

IN BRIEF

New Delhi to host first-ever Conference for Women Peacekeepers

New Delhi, Feb 23 (UNI) : The first-ever Conference for Women Peacekeepers will be held in New Delhi on February 24-25 that will see participation by women peacekeepers from 35 Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) from the Global South.

The conference, being held on the theme 'Women in Peacekeeping: A Global South Perspective', is being organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence and the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), a statement said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will deliver the key note address.

The United Nations will be represented by Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN Under Secretary General, Department of Peace Operations; and Christian Saunders, UN Special Coordinator. They will join other relevant stakeholders pertaining to the peacekeeping domain in the conference.

The participating women peacekeepers will also call on President Droupadi Murmu.

Mist or hazy conditions likely in Telangana in next 3 days: Met

Hyderabad, Feb 23 (UNI) Mist or hazy conditions are likely to prevail during morning hours at isolated places in Telangana during the next 3 days, Meteorological Centre said on Sunday.

In a daily weather report here, it said that a large change in maximum & minimum temperatures during the same period.

Dry weather is likely to prevail in Telangana during the next seven days.

Rainfall occurred at isolated places in the state during the last 24 hours.

The lowest minimum temperature of 15.6 degrees Celsius was recorded at Patancheru in Sangareddy district of Telangana on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday, the report added.

CM dedicates gold-plated Vimana Gopuram to Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy



(Standard Post Bureau) Hyderabad, Feb 23 : Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy dedicated the gold-plated Vimana Gopuram to Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy at Yadagirigutta in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri

district on Sunday. Before the dedication ceremony, the Chief Minister, along with his wife Ms Geetha, participated in the Maha Kumbhabhishek Samprokshan Mahotsav at 1154 hours during the

Pushkaramsa Sumuhurtana of the Moola Nakshatra Vrishabha Lagna. The programs were conducted under the direct supervision of Ramanuja Jeeyar Swamy, the 31st Peethadhipathi of

Vanamamalai Math.

Later, the Chief Minister offered prayers to Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy along with his wife Ms Geetha.

The structure has set a record as the tallest Swarna Gopuram in the country, standing 50.5 feet high with an area of 10,759 square feet. A total of 68 kg of gold was used for the gold plating. Chennai-based M/s Smart Creations carried out the work. About Rs. 80 crore was spent on the gold plating.

As part of the event, the Chief Minister and his wife, along with several ministers, MPs, MLAs, and Mathadhipathis, participated in the Mahakumbha Samprokshan programs.

Atishi to be Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly

New Delhi, Feb 23 (UNI) : The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday announced that former Delhi Chief Minister Atishi will be the Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly.

She is the first woman Leader of Opposition in the House.

The announcement was made by AAP's Delhi state President Gopal Rai today. He said that today a meeting of the AAP Legislature Party was held in which the MLAs unanimously elected Atishi as the Leader of Opposition.

Rai said that Atishi has served as the Chief Minister of Delhi very well. As the Leader of Opposition, she will have the responsibility of protecting the work done by the Kejriwal government and fulfilling the promises made by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to the people. "I thank the party's national convener Arvind Kejriwal and all the MLAs who have made me the Leader of Opposition. Whatever promises the BJP made, as the opposition, we will fulfill the responsibility of fulfilling all those promises," he said. "The people of Delhi have given us the role of opposition, and as a strong opposition, we will ensure that the BJP government fulfils all the promises it made to Delhiites," she said. During the election, Modi ji had guaranteed to give 2500 rupees a month to all the women of Delhi.

We will definitely get the BJP government to fulfill this promise," she said. AAP will raise the issues of the people with full force in the House. The fight for the rights of Delhi and Delhiites will continue. "

Predicting BJP's victory in the MLC elections, he claimed surveys already indicated Congress's downfall and accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of resorting to unethical tactics, including monetary inducements, to sway voters. He urged the public to recognise Congress's failures and place their trust in BJP to bring genuine change.

Bandi Sanjay slams Congress over paddy cultivation advisory, water mismanagement

Warangal (Telangana), Feb 23 (UNI) Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar criticised the Congress government in Telangana for advising farmers against cultivating paddy, calling it an irrational move.

He accused Congress of failing to utilize abundant water resources and surrendering Krishna River water to Andhra Pradesh, leading to water shortages and agricultural distress.

Addressing teacher voters at Bollikunta Vaagdevi Engineering College in Warangal during an MLC election campaign on Sunday, Bandi Sanjay

urged graduates, teachers, and employees to support BJP-backed candidate Sarotham Reddy.

He alleged that both BRS and Congress failed to field credible candidates, pushing independents who would ultimately align with Congress. He called on voters to elect representatives who would genuinely raise their concerns in the Legislative Council.

Highlighting the deteriorating water situation, Bandi Sanjay blamed Congress for mismanaging the Kaleshwaram project and failing to provide irrigation support despite heavy rainfall. He condemned the

government's inefficiency in addressing farmers' woes, pointing out that nearly seven lakh acres of crops had withered due to water shortages.

Additionally, he criticised the delay in fee reimbursement, alleging that Congress leaders were demanding commissions to clear pending dues, pushing educational institutions to the brink of closure. Bandi Sanjay further slammed the Congress government for failing to deliver on promises, including job creation, pension hikes, and loan waivers. He accused the Congress of neglecting public welfare while the BJP, under Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, had significantly improved India's economic standing. He emphasized the BJP's role as the primary opposition in Telangana, highlighting its efforts in fighting for teachers, employees, and the unemployed.

Predicting BJP's victory in the MLC elections, he claimed surveys already indicated Congress's downfall and accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of resorting to unethical tactics, including monetary inducements, to sway voters. He urged the public to recognise Congress's failures and place their trust in BJP to bring genuine change.

Cleanliness pioneer Sant Gadge continues to inspire us: Yogi

Prayagraj, Feb 23 (UNI) : Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday hailed Sant Gadge as a pioneer of social justice who spearheaded public awareness against caste discrimination, superstition, and uncleanness.

A grand function was held at the Ganga Pandal in Sector 1 of Maha Kumbh Nagar on Sunday to mark the 149th birth anniversary of Rashtrasant Param Pujya Gadge Maharaj.

Paying his tribute to Sant Gadge, the CM said that his life has been a beacon of inspiration for societal reform and awareness. "Wherever he travelled, he spread the message of education and cleanliness through kirtans, always carrying a broom as a symbol of his mission," he said.

Yogi recalled Sant Gadge's belief that 'God resides where there is cleanliness' and said how Prime Minister Narendra Modi furthered this very

vision through the launch of the Swachhata Abhiyan on October 2, 2014, which has now become a global movement.

He said that the message of cleanliness propagated by Sant Gadge a century ago continues to inspire millions today. "Under PM Modi's leadership, the Swachh Bharat Mission has facilitated the construction of toilets in crores of households, safeguarding women's dignity and preventing diseases," he

said. Lauding the people of Prayagraj, Yogi commended their exemplary role in maintaining cleanliness and ensuring the seamless organisation of the Maha Kumbh. He also praised the city's improved traffic management and the spirit of hospitality shown by its residents, who have embraced the Maha Kumbh as their own.

He announced that the 150th birth anniversary of Sant Gadge Ji Maharaj will be celebrated on an even

grand scale next year. He reiterated the double-engine government's commitment to social welfare and vowed to further amplify the message of cleanliness.

The CM praised Legislative Council Member Surendra Chaudhary for organising the grand event. He emphasised that the celebration not only honoured Sant Gadge's legacy but also reinforced public awareness of vital social reforms.

Indian army joins rescue efforts after SLBC tunnel collapse Near Srisaillam

Hyderabad, Feb 23 (UNI) A section of the roof, approximately 3 meters in length, of the under-construction Srisaillam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel collapsed on Saturday near Domalapenta in Nagarkurnool District, Telangana. The incident has left 6-8 workers feared trapped inside.

Rescue operations are in full swing, with the



Telangana & Andhra Sub Area coordinating efforts

to ensure the swift evacuation of those

trapped. The Engineer Task Force (ETF) of the Bison Division from Secunderabad has been deployed to assist in the operation. Army Medical Teams and Engineers, equipped with high-capacity pumping sets, armored hoses, excavators, JCBs, and bulldozers, are working tirelessly to clear the debris and facilitate a safe rescue. A joint meeting

involving the Civil Administration, NDRF, SDRF, Army, and tunnel construction contractors is currently underway to streamline efforts and enhance coordination.

The Indian Army is collaborating closely with all stakeholders to accelerate the rescue mission and ensure the safety of those trapped inside.



PM hails ISRO's feat, says it reflects resolve to touch

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed the remarkable achievements of ISRO in the space mission and mentioned its 100th rocket launch, as also the successes of Chandrayaan, Mangalyaan and Aditya L-1. Addressing the 119th episode of Mann ki Baat, Modi also hailed the Indian space agency's launch of 104 satellites into space on a single rocket. "Last month, the country witnessed the launch of ISRO's 100th rocket. This is not just a number; it also reflects our resolve to touch new heights in Space Science every day", he said. (See on page 2)

No shortage of urea, farmers should not worry: Minister



Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao said that there is no shortage of urea in the state and farmers should not worry. He held a teleconference with agricultural officials on Sunday and said that another 81,800 metric tons of urea will arrive in the state this week. (See on page 3)

Bicycles, looms given to displaced persons in Manipur



Manipur government in a bid to encourage and support the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) seeking refuge at various relief camps, distributed Mobility Support (Bicycles) to Internally Displaced students and Looms with accessories to Internally Displaced women weavers of Imphal East District on Sunday. (See on page 4)

Yogi govt telling lies after lies about Kumbh: Akhilesh Yadav



Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday alleged that Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is misleading the public by constantly lying and hurting religious sentiments. While talking to reporters after attending the ceremony, Akhilesh raised several questions related to Kumbh and accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government of a big scam. (See on page 7)

Engage constructively, focus on matters of welfare of J&K people: Jitendra to BJP MLAs

Jammu, Feb 23 (UNI) : Ahead of the crucial upcoming Budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh on Sunday urged BJP MLAs to engage constructively in the House and present a united front on matters concerning the welfare of the people of the Union Territory.

Chairing a luncheon meeting of BJP MLAs here at his residence, Dr Singh underscored the party's commitment to follow the nationalistic line, raising public-centric issues and bring pressure on the government to ensure that the governance is transparent and accountable.

The meeting focused on key public issues, legislative strategy and the legislative party's approach in the Assembly, setting the tone for an active and engaged participation in the upcoming Budget session of J&K Assembly.

The discussion revolved around pressing current concerns such as drug addiction, land encroachments and illegal mining, which have been



affecting people across the Union Territory.

