

Oblivious Of Today's Hi-Tech Life, Saharkhwans Keeps Date With Ramazan

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Hundreds of men from remote areas of Kashmir come to towns and cities like Srinagar to don the role of a Saharkhwaan, a drum beater, who goes around a town to wake up people for the pre-dawn meal, Sehri. Mohammad Rafiq Kataria from Kupwara's Kalaroos, who has been a drummer for the last 25 years, wakes up early in the morning to start his work at 3 am. "We wait 11 months for

Ramzan to come as whatever people donate to us at the end of the holy month, it provides for our families for the entire year," he said. Mohammad Mehboob Khatana, who has been coming to Srinagar for the last 20 years during Ramzan, said he is hopeful of getting a good reward from the almighty for waking people for the pre-dawn meal. "We wake people up for fasting. We do this for a living with hopes of getting rewarded," Khatana said.



WE WAIT 11 MONTHS FOR RAMZAN TO COME AS WHATEVER PEOPLE donate to us at the end of the holy month, it provides for our families for the entire year."

Another traditional drummer, Ghulam Rasool Payar, said "I have been doing this work for the past 50 years. We do not press anyone for payments. We accept whatever people donate to us out of their free will."

Asked if the modern gadgets had diminished the significance

of Saharkhwaan, Payar said it has not affected their work.

"Ramzan has started and so have our preparations. This is a month of blessings from the almighty," Maulana Mehmood, an Imam, said, adding that he will pray for peace in Kashmir and everywhere in the world.

J&K Govt In Process To Auction Lithium Reserves

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: J&K mining secretary Amit Sharma on Friday said the Union territory is in the process to auction the lithium reserves discovered last month but it is too early to talk about the timeline.

Lithium reserves have been found for the first time in the country in Jammu and Kashmir.

When asked when the auction of lithium reserves, found in Jammu and Kashmir, will happen, Sharma said, "It is too early. I know we are all ambitious about it, but it is too early to talk about it. But yes, we are in a process and maybe over the next few months or years we would be able to reach there with everybody's support".

Lithium is a non-ferrous metal and is one of the key components in EV batteries.

"Everywhere they are asking the question when will commercial exploitation start and when will the bidding start and **More on P6**

Rahul Gandhi Disqualified From Parliament

Congress Says Will Fight Legally And Politically, BJP Terms Action 'Lawful'

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi was on Friday disqualified from Lok Sabha following his conviction by a Surat court in a 2019 criminal defamation case, an action the party termed an attempt to "silence" his voice as it vowed to fight the battle legally and politically.

The BJP dismissed the charges and termed the disqualification "lawful".

The disqualification, which will bar Gandhi from contesting polls for eight years unless stayed

by a higher court, saw a shift in the dynamics of Opposition ranks with Trinamool Congress and Aam Aadmi Party also expressing strong support for the embattled leader, along with several other Opposition parties. Announcing his disqualification, the Lok Sabha Secretariat in a notification said that it was effective from March 23, the day of his conviction.

"Consequent upon his conviction by the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Surat...

Rahul Gandhi, Member of Lok Sabha representing the Wayanad **More on P6**



30 MPs Detained During Protest March

Over 30 opposition MPs, including those from the Congress, were detained on Friday as they took out a protest march from Parliament House, alleging that democracy is in "danger" and demanding a JPC probe into the Adani issue. Prominent leaders, including K C Venugopal, Adhir Chowdhury, K Suresh, **More on P6**

WE WILL KEEP FIGHTING FOR PROTECTING democracy and even if we have to go to jail, we will do so. Our people are ready to fight."

Gujarat Police Books 'PMO Conman' For House Grab Bid

Press Trust Of India

Ahmedabad: Alleged conman from Gujarat Kiran Patel, held in Jammu and Kashmir for posing as a top official of the Prime Minister Office (PMO), has been booked by the Ahmedabad cops on cheating and criminal conspiracy charges for trying to usurp a senior citizen's bungalow here using the same tactic, an official has said.

Patel, a resident of the Ghodasar area of the city, was

arrested by the Jammu and Kashmir police earlier this month from a five-star hotel in Srinagar after the authorities grew suspicious about his activities.

On Wednesday, the Ahmedabad city crime branch lodged a case of cheating (Indian Penal Code section 420), criminal breach of trust (406), criminal conspiracy (120-b) and personating a public servant (170) against the alleged conman, said Deputy Commissioner **More on P6**



Children having fun time inside Srinagar's Jamia Masjid, where thousands of devotees offered congregational prayers on the first Friday of the holy month of Ramazan: KO Photo, Abid Bhat

J&K Govt Issues Fresh Social Media Rules For Its Employees

Warned Of Action For Discussing, Criticizing Govt Policies

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday issued fresh social media guidelines for its employees working in the Union Territory, warning them against using social media for discussing or criticizing the policies pursued by the government on social media pages, communities of microblogs.

In a circular issued here on Friday, the government employees have been asked to strictly adhere and comply with the previous order issued by the General Administration department (GAD) in 2017.

The fresh social media guidelines come at a time when several employees have been suspended for criticizing the government. In a recent such incident, a school teacher was suspended in Ramban district last month for allegedly criticizing government policies on social media.



The government said despite the already existing guidelines and rules Jammu and Kashmir Employees Conduct Rules, 1971 it has been observed that government servants often engage themselves with social media in a manner which is in contravention to these rules.

"While using different social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. or Instant Messaging applications like WhatsApp, Telegram etc.,

employees have been seen to air disparaging views on subjects that they are expressly barred under rules to comment upon," reads the GAD order.

It further says that the employees have been seen to comment or act or behave in a manner that does not conform to the acceptable standards of official conduct, as envisaged in the existing guidelines and the rules.

"Such actions range from unauthorised communication of official information and/or dissemination of patently wrong or misleading information, airing of political or communal views etc. under their real or assumed identities," the order reads.

