

BRIEF NEWS

Raj Bhavan bids farewell to outgoing officers

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and the staff & officers of the Raj Bhavan today accorded a warm farewell to the outgoing Additional Secretaries Sh Jagdish Singh & Sh Pankaj Bhagotra and Deputy Secretary Sh Ankush Hans. In a ceremony at the Raj Bhavan, the Lt Governor

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GST Revenues Rise 11% To Rs 1.46 Lakh Crore In November

The collections from Goods and Services Tax (GST) grew by 11 per cent to about Rs 1.46 lakh crore in November on increased consumer spending and better compliance. This is the ninth month in a row that the revenues have remained above the

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Sufficient funds to pay salaries: J&K Police

The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday asserted that it has sufficient funds to pay the monthly salaries to its personnel. "Regarding a #fake news doing rounds on social media that the salary of Police personnel hadn't been paid for past 2 months. It's hereby clarified that every DDO has got sufficient funds in salary heads," Additional Director

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ATM guard held for withdrawing amount using customer card in J&K's Pulwama

Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested an ATM guard, who was allegedly withdrawing money using the card of a customer in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. Police said on November 14, 2022 Police Station Rajpora received a written complaint from one Mohammad Yousuf, a resident of Tujan stating therein that an amount of Rs 28,000 has been stolen/withdrawn from his account by an unknown per

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Punjab: Pak hands over BSF jawan who accidentally crossed IB

A Border Security Force (BSF) jawan, who inadvertently crossed over to the Pakistani side on Thursday morning in the Punjab sector, has been handed over to the Indian authorities, a force spokesperson said. The jawan was undertaking zero line checking along the India-Pakistan international border (IB) near BSF post G G Base in Abohar sector. The jawan crossed over to the other side inadvertently

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Lt Governor inaugurates Amar Jawan Shourya Sthal at Pouni, Reasi

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01
Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today inaugurated Amar Jawan Shourya Sthal at Pouni, Reasi and paid his respectful obeisance to Param Poojya Sant Balak Yogeshwar Das Ji Maharaj. "Salute to Veer Naris, our veterans and tributes to all those martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for our country", the Lt Governor said after laying floral wreath at Vir Stambh and paying homage to the martyrs. The Lt Governor observed that after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, the ecosystem nurturing terrorism has been dismantled. The nation is truly indebted to the brave Jawans for safeguarding national security, he added. On the occasion, the Lt



Governor highlighted the priorities of the administration. "All round economic growth is primary importance for us so that every citizen is able to live a life of honour and dignity in the environment of peace. The new dynamism in rural infrastructure will result in far greater prosperity for the people," Lt Governor said. "J&K has marched a great distance forward in the last three years. We have kept the wheels of progress moving to ensure that no section of society is left behind, to ensure that growth benefits marginalised groups and to ensure that prosperity brings bright future for youth", he further added. The results of our efforts to rejuvenate rural economy

are clearly visible. Farmers are receiving better prices, path breaking schemes have been implemented to ensure social safety net for vulnerable section & PRI's have been empowered to push forward rural development, said the Lt Governor. The Lt Governor observed that the accelerated speed of completion of developmental projects, creation of better infrastructure, streamlining of public service delivery mechanism, improved educational & health facilities, and growing industrial sector with massive investment proposals have laid down a solid foundation for the glorious future of Jammu Kashmir. During Back to Village - IV programme, efforts were made to identify 15 youth

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Delimitation Commission empowered to redraw constituencies in J&K: Centre to SC

New Delhi, Dec 01
The Centre on Thursday told the Supreme Court that a delimitation commission formed to redraw the Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir was empowered to do so. Seeking dismissal of plea challenging the government's decision to constitute a delimitation commission, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told the top court that the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 does not preclude the establishment of Delimitation Commission by the Central government. "It is submitted that Sections 61 and 62 of the 2019 Act do not preclude the establishment of Delimitation Commission by the Central Government under section 62 of the 2019 Act... It is submitted that the 2019 Act provides for two alternative mechanisms to carry out delimitation for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. "By virtue of Sections 60-61, while the power to determine delimitation is conferred on Election Commission, Section 62(2) and 62(3) confers powers to carry out delimitation on the Delimitation Commission constituted under Section 3 of the Delimitation Act," Mehta told a bench of Justices S K Kaul and Abhay S Oka which reserved its



verdict on Thursday. On March 6, 2020, Union Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department) had issued a notification in exercise of power under Section 3 of the Delimitation Act, 2002, constituting a Delimitation Commission, with former Supreme Court judge (Retd) Ranjana Prakash Desai as the chairperson. The Solicitor General also opposed the submission of the petitioners that Article 170 of the Constitution barred delimitation exercise on the basis of the 2011 census. He said petitioners are wrong in their submission that delimitation exercise had to either happen on the basis of 2001 census or

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India's G20 agenda will be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, decisive: PM

NEW DELHI, DEC 02
As India began its G-20 presidency from Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it will work to further promote oneness, inspired by the theme of "One Earth, One Family, One Future", and listed terror, climate change, pandemic as the greatest challenges that can be best fought together. India's G20 priorities will be shaped in consultation with not just our G20 partners, but also our fellow-travellers in the global South, whose voice often goes unheard, he said.

India's G20 agenda will be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive, he added. "Let us join together to make India's G20 Presidency a Presidency of healing, harmony and hope. Let us work together to shape a new paradigm — of human-centric globalisation," he said in an article which appeared in several newspapers and was posted on his website too. The country looks forward to working on encouraging sustainable lifestyles, depoliticising the global supply

of food, fertilizers and medical products among other subjects, the prime minister said in a series of tweets. He said, "I firmly believe now is the best time to go further still and catalyse a fundamental mindset shift, to benefit humanity as a whole." Gone is the time to remain trapped in the same old zero-sum mindset, which has led to both scarcity and conflict, the prime minister said. "It is time to get inspired

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This village in J&K has India's biggest International Yoga Centre

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01
UDHAMPUR, Dec 1: India's biggest Yoga Centre has been constructed in village Mantalai in the Chenani Tehsil of Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur. The village, which is located on the Himalayas in the sal forests' lap, the village, which has a peripheral view of both the plains as well as hills, which will serve the International Yoga Centre at the banks of the Tawi river. This river, also known as Suryaputri, originates from the Kailash Kund glacier. It is believed that the river's presence relieves the person



from life's maladies and Chenani town gives positivity, besides releasing energy that heals. As the Tourism Ministry in the Government of India has sanctioned Rs 9,782 crore for this, the Interna-

tional Yoga Centre has been given a modern outlook with swimming pools, business convention centres, helipads, spas, cafeteria and dining halls, cottage-designed eco-lodge huts with solarium,

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All-women bench to hear matters in SC

NEW DELHI, DEC 01
Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud has constituted an all-women bench comprising Justices Hima Kohli and Bela M Trivedi to hear transfer petitions involving matrimonial disputes and bail matters on Thursday. This is the third occasion in the history of the apex court that an all-women bench has been constituted. The two-judge bench is currently sitting in Court

number 11 of the top court. The bench has 32 matters listed before it, starting with 10 transfer petitions involving matrimonial disputes and followed by 10 bail matters. The first all-women bench was set up in 2013 when a bench of Justices Gyan Sudha Misra and Ranjana Prakash Desai was constituted followed by a bench of Justices R Banumathi and

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J&K Bank highest income tax payer in Chandigarh circle

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01
Income Tax Department today conducted an Awareness-Cum-Interaction Program on the Importance of Voluntary Compliance to Income Tax Act, 1961 here at J&K Bank's Corporate Headquarters. The program was attended by Bank's General Managers, Deputy General Managers and



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India made world's first COVID nasal vaccine gets approval: Dr Jitendra

NEW DELHI, NOV DEC 02
World's first intra-nasal vaccine for COVID developed by India has got approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for restricted use in emergency situations in the age group of 18 and above. This was informed here today by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent

Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh while chairing the meeting of the Societies of Autonomous Institutions of Department of Biotechnology (DBT) where he also announced the historic decision to merge the 14 societies of Biotechnology Institutes into a single society in the interest of convenient functioning, cost-eff-

fectiveness and integrated working. The Minister lauded the role of the Department of Biotechnology and its PSU, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance (BIRAC) for supporting the development of world's first Intranasal vaccine for COVID by Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL). Dr Jitendra Singh informed that the product

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Govt has no visionary policy for farmers: Rattan Lal

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01
Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President National Conference Jammu, while raising serious concern over the acute problems being faced by the farmers across Jammu region, has sought Lt Governor Manoj Sinha's immediate attention to ameliorate the miserable condition of the peasants thrust upon them by the BJP Govt at the Centre and its utter failure to address their pressing issues.



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Raj Bhavan bids farewell to outgoing officers

felicitated the officers with a memento and expressed his appreciation of the sincere devotion with which the outgoing officers performed their duties. He wished them good health, prosperity, and success in future.

The function was attended by all the officers in the Lieutenant Governor’s Secretariat.

GST Revenues Rise 11% To Rs 1.46 Lakh Crore In November

Rs 1.4 lakh crore mark. However, the collection in November was the lowest since August.

In October, GST collections had touched the second-highest level of Rs 1.52 lakh crore on festive spending.

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of November 2022 is Rs 1,45,867 crore of which Central GST is Rs 25,681 crore, State GST is Rs 32,651 crore, Integrated GST is Rs 77,103 crore (including Rs 38,635 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 10,433 crore (including Rs 817 crore collected on import of goods).

“The revenues for the month of November 2022 are 11 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year, which itself was Rs 1,31,526 crore,” the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

KPMG Partner Indirect Tax Abhishek Jain said continuing festive procurements, year-end reconciliations of input tax credits, credit notes, etc. would have played a significant role in the GST revenue uptick.

N.A. Shah Associates, Partner, Indirect Tax, Parag Mehta said the major factors for the increase in collections are the festive and wedding seasons.

“There has also been a major increase in sales for real estate and vehicle markets. Overall, there is substantial spending by consumers. Further, the authorities have been cracking down on tax evaders, defaulters, fake invoice instances etc,” Mehta said.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said GST collections for the month of October 2022 are encouraging and now it seems to be stabilizing around 1.5 lakh crores.

“October and November are festival months, which drove up purchases of goods and services, fueling GST numbers once again. In October, individuals splurged on real estate, automobiles, vacations, and other essential items,” Mohan said During November, revenues from the import of goods were 20 per cent higher and the revenues from the domestic transactions (including import of services) are 8 per cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year.

TIOL Knowledge Foundation, Chairman Shailendra Kumar said a very good sign is the sustained growth in IGST collections from imports, including services. This will cushion future growth in the economy.

Revenues from GST touched a record of about Rs 1.68 lakh crore in April. In May, the collection was about Rs 1.41 lakh crore, June (Rs 1.45 lakh crore), July (Rs 1.49 lakh crore), August (Rs 1.44 lakh crore), September (Rs 1.48 lakh crore), October (Rs 1.52 lakh crore) and November (Rs 1.46 lakh crore).

Tax Connect Advisory Partner Vivek Jalan said the Budgeted GST Revenue for the Government of India for 2022-23 was Rs 7.8 lakh crores out of which Central GST was Rs 6.6 lakh crore and compensation cess was Rs 1.2 lakh crore. It means that the budgeted GST collection is Rs 14.4 lakh crore approx. Till the month of November, Rs 11.91 lakh crore has already been done.

“Hence even if one takes a conservative estimate of Rs 5 lakh crore in the next 4 months, then the fiscal year would end with an uptick of Rs 2.5 lakh crore approx which is a 17 per cent growth over budget,” Jalan added. (Agencies)

Sufficient funds to pay salaries: J&K Police

General of Police (ADGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar said in a tweet.

The police’s clarification came after some news reports suggested that the salaries of a section of police personnel were on hold for the last two months due to non-availability of the budget.

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti had also raised the issue on Twitter.

“Sad that salaries of those who serve on the frontline have been withheld since two months. One can well empathise with the plight & pain of these families who solely rely on these salaries as their only source of income,” Mufti tweeted.

Punjab: Pak hands over BSF jawan who accidentally crossed IB

due to dense fog and resulting “extremely poor visibility” around 6.30 am, the spokesperson said.

“He was safely handed over to the BSF during a flag meeting with Pakistan Rangers at 1.50 pm,” he said.

This village in J&K has India’s biggest International Yoga Centre

also working on a series of projects to promote the world’s holistic oldest healthcare system in the Union Territory with the scheme— one, medicinal plant conversation in the forests, and the development of herbal gardens at home for promoting the use of herbs in daily life.

The region at a high altitude also creates the right conditions for growing the world’s rarest kinds of herbs.

For popularizing the value of the aforesaid projects, the Directorate of School Education Kashmir has set up 100 herbal gardens at the Government of India-sponsored schools and the ones recommended by the Jammu and Kashmir Medicinal Plants Board. A Rs 100 crore project with the name ‘The Insti-

tute of High Altitude Medicinal Plants’ is also being established at Bhaderwah in the Doda district, stressing the children’s need to learn the natural ways of living to prevent the early onset of various diseases.

The Indian government is also building an Ayurvedic Medical College at Jammu’s Akhnoor with a budget of Rs 16.19 crore, a government Unani Medical College and Hospital at Ganderbal Kashmir worth Rs 32.50 crore, and 50-bedded integrated AYUSH hospitals in Kupwara, Kulgam, Kishtwar, Kathua, and Samba.

All these projects aim at publicising the Union Territory as a Medical Tourism destination with the upcoming six specialized Ayush wellness centres at Katra, Patnitop, and Mansar areas of Jammu, and Pahalgam, Gulmarg, and Sonmarg areas of Kashmir. J-K holds special value to embrace spiritual tourism in the country as Jammu is the city of temples while Kashmir is locally known as Rish-ver, the abode of saints (Rishi).

Further, to upgrade the 370 Ayush Dispensaries and Ayush Health and Wellness Centres (AHWC) Rs 16.3 crore were allocated to the UT in November, as they provide consultation on Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Yoga, Unani and Siddha practices.

As per the reports, impressed by the achievements and spade works performed by the Directorate of Ayush in J-K in the last three years, the Indian government under the National Ayush Mission increased the approved funds from Rs 15 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 72 crore in 2022-23.

The Centre’s vision for the J-K is to establish a holistic wellness model and to provide informed choices on ancient traditional Indian medicine to the public. They also want the youth of J&K to recognize the value of their land. (Agencies)

India made world’s first COVID nasal vaccine gets approval: Dr Jitendra

development and Clinical trials were funded by the Department of biotechnology , Government of India and BIRAC under the Mission COVID Suraksha Program. This vaccine received approval under restricted Use in emergency situations for ages 18 and above for primary 2 dose schedule, homologous booster doses.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, India’s efforts through Mission COVID Suraksha under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not only strengthened AtmaNirbhar Bharat but also bolstered India’s status as a world-wide vaccine development and manufacturing center showcasing the strength of Science and Technology. It is a matter of great pride for the country, the Minister added.

Phase-III trials were conducted for safety, and immunogenicity in ~3100 subjects, in 14 trial sites across India (supported by BIRAC). Heterologous booster dose studies were conducted for safety and immunogenicity in ~875 subjects, where a booster dose (3rd dose) of BBV154 intranasal vaccine was administered to study participants who were previously vaccinated with licensed COVID vaccines. The clinical trials were conducted in 9 trial sites across India. National Institute of Immunology (NII), an autonomous institute of DBT in New Delhi utilized their “Human Immune Monitoring and T-cell Immunology Platform” to examine the vaccine-induced SARS-CoV-2-specific systemic and mucosal cellular immune responses the trial participants. Interactive Research School for Health Affairs (IRSHA), Pune (supported by BIRAC) completed the “Plaque Reduction Neutralization Assay” (PRNT) to quantify the titer of neutralizing antibody for the virus from three trial sites.

This vaccine has the double benefit of enabling faster development of variant-specific vaccines and easy nasal delivery that enables mass immunization to protect from emerging variants of concern. It promises to become an important tool in mass vaccinations during pandemics and endemics.

Vaccine is a recombinant replication deficient adenovirus vectored vaccine with a pre-fusion stabilized spike protein. This vaccine candidate was evaluated in Phases I, II and III clinical trials with successful results. It has been specifically formulated to allow intranasal delivery through nasal drops. The nasal delivery system has been designed and developed to be cost-effective in low- and middle-income countries. This vaccine is stable at 2-8°C for easy storage and distribution. Large manufacturing capabilities have been established by Bharat Biotech at multiple sites across India, including Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Telangana, with operations pan India.

In another historic and path-breaking decision, Dr Jitendra Singh today approved subsuming of 14 Autonomous Institutions of DBT to create one Apex Autonomous Body – Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC) for achieving centralized and unified governance to maximize impact of biotech research.

Dr Jitendra Singh the move is a tribute to Prime Minister Modi’s vision of “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance” as well as his call for Greater Integration of Ideas and Institutions for cost-cutting and effective output.