Several MLAs voiced the grievances of their respective constituencies, highlighting the challenges faced by the public and stressing the need for strong legislative action.

The MLAs also deliberated on how to effectively counter the ruling party and hold it accountable for what some members described as unfulfilled promises from the ruling party's manifesto.

"Personally, in my parliamentary career, I have always followed the dictum of focussing on 'issues'

rather than 'individuals' and over the years it has proved to be quite a successful approach," said Dr Jitendra Singh and urged upon the legislators to come prepared and confront the ruling party with well studied, evidence-based interventions in the Assembly, instead of indulging in inconsequential personal attacks.

Dr Singh further said BJP has won the recent Assembly election with a vote share higher than even the ruling party and the people of Jammu region have overwhelmingly

reposed faith in the national leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with a strong urge to have a "double engine" government in J&K, as is the case in several other States.

"It is therefore imperative upon us to prove ourselves worthy of the people's confidence and register the aspirations of the people on the floor of the House," he said.

The meeting was moderated by the Leader of Opposition (LoP) Sunil Sharma, who laid out the plan for BJP's participation in the legislative

proceedings. He said such coordination meetings with the UT and central leadership of the party will be a regular phenomenon and briefed the legislators about the calendar of interactions during the next few days.

He emphasized the significance of legislative party meetings that would take place before and during the session to fine-tune the party's strategy on a daily basis.

The meeting concluded with remarks from BJP J&K President Sat Sharma, who reinforced the importance of coordination among party members and their responsibility in voicing the concerns of the people effectively in the legislature.

With the budget session set to begin soon, BJP's legislative wing is poised to play a proactive role in the Assembly, ensuring that public issues remain at the forefront of the debate, he said.

Sat Sharma urged the legislators to carefully draw their strategy for the upcoming Assembly session to play the role of an effective Opposition.

Army chief embarks on official visit to France

New Delhi, Feb 23 (UNI) Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi departed on a four-day official visit to France on Sunday, aiming to strengthen defence ties between India and France. General Dwivedi will be in France from 24th to 27th February, a Defence Ministry statement said.

On 24th, the Chief of Army Staff will engage with senior military leadership of France at Les Invalides, Paris. He will hold discussions with General Pierre Schill, CEMAT (Chef d'État-Major de l'Armée de Terre – the French Army Chief).

The aim of the meeting will be to foster stronger military ties between the two nations. The itinerary also includes a visit to the École Militaire, the prestigious Military School and Institution Complex in Paris, where Gen Dwivedi will be briefed on Future Combat Command (CCF).

Moreover, he will be briefed at the Technical Section of the French Army (STAT) and visit the Battle Lab Terre at Versailles.

On 25th, General Dwivedi will travel to Marseille, where he will visit the 3rd Division of the French Army and will be briefed on the mission and role of the 3rd Division, the bilateral exercise Shakti, India-France training cooperation, and the French Army modernisation programme (Scorpion).

The following day, he will visit Carpiagne to witness a dynamic demonstration of the Scorpion Division with live firing exercises.

On 27th, the COAS will visit the Neuve Chapelle Indian War Memorial to lay a solemn wreath in honour of the fallen Indian soldiers who participated in World War I. Later in the day, he will deliver a talk at the École de Guerre, the French Joint Staff College, highlighting the evolving nature of modern warfare and India's strategic vision.

General Dwivedi's visit aims to strengthen the military collaboration between India and France, exploring new avenues of cooperation and enhancing strategic partnerships between the two nations' armed forces.

PM hails ISRO's feat, says it reflects resolve to touch new heights

New Delhi, Feb 23 (UNI) : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed the remarkable achievements of ISRO in the space mission and mentioned its 100th rocket launch, as also the successes of Chandrayaan, Mangalyaan and Aditya L-1.

Addressing the 119th episode of Mann ki Baat, Modi also hailed the Indian space agency's launch of 104 satellites into space on a single rocket.

"Last month, the country witnessed the launch of ISRO's 100th rocket. This is not just a number; it also reflects our resolve to touch new heights in Space Science every day", he said.

The PM pointed out that over the last 10 years alone, around 460 satellites have been launched, including many satellites from other countries.

Modi also praised women's participation in the space sector and noted that in recent years the number of women space scientists in India has been constantly on the rise.

"I am also very happy to see that today the space sector has become a favourite for our youth," he said.

With National Science Day approaching, the Prime Minister urged students and young minds to cultivate a passion for science. He introduced the idea of 'One Day as a Scientist,' encouraging people to visit research labs, planetariums, or space centres to experience the scientific process firsthand.

He emphasised that such experiences would enhance curiosity and deepen understanding.

The Prime Minister also spoke about India's achievements in artificial intelligence.

Sharing his experience from a recent AI conference in Paris, Modi stated that global leaders have acknowledged India's rapid progress in the sector. This recognition, he said, reflects the country's growing influence in cutting-edge technology.

"I went to Paris to participate in a big AI conference. There, the world praised India's progress in this sector. We are also getting to see examples of how people of our country are using AI today" he said.

PM Modi also praised the country's daughters, stating that respect for them has always been deeply rooted in Indian culture.

He acknowledged the significant role of women in India's freedom struggle and the drafting of the Constitution. In a special initiative for Women's Day, he announced that on March 8, he would hand over his social media accounts, including X and Instagram, to inspiring women across the country. They will share their work and experiences, offering a platform to showcase their contributions and inspire millions.

During the programme, PM Modi also raised concerns over the obesity disease and urged people to reduce the consumption of edible oil by 10 per cent. He shared the study by WHO saying that In 2022, about 250 crore people around the world were overweight, that is, they had more weight than required. Mentioning the National Games in Uttarakhand, he said there, more than 11,000 athletes from all over the country performed brilliantly.

"This event presented a new Swaroop of Devbhoomi. Uttarakhand is now emerging as a strong sporting force in the country. The players of Uttarakhand too performed wonderfully" he said.

"I am happy that with the determination and discipline of our young athletes, India is rapidly progressing towards becoming a global sporting powerhouse" PM Modi noted.

On the upcoming, World Wildlife Day, PM Modi urged people to associate with wildlife protection.

"It is a matter of great satisfaction for me that many start-ups have also emerged in this field", he said.

"In Gujarat as well, people have contributed significantly in the protection and conservation of Asiatic Lions in Gir. They have shown the world what co-existence with nature means" he said. The Prime Minister also wished the students participating in the exam this year and urged them to appear in the exam in the papers without any "stress and with a completely positive spirit".

India sends medical supplies, disaster relief material to Honduras

New Delhi, Feb 23 (UNI) : India on Sunday dispatched 26 tonnes of humanitarian aid, comprising medical supplies and disaster relief material, to the Honduras in the wake of Tropical storm Sara that caused severe flooding and landslides in the Central American nation.

The MEA spokesperson said in a post on X:

"A reliable partner for the Global South.

"India dispatched humanitarian assistance of 26 tons to Honduras in the wake of the recent Tropical storm SARA.

"The consignment comprising medical supplies & disaster relief material including surgical supplies, glucometers, oximeters, gloves, syringes & IV fluids, blankets, sleeping mats and hygiene kits has departed from India."

Tropical Storm Sara caused severe flooding and landslides in Honduras in November 2024.

The storm made landfall near the Honduras-Nicaragua border on November 14, 2024, with winds of 45 mph, and brought heavy rainfall to the northern region of the country, leading to devastating flash floods and mudslides.

Over 110,000 people were affected, and more than 1,700 communities were cut off due to flooding and landslides.

The storm caused extensive damage, including the destruction of nine bridges and damage to another 19 bridges.

Delhi HC orders pension benefits for ASI temporary employees, imposes penalty for delay

New Delhi, Feb 23 (UNI) In a significant move, the Delhi High Court has directed to pay pensionary benefits to five employees of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), who have been working as temporary workers for the past 20 years.

A division bench, comprising Justices C Hari Shankar and Ajay Dignpaul, quashed an earlier High Court order denying pensions to the petitioners, workers who had served for over 20 years before retiring between 2010 and 2014.

The High Court ruled in favour of five retired temporary employees of the ASI, affirming their right to pensionary benefits and condemning the prolonged exploitation of contractual employment.

The court directed the

authorities to release their dues within eight weeks, warning that any delay would attract an interest penalty of 12 percent per annum from the date of retirement until full payment.

In a strongly worded judgment, the court criticized the systemic misuse of temporary contracts in government institutions, noting that such arrangements—originally meant for short-term needs—were now being used to deprive employees of job security and financial benefits.

It pointed out that many temporary workers perform essential and recurring tasks identical to those of regular employees but remain deprived of stable employment status.

The court further

highlighted the arbitrary termination of temporary workers and their exclusion from promotions, pay raises, and career advancement.

It expressed concern over the growing trend of outsourcing as a means to evade regular employment obligations, calling it a deliberate strategy to deny workers their rights.

Referring to the Supreme Court's ruling in Secretary, State of Karnataka versus Uma Devi (2006), the High Court condemned its misinterpretation by government bodies to reject the claims of long-serving temporary employees.

It clarified that Uma Devi distinguished between "illegal" and "irregular" appointments

and upheld the rights of employees engaged in sanctioned posts for over 10 years.

The court also cited the Supreme Court's recent ruling in Jaggo vs Union of India (2024), reinforcing that extended temporary employment violates international labour standards.

Emphasizing that government institutions must set an example in fair employment practices, the High Court ruled in favour of the petitioners, represented by Advocates Anu Mehta and Rubinder Ghumman. The Court reiterated that non-compliance with its order would invite a strict financial penalty, sending a strong message against the prolonged exploitation of temporary employees.

CM hands over cheque worth Rs 1 cr to the family of Shaheed constable of SSF

Bhawanigarh, Feb 22 (UNI) : Condoling the death of Punjab police constable Harshveer Singh who attained martyrdom in line of duty a few days back, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday handed over cheque worth Rs one crore to the family of martyr as a mark of respect for his supreme sacrifice for country.

He said that Constable Harshveer Singh had attained martyrdom while performing his duty in Sadak Surkhya Force. He said that Rs one crore has been given as ex-gratia by state government whereas another payment of insurance cover worth Rs one crore had been made by the HDFC bank.

Homebuyers take to street after getting no relief from Judiciary and Authorities

New Delhi, Feb 23 (UNI) Hundreds of homebuyers of Greenopolis staged a massive protest at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi against Orris Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd., its contractor Three C, and the authorities after years of unfulfilled promises and zero accountability. The home buyers said they took to the street as despite approaching HARERA, Courts, and even Ministers, they received no relief. Despite repeated complaints and assurances, neither the builder nor the authorities took any steps to address the issue, they alleged. The Greenopolis project in Sector 89, Gurugram, launched in 2012 by Orris Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd. in collaboration with Three C Shelters Pvt Ltd, has left more than 1,800 homebuyers in limbo for over a decade. Comprised mostly of middle-class

families, retired armed forces personnel, and senior citizens, the buyers have been waiting for possession while struggling to manage EMIs, rent, and family expenses.