The government order mentions that it has been felt expedient to reiterate the main features of guidelines already notified regarding use of social media for compliance by the government employees:

1. Employees, **More on P6**

WHILE USING DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. or Instant Messaging applications like WhatsApp, Telegram etc., employees have been seen to air disparaging views on subjects that they are expressly barred under rules to comment upon."

Gandhi Did Not Have A Single University Degree: LG

Says Father Of Nation Achieved Everything Including Freedom Through Power Of Truth

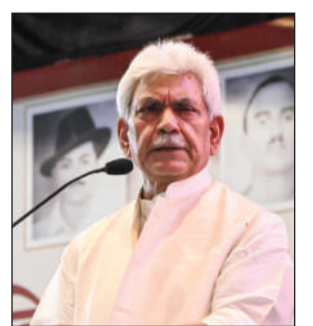
Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Thursday that Mahatma Gandhi had no law degree from the University and only qualification was a high school diploma.

"Who would say Gandhiji was not educated? Nobody has the courage to say that. But did you know that he did not have a single university degree or qualification. There are many of us who think that Mahatma Gandhi had a law degree. No, he did not. His only qualification was a high school diploma," Sinha said, while delivering the keynote address for Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Memorial Lecture at ITM, Gwalior on Thursday.

Gandhi, he said, qualified to practice law but he did not have a law degree.

"He had no degree but look at how educated he was...our father of the



Nation," he said, adding, "Gandhi achieved everything including freedom through the power of truth."

The LG further said that he wanted to make clear that one should not only be indulging in formal connection with a degree or what one thinks is education.

Earlier, Sinha said that India has emerged as the fifth largest economic power of the world and we are moving forward with the goal to become part of the world's top 3 largest economies. **More on P6**

SHORT TAKES

Avalanche Alert In 10 J&K Districts

Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) on Friday issued an avalanche warning for ten districts in the upcoming 24 hours. The JKDMA issued a 'Low Danger Level' warning above 2800 to 3000 metres over Anantnag, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Kupwara, Kulgam, Doda, Kishtwar, Poonch Rajouri and Reasi districts. People living in the specified areas have been advised to take precautions and avoid venturing in the avalanche prone areas.

4% DA Hike For Central Govt Employees

The Union Cabinet on Friday increased the dearness allowance and dearness relief by 4 per cent to 42 per cent to benefit 47.58 lakh central government employees and 69.76 lakh pensioners. The combined impact on the exchequer on account of both Dearness Allowance and Dearness Relief will be Rs 12,815.60 crore per annum, I&B Minister Anurag Thakur told reporters after the meeting of Cabinet Committee **More on P6**

Intruder Killed Along LoC In Kupwara

An unidentified intruder was killed by government forces during a foiled infiltration attempt along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district on Friday, officials said. Alert troops noticed suspicious movement along the Line of Control at Jabdi in the Karnah area in the morning, the officials said. The security forces challenged the intruders and, in the ensuing gunfight, one infiltrator was killed, they added. One AK rifle and some ammunition was **More on P6**

Missile Misfire During Army Exercise

A missile was misfired during a firing exercise by the army in Rajasthan's Jaipur. The annual exercise of a unit was going on at the Pokhran field firing range when the incident occurred. However, no loss of life or property was reported. "A case of Missile misfire was reported while a unit was undertaking its annual field firing today," a defence spokesperson said. He said the missile detonated safely. However, the debris fell in the **More on P6**

Cleric Killed In Ganderbal Accident

A cleric was killed and three others injured on Friday in a head-on collision between two cars in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. The accident occurred in Bani Bagh village of Kangan on Friday evening. Police sources said that there was a collision between a Swift car (JK16-6685) and an Alto car (JK16-548) in which four people sustained injuries. All the injured were removed to the Sub-district hospital Kangan for treatment. However, one of the **More on P6**

Mother Arrested For Selling Newborn

A baby boy was allegedly sold by his mother soon after his birth in Jharkhand's Chatra district, police said. Eleven people were arrested in connection with the case, including Asha Devi, the mother of the newborn, they said. Chatra's Deputy Commissioner Abu Imran received information about the incident. Immediately, police swung into action and rescued the newborn from the Bokaro district within 24 hours, Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) **More on P6**

Admin Intensifies Market Checking in Srinagar

Realizes Rs 89,000 Fine From Erring Shopkeepers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Administration Srinagar today conducted checking in various markets of Srinagar City, to prevent any kind of profiteering and black marketing by business establishments and to ensure all essential commodities are sold at Government approved rates as per the quality standards.

The checking squads headed by Tehsildars of Eidgah, South, Shalteng, Panthachowk, North, Chanapora and Khanyar Tehsils conducted intensive market checking in Lal Chowk, Rajbagh, Jawahar Nagar, Soura, Eidgah, Lalbazar, Khanyar, Nowhatta, Hazratbal, Shalimar, Panthachowk, Zewan, Sanat Nagar, Chamnapora, Hyderpora and other adjoining markets of the City.

The Market checking drive was conducted on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Ajaz Asad.

During the drive, dozens of food business units were inspected, while several erring shopkeepers were booked and found failing to maintain the quality of food items, not displaying rate lists of essential commodities, selling expiry products, besides indulging in practices of illegal profiteering.

A fine to the tune of 89000/= was also imposed on the erring shopkeepers for violating different provisions of Acts.

During the market checking huge quantities of rotten vegetables, fruits and other food items were also destroyed on the spot.

Sewing Machines Distributed Among Artisans Under Madadgar Yojna

Observer News Service

Srinagar: With aim to increase working skills of the people living below poverty line in rural areas, paramilitary CRPF under Madadgar Yojna, provided sewing machines to artisans (tailors) in different parts of the valley including Budgam and Baramulla.

CRPF, under the scheme provided sewing machines to many artisans including females working as sartor in Budgam and Baramulla districts in the year 2022/23.

These sewing machines were provided following a request through an application moved before Commandant 79 Battalion CRPF, Kishore Kumar.

"79 Battalion, CRPF, Srinagar, has always been working for the welfare of the people, development and social harmony, mainly organizing blood donation camps, various types of works under civic action, drug distribution, flag march to create awareness among people and drug de-addiction," a statement issued by 79 Bn CRPF.

