

HEADLINES TODAY

Vol No:13 • Issue No: 56 • RNI No: JKENG/2011/39231 • Epaper.dailyheadlinestoday.co. • www.dailyheadlinestoday.co • Pages: 08 • Price: Rs 02/-

Daily Headlines Today Wishes it's Readers SHAB-I-BARAAT Mubarak



News Brief

Lt Governor extends Shab-e-Baraat greetings

JAMMU, MARCH 07: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has extended his greetings on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Baraat. In a message, the Lt Governor said: "On this sacred occasion, I convey my greetings and best wishes to the people. May the Almighty continue to guide us on the path of selfless service, strengthen the spirit of brotherhood and usher in happiness and prosperity for all".

Dy Mayor Extends Shab-E-Barat Greetings

Srinagar, March 07: The Deputy Mayor of Srinagar, Parvaiz Ahmad Qadri on Tuesday extended a heartfelt greeting to the people on the sacred eve of Shab-e-Barat. In his message, the Deputy Mayor said that observance of the auspicious occasion endorses the spirit of forgiveness, benevolence, hope and good deeds. "May the auspicious occasion further strengthen the foundation of syncretic culture and promote progress, peace and prosperity in J&K and well-being of all", prayed the Deputy Mayor.

2 militant associates of LeT arrested in Baramulla

Srinagar, Mar 7 (UNI) Security forces arrested two militant associates in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district, police said on Tuesday. They said the two associated with banned Lashkar-e-Taiba's shadow group The Resistance Front were arrested during a cordon and a search operation (CASO) which was launched by Police and CRPF in village Monchkhud Kunzer following a specific information. During CASO two suspects identified as Khurshid Ahmad Khan and Reyaz Ahmad Khan, both residents of Zandpal Kunzer were apprehended. "During questioning both suspects revealed that they are working as terrorist associates with banned terrorist outfit LeT (TRF)", police said. From their possession two AK 47 magazines, 15 rounds of AK 47 and 20 posters of LeT (TRF) were recovered, they said.

Locals foil suicide bid in Baramulla

Baramulla, Mar 7 Locals in north Kashmir's Baramulla on Tuesday afternoon timely intervened to prevent a girl from committing suicide. Reports reaching said that a girl was spotted by locals attempting to jump into the river Jhelum at cement-bridge in Baramulla. On noticing her doubtful movements, locals rushed towards her and foiled her attempt to jump into the water body. Confirming it, a police officer told GNS they are looking to ascertain under what circumstances the girl tried to end her life.

One dead, Six Injured as Massive Landslide hits Srinagar -Jammu National Highway at Ramban

Ramban, Mar 07: A man was killed and six others were injured when two massive landslides struck Jammu-Srinagar national highway at Seri area of Ramban district on Tuesday, officials said. An official told the news agency that two landslides hit the highway at Siri area of Ramban within an hour, resulting in the death of a crane driver working at the site, while six members of a family, travelling in a private car, were injured when their vehicle plunged into a gorge after being hit by a rolling boulder. He said the highway was completely blocked from both sides after the landslides, adding that a rescue operation is underway to make the road traffic worthy. He said two vehicles, an earthmover and a private car were also damaged in the incident. "Deputy commissioner Ramban Mussrat-ul-Islam and senior

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 07

Banks Need to Play the Pivotal Role by Providing Adequate Finance to MSMEs : PM Narendra Modi

HT NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Mar 7 Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday highlighted the importance of banks reaching out to MSMEs and providing them with adequate finance which would ensure effective utilisation of the additional collateral-free guaranteed credit of Rs 2 lakh crore allotted in this year's budget. Addressing a Post Budget Webinar on the subject of 'Enhancing Efficiency of the Financial Services for Creating Growth Opportunities, he said the need of the hour is that the benefits of the strength in India's banking system should



reach the maximum number of people. He asked the banking system to reach out to the

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 07

J&K Bank Playing Delay Tactics in Providing Finance to MSMEs : Alleged Unit Holders

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar March 7: The Customers of J&K Bank who are the unit holder under the MSME Sector across Kashmir Valley have alleged that most of the branches play delay delaying tactics in Providing Finance. Few of the Unit Holders running their units across Srinagar District alleged that

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Nearly 350 modern health infra projects coming up in J&K: LG Manoj Sinha

HT NEWS NETWORK

Jammu, Mar 7 Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday emphasised on making collective efforts to popularise generic medicines among the masses and extend the benefits of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janushadhi Pariyojana to every nook and corner of the Union Territory. Sinha addressing the fifth Jan Aushadhi Diwas celebrations under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janushadhi Pariyojana here at GMC Jammu through



Women made invaluable contribution to socio-economic development of J&K: LG

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 07: Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha, has extended his greetings

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 07

Local artisans, craftsmen likely to demonstrate vocational education with 6th to 8th students

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, Mar 07: In order to expand vocational education in classes 6th to 8th, authorities have ordered schools to identify and invite local artisans or craftsmen and skilled people for demonstrations and interactions with students. Vocational Education is presently being introduced from classes 9th to 12th and training is being imparted in 14 different trades in various Government High and Higher Secondary Schools. According to the news agency—, State coordinator of vocational education at Samagra Shiksha has said, "As envisioned under New Education Policy 2020, emphasis has been laid on expanding the scope of vocationalization

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DC Srinagar Chairs NCORD meeting to review control measures against drug menace

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, March 07: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad on Tuesday chaired the 8th meeting of District Level Committee of Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) here at Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex to take review of the action taken by the concerned Departments with regard to decisions held in last meeting. The future course of action to uproot the drug menace and narcotic trade from Srinagar District was also formulated during the

meeting. The meeting was among others attended by Superintendent of Police, Arif Amin Shah, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Shabir Ahmad, SDM East, Murtaza Ahmad, Deputy Drug Controller, Nighat Jabeen, Chief Agriculture Officer, Mohammad Younis, Chief Education Officer, Mohammad Shabir, District Social Welfare Officer, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, Tehsildar Headquarter, Imtiyaz Amin Naik, Incharge Drug De-addiction Centre SMHS Hospital, Dr Yasir

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 07

NIA Intensifies Drive Against Nexus of Militant-Gangster-Drug Smuggler

Five More Properties Attached in Delhi, Haryana

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, March 07: National Investigation Agency on Tuesday intensified its cracked down against Militant-Gangster-Drug Smuggler Networks across North India.

In a handout to GNS, the NIA said that following investigations in cases against 3 major Organised Crime Syndicates/gangs being operated by Pak based Harvinder Rinda, Lawrence Bishnoi and

Bambiha group, the NIA has attached another 4 Properties in Haryana and 1 in Delhi owned by members of Organised Crime Syndicates operating in the northern States of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi. Today's attachments follow similar attachments of 5 properties (4 in Haryana and 1 in Delhi) on March 4th, 2023. According to statsment, properties attached today were found acquired from funds generated from carrying out different types of militant and criminal extortion activities and were thus 'proceeds of militancy', as they were being used for hatching militant conspiracies and execution of crimes. The Properties attached

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Digital Initiative: Capacity Building Programmes for JK's Registration staff

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, MARCH 7: As part of the capacity building program for digital transformation, the Registration Department organized a series of hands on training and interactive sessions for its staff in collaboration with Software Development Unit (SDU), NIC Pune. These programs were organized in Jammu and Srinagar, on the directions of the Secretary Revenue, over the past 10 days for the registering officers and registration staff. The programs were conducted at Convention Centre Jammu, DC office Srinagar, Sub Registrar Offices of District Baramulla and Srinagar

and were attended by IGR, J&K, AI-GRK/J, District Registrars and Sub Registrars both in person and virtually besides the registration staff. Pertinently, registration of documents in J&K is conducted online through the National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS), software developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), under the aegis of Government of India, Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development. Pranav Borate, Senior Developer, SDU, NIC, Pune (I/c J&K) along with the technical team of IGR office conducted the capacity building programs which witnessed overwhelming participation

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Effective Monitoring of Housing for All scheme in J&K

Govt orders social audit of scheme by MGNREGA SAU

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, Mar 07 In a move aimed at ensuring effective monitoring and public accountability of the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Gramin), the Jammu & Kashmir Government has ordered that social audit units set up under MGNREGA shall also conduct social audit of the scheme in the UT. In an order, a copy of which

is in possession of news agency—the J&K's Rural Development and Panchayati Raj has ordered that social audit units set up under MGNREGA shall also conduct social audit of PMAY-G in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir with the same geographical jurisdiction as assigned under MGNREGA. The move is aimed at ensuring community participation in the monitoring

of PMAY-G scheme at the grassroots level. Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin (PMAY-G) is a centrally sponsored flagship scheme of the Government of India that is dedicated towards Housing for All by the year 2024. The scope of social audit shall include assessing whether sufficient awareness on the scheme has been generated.

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Blossomed almond trees at Badamwari attracts tourists in Srinagar

Srinagar, Mar 7 (UNI) With the spring season set in the Kashmir valley the sprawling "Badamwari" or Almond garden in Srinagar's old city has become a source of attraction for the tourists these days. Badamwari, over the years, has been the first to come to life with the onset of the spring season in Kashmir after the harsh winters.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 07

5 drug peddlers arrested in Kashmir: Police

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, Mar 07: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested five drug peddlers in Handwara, Kulgam and Bandipora & recovered contraband substances from their possession. In Handwara, a police party of Police Station Kralgund during patrolling at Humpora crossing on Baramulla-Handwara highway intercepted a suspicious person who tried to flee from the spot but was apprehended tactfully by the alert police party, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). During search, 102 grams of charas was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Feroz Ahmad Khan son of Abdul Ahad Khan resident of Panditpora. He has been arrested and shifted

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Don't refer posts remaining vacant for more than 2 years to recruiting agencies: J&K admin tells departments

Shall be deemed abolished; Can be revived in rare and unavoidable circumstances

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, Mar 07: The administration of J&K Union Territory has directed all the departments not to refer posts which have remained vacant for more than two years to the recruiting agencies for filling them. The Jammu & Kashmir Finance Department has directed all the administrative Departments not to refer the posts under direct recruitment quota, which have re-



mained unfilled for more than 2 (two) years, to the recruiting agencies."The Departments shall obtain the prior concurrence of the Finance Department for revival of such posts before referring them for recruitment, in unavoidable cases," reads the Finance

department's circular, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer. Reminding the departments of its directions issued on July 15, 2021, the Finance department said that all posts, except newly created posts kept in abeyance or remaining vacant for a period of more than 2 years in any department/ attached office/ subordinate office/ statutory body, would be considered as 'deemed abolished' unless an exemption has been given at the time of sanctioning the post. The instructions also state that a post falling into the category of 'deemed abolished', cannot be filled up prior to obtaining its revival, from the Finance Department. "Revival of posts would be considered in rare and unavoidable circumstances only," the instructions further state—

PROCESSING J&K

SHG members of Pouni Reasi tasting entrepreneur success with kitchens at Dogra Rural Haat

UMEED scheme of JKRLM harnessing culinary skills of homemakers, honing them to earn a livelihood at these kitchens

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, MARCH 07: UMEED scheme of JKRLM and support from District Administration has empowered a Self Help Group of Pouni Block of Reasi district to taste the entrepreneur success with the establishment of kitchens at Dogra Rural Haat. Launched in March 2021 by District Administration Reasi in convergence with JKRLM, UMEED harnessed the culinary skills of homemakers, honed



them to earn a livelihood out of their kitchens at Dogra Haat. A four Cluster level federation SHG of women from Block

Pouni turned cooking into a career option and made good profits which is helping them to support their families financially. After starting the livelihood venture 'Dogra Haat', many skill development trainings were imparted to support and increase capacities of these women. They were taught the basics of stocking up the pantry, making quick recipes, packing techniques, social media skills and order management related to cooking techniques. The SHG members were also made to understand promotional strategies for the modern market to run their kitchen single-handedly, while keeping adequate quantity and

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Prepared to ensure peaceful polls, Amarnath Yatra in J&K : IG CRPF

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, Mar 7 (UNI) Inspector General, Operations, Kashmir CRPF M S Bhatia on Tuesday said the security preparations for this year Amarnath Yatra and elections, if held, have started.