The Rs 2000-crore project, which promised 1,862 flats across 28 towers and 10 acres reserved for future development, stalled in 2016 after buyers had paid 80-95 percent of their flat costs. ORRIS has also given affidavits in courts that they will complete the project and give homes to all the homebuyers. As per the agreement between Three C and Orris, Three C will construct the project and will sell 65 percent of the flats, while Orris will sell 35 percent of the units.

However, disputes between Orris and its contractor led to construction delays, leaving homebuyers stuck in protracted legal battles.

Things worsened when the Three C went into insolvency and Orris took over the obligation to complete the Project but later went back on its words. The struggle has already spanned 12 years. More than 50 buyers have passed away during this time, and over 500 senior citizens remain affected.

The Builders, they said, were exploiting the laws enacted to protect the interests of homebuyers in real estate projects. Homebuyers' demanded immediate possession of their homes which are ready and a court-backed completion timeline for the rest of the project and strict action against Orris Infrastructure Pvt Limited and 3Cs. They also demanded compensation for homebuyers' financial and emotional distress and the huge financial loss suffered for over a decade.

spread tension among the followers of different religions in a planned manner. This tendency is fatal for both the society and the country. He said that some selfish elements are engaged in a conspiracy to harm the Ganga-Jamuni culture of Indian society, which should be thwarted at all costs.

Syed Noorullah appealed to peace-loving Indians to come forward to maintain unity and peace in the society and foil the conspiracies of divisive elements.

He announced that a huge meeting of religious leaders of all religions will be held in April. In this

meeting, a comprehensive strategy will be made to strengthen the forces uniting the society and to counter the attempts to break the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice President Dr. M. Rahmatullah said that peace and tranquility are essential for the progress of any society and country. Acting General Secretary Mohammad Tayyab expressed his views on the issues related to Urdu language and stressed the need for its preservation and promotion. Various issues related to auqaf and education were also discussed in detail in the meeting.

AIMMM will launch campaign to strengthen brotherhood : Noorullah

New Delhi, Feb 23 (UNI) The All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mashawrat (AIMMM) Delhi chapter on Sunday expressed deep concern over the growing social tension and attempts to disturb harmony in the country and said that it will launch a massive campaign in collaboration with various religious organizations to strengthen brotherhood and national unity.

After the AIMMM meeting, the organization's President Syed Noorullah on Sunday said that the country is going through a serious phase where there are attempts to

Union Minister Kishan Reddy urges teachers to ensure victory of BJP

Adilabad, Feb 23 : Union Minister and Telangana BJP President G Kishan Reddy urged teachers to ensure the victory of BJP candidates in the upcoming MLC elections, emphasising the significance of these polls in shaping the future of Telangana.

Addressing a gathering of prominent citizens and intellectuals in Adilabad town on Sunday, he recalled the district's unwavering support for the BJP in previous elections. He expressed gratitude for their continued faith in the party. Reddy criticised the ruling Congress and the then TRS governments for their failure to fulfill promises made to the people. He alleged that these parties have led Telangana into a severe financial crisis, burdening the state with debts amounting to Rs 9 lakh crore. Despite the state's



abundant natural resources, he accused past governments of exploiting them for personal gains rather than public welfare.

"The Telangana state was formed with a surplus budget, but due to the misgovernance of family-run political parties, it has been pushed to the brink of bankruptcy," he stated.

He highlighted the non-implementation of six guarantees, unresolved

issues related to unemployment and education, and the failure to deliver financial benefits to state employees, including five pending DAs and unfulfilled PRC commitments. The Union Minister criticised the Congress government for its lack of direction and accused BRS of working behind the scenes to undermine the BJP. He pointed out that salaries are

not being paid on time, small contractors are struggling with payments, and basic infrastructure, including electricity supply, is suffering under the current administration.

Kishan Reddy called for a renewed movement in Telangana, asserting that only a BJP-led government can bring about true progress. He praised the Modi government's track record, citing its success in

abrogating Article 370 in Kashmir, empowering Muslim women by abolishing triple talaq, and conducting massive spiritual events such as Prayagraj's congregation of 60 crore people. "The BJP has been running a corruption-free government for the past 11 years, focusing on development with integrity. If Telangana also gets a double-engine BJP government, the state will witness rapid progress," he asserted.

Encouraging the electorate to support the BJP in the MLC elections, he expressed confidence that the party will secure victories in Telangana, just as it is poised to do in other Congress-ruled states. "The first step was taken with the victory of one MP and four MLAs from Adilabad. Now, let's take the second step by ensuring BJP's win in the MLC seats," he added.

Taneira partner with JJ Active flags off Saree Run in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, Feb 23 (UNI) : Taneira, a Tata brand, partnered with Bengaluru-based fitness company JJ Active flagged off the Saree Run here at People's Plaza on Sunday.

With 3,120 women draped in stunning weaves from across India, People's Plaza, transformed into a lively celebration of color, unity, and spirit.

A tribute to womanhood, fitness, and self-expression, the Hyderabad chapter of the Taneira Saree Run was flagged off by Coach Pramod from JJ Active.

The Taneira Saree Run celebrates the saree's adaptability deeply rooted in tradition yet evolving with the modern woman.

With successful editions in cities like Bangalore, Ahmedabad, and Chennai, it unites women through shared stories of strength transforming the saree into a powerful thread that connects tradition with progress.

Speaking about the event, Ambuj Narayan, CEO Taneira said "The saree, a symbol of grace and resilience, continues to empower women as they embrace both their heritage and individuality. In partnership with JJ Active, we're showing how the saree fits seamlessly into today's active lifestyles. Set in the lively city of Hyderabad, this event highlights the power of community, promoting women's health, and inclusivity, and It provides a supportive platform for women to share inspiring stories, motivate each other, and overcome challenges together"

Pramod said, "The Taneira Saree Run is a unique initiative designed to empower women to prioritize their fitness in a comfortable and encouraging environment. It provides a platform for them to share inspiring stories of resilience, support one another, and celebrate their journey toward better health. The women of Hyderabad have shown remarkable enthusiasm, as seen in the tremendous response to last year's inaugural Taneira Saree Run. We are thrilled to witness an even greater turnout this year. Kudos to the incredible women of Hyderabad for championing fitness and well-being"

EAST COAST RAILWAY
 1) Tender Notice No. VSKP-ELG-TL-AC-24-25-13, Dt. 13.02.2025
N A M E O F T H E W O R K :
OUTSOURCING OF AC COACH ELECTRICAL ATTENDANT FOR ESCORTING, OPERATION & TROUBLESHOOTING IN AC COACHES OF MAIL / EXPRESS / SUPERFAST / RAJDHANI TYPE TRAINS AT VISAKHAPATNAM DEPOT FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.
Tender Value (₹) : 6,60,15,343.20,
Bid Security (₹) : 4,80,100.00, **Cost of Tender Document (₹) :** 11,800.00
 2) Tender Notice No. VSKP-ELG-TL-AC-24-25-17, Dt. 19.02.2025
N A M E O F T H E W O R K :
ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR PANTRY ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENTS IN COACHES AND PANTRY CARS OF LHB TRAINS AT VISAKHAPATNAM COACHING DEPOT FOR THREE YEARS.
Tender Value (₹) : 42,03,629.04,
Bid Security (₹) : 84,100.00
Completion period : 36 Months (For both tenders)
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1330 Hrs. of 17.03.2025, Date and Time of opening of Tenders : At 1600 Hrs. of 17.03.2025 (for both the tenders).
 The tender documents complete details available at: <http://www.ircps.gov.in>
 The tenderers are required to watch the website for any corrigendum's issued for this tender.
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G), PR-1011/P/24-25 **Waltair**

No shortage of urea, farmers should not worry: Minister

Hyderabad, Feb 23 (UNI) : Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao said that there is no shortage of urea in the state and farmers should not worry.

He held a teleconference with agricultural officials on Sunday and said that another 81,800 metric tons of urea will arrive in the state this week. In the last Yasangi, farmers purchased 6.9 lakh metric tons of urea by February 20, but this time they purchased 8.80 lakh metric tons, while last year they purchased 1.99 lakh metric tons in February, and this year they purchased 2.59 lakh metric tons in February 20.

While 8.54 lakh metric tons of urea was supposed to come from the central government, the state has received only 6.81 lakh metric tons. We are in constant contact with the centre and explain the situation from time to time. Although 1.60 lakh metric tons of urea was sent less than the amount allocated to the state, the state government is taking steps to ensure that there is no problem anywhere by supplying it to all districts as per the requirement with the 3.08 lakh metric tons that it had kept at the Mark Fed in advance.

He said that our officials have already met the central officials and that he has directly written to the relevant ministers requesting them to supply the fertilizers allocated to our state immediately.

The BJP leaders of the state also said that it would be better if they stopped criticizing this matter and did their best to supply the fertilizers allocated to our state immediately.

Given the increased area and consumption, it would be better if they took their share of responsibility and supported the efforts of the state government, keeping in mind the well-being of the farmers. He said that the state government officials who have already gone to Delhi have requested the immediate supply of the urea allocated to the state. The minister said that compared to the area of salad crops in the last Yasangi, this time due to the abundance of water resources and groundwater, there has been an increase of 5 to 10 percent in the area of paddy and maize crops, and the use of urea has also been increased by 1.9 lakh metric tons compared to the past.

However, the state government has been reviewing the situation since the beginning of the harvest season and has taken steps to make adequate urea stocks available to farmers across the state. If there is a delay in the arrival of vessels or railway wagons in any district, it is immediately shifted from neighboring districts.

The state currently has 1.29 lakh metric tons of urea stocks, and 3 rakes on February 22, 7 rakes on February 23, 4 rakes on February 24, 7 rakes on February 25, 4 rakes on February 26, 5 rakes on February 27, and 4 rakes on February 28, totaling 81,800 metric tons will arrive this week, he said. The Minister directed the officials to ensure that farmers do not face any difficulties in the supply of urea and to take strict action against anyone who artificially creates a shortage or sells it at high prices, according to an official statement.

Rescue operations underway to save workers trapped in SLBC tunnel collapse

Hyderabad, Feb 23 (UNI) : A major accident occurred at the Srisaillam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel, prompting extensive rescue operations to save workers trapped inside.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams have reached the tunnel boring machine (TBM) to assist in the rescue mission.