Dr Jitendra Singh explained that the restructuring of DBT institutes is being carried out with a larger goal to enhance the scientific character and science outcomes at the institutes by building research synergies, new education programs in line with National Education Policy, improving human resource structures across cadres and effective management and monetization of assets emanating from the research being carried out.

The Minister hoped that BRIC will build on the foundations developed at the DBT institutions to foster synergies while maintaining their distinct research mandates. With an emphasis on interdisciplinary interactions that cut across institutional boundaries, BRIC institutes will undertake cutting edge research addressing national priorities, the Minister added.

Secretary, DBT, Rajesh Gokhale earlier welcomed the Minister and oversaw the presentation of Science activities in 2021-2022 by 9 Institutes today, while remaining 5 will give their presentations tomorrow.

Govt has no visionary policy for farmers: Rattan Lal

Interacting and discussing with the senior colleagues of the party regarding miserable condition of the farmers namely Abdul Gani Malik former minister and Zone President Reasi Udhampur district, Sheikh Bashir Ahmed Provincial Secretary Jammu, Abdul Gani Teli P.P OBC Cell, Vijay Lochan P.P SC Cell, Abid Magrey, Nazir Ahmed Lone. Mr Rattan Lal Gupta lamented that it is because of the failure of the J&K Administration that farmers have been compelled to come on roads. He said that in absence of any visionary policy of the farmers these food producers continue to crave for seeds and fertil-

izers. The miseries do not end here as still there is no fixation of MSP for the farmers’ produce.

The senior NC leader said that despite Govt’s tall claims of having achieved tremendous success in every sector, the fact remains that there are no proper or even adequate Marketing Mandis or storage facilities for farmers’ produce. The ultimate result of all these enumerated shortcomings is that farmers are not getting adequate prices for their produce despite their hard toil in the fields amid tough economic condition, he added.

Rattan Lal Gupta said that it is the farmers who ensure sustenance of life of the people of the nation and in view of this fact they deserve top priority attention which the Jammu and Kashmir Administration has failed to do. He made a fervent appeal to the Lt Governor Manoj Sinha to take serious note of farmers’ issues and address the same on priority by directing the concerned departmental men and machinery to gear up and provide the necessary amenities and facilities for healthy farming. He asked LG to ensure the timely availability of seeds and fertilizers to the farmers so that their efforts do not get wasted during the ongoing the crop season.

Lt Governor inaugurates Amar Jawan Shourya Sthal at Pouni, Reasi

from each panchayat for self employment generation assistance. 27,000 sanction letters have been issued and by the end of December, all the sanction letters will be issued, the Lt Governor observed.

We have improved public service delivery and ensured higher financial outlays for district development. Health, education, industry, agriculture, handicraft is being given special attention as part of our strategy for inclusive and higher economic growth, he added.

The Lt Governor also observed that the administration has taken various steps to implement e-service delivery of public services but some people are facing difficulties in certain areas.

We are making efforts to establish a mechanism, in the coming three months wherein if the services are not provided within set timelines, officials will be held responsible, the Lt Governor asserted.

Speaking on the developmental scenario in Reasi district, the Lt Governor informed that in the last financial year, 1012 projects were completed in Reasi under the District Capex scheme while the target for this year is to complete more than 1500 projects. Last year, under District Capex, Rs 1125 crore was allocated to Reasi district for development works and this year the amount has been increased to Rs 1183 crore, he further added.

Param Poojya Sant Shri Balak Yogeshwar Das Ji Maharaj in his address shared the vision of developing Pouni as a Tirth Sthal. He also highlighted the activities of Ati Vishnu Mahayagya Samiti for the welfare of the martyrs’ families.

Earlier, the Lt Governor honoured the Parents of Param Vir Chakra Awardee Captain Vikram Batra; Veer Naris and families of the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the security of the country.

The Lt Governor also inaugurated Yagyashala and felicitated ex-servicemen and organisations for their selfless service towards the welfare of the families of the martyr soldiers. Students participating in various national integration competitions and rallies were also felicitated.

A publication on Param Poojya Sant Shri Balak Yogeshwar Das Ji Maharaj was also released.

Brigadier Harcharan Singh; PRI members; Army veterans; Families of the martyrs, Veer Naris, office bearers of Ati Vishnu Mahayagya Samiti and prominent citizens from all walks of life were present on the occasion.

Sh Mukesh Singh, ADGP Jammu; Sh Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Ms Babila Rakwal, Deputy Commissioner Reasi, senior officials of police, defence and civil administration were also present.

All-women bench to hear matters in SC

Indira Banerjee in 2018.

There are three women judges in the top court at present including Justice Kohli, B V Nagarathna, and Trivedi.

Justice Nagarathna is also set to become first woman Chief Justice in 2027.

The apex court currently has a strength of 27 judges including the CJI, against a sanctioned strength of 34. (Agencies)

Delimitation Commission empowered to redraw constituencies in J&K: Centre to SC

await “the first census after the year 2026.”

“The idea was that last delimitation under the old regime took place in 1995. It was also the government’s idea was to immediately give democracy to the newly-formed Union Territory. . . For that to wait till 2026 or to do it as per 2002 was found to be legislatively unwise. The reorganisation provided for Section 59 recognising that commission would be more apt,” Mehta told the top court.

The counsel appearing for the two petitioners, Haji Abdul Gani Khan and Mohammad Ayub Mattoo, had argued that the delimitation exercise was carried out in contravention of the scheme of the Constitution and alteration of boundaries and inclusion of extended areas should not have been done.

The plea had sought declaration that the increase in the number of seats from 107 to 114 (including 24 seats in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir) in Jammu and Kashmir is ultra vires constitutional provisions and statutory provisions, particularly under section 63 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.

It had said the last delimitation commission was set up on July 12, 2002 in exercise of powers conferred by section 3 of the Delimitation Act, 2002 after the 2001 census to carry out the exercise throughout the country.

The plea had said the commission had issued guidelines and methodology for the delimitation of assembly and parliamentary constituencies vide letter dated July 5, 2004 along with the constitutional and legal provisions.

“It clearly stated that the total number of existing seats in the Legislative Assemblies of all states, including UTs of the National Capital Region and Pondicherry, as fixed based on the 1971 census shall remain unaltered till the first census to be taken after the year 2026,” the plea had said.

It had sought to declare as unconstitutional the notification dated March 6, 2020 constituting the delimitation commission to take up delimitation in the UT of J&K and states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Nagaland by the Centre.

The plea had also challenged the consequential omission of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland from the process of delimitation vide notification dated March 3, 2021, claiming that it amounts to classification and violates Article 14 (equality before law) of the Constitution. **J&K Bank highest income tax payer in Chandigarh**

circle

senior officers while as Assistant Commissioner Circle Srinagar, Gulzarin Akhtar along with other officers of the department participated in the awareness program.

Lauding J&K Bank on the occasion for paying the highest amount of income tax in Chandigarh Circle, Gulzarin Akhtar told the participants, “I am happy to inform that J&K Bank is the highest tax payer not only in J&K but in the entire Amritsar circle which covers Jalandhar, Shimla, J&K besides Amritsar. It speaks volumes about the great success story this financial institution has become. The strong KYC culture of your organisation is very appreciable and I hope J&K Bank continues to keep improving on every functioning front.”

Bank’s CFO Pratik D Punjabi, on the occasion, stated that with Bank on its growth path of prosperity, the tax paying numbers are only going to increase in times to come.

Meanwhile Bank’s General Manager/Group Compliance Officer (GCO) Peer Masood Ahmad highlighted Bank’s commitment to further improve its KYC culture. “We have a strong and robust KYC culture in place and we are committed to improve it further. Any action warranted by rule of law in case of deviations in tax paying will be taken immediately.”

Notably, on the occasion, the income tax department extended hearty congratulations to the Bank for being number one corporate tax payer of not only circle and range but as number one tax payer of PCIT Srinagar and CCIT Amritsar.

ATM guard held for withdrawing amount using customer card in J&K’s Pulwama

son. A case was registered at Police Station Rajpora and investigation started during which a special team was constituted with the help of technical resources.

Police said it came to fore that the amount has been withdrawn by using his ATM card at Dalipora ATM machine by the accused person wearing a mask.

Further Investigation led to identification of a suspect identified as Shabir Ahmad Posvaal (ATM Guard at Pakherpora ATM) a resident of Sonabanjr Rajpora who was brought in for the questioning and during sustained interrogation he confessed his crime and on his disclosure stolen money of Rs 28, 000 and four other ATM cards belonging to different customers recovered.

Further investigations are going on, police said.

India’s G20 agenda will be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, decisive: PM

by our spiritual traditions which advocate oneness and work together to solve global challenges,” he added.

“As India assumes this important mantle, I ask myself — can the G20 go further still? Can we catalyse a fundamental mindset shift, to benefit humanity as a whole? I believe we can,” he said in the write-up to share his thoughts on the significant milestone for Indian diplomacy.

“Our mindsets are shaped by our circumstances as through the history, humanity lived in scarcity. People fought for limited resources because their survival depended on denying them to others. Confrontation and competition between ideas, ideologies and identities became the norm,” he said.

“Unfortunately, we remain trapped in the same zero-sum mindset even today. We see it when countries fight over territory or resources. We see it when supplies of essential goods are weaponised. We see it when vaccines are hoarded by a few, even as billions remain vulnerable,” he said.

If humans were inherently selfish, what would explain the lasting appeal of so many spiritual traditions that advocate the fundamental one-ness of us all, he asked.

Modi said, “One such tradition, popular in India, sees all living beings, and even inanimate things, as composed of the same five basic elements – the panch tatva of earth, water, fire, air and space. Harmony among these elements – within us and between us – is essential for our physical, social and environmental well-being.”

He added, “India’s G20 Presidency will work to promote this universal sense of one-ness. Hence our theme — ‘One Earth, One Family, One Future’.”

Today, the world has the means to produce enough to meet the basic needs of all people. “Today, we do not need to fight for our survival — our era need not be one of war. Indeed, it must not be one,” he said.

Fortunately, today’s technology also gives us the means to address problems on a humanity-wide scale, he said, adding that India with one-sixth of humanity and with its immense diversity of languages, religions, customs and beliefs is a microcosm of the world, he added.

For imbuing hope in our future generations, India will encourage an honest conversation among the most powerful countries on mitigating risks posed by weapons of mass destruction and enhancing global security, he said.

As the “mother of democracy,” India’s national consensus is forged not by diktat but by blending millions of free voices into one harmonious melody, he said.

India is now the fastest growing large economy and its “citizen-centric governance model” takes care of even its most marginalised citizens, while nurturing the creative genius of its talented youth, he said.

“We have leveraged technology to create digital public goods that are open, inclusive and inter-operable. These have delivered revolutionary progress in fields as varied as social protection, financial inclusion, and electronic payments,” he said. (Agencies)

Kashmir Valley, Ladakh Under Deep Freeze; Srinagar Records Minus 2.1°C

said.

In Pahalgam, the mercury settled at minus 3.8°C against minus 3.4°C on the previous night and it was normal for the south Kashmir resort, he said.

Kokernag recorded a low of 0.2°C against minus 0.3°C on the previous night and it was 0.6°C above normal for the place, he said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 1.0°C, the same as on the previous night, the official said. It was 2.1°C above normal for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir’s Baramulla district, the official said.

In Kupwara town, the mercury settled at minus 2.6°C against minus 2.5°C on the previous night, the official said. It was 1.5°C below normal for the north Kashmir place, he said.

Jammu recorded a low of 9.3°C against 10.0°C on the previous night. It was 1.0°C below normal for J&K’s winter capital, he said. Banihal recorded a low of 1.2°C (0.7°C below normal), Batote 4.7°C (0.6°C above normal), Katra 9.0°C (0.1°C above normal) and Bhadarwah 3.0°C (1.7°C above normal).

In Ladakh, Leh recorded minus 7.0°C, Kargil minus 11.3°C and mercury in Drass, the world’s second coldest place after Siberia, settled at minus 10.0°C, the official said. The MeT department has forecast mainly dry weather till December 7.

Rajouri Admin organises Maiden virtual Education conclave

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

A maiden virtual Education Conclave was today organised by the District Administration Rajouri in collaboration with the School Education Department.

As many as 15000 students from 143 schools attended the event online while sitting in the smart classrooms of their respective schools.

Deputy Commissioner, Vikas Kundal - the Chief Guest presented a highly informative and thought provoking lecture to encourage the students to dream high.

"There is no substitute for hard work when it comes to achieving your cherished dreams," said Deputy Commissioner Rajouri.

While interacting with the students, the Deputy Commissioner encouraged the students to keep up a positive spirit and eagerness to work hard towards achieving academic excellence and career goals. He encouraged them to focus on their studies during their academic years, adding that a keen awareness and update of current affairs and reasoning is also very important to succeed in most of the exams.

Lauding the dedication of teachers and their efforts and initiatives, the DC suggested them to explore innovative ways to make the teaching and learning process more effective. He further advised the students to take advantage of the ICT labs/Smart classroom to add



new dimensions to the teaching- learning process. He also advised the teachers to inculcate reading habits among the students.

The DC emphasised the importance of role models in life. "They influence our actions and motivate us to strive to discover our true potential and overcome our weaknesses. They encourage us to make the most of our lives," he added.

The DC also said that the future of the country was in the hands of the youth and they should work hard with strong commitment and dedication to be able to contribute towards the development of the Nation.

As many as 18 guest speakers spoke at the event through virtual mode and

shared the experiences of their lives and motivated the students to understand their potential and focus on the aims of their lives to achieve them.

Other speakers were Deputy Director Planning, Bilal Rashid Mir; Dr. Sachi Sood; Imran Malik; Dr. Danish Raina; Muslim Wani; Jaffer Latief; Abhishek Gupta; Dr. Rashid Anjum; Dr. Nahida Choudhary; Adil Wani; Shariq Shawl; Mohit Raina; Sayila Mir; Arif Lone; Hassan Athar Chouhan; Aamir Rather, Dr. Ather Aziz Raina and Yawar Raina.

Among the others present at the event were Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Imran Rashid Kataria; Chief Education Officer, Shailash Kumari; Additional District Informatics Officer, Ashwini Sharma and DPEO, Abdul Raof Dar.

DC Rajouri reviews implementation of PMFME scheme

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Vikas Kundal, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, today chaired a meeting to review the implementation of Prime Minister's Formalization of Micro Food Enterprises (PMFME) scheme in the district.

Officers present in the meeting were DFO Rajouri, Arshdeep Singh; CPO, Mohammad Khurshid; GM DIC, Ashwini Sharma; CHO, Madan Lal; DSWO, Wakeel Ahmed Bhatt and other concerned officers.

Speaking at the meeting, the DC said the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme has been launched under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan to identify food products for districts keeping in view the existing clusters and availability of raw material.

He said the PMFME is aimed at establishing Micro Food Processing Industries at Micro/Village level through



individuals, Self Help Groups (SHGs), Cooperatives and Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs). Under the programme, 35 per cent subsidy/capital support with a ceiling of Rs 10 lakh is

being provided to the beneficiaries.

The DC also asked the concerned officers to give wide publicity to the scheme and ensure that maximum beneficiaries are covered under the scheme.

DLSA Samba hosts awareness program to observe World AIDS Day

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Under the able aegis of NALSA and as per the Action Plan issued by Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority & for the month of December, 2022 and also under the able guidance and supervision of Sonia Gupta, Chairman District Legal Services Authority Samba (also Pr. District and Sessions Judge Samba), District Legal Services Authority, Samba today observed the World Aids Day on the Theme (2022) "Equalize" by organizing an Awareness program in collaboration with the Department of Health, here in the Government

District Hospital.

Dr. Mohinder Kumar, Medical Superintendent, Government District Hospital Samba acted as a Resource Person in the program. He deliberated upon the theme and importance of the Day. He spoke about as to how individual living with HIV and other vulnerable and marginalized groups risk discrimination and isolation because of the Virus. He urged upon how our Communities must utilize the 'Equalize' message to highlight the inequalities they experience and push for the measure necessary to rectify them.

The proceedings of the program were

conducted by Panel Advocate Hitesh Sharma who addressed the gathering about the Legal Rights of AIDS patients and presented the vote of thanks to the gathering.

The program was attended by Panel Advocates, staff of Govt. District Hospital Samba and PLVs of District Legal Services Authority Samba. Besides this, another program on 'World Aids Day' also organized by DLSA Samba at Sub District Hospital Vijaypur, wherein Dr. Abdul Queum, Medical Superintendent, elaborated on how to end this disease and eliminate the inequalities against the disease.

MTMP Phase 2.0: 2-day Food processing Training for women begins at Saringal- Bhaderwah

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

To acquaint the women about the processing of fruits and vegetables on scientific lines, the Department of Horticulture Doda today organised a two day fruit and Vegetable processing training for women, here at Saringal- Bhaderwah under My Town My Pride (MTMP 2.0).