World Tuberculosis Day

Efforts On To Make J&K TB Free By 2025

Observer News Service

Srinagar: With the efforts of the Health Department, the tuberculosis cases in Kashmir are on decline even as authorities claim that every effort is being taken to make J&K TB free by 2025.

A top health official said that TB cases are on decline and more and more districts

are showing improvement with each passing day.

He said 18,506 cases of tuberculosis have been reported in Kashmir in the last five years. In 2018, 4,774 TB cases were recorded in J&K. In 2019, it was down to 4,080 TB cases, he said, adding that due to less screening because of Covid-19 Kashmir reported 2,840 cases.



Devotees in thousands throng central Jamia Masjid in Srinagar to offer congregational prayers on the first Friday day of the holy month of Ramazan. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Thousands Throng Hazratbal, Jamia Masjid On First Friday Of Ramazan

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The major shrines and mosques in Srinagar witnessed huge rush of devotees during the congregational Friday prayers today, while authorities claimed that 78,000 people offered prayers at historic Jamia Masjid in Nowhatta and Dargah Hazratbal shrine.

On the first Friday of Ramadan, the devotees from different parts of the Valley thronged Dargah Hazratbal shrine and Jamia Masjid here to attend the congregational prayers. Shrines and mosques reverberated with

Durood-Azkar across the Valley.

At Jamia Masjid Srinagar and Dargah Hazratbal shrine, the religious clerics highlighted the teachings of Islam and also the importance of the holy month Ramazan.

Notably, Waqf Board, Jammu and Kashmir has made special arrangements this year at Hazratbal shrine where the makeshift tents in large numbers have been erected for the devotees in the lawns so that they won't face any inconvenience.

Outside the shrine, the local and non-local business establishments had installed the carts and were seen selling the

Kashmir traditional food stuff.

Meanwhile, Srinagar police in a tweet informed that the congregational prayers concluded peacefully in all the mosques of Srinagar. Below are pictures from Jamia Masjid, nowhatta & Hazratbal Dargah wherein around 18,000 & 50,000 devotees attended Friday prayers respectively," Srinagar Police tweeted.

"Friday afternoon Prayers on the first Friday of the holy month of Ramzan concluded peacefully in all the mosques of Srinagar. Below are pictures from Jamia Masjid, nowhatta & Hazratbal Dargah wherein around 18,000 & 50,000 devotees attended Friday prayers respectively," Srinagar Police tweeted.

Following Div Com Direction, Night Bus Service Begins On 2 Routes In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The government has started night bus services on many routes to ensure that the common people, who don't have their own transport, get accessible and reliable transport facility during evening hours and also give access to the people towards Dalgate-Boulevard road, Regional Transport Officer (RTO), Kashmir, Syed Shahinawaz Bukhari said on Friday.

The directions in this regard were passed by Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Vijay

Kumar Bidhuri in a meeting yesterday. RTO Kashmir said the decision to start night bus service on many routes was taken in view of many issues confronting people.

"The shopkeepers in many areas put down their shutters by 6 PM as they are not confident whether they would get transport to reach home in late evening. Similarly, people too don't come out in the evening in absence of public transport," he said, adding the night bus services will be ensured on the Chadoora route and Lal Chowk-

Dalgate to Harwan.

He said people are being given access to boulevard road in evening hours as there were many events in the past and the common people, who don't have their own transport, desired to visit the place, but couldn't. "Thus, keeping these things in mind, the night bus service will be ensured along these routes to ensure the people heave a sigh of relief," he said.

RTO Kashmir further said that the decision has been taken to ensure an accessible and reliable transport system for the people.

TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
 PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
 PDD: 0194-2450213
 FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES :
 2479488,2452222,2452155
 CAPD: 18001807011
 SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
 Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS
 SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS
 SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
 ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
 BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
 BUBHERA: 01932-228243
 PAMPORE: 01933-294132
 PATTAN: 01954-293507
 QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS
 Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
 Mughal Road - (Closed)
 Srinagar-Leh - (Open)

PRAYERS

FAJR	5:08
ZUHR	12:40
ASR	4:58
Magrib	6:48
ISHA	8:08

HIJRI CALENDAR
 03 RAMAZAN
 1444

This Day In History

- 1802 - Great Britain and the French Republic sign the Treaty of Amiens
- 1817 - Tsar Alexander I recommends formation of Society of Israeli Christians
- 1820 - Greece freedom revolt against anti Ottoman attack
- 1821 - Greece gains independence from Turkey (National Day)
- 1895 - Italian troops invade Abyssinia (Ethiopia)
- 1902 - In Russia, 567 students are tried for rioting and 'political disaffection' are found guilty; 95 are banished to Siberia
- 1911 - Triangle Shirtwaist Factory catches fire 145 die, all but 13 girls
- submarine disaster; a US F-4 sank off Hawaii, killing 21
- 1920 - Greek Independence Day.
- 1937 - Italy & Yugoslavia sign non-aggression treaty (Pact of Belgrade)
- 1944 - RAF Flight Sgt Nicholas Alkemade survives a jump from his Lancaster bomber from 18,000 feet over Germany without a parachute; his fall was broken by pine trees and soft snow, and he suffered only a sprained leg.

From KO Archives

Legislative History Created, Entire Opposition Expelled

Observer News Service

Jammu - History of sorts was created here state legislative assembly here today, with at least fifteen people including seven legislators sustaining injuries in a clash between watch and ward staff of the Assembly and opposition MIAs in the course latter's forcible removal as ordered by the Speaker Ali Mohammed Naik. Barring Dilawar Mir (JD), Yusuf Tarigami (CPM) and Bhagat Ram Chand (BSP) entire opposition was expelled for the rest of the current session.

The Speaker's order following unprecedented pandemonium that broke out in the house, soon after today's session started, with Naik announcing the question hour. The agitating members left their seats and assembled in the well of the house demanding suspension of the question hour and asking for a discussion over the situation arising of the agitation of Jammu students against the alleged "injustice" done to the students from that division.