The accident occurred at 0800 hours on Saturday at the 14th kilometer of the SLBC tunnel construction site in Domalapeda, Amrabad Mandal, Nagarkurnool district. The collapse occurred when the tunnel roof caved in during construction work, leading to a blockage caused by mud, concrete, and water accumulation. Approximately 1,000 cubic meters of rocks and soil obstructed the passage, complicating rescue efforts.

Of the 50 workers present in the tunnel during the incident, 42 managed to escape, some sustaining injuries and receiving treatment at Genco Hospital. However, eight workers, employed by Jaypee Company, remain trapped inside. Authorities have confirmed that oxygen supply is being maintained from outside to ensure their safety.

Rescuers, using a loco train, reached the 11th kilometre and proceeded on foot to the 14th kilometre, where they encountered severe obstructions. The rear portion of the tunnel boring machine was damaged, with both sides buried under mud and debris, making access to the trapped workers exceedingly difficult.

Efforts are ongoing to clear the accumulated debris and ensure the safe evacuation of the remaining workers. Officials continue to monitor the situation closely as teams work tirelessly to complete the rescue operation.

SLBC tunnel rescue efforts in full swing; Minister monitor rescue operations

Nagarkurnool, Feb 23 (UNI) : Irrigation & Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy stated that the government is making all-out efforts to rescue the eight workers trapped inside the collapsed Srisaillam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel in Nagarkurnool district.

He emphasised that the State government, Army, Navy, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and other agencies are working together to ensure a swift and safe rescue. Dewatering operations have commenced, and oxygen is being continuously pumped into the tunnel to sustain the trapped workers.

"We have reviewed the relief operations with representatives from the Army, Navy, and NDRF. The government is putting in all possible efforts to save the eight lives inside the tunnel. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is personally monitoring the situation, and the entire administration is on high alert," Reddy said while inspecting the rescue

operations.

The minister further informed that both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi spoke to the Chief Minister and expressed their full support for the rescue efforts. Rahul Gandhi personally called the Chief Minister today for an update, while Prime Minister Modi had also spoken to him earlier, assuring all necessary assistance.

Minister Reddy stated that the situation at the accident site remains critical, with water inflow hampering rescue operations. Measures are being taken to prevent waterlogging, and alternative solutions are being explored to clear the mud and debris inside the tunnel.

"The natural rock formations in the tunnel became loose, causing sudden water and mud inflow, filling about 12-13 feet of the tunnel. This is a highly challenging situation, and technical experts are working round the clock to resolve the crisis," he explained.

The minister mentioned that getting heavy

machinery into the tunnel is difficult due to the terrain, but officials are working on alternate methods to remove the debris. The Irrigation Department, Disaster Response Teams, and Defense personnel are coordinating efforts, with oxygen being continuously pumped inside and motors deployed for dewatering.

Since the incident occurred, Minister Reddy stated that the government has been actively engaged in rescue efforts. He personally rushed to the accident site on Saturday, held consultations with disaster relief teams, Army officials, and engineering experts, and ensured the immediate deployment of NDRF and SDRF teams.

On Saturday night, Uttam met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to review the rescue strategy. He also held a teleconference with Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari, Irrigation Department Principal Secretary Rahul Bojja, and NDRF and SDRF officials to assess progress and issue further instructions.

The minister returned to the site on Sunday morning, where he

Omar inaugurates helicopter service for Heli-skiers at Gulmarg

Srinagar, Feb 23 (UNI) : Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday inaugurated a helicopter service for heli-skiers and a Safari service for tourists eager to explore the high peaks of Gulmarg.

Speaking to the media, the Chief Minister said the helicopter service would significantly boost tourism in Gulmarg.

"Many skiers prefer heli-skiing, even when their favorite locations are accessible, but they often face challenges due to the lack of transport to the high-altitude starting points. This new service will address that issue and enhance their experience," Omar said.

The Chief Minister said from today not only the Heli-skiing has started but those visitors who are coming for sightseeing can avail of the helicopter service to visit higher peaks including Affarwat and SunShine peak at Gulmarg.

This time the helicopter service was available for the tourists throughout the year instead of during the winters only, he said.

"Gulmarg would be known now not only for the ride on the Gondola Cable Car but also for the Heli-skiing and helicopter safari service for the tourist throughout the year and it would further boost the tourism", Omar said.

Regarding the Khelo India Winter games, those were postponed earlier due to less snow at Gulmarg. Omar said "We are not in a position to announce the dates for the winter games yet. There is a prediction of snowfall for three more days around February 26. And after that, the experts from the ski federation would examine the slopes and if they feel the snow is sufficient for conducting the winter games we would announce the dates", he said.

"I wish if there would be sufficient snowfall during the period, the games could be held in the first week of

March", Omar said and added, "later the warm weather will start and it would be difficult to conduct the games this year".

In reply to a question, Omar said that talks are going on with some private investors who are ready to invest to further improve the skiing infrastructure at Gulmarg.

"Talks are going on. If we could get a satisfying proposal which will improve the services at Gulmarg with the new infrastructure we will go ahead", he said. Omar said simultaneously some projects of Cable Car would also be constructed in Gulmarg.

IN THE COURT OF THE SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE & JMFCAT BASAVAKALYAN
M.V.C. No. 366/2022
 Claimant : **P.SHRUTHI**
 Respondents : **A. VENKATANNA AND OTHERS**
Sub: Petition Under Section 166 of MV Act.
 To,
 The Respondent,
 1. A. Venkatann S/o A. Anjanappa, Age: Major. Occu: Private Service and owner of Bajaj Discover motorcycle bearing Reg. No. TS-09/EA-2160, R/o H.No. 8-2-269/15-526/A Indira Nagar, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500033.
 2. Banda Ramu @ Ramulu S/o Linganna, Age: 35 years, Occ: Ridor of Bajaj Discover motorcycle bearing Reg. No. TS-09/EA-2160, R/o Room No. 9, Block No. 17 phase-1 Indiramma Colony, Nizampet, KHPB, N/o Nagardoddi village, Dharoor Mandal, Gadwal, Ph.8121904566.
 Whereas the claimants through Sri. G.S.Kurkote, Advocate Basavakalyan had filed a claim petition U/Sec. 166 of M.V.Act before the Hon'ble court for grant of compensation in view of accidental injuries sustained by the claimant in motor vehicle accident. That, in the above case the claimant has filed the claim petition against the respondents No.1 and 2 the Hon'ble Court has issued the notice to the respondent No.1 and 2 through RPAD several times but the respondents No.1 & 2 are intentionally avoiding the court notices and RPAD notices, so this Hon'ble Court was pleased to issue order to the effect that service of summons notice etc., be served upon the Respondents No.1 & 2 as mentioned below by way of substitute services by paper publication.
 Therefore, you are hereby notice to appear before this Hon'ble Court on 28-03-2025 at 11.00 a.m. either personally or through pleader duly instructed to give answer for such claim failing which the matter will be determined in your absence according to law.
 Given under my hand and seal of the court, this the 21st day of January, 2025
(By Order of the Court)
Sd/-
Chief Ministerial Officer,
Senior Civil Judge & JMFCAT,
Basavakalyan.

STANDARD POST

2024 marked a year for India's youth to go big

The past decade under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has been nothing short of a youth-driven revolution, where dreams met opportunities and innovation became a way of life.

From reimagining education through the transformative New Education Policy to nearly doubling the number of medical colleges, PM Modi has laid the foundation for a future brimming with possibilities. With initiatives like Start-Up India igniting entrepreneurial spirits, Khelo India fostering a generation of sports champions, and Digital India equipping the youth with cutting-edge skills, the government has not just supported young minds but empowered them to lead. More than 1.42 crore youth have been trained under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY). The momentum of this transformative decade has propelled us into 2024, ushering in a new wave of opportunities for India's youth.

In 2024, Modi Government has reinforced its commitment to empowering India's youth by launching forward-thinking policies and programs aimed at fostering innovation, skill development, entrepreneurship, and technological growth.

Some of those initiatives are as follows:

Revival of Nalanda University

The revival of the ancient Nalanda University is a testament to Modi Government's dedication to preserving its rich educational heritage. The university, once a global centre for knowledge and innovation, was rebuilt to serve as a hub for global collaboration, research, and cultural exchange.

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024

To address systemic issues of cheating and unfair practices in public examinations, the government introduced this landmark legislation. It ensures stringent measures to prevent malpractices, including severe penalties for offenders. The Act aims to protect the integrity of India's examination system, providing a level playing field for hardworking students and restoring public trust in education.

Vigyan Dhara scheme

Recognising the importance of science and technology in India's future, the Vigyan Dhara Scheme aims to inspire and empower young minds to pursue careers in Science and Technology. The proposed budget for implementing this unified scheme is ₹10,579.84 crore during the 15th Finance Commission period, spanning from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The main objective of the scheme is to enhance capacity of science and technology (S&T) to strengthen the innovation ecosystem in the country.

PM's package for the youth

A Rs 2 lakh crore Prime Minister's Package has been announced to provide a massive boost to employment generation and skill development initiatives. Targeted at 4.1 crore youth, the package includes funding for upskilling programs, startup incubation support and sector-specific training initiatives. It aims to create opportunities in industries such as manufacturing, IT, green energy, and healthcare. This comprehensive package aligns with the government's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' by equipping youth with skills to succeed in competitive global markets.

PM Vidyalaxmi scheme

The PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme is a ground-breaking initiative to ensure that financial limitations do not obstruct India's youth from pursuing higher education. PM Vidyalaxmi is another key initiative stemming out of the National Education Policy, 2020, which had recommended that financial assistance should be made available to meritorious students through various measures in both public and private HEIs. Under the PM Vidyalaxmi scheme, any student who gets admission in quality Higher Education Institution (QHEIs) will be eligible to get collateral free, guarantor free loan from banks and financial institutions to cover full amount of tuition fees and other expenses related to the course.

75,000 more medical seats

Addressing the growing demand for healthcare professionals in India, the government has approved the addition of 75,000 new medical seats across the country.

This expansion covers undergraduate (MBBS) and postgraduate medical programs, particularly in underserved regions. By establishing new medical colleges and upgrading existing institutions, the government aims to improve access to medical education, bridge the doctor-patient ratio, and enhance India's healthcare infrastructure. The move will create more opportunities for aspiring doctors while strengthening the nation's healthcare system.

Protection of youth from drug menace

MANAS (Madak Padarth Nishedh Asuchna Kendra) helpline was launched to assist and report drug-related issues, contributing to Nasha Mukta Bharat. MANAS will have a toll-free number 1933, a web portal, a mobile app and UMANG app so that citizens of the country can anonymously connect with NCB (Narcotics Control Bureau) 24x7 for seeking advice on deaddiction and rehabilitation, sharing information on drug trafficking.