As many as 70 women attended the training programme on the first day.

Chief Horticulture Officer, Rakesh Kotwal, in his address asked the participants to establish Fruit processing units and avail subsidy to the tune of 60%. The fruits and vegetables are perishable and need immediate processing to get optimum price and to reduce post harvest losses.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Bhaderwah, Dil Mir Choudhary stressed on the promotion of local and traditional products as tourists demand local products.

Manager cum Chemist Bhaderwah,



Bharat Bhushan emphasized on scientific processing of food products by using modern technology so that both quality and nutritional value of the products was preserved while process-

ing. He also educated the participants regarding different Training programmes being conducted by the Department for the welfare of the farmers/ Orchardist and Budding Agripreneurs.

DC Kathua discusses revised Mining Plan with District level Committee meet

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rahul Pandey today chaired a meeting of Mining Department and other stakeholder Departments regarding formulation of District Mining Plan.

The meeting deliberated upon the issue of NOCs required from the concerned stakeholder departments viz Irrigation & Flood control, Forests, RDD, Jal Shakti, PWD etc.

The DC directed all the stakeholder departments to go through the details mentioned in the draft Mining Plan and seek clarification from the Mining Department in case of any query.

The members of the Committee discussed at length the prerequisites for according approval to Revised Mining Plans and suggested the necessary rectifications to the Mineral department so that the process of e-auctioning can be processed further.

The DC further laid thrust on adhering to specified timelines for giving approval to new mining plans for different mining blocks of the district.

The meeting was attended by mem-



bers of the Mining Plan Approval Committee including Deputy Director (J) Geology and Mining Department (Member Secretary), AEE, Jal Shakti,

XEN PWD (R&B), PDD, District Mineral Officer, DFO Kathua, Billawar and Executive Engineer, Flood Control Kathua and other concerned officers.

Jan Abhiyan: DC inaugurates Inter-Collegiate Kabadi competition at GDC Kathua

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

As the part of ongoing Jan Abhiyan under 'My Town My Pride' program, an array of outreach activities were held across the district on 4th day of the public campaign.

At Government Degree College Kathua, Deputy Commissioner, Rahul Pandey inaugurated an Inter-Collegiate Kabaddi tournament. Six institutions of Kathua district participated in the event. While addressing the participating students, the DC said the sports event was a great medium to channelise the energy of young students in the right direction and provide them a platform to exhibit their sports talent. He also said that apart from curricular activities, co-curricular and extracurricular

activities have special importance in the holistic development of the individuals. He urged the students to have grit, determination, focus on achievement of goals which are quintessential for achieving success in any field.

The DC further said that the District Administration, in collaboration with ULBs, was organizing a plethora of activities under Jan Abhiyan Shehri across all municipal limits in the district. He said people should come forward and become active participants in this week-long pre- MTMP 2.0 campaign.

Meanwhile, the day witnessed a series of Awareness programmes for Mumkin and other government schemes, plantation drives, special sanitation drives, anti-littering drives and

other activities carried out by various departments across all municipal areas of the district besides distribution of land passbooks and approved loan cases amongst the SVANidhi beneficiaries..Stalls and registration counters were set up by different departments at respective municipal complexes wherein people were apprised about Government schemes and registered beneficiaries for the same.

Apart from other outreach activities, a massive rally to promote the Anti-Drug campaign (Nasha Mukti J&K) was also organised in Billawar Town.

The programmes witnessed overwhelming participation of the public and ULB members of Municipal Committees and councils, and other district and sectoral officers.

Chairman DDC Doda exhorts teachers to imbibe moral values among students

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Chairman, District Development Council (DDC) Doda, Dhanantar Singh Kotwal today called upon the teachers to imbibe moral values among the students to make them Good Citizens.

He also stressed on the need to impart skill training to the students as per their potential so that in future they don't solely depend on government jobs.

The Chairman was addressing the Annual Day



function of Moon Light Model Academy Bhella as the chief guest.

The DDC Chairman further emphasised the role of education in empowering

the citizens and the duty of the parents and teachers to in making the career of students.

Earlier, the school students presented a variety cultural programme featuring Kashmiri songs, Bhaderwahi songs, Rajasthani songs. The Children, through their performances, gave the message for keeping a check on the rising cases of crime against women and emphasized the role of citizens to protect the dignity of women .

DC Shopian reviews implementation & progress of works under JJM

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01
In order to review the implementation of projects taken up under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the district, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya Thursday chaired a meeting of concerned Officers in his office chamber, here.

At the outset, the DC took a detailed review of the progress of works on key infrastructural projects. He also took a firsthand appraisal about the status of schemes under languishing projects taken up and Re-vamping of various Water Treatment Plants of different capacities, Improvement & Extension of pipe network.



A threadbare discussion was held with regard to the status of several aspects of implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission including physical and financial status of various projects under JJM. The meeting was informed that out of 107 works under different schemes, 22 works stand tendered and Letter of Intent and allotment in respect of JJM stands issued for works. The DC directed all the

concerned to expedite work on all the ongoing works to complete the projects within stipulated time frame. He exhorted the engineers to put in coordinated efforts to achieve the target so that people are benefited from the schemes. Vaishya said that the Mission is envisioned to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections to all households of the district.

Among others, the meeting was attended by ADDC Shopian, Manzoor Hussain; Superintendent Engineer, Jal Shakti Hydraulic; Project Officer Wage Employment (ACD); Chief Medical Officer, Dy Chief Education Officer, Divisional Forest Officer, Executive Engineers besides other concerned engineers and officers.

Mega Jan Abhiyaan function held at Kaloosa, Bandipora

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01
As part of activities under "My Town My Pride" (MTMP), a mega Jan Abhiyaan function was today conducted at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Kaloosa, here.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Dr. Owais Ahmed was chief guest on the occasion.

The programme was attended by President MC Bandipora, Basharat Hussain, CEO MC Bandipora Wali Mohammad, Tehsildar Bandipora Sheikh Tariq, Programme Manager DIC Bandipora Mehraj Wani, Municipal Councilors and officers of various other departments, teachers, students, youth and a large gathering of public.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that as part of the program, various services of different departments are being provided to the people in Municipalities at their doorsteps along with organi-



sation of multifaceted activities.

He further mentioned that the thrust is to ensure that the benefits of different Govt schemes and programmes percolate to the beneficiaries in the urban areas, more effectively.

Highlighting the importance of Shehri Jan Abhiyaan, the DC said that the programme is aimed to assess the issues of the public at grassroots level and redress the same.

Deliberating upon the ill effects of pollution and Single Use Plastic (SUP), Dr. Owais said that people have to act judiciously to stop the use of SUP and prevent its ill effects and urged people to properly use dustbins and take other preventive measures for proper disposal of waste.

He said as responsible citizens, people have to perform their duties and cooperate and coordinate with administration in implementation

of various public oriented Government schemes and programmes.

Speaking about drug abuse and measures taken up by District Administration to curb it, the DC said that those involved in drugs are victims and it is our moral responsibility to encourage them for rehabilitation so that they can return to mainstream life.

Earlier, the DC inaugurated a volleyball and cricket match under the banner of Shehri Jan Abhiyaan. He also interacted with players and asked them to actively participate in sports to showcase their talent in both academic and sports.

The programme also witnessed plantation drive within the premises of GHSS Kaloosa in which Dr Owais participated.

Speaking on the occasion, President MC Bandipora, Basharat Hussain urged people to come forward in collective mode to meet the targets of MTMP.

Spl Secretary PD&MD visits MCs of Ramban

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01
Special Secretary Planning Development & Monitoring Department (PD&MD), K.S Chib today visited Ramban town for physical verification of developmental projects, besides interacting with the Public representatives and people here. He also interacted with the Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Mussarat Islam and discussed various issues in the planning and development sectors.

Focusing on achieving the indicators as per parameters prescribed by the Government for saturation of all developmental, social and Job oriented schemes under Jan Abhiyan as a part of 'My Town My Pride' Phase-2 District Administration Ramban organised a mega awareness programme at Ramban.

President, Municipal Council, Ramban, Sunita Sumbria and Special Secretary PD & MD jointly presided over the awareness event attended by the Councilors of Municipal Council and prominent citizens.

Chief Planning Officer, Dr. Kasturi Lal, General Manager, District Industries Centre, Ravinder Anand, DSEO, Ganesh Kumar, Executive Engineer, PWD Abhishek Gupta, CEO, MC Ramban, Sudarshan Kumar



were also present on the occasion.

The Special Secretary also discussed various issues pertaining to the development of Ramban town with public representatives, besides sensitising the participants about measures taken by the government to fulfil the developmental requirements of the town under different sectors.

The Special Secretary also sensitized the participants, especially students about Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan and Traffic Rules, besides asking them to avoid drug addiction and traffic rule violations to enjoy a healthy and safe life. He also highlighted the benefits of various Government schemes launched for the welfare and development of the people.

Earlier, the Special Sec-

retary along with concerned officers also conducted physical verification of various developmental works at Ramban, Banihal and Batote towns executed by the various departments under different sectors and schemes including Maitra Park developed by the Floriculture Department, lane and drainages and other developmental projects constructed by the Municipal Council Ramban, besides 1500 LPM Oxygen Generation Plant at District Hospital, Ramban.

President of Municipal Committee, Batote, Ravinder Singh, in presence of DFO, Kuldeep Singh, Vice-president, Kewal Krishan Gupta, President, Beopar Mandal, Sanjay Gupta, SDAO, Sudhir Manhas and PRIs.

Similar programmes were also held in Banihal town which witnessed huge public participation.

in a plantation drive organized by the Forest Division Batote

Meanwhile, the Agriculture Department sensitized the participants about the value of organic farming, mushroom farming and various other farmers' welfare schemes.

Later, free Grow Bags and Solar Dryers at fifty percent subsidy were provided to progressive farmers by the chief guest, President,

Pr. Secy SDD visits GPC, ITI Doda

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Principal Secretary Skill Development Department (SDD), Dr Asgar Samoon today visited Government Polytechnic College (GPC) Doda and ITI Doda and interacted with students, faculty and trainees here.

The Principal Secretary was accompanied By District Development Commissioner Doda Vishesh Paul Mahajan; Director SDD, Sudershan Kumar; Senior superintendent of Police, Abdul Qayoom; Financial Advisor Yasir Rather and other district officers of various departments.

During the visit, Dr Samoon extensively inspected the college premises and other infrastructure.

Dr Samoon on the occasion inaugurated different buildings / workshop at Government Polytechnic/ ITIs. He also inaugurated Academic Block at Government Polytechnic College Beoli Doda and Administrative Block at ITI Doda and distributed certificates among students.



Dr Samoon appreciated Superintendent ITI Doda for satisfactory functioning and development of the Institute. Dr Samoon while interacting with trainees wished them good luck for their future endeavours. He stressed on imparting

quality training and the need for self employment which would eventually make the young population self reliant and able to earn their own livelihood. He also assured the students that transport facility will be provided to different areas.

15-Day Skill training programme on Scientific Sheep & Goat Rearing concludes at Budgam

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

15 Days Skill development programme on Scientific Sheep and Goat Rearing organised under Aspirational block development programme 2022-23 concluded on Thursday at Sheikh-ul Alam Conference Hall, Budgam.

About 48 farmers from Aspirational blocks of Surasyar and Pakherpora of district Budgam participated in a programme that was organised by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Budgam in collaboration with Sheep Husbandry Department Budgam.

The training programme was aimed to build entrepreneurial mindset among the youth and develop their skills so that they can launch their own business ventures.



Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Dr. Nasir Ahmad was the chief Guest at the valedictory function.

Speaking on the occasion, he stressed on the need of skill development in self employment generation. He further empha-

sized on the need of using scientific practices in improving the livelihood of farmers.

Dr. Mir Nadeem Hassan (Course Coordinator) presented a detailed overview of the training.

Dr. Mohd. Ashraf Baba, District Sheep Husbandry Officer Budgam also held a detailed interaction with the farmers.

During the programme participation certificates and first aid kits were also distributed among the trainees.

The programme was also attended by Sr. Scientist & Head KVK Budgam, Dr. Bilal Ahmad Lone, District Sheep Husbandry Officer Budgam, Dr. M Ashraf Baba and Scientists of the Kendra besides Block Development Officers of Sheep Husbandry Department Budgam.

Department of HP&M conducts awareness programme at Fruit Mandi Kupwara

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

As part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, the Department of Horticulture Planning and Marketing District Kupwara (HP&M) on Thursday conducted one day awareness programme regarding Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprise Scheme (PM-FME) at Fruit Mandi Kupwara.

At the outset Nodal Officer PM-FME/ Area Marketing Officer Kupwara, Mushtaq Ahmad highlighted the importance of spreading awareness among the public for motivating them to start entrepreneurial units and also encourage existing unit holders to expand their business by availing the benefits of the scheme

with the help of financial institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, District Resource Person of PM-FME, Danish Ahmad shared information about the scheme and importance of One District One Product to generate employment besides the modalities and procedure of formation of cases to avail benefits with subsidy for establishment of entrepreneur units of PM-FME.

On the occasion he invited participants to approach the department where officers will handhold them in the DPR to start business with confidence.

Benefits of the scheme were also shared by Iftikar Hussain, HDO Kupwara of the concerned Department.

During the interactive session between potential applicants and Bank au-

thorities, the representatives also addressed various queries and apprehensions on the spot and demanded that all the stakeholders including HP&M, JK Bank and entrepreneurs shall come on one platform to chalk out steps to make the entire process simple, easy and glitch free.

Meanwhile, various entrepreneurs also shared success stories of their growth with the intervention of the PM-FME scheme that increased their income and expanded their units.

Among others, the programme was attended by representatives of other allied departments, staff of HP&M, President Fruit Mandi Kupwara, President Bakers association, traders, local entrepreneurs and unemployed youth.

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Member Parliament (Lok Sabha), Jugal Kishore Sharma on Thursday released a book titled NEP-2020: Conception of a Modern Knowledge Society written by Prof.(Dr.) Raj Shree Dhar, here at a book Release Function hosted in Government Degree College Jindrah. A prolific academician, Prof Dhar is the Principal of GDC Jindhra.

Former MLA Devender Singh Rana; Padam Shree, Prof. Shiv Dutt Nirmohi; All J&K Sarpanch Conference President, Anil Sharma; Tehsildar Dansal, Dhruv Gupta and other dignitaries including, a galaxy of teachers, literary persons, students and general public were present on the occasion.

The event also witnessed a splendid Folk Dance and Song competition among the school students of Jindrah held in collaboration with VARDaan. The college students also presented the na-



tional song, Dogri Dance and a skit.

In his address, MP Jugal Kishore Sharma congratulated Dr. Dhar for contributing towards society by writing a book on New Education Policy-2020. He hoped the book would equally help teachers, students and other stakeholders to understand the spirit and vision of the NEP-2020. He emphasized on the need to equip the students with all different skills side by side academic education

Dr. Raj Shree Dhar, the author of the book, gave a brief on the contents and subject of the book. She said that the

book was an attempt to explain the dawning of National Education Policy 2020, why and how it can be implemented, how India aims to be a global leader in education, about skill India mission etc. She shared her feelings regarding the process and her wish to publish after presenting her views in the first conference on NEP-2020 in September 2020 chaired by Hon'ble LG.

Devender Rana, former MLA said that it was heartening that the first book on NEP-2020 was released at GDC Jindrah. He impressed upon all the students and teachers to strive to have a

deep insight about the New Education Policy.

Prof. Shiv Dutt Nirmohi and the guest of honour of the event deliberated upon the brilliant work and most wanted book for the public. Earlier, a folk dance competition was held among the students of Jindrah. The winners of the folk dance contest were awarded with distinctive prizes. The author was presented a memento by VARDaan. The proceedings of the function were conducted by Prof Jasneet Kour and Priya. The vote of thanks was delivered by Bodh Raj. Vardaan team President and President awardee.

Kathua Campus (JU) organizes maiden outreach activity i.e. Cleanliness Drive Trek

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Kathua Campus, University of Jammu organized its maiden outreach activity i.e. Cleanliness Drive Trek wherein more than 40 students along with teachers trekked from village Padna to Sundri Kot which is almost 4 kilometers steep trek and collected garbage throughout the way to encourage the spirit of cleanliness and hygiene. The village Sundri Kot is situated in the Shivalik Hills of Billawar tehsil of Kathua district which is located at an elevation of 1000 meters above sea level. The students enjoyed the pleasant and breathtaking view of the surrounding landscape and also displayed their talent by painting a wall at

Sundri Kot which clearly depicts the message of cleanliness for all the passersby. Dr. Meenakshi Kilam, Rector Kathua Campus, University of Jammu flagged off the trekking expedition and encouraged the students to participate in these types of mass awareness programmes along with promoting Clean India movement. She said it is the responsibility of academic institutions to organize outreach activities in villages especially far flung areas to spread awareness among the society at the grassroots. She reiterated that Kathua Campus shall organize similar outreach activities (atleast one per month) for sharing best practices and promoting scientific temperament among the masses by means of door to

door campaign and community participation. She further said the Campus has already undertaken various initiatives aimed at the augmentation of civil society and Kathua Campus bond for promoting the societal development of Kathua district.