The Amarnath yatra usually starts in June or July from the twin routes of Nunwan-Pahalgam in Anantnag district and Batal in Ganderbal district. "We have started preparations for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra and elections, if held", Bhatia told reporters on the sidelines of inauguration of a unit hospital in Tral area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district Tuesday. He said whether it is elec-



tions or yatra, forces remain fully alert all the time to maintain law and order and try to ensure the event is held peacefully. IG operations CRPF, said they always remain prepared for any event, be it elections or Amarnath Yatra. "We always ensure these events are conducted peacefully," he said. He said the CRPF unit hospital has been opened under the Pradhan

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DC Baramulla chairs 5th NCORD meeting: reviews functioning of Drug De-addiction Centre

BARAMULLA, MARCH 07: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Dr Syed Sehrish Asgar today chaired 5th District Level Committee meeting under Narco- coordination Center (NCORD) and COTPA (Cigarette and Other Tobacco products Prohibition Act) and reviewed the functioning of Drug De-addiction Centre which was recently established in PHC Singhpora. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Sehrish said that the drug menace is a threat to every household as it can knock on any door anytime. She said the constant parental control is important to check activities of children so that early detection can help to pit the spark off before it burns the house. The DC reviewed various action points taken by the line departments on the directions already issued in the previous meetings. It was informed that 222 Prahari clubs have been established in high schools across the district to sensitize the students about the menace. It was also given out that training of youth clubs and functionaries of the departments have already been completed and the master trainers will further

train other functionaries in a cascading way to help the victims of substance abuse to come out of this vicious circle. The DC directed for identification of victims of Drug Abuse and the hotspot areas of drug addiction so that special drives will be launched in the hotspot and grey areas. She stressed on mass awareness through IEC activities and directed the Transport and Excise departments to create awareness among masses and launch sticker campaigns against drug abuse. The DC further directed MCs for installation of hoardings at proper places across district highlighting the messages "Yes to Life, No to Drugs". Reiterating upon its commitment to curb drug trafficking, the DC said that stringent measures are being taken to nip the menace in the bud and assured every possible action to dismantle the nexus of drug trafficking and peddling. She also urged the concerned stakeholders to play their part for its complete eradication. The meeting also discussed relocation of tobacco and cigarette selling shops near schools besides mapping of areas with poppy and bhong cultivation.



The meeting was also informed that CCTV cameras have been installed in schools on a larger scale to keep vigil on the activities of students inside schools besides random checking of the CCTV record. Talking about the newly established Drug De-addiction Centre, Dr Sehrish said that the

Drug De-addiction & Rehabilitation Centre is a milestone and a first of its kind in the district for treatment of the victims of drug abuse and their rehabilitation to come out of this vicious circle. Principal GMC (Incharge) Dr Ifhat Hassan Shah; ADC Sopore, Tariq Ahmad Reshi;

ASP Baramulla, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, all SDMs, ACD, CMO, CEO and other concerned officers and officials were present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Sehrish said that the drug menace is a threat to every household as it can knock on any door anytime. She said

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Mayor of Srinagar extends greetings to people on the eve of Shab-e-Barat

SRINAGAR, MARCH 07: The Mayor of Srinagar, Junaid Azim Mattu today extended a heartfelt greeting to the people on the sacred eve of Shab-e-Barat. In a message for masses, the Mayor said on this Shab-e-Barat eve, which is also known as the 'Night of Fortune and Forgiveness', May Allah grant forgiveness to all the Ummah and

bestow us all with peace and prosperity. He wished that on this Shab-e-Barat occasion may mercy, blessing, benefit, pardon and forgiveness descend upon the people of earth. Requesting the people to remember the poor and needy on this occasion, Junaid wished a blissful Shab-e-Barat to all.

Director Agriculture inaugurates Spawn distribution among Mushroom Farmers at IMDC Srinagar



SRINAGAR, MARCH 07: The Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhury Mohammad Iqbal today inaugurated distribution of spawn among the mushroom farmers at Integrated Mushroom Development Centre (IMDC) Lalmandi, here. Speaking to the mushroom farmers, the Director highlighted the importance of small-scale agri-based cottage industries (SSCIs) for the sustainability of the agriculture sector. He said the department is committed to promote SSCIs in Kashmir. He said the farmer who is operating an agri-based cottage industry like mushroom cultivation could easily supplement the income raised from selling crops. Iqbal said that the agri based cottage industries like mushroom cultivation; apiculture etc has vast potential to generate employment opportunities for educated youth, rural people.

DLSA conducts gender-based legal awareness programme at Bandipora

BANDIPORA, MARCH 07: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Bandipora in collaboration with NALSA and National Commission for Women (NCW) on Tuesday organized a one day legal awareness programme on family Laws, rights of women, gender-based discriminations etc at Govt. Higher Secondary School Nadihal Bandipora.

The programme was held under the chairmanship of Chairman DLSA and Principal District and Sessions Judge Amit Sharma and under the guidance of Secretary DLSA Bandipora, Nusrat Ali Hakak. The programme was inaugurated by Secretary, DLSA Nusrat Ali Hakak along with Principal GHSS Nadihal. The programme started with the introductory speech given by Secretary DLSA Bandipora. She said that the noble objective of this programme is to promote gender equality enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble and to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. She also made the gathering aware of the



various machineries/ organs of the Justice delivery system available for redressal of their problems/grievances. The programme consisted of two sessions.

In the first session Adv. Aamir Shafi Panel Lawyer resource person delivered a lecture on the topics Marriage & Divorce, Maintenance Laws, Women Right to Property, Domestic Violence, On the topics Dowry Death & Acid Attack, Outraging Modesty of Women, Kidnapping & Abduction and Rape, Sexual Assault & POCSO. The second session was carried out by Resource Person Advocate Iqbal Rubani Panel Lawyer DLSA Bandipora Prevention of Sexual Harassment at work place, Maternity Benefit Act, Factories Act, Equal Remuneration Act and Women and Reproductive Health Rights and Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act and PNDDT Act. In the end of the programme booklets/pamphlets were distributed among the participants and general discussion and question & answer sessions were also held. The programme was attended by Female Teachers, Anganwadi Workers/ Helpers, Staff members of the said school, Staff members of DLSA and PLVs.

DC Anantnag reviews functioning of Health, Education departments

ANANTNAG, MARCH 07: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr Basharat Qayoom today reviewed the functioning of health and education departments in the district with particular focus on completion of works related to these two sectors in the district taken up under District CAPEX and other schemes. Apprising the chair about the educational scenario in the district, the Chief Education Officer, Anantnag presented status of various parameters including teacher pupil ratio, distribution of staff across the schools in the district, improvements



in enrolment ratio and steps being taken for bringing back out of school

children, lab facilities in schools, infrastructure projects under execution under different heads, steps taken under technical innovation program, etc. Chief Medical Officer, Anantnag presenting the performance in the health sector, gave a brief on the health facilities in the district and availability of staff and ambulances across the district. He shared the progress of works being taken up in the health sector. The DC highlighted the importance of education in personality development of children and ensuring that they become positive contributors.

DDC Kulgam reviews status of developmental projects/ works of Irrigation & Municipalities

Farooq Rather



KULGAM, MARCH 07: To review the status of developmental projects of Irrigation department and Municipalities in Kulgam, a meeting of officers was today held under the chairmanship of District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat at Mini-Secretariat, here. The meeting was attended by President Municipal Council Kulgam Muneeb Ahmad Zargar; ADDC Showkat Ahmad Rather; Jt. Director Planning, Executive Engineers from Irrigation, PDD and R&B, EOs and other concerned officers. During the meeting, the DDC reviewed the status of Slaughter House, Sumo Stand and Solid Waste Management plant, and directed Executive Engineer R&B Kulgam to complete these Projects well in time. Moreover, Executive Engineer KPDCL and EO Municipal Council Kulgam were directed to make all street lights functional in town at an earliest. The DDC also reviewed status and progress made in various irrigation works. He reviewed status and progress made on renovation and repairs of Chakidhara, Grimtoo, Sonman, Mav Khul, Nandi and other canals. He instructed Executive Engineer, Irrigation department to scale up pace of work and complete the repair and renovation of canals and ensure smooth irrigation facilities to the agrarians throughout this farming season. During the meeting, the DDC reviewed the status of Slaughter House, Sumo Stand and Solid Waste Management plant, and directed Executive Engineer R&B Kulgam to complete these Projects well in time. Moreover, Executive Engineer KPDCL and EO Municipal Council Kulgam were directed to make all street lights functional in town at an earliest.

DC Kulgam flags-off group of Farmers on Exposure Tour

Farooq Rather

KULGAM, MARCH, 07: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Dr. Bilal-Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today flagged-off a group of 14 farmers on exposure cum training programme to Jammu for a period of 5 days. Present on the occasion were ADC, Viqar Ahmed Giri; Chief Agriculture Officer, District Agriculture Officer, Agriculture Extension Officers and other concerned officers and officials.

It was informed that the tour has been organized under the Sub Mission on Agriculture Extension of the centrally sponsored scheme of Agriculture Technology and Management Agency (SAME- ATMA) by Dy. Director Agriculture Training, FTEC Ganderbal.

While interacting with the farmers, DC said that the objective of the exposure cum training visit is to make the farmers aware about the latest technical know-



how and modern agriculture/ progressive practices being adopted in the sector.

He asked the farmers to avail the opportunity to learn the latest technologies and

practices and adopt the same in their own farms. Chief Agriculture Officer, Sartaj Ahmad Shah informed that during the tour, the farmers will get an opportunity to interact with scientists at SKUAST -Jammu and will be given the practical demonstration of the latest technology in the field at main campus Chatha, Centre Of Excellence of Fruits Udhaywala and Chinore Farm of department of Agriculture Jammu. He called upon them to share and disseminate the knowledge gained during the tour among the farmers back home, so that they can also adopt the latest agriculture techniques to improve their farm yields and income. practices being adopted in the sector. He asked the farmers to avail the opportunity to learn the latest technologies and practices and adopt the same in their own farms.

DLRC: DC Anantnag reviews credit facilitation in 3rd Quarter Credit availability will be instrumental for rapid development of social infrastructure: Dr Basharat

ANANTNAG, MARCH 07: The District Level Review Committee met here in presence of all concerned stakeholders including banks, officials from employment, industries and other departments under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr Basharat Qayoom to review credit facilitation by banks during the 3rd quarter of the present fiscal.

The chair was apprised by the Lead District Manager that both credit and advances have shown positive growth over the previous quarter. The District has extended more than 81% of the target credit to MSMEs in the district in a bid to boost employment among the youth.

There has been extensive effort towards the Financial Literacy of the residents in the district and 37 Financial Literacy Camps have been organised in the district, he added.

Sharing the target achievement under various Govt Schemes, the chair was informed that 435 cases under PMEGP (DIC), 157 under PMEGP (KVIB), 264 under PMEGP (KVIC), 116 under Mumkin, 23 under Tejaswini, 96 under stand up India and 228 Artisans and Weavers have received credit facility in excess of Rs 66 crores aimed at creating sustainable livelihood opportunities in the district.



Under RSETI, 128 candidates have received training through 6 programs so far out of which 111 candidates have successfully set up units. Sanctioning of cases and disbursement of funds under KCC and Progress under Social Security Schemes

was also discussed on the occasion. Dr Basharat instructed banks to ensure credit flow to the priority sector. He said that priority sector lending is a focus area and credit flow remains one of the primary drivers for modernisation of the

sector.

He said banks should also be sensitive to rising social infrastructural needs and any capital requirements in this area must be handled on priority.

The DC said that over the previous months, there has been much progress in reducing the processing time for PMEGP and other self-employment scheme cases but there is still scope for sensitization among bank employees so that aspiring youth are not unnecessarily left wanting for credit.

The meeting was attended by ADDC, JD Planning, LDM, AD Employment and representatives from various banks. He said banks should also be sensitive to rising social infrastructural needs and any capital requirements in this area must be handled on priority.

The DC said that over the previous months, there has been much progress in reducing the processing time for PMEGP and other self-employment scheme cases but there is still scope for sensitization among bank employees so that aspiring youth are not unnecessarily left wanting for credit.

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DC Doda reviews functioning of revenue department

DODA, MARCH 07: Deputy Commissioner Doda, Vishesh Paul Mahajan, today reviewed the functioning of the Revenue department here at a meeting with concerned officers. He instructed the SDMs and Tehsildars to ensure all the communication goes through e-office only. He asked the revenue officers that any of the service, if delivered beyond PSGA timeline, shall invite penalty and strict action against the defaulting officer/ official.

DC asked the Tehsildars to install WiFi in the Tehsil Offices and instructed Tehsildars to ensure officials down the line use Tablets provided to them for officials work and online services delivery. The meeting was attended by ADC Doda, Dr R K Bharti, ADC Bhaderwah, Choudhary Dil Mir, ACR Doda Sanjeev Kumar, SDMs and Tehsildars of the district. The meeting also discussed the purification of data, expenditure of funds, SRO 43 cases, condemnation of official vehicles, revenue Court Cases Management System (RCCMS), Change of Land Use, retrieval of government land, attestation of mutations, SDRF, Agriculture census, litigations pending in various courts/ CAT, land acquisition, and other revenue issues tehsil wise. DC asked to ensure that retrieved land is not re-encroached and the anti encroachment drive intensified in all tehsils. AP KEY GAON MAI APKA TEHSILDAR is a unique initiative of the district to address the genuine public issues by reaching out to them on every Saturday and the Tehsildars must take the initiative as a tool to get the public feedback, provide them services/ awareness and review the performance of other departments in the visited village. DC impressed upon Magistrates to create a database and keep an eye on OWGs and drug peddlers in their respective jurisdictions to maintain peace in the area. He has asked for augmentation of revenue buildings and monitoring of activities of other departments in their jurisdiction to maintain the pace of development and ensure the peace.