The opposition members also demanded that the list of selected candidates for MBBS and BDS courses be scrapped.

The trouble started immediately after Speaker resumed his seat when members the BJP, Congress and Janta Dal got up to raise the issue of "large scale bungling, irregularities and corruption" in the recently released selection list of MBBS and BDS. The speaker Ali Mohd Naik however ignored the shouts of opposition and instead named the member, on top of the list of questions slated for today, to ask his question. But the agitated opposition continued with slogan shouting and amidst unruly noisy scenes in the house, nothing was audible. As the protest continued, CPM member Yusuf Tarigami was heard inviting the attention of the speaker about the "environment of the house" saying "we want to speak about environment of the state but the environment inside the house is not well".

When the speaker disallowed all pleas of the opposition, the agitated members walked to well of the house and staged a dharna shouting slogans against ministers and ruling party members. Harsh Dev Singh (NPP) Mohd Yusuf alias Kuka Parrey (AL) Satpal Lakhitra and Jagdish Dubey (JD) also joined the dharna and continued shouting slogans demanding scrap of list. The BJP and Congress members including Mehbooba Mufti, Ashok Sharma, Balbir Singh, Lal Singh, Searing Dorjay, and Tara Chand also joined the BJP legislators headed by Shiv Charn Gupta and demanded suspension of question hour and a reply from the government. At one stage some opposition members were seen rushing towards the Speaker's podium amidst shouts of slogans.

At this stage Law minister P L Handoo, who also hold Parliamentary Affairs portfolio, moved a motion seeking expulsion of all the members for rest of the session. The motion was seconded by Finance Minister Mohd Shafi carried by a voice vote and then followed Naik's order expelling all the 17 members, indulging in "uncalled for behaviour" for remaining period of the current session of the assembly. After the motion was adopted and Speaker gave his ruling, the members were asked to leave the house. However as the members defied the repeated orders of the chair, the Speaker adjourned the house for half an hour. But the opposition members continued their dharna and slogan shouting in the well of the house.

As the house re-assembled, after stipulated time, the opposition was there in the well busy in slogan shouting and making it impossible for the Speaker to go ahead with the proceedings.

The Speaker at this stage ordered the Marshall of the house to remove the expelled members physically with the help of watch and ward staff, this resulted in violent clashes between the members and the watch and ward staff with the former offering stiff resistance. Chairs and microphones were used in the melee that followed leading to multiple injuries to Ashok Sharma, Ch. Lal Singh.

Shiv Charn Gupta, Prithvi Chand, Bali Bhagat, Ch Chuni Lala, Ch Piara Singh and Satpal Lahotra. Seven members of the watch and ward staff also received injuries.

The Chief Minister and his ministerial colleagues did not respond to opposition members' demand for scrapping the list or discussion over the issue.

(Kashmir Observer, 25 March, 1998)

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir
Office of the Divisional Forest Officer Bandipora Forest Division Chiternar.
 e- NIT NO: - 25 OF 2022-23 DATED: - 18 - 03 - 2023

For and on behalf of the Hon'ble President of India, e-tenders are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir /Central Govt. Organizations for the following works:-

S.NO	NAME OF WORK	ADV. COST (Rs. In lacs)	Bid Security (EMD)INR	CLASS OF CONTRACTOR	Cost of Tender Document (Rs)	TIME OF COMPLETION
1	Construction of Forest Range Office Building at Dawar Gurez. Bandipora Forest Division Chiternar.	61.76	123520.00	"A"	Rs. 1600/=	150 calendar days.

The e-NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bills of quantities, (B.O.Q) set of Terms & Conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Website: -www.jktenders.gov.in.

Position of AA: available
 Position of T/S: available
 Position of Funds: Budgeted.

Publishing Date: - 18-03-2023
 Download Start Date: - 18-03-2023 from 06:00 PM
 Bid submission Start Date: - 18-03-2023 from 06:00 PM
 Bid submission End Date: - 05-04-2023 Up to 04.00 PM
 Date of Opening of Technical Bid Online: - 06-04-2023 at 10.00AM in the Office of the Conservator of Forests Srinagar Circle at Shiekh Bagh Srinagar.
 Date of Opening of Financial Bid Online: - To be opened online at any convenient date and time after completion evaluation Technical bids at Shiekh Bagh Srinagar.

01. The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website: - https://jktenders.gov.in
 02. The date for opening of Technical & Financial bids online shall be opened as per time schedule mentioned above.
 03. Bids uploaded must accompany Govt. Treasury Receipt (cost of tender document) in shape of Treasury Challan for the amount shown against the work above to be deposited in Govt. Treasury under Account Head 0406- Forest and Bid Security deposit in the shape of EMD for requisite amount and pledged to Divisional Forest Officer Bandipora. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of bids.
 04. As per rule 171 of GFR-2017, Performance Security shall have to be deposited by successful bidder to the order of 3% of the value of contract and if there are compelling circumstances, performance security in excess of three percent may also be demanded.
 05. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website jktenders.gov.in
 06. To participate in bidding process bidders have to get Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per Information Technology Act Bidders can get Digital Certificate form approved vendor.
 07. The bidders have to submit their Technical & financial bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No Technical or financial bid will be accepted in physical/hard form.
 08. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.
 09. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents i.e Valid Registration Card issued by PWD/CPWD duly renewed for the current financial year 2020-21, PAN, Valid GST Registration, Govt. Treasury receipt/Challan (cost of Tender Document).
 10. The successful bidder has to produce Valid Labour Registration Certificate issued by Labour Department after issuance of award of contract.
 11. The Department will not be responsible for any delay in online submission of the bid due to any reason (technical or otherwise).
 12. The Department shall not be held responsible for selection criteria/policy matter being adopted by the Directorate of Information regarding publishing the NIT, in any of the newspaper under circulation.
 13. The tender accepting Authority however reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
 14. All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per PWD form 25 (double leaf) and as per the detailed document.
 NO: - DFO/A/Actt/ 974-91
 DPK-18707/22 Dated: - 24-03-2023

Divisional Forest Officer,
 Bandipora Forest Division,
 Chiternar.