Dr. Sourabh Shastri, Incharge Head, MCA Department and Convener, Sports Committee, Kathua Campus administered the cleanliness pledge to the participants at Sundri Kot. He said the students should make maximum utilization of these types of activities to channelize their energy in the positive direction and to work for the society.

Dr. Sunny Sharma, Ritika Goyal, Pranav Ratta and Dr. Zaheen Ansari coordinated the whole activity.

Debate Competition on the Theme “Offline vs Online mode of Learning” organises at PSPS Govt PG College for women Gandhinagar.

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

The Department of Sociology, PSPS Government PG College for Women, Gandhinagar, Jammu in collaboration with IQAC organised a debate competition on 1st of December, 2022 on the theme “Offline vs Online mode of learning”. Dr. Suraj Mohani Jamwal, H.O.D, Sociology welcomed the chief patron, Prof. Minu Mahajan, the worthy Principal of the college along with the judges.

Prof. Minu Mahajan applauded the initiatives taken by the Department of Sociology in organising events on various issues of social importance. She stressed on the need to accept the changing dynamics of the social situations and to realise the increasing importance of the technology for every section of society, especially the students.

Prof. Seema Arora (H.O.D, English), Prof. Mala Bhasin (H.O.D, Botany) and Prof. Renu Rajput (Associate Professor, Physics) were the judges on the occasion.

Dr. Yash Paul Sharma, Convenor, IQAC also graced the occasion. He motivated the students to participate in such events and highlighted the impor-



tance of online mode along with the traditional (offline) mode of learning for the overall development of the students.

A total of 16 students participated in the event in which 11 students favoured the offline mode of learning while others were in favour of online mode. Around 120 students attended the debate competition. Ms. Simran (B.A), Ms. Anisha (B.A) and Ms. Suhani (B.Sc) Semester 1st bagged 1st, 2nd and 3rd Position re-

spectively.

The formal vote of thanks was given by Dr. Shelly Sabharwal. Prof. Anupma Sharma, Prof. Eisha Gohil, Dr. Priyanka Sharma, Prof. Neetu Raina, Dr. Varun Sharma, Prof. Paramjeet Singh, Prof. Ujjawal Sharma, Prof. Bhagwati and Prof. Poonam were also present during the event. The whole programme was coordinated by Ms. Riya and Ms. Sonali of B.A 1st Semes-

Orientation programme under Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan-2 held at Budgam

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

A daylong orientation programme under Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan was today held at Conference Hall Budgam.

A review, feedback and orientation workshop was organized by District Social Welfare Office Budgam in collaboration with District Administration Budgam. The programme was chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone while as State Coordinator for Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan from Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Government, Nandini Rawat interacted and took feedback from the master trainers and volunteers on the occasion.

The master trainers and volunteers from the Education, District Legal Services Authority, Social Welfare and Health department participated in the workshop. At the outset, ADC emphasised that every individual has a role to play to make Budgam as Nasha Mukh District. He said though both civil and police administration are on the job to get drug abuse menace eliminated from the society, tangible results will be achieved only after due support and contribution from the people. The State Coordinator also sensitized the partici-



pants about their role in curbing the menace.

DSWO Budgam, Dr. Farhana Asgar also spoke on the occasion and deliberated on the activities being carried out by Social Welfare under Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan across Budgam district. She emphasised on the need to change on approach towards sensitising the society regarding different drugs and their impact on our youth and society.

She also talked about developing a network of officials, officers, teachers, master volunteers from DLSA, doctors, medical professionals, police and individuals from all walks of life to create intelligence network to generate awareness, recognise hot spots of drug abuse, spot out drug peddlers and abusers and finally provide treatment at district level. DSWO said that they are working on a multipronged approach to

reach the abuser and his family, and how to guide them at every step to come out of their addiction into mainstream. She emphasised on the importance of individual responsibility of each and every member of the community/ society to ensure systematic improvement in drug demand reduction at all levels.

Later, participants also took pledge against drug abuse under Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

People in J&K Totally fed up from proxy govt by BJP, Only NC can deliver good results: Dr Vikas

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

The restoration of Statehood to Jammu and Kashmir is the only way out to mitigate the sufferings of poor and hapless masses who are at the receiving end due to official apathy, said Dr Vikas Sharma Coordinator Jammu District (Urban) and Zonal Secretary JKNC.

While interacting with youth at Gandhi Nagar, Dr. Vikas Sharma said that ever since BJP took over the reign into its hand, majority of youth and general public are totally feeling disgruntled and slipped into a state of desperation due to anti youth policies of the present government. He said that growing unemployment is a burning issue as the present regime has miserably failed to create job opportunities for the youth.

He said that unemployment is at an all time high in the country and in J&K as well following which the youth is under depression. “Frustration due to unemployment among educated youth is leading to suicides, crime, and drug addiction”, Dr Sharma lamented.

He regretted that the Government is deliberately indulging the youth in drug addiction by allowing the selling of alcohol in departmental stores. “Already the City of Temples has been turned into town wine shops because, in every street of Jammu city, wine shops have been opened during the last one and half



years”, he said.

He said that the Government is violating rules and regulations by allowing departmental stores to sell Beer and other ready-made drinks. He said that already wine shops have been opened in populated areas and near religious places and they will not allow the departmental stores to sell Beer and other ready-made drinks.

Dr Vikas also said that we stand committed for secularism and social equality. He said the National Conference has a legacy of serving the poor and weaker sections of the society which was started by Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. He maintained that the fight for restoration of statehood to J&K shall be the foremost agenda of the party.

People of J&K have suffered a lot during the past three years since the abolition of statehood. He said that NC is fighting and will continue its fight till restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr Vikas asked youth to strengthen the hands of Dr Farooq Abdullah and Janab Omar Abdullah for getting rid of all the problems being faced by the youth of J&K. He urged the youth to get united and vote NC to power in the coming Assembly elections.

Dr Vikas said that we have standing instructions from our party President Dr Farooq Abdhulla to keep in constant touch with the people at the grass root level and take note of their problems for appropriate solution and timely disposal.

Dulloo inaugurates sheep husbandry technical workshop at Jammu

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production Department, Atal Dulloo today inaugurated one-day Technical Workshop-cum-Seminar on 'Latest Technical Interventions in Sheep and Goat Husbandry Sector in the Union Territory at Kisan Bhawan here.

Vice Chancellor, SKUAST Jammu, Prof JP Sharma was the guest of honour at the occasion.

In his address, the ACS informed about the MoU with New Zealand under which the sheep husbandry sector is going to be developed with world class technology and expertise.

Atal Dulloo stressed on the need for breed improvement among other initiatives for increasing mutton production to meet the 40 percent deficit in the UT.

He also called for improvements in germ plasm production through artificial insemination and embryo transfer technologies.

For strengthening of the sector, the ACS suggested



increasing healthcare outreach in alpine pastures and other remote regions of J&K.

He also acknowledged the significant role of development of new vaccines.

He took note of fodder scarcity in the UT and called for providing farmers with wool aggregation facilities and help on formation of Farmers Producers Organisations.

ACS shared a plan of action under which improvement of germ plasm, augmentation of animal health facilities, increasing fodder production and availability and post production initiatives like meat processing

etc for increasing exports could be undertaken.

He shared that the Integrated Sheep Development Scheme has benefited many farmers and called for continued assistance under the scheme. Under the National Digital Livestock Mission, he said, production of mutton and wool would be encouraged.

Prof JP Sharma underlined that the sector provides livelihood to poorer sections of the society and therefore approached with due attention towards their needs.

He also highlighted the requirement of value addition and post production pro-

cessing to increase income of people involved in the sector.

Earlier, Director Sheep Husbandry Jammu, Krishan Lal in his welcome address informed that veterinarians and paramedics of the sector would be educated about the latest developments in disease investigation, animal nutrition, Embryo Transfer Technology and Artificial Insemination etc.

He shared that the department aims to increase mutton production and promote cross breeding with superior breeds. Seven departmental farms are on the job of increasing the quality of germ plasm, he informed.

Eight research papers and their research findings were shared on the occasion for awareness of the staff by experts.

Those present at the occasion include Director Agriculture Jammu, KK Sharma; Managing Director JK Agro, Dr Arun Manhas; Joint Director Farms Jammu, Joint Director Extension Jammu among other senior officers and staff of the department.

Social Forestry Dept, Army organize Mega Plantation drive at Rangreth Cantonment Srinagar

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

A massive plantation event was today organised by the Department of Social Forestry at Rangreth Cantonment, Srinagar during which more than 5000 plants were planted up by the Army Jawans of JAKLI regiment, children drawn from different schools, representatives from PRIs of Budgam and Srinagar districts, staff of Social Forestry, Ex. serviceman and Govt. Officials.

PCCF/Director Department of Social Forestry J&K was also present along with Addl. Commissioner Kashmir Abid Hussain at the event.

Besides, several officials from JAKLI Regiment, Officers from Social Forestry Department also participated in the event.

It is worth mentioning here that the Department of Social



Forestry has embarked upon a massive Programme of winter plantation within the entire Kashmir Valley. As per official spokesman of the department more than 15 lac plants shall be planted in all 10 districts by March 2023.

Department is laying emphasis to achieve the maximum target of plantation before the onset of Chilia Kalan spell so that the target could be

achieved timely. Department is also ensuring the participation of representation of PRIs like DDC, BDC members along with Sarpanchs and Panchs of the Panchayats.

Department of Social Forestry is taking up these plantation under Green J&K Drive in which the Govt of J&K has fixed a target of 150 lac plants during 2022-23 financial year on Forest lands

and available vacant non forest lands like Gram Panchayat Lands, State Lands & lands belonging to the Schools, Army, Para military forces & other institutions.

Department has a target of pThe Farm Forestry/ Agro-Forestry Practices Department is supplying high fast growing clonal plants of poplar/ eucalyptus and other fast growing species to farmers for planting on their private lands. The official spokesman said that the Department has made fervent appeal to the public at large, farmers and growers in particular to avail the opportunity and take up plantations of fast growing species including clonal varieties on their farm lands/ waste lands for economic and environmental benefits. These plants are available in the departmental nurseries in all districts.

EDITORIAL

Apart from other tourism activities, Kashmir being promoted as wedding destination

Says govt trying to take tourism to grassroots level to provide people complete tourism experience

Secretary Tourism Jammu and Kashmir, Sarmad Hafeez on Tuesday said that Kashmir is being promoted as wedding destination as apart from other tourism activities, the Valley has a lot of potential for wedding destination.

In this regard Hafeez said that recently a couple had could to Pahalgam from Canada for destination wedding.

“Apart from adventure tourism and other tourism activities, we are trying trying to promote Kashmir as wedding destination as it has a lot of potential and people too are keen to conduct weddings here,” he said.

He added that they some so many tourism products and recently a cyclothon was organised for promotion of adventure tourism in the Valley and for which about 70 untapped destinations have already been identified and are being promoted.

Replying to a question, he said that education tourism is also being promoted here and apart from people coming to study here, “we should also try and have exchange programmes with various institutions around the world and around the country. We are also trying to promote corporate tourism here,” he said.

He also said that they are trying to take tourism at the grassroots level and provide people, who come here, a complete tourism experience.

Why hasn’t EC acted against Amit Shah for violating MCC in Gujarat?

Prakash Karat/IPA

The BJP campaign for the Gujarat assembly election gives an insight as to how Gujarat became a ‘laboratory’ for the Hindutva forces and how the corporate-communal axis was forged that became known later as the ‘Gujarat model’.

Some of Amit Shah’s assertions in his election speeches have been startling for many outside Gujarat, but they reflect how the RSS-BJP have succeeded in inverting the reality and building a false narrative.

According to Shah, the communal pogrom against Muslims in 2002 was actually an instance of “rioters” being “taught a lesson”. They were put down firmly by Narendra Modi who was the chief minister then. Since then, ‘permanent peace’ has been established in Gujarat. Peace of the graveyard as far as the Muslims are concerned.

Shah also accused the previous Congress governments (before 1995) of being soft on communal rioters. Thus, the biggest pogrom against minorities after independence is now being depicted as a firm suppression of ‘rioters’ who

are all presumably Muslims.

It is this sort of warped thinking which has led to the rapists and murderers of Bilkis Bano and her family members to be released from prison by granting remission of their life sentences. According to the Gujarat government, it was Amit Shah-led Union Home Ministry that approved the remission.

The other refrain in the BJP campaign, which was voiced by Modi himself, is that the Opposition parties support anti-national or anti-Gujarat forces. Modi has attacked Congress and other smaller parties for viewing terrorism through the prism of vote banks and appeasement. So the defence of secularism and the rights of minorities translates into being soft on terrorism and therefore, anti-national.

It is such a bigoted outlook that led to the arrest and jailing of Teesta Setalvad and former DGP, R B Sreekumar, for taking the judicial route to seek justice for the victims of the pogroms.

The current campaign echoes what has been the approach during the entire tenure of Modi as Gujarat chief minister – a continuous effort to conflate Pakistan and terrorism with the minorities and accusing the secular parties of mi-

nority appeasement and hence complicity with terror. All those who question this narrative are branded anti-national and anti-Gujarat.

The growth story in Gujarat has been distinctive for the emergence of the corporate-communal regime. The entire corporate sector and capitalist class rallied firmly behind Modi and the BJP. The advancement of the industry has been marked by the huge concentration of assets and wealth in the hands of big business and mercantile houses, while the urban and rural workers are paid some of the lowest wages in the country.

The contrast between the high levels of growth of the state’s gross domestic product and the low level of social indicators is stark.

The discontent among the poorer sections and socially oppressed groups due to price rise, unemployment, and lack of educational and health facilities has surfaced during the election campaign. But as before, the deep-rooted communal polarisation which exists, is sought to be utilised to blunt such anger.

The target of the communal campaign – the Muslims – are themselves living in ghettoised and wretched conditions. In the

cities, there is a visible divide wherein the Muslim localities are in deplorable conditions deprived of basic civic facilities.

The BJP is confident that its mix of toxic Hindutva propaganda and promises of more benefits to lab-harthis (beneficiaries) should be enough to get its way with the electorate.

There is nothing to check the poisonous communal propaganda. It has become normalised because of the failure of the Election Commission to intervene and act against repeated violations of the model code of conduct in previous assembly elections and the Lok Sabha elections of 2019 when Narendra Modi and Amit Shah were the culprits.

Regarding this election campaign in Gujarat, a retired senior civil servant, EAS Sarma, had written to the Election Commission to take action against Amit Shah for his speeches violating the model code of conduct and invoking the provisions of the Indian Penal Code. There was no response from the EC.

Is it because in the current dispensation, it is the Union Home Minister who sets down the law in such matters?

Twitter censoring Left tweets exposes Musk’s claim of being ‘free speech absolutist’

Branko Marcetic

NO ONE SHOULD’VE HONESTLY BELIEVED ELon Musk would use his ownership of Twitter to champion free speech. Besides the fact that the man is a professional bullshitter, it was always dubious that a guy who slaps employees with gag orders and bars them from wearing pro-union messages had a genuine commitment to the proverbial marketplace of ideas.

No one is more eager to hawk the idea of Musk as a free-speech warrior, of course, than Musk himself, who framed his growing entanglement in the social media platform around defending the principle, and recently retweeted a satirical headline charging that he’d “threaten free speech on Twitter by literally allowing people to speak freely.”

Reportedly telling staff he wanted the platform to be “the digital town square” by “represent[ing] people with a wide array of views even if we disagree with those views,” Musk has reinstated a spate of reactionary Twitter accounts that had been suspended, including those of Jordan Peterson, Project Veritas, and former president Donald Trump.

But it’s looking more and more like the Tesla CEO’s supposed commitment to free expression only goes as far as his own political biases.

At the same time that Musk has been playing footsy with noxious right-wing figures and giving a voice back to their faves, he’s also banned a string of left-wing accounts - seemingly at the prodding of those same noxious voices.

Left-wing accounts being suddenly and inexplicably banned is sadly nothing new on Twitter. But what makes this instance more disturbing is that it immediately followed an exchange Musk had with far-right influencer Paul Ray Ramsey - seen here posing with neo-Nazi Richard Spencer at a conference they both spoke at - whose post about Twitter “nuking pedo accounts” led Musk to personally urge the video blogger to report “anything that Twitter needs to address.”



He also had an exchange with right-wing troll Andy Ngo, known for his lie-filled vendetta against Antifa. Told by Ngo that “a large number of Antifa accounts operate on Twitter” to incite various acts of violence, Ngo and the Twitter CEO then had a back-and-forth about the importance of reporting and suspending such accounts.