FSO Anantnag conducts Awareness program on Food Fortification at GDC Kokernag

ANANTNAG, MARCH 07: Food Safety Officer, Anantnag today held a massive awareness campaign regarding food fortification at Government Degree College Anantnag.

The program was attended by a large gathering of people belonging to ICDS and the Education Department. The participants were educated about the concept of food fortification and its benefits particularly for children in their growing years.

It is in place to mention that Fortification is the practice of deliberately increasing the content of one or more micronutrients (i.e., vitamins and minerals) in a food or condiment to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply and provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health.

In a separate incident, a team of officials from FSO Anantnag, acting on prior information apprehended a transporter for transporting meat balls and kebabs without a cold storage facility. On being apprehended, the concerned disclosed that the items have been labeled incorrectly and are in violation of the provisions of FSSAI-2006.

The team has booked the culprit for violation of the provisions of FSSAI-2006 and destroyed the whole consignment of items owing to false labeling and short shelf life of the product.

NMBA at Anantnag: DCO begins weeklong inspection drive

ANANTNAG, MARCH 07: Under the aegis of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, the Drug Control Office (DCO) Anantnag today began a weeklong inspection drive in the district.

The inspection drive will focus on medical establishments located in rural areas of the district. On the first day of the drive, 25 sale outlets in Kokernag tehsil were inspected. The drive was carried out in Takiya Magam, Sundbrari, Lohar Senzi, Gadole, Vailoo, Dodhkul and Adhal area. The operations of 03 medical shops were disallowed on account of violation of provisions of the Drug and Cosmetics Act. The team also lifted drug samples of various pharmaceutical companies for analysis. The team impressed upon the chemists to ensure maintenance of proper records of all scheduled H1 drugs as per norms.

3 day training programme on early detection of drug abuse and post detection management held at Handwara

KUPWARA, MARCH 7: A three days training programme on Early Detection of Drug Abuse and Post detection management was held today at Environment Hall Handwara.

On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, the programme was organised involving Social Welfare, School Education, Police and other departments. The training programme was attended by Dr. Mehraj Din Malik (Health Department), Javid Ahmad Malik, Tehsil Social Welfare officer Handwara, Feroz Ahmad Tantry

AP Sociology GDC Handwara, Master trainers on drug demand reduction from School Education Department, Officials of Youth Service & Sports department Kupwara, Youth Club members and NSS volunteers of GDC Handwara as participants.

On the occasion Javid Ahmad, TSWO Handwara presented welcome address and highlighted different issues associated with drug abuse. During the session Dr. Mehraj Din Malik spoke on early iden-



tification of drug abuse. While experts on substance abuse also briefed the participants about early identification and post management of the problem.

On conclusion of 1st phase of the programme, DSWO Kupwara, Hyditullah Mir (Nodal officer) appreciated efforts of the Departments collaborating for the programme and said the experience from these training sessions which will help the youth club members to work more ef-

fectively in the field in curbing this menace. A three days training programme on Early Detection of Drug Abuse and Post detection management was held today at Environment Hall Handwara.

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Youth Entrepreneurship Festival in Ganderbal soon



GANDERBAL, MARCH 07: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shyambir today chaired a meeting, here on 'Youth Entrepreneurship Festival' to be held in the district.

In the meeting, a presentation was presented by Mahatma Gandhi National Fellow Ganderbal during which the DC was informed that by holding Youth Entrepreneurship Festival Ganderbal the District Skill Committee aims to achieve various objectives viz, developing entrepreneurial zeal among the youth by driving innovation based activities, making skill development an aspiration, thereby promoting Skill Entrepreneurship, Engagement of MSMEs via Skill Competitions, foster teamwork for successful Entrepreneurs

The meeting was informed that the District Skill Committee (DSC) Ganderbal aims to achieve these objectives by events like Idea Pitching, Idea Hunting Challenges, Employment Fair, Skill Competitions, Art and Craft Competitions, Guest Lecture by Entrepreneurship Experts and Sharing of Success Stories under the banner 'Success Talks'. Besides these activities, sports events and cultural events shall also be held which will showcase the local crafts and traditions. The DC directed that mobilisation activities for the festivals should start as soon as possible and instructed all the participants in the meeting to advertise about the activities of the festival at large scale.

G-20 PRESIDENCY OF INDIA: Indian army organises seminar on "Women empowerment, Gender equality, Role of Women in Upliftment of Society in Kashmir"

KUPWARA, Mar 07, The Rastriya Rifles Battalion of Indian Army stationed at Gujjarpatti-Sogam (Lolab) under the aegis of Charkut Garrison, in collaboration with Health Department, Kupwara and Government Degree College, Sogam organized a one day seminar cum workshop today at Gujjarpatti-Sogam on the theme, "Women Empowerment, Gender Equality & Role of Women in Upliftment of Society in Kashmir" to celebrate 'International Women's Day 2023'.

The session commenced with the 'National Anthem' and Tribute to the Contribution of Women in Development of the Society' followed by the presentation and educational talk by eminent professors on varied topics on the subject to include doctors, subject experts and students from Government Degree College, Sogam on 'Women Empowerment, Gender Equality, Women's Economic Empowerment, Girls' Education, Family Planning, Measures for Reducing Child Marriages & Role of Women in Upliftment of Society in Kashmir.



The first of its kind seminar cum workshop on the occasion of International Women's Day at Lolab Valley in Kupwara district of North Kashmir was an important step towards spreading awareness about the importance of women's empowerment and education for upliftment of the society of Kashmir, specially for the place like Kashmir where there is a huge scope of gender equality, women empowerment and women's education as compared to other states of India.

Gender equality and empowerment of Kashmiri Women remains a top priority for the Indian Army. Indian Army is working with various stakeholders to find innovative solutions to help women and girls

unleash their human capital and become leaders, entrepreneurs, and agents of change for green, resilient, and inclusive development which is in consonance with agenda for 'India's prestigious G-20 Presidency'.

Speaking on the occasion, a well known guest speaker, Professor Mehbooba Bano, Head of the Department of Political Science, Government Degree College, Sogam said that, the world is changing and women are taking up every field and making their contribution at all levels and the government has initiated several schemes for women empowerment, specially in Kashmir.

Dr Shugufta Kazi, a professional medical expert on women's health from

Department of Health, Kupwara delivered an educational talk on girls education, family planning, reducing child marriages and female child foeticide specially in context of Kashmiri society. During her talk, she also mentioned that, Kashmiri society is changing today and helping country to grow. Women empowerment

has a long history of women emancipation. She motivated the audience for taking positive steps towards empowering women. Various scholar girl students to include Miss Syed Shazia, Miss Salma Jahangir and Miss Seer-at Bhat also delivered a talk on 'Role of Women in Development of Kashmir' during the seminar cum workshop. They highlighted the success of Kashmiri women is not limited to the professional front only but also on the family front too by stressing upon gender equality and making women more visible in the crowded and noisy society of Kashmir.

Mrs Samiksha Sagar Doifode, who is a well known coordinator of NGOs working towards gentle cause of women empowerment spoke about respecting women in all spheres of life. She reiterated that we should never differentiate between Men and Women. She mentioned about the several complex aspects of womanhood and their course of journey lucidly in an easy-to-understand manner by giving day.

Holi festival: Nowshera Forest Division conducts special Plantation drives at various temples by planting Rudraksh Plants

JAMMU, MARCH 07: A Plantation drive under J&K Green Drive was held on the eve of Holi day at Shiv Mandir Thandapani.

The main drive was conducted at Shiv Mandir Thandapani in which Member number of devotees and locals planted Rudraksh trees in the temple premises. Number of Plants were planted by local and students to celebrate the Holi day. The plants were also distributed among the locals and students.

Rangee Singh, Block Forest Officer Sunderbani hold a special counter in the premises of Shiv Mandir from where the locals and students collected plants of their choice. The Mandir management lauded the efforts of Forest Department for conducting such drives at Shiv Mandir Thandapani. While loading the efforts of Nowshera Forest Division member Shiv Temple Thandapani said that Forest department is conducting religious plantation drives in almost all the occasions, these drives gives a message of participatory forest management as well as aware the people about the greening of environment.

While speaking, Neelima Shah Divisional Forest Officer Nowshera said that Nowshera Forest Division is dedicated to conduct such drives. Rakesh Verma Range Officer Sunderbani appealed the devotees to help the first department



in combating and managing the upcoming forest fires, as the temperature is soaring day by day, forest department need the help of one and all to manage and control the forest fires. Similar other drives were conducted at Shiv temple Makol in which members of trust and devotees participated.

In another such drive which held at Lamman Temple large number of devotees participated. Sh. Rakesh Verma Range Officer, Sunderbani said that such drives are conducted on special occasions so that maximum number of plants are to be planted. The main objective of such drives is to sensitize the people about the

importance of plants. He appealed the participants to join hands to manage and control forest fires.

Neelima Shah, Divisional Forest Officer Nowshera said that forest fires not only damages the forest trees but also cause serious damage to the lives of animals, birds and micro-organism present in the soil. "It is our collective responsibility to control and manage forest fires", he said. The objective of J&K Green drive is to reach maximum number of people by conducting such drives.

The whole drives were managed by Didar Singh, Rangee Singh, Rajinder Dev Sharma and Ved Parkash Block Forest Officers with the active participa-

tion of Ishan Raina Fgd, Dogar Nath and field staff.

The whole drive was conducted under the close supervision and directions of Vivek Verma, Conservator of Forests, West Circle Rajouri and Neelima Shah, Divisional Forest Officer, Nowshera. In another such drive which held at Lamman Temple large number of devotees participated. Sh. Rakesh Verma Range Officer, Sunderbani said that such drives are conducted on special occasions so that maximum number of plants are to be planted. The main objective of such drives is to sensitize the people about the importance of plants. He appealed the participants to join hands to manage.

HEADLINES TODAY

SHAB-E-BARAT : The Night That is Believed to Decide Our Fate :

By - Farhana Ahmed

Shab-e-Barat is the night when our fate is believed to be decided by the Almighty. It's a night of worship, forgiveness and rewards for devout Muslims all over the world.

Apart from the religious aspect, Shab-e-Barat is also about socialisation, especially in Asia. People share sweetmeat, bread, ruti made of rice flour and etc with destitute people, relatives and neighbours.

In my childhood, we used to celebrate it as a festival. As I grew up in a big, joint family, preparation for an occasion used to be huge. So, 3-4 days before Shab-e-barat, my mother and grandmother along with their domestic helps used to start preparation for different types of haluas, barfis and ruti and many other traditional foods. Back then there were not that much sweetmeat items to buy from shops. Most of the delicacies were prepared at home.

On the day, the elderly women in the family – mothers and bhabis -- engaged themselves in the preparation since morning. Some of them used to fast. In the morning, I used to see my mother cooking beef curry in one stove for having those with chaler ruti while the other stove remained busy in preparing haluas like cholar daler halua, peper halua, narkel er barfi, carrot halua and many others. Sometimes they also cooked biryani and payesh. The domestic helps used to make dough of rice flour, which they kept wrapped in wet cloths to contain moisture so that the ruti, made later in the day, would be soft. Since morning, beggars would buzz the doorbell of the house for the huluu-ruti. They were also given money as charity.

In the afternoon, the domestic helps were sent to the neighbouring houses with trays full of gourmet goodies covered with embroidered cloths or decorative lids. And the kids of the houses used to accompany them. People had to rush only to some specific places, including Bailey Road and Old Dhaka, if they wanted to buy sweetmeats and breads or paratas. All the members would return home early that day and get prepared for going to mosque for the special prayer for Shab-e-Barat.

At our home, after Maghrib, everyone would sit together and have ruti with beef curry. My grandfather, grandmother, uncle and his family also joined us. By this time, our caretaker and driver would return home after distributing food items at the relatives' houses. All distribution usually ended before Esha prayers. The male members of the family, mostly with white payjama Panjabi, would be seen going to the mosque holding prayer mats.

The women mostly used to pray at home. From the evening, children would start popping fire crackers and lighting tarabati inside lanes or rooftops. The practice wasn't as notorious as the present day. All the mosque would distribute sweets among the devotees and our male members used to bring those at home as they knew that we would be waiting for the savories.