FREE One to one and group mental health counselling services in the clinic as well as in online mode

HEALTHY MINDS

Our team of well qualified and trained professionals comprises both child/adolescent as well as adult psychologists & counsellors that work under the guidance & supervision of senior consultant psychologists.

WE PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL HELP IN OVERCOMING THE FOLLOWING AND MANY MORE CONDITIONS

- Anger & Stress management
- Post Traumatic Stress disorder
- Anxiety Disorder
- Personal Empowerment
- Depression
- Suicide Prevention and more

CALL FOR FREE CONSULTATION! 10AM - 4PM, Monday - Saturday

9469 807 321 | 9469 811 096 | 9070 130 280

HOUSE NO. 27, LANE NO 16 A, GOGJI BAGH

Statements Are Not Narrative

Riyaz Wani



CONGRESS leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks in London have become a topic of intense media and political discourse within the country. Gandhi is accused of seeking international intervention to arrest the alleged democratic backsliding in India, something he has denied doing. Clarifying his position recently before the parliamentary advisory committee chaired by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) S Jaishankar, Gandhi said he had only "raised questions" about India's democracy during his London interactions. However, is this the issue that should have become a national topic of discussion over the course of a week or so? This is debatable. Gandhi did mention the erosion of democracy in India in his meetings in the British capital, but when asked directly if he wanted international pressure to make the Indian government uphold democratic standards, he flatly denied it.

The facts, however, don't usually come in the way of a political debate. Or for that matter, in the way of a media debate. More so, in an era, when such debates are not organic, evolving naturally out of a day to day news cycle, but are carefully choreographed and pushed to the centre stage. Intrinsic truth doesn't matter. What matters is what twist you want to give it by pushing a certain narrative determinedly across all available media over a certain period of time. And this, by and large, invariably succeeds in manipulating public opinion in sync with intended goals. So, it is immaterial what Gandhi said or didn't say. Yet it is also true that his remarks in London provided a tempting opportunity for the BJP to twist them to make a convenient political argument.

Who prevailed this round of the political battle royale between the BJP and the Congress? Any off-hand conclusion will be a self-fulfilling prophecy. But, yes, a government has always an edge as it exercises a certain degree of control over institutions, including over media. It can get a certain message across to a largest mass of people. This makes opposition a loser from the word go. Yet some imponderables can still nuance the situation: for example, how people process the information fed to them and whether they want or are able to critically assess it. And this does happen occasionally. In 2003, the then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee lost general election despite his popularity and the blitzkrieg of Shining India campaign.

That said, a lot is at stake for both parties in the run up to the 2024 national elections. And the BJP expectedly seems to be way ahead of Congress. The saffron party's effort now seems to undo what Gandhi may have gained during his 4000 kilometre long padyatra. True, the yatra seems to have breathed new life into an otherwise moribund party. Gandhi drew reasonably good crowds. But mobilizing crowds doesn't necessarily guarantee a good electoral performance as was clear in

the last Assembly polls in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, where Congress performed miserably in the former state.

There will be more tests ahead. Around ten Assembly elections are scheduled to be held before the general elections. Among them, the elections in Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana will be very crucial. The BJP will hope to win all of them. But should the party suffer reverses in the majority of these states, this may not bode well for its 2024 chances. The elections in these five major states represent the last chance for the opposition, especially Congress, to hurtle back into the reckoning. For now, the party can take heart from the victory in Himachal. It can put some wind in its sails as it prepares for the upcoming Assembly elections.

As for Gandhi's makeover, it still seems to be a work in progress. Many political observers remain skeptical about his ability to generate a public groundswell in favour of the Congress. And

they may be right. A year ahead of the general elections, Congress activities show little promise. Gandhi's yatra and speeches have so far only served to promote his image as a good boy. His statements are largely about some of the BJP's governance failures, not about the overarching ideological challenge posed by the saffron party. Hence the persisting absence of a cogent political narrative.

Will the tide turn now? It is difficult to tell. The yatra has certainly generated some goodwill, and things look potentially set for a change. Congress has finally shown some assertiveness about pursuing an inclusive political agenda, but a proper ideological narrative is far from taking shape. So is the unity of the opposition, which is critical to any political effort to dislodge the BJP. As things stand, only a combined opposition could be expected to take on the BJP. Gandhi has also been trying to forge opposition unity, but there are only feeble indications that he has had any success in this en-



There will be more tests ahead. Around ten Assembly elections are scheduled to be held before the general elections. Among them, the elections in Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana will be very crucial. The BJP will hope to win all of them. But should the party suffer reverses in the majority of these states, this may not bode well for its 2024 chances

deavour. It won't be easy to bring all the opposition parties together on one platform, especially, with several regional leaders nursing their personal ambitions. But for now, Congress can bank on the gains of Gandhi's successful yatra and hope to build on them. There's also an expectation that some sort of loose political alliance comes along in the near future. And if it doesn't and Congress also fares badly in the upcoming assembly elections in some major states where it boasts of a significant support base, then there is little that can stop the BJP from returning to power.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The author is the Political Editor at Kashmir Observer

If We Don't Master A.I., It Will Master Us

Yuval Harari, Tristan Harris and Aza Raskin

Mr. Harari is a historian, author of 'Sapiens', 'Homo Deus' and 'Unstoppable Us', and co-founder of the social impact company Sapienship. Mr. Harris and Mr. Raskin are co-founders of the Center for Humane Technology.

Imagine that as you are boarding an airplane, half the engineers who built the plane tell you there is a 10 percent chance the plane will crash, killing you and everyone else onboard. Would you still board?