It ended with Ngo singling out CrimethInc for trying to “radicalise people into criminal militancy,” pointing to a number of anodyne social media posts by the group, the most edgy of which was a zine about breaking windows and “the effectiveness of political vandalism.” Within a few hours, the account was suspended.

This wasn’t an isolated event. Journalist Steven Monacelli documented the suspensions of several more leftist accounts in recent days, including the Elm Fork John Brown Gun Club (EFJBGC), an armed left-wing group that goes to LGBTQ events that far-right militants, including some armed groups, plan to attend; Vishal Singh, a left-wing journalist and documentarian based in California who reports on the far right and law enforcement; and Chad Loder, a Los Angeles-based cybersecurity expert who used his Twitter feed to expose and document the activities of right-wing extremists.

All of this came just a few days

after Musk claimed it was “obvious” that “there is not one permanent ban on even the most far left account spouting utter lies.”

It’s unclear how much of this is a reflection of Musk’s true long-standing political leanings, or if he’s taken a similar journey of Twitter-fuelled political derangement to other high-profile figures, ensconcing himself in a right-wing intellectual bubble that now drives his thinking.

In any case, after once making the questionable claim that Twitter “has a strong left wing bias,” Musk now seems to have decided the solution is giving it a strong far-right bias instead.

It’s also not clear how much of this anti-left censorship is due to Musk personally. But besides his personal interaction with reactionaries who have pushed to suppress groups they politically disagree with, we know Twitter’s content moderation team was explicitly ordered to reinstate the conservative satirical outlet Babylon Bee - whose ban had first prompted Musk to muse about buying the platform - hours after he took ownership.

We also know that Musk told employees last week that his planned content moderation council would be purely advisory, and that he would “either agree with it or I won’t,” suggesting a more hands-on approach from the CEO on the subject of censorship.

The real problem is that, in the

society and economic system we’ve created, a moron can take over a critical public resource like Twitter on a whim, as long as he or she has an enormous hoard of wealth that this system has allowed them to accrue, at which point they’ll promptly inject their own blinkered biases into the way the platform operates.

This is why voices on the Left have not just warned about the dangers of resorting to excessive, heavy-handed censorship on such platforms, since changes in ownership, individual biases, and human error all mean speech one personally doesn’t object to can become a target for suppression.

They’ve also called for public ownership, or at the very least greater state regulation, of platforms like Twitter that have clearly become integral to life today, to provide some modicum of democratic control over them and save us from the whims of erratic billionaires.

Other possible solutions don’t seem so promising. Some have fled Twitter in protest and joined “decentralized” alternatives like Mastodon, where groups and individuals can make their own servers with their own particular rules.

Yet among other things, this potentially just repeats the situation with Musk on a smaller scale, as antiwar group Code Pink recently found when it was banned from a Mastodon server by a moderator who had “re-

ceived reports the organisation was affiliated with some less than savoury groups” and was deemed “potentially controversial.”

Musk is now facing an advertiser revolt, and one advertiser, the tech behemoth Apple, has, according to the billionaire, “threatened to withhold” the platform from its App Store, a potentially powerful blow to Twitter’s market share if true.

This could in theory force a change to Musk’s policies by essentially strong-arming him into backing down.

But do we really want the rules that govern social media platforms dictated instead by similarly unaccountable corporations using their economic heft or, in Apple’s case, their monopoly power to force a change to policies they don’t like?

Remarkably, in spite of all this, the liberal discourse around Musk’s helming of Twitter continues to be framed in exactly the (untrue) way that he prefers it: of Musk as an overzealous free-speech champion, endangering the world through his commitment to a principle that he’s shown he doesn’t actually give a damn about.

This hail of misguided and reality-divorced liberal criticism ironically gives Musk the exact cover he needs, convincing the uninformed he really does walk the walk on free speech, and allowing him to keep tweeting self-aggrandizing nonsense like, “This is a battle for the future of civilization. If free speech is lost even in America, tyranny is all that lies ahead.”

Yet that tyranny is already here, largely thanks to the figure of Musk himself, and to the kind of society that lets those with wealth treat vital public goods as their own personal playpens.

There’s a real conversation to be had about how exactly to strike the tricky balance between protecting free expression on social media platforms and providing a safe and enjoyable user experience.

But to have that conversation, we have to wrench control of this digital public square from censorious billionaire frauds like Musk first.

England sets record on first day of Test against Pakistan

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

Virus-hit England stamped its aggressive brand of cricket on its first Test in Pakistan in 17 years by amassing a world record 506-4 with four batters smashing hundreds on Thursday.

Zak Crawley hit 122 and Ben Duckett made 107 in a blistering opening stand of 233. Ollie Pope and Harry Brook blazed hundreds in the last session in an astonishing display of power-hitting against an inexperienced Pakistan bowling attack.

And the Test almost didn't start.

England confirmed it had a fit 11 and the match could go ahead only two hours before the toss. Then it destroyed a host of records in only 75 overs before play ended prematurely because of bad light.

The 506-4 total was the highest on the first day of any Test, surpassing Australia's 494-6 in 1910 against South Africa in Sydney. England also became the fastest team to score 500 runs.

Pope, who will keep wickets after Ben Foakes couldn't recover from a viral infection that hit the England camp, cemented coach Brendon McCullum's aggressive approach by making 108.

Brook struck six fours in one over by debutant Saud Shakeel in the final session to reach 101 not out. Captain Ben Stokes, who won the toss and elected to bat after recovering in time from the virus, was not out on 34 off 15 balls.

England batters smashed 73 boundaries and three sixes in a white-ball fireworks display with the red ball.

In the absence of injured spearhead Shaheen Afridi, Pakistan opted to hand debuts to three bowlers; fast bowlers Haris Rauf and Mohammad Ali, and legspinner Mohammad Zahid.

But none of the bowlers could extract any help from a slow, grassless pitch at Pindi Cricket Stadium.

Surprisingly, Joe Root was the only batter to miss out when he fell to Mah-



mood, who finished the day with 2-168. Rauf (1-78) and Ali (1-96) shared the other wickets.

Crawley and Duckett combined in a better-than-run-a-ball 233 stand before Pakistan picked up three wickets in the middle session when Mahmood and Rauf struck in successive overs with the old ball.

Mahmood broke the stand when Duckett went for a reverse sweep against the leg-spinner and Pakistan successfully went for a TV referral against on-field umpire Joe Wilson's not-out decision.

Rauf then swung in late and clattered Crawley's stumps in the next over. But England's intent to score at pace didn't subside after the dismissal of the two century-makers.

Joe Root was out lbw for 23 when he was struck on the back leg while attempting a sweep.

Crawley was on 99 when Naseem Shah trapped him on the backfoot, but Crawley successfully overturned the decision as the video suggested the ball would have missed the leg stump.

Two balls later, Crawley achieved the fastest test century by an England opener off 86 balls with a cover-driven boundary, and Duckett reached his maiden hundred by pulling Rauf to the

legside for four.

Crawley and Duckett stormed England to 174-0 in the first session.

Crawley missed an opportunity to become the first Englishman to smash a century before lunch in a test match when he reached 91, while Duckett dominated Mahmood's spin to make 77.

Crawley was ruthless against Rauf's short-pitched deliveries and the gentle medium pace of Ali, too, to raise his half-century off only 38 balls with 11 fours. He hit another six boundaries in the session.

Duckett dominated the leg-spin of Mahmood with his trademark sweep shots and didn't hesitate to attack the spinner early with a reverse-swept boundary. He completed his maiden Test half-century off 50 balls.

The start of the Test was confirmed at only 7.30am local time after the Pakistan Cricket Board said England "informed (them) they are in a position to field an XI, and, as such, the first test will commence as per schedule today."

England had to make a change in its playing XI at the last minute. Foakes was replaced by Will Jacks, who will make his test debut, and Pope will keep. Liam Livingstone will also debut.

How Brazil can reach the FIFA World Cup final

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

HOW DID BRAZIL QUALIFY FOR THE ROUND OF 16?

* The top two in each World Cup group advance to the last 16. The knockout rounds will begin on Dec. 3 and will feature one-off matches, which can go to extra time and then penalties to decide the winner.

Brazil beat Serbia 2-0 and defeated Switzerland 1-0 in their first two Group G matches to secure a place in the knockout stages.

* Brazil are not assured of top spot in

WHO ARE BRAZIL'S POTENTIAL OP-
PONENTS IN THE QUARTER-FINALS?

* If Brazil win Group G, they could face Spain in the quarter-finals, provided the 2010 champions win Group E and beat the runners-up from Group F - Croatia, Morocco, Belgium or Canada.

* If Brazil finish as Group G runners-up, they could potentially face Croatia in the quarter-finals, provided the 2018 finalists are able to win Group F and defeat the runners-up from Group E - Spain, Germany, Japan or Costa Rica.

WHO ARE BRAZIL'S POTENTIAL OP-



Group G, however, and can still be overtaken by Switzerland.

WHO ARE BRAZIL'S POTENTIAL OP-
PONENTS IN THE ROUND OF 16?

* Brazil will be pitted against a team from Group H in the round of 16, meaning they could face Portugal, Ghana, South Korea or Uruguay.

* If Brazil win Group G, their round of 16 game will be against the runners-up in Group H.

* If Brazil finish runners-up in Group G, their round of 16 opponents will be the winners of Group H, potentially Euro 2016 champions Portugal.

PONENTS IN THE SEMI-FINALS?

* If Brazil make it to the semi-finals as Group G winners, they could potentially face South American rivals Argentina or the Netherlands.

* If Brazil reach the semi-finals as Group G runners-up, they could face the potential winners of Groups B and D - England or 2018 champions France.

WHO COULD BRAZIL FACE IN THE FINAL?

* If Brazil go all the way to the final as Group G winners, they could potentially find themselves taking on France or Portugal.

French federation files complaint over disallowed goal

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

The French football federation (FFF) is filing a complaint with FIFA over Antoine Griezmann's disallowed crucial equalizer goal at the end of a 1-0 loss to Tunisia at the World Cup on Wednesday.

Following a VAR review, Referee Matthew Conger ruled out the equaliser goal by disallowing it. The goal was scored towards the end of the final minute of the match.

The FFF released a statement overnight raising their complaint. "We are writing a complaint after Antonine Griezmann's goal was, in our opinion, wrongly disallowed. This complaint has to be filed within 24 hours after the final whistle," the FFF said in a statement.

According to reports, Conger restarted the match after



the goal and then blew the final whistle after which he consulted VAR and ruled out Griezmann's goal.

It was reported that Griezmann was in an offside position when a cross came over but then retreated and appeared to be played back into an onside position following a Tunisia defender's deflection when he shot into the bottom left corner.

The FFF said that it had 24 hours from the end of the match to file an official complaint with governing body FIFA. It was France's first World Cup defeat since 2014 when it lost 1-0 to Germany in the quarterfinals.

Defending champion France finished atop Group D on goal difference from Australia and will face Poland in the last 16 on Sunday.

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

Mexico scored twice in five second-half minutes in a thrilling last-ditch effort to stay in the World Cup on Wednesday, beating Saudi Arabia 2-1 but agonisingly missing out on the last 16 on goal difference.

Goals from Henry Martin and Luis Chavez soon after the interval catapulted Mexico back into contention, but a string of superb saves by Saudi keeper Mohamed Al-Owais and two disallowed efforts denied the South Americans the elusive goal they needed to advance.

The match went right down to the wire and at one point looked like Mexico would miss out to Group C rivals Poland by virtue of having accrued more yellow cards, but Saudi striker Salem Al-Dawsari netted in stoppage time to make goal difference the decider.

Mexico's exit ended a run of



seven successive last-16 appearances at the World Cup and the defeat for Saudi Arabia killed off what had looked to be a realistic chance of advancing from the group stages for the first time in 28 years.

Having failed to score in their opening two Group C matches, Mexico's chances of progressing had looked slim going into the match, hinging on the outcome of the game between Argentina and Poland which Ar-

gentina won 2-0 to top the group.

Urgently needing to beef up their goal difference, Mexico took the game to Saudi Arabia from the start and never stopped running, peppering the goal with long-range efforts in a desperate bid to wrest control of their own fate.

Orbelin Pineda and Chavez were the engines in a high-octane match that the Saudis struggled to get into, defending

with desperation.

Mexico broke the deadlock two minutes after halftime when Cesar Montes's deft back-heel from a corner found Martin who bundled the ball over the line in a crowded goal-mouth.

They doubled their lead five minutes later when Chavez's powerful free kick 20 metres out sailed into the corner of the goal beyond the reach of Al-Owais, sparking wild Mexican celebrations on the field.

Lozano found the net but his goal was disallowed and Mexico battled hard to get the decisive third but were denied constantly by the reflexes of Al-Owais in the Saudi goal.

Substitute Uriel Antuna had a stunning late effort disallowed for offside four minutes from time before Al-Dawsari shattered Mexican hopes when he grabbed a Saudi consolation goal deep into stoppage time.

Leader Messi key to Argentina's WC title hopes

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

Lionel Messi may be making his last World Cup appearance in Qatar but the talismanic forward is still capable of spurring Argentina to a third World Cup title, his compatriot and former Paris St Germain head coach Mauricio Pochettino said.

Pochettino, who is well aware of Messi's game-changing abilities having worked with the 35-year-old last season, said he was still the best player in the world.

"Messi will always be decisive. He's the best player in the world," Pochettino, 50, told Argentine newspaper Ole.

"Messi has the role today that can give Argentina the World Cup. He's the clear leader of this team and everyone understands that he's the leader, all the energy is focused on that."

The Parisian club parted ways with Pochettino in July after an 18-month stint where he won the 2020-21 French Cup and 2021-22 Ligue 1 title but failed to deliver in the Champions League.

Pochettino also managed Brazilian striker Neymar and France's Kylian Mbappe at PSG,



but said Messi's ability makes him stand out.

"They're players who will always surprise you... You can understand the dimension of each one," Pochettino said.

"In football terms, I highlight Messi's simplicity. The ability to make everything simple.

"It's very difficult to remember a training

session in a year in which I've seen him make a technical mistake."

After their setback against Saudi Arabia and a crucial win over Mexico, Argentina will play their final group game against Poland on Wednesday.

Australia in party mode; Tunisians enjoy historic win

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

Australia hailed Graham Arnold's new 'golden generation' on Thursday and fans demanded a national holiday as the country celebrated the Socceroos' unlikely advance to the World Cup knockout phase.

Thousands gathered at Melbourne's Fed Square in the middle of the night to watch Australia's 1-0 upset of Denmark on a big screen, and were left dancing in the smoky light of flares as the Socceroos set up a last 16 clash against Argentina.

Arnold's team matched the side who made the last 16 at the 2006 World Cup

in Germany but with a squad lacking the pedigree of the players from 16 years ago who came to be known as Australia's "golden generation".

"Tell your kids. Tell your loved ones. Tell your mates. Whisper it, yell it, scream it, put it on a T-shirt and wear it to bed. Hard work gets you places," Australian soccer pundit Adam Peacock wrote on the Herald Sun newspaper's website.

Saudi Arabians enjoyed a national holiday to celebrate upsetting Argentina last week, and a picture of a Socceroos fan holding up a sign saying, "Give us a pub-

lic holiday", was widely shared on social media.

"Do I need to ask (Prime Minister) Anthony Albanese again to give the people a day off to celebrate?" Arnold said.

"I think there'll be some hangovers (around the country) and some joy in the Australian team."

The Australian prime minister offered congratulations but left the public holiday question unaddressed.

"Magnificent win by the @Socceroos #woohoo," Albanese tweeted soon after the result.

East Pakistan debacle in 1971 a 'military failure', says Bilawal Bhutto

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has termed the East Pakistan debacle in 1971 a "military failure," in a veiled jibe at the former Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, who termed it a "political failure."

Bilawal made these comments at the Nishtar Park rally, which was organised to mark the 55th Foundation Day of his Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

On the occasion, the PPP chairman revisited the history of his party and recounted the achievements of its founder, his grandfather, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took over the government, the people were broken and had lost all hope, he was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper.

But he rebuilt the nation, restored the confidence of the people, and finally brought our 90,000 troops back home who had been made prisoners of war due to military failure'. Those 90,000 soldiers were reunited with their families. And that all was made possible due to politics of hope... of unity... and in-



clusion," he added.

before his retirement on November 29, Gen Bajwa termed the East Pakistan debacle a "political failure," and complained that the sacrifices of the troops were never properly acknowledged.

He rejected the commonly held notion that 92,000 soldiers surrendered in the 1971 war and claimed that there were just 34,000 combatants, while the others were part of different government departments.

While addressing a Defence and Martyrs Ceremony at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi last week, Bajwa said: I want to correct the

record. First of all, the fall of East Pakistan was not a military but a political failure. The number of fighting soldiers was not 92,000, it was rather only 34,000, the rest were from various government departments.