Rupee will continue to weaken in the new year

(By Satish Singh)

The fall in the exchange rate of rupee against the dollar is a major obstacle in the path of development. It is necessary to overcome this to ensure smooth development. The Reserve Bank of India is using foreign exchange reserves to prevent the fall in the exchange rate. Since the dollar is the most powerful currency in the world, it is largely through it that trades are conducted across the world.

The rupee witnessed its biggest fall in 2 years during day trading on 27 December 2024 and became one of the worst performing currencies in Asia. The rupee has consistently closed at a weak level at the end of the calendar year against the dollar in the last 7 years.

The rupee has fallen by 2.7 percent so far in the year 2024. The rupee weakened to a low of 85.82 and has now come down to 85.54 per dollar, which is the lowest level of the rupee so far. Again, this is the biggest fall in the exchange rate of rupee against the dollar since the global recession of 2008.

Due to the use of foreign exchange reserves to reduce the weakness of the rupee, a decrease of \$ 8.48 billion was recorded in the foreign exchange reserves on 27 December 2024. Last week, on 20 December, \$ 1.99 billion was withdrawn from the foreign exchange reserves. In the month of

September, the foreign exchange reserves had increased to the level of \$ 704.88 billion. Since then, it has been continuously declining and now it has reached the level of \$ 644.87 billion.

Right now, the level of foreign exchange reserves cannot be considered worrisome, but if the foreign exchange reserves keep decreasing like this, it will not be good for the health of the economy. Decrease in foreign exchange reserves means that investors are not investing in India, which cannot be considered a good sign at all. Usually, as soon as the dollar strengthens, foreign investors turn to the US market in the hope of higher returns and when it weakens, investors again turn to the markets of other countries in the hope of higher returns.

There are some other important reasons for the fall in the value of rupee against the dollar in India, such as, India's trade deficit is constantly increasing.

This usually happens due to reduced exports and more imports. Since, India still does not produce all the goods needed and is completely or partially dependent on the import of many products.

Most of the transactions in the international market are done through the US dollar. Therefore, dollars are needed for imports, which directly affects the market and the production of various goods. For



(Mr Satish Singh)

example, if an industry is dependent on raw material for production which is not found in India or if an essential product is not available in India, then it is imported to meet the need of the people.

After coming to power, the positive & convincing speeches of the US President have increased the confidence of investors in the US market, due to which the dollar has strengthened. Now foreign investors have started investing in US by withdrawing their investments in other countries. Meanwhile, the US Federal Reserve recently hinted at bringing changes in its benchmark interest rate and said that

it can cut interest rates twice in 2025. After this announcement, the dollar index reached 108.086, which is the highest level in the last two years. This has also increased the confidence of investors in the dollar.

The fall in the rupee has a direct impact on the cost of imported goods, which includes the raw material or parts for the manufacture of a product in addition to the imported product. For example, if someone had to spend Rs 8300 earlier to buy a product worth \$100, then after the rupee weakened, he or she would have to spend Rs 8,500. Obviously, this will affect both the budget and

investment of the common man.

The dollar becoming expensive has a direct impact on the price of crude oil. Since India does not produce enough fuel to fulfil its requirement, it is dependent on imports to ensure the availability of crude oil. Therefore, when the cost of crude oil increases, the cost of transportation increases, which increases the price of essential items, especially food products, which spoils everyone's household budget.

The cost of those who go abroad for the purpose of studies or tourism also increases due to the weakening of the rupee. The cost of products of businesses that are dependent on imports also increases and the profitability of the company decreases. However, exporters will benefit from the weakening of the rupee. For example, businesses in sectors like IT, pharma, and gems and jewellery will benefit because their businesses export and they get higher prices for their products due to the strengthening of the dollar.

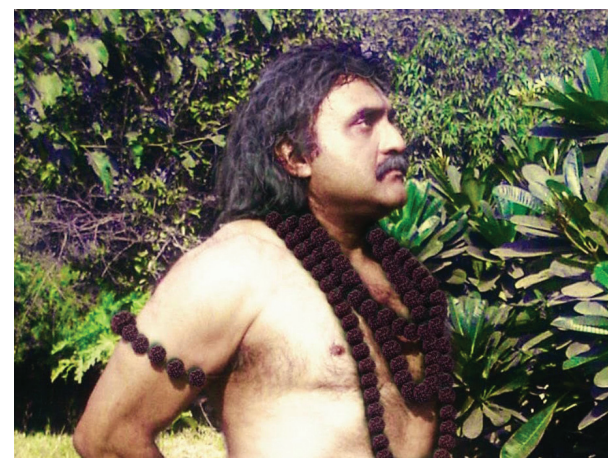
The weakening of the rupee also has a negative impact on the stock market because foreign investors invest in the US dollar instead of the rupee in the hope of higher returns and for this, they withdraw their investments from the Indian market. Investors who have invested in the US stock market benefit. In this context, to avoid

the ill effects of the weakening of the rupee, investors can reduce their losses to some extent by changing their portfolio.

For the past few quarters, the performance of the manufacturing sector in our country has been poor and a decline has been recorded in industrial production. Due to inflation, consumer expenditure has decreased, as it has reduced the purchasing power of the people. This is also likely to have a negative impact on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In such a situation, the weakness of the rupee is making the situation even more serious.

It can be said that the benefits of weakening of the rupee are less and the disadvantages are more. Therefore, to take corrective measures in the matter, the Reserve Bank of India will have to make efforts to increase the foreign exchange reserves, which is certainly a challenging task, as India is still dependent on imports to meet many of its needs. At present, the possibility of increasing political and economic instability at the international level cannot be ruled out. There is also a possibility of the Federal Reserve cutting interest rates in the coming months. In such a situation, it is being speculated that by the end of the last quarter of the current financial year, the exchange rate of rupee against the dollar may reach the level of Rs 86 per dollar.

Glow like the Sun - by Ashwini guruji of Dhyana ashram



Human body is the only dimension where one can move from darkness to light. Tamso maa jyotir gamaya. When you look at the night sky, what is it that catches your attention first? The moon. Why? Because it is the brightest. Sun, moon, stars are all gods and goddesses and the universe is full of them. Some of them are in light, then you can see. Others are in darkness.

When you go in deep states of dhyana you are able to interact with them, and you actually see the pits of darkness they are in and the pain they experience because we got this chance, a human body, to move from darkness to light. They also got a chance, but

lived a selfish life, hence are in darkness. Sanatan Kriya gives you the ability to see their dimensions.

To get a first-hand experience of this darkness, sit in a closed cupboard such that not even a ray of light can enter.

Ask someone to lock it from outside and lock the room and not open it for 3-4 hours, no matter how much you shout or bang at the door. I

n that pitch dark where you can barely breathe or see your own hands, when you get scared and shout for help, remember your karmas and ask yourself how many people have you pulled out of darkness? Why should you be freed from darkness?

A similar interaction is carried out with those beings in darkness as one intercepts them in dhyana. They also shout and call out for help.

But why do these beings call out to you?

When you good for people, you develop a glow inside you. Gita says a life led only for self-gratification is a life of sin. Do something good for someone, you will start to glow.

And the entire brahmand can see you like glow-worms.

The more are your good karmas, the greater is the glow, more are the gods that can see you and the more you evolve. Because all said and done, when you see someone in pain, you do get at least one thought that he/she should be saved. And, energy follows thought. When you think, your voice is heard and god saves them.

Similarly when gods see you glow, they also think to do something for you. You are chosen by them. Your thought manifests for them and their thought manifests for you.

Earthquake of magnitude 3.7 hits Mandi

Shimla, Feb 23 (UNI) An earthquake of magnitude 3.7 struck Himachal Pradesh's Mandi here on Sunday morning, an official said.

The seismic event occurred at 08:42 hours, according to the Meteorological Department. The epicenter was pinpointed at a latitude of 31.48 and a longitude of 76.95, with a depth of 7 kilometers. Fortunately, no loss of life or property has been reported following the tremors.

The affected area, particularly Sundernagar, is recognized as a high seismic-prone zone and falls under Schedule 4 for earthquake risk. The region is approximately 150 kilometers from the state capital.

The Mandi district, known for its susceptibility to seismic activity, has experienced similar tremors in the past, prompting ongoing efforts to enhance disaster preparedness in the region.

Bicycles, looms given to displaced persons in Manipur

Imphal, Feb 23 (UNI) : Manipur government in a bid to encourage and support the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) seeking refuge at various relief camps, distributed Mobility Support (Bicycles) to Internally Displaced students and Looms with accessories to Internally Displaced women weavers of Imphal East District on Sunday.

In the event held at Panchayat Bhavan, DC Office Complex, Porompat, Prashant Kumar Singh, Chief Secretary, acknowledged the hardships faced by the IDPs, who have been enduring the ongoing conflict for nearly two years, with lack of basic amenities. He said that the ongoing initiatives would be made more efficient and transparent to provide better support for the IDPs.

He commended the officers, civil officers, staff of DC Imphal East and police personnel for their exceptional dedication and efforts beyond the call of duty. The Chief Secretary also expressed admiration for the courage and resilience of those displaced from their homes in enduring the situation. Noting the delay of funds and assistance in the past, he assured time delivery henceforth and all-out support from the Government. He further wished for a safer, free from fear and self-reliant future for the displaced. The Chief Secretary also thanked POWERGRID and Weavers Service Centre for their assistance through the CSR initiative.

Khumanthem Diana Devi, Deputy Commissioner, Imphal East district, said the district currently hosts 3,500 IDPs across 17 relief camps and 400 units of pre-fabricated houses accommodating 1,394 IDPs from 359 families. She said that over 293 families have returned to their villages with the improvement of law and order situation.

She further highlighted the financial assistance provided to the IDPs under the Permanent Housing Scheme of the Government of Manipur.

She emphasised that the event aimed to ease the transportation costs of the students and promote sustainable livelihoods for the IDP families.

The Deputy Commissioner hoped for restoration of normalcy in the district and the state as a whole in the near future, given the rigorous initiatives of the Government under the leadership of the Chief Secretary.

Foods

Indian restaurants you must eat at in Kolkata



These Indian restaurants in Kolkata will lure you in with their divine flavours and rich ingredients. Travelling the length of the country—from Punjab to Kerala—they offer a variety of Indian cuisines that pack a punch and guarantee to keep you coming back for more.

Aaheli

Aaheli at Peerless Inn hotel and its branch at Axis Mall in Rajarhat have carved a niche for themselves and are known for their authentic Bengali preparations. You can either opt for the thalis or go a la carte. The Mahabhog Thali and the Rajbhog Thali are elaborate fixed menu meals which include delicacies like Shukto, Bati Chingri, Doi Ilish, Chingri Malai Curry, Murgir Jhol, Kosha Mangsho, Aamer Chutney, Chhanar Payesh and Malpua. On the a la carte are the not-so-common yesteryear dishes like the Gachpathar Malai Curry, Kumro Patay Mora Chingri Paturi, Dhumragondhi Ilish, Rui Machher Patishapta. Their festive season promotions are huge

wd-pullers, not only for the delicious fare but also for the traditional delicacies on offer. Reservations are advised, especially for the weekends. Expect to pay five-star prices.