The items might not anything special – mostly jilapi or amirti – but it always tasted heavenly. All of us used to pray at home till Fazr prayer. After that, we all would go to sleep.

But the nature of socialisation centring Shab-e-barat has changed these days. Life has become more hectic. People do not have that much time for the making the sweetmeats at home. And all types of haluas, sweetmeats and breads are available at markets across the capital. Even if we want, it's now has become impossible to send foods at our relatives' houses due to traffic jam.

Moreover, we now don't allow our kids to go to the neighbouring houses without supervision. The children mostly stay at home. But Shab-e-Barat is Shab-e-Barat. Still, we do celebrate the day with great enthusiasm and religious fervor. It gives us pleasure and remind us that the holy month of Ramadan is at the door, which would be followed by the Eid-ul-fitr, one of the biggest festival of Muslims.

Courtesy - The daily Star

“Breaking Free from the Shackles of Ignorance: The Importance of Education in the Muslim Community”



AUBAID AHMAD AKHOON

In today's world, knowledge is power. It is what separates the enlightened from the unenlightened and the informed from the uninformed. Education is the key to unlocking the doors of the biggest prison named ignorance and freeing oneself from the chains of intellectual blindness and misinformation. Yet, despite the importance of education, some individuals choose to remain in the dark and refuse to seek the light of knowledge.

It is unfortunate to see that some individuals, regardless of their colour, creed, religion or social background, choose to remain ignorant and refuse to educate themselves. However, it is also important to recognize that not all Muslims fall into this category and many actively seek to understand and live by the teachings and commandments of the holy Qur'an.

Education and critical thinking are crucial in any society and can help individuals break free from the chains of misinformation and misunderstanding. It is through learning and seeking knowledge that individuals can make informed decisions and contribute positively to society.

This is true in Central Asia particularly Muslim community have fallen prey to the traps of ignorance and misinformation.

The first word revealed to the Holy Prophet as a revelation of the Holy Qur'an was "Iqra," which translates to "read or recite." This was a call to the believers or the Muslims, to seek knowledge and remove darkness from their lives and the lives of their fellow-human beings. Yet, as history has shown, not all Muslims responded positively to this divine call.

Hairat hain ki taleem wa tarakee mai hain peechay, jis kaum ka agaz he iqra se huwa tha "Alama Iqbal" "Allama Iqbal, the famous revolutionary poet, used his poetry to inspire Muslims towards education. In one of his poems, he expressed surprise at the lack of progress in education and civilization among the Muslim community, despite the fact that their journey towards knowledge and enlightenment began with the word 'Iqra' (Read). He was trying to encourage Muslims to rediscover their love for learning and to strive towards greater educational, intellectual and cultural achievements."

Instead, some chose to ignore the message and remain in the dark, listening to the "Kathas" and "Dastans" of others, including anti-Islam non-Muslim propagandists, ignorant Muslim preachers, politicians, deviant writers, and culturalists.

Given below are some of the famous quotes of Alama Iqbal extracted from his poems, that emphasize the importance of pursuing knowledge and learning for Muslims:

"Talib-e-ilm kaafir-e-be-niyazi se behtar hai" (A seeker of



Breaking Free from the Shackles of Ignorance: The Importance of Education in the Muslim Community”

knowledge is better than a faithless and indolent person) "Iqra ki rasm hai duniya ki tamaddun ki bunyad, Bina taalim ke insaan kisi halakat ka shikar" (The tradition of 'Iqra' is the foundation of human civilization; without education, humans are prone to destruction)

"Har ek momin ki zindagi mein, talim ki roshni honi chahiye, Ta ke bana sakey wo bhi insaan, jaisa baney khuda ne irada" (In the life of every believer, there should be the light of education, so that they can become human as Allah has intended them to be)

"Talim-e-insaanat se bhara hai meri tan mein, Mera zameer hai shaheen, meri nazar qaatil-e-nafs" (My body is filled with the education of humanity, my conscience is noble, and my sight is the slayer of ego.)

"Khudi ko kar buland itna, ke har taqdeer se pehle, Khuda bande se khud poochhe, bata teri raza kya hai" (Elevate yourself so much that you excel your destiny, God Himself should ask you, 'tell me, what is your will?') "Talim uloom ki shama se hoti hai roshan, Insaan ke qad-o-qamat ka imtiyaz hai ye" (Education illuminates with the light of knowledge, it is a privilege of human dignity and stature.)

These quotes from Allama Iqbal emphasize the impor-

importance of education in the life of a Muslim and they teach him how he can break free from ignorance and darkness. They encourage Muslims to seek knowledge, reflect on the teachings of the holy Qur'an, and contribute positively to society.

The problem of ignorance is not limited to the Muslim community alone. It is a global issue and it affects all societies. However, the Muslim community is particularly susceptible to the problem because of the influence of certain individuals who spread misinformation and promote ignorance. These individuals, who may hold high degrees, have not used their education to critically examine the narratives and counter-narratives presented to them. Instead, they spread their ignorance, acting as drivers of the juggernaut of age-old "Jahalat" among Muslims.

The effects of ignorance and misinformation can be devastating. It can lead to misunderstanding, conflict, and even violence. It is therefore crucial that individuals in the Muslim community and beyond break free from the shackles of ignorance and seek knowledge. Education is the key to achieving this goal. By reading, studying, and researching, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of the world around them and make informed decisions.

Education, however, is not just about obtaining degrees and certificates. It is about a lifelong commitment to learning, self-reflection, and critical examination of all sources of information. It is about seeking the truth and striving for a better understanding of the world. This can only be achieved through a strong commitment to education and a determination to break free from the chains of ignorance.

In conclusion, breaking free from the shackles of ignorance is a crucial task for all individuals. Education is the key to unlocking the doors of ignorance and freeing oneself from the traps of misinformation. The Muslim community, in particular, must make a concerted effort to seek knowledge and escape the influences of ignorance and misinformation. By doing so, they can not only improve their own lives but also contribute positively to society as a whole.

"Learn from history or you will repeat it, to be great again Muslims must pursue knowledge with zeal, sincerity and grit." - Allama Iqbal

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THE DAMAGE DONE: HOW FACEBOOK JOURNALISTS UNDERMINE PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM



Irfan Attari Kashmiri

The rise of social media has transformed the way people consume news and information. While this has brought many benefits, it has also led to a significant change in the way journalism is practiced. One of the most significant changes has been the emergence of Facebook journalists, individuals who use social media platforms to disseminate news and information to a wide audience. While these individuals can be a valuable source of information, they can also do significant damage to the field of journalism.

One of the primary ways that Facebook journalists damage journalism is by undermining the traditional role of professional journalism. Professional journalists are trained to seek out and verify information, to provide context and analysis, and to adhere to ethical standards. Facebook journalists, on the other hand, are often untrained, and their content may be based on rumor or hearsay rather than solid reporting. This can lead to the spread of misinformation, which can be dangerous in areas such as politics or public health.

Another way that Facebook journalists damage journalism is by blurring the line between fact and opinion. Professional journalists are expected to provide objective reporting, while Facebook journalists often mix their reporting with their personal views and opinions. This can lead to a loss of trust in journalism as a whole, as people may be unsure what information to believe and what to disregard. Facebook journalists can also be damaging to the field of journalism by spreading bias or propaganda. Because social media platforms like Facebook are often used to spread information quickly, it can be easy for false or biased information to go viral. This can be particularly problematic in regions where there is already

a high level of polarization or tension, as it can further inflame emotions and lead to violence or unrest.

In addition to these concerns, Facebook journalists can also damage journalism by contributing to the monetization of clickbait and sensationalism. Because Facebook algorithms often prioritize content that generates clicks or shares, some Facebook journalists may be incentivized

to create content that is sensational or inflammatory rather than informative or accurate. This can lead to a situation where the most popular content on Facebook is not necessarily the most valuable or informative. So, what can be done to address the damage that Facebook journalists can do to journalism? One important step is for social media platforms like Facebook to take responsibility for the content that is shared on their platforms. This could involve more rigorous fact-checking or the creation of algorithms that prioritize accurate and informative content over sensational or inflammatory material.



Another important step is for individuals to be more discerning about the information that they consume and share on social media. By taking the time to verify information and to seek out sources that are reliable and reputable, individuals can help to prevent the spread of misinformation and to support quality journalism. In conclusion, Facebook journalists can be a valuable source of information

and professional journalists must work together to ensure that accurate, informative, and ethical reporting is prioritized over sensationalism and propaganda. Unprofessional journalists can have a significant impact on society in a number of ways. Some of the potential impacts of unprofessional journalism include: Spreading misinformation: Unprofessional journalists may not have the training or expertise needed to verify facts and sources, leading to the spread of false or misleading information. Polarizing public opinion: Unprofessional journalists may have strong biases or agendas that they promote through their reporting, leading to the polarization of public opinion on important issues.

Undermining trust in media: Unprofessional journalism can erode public trust in the media as a whole, making it harder for people to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources of information.

Inciting violence or hatred: Unprofessional journalism can contribute to the spread of hate speech or incitement to violence, with potentially dangerous consequences.

Weakening democracy: A free and independent press is essential to the functioning of a healthy democracy. Unprofessional journalism can weaken democratic institutions by promoting misinformation, undermining public trust, and polarizing public opinion.

Overall, the impact of unprofessional journalism on society can be significant and far-reaching. It is important for individuals to be aware of these potential impacts and to take steps to promote responsible journalism and media literacy. By supporting reliable news sources and promoting critical thinking skills, we can help to mitigate the impact of unprofessional journalism and build a more informed and engaged society.

Unprofessional journalism can have a damaging effect on journalism as a profession, as well as on society as a whole. Journalists who lack proper training or ethics can spread misinformation, undermine public trust, and polarize public opinion, with potentially dangerous consequences.

While it is not appropriate for authorities to "stop" unprofessional journalism, individuals can take steps to promote responsible journalism and media literacy, such as supporting reliable news sources, promoting critical thinking skills, and holding journalists accountable. By working to mitigate the impact of unprofessional journalism, we can help to build a more informed and engaged society, where reliable information is valued and respected.

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The Opinion / Views expressed by the Author are his own and daily Headlines Today doesn't Own, Acknowledge or Support the same.

China warns US against suppression or risk 'conflict'

The United States should change its "distorted" attitude towards China or "conflict and confrontation" will follow, China's foreign minister said on Tuesday, while defending its stance on the war in Ukraine and defending its close ties with Russia.

The US had been engaging in suppression and containment of China rather than engaging in fair, rule-based competition, Foreign Minister Qin Gang told a news conference on the sidelines of an annual parliament meeting in Beijing.

"The United States' perception and views of China are seriously distorted," Qin said. "It regards China as its primary rival and the most consequential geopolitical challenge. This is like the first button in the shirt being put wrong." Relations between the two superpowers have been tense for years over a number of issues including Taiwan, trade, and more recently the war in Ukraine but they worsened last month after the United States shot down a balloon off the US east coast that it says was a Chinese spying craft.

The US says it is establishing guardrails for relations and is not seeking conflict but Qin said what that meant in practice was that China was not supposed to respond with words or action when slandered or attacked.

"That is just impossible," Qin told



his first news conference since becoming foreign minister in December.

"If the United States does not hit the brakes, and continues to speed down the wrong path, no amount of guardrails can prevent derailment, which will become conflict and confrontation, and who will bear the catastrophic consequences?" Qin likened the Sino-US competition to a race between two Olympic athletes.

"If one side, instead of focusing on giving one's best, always tries to trip the other up, even to the extent that they must enter the Paralympics, then this is not fair competi-

tion," he said. Jackals and Wolves During a nearly two-hour news conference in which he answered questions submitted in advance, Qin made a robust defence of "wolf warrior diplomacy", an assertive and often abrasive stance adopted by China's diplomats since 2020.

"When jackals and wolves are blocking the way, and hungry wolves are attacking us, Chinese diplomats must then dance with the wolves and protect and defend our home and country," he said. Qin also said that an "invisible hand" was pushing for the escalation of the war in Ukraine "to serve certain geopolitical agen-

das", without specifying who he was referring to. He reiterated China's call for dialogue to end the war.

China struck a "no limits" partnership with Russia last year, weeks before its invasion of Ukraine, and China has blamed NATO expansion for triggering the war, echoing Russia's complaint.

China has declined to condemn the invasion and has fiercely defended its stance on Ukraine, despite Western criticism of its failure to single Russia out as the aggressor. China has also vehemently denied US accusations that it has been considering supplying Russia with weapons.

Advance relations with Moscow Qin said China had to advance its relations with Russia as the world becomes more turbulent and close interactions between President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, anchored the neighbours' relations.

He did not give a definite answer when asked if Xi would visit Russia after China's parliament session, which goes on for one more week.