Gen Bajwa, 61, retired on November 29 after getting a three-year extension in 2019 by the then Prime Minister Imran Khan, who turned out to be the biggest critic of the Pakistan Army.

The East Pakistan debacle in 1971 saw Pakistan suffering a humiliating defeat to India.

It saw East Pakistan secede to form a new country called Bangladesh.

Jacinda Ardern, Sanna Marin shoot down question on age, gender

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and her Finnish counterpart Sanna Marin on Wednesday fielded a misogynistic question from a reporter. At a joint press conference, a reporter asked, "A lot of people will be wondering are you two meeting just because you're similar in age and, you know, got a lot of common stuff there," Reuters reported.

Ardern was quick to shoot the question down. "I wonder whether or not anyone ever asked Barack Obama and John Key if they met because they were of similar age," she said. "We are meeting because we are prime ministers," she went on.

Women lawmakers outnumber men in



New Zealand for the first time

"Our countries are aligned on incredibly important issues – we share a strong commitment to democratic values as the basis for open, tolerant, resilient, equal societies, and to multi-lateralism and a rules-based order that has under-

pinned global peace and prosperity since 1945," Ardern said elaborating on New Zealand's relations with Ukraine.

Finnish PM Marin added to the answer, she expressed her concern about what is happening in Ukraine and Iran. She said they both-- Marin and Ardern wanted to stand to-

gether over equality "to make sure every woman and girl all across the world will have the same rights and the same opportunities as men". Ardern also said, "We, of course, have a higher proportion of men in politics – it's reality – because two women meet, it is not simply because of their gender."

UK royals arrive in Boston to showcase youthful monarchy

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

The Prince and Princess of Wales embarked on their first overseas trip since the death of Queen Elizabeth II, aiming to showcase the younger face of a monarchy that is tackling important issues like climate change as it attempts to remain relevant in a modern, multicultural Britain.

The three-day trip to Boston is focused on Prince William's splashy initiative to award millions of dollars to a new generation of environmental entrepreneurs who are developing everything from cleaner burning stoves to alternatives to leather. It will include visits to a program for at-risk youth, a sustainability lab and a tour of Boston's shoreline to see the city's effort to combat climate change.

The event that started on Wednesday will culminate on Friday in the awarding of the Prince's signature Earthshot Prize, a global competition aimed at finding new ways to protect the planet and tackle climate change.

After their arrival, the beaming royal couple strolled onto a stage at City Hall Plaza William wearing a single-vent navy suit and Kate radiant in a Burberry dress and Alexander McQueen coat, and earrings by designer Shyla London amid tight security and a cheering crowd, many snapping photos and video.

Prince William told the crowd that one of President John F. Kennedy's speeches was the inspiration to hold the second Earthshot Prize in Boston.

It was that moonshot speech that inspired me to launch the Earthshot Prize with the aim of doing the same for climate change as President Kennedy did for the space race. And where better to hold this year's awards ceremony than in President Kennedy's hometown," William said.

Later, the couple sat courtside for a

Boston Celtics-Miami Heat game, joined by team managing partner Wyc Grousbeck, co-owner and president Steve Pagliuca and his wife, Judy, along with Boston Mayor Michelle Wu and Massachusetts Gov.-elect Maura Healey.

The royal couple was announced to a cheering Garden crowd during a timeout in the second quarter and briefly shown on the video screen. But a security official stepped in front of the camera, eliciting a chorus of boos.

The visit comes less than three months after the death of Queen Elizabeth, whose personal popularity dampened criticism of the crown during her 70-year reign. King Charles III, William's father, has made clear that his will be a slimmed-down monarchy, with less pomp and ceremony than its predecessors.

I think this is less about saving the Earth and more about saving the royal family," said Boston University professor Arianne Chernock, an expert in modern British history. To be honest, we've seen Charles as king and his first months in that position trying to feel his way, find his way towards being a more relevant, more modern monarch. And I think we see something similar happening with William and Kate."

Part of that reset involves reclaiming the hearts and minds of people in America, where William's younger brother, Prince Harry, and sister-in-law, Meghan, have dominated the media since moving to California in 2020. Harry and Meghan have criticized the royal family for alleged racism and insensitive treatment and built their own media profile by making films and podcasts for Netflix and Spotify.

US: Hakeem Jeffries elected to lead House Democrats

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

Emboldened House Democrats ushered in a new generation of leaders on Wednesday with Rep. Hakeem Jeffries elected to be the first Black American to head a major political party in Congress as long-serving Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her team step aside next year.

Showing rare party unity after their midterm election losses, the House Democrats moved seamlessly from one history-making leader to another, choosing the 52-year-old New Yorker, who has vowed to get things done, even after Republicans won control of the chamber. The closed-door vote was unanimous, by acclamation.

It's a solemn responsibility that we are all inheriting, Jeffries told reporters on the eve of the party meeting. And the best thing that we can do as a result of the seriousness and solemnity of the moment is lean in hard and do the best damn job that we can for the people.

It's rare that a party that lost the midterm elections would so easily regroup and stands in stark contrast with the upheaval among Republicans, who are struggling to unite around GOP leader Kevin McCarthy as the new House speaker as they prepare to take control when the new Congress convenes in January.

Wednesday's internal Democratic caucus votes of Jeffries and the other top leaders came without challengers.

The trio led by Jeffries, who will become the Democratic minority leader in the new Congress, includes 59-year-old Rep. Katherine Clark of Massachusetts as the Democratic whip and 43-year-old Rep. Pete Aguilar of California as caucus chairman.

The new team of Democratic leaders is expected to slide into the slots held by Pelosi and her top lieutenants Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland and Democratic Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina as the 80-something leaders make way for the next generation.

But in many ways, the trio has been



transitioning in plain sight, as one aide put it Jeffries, Clark and Aguilar working with Pelosi's nod these past several years in lower-rung leadership roles as the first woman to have the speaker's gavel prepared to step down. Pelosi, of California, has led the House Democrats for the past 20 years, and colleagues late on Tuesday granted her the honorific title of speaker emerita.

It an important moment for the caucus that there's a new generation of leadership, said Rep. Chris Pappas, D-N.H., ahead of voting.

While Democrats will be relegated to the House minority in the new year, they will have a certain amount of leverage because the Republican majority is expected to be so slim and McCarthy's hold on his party fragile.

The House's two new potential leaders, Jeffries and McCarthy, are of the same generation but have almost no real relationship to speak of in fact the Democrat is known for leveling political barbs at the Republican from afar, particularly over the GOP's embrace of former President Donald Trump. Jeffries served as a House manager during Trump's first impeachment.

We're still working through the implications of Trumpism, Jeffries said, and what it has meant, as a very destabilising force for American democracy.

Jeffries said he hopes to find common ground when possible with Republicans but will oppose their extremism when we must. On the other side of the Capitol, Jeffries will have a partner in Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer as two New Yorkers are poised to helm the Democratic leadership in Congress. They live about a mile (1.6 kilometres) apart in Brooklyn.

There are going to be a group, in my judgment, of mainstream Republicans who are not going to want to go in the MAGA direction, and Hakeem's the ideal type guy to work with them, Schumer said in an interview, referencing Trump's Make America Great Again slogan.

Jeffries has sometimes been met with scepticism from party progressives, viewed as a more centrist figure among House Democrats.

But Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., a progressive and part of the squad of liberal lawmakers, said she has been heartened by the way Jeffries and his team are reaching out, even though they face no challengers.

There's a genuine sense that he wants to develop relationships and working partnerships with many of us, she said.

Clark, in the No. 2 spot, is seen as a coalition builder on the leadership team, while Aguilar, as the third-ranking leader, is known as a behind-the-scenes conduit to centrists and even Republicans.

Swara Bhaskar joins Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra in Ujjain

NEW DELHI, DEC 01

The Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Congress MP Rahul Gandhi resumed from Ujjain on Thursday morning after a day's break and headed for Agar Malwa, the last district of its Madhya Pradesh leg.

Uttarakhand's former chief minister Harish Rawat, Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh, ex-parliamentarian Prem Chand Gudu, All India Mahila Congress's former president Shobha Oza and actor Swara Bhaskar were seen walking briskly with Gandhi.

The foot march, a mass contact programme of the Congress, started from R D Gardi Medical College on the outskirts of Ujjain at around 6 am.

The yatra will stop for the morning break in Nazarpur village around 10 am.

It will resume in the afternoon from Ghaatiya bus stand.

The foot march participants will stay overnight in Jhalara village,



party sources said.

Shopsy, Questt on top as Google announces India’s best apps of 2022

NEW DELHI

Questt, an app that makes studying fun even while it uses data to help the process, and Shopsy, a hypervalue e-commerce app from Flipkart, are the big winners in tech giant Google’s selection of the best apps from India in 2022.

Shopsy won the User’s Choice App of 2022 award, from among the options available on Google PlayStore while Angry Birds Journey was the winner for best game of the year in the user’s choice section.

The Google Play winner of the best app 2022 (editor’s choice) was Questt, which uses artificial intelligence to personalise education, including the gamifying of the learning experience for students. While Shopsy led the category of the best app for everyday essentials, the rise of ultra-fast delivery in 2022 saw an increase in the popularity of apps like Zepto (a Mumbai startup which promises 10-minute delivery of groceries) and BlinkIt (formerly called Grofer’s).

“Once again, we saw apps that helped people in numerous ways, including personal growth, daily tasks, creative expression and business aspirations,” said Google Play’s global director of merchandising John Mentgen in a blog post on Thursday afternoon.

“Many of these (apps) come from local developers in India that once again inspired us with their ambition and cre-



ativity, building winning solutions for India and the world,” he added.

Personal growth was a major focus of some of the apps that finished on top. This ranged from Filo, PrepLadder, CueMath and Yellow Class which provided quality content to make education interactive, gamified and with expert guidance, to apps like BunkerFit, Neend and Dance Workout for Weight Loss in the wellness space which offered creative and localised solutions to help people stay fit physically and mentally. Unique app ideas from India also found takers this year. Khyaal, which helps senior citizens interact and support each other in their holistic care won the category for ‘Best App For Good’. Turnip, which helps people

connect globally to stream content with like-minded others won the ‘Best App for Fun’ category, while Apex Legends Mobile won the ‘Best Game of the Year’ category (Angry Birds Journey won the User’s Choice game award).

The best ‘Ongoing Games’ category saw desi favourites Ludo King and Real Cricket 20 on top, with ‘Clash of Clans’ the winner. Google’s blog also noted that parenting and pet parenting, in particular, were finding users. BabyG, which guides parents on the evolving needs of their infants and toddlers was the winner in the ‘Hidden Gems’ category, while PetPerfect, which provides information to owners to take care of their furry friends, was an honourable mention.

WhatsApp bans 23.24 lakh accounts in India in October

NEW DELHI

Instant messaging platform WhatsApp, on Wednesday, said it banned 23.24 lakh accounts in India in October, including 8.11 lakh accounts which were barred proactively before being flagged by users.

The number of accounts blocked in October was about 13 per cent less than the 26.85 lakh accounts the messaging platform banned in September.

“Between 1 Oct, 2022 and 31 Oct, 2022, 2,324,000 WhatsApp accounts were banned. 811,000 of these accounts were proactively banned, before any reports from users. An Indian account is identified via a +91 phone number,” WhatsApp said in the India Monthly Report under the Information Technology Rules 2021 for the month of October.

The tougher IT rules, which came into effect last year, mandate large digital platforms (with over 50 lakh users) to publish compliance reports every month, mentioning the details of complaints received and action taken.

Big social media firms have drawn flak in the past over hate speech, misinformation and fake news circulating on their platforms. Concerns have been flagged by some quarters time and again over digital platforms acting arbitrarily in



pulling down content, and ‘de-platforming’ users. The government last week announced rules for setting up a grievance appeal mechanism against arbitrary content moderation, inaction, or takedown decisions of big tech companies.

According to the latest WhatsApp report, the platform received 701 grievances in September but took action only against 34.

The platform received appeal to ban 550 accounts but it took action only on 34 accounts.

“We respond to all grievances received except in cases where a grievance is deemed to be a duplicate of a previous

ticket. An account is ‘actioned’ when an account is banned or a previously banned account is restored, as a result of a complaint,” the report said.

In addition to responding to and actioning on user complaints through the grievance channel, WhatsApp also deploys tools and resources to prevent harmful behaviour on the platform, the report said.

“We are particularly focused on prevention because we believe it is much better to stop harmful activity from happening in the first place than to detect it after harm has occurred,” the company said.

Swiggy shuts cloud kitchen brand The Bowl Company in Delhi-NCR after pilot run

NEW DELHI, DEC 01: Food delivery platform Swiggy has shut down its cloud kitchen brand ‘The Bowl Company’ in the Delhi-NCR market after a period of pilot run.

“The expansion of The Bowl Company in Delhi/NCR was an experiment we ran to bring new food experiences to users. This experiment has led to its due learnings, even as we focus on operational excellence for the brand,” a company spokesperson confirmed to Business Today.

The company further said it will continue to invest and grow the brand in cities like Bangalore, Chennai, and Hyderabad.

The Bowl Company was first launched in Bengaluru in early 2017. It offers food in a bowl and currently operates over 20 outlets in the



city.

Stock Market Today: Asian markets, oil prices, FPI flows & 7 other things you should know

Nifty Bank Outlook: Keep booking profits at high; Canara Bank, PNB and BOB to do well among PSBs

The curious case of Adani-NDTV open offer

Technical tools used by experts to predict stock market trends

The development comes days after Swiggy’s

cured a \$700 million round led by American investment management company, Invesco with participation from Prosus.

Swiggy’s primary rival in India, Zomato, reported that its consolidated revenue for the second quarter surged 62.20 per cent to Rs 1,661.30 crore from Rs 1,024.20 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. Zomato reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 250.80 crore for the September quarter, which was higher than June quarter’s Rs 186 crore loss but less than the year-ago’s Rs 434.90 crore loss. Consolidated revenue for the quarter surged 62.20 per cent to Rs 1,661.30 crore from Rs 1,024.20 crore in the corresponding quarter last year.

Earlier this month, Zomato said it will lay off 3 per cent of its workforce.

India on track to achieve 6.8-7 pc GDP growth this fiscal: CEA

NEW DELHI

The Indian economy is on track to achieve a 6.8-7 per cent GDP growth in the current fiscal, Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said on Wednesday.

He said the economic recovery momentum is continuing and the GDP is averaging the 2019-20 level.

“In 2022-23, the economy is on track to reach a 6.8-7 per cent growth in the current fiscal,” he said, adding festival sales, PMI, bank credit growth and auto sales data shows that the economy has maintained momentum despite global headwinds.

The IMF has projected Indian economy to grow at 6.8 per cent this fiscal, while the RBI has pegged it at 7 per cent.

India’s economic growth slowed



down to 6.3 per cent in the July-September quarter of this fiscal, as against 8.4 per cent in the same period 2021-22.

India’s economy grew by 9.7 per cent growth in the first half (April-September) of this fiscal.

Markets rise in early trade amid firm global trends

NEW DELHI

Benchmark indices rallied in early trade on Thursday tracking firm global market trends and continuous foreign fund inflows.

Buying in IT counters also added to the momentum.

After a firm beginning, the 30-share BSE Sensex further rallied 483.42 points to 63,583.07, its lifetime intraday peak in early trade.

The broader NSE Nifty climbed 129.25 points to 18,887.60.

Among the Sensex pack, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Wipro, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, Larsen & Toubro and HDFC were the major winners.

Hindustan Unilever, Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra and NTPC were among the laggards.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong were trading higher.

Wall Street had ended significantly higher on Wednesday.

“Fed chief Jerome Powell’s observation that ‘it makes sense to moderate the pace of rate hikes’ has come as a shot in the arm for the bulls to take the ongoing rally forward,” said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

The dip in the dollar index to 105.5



and the US 10-year bond yield declining sharply to 3.63 per cent are hugely favourable for continuation of FII inflows, Vijayakumar added.

The 30-share barometer rallied 417.81 points or 0.67 per cent to settle at 63,099.65, its fresh record closing high on Wednesday. The Nifty advanced 140.30 points or 0.75 per cent to end at record high of 18,758.35.

“Strong global cues led by overnight surge in the US markets is expected to give local equities a major fillip in early trades on Thursday, after Fed Chair Powell hinted at a smaller rate hike in

RBI may go for another 35 bps rate hike before pause

NEW DELHI, DEC 01: Exactly a fortnight ahead of the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI’s) next monetary policy review, a key market indicator of interest rates — the overnight indexed swap (OIS) — suggests that the central bank may tighten policy by 35 basis points and then refrain from further rate hikes.

RBI Deputy Governor Michael Patra recently described the OIS as the primary instrument for hedging interest rate risk in India. The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the RBI will meet on December 5-7.

Overnight indexed swaps, which are derivative products, were initially developed as a tool for investors to hedge their interest rate exposure to sovereign bonds. Over time, the market evolved into one that, to a great extent, involves taking a bet on the future direction of interest rates.