6 Ballygunge Place

Housed in a century-old bungalow in south Kolkata, this restaurant is full of vintage charm. While their buffets are extremely popular, you can also opt to go a la carte and sample the full range of the menu. Begin with a Bengali fish fry, prawn finger fry and mochar chop (plantain croquettes).

For the main course, try signature dishes such as dab chingri (prawns roasted inside a coconut), bhapa eilish (hilsa fish in a mustard gravy) and kasha mangsho (spicy mutton curry). Their repertoire also includes vegetarian dishes such as aloo posto (potatoes cooked in poppy seed paste), begun basanti (brinjals in a mustard-curd gravy), and chholar dal (lentils with coconut). End your meal with divine desserts such as baked sandesh, mishti doi (sweet yoghurt) and nolen gur (sugarcane-flavoured) ice cream.

Ammini
If authentic Kerala cuisine is what

you've been looking for, just head to Ammini on Manohar Pukur Road. The focus here is on quality, be it service or food; both are superb. The list of Kerala delights is small, but the food at Ammini will leave you happy and contented. Mrs Menon, the owner of the place often suggests the day's specials. Start with fluffy idlis, Paniyarrappams or the Addai Dosa with an assortment of chutneys... Coconut with Green Chilli Chutney, Red Chilli Coconut Chutney or the Ulli Chamandi (a spicy onion chutney) and the Molaga Podi (dry powder served with ghee). The mains consist of Potato Stew, Vegetable Korma, dry and hot spicy Mutton Olathede, the Naimeen Seer Fish Curry and Kerala Chicken Curry to go with hot Appams and Iddiappams. Weekend specials include Avial, Korma, Thoran, Brown Stew, Payasam, Kesari (suji halwa) and Unniappams (deep-fried bananas with jaggery, milk and coconut dumplings).

Oh! Calcutta
Celebrated for having introduced the country to

Bengali fine dining, this restaurant celebrates Kolkata and its eclectic culinary influences. The elegant interiors are done up with wooden furniture, and city-related paintings and drawings. The menu is a mix of traditional Bengali recipes from both sides of Bengal's border, as well as nawabi, Anglo-Indian and colonial cuisine. Signature dishes include kakra chingri bhapa (steamed crab with shrimps and mustard), roshun bhapa maach (steamed fish with garlic, mustard and chilli), Dhakai fish tika (marinated fish cooked in a tandoor), Chittagong masala murgi (chicken cooked Bangladesh-style) and bekti maacher paturi (fish fillet flavoured with mustard and steamed in banana leaves). Round off your meal with a bhapa sondesh (steamed cottage cheese flavoured with date jaggery) or a payesh (condensed milk wit fruit or rice)

Haveli

Modelled like a traditional haveli, this vegetarian restaurant is best known for its staple Rajasthani food. With staff dressed in traditional Rajasthani attire, the restaurant has gained in popularity thanks to its authentic cuisine. Irrespective of what you eat, make sure you end your meal with a kulfi and gulkand pan. Food is served in traditional plates and handis, and if Indian isn't your cup of tea, the restaurant also serves up modest Chinese and Continental fare.



Indian restaurants you absolutely have to visit in Mumbai

These Indian restaurants in Mumbai are known for their scrumptious fare and bold flavours. So in between sampling the global palate in the city, keep aside some time to dine at these authentic and oh-so-delicious restaurants that promise a great meal.

Crystal

This hole-in-the-wall eatery serves some of the best Punjabi fare in

Mumbai. Crowded at all times during the day, Crystal offers hearty and unpretentious food. The menu features



all north Indian favourites - rajma, paneer masala, baigan bharta and a range of paranthas. Round off your meal with their homemade chilled and creamy kheer. While the decor isn't much to write home about, there are stunning views of Chowpatty beach and Marine Drive all around.

Chetana

This is one of the few places in the city that serves Gujarati, Rajasthani, Maharashtrian and Health thalis, all under one roof, and does a pretty good job of them too. The set meal begins with starters like bhajiya, dhokla, chaas, jaljeera, salads and snacks which are just too many to count or consume. But if you're opting for a thali meal, the idea is to take it slow, cherish every item on the list and make a long and satisfying meal of it. In the Maharastrian thali, the popular star dishes include 'methi chi bhaji', 'puran poli' (sweet roti) and 'rai batata' which are best clubbed with 'bajre ki roti'. If you pick the Rajasthani thali, you will particularly enjoy the 'Rajasthani saagh', 'gatte ki sabzi' and the 'daal baati churma' which are prepared in a traditional way and offer a distinct flavour of Rajasthan. Among desserts, the gulab jamun, bundi and kheer scores above the fruit custard.

Trishna

Hype and hoopla surrounds this seafood joint in Fort. Sports legends, Hollywood and Bollywood stars, Presidents and heads of state of various countries have all dined on the seafood here! I ate at this award-winning restaurant to check if there is hope behind the hype and came away

happy and contented. It continues to be packed to the gills. The seating isn't comfortable at this twin-halled, air-conditioned eatery, tucked away in a grotty lane of Mumbai's business district, and it can get crammed and noisy because it's always packed (reservations are needed), but the focus here is on the food. I love wearing the black bib (they give) and getting my fingers into the King Crabs (ask for crab crackers and marrow spoons too!), savouring throughout their lusty garlic and butter flavours. Other must-order items that remain as good as ever: superb Hyderabad Pomfret, delicious Bombil Fry, Prawn Gassi and luscious Dal Hyderabad. Squids, crabs, pomfret, rawas, lady fish, surmai, lobster, jumbo prawns, shark, chicken and veggie dishes meet Tandoori, Schezwan, Chinese Sauce, Koliwada, Chilli-Garlic Masala, Butter and Pepper 'n' Garlic to form various spectacular combinations (and prices to match, especially with crab!). This time we actually check out the Chinese food (yes the omnipresent Chindian) and find it as chatpata as ever. Lousy Caramel Custard, but sweet and spongy hot Gulab Jamun here. A must visit.

Neel

Want a snap (literally too) judgment of the food at the brand new Neel? Take a look at the photo. Do you see the award-winning actor Ram Kapoor on his knees, drooling at the Raan e Mukhtar? Though he is in a frenetic juggling of his Bollywood films and TV shoots, (Las Vegas, Moscow, Latvia) he still squeezes time for dinner at his favorite Neel. What a delight it is to dine with this sparkling, happy, actor couple. Hailing from a family of doctors, slender livewire Gautami's acting career touched heights and then she took a break (mothered two children) and now Ram and Gautami are all set to star together in Karan Johar's



new film. A deep abiding love for food, travelling, movies, their son, daughter and dog are their passions. Their quips, quotes and anecdotes fuel our high octane fun evening. And yes! they are regulars at Neel, for its exquisite "non-Punjabi, forgotten food of the Muslims." We salute Neel...the brand new sensational second begum whose marriage was solemnised at the Turf Club on July 30. The faltering, anglicised, somewhat arrogant first wife Tote was justifiably given a hasty unceremonious burial. And though never a Tote fan, I salute the colossal guts of taking a risk of that magnitude and then the guts to turn that stumbling block into a stepping stone.

Out of a similar situation of turning a crisis into an opportunity was born Dum Pukht, the most luxurious of cuisines. It owes its existence to a famine. When the nawab (in order to keep the famine stricken workers fed) ordered that rice, meat and spices simmer round the clock in their own steam, under a lid (in a pit with charcoal under it) was born the Dum Pukht cuisine. Neel's Dum biryani being a case in point: exquisite long grained rice, choicest mutton cuts, fragrant with spices, which does a sublime jugalbandi with mirchi ka salan and raita. Succulent tandoor roasted leg of baby lamb (Raan) which we dip into

the taar korma (served with it) makes even me and Gautami into converts.

I love the flavours that the beetroot marination coaxes out of the murg Karachi kabab, the delicate hung curd marination of the fish too. Our entire meal takes on a lyrical note, the velvety texture of the slim kakori kababs brings on a "wah wah". It's the dense, safed makhna rich kali dal which makes Ram "in the words of Jack Nicholson, want to be a better man". Behind this is chef Mukhtar Querishi who has cooking in his genes and jadu in his fingers. Happily, there is plenty for vegetarians, uttari lahsouni saag enlivened with garlic, achari Portobello mushrooms tangy with a pickle coating. Green olive rubbed jaittuni mushroom tikkas too. It's the trying-too-hard-to-be different waterchestnut with bambooshoot kabab and the pinenut shorba and the sabz santre ka shorba that disappoint. But the other two shorbas (nalli, murg badami) delight as does the Rabi icecream. The value for money pricing (Rs.1,100, meal for one) and the unique baked apricot parde me khubani do an irresistible mujra on our wallet and palate, respectively.

Indulge in mouthwatering South Indian cuisine with a grand festival at Southindies, Shivajinagar. Choose from the exotic dishes from all the four southern states of India. The personalised meal experience at the Grand Maharaja Banquet in Southindies is on till September 1 and will make us feel pampered like a king. To start with, choose from an array of

Recipe: Stuffed cobra Rice roll



unique flavoured rasams to go along with puris. It is followed by some of the mouthwatering starters like grilled pineapple, pazham-pineapple, the spicy Andhra chilly mushroom, podi tossed idli or the cocktail idlis tossed with gunpowder. Don't forget to try out the Madras bhel.

The best part is the maincourse, which is served to you with a choice of appams, iddiappams and parathas, along with kaistew, spicy kozhambu or a kurma. The buttermilk sorbet, served between the maincourse, is an absolute must try. One can savour some authentic curd rice with an array of interesting pickles as well.

For those who have a sweet tooth, the desserts like the tender coconut payasam — a signature dish of Southindies and an array of other desserts to choose from the dessert buffet spread, are a must-try.

So indulge in the the Grand Maharaja Buffet at Southindies, Shivajinagar, Ganeshkind Road from 7 pm onwards. It is priced at ₹500 plus taxes per person.

Health



15 best Summer health care tips

Summer brings with it a plethora of problems - skin, hair and health problems like sunstroke, and heat boils. Summer also calls for a change in diet and other healthy living tips. We chalk out the 15 best summer health care tips to practice this summer season.