Since Russia invaded its southwestern neighbour a year ago Xi has held talks several times with Putin, but not with his Ukrainian counterpart. This undermines China's claim of neutrality in the conflict, Kyiv's top diplomat in Beijing said last month.

Gender equality still '300 years away,' UN chief warns

Global progress on women's rights is "vanishing before our eyes," UN boss Antonio Guterres warned on Monday, saying the increasingly distant goal of gender equality will take another three centuries to achieve. "Gender equality is growing more distant. On the current track, UN Women puts it 300 years away," the United Nations secretary-general said in a General Assembly speech ahead of International Women's Day on March 8, as he launched two weeks



of discussions led by the Commission on the Status of Women. "Women's rights are being abused, threatened, and violated around the world," he added, as he ticked off a litany of crises: maternal mortality, girls ousted from school, caregivers denied work and children forced into early marriage. "Progress won over decades is vanishing before our eyes," Guterres said. He highlighted the particularly dire conditions in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, where "women and girls have been erased from public life." He did not name other specific countries, but Guterres stressed that "in many places, women's sexual and reproductive

rights are being rolled back (and) in some countries, girls going to school risk kidnapping and assault."

Also left unmentioned was Iran, which was expelled late last year from the Commission on the Status of Women due to the country's repression of a female-led revolt since last September. The Islamic Republic was ousted from the commission on December 14 by a US-led vote of the UN Economic and Social Council, or ECOSOC.

"Centuries of patriarchy, discrimination and harmful stereotypes have created a huge gender gap in science and technology," Guterres said, citing as an example how women represent only three percent

of Nobel prize winners in the sectors.

He called for "collective action" worldwide by governments, civil society and the private sector to provide gender-responsive education, improve skills training and invest more in "bridging the digital gender divide."

"The patriarchy is fighting back. But so are we," Guterres added. "The United Nations stands with women and girls everywhere. He called for "collective action" worldwide by governments, civil society and the private sector to provide gender-responsive education, improve skills training and invest more in "bridging the digital gender divide."

'Mercenary' rep barred from Russian army HQ in Ukraine

KYIV: Russian mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin said his representative had been denied access to the headquarters of Russia's military command in Ukraine on Monday, in a further deepening of his rift with the defence establishment.

Prigozhin said the incident came the day after he urgently requested ammunition supplies from the commander of what Russia calls its "Special Military Operation" (SMO).

"On March 5, I wrote a letter to the commander of the SMO grouping about the urgent need to allocate ammunition. Next day, my representative at the headquarters had his pass cancelled and was denied access," Prigozhin said via his press service on Telegram.

Since mid-January, Russia's campaign in Ukraine has been commanded personally by the chief of the general staff, Army General Valery Gerasimov. Prigozhin's private militia, Wagner, has led much of the heaviest fighting for the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, but he has complained bitterly for weeks that the military leadership is belittling its contribution.

Kyiv vows to fortify defences in frontline Bakhmut; Shoigu visits Mariupol In a video published at the weekend, he repeated earlier complaints that his men were being deprived of ammunition.

"If Wagner retreats from Bakhmut now, the whole front will collapse," Prigozhin said in the video, apparently filmed in a bunker. "The situation will not be sweet for all military formations protecting Russian interests."

In Monday's statement, he said: "We are continuing to smash the Armed Forces of Ukraine near Bakhmut."

On Monday, Ukraine pledged to bolster its defences in frontline Bakhmut, after reports that Kyiv was withdrawing from the city that's become a symbolic prize in the



war. Ukraine has reported an increasingly difficult situation around Bakhmut in recent days and some analysts said its forces may have initiated a strategic retreat.

But President Volodymyr Zelensky met with top commanders on Monday and his office said they were in favour of "continuing the defensive operation and further strengthening our positions in Bakhmut." Neither side has said how many troops they have lost in the battle, with observers saying both Moscow and Kyiv are trying to exhaust each other.

Russia has appeared determined to take Bakhmut at all costs, despite analysts saying the city has little strategic value.

Ukraine faced new air attacks, with the air force saying that it had shot down 13 explosive drones launched from southern Russia overnight. The air force said on Telegram that Russian forces had launched 15 Iran-made Shahed drones, 13 of which Ukrainian forces shot down.

Russian defence minister in Mariupol Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu visited Mariupol, his ministry announced Monday, the port city that Moscow captured after a long siege last Spring. Shoigu is one of the highest-ranking Russian officials to visit east Ukraine. He toured the destroyed city to oversee reconstruction efforts.

25% Women Lost Jobs Since Taliban Took Over Afghanistan: UN Agency

Kabul: Female employment in Afghanistan has dropped by a quarter after the Taliban took over the country, according to estimates from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which said the fall was exacerbated by restrictions on women working and studying.

The ILO said the 25% drop in female employment took place by the final quarter of 2022 from the second quarter of 2021, compared with a 7% drop for men. The Taliban took over the country in August 2021 as foreign forces withdrew.

"Restrictions on girls and women have severe implications for their education and labour market prospects," said Ramin Behzad, the Senior Coordinator for Afghanistan at the ILO, in a statement accompanying its assessment for 2022 of Afghanistan.

Taliban authorities have barred most girls from high school, stopped women from attending universities and most female NGO workers from working.

Afghanistan's economy has also been plunged into a crisis that has wiped out jobs. Following the Taliban takeover, foreign governments withdrew development aid and froze the country's central bank assets.

The ILO estimated GDP had contracted by 30-35 per cent across 2021 and 2022. Taliban have called on the international community to unfreeze its assets to ease the country's liquidity crisis and have said they are focused on encouraging trade and investment to create economic self-sufficiency.

Youth unemployment had also



shrunk by an estimated 25% for those aged between 15 and 24. The ILO noted that total employment had shown some signs of recovery in the first half of 2022, but that it had decreased for young men and all women over the year.

"Some women moved into self-employed activities, such as farming...or repairing clothes, thereby contributing to household income and preventing female employment from falling by even more," the ILO's report said. The ILO said the 25% drop in female employment took place by the final quarter of 2022 from the second quarter of 2021, compared with a 7% drop for men. The Taliban took over the country in August 2021 as foreign forces withdrew.

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Taiwan President To Meet US House Speaker In California: Report

Taipei: Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen will meet US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in California rather than in Taipei, the Financial Times reported on Tuesday, hours after Taipei warned a high-profile US visit could provoke a Chinese military response.

Tsai's government had provided McCarthy's staff with intelligence about Chinese threats, the newspaper reported, citing an unidentified senior Taiwanese official.

McCarthy had expressed an interest in visiting Taiwan, as his predecessor Nancy Pelosi had done in August.

Pelosi's trip sparked condemnation from China, which held massive military drills around the self-ruled island in response in a move Taipei said was preparation for an invasion.

Taiwan lives under constant threat of such an invasion by China, which views the democratically ruled island as part of its territory to be seized one day, by force if necessary.

The US is one of Taiwan's closest allies and biggest arms suppliers



but also adopts a "One China" Policy, in which the US recognises Beijing and opposes any unilateral changes to the status quo from either side.

Taiwan's defence minister said on Monday a sharp increase in Chinese defence spending announced at the weekend was potentially aimed at the island.

"I think they are waiting for a good reason to send troops, such as high-level visits from other coun-

tries to Taiwan or too-frequent activities between our military and other countries," Chiu Kuo-cheng said.

The minister said Taiwan was "making advance preparations" for incursions deeper into waters around the island than have been the norm in recent years.

McCarthy's office has not commented on the potential visit, which the FT reported would take place in April. Tsai's office also

offered no confirmation when approached by AFP on Tuesday. Taiwan's foreign ministry would neither confirm nor deny the planned visit.

"The ministry will announce to the public if there is any confirmed arrangement for the president's visit but we don't have any relevant information to share at the moment," spokesman Jeff Liu said on Tuesday.

Tsai last visited the United States in 2019, stopping over while making official visits to diplomatic allies in the Caribbean. The minister said Taiwan was "making advance preparations" for incursions deeper into waters around the island than have been the norm in recent years.

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Capturing Ukraine's Bakhmut Key To 'Further Offensive' In War: Russia

Moscow: Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Tuesday the capture of the eastern Ukrainian town of Bakhmut was key to launching a further offensive in the wider region.

"This city is an important defensive hub for Ukrainian troops in Donbas," Mr Shoigu said of the industrial east of the country.

"Capturing it will allow for further offensive operations deep into the defence lines of the Ukrainian armed forces," he told a televised meeting of military officials.

The battle for Bakhmut is now the longest-running and bloodiest of Russia's year-long military intervention in Ukraine, and both sides have doubled down in the fight for its control. Bakhmut, an industrial town once known for its sparkling wine production and salt mines, had an estimated pre-war population of some 80,000 people.

But Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk told regional media on Tuesday that fewer than 4,000 civilians now remain.

"Approximately 38 children, as far as we know, remain in Bakhmut today," Ms Vereshchuk said.

Both Moscow and Kyiv said on Tuesday that the fight was exacting a huge cost in military personnel on the opposing side.

The Ukrainian military said Moscow's forces were launching attacks on Bakhmut and its outskirts "despite signif-



icant losses". Mr Shoigu meanwhile said there was a "significant increase in losses" among Ukrainian forces during recent fighting for Bakhmut.

Neither side has published official tolls from fighting in the Donetsk region, which Moscow claimed to have annexed into Russia last year.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced this week that he had instructed the army to find forces to bolster the defence of Bakhmut.

Analysts says that despite the massive resources being thrown by both sides at the battle, Bakhmut offers little strategic importance in the broader fight.

President Droupadi Murmu accepts Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain's resignations

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu has accepted the resignations of the former Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi Manish Sisodia now lodged in Tihar's jail and Aam Aadmi Party leader Satyendar Jain in connection with the excise policy case, the official said on Tuesday.

As per the Ministry of Home Affairs' notification, the President has accepted the resignations of Manish Sisodia and Satyendra Jain with immediate effect.

"The President is pleased to accept, on the advice of the Chief Minister of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, the resignation of Manish Sisodia, a Minister in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, with immediate effect," said the notification published on Tuesday. The Delhi council of ministers now has a strength of five, including Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who doesn't hold any portfolios.

Mr Sisodia had resigned from his all 18 posts following his arrest in the alleged excise policy scam. After former Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain's arrest last year, seven portfolios handled by him were shifted to Mr Sisodia, who was looking after 18 departments when he was arrested on Sunday. He is now lodged in Tihar jail after



Rouse Avenue Court on Monday sent him to judicial custody till March 20.

The jail officials told ANI said that the 51-year-old AAP senior leader has been kept in senior citizen's cell and is not sharing the cell with anyone at present. He is under CCTV surveillance.

"Sisodia is lodged in ward number 9, with mounted CCTVs, of Tihar Jail number 1," jail officials said, adding that he will be sharing his cell with another person in near time. He also has some dreaded criminals as neighbours in the same ward.

The AAP leader was taken to Ti-

har jail in the afternoon and after which he had to undergo some medical tests. "After reaching Tihar Jail on Monday afternoon Mr Sisodia underwent a medical test and his report came "normal", the officials added.

He has been provided with a 'Spars Kit', which includes toothpaste, soap, toothbrush and other items of daily needs.

As per the sources close to ANI, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) will question Mr Sisodia on Tuesday.

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"Rahul Gandhi In The Grip Of Maoist Thought Process, Anarchist Elements": BJP

New Delhi: The BJP on Tuesday lashed out at Rahul Gandhi for his criticism of the state of democracy in India and the RSS from Britain, claiming it is its clear conviction that he is completely in the grip of "Maoist thought process through his minions" and also "anarchist elements". Addressing a press conference, former Union minister and BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad also expressed his party's disapproval of Rahul Gandhi "misusing the forum of British parliament" to spread shameful lies and unfounded claims, and said there needed to be a "proper rebuttal". He accused the Congress leader of shaming India's democracy, polity, Parliament, judicial system and strategic security from a foreign land.

Rahul Gandhi told British parliamentarians in London on Monday that functioning microphones in the Lok Sabha are often silenced against the Opposition.

During an event organised by veteran Indian-origin Opposition Labour Party MP Virendra Sharma within the House of Commons complex, he said opposition parties in India are often not allowed to debate issues in Parliament.

Mr Prasad said Rahul Gandhi has forgotten all parliamentary norms, political propriety and "democratic shame" by criticising Indians from abroad. He further said people of India neither listen nor understand him and supporting him is a distant thing.

Therefore, Rahul Gandhi goes abroad and laments that India's democracy is in danger, he said, adding, "This is a matter of great shame." "Rahul Gandhi has insulted



everything, including India's democracy, parliament, people, political system, judicial system and strategic security," the former Union Minister said. The BJP leader also accused Rahul Gandhi of seeking the intervention of Europe and the US in India and said he had gone against the consensus in India against any interference in its internal affairs by foreign powers. "Rahul Gandhi has tried to embarrass the country by saying that Europe and America should interfere in the internal affairs of India," he said. Mr Prasad sought reactions from Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and his predecessor Sonia Gandhi on Rahul Gandhi's "utterly irresponsible" statements and whether the opposition party disowns them or not. The BJP leader also slammed Rahul Gandhi for his condemnation of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), claiming that the Hindutva organisation has been serving society and the nation.