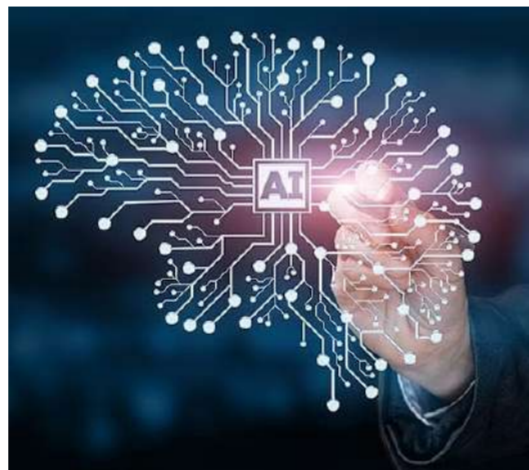
In 2022, over 700 top academics and researchers behind the leading artificial intelligence companies were asked in a survey about future A.I. risk. Half of those surveyed stated that there was a 10 percent or greater chance of human extinction (or similarly permanent and severe disempowerment) from future AI systems. Technology companies building today's large language models are caught in a race to put all of humanity on that plane.

Drug companies cannot sell people new medicines without first subjecting their products to rigorous safety checks. Biotech labs cannot release new viruses into the public sphere in order to impress shareholders with their wizardry. Likewise, A.I. systems with the power of GPT-4 and beyond should not be entangled with the lives of billions at a pace faster than cultures can safely absorb them. A race to dominate the market should not set the speed of deploying humanity's most consequential technology. We should move at whatever speed enables us to get this right.

The specter of A.I. has haunted humanity since the mid-20th century, yet until recently it has remained a distant prospect, something that belongs in sci-fi more than in serious scientific and political debates. It is difficult for our human minds to grasp the new capabilities of GPT-4 and similar tools, and it is even harder to grasp the exponential speed at which these tools are developing even more advanced and powerful capabilities. But most of the key skills boil down to one thing: the ability to manipulate and generate language, whether with words, sounds or images.

In the beginning was the word. Language is the operating system of human culture. From language emerges myth and law, gods and money, art and science, friendships and nations — even computer code. A.I.'s new mastery of language means it can now hack and manipulate the operating system of civilization. By gaining mastery of language, A.I. is seizing the master key to civilization, from bank vaults to holy sepulchers.

What would it mean for humans to live in a



In 2022, over 700 top academics and researchers behind the leading artificial intelligence companies were asked in a survey about future A.I. risk. Half of those surveyed stated that there was a 10 percent or greater chance of human extinction (or similarly permanent and severe disempowerment) from future AI systems. Technology companies building today's large language models are caught in a race to put all of humanity on that plane.

world where a large percentage of stories, melodies, images, laws, policies and tools are shaped by non-human intelligence, which knows how to exploit with superhuman efficiency the weaknesses, biases and addictions of the human mind — while also knowing how to form intimate relationships with human beings? In games like chess, no human can hope to beat a computer. What happens when the same thing occurs in art, politics, and even religion?

A.I. could rapidly eat the whole of human culture — everything we have produced over thou-

sands of years — digest it, and begin to gush out a flood of new cultural artifacts. Not just school essays, but also political speeches, ideological manifestos, and even holy books for new cults. By 2028, the U.S. presidential race might no longer be run by humans.

Humans often don't have direct access to reality. We are cocooned by culture, experiencing reality through a cultural prism. Our political views are shaped by the reports of journalists and the anecdotes of friends. Our sexual preferences are tweaked by art and religion. That cultural cocoon has hitherto been woven by other humans. What will it be like to experience reality through a prism produced by non-human intelligence?

For thousands of years we humans have lived inside the dreams of other humans. We have worshiped gods, pursued ideals of beauty, and dedicated our lives to causes that originated in the imagination of some prophet, poet or politician. Soon we will also find ourselves living inside the hallucinations of non-human intelligence.

The "Terminator" franchise depicted robots running in the streets and shooting people. "The Matrix" assumed that to gain total control of human society, A.I. would have to first gain physical control of our brains, and hook our brains directly to a computer network. In fact, however, simply by gaining mastery of language, A.I. would have all it needs to contain us in a Matrix-like world of illusions, without shooting anyone or implanting any chips in our brains. If any shooting is necessary, A.I. could make humans pull the trigger, just by telling us the right story.

The specter of being trapped in a world of illusions has haunted humankind much longer than the specter of A.I. Soon we will finally come face to face with Descartes's demon, with Plato's cave, with the Buddhist Maya. A curtain of illusions could descend over the whole of humanity, and we might never again be able to tear that curtain away — or even realize it is there.

Social media was the "first contact" between A.I. and humanity, and humanity lost. "First contact" has given us the bitter taste of things to come. In social media, primitive A.I. was used not to create content, but to curate user-generated content. The A.I. behind our news feeds is still choosing which words, sounds and images reach our retinas and eardrums, based on selecting those that will get the most virality, the most reaction, and the most engagement.

While very primitive, the A.I. behind social media was sufficient to create a curtain of illusions that increased societal polarization, undermined our mental health, and unraveled de-

mocracy. Millions of people have confused these illusions for reality. The U.S.A. has the best information technology in history, yet U.S. citizens can no longer agree on who won elections. Though everyone is by now aware of the downside of social media, it hasn't been addressed, because too much of our social, economic and political institutions have become entangled with it.

Large language models are our "second contact" with A.I. We cannot afford to lose again. But on what basis should we believe humanity is capable of aligning these new forms of A.I. to our benefit? If we continue with business as usual, the new A.I. capacities will again be used to gain profit and power, even if it inadvertently destroys the foundations of our society.

A.I. indeed has the potential to help us defeat cancer, discover lifesaving drugs, and invent solutions for our climate and energy crises. There are innumerable other benefits we cannot begin to imagine. But it doesn't matter how high the skyscraper of benefits A.I. assembles if the foundation collapses.

The time to reckon with A.I. is before our politics, our economy and our daily life become dependent on it. Democracy is a conversation, conversation relies on language, and when language itself is hacked the conversation breaks down and democracy becomes untenable. If we wait for the chaos to ensue, it will be too late to remedy it.

But there's a question that may linger in our minds, "If we don't go as fast as possible, won't the West risk losing to China?" No. The deployment and entanglement of uncontrolled A.I. into society, unleashing godlike powers decoupled from responsibility, could be the very reason the West loses to China.