When OIS rates fall, market participants express expectations of easier financial conditions.

A rise in swap rates typically points towards tighter financial conditions and rate hikes.

From October 14 to November 21, two of the most active OIS contracts — the one-year swap rate and the five-year swap rate have declined by 40 basis points and 50 basis points, respec-



tively, Bloomberg data showed.

The fall in swaps was brought about by softer inflation prints in India and the US.

“At present, the OIS pricing is showing a 35-basis point rate hike by the RBI in December.

“The current pricing is because of the latest inflation data, both in the US and India.” Traders now feel that on the domestic front, we are somewhere close to the peak on the repo rate,” said Naveen Singh, head of trading at ICICI Securities Primary Dealership.

While this recent plunge does not mean that the market expects the RBI to immediately start cutting interest rates, it shows expectations of the central bank calling an end to its current tightening cycle, traders said.

So far in 2022, the RBI has hiked the repo rate by a cumulative 190 basis points to 5.90 per cent, in order to

tackle elevated inflation.

“If you see the one-cross-one forward rate (the relevant one-year forward rate), it is at 6.40 per cent, which tells us that the RBI won’t hike rates beyond 6.25 per cent.” The 15 bps above that is the funding cost premium.

“So, the curve is telling us that after a 35-basis point hike, the RBI will take a long pause,” Singh said.

The expectation of the RBI’s rate hike cycle ending after December is further elucidated by a rare occurrence -- an inversion in the swap curve.

This implies that the market expects concerns of slowing economic growth to play out over a more-than-one-year time frame, which would make a case for the RBI to opt for a looser monetary policy.

At present, two-year swap rates and five-year swap rates are sharply lower than the one-year swap.

On Tuesday the one-year swap rate closed at 6.70 per cent, while the two-year and five-year swaps closed at 6.45 and 6.43 per cent, respectively, Clearing Corporation data showed.

Under usual circumstances, rates on longer-term debt instruments are higher than those on short-term instruments in order to compensate for uncertainty regarding inflation and growth dynamics over a larger time frame.

This also generally holds true for yields on government bonds. “Now, I think there is a consensus of a 35-basis point rate hike in December with a lot of people talking about a change in stance to neutral,” said Vikas Goel, PNB Gilts MD & CEO. “The inversion is our way of pointing to growth slowing down a lot. If you look at the one-year swap over the two-year swap, the inversion is quite sharp.

This is the BMW i7 Audi RS 5 Sportback with competition plus package Interior Design” They (RBI) might start reducing rates fairly quickly.

“That is what the OIS market is telling me right now,” he said.

Goyal added the caveat that the OIS market is often heavily influenced by overseas factors and as such was not a watertight indicator of domestic rate expectations.

Bickram Ghosh, co-curator at Serendipity Arts Festival, reflects on how Covid-19 reshaped music-making

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Serendipity Arts Festival (SAF) 2022 is back in Goa. Scheduled from December 15 to 23, the fifth edition promises to be a showstopper with hundreds of performances. A line-up of immersive and interdisciplinary programmes has been put together by a panel of curators across disciplines from performing, visual to culinary arts and crafts including Quasar Thakore Padamsee for theatre and Geeta Chandran and Mayuri Upadhyaya for dance.



Within the seven disciplines, Bickram Ghosh and Ehsaan Noorani will curate music for the festival with a wide range of live concerts spanning classical, folk, indie pop, and rock. Ghosh, noted classical tabla player, continued to be prolific through the pandemic by releasing music on audio platforms and OTT. Here he highlights key acts from Serendipity with The Week alongside pausing to reflect on the reinventions that the music industry underwent in the last two years.

How do you feel Covid impacted the independent music industry and how much of it has recovered?

There is no doubt that Covid impacted almost every industry, but music performance was very badly hit. Even top artists didn't have shows for two years. Obviously, that was a humongous setback, but interestingly human beings are creatures of invention and reinvention. I think the music industry reinvented itself very quickly. Even during the pandemic, I can speak for myself, and many others, who were doing online shows. I did quite a few online shows and even, in fact, we recorded the shows in auditoriums with camera shoots. Those shows were bought by the audience!

The music industry was also producing a lot of content for streaming platforms. I think now things are back to normal and in some ways after living without the wonderful pleasure of going out and listening to music, audiences are thronging themselves back

into the theatres. Interestingly, today after the whole wheel of reinvention, we are doing a large number of shows which are live. But we are still doing some online shows and online content. So, all of this together has resulted in a bigger market, one the live market and two, the digital market.

With cultural festivals like Serendipity back on the ground, how is likely to benefit the overall ecosystem of the music industry?

Serendipity is an iconic festival, which has gained fame in a very short period of time. It is a festival that encompasses many forms of art. Music is a very important part of the artistic texture of Serendipity. I think it is great news for music and art in general that Serendipity is back on the ground and it already receiving tremendous response. I think festivals like Serendipity, psychologically, give a big boost to musicians in the way they feel and are an assurance that everything is okay now, where we can all go and perform freely. It's a big festival where there are 2,000 performances. I feel very happy and honoured to be curating the music for it along with Ehsaan Noorani.

Some interesting acts you would like to highlight this year at Serendipity? I would like to go by the highlights of my own curation for Serendipity. First, Ricky Kej who has won his second Grammy this year. There is a wonderful classical fusion featuring Purbayan Chatterjee, Taufiq Qureshi, Rakesh Chaurasia on flute,

Ojas Adhiya on tabla. There's the act that I am not just curating but also participating in, which is called Kings of Percussions. I am also playing in that and it features Shivamani, myself, and Selvaganesh. It promises to be a very high-energy act. I would also like to highlight Sufi folk, which is a wonderful confluence of Sufi and folk music from across the nation featuring the wonderful Sufi kawals, Parvati Kumari, and the brilliant Kalpana Patowary on folk vocals. There is this show which is very close to my heart called 'The World of Pancham', which features the great R.D. Burman's numbers played by people who were actually his team of musicians. There's a synergy between screen and stage here in the show, which we are trying to make as seamless as possible. Besides, there is Sanjay Mandal and the thrown waste, which is a fantastic act with the scrap material and the kids from the street. There's River Raga, where there are 9 acts featuring several very good younger-generation classical artists both from north India and south India featuring vocal and instrumental music.

Going forward, how will the production and consumption of music change in India after this long spell of inactivity when so many people took to appreciating music a lot more?

I think the one big thing that people have realised is how much they missed music during these two years, which is why literally every show is getting a fantastic response from the audience. I did a festival called 'Naav' earlier this year and it was overflowing with people. Another takeaway is that music consumption digitally has increased many-fold. It is a big change because it means, we too, as artists have to cater to that segment. I am creating a lot of music in the studio now, releasing it both on YouTube and streaming platforms. Besides this, film for OTT is a big space and I do a lot of film scoring. A lot of digital platforms are going to become very big in the near future and we as artists have to be prepared for that.

The Kashmir Files row: Anupam Kher and Pallavi Joshi SLAM IFFI 2022 jury head Nadav Lapid for his comments on the film

The Kashmir Files is yet again in the news and this time, the film has been embroiled in a controversy after the remarks of the IFFI 2022 jury head, Nadav Lapid over the film directed by Vivek Agnihotri. Indians have come in strong support of the movie The Kashmir Files against the comments by the Israeli screenwriter and director at the closing ceremony of the IFFI 2022 ceremony. Indian Filmmaker Sudipto Sen shared a statement saying that the comments made by Nadav on The Kashmir Files were entirely personal and not the comments of the jury panel. And now, Anupam Kher and Pallavi Joshi have also slammed Nadav Lapid for calling The Kashmir Files a propaganda film. While Kher shared a video and called him out, Pallavi shared an official statement online. Also Read - The Kashmir File row: Israel filmmaker Nadav Lapid calls movie 'propaganda'; Anupam Kher, Vivek Agnihotri react [Watch Video]

Anupam Kher Slams IFFI Goa 2022 jury head Nadav Lapid for his comments on The Kashmir Files

Anupam Kher took to his social media handle and shared a video in which he talked about people who refused to see the movie present in the true story form and called it a propaganda film. He said that some people cannot see or show the truth in its true form and such



people see the truth in a very colourful form. Anupam Kher said that some people cannot digest the movie and the truth about the exodus of the Kashmir Pandits. He asked people who cannot digest and accept the truth of The Kashmir Files, to stay quiet and close their eyes. Without mincing his words he talked about the friendship Israel and India share and how they both have been victims of terrorism from

neighbouring countries. He adds that there are anti-nationalists in every country while taking a dig at Lapid. The Kashmir Files is back to trending in the Entertainment News section.

Pallavi Joshi condemns Nadav Lapid's comment on The Kashmir Files

Pallavi Joshi, the actress and producer of The Kashmir Files shared a statement on her Instagram handle. The actress

said that she and Vivek (the director) knew about people who would not be able to digest the stark truth shown in the movie. She expressed her sadness and disappointment saying that 'a creative platform was used to promote their political agendas to preserve an old, false and jaded narrative about Kashmir.' The Kashmir Files actress thanked fans for their support amidst the controversial comments.

Gold, HIT: The Second Case, An Action Hero, Saudi Vellakka: Theatre releases in 1st week of December

December is off to a good start with some eagerly-awaited films hitting the big screens in the first week. Let us take a quick look at some of the major releases this week.

Gold (Malayalam): December 1

A much-awaited Malayalam film, Gold arrives in theatres on December 1, Thursday after being rescheduled earlier due to production delays. Written and directed by Alphonse Puthran, Gold is bankrolled by Supriya Menon and Listin Stephen. Gold, touted as a dark comedy, features Prithviraj Sukumaran and Nayanthara in the lead. The film also features Ajmal Ameer, Krishna Sankar, Shabareesh Varma, Chemban, Vinod Jose, Vinay Forrt and Roshan Mathew.

DSP (Tamil): December 2

Tamil actor Vijay Sethupathi is back with his next film DSP, set to arrive in theatres on Friday. Directed by Ponram, the action-packed entertainer will see Sethupathi essay a cop. Anukreethy Vas plays the female lead in the film, which features actor Prabhakara as the antagonist. With D. Imam's music, DSP is produced by Kaarthekyan Santhanam and presented by Karthik Subbaraj's Stone Bench Films.

HIT: The Second Case (Telugu) – December 2

The Telugu crime thriller starring Adivi Sesh and Meenakshi Chaudhary is the second installment in the Hit franchise. The film has garnered attention in the wake of the gruesome murder of Shraddha Walkar in Delhi. Coincidentally, HIT: The Second Case's



trailer revealed the plot revolves around the brutal murder of a woman called Sanjana who was "butchered" to death. Speaking to reporters recently, Sesh said director Sailesh Kolanu had written the story months before the murder took place. It is purely by chance that one of the characters in HIT: The Second Case is named Shraddha, who assists the police in the probe.

An Action Hero (Hindi): December 2

Ayushman Khurrana-starrer action flick arrives in theatres on Friday. The film, directed by Anirudh Iyer, follows an artist's journey both in front and behind the lens. The film is produced by filmmaker Aanand L Rai's banner Colour Yellow Production and Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar's T-Series. Ayushmann, known for his socially relevant family dramas, is trying to break that trend and experiment with a different genre with this quirky

film.

Saudi Vellakka (Malayalam): December 2

The Malayalam film directed by Tharun Moorthy of 'Operation Java' fame is another socially relevant drama featuring Lukman Lukku, Binu Pappan and Vincy Aloshious. According to reports, the film is based on some true events. Saudi Vellakka has already garnered some positive reviews after its premiere at the 53rd IFFI in Goa recently.

Thimayya & Thimayya (Kannada): December 2

The slice-of-life family drama directed by Sanjay Kumar, features real-life actor couple Diganth and Aindrita Ray in the lead. The film also stars Anant Nag and Shubra Aiyappa. The film, said to be about relationships, is expected to evoke a mixture of strong emotions in the viewers, the team said earlier.

Chandramukhi 2: Kangana Ranaut replaces Jyothika for the lead role in sequel to Rajinikanth starrer horror comedy

Kangana Ranaut is one of the most popular actresses in the country. She is currently gearing up and working on her next, Emergency. And the latest buzz states that Kangana has been approached for a lead role in South Movie, Chandramukhi sequel. Yes, you read that. The original movie starred Rajinikanth and Jyothika in the lead role. Chandramukhi is one of the most adored films and is considered to be one of the cult horror comedy movies. And now, the sequel is in the making. For Chandramukhi 2, Kangana Ranaut has been approached to play the lead role. Also Read - Ahead of Ranveer Singh in Cirkus, list of Varun Dhawan, Kangana Ranaut and other actors who did double roles and their box office collections

Kangana Ranaut in Chandramukhi 2

Kangana has always been fondly vocal about her love for regional cinema. She praised Kantara and more films and talked about how they are connected to the roots and have a different way of story-telling. And guess what? After her Thalaivi, Kangana Ranaut is heading South again. As per a report in ABPLive, Kangana will be seen as Chandramukhi in the sequel of the Jyothika and Rajinikanth starrer movie. Renowned film actor and director Raghava Lawrence will be stepping into the shoes of Rajinikanth while Kangana is into Jyothika's shoes, it seems. Kangana often grabs headlines in Entertainment News.

Neeta Lulla describes Chandramukhi and shares her excitement

Neeta Lulla is designing the look of Kangana Ranaut's Chandramukhi. She describes Chandramukhi as a person who has a lot of grace in her every Adaa. She says that Chandramukhi's being is a walking spirit of dance.



While the designer believes that it is going to be a challenging film, she expresses her excitement to work with Kangana Ranaut. "Her sheer strength as an actor lies in the ability to lose herself to the character she is playing. Can't wait to see what amalgamates in Chandramukhi 2," Neeta said, reports the portal.

Also Read - Ranbir Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, Kareena

Kapoor Khan and more celebs who entered the film industry without completing their education

Meanwhile, as per the report, Kangana Ranaut is going to begin shooting for Chandramukhi 2 in the first week of December. The actress will return to Emergency after wrapping the first schedule and will resume Chandramukhi 2 in January.

Bhediya box office collection Day 4: Ajay Devgn's Drishyam 2 beats Varun Dhawan starrer on its first Monday, continues strong hold

Varun Dhawan and Kriti Sanon's Bhediya sees a downfall on its first Monday as it has managed to earn only 3.85 crore and it is definitely not good news for the makers. While the film has been receiving a rave response and the audience is

going gaga over the film. While there is one more film that has been shining ever since its release and has turned out to be a blockbuster. Ajay Devgn's Drishyam, continue to stay strong at the box office and this Monday it has even managed to beat Varun this

week's release Bhediya.

Varun and Kriti's film opened with low numbers and later shows a healthy jump in its weekend. However, now the film saw a drop of more than 50 per cent after Friday and it has earned around rupees 3.85 crore. And now it is specu-

lated that the lifetime business of the film might be between 50-60 crore. While talking about Ajay Devgn and Tabu starrer Drishyam it earned 5.44 crore on its second Monday and it is expected to do a lifetime business of 200 crore and more at the box office.

Long Covid linked with increased body weight : Study

Overweight women are more likely to experience symptoms of long Covid, according to a new research.

The study from the University of East Anglia (UEA) shows that having a higher Body Mass Index (BMI) is linked with the condition, and that women are more likely to experience long Covid than men. It is one of the largest studies on long Covid in the UK, the study said.

The research, published in PLOS Global Public Health, also shows that people with long Covid were much more likely to need additional, and often lasting, care at the National Health System (NHS) than those who make a swift recovery.

"Long Covid is a complex condition that develops during or after having Covid, and it is classified as such when symptoms continue for more than 12 weeks," said Professor Vassilios Vassiliou, from UEA's Norwich Medical School.

"Just over two million people in the UK are thought to suffer with long Covid and it affects people in different ways. Breathlessness, a cough, heart palpitations, headaches, and severe fatigue are among the most prevalent symptoms," said Vassiliou.

"Other symptoms may include chest

pain or tightness, brain fog, insomnia, dizziness, joint pain, depression and anxiety, tinnitus, loss of appetite, headaches, and changes to sense of smell or taste," said Vassiliou.

"We wanted to find out what factors might make people more or less susceptible to developing long Covid," said Vassiliou.

The research team surveyed patients in Norfolk, UK, who had received a positive Covid PCR test result in 2020. A total of 1,487 people took part in an online survey which covered long-Covid symptoms such as breathlessness, chest pain, fatigue, memory problems, and anxiety.

They found that more than half of the participants (774) were experiencing at least one long Covid symptom, showing a high self-reported prevalence.

Next, they looked to see what factors might make people more or less likely to suffer the condition by looking at the participants' medical records.

Factors including BMI, sex, medication use, other health conditions, and whether they lived in a deprived area were taken into account.

"We show that more than a half of the survey respondents who tested positive for Covid in the East of England during the first year of the pandemic went on to report long Covid symptoms," said Vassiliou.