"Why No Arrest For BJP MLA After Cash Haul?" Arvind Kejriwal Taunts PM

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal wrote a stinging note addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Twitter today. The subject of the note: bail to a BJP MLA in an alleged bribery case. Citing the example of Karnataka BJP MLA Madal Virupakshappa, who got interim bail today in an alleged bribery case, Mr Kejriwal questioned why was he not arrested when Manish Sisodia was.

"Nothing was found in the raid at Manish Sisodia's house. He was arrested after applying all the sections of the CBI, ED (Enforcement Directorate). So much cash was found from your party's MLA. Why was he not arrested?" questioned the AAP boss. He ended the note with yet another scathing line: "Now don't ever talk about fighting corruption. It's a bit rich coming from you."



In an alleged cash-for-contract scandal, over eight crore was recovered by Lokayukta from the MLA's son V Prashanth Madal last week. Lokayukta registered a case in the alleged bribery case, in which Mr Virupakshappa was named accused number one. Earlier on Saturday, Arvind Kejriwal took a jibe at the BJP over the Lokayukta raid, saying the MLA's son might be honoured with "Padma Bhushan".

"Minister's son was found with 8 crore but Manish

Sisodia was arrested and he wasn't. They might award him, Padma Bhushan, next year," Mr Kejriwal said while addressing a gathering in post-bound Karnataka.

Delhi's former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia was sent to a 14-day judicial custody on Monday, ten days after he was arrested by the CBI in the Delhi liquor policy case. The senior AAP leader faces allegations of corruption in the liquor policy that was scrapped after Delhi Lt Governor VK Saxena recommended a CBI probe. He resigned from the Delhi cabinet two days after his arrest.

He has applied for bail which will be heard by a Delhi court on Friday. He had earlier approached the Supreme Court for bail but it refused to intervene and asked him to go to the High Court.

Delhi High Court Stays Proceedings In BJP vs Journalist Defamation Case

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday stayed the proceedings before the trial court in a defamation case lodged by Delhi BJP spokesperson Tajinder Pal Singh Bagga against journalist Swati Chaturvedi. Justice Rajnish Bhatnagar issued notice on the petition by Ms Chaturvedi challenging the summons issued by the trial court to her on the defamation complaint and asked Mr Bagga to file his response to the plea in two weeks.

"Till then, trial proceedings are stayed," said the judge. The counsel appearing for the petitioner contended that no case for defamation was made out from the material on record and the complainant has not even brought forth witnesses before the trial court to substantiate his claim that his reputation was lowered due to the actions of Ms Chaturvedi. The defamation case arises from a tweet Ms Chaturvedi allegedly posted in 2017 in which she claimed Mr Bagga had not only beaten up a lawyer once but was



also arrested in a sexual harassment matter. Mr Bagga's counsel had told the trial court that the tweet was made after he was appointed a BJP spokesperson.

The counsel for the complainant defended the summoning order and said the petition lacked merit and the issue of lowering of reputation was a question of fact to be decided during the trial. It was also said that there is no necessity under the law to examine any witness on the issue of loss of reputation at this stage. The counsel, who opposed

stay on trial court proceedings, also said the allegation pertaining to the sexual harassment case was absolutely incorrect and the matter relating to beating up a lawyer was sub-judice.

The petitioner's lawyer said Mr Bagga himself acknowledged the incident where he beat up another lawyer and the victim of the sexual harassment case in question had also earlier tweeted about it. A magisterial court order had directed Chaturvedi to appear before it in the case filed by Mr Bagga in May 2018.

Meet The First Woman In Indian Air Force History To Command Combat Unit

New Delhi: The Indian Air Force has selected Group Captain Shaliza Dhama to take over command of a frontline combat unit in the Western sector, shattering the proverbial glass ceiling. For the first time ever in the IAF's history, a woman officer has been given command of a frontline combat unit - in this case, a missile squadron in the Western sector. Earlier this

month, the Army began assigning women officers to command roles for the first time, outside the medical stream. Around 50 of them will head units in operational areas, including forward. This will happen in both the Northern and Eastern Commands. Group Captain Dhama was commissioned in the year 2003 as a Helicopter pilot and has over 2,800 hours of flying experience. A Quali-

fied Flying Instructor, she has served as Flight Commander of a Helicopter Unit in the Western sector. A Group Captain in the IAF is equivalent to a Colonel in the Army. Having been commended by the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief on two occasions, the officer is presently posted in the Operations branch of a frontline Command Headquarters.

MoS Singh in Doha reaffirms India's commitment to boosting ties with LDCs

New Delhi, Mar 7 (UNI) Minister of State for External Affairs Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, who is in Doha to attend the 5th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), on Tuesday reaffirmed India's strong political commitment to strengthening its close ties with the LDCs. MoS Singh also spoke on South-South Cooperation and highlighted India's readiness to share its developmental experience and expertise with the Global South. He also interacted with the Indian Diaspora in Doha on the sidelines of the LDC5 conference. In tweets, the MoS said: "Addressed India's National Statement at the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries #LDC5 reaffirming India's strong political commitment to strengthening its close ties with the LDCs." "Spoke on #LDC5 Ministerial Meeting On SOUTH-SOUTH Cooperation titled



"Renewed partnerships for actionable solutions in support of implementation of the #DPoA". Highlighted India's readiness to share its developmental experience and

expertise with brothers of Global South." On his meeting with the diaspora, he tweeted: "Glad to interact with our Indian Diaspora in Doha during #LDC5 conference."

Thanks for the warm welcome and wish for all progress and prosperity. This year 2023 is special as we celebrate 50th anniversary of establishment of full diplomatic relations. #AzadiKaAmritMahotsav On Monday, the MoS held several bilateral meetings, including with ministers from Gambia, Republic of Guinea, Cuba and Yemen. In tweets, he said: "Met H.E. Dr. Mamadou Tangara, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambian on the sidelines of #LDC5. Assured continued support on the socio-economic development of Gambia and discussed to strengthen our bilateral ties." "Delighted to meet H.E. Ms. Rose Pola Pricemou, Minister of planning and International Cooperation of the Republic of Guinea. Highlighted India's 'People Movement' alongside positioning India as the Global Hub for Millets."

US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo on India visit

New Delhi, Mar 7 (UNI) US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo is visiting New Delhi, from March 7-10 to attend the India-US Commercial Dialogue and CEO Forum and discuss cooperation in various sectors that could unlock new trade and investment opportunities between the two countries, a statement said. She is visiting India on the invitation of Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal.

The Commercial Dialogue is a cooperative undertaking encompassing regular government-to-government meetings to be held in conjunction with private sector meetings, with an aim to facilitate trade, and maximize investment opportunities across a broad range of economic sectors.

The last India-USA Commercial Dialogue was held in February 2019. Since then, due to the pandemic and other factors it could not be held. It is proposed to re-launch the Commercial Dialogue with strategic outlook with focus on supply chain resiliency and diversification and new emerging areas, after a gap of three years, the statement added.

Earlier, India-US CEO Forum was soft-launched by Indian Commerce & Industry Minister and US Secretary of Commerce on November 9 last year via video-conference for which identified key priorities were increas-



ing supply chain resilience, enhancing energy security and reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions, advancing inclusive digital trade; and facilitating post-pandemic economic recovery, especially for small businesses. Trade, Commerce and Economy had always enjoyed a place of prominence in the India-US multifaceted strategic bilateral relations. To-

day, the two countries are leading trading partners of each other.

India is the ninth largest trading partner for the US, while the US is India's largest trading partner and the largest export destination. The bilateral trade in goods saw very robust growth during CY 2022, surpassing \$131 billion in goods, thus doubling since 2014 (in 8 years) while total trade in Goods and Services is expected to cross US\$ 180 billion. US is also the third biggest source of FDI for India, and USA is one of the top five investment destinations for India. This visit will immensely contribute towards furthering trade and commercial ties between the two countries, the statement added. India is the ninth largest trading partner for the US, while the US is India's largest trading partner and the largest export destination. The bilateral trade in goods saw very robust growth during CY 2022, surpassing \$131 billion in goods, thus doubling since 2014 (in 8 years) while total trade in Goods and Services is expected to cross US\$ 180 billion. US is also the third biggest source of FDI for India, and USA is one of the top five investment destinations for India. This visit will immensely contribute towards furthering trade and commercial ties between the two countries, the statement added.

Turkey Earthquake Damage Estimated To Exceed \$100 Billion: UN

Geneva: Damage from the catastrophic earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria last month has been estimated at over \$100 billion for Turkey alone, the United Nations said Tuesday.

"Already it is clear that just the damages alone will amount to more than \$100 billion," Louisa Vinton of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) told reporters via video link from Gaziantep in Turkey, adding that the recovery costs "will be on top of that".

The 7.8-magnitude quake that struck on February 6 and its aftershocks have claimed more than 45,000 lives in Turkey and 5,000 in neighbouring Syria.

The World Bank estimated last week that the devastating quake, which flattened entire cities, had caused damage worth more than \$34 billion in Turkey, with recovery likely to double that sum.

But Ms Vinton said the Turkish government, with support from UNDP, the World Bank and the European Union, had calculated far higher damage.

While preliminary, "it is clear from the calculations being done to date that the damage figure presented by the government and supported by the three international partners will be in excess of \$100 billion," she said.

Once completed, this estimate will be the basis for a recovery and reconstruction donor con-



ference in Brussels next week, she said. Recovery costs, including efforts to build improved and more environmentally sustainable infrastructure, "will obviously exceed that amount", she said. So far, she said, UNDP was "very disappointed and saddened" by the low level of response to funding appeals to date. A \$1 billion flash appeal made on February 16 is currently funded at just 9.6 percent of the total, she said. Damage from the catastrophic earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria last

month has been estimated at over \$100 billion for Turkey alone, the United Nations said Tuesday. The 7.8-magnitude quake that struck on February 6 and its aftershocks have claimed more than 45,000 lives in Turkey and 5,000 in neighbouring Syria.

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FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

LG

excellent opportunity of self-employment to women and youth.”

The Lt Governor highlighted the reforms introduced to ensure quality, affordable and accessible healthcare for the people of Jammu Kashmir.

“Under the guidance of PM Narendra Modi, we are strengthening the health sector to ensure well being of all. Our biggest asset is the health of the citizens. Around 350 modern health infrastructure projects coming up in UT for resilient health system and strong socio-economic growth”, said the Lt Governor.

“Along with conventional economic metric like GDP, we should also focus on Gross Health and Happiness of people. Healthy and happy society can enable economic benefits and all-round development,” the Lt Governor said. He said affordable medicines from Jan Aushadhi Kendras have resulted in saving of huge sums for families across the country, adding, “approximately 32,000 patients are visiting 227 Kendras every day in J&K UT.”

“It is our endeavour to start 75 Jan Aushadhi Kendras in every district to mark Amrit Kaal”, the Lt Governor noted.

Week-long events have been organised across J&K to commemorate the Jan Aushadhi Diwas.

Jan Aushadhi Kendra's and other stakeholders were felicitated for their contribution in promoting generic medicines and menstrual health and hygiene. Bhupinder Kumar, Administrative Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department; Dr. Shashi Sudan Sharma, Principal, GMC Jammu; Nodal Officer of PM-BJP and other senior officials were present on the occasion.

SHG

affordable pricing as the core mantra of the business.

The kitchen of these SHG members offers an attractive menu with more than 20 varieties of comfort Dogra Recipe food. Some of the popular dogra food cuisines include Makki ki Roti, Saag, Quer, Khurmure, special dogra recipe dal or mixed rice are available in their kitchen and this sets them apart from commercial restaurants. Lassi and Kheer is also one of the most sought after items by the visitors in these kitchens. The response to the Dogra Haat has been overwhelming as it has become a favourite layover point for the tourists travelling to the famous shrine of Shivkhori. The Haat has delivered big orders to tourists and many other rural and urban customers are amongst their clientele.

The turnover of Haat has reached around Rs. seven lakh in a span of two years. Dogra Haat Kothian is more a women's empowerment movement than a business and they have been able to motivate women from all age groups and even conservative families after earning their trust. Many in the area hail the role of Kailash Kumari, Cluster coordinator of Ekta Mahila CLF, Pouni and Neelam Kumari who is also Sarpanch of Kothian Panchayat who worked hard for the success of Dogra Haat.

Dogra Haat, Kothian has played a key role in empowering SHG women who are now confident of their skills and have become financially independent.