We can still choose which future we want with A.I. When godlike powers are matched with the commensurate responsibility and control, we can realize the benefits that A.I. promises.

We have summoned an alien intelligence. We don't know much about it, except that it is extremely powerful, offers us bedazzling gifts, but could also hack the foundations of our civilization. We call upon world leaders to respond to this moment at the level of challenge it presents. The first step is to buy time to upgrade our 19th-century institutions for a post-A.I. world, and to learn to master A.I. before it masters us.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by New York Times

Fasting and Health in Ramazan



FASTING NOT ONLY PURIFIES A MUSLIM'S SOUL BUT ALSO HIS BODY. Fasting helps reduce weight and rejuvenate the body as food consumption is modified and the body gets a chance to cleanse itself of unwanted impurities and toxins

Aejaz Iqbal

RAMAZAN is a month of self-regulation and self-training. Muslims fast in accordance with our religious requirements, but there are medical benefits as well. Generally, fasting has been used by patients for weight management, to rest the digestive tract, and for lowering lipids. There can be adverse effects of both total fasting and crash diets.

Islamic fasting is different from these diet plans because in Ramazan fasting, there is no malnutrition or inadequate calorie intake. The calorie intake of Muslims during Ramazan is typically at or slightly below the nutritional requirement guidelines. In addition, the fasting in Ramazan is voluntarily taken and is not a prescribed imposition from the physician. And there is hope that this training will last beyond the end of Ramazan.

The difference between Ramazan and total fasting is the timing of the food; during Ramazan, we take an early pre-dawn breakfast and do not eat until dusk. The fast is from both food and liquid intake. Abstinence from water for eight to 10 hours is not necessarily bad for health. In fact, it causes concentration of all fluids within the body, producing slight dehydration. The body has its own water conservation mechanism. It has even been shown that slight dehydration and water conservation, at least in plant life, improve their longevity.

The physiological effect of fasting includes lowering of blood sugar, lowering of cholesterol, and lowering of the systolic blood pressure. In fact, Ramazan fasting could be an ideal recommendation for the treatment of mild to moderate, stable, non-insulin diabetes, obesity, and essential hypertension. It is important to note that patients who are suffering from severe diseases, such as Diabetes or coronary artery disease, kidney stones are exempt from fasting and should not be allowed to fast.

There are psychological effects of fasting as well. There is a peace and tranquility for those who fast during the month of Ramazan. Personal hostility is at a minimum, and in areas of the world where Muslims are living in large numbers, the crime rate decreases. This psychological improvement could be related to better stabilization of blood glucose while fasting; hypoglycemia after eating can aggravate behavior changes.



There is a spiritual beneficial effect of extra prayer at night. This not only helps with better utilization of food, but also helps in energy output. It has been calculated that there are 10 extra calories output for each unit of the prayer. This would particularly be connected to the extra prayers that are performed during the last 10 nights of Ramazan, when the believer is seeking the night of power, when worship during this night is said to be worth a thousand months.

It is important to emphasize that Muslims are not performing prayers for exercise, but a mild movement of the joints with extra calorie utilization can be a better form of exercise. Similarly, recitation of the Quran not only produces a tranquility of heart and mind, but it has also been shown to improve memory.

Fasting is a special act of worship which is

ultimately between the believer and the Creator Himself, as no one else knows for sure if this person is actually fasting. In a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Allah says, "Fasting is for Me and I only will reward it." In another hadith, the Prophet reminds us, "If one does not give up falsehoods in words and actions, Allah has no need of him giving up food and drink."

Fasting not only purifies a Muslim's soul but also his body. Fasting helps reduce weight and rejuvenate the body as food consumption is modified and the body gets a chance to cleanse itself of unwanted impurities and toxins.

Ramazan brings with itself countless blessings and benefits. Observe fasting in Ramazan to be rewarded in this world and the Hereafter.

The author is a Microbiologist and can be reached at aijazsmile@gmail.com

Ideal Diet for Ramazan

Nazeeya Sayed

Ramadan is the month in the Islamic calendar when the Qur'an was revealed to the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). During the month, Muslims abstain from all sensory pleasures (like food and drink, sex, TV and music) from dawn to dusk. The time is centred on prayer, the Qur'an, deep mindfulness and spiritual reflection. The duration of fasting varies from 13 to 18 hours a day, depending on the daylight times in a country. Muslims believe that fasting helps to develop their submission to God, empathy with the poor and repentance for past sins. Registered dietitian, Dr Nazeeya Sayed, spoke to Faaizah Laher, also a registered dietitian and a spokesperson for the Association for Dietetics in South Africa, about the healthiest approach to the fast.

What does fasting do to your body?

During fasting, meal schedules, fluid intake, and sleep and wake times are altered. This causes physiological, biochemical and metabolic changes in the body. The adaptability to these changes depends on the types and quantity of foods and drinks that are consumed during the month.

Initially individuals may experience headaches, dizziness and nausea because they are sleeping less and taking in less caffeine. In the second week the body is used to the changes and the digestive system is able to rest. The size of the stomach changes and the amount of food a person is able to eat at each meal also decreases.

During Ramazan, as at any other time, a person should eat a balanced diet. A balanced meal approach consisting of lean proteins, whole grain starches, vegetables, fruits, and heart healthy fats will allow individuals to experience a reduction in body weight, body fat, blood pressure and anxiety levels. A reduction in inflammation and blood lipid levels is good for heart health. A balanced diet is a healthy, non-pharmacological way of



minimising risk factors such as indigestion, dehydration and constipation but still improving health.

Why is it important to consider what foods and drinks you start and break your fast with?

The Ramadan cornerstone is to practise mindfulness, discipline and control. It is a great time to reset and learn better nutrition habits. The eating and drinking window in the day is fairly small. Eating slowly, and reading hunger and fullness cues, are important to prevent discomfort. Meals can also be broken up into two smaller evening meals instead of

one big meal.