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"All of these people were infected in the months before the Covid vaccination programme was rolled out and they suffered from numerous new symptoms that were not present before their Covid infection," said Vassiliou.

"Interestingly, we found that more women than men had long Covid symptoms. We also found that having a higher BMI was linked with long Covid."

"This is really important because information like this can be used to profile those people who are 'at risk' of developing long Covid," said Vassiliou.

"We also found that people with long Covid were over three times more likely to use healthcare services than those who didn't display long Covid symptoms," said Vassiliou.

"We hope that our work will help policymakers plan local services and also inform the wider public of the scale of the long Covid pandemic," said Vassiliou.

"When COVID-19 struck it was new to everyone. All clinicians and the wider health and care system worked extremely hard together to deal with the impacts of the virus and protect our people and communities," said Dr. Mark Lim, interim service director of the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board.

New drug slows cognitive decline in patients with Alzheimer's



A drug candidate reduced cognitive decline by 27 percent in people with early-stage Alzheimer's compared with those on a placebo after a year and a half. The drug lecanemab from Eisai and Biogen slowed cognitive decline in a closely watched trial but may carry a risk of serious side effects for certain patients, according to detailed data from the study which were presented at the Clinical Trials on Alzheimer's Disease meeting in San Francisco. If the results stand up, the treatment would be the first of its kind to show a strong signal of cognitive benefit in a robust trial, according to a report in Nature.

"Today's announcement gives patients and their families hope that lecanemab, if approved, can potentially slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease, and provide a clinically meaningful impact on cognition and function," said Michel Vounatsos, Chief Executive Officer at Biogen. "Importantly, the study shows that removal of aggregated amyloid beta in the brain is associated with a slowing of disease in patients at the early stage of the disease. We want to thank the many patients who participated in this groundbreaking global study and want to acknowledge the clinical investigators

who worked tirelessly to increase the enrollment of traditionally underrepresented populations. As pioneers in neuroscience, we believe defeating this disease will require multiple approaches and treatment options, and we look forward to continuing the discussion about the significance of these findings with the patient, scientific, and medical communities."The Alzheimer's Association said the data confirms the drug "can meaningfully change the course of the disease," and called on US regulators to approve the company's application for accelerated approval.

In July 2022, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) accepted Eisai's Biologics License Application (BLA) for lecanemab under the accelerated approval pathway and granted Priority Review. The Prescription Drugs User Fee Act action date (PDUFA) is set for January 6, 2023. The FDA has agreed that the results of Clarity AD can serve as the confirmatory study to verify the clinical benefit of lecanemab. In an effort to secure traditional FDA approval for lecanemab as soon as possible, Eisai submitted the BLA through the FDA's Accelerated Approval Pathway so that the agency could complete its review of all lecanemab data with the exception of the data from the confirmatory Clarity AD study.

New potential drug target to treat heart disease found: Study

Scientists have uncovered details of a phenomenon that contributes to coronary artery disease, more commonly known as heart disease, an advance that may lead to new drug treatments for fighting heart disease, according to a study.

Soon after cholesterol and fat start depositing on the lining of the blood vessels that supply your heart, the smooth muscle cells that give the blood vessels strength and flexibility start to get bigger and multiply.

While scientists studying the phenomenon suspect these vascular smooth muscle cells are trying to help, this atypical behavior for these strong cells instead contributes to coronary artery disease.

In a bit of a vicious cycle, stents as well as bypass grafts used to treat coronary artery disease can prompt the same response.

Now Medical College of Georgia (MCG) scientists report new insight into how the cells enable this unhealthy growth and a new target to intervene.

The endothelial cells that line our blood vessels are in constant communication with the layers of vascular smooth muscle cells that encase them and play a key role in regulating our blood pressure, said Yuqing Huo, director of the Vascular Inflammation Program in the Vascular Biology Center at MCG.

In states of good health, for example, the two cell types share messages about how it is time for our blood vessels to dilate a little because we are exercising. Early in vascular disease, however the conversations change, said Huo, corresponding author of the study in the journal Circulation.

"They get the message that something is wrong," said Huo, and existing cells get exponentially bigger and start proliferating, which these cells don't normally do, perhaps in an effort to make more room inside for blood to flow since cholesterol and fat are narrowing the existing



passageway.

"Normally, the smooth muscle cells provide strength. If they start to proliferate a lot, it changes their identity," Huo says.

Whatever the reason, the result is more narrowing and scarring of the vital passageway for blood and worsening disease. So, the scientists looked at the building blocks needed to enable the unhealthy response.

They knew that growing more and bigger cells required more DNA, RNA and the proteins they produce. To make that happen required more purines, one of two chemical compounds in the body used to make the building blocks of DNA, in this case adenine and guanine.

What they didn't know was precisely how these cells make more purine when faced with arterial disease, says Dr. Qian Ma, postdoctoral fellow with Huo and the study's first author.

There are two fundamental ways cells come up with purine: One is to essentially make it from scratch, called de novo purine synthesis, and the other is through recycling.

The MCG scientists are the first to find that the higher-energy consuming de novo purine synthesis is increased in this scenario, Ma said. In the scar tissue and

stage, an intravenous drip for seven days, which requires hospitalisation, the researchers said. Patients were also required to undergo a spinal tap, where fluid is collected from the spine, to diagnose the stage of sleeping sickness to determine the most appropriate treatment, they said.

In 2019, fexinidazole was introduced, a 10-day oral drug developed by DNDi as a first-line treatment for both stages of the disease, but its administration still requires skilled staff and, often, hospitalisation.

The new prospective study looks at the efficacy of one oral dose of acoziborole in treating g-HAT.

"Sleeping sickness threatens millions of people across sub-Saharan Africa. Many of the people at risk live in remote rural areas where there is little access to adequate health services, and where acoziborole has the potential to revolutionise treatment for sleeping sickness," said Dr. Antoine Tarral, Head of Human African Trypanosomiasis Clinical Program at DNDi, and lead author of the study.

More boys with cancer being diagnosed than girls in India: Lancet study

More boys than girls with cancer in India are being diagnosed with the disease and the probable cause for this is gender bias in society, according to a study published in The Lancet Oncology.

The researchers collected individual data of children aged 0-19 years with cancer extracted from the hospital-based records of three cancer centres in India between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2019.

They also used data from two population-based cancer registries: PBCRs in Delhi between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2014 and Madras Metropolitan Tumour Registry between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2017.

The researchers from All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi and Cancer Institute (WIA) Chennai calculated the male to female sex ratio from the three hospitals in the context of the ratio in the corresponding PBCRs.

This ratio allowed them to see how many boys with cancer were seeking treatment for each girl seeking treatment.

The team separately analysed the male to female ratios of patients undergoing stem cell transplant which is a comparatively expensive procedure used in cancer care.



"We observed that among nearly 11,000 patients registered in the PBCRs, there was significant skew in favour of boys for getting diagnosed with cancer. Similarly, among the 22,000 children with cancer enrolled in the three hospitals, we saw that more boys were seeking treatment than girls," said Professor Sameer Bakhshi, from Department of Medical Oncology, AIIMS New Delhi.

"However, when we looked at sex ratios among patients seeking

cancer care in the context of sex ratios at diagnosis, the skew in sex ratios was no longer apparent. This tells us that the bias towards boys originates at the community level. Once children are brought forward and diagnosed, there is no further gender bias in seeking treatment," Bakhsh, the corresponding author of the study, told PTI.

The researchers noted that lesser girls were seeking treatment in hospitals in centres in Northern India as compared to Southern India.

The disparity between the genders was more for patients coming from rural as compared to urban areas. This may have to do variations in social fabric in different parts of the country, they said.

The study also found that lesser number of girls were coming to the hospital if the distance of the centre from their home was over 100 kilometers, signifying that if costs related to treatment increase, the bias would likely increase.

The researchers observed that the male to female ratios in Delhi have been improving over the last 15 years.

"The study clearly shows that more boys with cancer are being diagnosed than girls and the probable cause for this is gender bias in society," Bakhshi said.

Lt Governor chairs meeting of financial institutions, public sector banks & govt departments

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today chaired a meeting of financial institutions, public sector banks and government departments at the Civil Secretariat.

During the meeting, the Lt Governor directed banks and the departments to work in close collaboration for seamless credit flow to address the needs of industries, youth, and farmers for their capacity building and entrepreneurship development.

Sharing his views on the overall assessment of financial inclusion led interventions and reaching out to underbanked sections of rural



economy, the Lt Governor said that our collective efforts must strive towards supporting sectors working as the power engines of our economy.

Earlier, department-wise issues and analysis of banking sector services were presented before the Lt Governor via a PowerPoint presentation.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Sh Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department; Sh Prashant Goyal, Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department; Sh Baldev Prakash, MD& CEO, J&K Bank; Ms. Manddeep Kaur, Commissioner/Secretary,

Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj; Ms Sheetal Nanda, Commissioner/Secretary, Social Welfare Department; Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, CEO, Mission Youth; Ms. Indu Kanwal Chib, Mission Director, JKRLM; HODs, Heads and representatives of several banks operating in the UT were present.

Comm Secy S&T inaugurates day-long awareness programme on GCRSS at Katra

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

The Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development (JAKEDA) today conducted day-long awareness programme on Grid Connected Rooftop Solar Scheme (GCRSS) of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Gol at Conference Hall, Spiritual Growth Centre, here.

The programme was inaugurated by Commissioner Secretary, Science & Technology (S&T), Saurabh Bhagat.

SDM Katra, Angrej Singh, elected members of MC, Katra, officers of Agriculture, Horticulture, PDD, PWD Departments and representatives of Hotels and Restaurants Association, Katra attended the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Saurabh Bhagat said that the Ministry has sanctioned a cumulative capacity of 200 MW for Jammu City and 20 MW for the rest of the Districts of the UT wherein the Ministry provides an incentive of 40% for all the Solar Plants upto 3 KW capacity and 20% beyond 3 KW upto 10 KW. He added that in addition to above, a flat subsidy of 25% shall be provided by the UT government for all the Solar Plants upto 10 KW capacity to make the scheme viable for residential consumers.

The Commissioner Secretary suggested to install



a solar power plant at a centralized location in Katra town so that the benefit of solar energy generated could be passed on to the individual beneficiaries / inhabitants of the adjacent area through virtual net metering..

The Commissioner Secretary also informed about PM-KUSUM scheme which is primarily meant for upliftment of farmers wherein the farmers can install subsidized Solar Powered Pumps upto 10 H.P. capacity for which the Ministry provides 50% subsidy and the UT of J&K provides an additional subsidy of 30% of the total cost of the system with farmers having to bear only 20% cost of the pump. He requested the elected member of MC Katra to identify the prospective farmers who could avail the benefits

under Solar Pumping Scheme.

Commissioner Secretary also informed about establishment of Biotechnology Park by Jammu & Kashmir Science Technology & Innovation Council (JKST&IC) wherein the farmers can cultivate aromatic plants like Lavender, Damascus Rose and other aromatic plants for extraction of oils and generate a handsome income out of the same.

CEO, JAKEDA, Dr. P. R Dhar advised the MC, Katra to identify the prospective beneficiaries under Solar Rooftop Scheme, wherein the beneficiary share could partly be paid out of the DDC/BDC grants and the rest by the individual beneficiary. He also informed that the group housing societies could also avail the

subsidy under the Rooftop Scheme by installing the solar power plant at a Centrally located place and take the net metering benefit individually in a proportional manner.

During the programme, the officers were apprised about the various benefits/incentives extended by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy MNRE Gol, under the Rooftop Solar Scheme, which is primarily meant for off-setting the Monthly Electricity Bills by residential consumers of UT of J&K through net metering mechanism.

The pamphlets containing all the related information of Rooftop Solar Scheme, like prices, subsidy amount, beneficiary share, contact numbers of nodal persons, were also distributed among the officers on the occasion.

Ensure 100% certification of works taken up under JJM: CS

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta on Thursday said that the certification of completed works under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is of paramount importance and should be carried out for all the finished works by the concerned department.

He made these remarks during a periodical review meeting held by him to take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the Mission in the UT.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Jal Shakti Department; CEO, JJM; Chief Engineers and other concerned officers of the department.

Outstation based officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

Dr Mehta impressed upon the officers to speed up their pace of work so that the deadline is not missed further. He enjoined upon them to enhance their outreach activities also for the awareness of masses. He told them to give special focus on the works the demands of which had



been made during the Back to Village or upcoming My Town My Pride programmes.

The Chief Secretary exhorted upon the senior officers of the department to visit all the works themselves either physically or virtually to have better idea about the overall progress. He directed them to take feedback from Panchayat representatives and public about these works. He asked them to give due priority to the water quality and sustainability of source of each scheme.

Dr Mehta further urged the department to constitute the District PMUs forthwith for quality monitoring of the execution of works. He also told them to

train the persons in these PMUs for effective implementation of this Mission as per its objectives. The need repackaging the irresponsible tenders was discussed at length. He complimented the department for adopting a professional management technique like Critical Path Method (CPM) to have insights about their weak areas and thereby formulation of suitable action plan. He said that the officers should be made aware about its proper use and understanding. He asked the department to implement online billing by executing agencies immediately. He suggested them to see for analogies in other government departments

and customize the same to meet their requirements.

The Principal Secretary informed the meeting that the department is looking into the possibility of allotting nearly 328 works of laying pipe networks simultaneously.

He further elucidated that nearly 70000 Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) had been provided under this Mission. It was said that out of 2504 allotted works 1409 are under various stages of completion. It was also revealed that 168 works stands completed and up to December end all the works of the Mission would be allotted for execution and timely completion.

Advisor Bhatnagar addresses World AIDS Day programme at PPS GCW Gandhinagar

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, DEC 01

Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar today remarked that that on this World AIDS Day we all should reiterate our commitment towards fighting this AIDS and eradicate this silent killer in our society.

The Advisor made these remarks while speaking during the World AIDS Day programme at Padmashree Padma Sachdev (PPS) Government P.G College for Women (GCW) Gandhinagar here.

The programme was organised by Jammu and Kashmir AIDS Control Society (JKACS) in collaboration with the Padmashree Padma Sachdev Government P.G College for Women under the theme 'Equalise: Achieving Equity to End HIV'.

Addressing the large gathering of students, medical researchers, doctors, college faculty and other senior officers of health department, Advisor Bhatnagar said that we have come a long way in ensuring that an HIV infected person lives a productive life with hope and confidence and therefore it should be our firm resolve that we provide all possible handholding to the affected persons and help

them live a normal life.

Speaking on the theme of this programme, Advisor Bhatnagar said that the theme emphasis on the message of equality and human rights and therefore we should be committed towards removing the stigma associated with this disease so that the affected persons come forward for testing and treatment and do not feel any kind of segregation from the society.

The Advisor maintained that a well established system has been put in place by the Government for affected persons and we all need to create awareness among them so that they can benefit from this system. He added that the prevention measures are very important for combating this disease and therefore we need to create maximum awareness among the masses about the same.

"Students have a great role to play in creating awareness among the people about the spread of this disease as well as reducing the stigmatisation associated with it", Advisor Bhatnagar said.

The Advisor further said the launch of SOCH (Strengthening Overall Care for HIV beneficiaries) portal by JKACS is very significant step as it will help to track and record

beneficiary service and inventory transactions in the National HIV program to improve service delivery and beneficiary health outcome. He also appealed to all concerned to make every effort to combat drug abuse addiction and needle use associated with it. He also commended the JKACS, health department and other volunteers for working in this sector and establishing an equitable society for the affected persons.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Health and Medical Education, Bhupinder Kumar said that access to healthcare is a challenge when it comes to AIDS and therefore affordable and equitable access to healthcare should be our main resolve while dealing with the issues of AIDS affected persons. He added that with timely awareness and right kind of treatment to affected persons, this disease will be combated to its larger extent.

The Secretary further said that with the advent of social media and digital world, an environment of information and awareness on prevention of AIDS can be created for better care of patients as well as for reducing their stigmatisation.

Addressing the gathering, Project Director,


JKACS, J&K, Dr Samir Mattoo said that by celebrating World AIDS Day, we all have an opportunity to unite for fight against AIDS. In his address, he also highlighted the achievements of JKACS and infrastructure established by them for dealing with the issues of HIV infected persons across the J&K. Remarkably, on the occasion, two AIDS survivors also spoke and expressed their journey of dealing with this disease. They complimented the JKACS for their timely support while dealing with this virus.

During the programme, Advisor Bhatnagar also launched the SOCH portal of JKACS which will help in better management of patients as well as improving the health care service delivery. The Advisor also distributed Baby Kits and other personal hygiene products among the children.

Director, Health services Jammu, Director AYUSH, J&K, Principal GMC, Jammu, Principals of newly established medical colleges, Additional CMO, JKACS, senior officers of health department, medical researchers, doctors, faculty of college and large number of students were present on the occasion.



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