IGP BHATIA

Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana (PMGAY) scheme and will also be put through for the public also.

IGP Bhatia said all the hospitals of forces will be put open for the common man also to enable them to get treated in the best way.

NIA

in action by NIA today include the House of Chhotu Ram @ Bhat at Chautala (district Sirsa), House of Jagseer Singh @ Jagga @ Jagsir @ Jagga Sarpanch at Takhatmal (district Sirsa), house of Virender Singh @ Kala Rana in district Yamuna Nagar and land of Raju @ Mota r/o Basaudi in district Sonapat in Haryana and land of Satyawan Sehrawati @ Sonu at Dariyapur in Delhi, he said. NIA's action today has hit at the weapons supply chain of this network. Virender @ Kala Rana, Chhotu Ram @ Bhat and Jagseer Singh @ Jagga used to provide weapons and arrange logistics, include safe sanctuaries, to the gang members. Satyawan @ Sonu and Raju @ Mota r/o Basaudi had also harboured gangsters. They had a major role to play in the generation of funds to support the operations of militancy-crime syndicates. Raju @ Mota had laundered the money by investing the 'proceeds of terrorism' in real estate business and other businesses, including liquor, he said. NIA has carried out over 230 raids/searches across Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi/ NCR, arrested 27 gangster-leaders, recovered around 38 weapons, frozen 87 Bank accounts since it launched its drive against organised crime syndicates in August 2022. In addition, Canada based Arsh Dalla and Pakistan based Harvinder Rinda have been listed as 'terrorists' by the MHA under UAPA in the recent past, he said. The drive to choke these organised crime networks of funding and to dismantle their ecosystem by attaching and seizing their properties, derived from 'proceeds of terrorism and crime' would be intensified in the coming days, alongwith Police forces of various States, reads the statement.

MODI

formal financial system. He called upon the stakeholders to re-engineer all the processes to reduce the cost and increase the speed of credit so that it reaches the small entrepreneurs quickly. It is the tenth of a series of 12 post-budget webinars organised by the government to seek ideas and suggestions for effectively implementing the initiatives announced in the Union Budget 2023. Addressing the gathering, the PM said that the government is paving the way for collective ownership and equal partnership in the implementation of the budget through these Post Budget Webinars where the views and suggestions of stakeholders hold. The PM emphasized that applications are continuously pouring in to avail of the PLI scheme which makes India an important part of the global supply chain. The Prime Minister urged everyone to take full advantage of this opportunity. Touching upon the issue of 'Vocal for Local' he said that this is not a matter of choice but "Vocal for local and vision of self-reliance is a national responsibility." He noted the tremendous enthusiasm for Vocal for Local and Aatm Nirbharta in the country and talked about increased domestic production and record growth in exports. "Our exports have been at an all-time high, whether in goods or services. This indicates growing possibilities for India."

WOMENS DAY

all the women on the eve of International Women's Day, which is observed every year on 8th March. In a message the Lt Governor said: International Women's Day is an opportunity for us to renew our commitment to women empowerment. This year's theme DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality, gives us an occasion to celebrate their invaluable contribution in the making of digital society and an opportunity

to eradicate gender gap in digital access and make it safer, inclusive and equitable.

Women have made invaluable contribution to the socio-economic development of J&K UT. It is our collective responsibility to encourage their participation at all levels in economic development and create an ecosystem that ensures security, honour and respect of women in society, said the Lt Governor.

Let us resolve to redouble efforts for equitable digital future and their active participation in nation building, he added.

DC SRINAGAR

Rather, Deputy Nodal Officer ATF, SKIMS Bemina and other concerned. While Zonal Director Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Rajesh Kumar participated in the meeting through virtual mode and threw light on various dimensions related to drug abuse and its peddling.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner took detailed feedback from every concerned Department regarding and measures undertaken for combating illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and its consumption in the District to save youth from the dangerous effects of the drugs. At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner said that drug abuse is a serious problem that not only affects individuals, but also families and communities. He stated that it is essential to tackle the issue from multiple perspectives, including deterrence, treatment and enforcement. The DC also reiterated that the District Administration Srinagar is committed to create a drug-free environment in the District and will continue to take all necessary steps to achieve this goal.

On the occasion, the DC stressed upon the Officers of all the line Departments including Enforcement agencies to ensure better coordination in imposing greater deterrence to combat dangerous trade of drug-trafficking. He said that efforts with Cooperation, Coordination and Collaboration are vital to contain the drug peddling and break the supply chain, besides taking stringent action against the culprits involved in the hazardous trade of drugs. The DC said Deterrence initiatives have also been initiated including Educational campaigns at Schools and Colleges levels to sensitize students and common masses about ill effects of drugs as well as encouraging healthy activities and hobbies to discourage the drug abuse. Education Officer, Srinagar to conduct anti drug seminars, rallies and other programmes on the harmful effects of drug menace in Educational Institutions of the District so that youth is discouraged from tempting towards drugs.

DIGITAL

of the registration staff of all Sub Registrar offices.

Borate gave detailed presentations on the steps involved in citizen registration, dos and don'ts of the process and trouble-shooting tips to ensure on-spot resolution of any technical glitches or errors. Many technical issues pertaining to certain Sub-Registrar offices were resolved on spot and most of the issues relating to up-dating of Sub registrar offices on NGRS were discussed for early resolution and on spot redress. While giving hands on simulation of the whole registration process including steps such as citizen registration, property valuation, party details, document upload and submission by the citizen, followed by check-in by Sub Registrar, payment verification, photography and final acceptance, various technical errors that crop up at citizen/Sub Registrar level were discussed and solutions/remedies explained to the participants, who also expressed certain suggestions and raised some queries of legal nature, which were responded to by IGR and other officers. The expert responded to all technology related queries of the participants. He also threw light on the initiatives which have either been taken or are in the pipeline for a more transparent and citizen-friendly registration.

SCHOOLS

by introducing it in classes 6th to 8th.”

In the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B) of 2022-23, Ministry of Education, Government of India has approved 862 schools having classes 6th to 8th under the activity. “Accordingly, I am directed to request all the Chief Education Officers to make necessary arrangements for implementation of the activity in the approved schools on immediate basis,” the officer said. In the guidelines issued by the authorities, it said, “Schools shall identify and invite the local artisans, craftsmen and skilled people for demonstrations and interactions with students.”

DEAD

superintendent of police (SSP) Mohita Sharma also visited the spot and supervised the rescue operation”, he said.

DRUGS

to police station where he remains in custody.

In Kulgam, a police party of Police Post Mirbazar led by In-charge PP Mirbazar at a checkpoint established at Nippora crossing intercepted a vehicle bearing registration PB02-DZ-9045 driven by Lovepreet Singh son of Labhaia Masih resident of Gurdaspur, Punjab. During search, officers were able to recover 06 kgs of Poppy Straw from the said vehicle. The accused was arrested and the vehicle used in the commission of crime has also been seized. Meanwhile, acting on specific information regarding drug peddling, a police party led by SHO PS Behibagh established multiple checkpoints at different places. At one such checkpoint established at Batpora crossing, a police party led by SHO PS Behibagh intercepted a suspicious person identified as Fayaz Ahmad Lone son of Abdul Rashid Lone resident of Melhora, Shopian. During checking, officers were able to recover 10grams of heroin from his possession. He has been arrested and shifted to police station where he remains in custody.

J&K BANK

officials of the bank are unnecessarily delaying the release of finances. “I had applied for mere upgradation of Cash Credit Account from 7 lakhs to 15 Lakhs and I have been repeatedly submitting documents from last eight months. Every time I enquire about the delay I am being directed to re-submit the documents which I already submitted”. The proprietor of a leading Offset printing press said. Another Unit Holder at Industrial estate Khanmoh Srinagar alleged that I had to surrender the allotment of my plot as the concerned Branch of J&K Bank played altogether a negative role which lead to my failure in establishing the unit.

MSMEs seeking marginal finances are the worst sufferers as they are not able to provide Guarantees in shape of Government Employees. “On one had PM Modi is assuring financial support to the Startups, however on the contrary Banks are demanding such documents and formalities which are almost near to impossible for the Prospective Entrepreneurs” Alleged another allottee at IE Khanmoh.

Prospective Entrepreneurs have appealed LG Manoj Sinha and PM Modi to kindly intervene into the matter and make things smooth for the beginners.

Army flags off All Women motorbike expedition

Srinagar, CNS,07-Mar; An 'All Women Motorbike Tour of Eastern Ladakh' under the aegis of Ultimate Force was flagged off by the Chief of Staff, Fire and Fury Corps today to pay tribute to the valour and sacrifice of the Indian Army on forthcoming International Women's Day.

In a statement issued, PRO (Defence) Srinagar said that this three day expedition comprises of 25 brave and experienced women bike riders pan India who have volunteered for this adventurous activity. The expedition commenced from the Hall of Fame, Leh and will culminate at Rezang La War Memorial, Chushul. The aim of this Adventure Tour is to pay tributes to the valour and sacrifices made by the brave hearts of the Indian Army since 1962.

Over the next three days, the participants of the 'Adventure Tour' will negotiate Changla at an altitude of 17600 feet before ascending into the Tangtse valley.

Thereafter, they would ride upto the Frozen Pangong Tso lake and finally reach the valley of the braves - the Chushul valley at 14500 feet. The culmination of the 'Adventure Tour' is planned on 08 March 2023, which also coincides with the International Women's Day. (CNS)

Tarigami urges Govt to redress genuine demands of patwaris

Farooq Rather

Srinagar, .07-Mar: While urging the government to redress genuine demands of striking patwaris, CPI (M) leader Mohamad Yousuf Tarigami on Tuesday said that the strike of patwaris has paralysed the working in revenue department.

In a statement issued to, Tarigami said that the administration has been giving assurances and making promises that their genuine grievances would be redressed, but nothing seems to be happening on ground, forcing them to go on protest.

“The demands include increase in the grade pay of graduate patwaris, timely departmental promotion of patwaris, girdawaris, rent for Patwar Khanas (Private accommodation), construction of new Patwar Khanas, creation of new patwar halgas and Girdawar circles are all genuine demands, which they must be fulfilled without any further delay”.

Tarigami further said that the Government must talk to the representatives of the Association and take effective steps to settle their genuine demands.

AHD focussing on production under HADS in Anantnag

Srinagar, CNS,07-Mar; Animal husbandry department in Anantnag is focussing on the importance of increasing the production of resources by using improved varieties as well as hybrids and low-cost farmer friendly hydroponic units under Holistic Agriculture Development scheme.

In an exclusive interview with CNS, Chief Animal Husbandry officer, Nasir Ahmad Khan stressed on adopting all the guidelines for implementation of scheme in letter & spirit for transforming agriculture from subsistence activity to a sustainable venture. He emphasised on the use of Information & Communication technology for improvement of the Agriculture sector in the District. He also focussed on dissemination of knowledge from lab to land through Panchayat and other local bodies.

He encouraged his team of ground workers to update themselves about the latest technologies for implementation of the project in district and directed the officials to strictly attend the duties as per schedule. (CNS)

Training on 'Analysis of Food' commenced at IUST



Awantipora, March 7: One-week training program on 'Analysis of Foods' commenced at NABL-accredited Food Testing Laboratory (FTL), Department of Food Technology, Islamic University of Science and Technology. The training attended by industry representatives and researchers from different parts of the valley will run from March 6-12, 2023.

DC SRINAGA

It shall also look at whether people's voices were heard in the implementation of the scheme.

It shall examine whether specified processes relating to preparation of permanent wait list from Socio Economic and Caste Census data, beneficiary selection, house sanction, fund disbursal, maintenance of documents and registers, technical support, loan support, and convergence have been followed.

In the initial audit, all PMAY-G houses since the inception of PMAY-G to be covered. “However, for subsequent audits, the audit period shall be 12 months prior to the month when the audit takes place,” reads guidelines governing social audit for PMAY (G) scheme.

The guidelines further state that social audit shall be conducted once a year in every Panchayat.

“The scope of social audit for a particular year shall include verification of all beneficiaries under PMAY-G. This will include both - beneficiaries who have completed construction of their house and beneficiaries whose house is under construction. This would help in addressing the problems faced by beneficiaries during the construction,” the guidelines state—(KNO)

ALMONDS

On Tuesday, the tourists both locals and domestic were seen thronging the garden and seen clicking selfie in the backdrop

The almond blossom trees in the historic garden become a source of attraction for the tourists.

A couple from Mumbai was all surprised to see the blossomed almond trees for the first time in life and said that it is not possible to see Kashmir valley in just one visit.

Mahesh from Kerala who is on a maiden visit to the Kashmir valley was stunned after visiting the Badamwari garden.