Heat stroke

Heat stroke, a severe form of hyperthermia, occurs when the human body absorbs more heat than it can dissipate. This is a serious condition and needs immediate medical attention. It is important to lower the

Remedy:

temperature of the body, hence immerse yourself in ice if you have too or take a cold shower. You can prevent heat stroke by wearing loose and light clothes, drink water and do not exert yourself during summer.

Heat cramps symptoms

Muscle pains or spasms usually occur in the abdomen, arms or legs. Spasms usually occur in coordination with strenuous physical activity.

Home remedies:

Rest in a cool place. Drink clear juice or electrolyte-enriched drinks. Do not go back to strenuous activity even after cramps subside

since it may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Heat exhaustion symptoms

Heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, fainting, muscle cramps, fainting.

Home remedies:

Rest. Have cool non-alcoholic beverages, a cool shower, bath or sponge bath. Use light clothing. Dehydration symptoms Dry mouth and eyes, dry skin, a condition where sweating nearly stops, muscle cramps, nausea, heart palpitations and light headedness.

Prevention:

Re-hydration with water, clear broths, and any other water replacements that contain electrolytes, like Gatorade.

Home remedies:

Fluid replacement and control through diet and medication. Fever medication.

Skin care: Rosacea

Rosacea symptom is your skin will turn red due to over exposure to the sun and the heat. The redness appears as the excess heat causes the blood vessels to dilate.

Remedy:

Avoid direct sunlight. Always use a good sunscreen with SPF 30+

Skin care: Sunburn

The ultra violent radiation burns the skin when you spend long hours under direct sun. Sunburn symptoms are patches of darkened skin peeling away.

Remedy:

For Indians it is recommended to stay indoors during 10am to 4pm when the sun light is at its peak.

Home remedies:

Mix together the juice of six peeled cucumbers, two cups powdered milk and two teaspoons

dried lavender flowers.

- Apply the above paste directly on the affected areas of the skin.
- One cup of the mixture added to lukewarm water can be used as a skin smoothening balm

Skin care: Sun tan

Sun tan makes your skin darker which is a taboo for Indians.

Remedy:

Avoid sun block to be repeated every two to three hours. Skin lightening treatment and therapies like rehydration helps.

Skin care: Prickly heat

Prickly heat affects everyone; it is a result of sweat and humidity that causes bacterial infection on the skin.

Remedy:

- Having cold showers, wearing loose clothes, putting talcum powder after a bath, applying calamine lotion on the rashes.
- Apply medicated talcum powder.
- Keep the area dry and clean.

Skin care: Foot infection

Sweating and humidity can increase your chances of foot infection during summer.

Remedy:

There are several anti-bacterial powders available in medical stores. And scrub your feet and the toes thoroughly to wash off the bacteria. But for dire skin ailment consult a dermatologist.

Skin care:

Dandruff Dandruff is aggravated during summer heat and sweat. Dandruff causes hair loss and is an unhygienic skin condition.

Summer diet

One must eat cold foods such as watermelon, yogurt, berries and the likes. Such foods are low in calories and additionally require very little energy for digestion. Usually such foods taste better when chilled and are therefore traditionally eaten that way. Naturally, eating such chilled low calorie foods feels good in the summer months.

Summer diet

Importance of including a variety of foods in your diet. All essential nutrients are required in the summer months, particularly the minerals that are lost in the sweat. It is possible to replenish these micro-nutrients only if the diet includes varied food groups such as fruits, vegetables, milk, cereals, meat, pulse and fats.

Summer diet

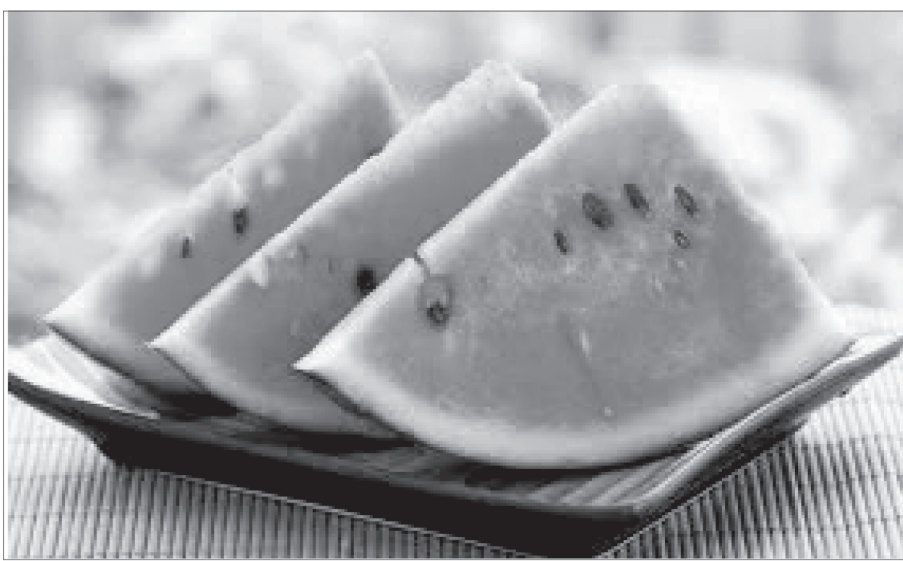
Importance of choosing fats carefully. In the summer months, a number of people who want to lose weight switch to a zero fat diet. This is not a healthy trend. The essential fats that the body needs are available through diet alone. It is therefore sensible to limit the fat intake to just the essential requirement but to avoid any extras.

Summer diet

Drinking very chilled liquids is not advisable. Food consumed at extreme temperatures, whether hot or cold, is not appropriate for the body. The body has to work extra in order to get the temperature close to the body temperature. Drinking warm or cool (as opposed to hot and cold) liquids are best suited for the body.

Summer diet

Maintain good food-hygiene levels. Many dangerous bacteria and viruses thrive in the summer months as the temperature is conducive for their growth. The bad bugs usually enter the body through food and water. This is why maintaining food hygiene is crucial in this season.



You're supposed to drink 8 glasses of water a day but how many of us actually do that? Here are some ways you can eat your water content and deliciously hydrate your body by eating certain foods

When you exercise or workout, you usually tend to lose a lot of water through sweat leading to your electrolyte levels going below normal. A wise move for replenishing your hydration levels is to drink electrolyte-rich fresh juices and eat hydration-promoting foods, such as fruits and vegetables. Also, drinking too much water can actually cause a critical loss of vitamins and minerals as they get whooshed out of the body with every trip to the bathroom. When you start 'eating' water, you don't need to count your glasses. You can replace at least one glass of water a day with one serving of raw fruits or vegetables and you will be able to stay hydrated significantly longer. Moreover, you'll get the added boost of fiber, antioxidants and other health-promoting phytonutrients. In fact, by sticking to a healthy diet, you'll end up 'eating' most of the water needed each day to stay hydrated.

Hydrating foods to eat every day

Our body is constantly replacing damaged cells, so it is imperative that we eat and drink to promote our cellular health. The best way to do this is to keep the body flooded with cell-protecting antioxidants

and the building blocks of stronger cell membranes. Here are foods that contain high levels of nutrients and 'structured water'.

Mangoes

If your skin frequently feels parched, just eat a mango! Mangoes are bursting with vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin A. Vitamin A normalises the production and life cycle of skin cells. Mangoes also improve your skin if you suffer from acne. In skin with acne, there is an overproduction of cells in the stratum corneum, which is the outermost layer of the skin and is composed of biologically 'dead' cells. These excess dead cells combine with sebum (the skin's own natural oil) to form comedones - the pore plugs that are the defining element of acne. Taken as a dietary supplement, vitamin A helps to prevent overproduction of skin cells in the stratum corneum. You can add 3 to 4 slices of mango to every meal as a refreshing and hydrating naturally sweet treat.

Pomegranates

Pomegranates are a wonderfully hydrating source of antioxidants. They may be the world's most prolific source of polyphenols. The unique combination of elements in pomegranates increases the protective abilities of sunscreens, which can help prevent sun damage. Add pomegranates to your morning

Foods that keep you Hydrated



cereal or yogurt, fresh green or fruit salads for a refreshing snack or breakfast.

Avocado

The buttery-fleshed avocado may not seem like a hydrating food, but these healthy gems replenish potassium and contain healthy fats and fiber, which help your body hold on to water. As a bonus, the monounsaturated fats in avocados contain oleic acid, which has been found to improve fat levels in the

body and help control diabetes and cholesterol. Layer your sandwiches with avocado slices, toss diced avocado into your salads or simply scoop avocado out of its peel as a snack.

Cucumber

Not only are cucumbers delightfully crunchy and low in calories, they are composed mostly of water, which will keep you feeling hydrated longer. In addition, cucumbers are an excellent source of silica, a trace mineral that contributes to the strength of connective tissue. Do not peel the cucumber skin! It is a good source of vitamins A, C and folic acid. You can add diced cucumber to green and grain salads or fan sliced cucumber on the side of your plate as a refreshing side dish. You can also cut cucumber into batons for an afternoon snack.

Broccoli

Your mom was right when she said to eat your greens. Broccoli and other green foods, such as spinach, are a great source of alpha lipoic acid which is a potent fat- and water-soluble antioxidant and an anti-inflammatory. Toss raw broccoli into your salads or simply snack on this hardy vegetable all by itself.



Lease policy of land for Makhana farming will be simplified: Chaudhary



Patna, Feb 23 (UNI) : Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary on Sunday said that the state government would simplify the lease policy of land for Makhana farming so that those associated with this sector could get its maximum benefits.

Chaudhary while addressing a function organised at Makhana Research Centre in Darbhanga, said that Bihar was the producer of 85 percent of total Makhana

Shivraj asks scientists to develop thornless seeds of fox nut

Darbhanga/Patna, Feb. 23 (UNI) : Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan directed the authorities and the scientists as well as researchers to develop thornless seeds of fox nut (Makhana) and said that the centre was considering providing the same benefits as farmers to those farming by taking land on lease.

After taking the details of the technical know-how of Makhana cultivation from the farmers for which Chauhan himself stepped into the pond during his tour to Fox nut (Makhana) Research Centre in Darbhanga, the Union Minister asked the authorities to work extensively for developing thornless seeds of Fox nut.

Describing Makhana as a superfood full of Nutrition was not easy to cultivate and the farmers had to face lots of pain while cultivating it. Their suffering can be experienced only after coming to Bihar, he added.

Chauhan announced initiating steps for increasing the productivity of Makhana per hectare, slashing its production cost, overcoming the hurdles in its production and providing adequate prices to the farmers for their cultivated Makhana.