“One should visit here once in two years to cherish the pure beauty and atmosphere of nature,” he said

Aryans celebrates International Women's Day with Holi festival



Srinagar, March 7th Aryans Group of Colleges & Rajpura, Near Chandigarh & Aryans Overseas celebrated International Women's Day on this year theme "Embrace Equity". To make it more special, the festival of colors, Holi was also celebrated at Aryans campus. Female students and staff were seen participating in various activities on the occasion.

Dr. Parveen Kataria, Director General, Aryans Group highlighted the role of women being acknowledged as equal in all the domains of the society. From the earliest days of computing to the present age of virtual reality and artificial intelligence, women have made untold contributions. We have a chance to create a better future not just for women and girls, but for all humanity and all life on Earth, she highlighted. The female students & staff wore colorful dresses & participated in dance, antakshari, modeling etc. Sweets were also distributed among staff. Known as the festival of colors, Holi is celebrated on the last full moon in the lunar month of Phalgun while international women's day is celebrated on March 8 bringing attention gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence and abuse against women.

Resonance Coaching Center Mendhàr bids farewell to Class 12th

M S Nazki



MENDHÀR : Resonance Coaching Center Mendhàr accorded a fond farewell to class XII of batch 2021-22 at Mendhàr, marking the end of their glorious sojourn. RCCM organised a glistening farewell party for their seniors and made all efforts to make the last day of school very special and memorable for them, who would soon embark on a new path in their lives.

The event was graced by the Sarpanch Gohlad Subhash Sharma along with the teaching faculty members of Resonance Coaching Center Mendhàr.

The Sarpanch in his address wished the outgoing batch good luck for their board exams and their life ahead. He encouraged them to give their best and come out with flying colours in their future life.

Cultural bonanza presented by Class XI further energised the festive atmosphere.

The day was a jubilant fiesta where friends and teachers looked back at the years of life, laughter and learning spent together. Students reminisced about their fun-filled days in school and expressed how difficult it was for them to go out of the portals of their alma-mater. They felicitated their teachers by presenting them floral bouquets as a mark of their gratitude and respect.

The Senior teaching faculty of Physics, Mathematics conveyed his best wishes to the outgoing Heritageans for their future ahead and encouraged them to do their alma-mater proud and blessed the batch with his words of wisdom.

The curtain of the function was let down with dance, other teaching faculty members Presents including Rasool Faculty of English Abdul Majeed Khan Faculty of Chemistry .Wahied Ahmed Khan Faculty of Biology Shahnawaz Ahmed faculty for lower classes. Mohd Yasser Khan Accountant in Resonance Coaching Center Mendhàr

DC Kupwara inaugurates blood donation camp at SDH Kupwara



KUPWARA, MARCH 7: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Dr. Doifode Sagar Dattatray today inaugurated blood donation camp at Sub District Hospital Kupwara which was organized by J&K Yateem Foundation Unit Kupwara in collaboration with the Health Department. The Deputy Commissioner himself donated one pint of blood. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner received feedback from the concerned officers regarding functioning of the blood bank established in the hospital. He was informed that there is a capacity of 500 pints in the blood bank and almost 200 pints remain available. He was further informed that as many as 50 donors have registered themselves to donate their blood in the blood camp. Deputy Commissioner said that blood donation is a social service and people especially youth should come forward to donate blood which helps in saving the precious lives. He appreciated volunteers who donated their blood and also congratulated the stakeholders for conducting the blood donation camp for a better cause. Medical Superintendent SDH Kupwara, Abdul Gani Dar; DIO Kupwara, Mohammad Yousuf Mir; Tehsildar Kupwara, Sahibzada Niyaz Ahmad; besides, doctors, paramedics and volunteers were present on the occasion. Deputy Commissioner said that blood donation is a social service and people especially youth should come forward to donate blood which helps in saving the precious lives. He appreciated volunteers who donated their blood and also congratulated the stakeholders for conducting the blood donation camp for a better cause. Medical Superintendent SDH Kupwara, Abdul Gani Dar; DIO Kupwara, Mohammad Yousuf Mir; Tehsildar Kupwara, Sahibzada Niyaz Ahmad; besides, doctors, paramedics and volunteers were present on the occasion.

ADGP Kashmir, DIG CKR distributed sports kits to wards of Police martyrs under Civic Action Programme

Srinagar, Mar 07. : ADGP Kashmir accompanied by DIG Central Kashmir Range distributed sports kits to wards of Police martyrs under Civic Action Programme 2023 in summer capital Srinagar. According to a statement received by news agency Kashmir Dot Com (KDC) today in a function held at Police Public School Bemina Srinagar, the wards of Police martyrs of District Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal as well as those from other districts of the valley residing in the hostel of Police Public School were given sports kits by the chief guest ADGP Vijaay Kumar who was accompanied by DIG CKR Srinagar Sujit Kumar. The distributed items included Gym bags, Footballs and track suits which were given to all the wards individually. Apart from these items, common sports items which included Cricket Mat, Cricket Net, Cricket Kit, Volleyball kit and Badminton Kit were given to the school for use of all the martyrs residing in its hostel, it said

adding that the recipients included 86 wards (up to class 12th) of police martyrs. On the occasion, Principal PPS Srinagar Snigdha Singh presented a bouquet to the chief guest. The Programme began by lighting candles in honour of martyred police personnel by the chief guest which was followed by distribution of gift items to these wards as well as their guardians who were present. The program was organised by Range Police Hqrs Srinagar as part of the Civic Action Program (CAP) of J&K Police to reach out to the families of the martyrs. The aim of the programme was to extend sports facilities to the wards of Police Martyrs so that they can participate in various sports events and remain physically fit as well as mentally happy. Vijay Kumar impressed upon these young minds that there is no shortcut to success and urged them to stay away from drugs and make a mark in life which will also bring solace to the martyr's soul. Su-



jit Kumar, DIG CKR expressed satisfaction that J&K Police remembers its martyrs and through these functions we express our care for their families. The function concluded with lunch which was served by RPHQ team to all the wards as well as their guardians who attended the function, the statement added. According to a statement received by news agency Kashmir Dot Com (KDC) today in a function held at Police Public School Bemina Srinagar, the wards of Police martyrs of District Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal as well as those from other districts of the valley residing in the hostel of Police Public School were given sports kits by the chief guest ADGP Vijaay Kumar who was accompanied by DIG CKR Srinagar Sujit Kumar. The distributed items included Gym bags, Footballs and track suits which were given to all the wards individually. Apart from these items, common sports items which included Cricket Mat, Cricket Net.

Liverpool rout of United proves they are alive and kicking



LIVERPOOL: The balance of power had supposedly shifted from Liverpool to Manchester United with the arch-rivals heading in opposite directions, but that theory was blown to bits on Sunday. Liverpool have had bragging rights over United pretty much since Juergen Klopp walked into Anfield in 2015, winning the Premier League, Champions League, both domestic cups and more. But this season Klopp's golden era seemed to be in decline with Liverpool a shadow of their best while United under Eric ten Hag appeared to be on the rise and last week won the League Cup, their first silverware since 2017. On Sunday, however, Liverpool's record 7-0 rout of the visitors reduced United's new-found swagger to a stagger. It more or less killed off any hopes United had of mounting a title charge in the last months of the season while hoisting Liverpool into fifth spot and firmly back in the hunt for a top-four finish that had looked unlikely earlier in the season. Klopp could hardly stop smiling as he saluted the delirious Liverpool fans at a rocking Anfield, and who could blame him. "A freak result and a top performance," the German told reporters after Liverpool's biggest ever win over United courtesy of braces for Mohamed Salah, Cody Gakpo and Darwin Nunez and a late effort by Roberto Firmino. "I don't think the second half could start

any better with the two early goals and then from that moment we were flying and it was really difficult to play against us." Liverpool have now won four of their last five league games after a run of three defeats in four and, while retrieving a 5-2 first-leg defeat by Real Madrid in the Champions League last 16 might be beyond them, they look to be back on track. "It was one of the best performances for a long, long time," Klopp added. "The main difference is that we now have pretty much all the players available. But we have to make these results count with the result of the next game. That's what the plan is." In a desperately disappointing season, the signings of Nunez and Gakpo for a combined 100 million (\$121 million) have been questioned. But both enjoyed by a distance the best day of their Liverpool careers to prove the doubters wrong. "We showed tonight what we could be, what we can be and what we have to be from now on," said Klopp. "We don't talk about the scoreline, we just talk about the performance. "A few months ago everyone thought it was a good moment to play Liverpool — you can't say it publicly but everyone thought it — because they felt we were struggling a lot, but now it is less of a good moment, we look more like ourselves. It is important that everyone knows we are here and we are still alive."

HBL Pakistan Super League: Guptill-inspired Gladiators stay alive with thrilling victory over Kings

RAWALPINDI: The stands were empty and the atmosphere was dull here at the Pindi Cricket Stadium on Monday. After all, much wasn't expected from the fixture featuring Quetta Gladiators and Karachi Kings — the bottom-two teams of the HBL Pakistan Super League — vying for survival. After the Kings had dragged themselves to a fighting total of 164-6, the Gladiators' chase was going nowhere as they looked into certain elimination. But opener Martin Guptill — with the Gladiators captain Sarfraz Ahmed on the other end — had different ideas. With 65 runs needed off the last 27 balls, Guptill went deep into his crease to club Kings pacer Mohammad Amir over midwicket for six. The New Zealander smashed James Fuller for another humon-



gous six to bring up his 50 and plundered the medium-pace for three boundaries before finishing off the 17th over with six more. The powerful right-hander dis-

patched Mohammad Musa for another maximum with an upper-cut over the wicket-keepers head before Sarfraz got into the act to find a boundary towards

square-leg. Guptill placed Amir through the covers in an otherwise low-scoring penultimate over but the damage was already done. After Sarfraz sacrificed his wicket when a mix-up between him and Guptill (86 off 56) resulted in a run-out, the incoming Dwaine Pretorius sealed the match with two boundaries off Aamer Yamin in the final over as the Gladiators registered a four-wicket-victory with a ball to spare. The result left the Kings on the verge of elimination; their hopes resting on Peshawar Zalmi's clash with Lahore Qalandars on Tuesday. The Quetta outfit, meanwhile, need to win their remaining two matches and hope for Zalmi to falter. The Gladiators wet off to a poor start to their chase with debutant Omair Bin Yousuf and first drop Mohammad Nawaz —

Djokovic extends record stay as world number one

PARIS: Novak Djokovic extended his record of weeks as world number one to 379 in the latest ATP rankings released on Monday, although Carlos Alcaraz remains in hot pursuit. The 35-year-old winner of 22 Grand Slam titles edged ahead of Steffi Graf's all-time record last week despite losing in the Dubai semi-finals to Daniil Medvedev. The Russian ended Djokovic's 20-match win streak and perfect start to 2023 before claiming his third title in as many weeks with defeat of compatriot Andrey Rublev in Dubai. He moved up a place to sixth. Second-ranked Alcaraz will take over at the ATP sum-



mit if he wins the Indian Wells Masters, — Djokovic was forced to withdraw from the event starting this week on Sunday. Djokovic is unable to enter the United States because he is unvaccinated against Covid-19, but he had petitioned US authorities for special permission to enter. The Indian Wells ATP

1000 event begins next week in the California desert and is followed by the prestigious tournament in Miami which Djokovic is now expected to miss unless US authorities have a change of heart. The United States still doesn't allow unvaccinated international travellers to enter the country, with the Transportation Security Administration recently indicating the policy would not change until at least mid-April. Djokovic will be replaced in the field by Nikoloz Basilashvili, a brief statement said. On Friday, both the US Tennis Association and US Open organisers voiced support for Djokovic's request.

Markram named South Africa T20 captain

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's new white-ball coach Rob Walter unveiled his first squads on Monday with Aiden Markram named as the new T20 captain but there was no place for former skipper, Faf du Plessis. Although Walter had talks with Du Plessis, no agreement was reached for the ODI and T20 International series against the West Indies this month. Cricket South Africa director Enoch Nkwe said this did not mean the door was closed on Du Plessis, 38, who has not played for South Africa since February 2021, or other non-contracted cricketers. "We've always been open to talks with our freelance players, we're happy to en-



gage and find the best way forward," said Nkwe. As widely anticipated, Markram, who marked his return to the Test team last week with a fine 115 in the victory over West Indies, was named as captain of the T20 side. But there was no place in the T20 squad for Test captain Temba Bavuma, although he will continue to lead the ODI side.

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Umrah-2023 with Bulbul-e-Raza

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The Name of Trust, Faith & Belief

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"RAMADAN UMRAH PACKAGE"

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- ✈️ Visa with Insurance
- ✈️ Flight Indigo SXR-SXR
- 🏠 Accommodation
- 🍽️ Meals

Umrah-2023 with Bulbul-e-Raza

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