He also spoke about the problems of the farmers doing agricultural activities and taking lands on lease and admitted that such farmers were not getting the benefits of the schemes introduced by the Centre for the Peasants. He said the centre was considering that those who do farming by taking land on lease should also get the same benefits as farmers. Chauhan said he was not just running the department under the leadership of the Prime Minister but was going deep into the situation to solve the problems of the farmers.

production in the country. A historic decision taken by the Narendra Modi government to constitute Makhana Board would further help in increasing Makhana farming in Bihar, he added.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the quality and quantity of Makhana would also get a further boost after the constitution of the Makhana board in Bihar. Several suggestions had been received by the state

government to simplify the lease policy of land for Makhana farming, he added.

"State government is seriously thinking of simplification of lease policy of land for Makhana farming and a decision in this connection would be taken soon", Chaudhary said adding that fish farming was also being promoted. All grievances relating to fish farmers would also be addressed as well, he stated.

Devotees from WB take dip in Sangam

Prayagraj, Feb 23 (UNI) Amidst chants of 'Jai Shri Ram', 2,000 devotees from West Bengal joined the spiritual fervour by taking a holy dip in Sangam, the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, during Maha Kumbh on Sunday. Contrary to recent remarks by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Maha Kumbh, devotees from her state displayed immense enthusiasm for the Triveni Snan. A massive contingent of 2,000 devotees from Asansol arrived in 40 buses, eager to immerse themselves in the holy confluence. The devotees participated in the sacred ritual alongside revered saints, culminating in a collective chanting of Lord Ram's name.

Swami Dilip Das Tyagi, a prominent saint from Ayodhya and president of Raghuvansh Sankalp Seva, said that this devoted group had travelled from West Bengal to be part of the grand event.

Krishna Prasad, president of the organising committee, emphasised the profound significance of this pilgrimage and said that preparations had been underway for months.

"The Maha Kumbh is the world's largest cultural gathering, and we were all eager to witness its magnificence," he said.

He said, "No other Chief Minister in the country has orchestrated a Mahakumbh of such scale and success as Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath. Inspired by his efforts, many devotees from West Bengal flocked to Prayagraj to witness the world's largest spiritual gathering firsthand."

Special 'yagyas and havans' were conducted during their visit, drawing participation from devotees across various states, including West Bengal.

West Bengal devotees also offered prayers to Maa Ganga for their ancestors. Despite West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's recent remarks about the Maha Kumbh, the enthusiasm among the people of her state for this sacred event remained unwavering.

Devotees expressed their deep spiritual commitment and said, "When 60 crore people are coming to Prayagraj for the holy dip, why should we stay behind?"

Arms laid in Manipur, one nabbed

Imphal, Feb 23 (UNI) : Arms and ammunition were surrendered at the office of SP, Thoubal, Imphal East, and Imphal West on Sunday. Police said a militant was also nabbed while arms were recovered and two bunkers constructed by Kuki militants were destroyed.

Police said at SP Office Thoubal District people surrendered SMG Carbine with Magazine, Tear Gas Guns, Sniper Rifles, Double Barrel Gun, Single Barrel Gun, .38 mm Pistol, Mortar Shells, improvised IEDs, and Hand Grenades.

At SP Imphal East District one AK 56 Rifle with magazine, 2.3.01x7.62 mm MAS Series Bolt Action sniper rifle with magazine and 303 Rifle with magazine were surrendered. At SP Office Imphal West a 9 mm Carbine was surrendered.

Search operations and area domination were conducted by security forces in the fringe and vulnerable areas of hill and valley Districts. One .303 Rifle with one Magazine, three Single Barrel (Country made), one high trajectory modified 81 mm Mortar (Pumpi), IED and other war materials were seized at Langza Churachandpur District.

Security Force arrested an active member of the outfit KCP (Noyon) from Imphal East District. Two illegal bunkers at Chingmang and L. Champhai village under Leimakhong-PS, Kangpokpi District were also destroyed.

Cong to hold AICC session in Ahmedabad on April 8-9

New Delhi, Feb 23 (UNI) : The Congress will hold a two-day AICC session in Gujarat's Ahmedabad which will be presided over by party president Mallikarjun Kharge. According to a statement issued by party general secretary K C Venugopal on Sunday, "AICC delegates will deliberate on the challenges posed by the anti-people policies and the relentless attack on the Constitution and its values by the BJP, while charting the party's future course of action."

The meeting will be attended by Congress Parliamentary Party chief Sonia Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Chief Ministers of Congress-ruled states and national and senior party leaders.

Venugopal stated that this session is being convened as a continuation of the resolutions adopted at the Belagavi extended CWC meeting, which commemorated the 100th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's presidency at the 1924 INC session.

He said that the session will commence on April eight with an extended Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, followed by the AICC Delegates' meeting on April nine. The statement added, "The upcoming session will serve not only as a platform for crucial deliberations but also as a reaffirmation of the Congress party's collective resolve to address the concerns of the common people and present a strong alternative vision for the nation."

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Yogi govt telling lies after lies about Kumbh: Akhilesh Yadav

Etawah (UP), Feb 23 (UNI) : Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday alleged that Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is misleading the public by constantly lying and hurting religious sentiments.

While talking to reporters after attending the ceremony, Akhilesh raised several questions related to Kumbh and accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government of a big scam.

He said that CM Yogi is claiming that this Maha Kumbh is happening after 144 years, whereas this is not mentioned in any scripture.

He said, "According to the scriptures, Kumbh takes place in Prayagraj every 12 years and Maha Kumbh does not happen every 144 years, but after every 12th Kumbh that is in the 144th year."

The SP chief targeted the Yogi government and said that if the Maha Kumbh was actually being organised after 144 years, then why did the government not mention it in the budget session?

"It is clearly written in the budget session documents that Kumbh is organised every 12 years. This means that the government is serving lies to the public," he said.

He said, "The CM is also claiming that UP has received economic benefits of about Rs 3.5 lakh crore from this event. If this is true, then this amount should also be recorded in the GST data. The government should make its complete details public, so that the public can know the

reality. The government has claimed to have spent about Rs 15,000 crore for the Prayagraj Kumbh, but the reality is telling something else."

He said, "Devotees are facing problems due to mismanagement and chaos. Chaos and negligence prevail everywhere. This makes it clear that there has been large-scale corruption in this event."

He said that when there will be a proper investigation, then the real scam will be revealed.

Akhilesh raised the question that the CM had claimed that arrangements for 100 crore people have been made for the Kumbh, but the ground reality is telling something else.

"If arrangements had really been made for such a large number of people, then why are there constant reports of chaos and troubles of devotees?," he said. He said that the BJP government has failed on every front in organising the Maha Kumbh.

"Devotees are facing huge difficulties in reaching Prayagraj. The number of trains and buses is insufficient. The condition of the roads remains dilapidated. The government, which claims to clean the Ganga, has failed to provide clean water at Sangam," he said.

The SP chief said that a dispute has come to the fore between the Central and State Pollution Control Boards.

"Many people died in the stampede, but the government is unable to even tell the correct figures.

No help was given to the families of the dead and the injured. Many accidents

Whether statehood was another Jumla: J&K Cong chief asks BJP

Jammu, Feb 23 (UNI) Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee President Tariq Hameed Karra on Sunday asked the BJP to explain whether the commitment to restore statehood of the present Union Territory was another "Jumla" of the Narendra Modi government.

Addressing a Congress workers' convention at Muthi, Karra questioned the local BJP for its stand over the continued neglect of the most popular demand of people of the entire Jammu and Kashmir by the centre government. He also wondered if it was like several other jumlas of the Modi government, which were never fulfilled. Asserting that Congress would not rest till the central government fulfills the commitment of statehood, made on the floor of parliament, before the Supreme Court and also the people of J&K, during the recent assembly elections.

"Most surprising is the total silence of the local BJP unit and the party's MLAs after getting a huge mandate from the people. Is it not a continued deceit of the centre over the most fundamental demand of the general public and the right of people?," he asked.

Karra said people are suffering in the absence of powers with the elected government and various sections like unemployed youth, daily wagers, contractual, ad-hoc, consolidated temporary and NHM employees, Anganwadi workers, aasha workers, are awaiting justice from the government.

He said Dogras are worst hit and most hurt by the loss of identity, status, dignity and the rights to protect their land, jobs and natural resources, which are being looted and taken over by influential outsiders.

The convention was organised by DCC Rural under the leadership of Thakur Hari Singh Chib and attended by senior party leaders.

Karra said that Congress has a history of sacrifices before and after independence as its two prime ministers gave their lives while the BJP has a legacy of the "Mafinama" party.

"Our ideology and the nation's Constitution is based on unity in diversity while BJP believes in division and communalism for vote bank politics," said Karra.

Addressing the gathering, Congress leader Tara Chand talked of the role of his party in uniting people and uplifting the downtrodden and said as a result the Dalits occupied prime positions in the government and services.

J&K Forest Department to plant 1.5 cr saplings to mitigate climate change

Srinagar, Feb 23 (UNI) Aiming to improve the region's green cover and mitigate climate change, the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department has unveiled an ambitious plan to plant 1.5 crore saplings upto March end this financial year, officials said.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests S.K. Gupta, announced the initiative during a plantation drive at Ompora city forest on Sunday.

Addressing recent concerns over increased forest fires, PCCF attributed the incidents to a prolonged dry spell. He said that swift action by forest officials had prevented significant damage.

The department is also taking steps to strengthen its workforce by referring vacancies to the SSRB (Service Selection Recruitment board) for recruitment, he stated.

In a move to support local farmers and expand tree cover outside designated forest areas, the Social Forestry Department distributed male poplar clones.

PCCF highlighted the importance of integrating modern techniques into nursery management, releasing a pamphlet prepared by DFO Budgam to guide best practices.

While underlining that community involvement is crucial to protect and expand our forests, PCCF urged residents to participate in the plantation drives.

Maha Kumbh to attempt global cleanliness record on Feb 24

Prayagraj, Feb 23 (UNI) Taking Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision of 'Swachh Maha Kumbh' to new heights, a massive cleanliness campaign will be launched on Monday in Prayagraj where over 15,000 sanitation workers will conduct a synchronized cleanliness drive across four different zones.

This historic effort aims to set a Guinness World Record for cleanliness. Under CM Yogi's leadership, Maha Kumbh is setting new benchmarks in cleanliness every day. The grand religious gathering has been dedicated to maintaining high hygiene standards, earning it the title of 'Swachh Maha

Kumbh'. It may be noted that a previous world record attempt for cleaning the Ganga River was also made during Maha Kumbh, where over 300 sanitation workers carried out a coordinated river-cleaning drive at various ghats of Prayagraj.

Besides, two more world record attempts related to cleanliness are in the pipeline. As per the scheduled programme, the mega cleanliness campaign will start at 12 pm on Monday, with thousands of sanitation workers participating across four designated zones, including Helipad Parking, Bharadwaj Ghat, Old GT Road and Harishchandra Ghat and Chakramadhav Ghat.

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