Huge meals that are high in fat and sugar can lead to health issues such as high blood pressure, indigestion, nausea and constipation or aggravate existing problems. Focus on healthier cooking methods such as grilling, baking, air frying or stewing instead of deep fat frying and oily meals. Oily meals cause indigestion, sluggishness, fatigue and weight gain.

Hydrating well will prevent headaches, urinary tract infections and dizziness. Focus on fluids that are low in sugar, avoid fizzy drinks and caffeine, and opt for water or smaller portions of

fruit juices.

Healthy eating is important, as a strong, healthy body can help an individual stand longer for prayers, fast with better strength and feel less of an energy drain.

What are the best foods and drinks to begin and end the daily fast?

The suhoor meal (before the fast begins at dawn) needs to give a person strength, vitality and sustainability. Foods should be wholesome and filling. This meal is the primary source of fuel for the day. A filling, wholesome meal will help to prevent craving dur-

ing the day.

Instead of sugary cereals, it's best to eat a meal that is high in fibre and protein. Some examples include:

- ▶ An oats smoothie with fruit, milk and yoghurt, oats, seeds and honey
- ▶ Wholewheat toast with mushrooms and scrambled eggs
- ▶ Granola, yoghurt, honey and fruit; add a boiled egg for extra protein
- ▶ Cooked oats with apple, cinnamon, milk and honey
- ▶ Talbina (barley) with nuts, milk and fruit
- ▶ Tuna on toast with a glass of milk.

The iftar meal at the end of the day needs to give balance and help to recharge the body after many hours of fasting. It is important to eat mindfully and slowly. Dates are an ideal food to break the fast with as they are easily digested, contain soluble fibre and enable a slower start to the iftar meal than starting with food.

- ▶ Avoid fizzy and sugary drinks at iftar. Salty and sweet foods can cause indigestion, fatigue and thirst. The meal should include the different food groups.
- ▶ Proteins: lean meat, yoghurt, milk, beans, lentils, fish.
- ▶ Carbohydrates: wholewheat or unrefined options are better – brown rice, wholewheat roti or pita, starchy vegetables like potato, sweet potato, butternut or pumpkin, wholewheat pasta or crushed wheat and oats added to soups.
- ▶ Fats: avocado or olive oil-based dressing, olives
- ▶ Vegetables: a colourful mix of vegetables, cooked or raw
- ▶ Fruits: whole, with the skin on and no sugar added is the best option.

By arrangements with *The Conversation*

Nepal's Population Reaches 29.1 Million; PM Prachanda Hails Census Data As Good Governance Tool

AGENCEIS

Kathmandu: Nepal's total population has reached more than 29.1 million, according to the latest census published on Friday, registering a growth of 0.92 per cent in a decade.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', launching the National Report of the National Census 2022 here, said that the census data have emerged as tools for promoting good governance and measuring the nation's progress towards the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs).

According to the data published by the Central Bureau of Statistics, out of the 29,164,578 people in Nepal, 14,911,027 are females, while the number of males 14,253,551.

At the time of the previous census, the country's total population stood at 26,494,504. According to the report, the population has increased at the rate of 0.92 percent

in the last 10 years.

"The Census would provide a guideline to monitor and evaluate Nepal's commitments on the international forum about demography and its development, and the goals of national development as also to analyse the existing indicators of development," Prachanda said during the launch of the report.

The prime minister said that the data collected is expected to provide a reliable ground for the federal, provincial and local governments to make concrete decisions while preparing their policies, plans and programmes.

"I found the national census as a supporting tool to review the implementation of the 15th Periodic Plan and formulate an approach paper for the consecutive periodic plan," he said.

Citing the latest census data, the prime minister said that the population growth rate is shrinking in the country, and it

is more rapid in the mountains and the rural population.

"The number of people staying abroad and thereby considered absent during the census has increased in this census as compared to 2011," Prachanda said, adding that according to the data, the proportion of women going abroad has risen.

More than 2,190,000 Nepalis live abroad (in countries other than India), the report said, adding that the figure is higher by 269,098 than in the precious census of 2011.

According to the census data, the country's literacy rate has reached 76.3 per cent, increasing 10.4 per cent in the last ten years.

The census data also reflects that women's access to family properties increased, with 23.8 per cent of households having their land and house in the woman's name, a 1.1 per cent increase when compared to the 2011 census.

There are 6,666,937 households in the country, of which 6,660,841 are residential households. Women run 31.55 per cent of these households, a 5.82 per cent rise compared to the previous census.

According to the census data, Kathmandu has the highest population across the country at 2,041,587, while only 5,658 people reside in the Manang district.

Even after the government's emphasis on the development and promotion of clean energy, a large section of the country's population still relies on traditional means of cooking fuel, the report said.

A total of 51 per cent of the households in the country still use firewood in the kitchen, while the percentage of those using LPG gas cylinders stands at 44.3 per cent.

The government's vision of expanding electricity coverage to all households is almost close

to realisation, with 92.2 per cent of these households being under the ambit of electricity. Ten years ago, only 67.3 per cent of the population had access to electricity.

According to the statistics, 98.8 per cent of the population has access to clean energy, while those using kerosene and other fuels remain below 1 per cent.

The Himalayan nation's government halted the census in 2021, citing the risks of the COVID-19 pandemic. The census was also delayed by five months more than the estimated deadline.

The first census in Nepal was conducted in 1911. Conducted every 10 years, the 12th National Census in 2021 was conducted from November 11-25 in 2021 with the slogan- 'My Census, My Participation: National Census-2021'.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, 39,000 enumerators and 8,000 supervisors were deployed for the census in 2021.

AFSPA Extended In Parts Of Arunachal, Nagaland

New Delhi: The Union home ministry on Friday extended for six months the "disturbed area" status in parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958.

According to two separate notifications, the decisions have been taken after review of the law-and-order situation in both the states.

The AFSPA gives armed forces personnel, operating in disturbed areas, sweeping powers to search, arrest, and to open fire if they deem it necessary for "maintenance of public order".

The home ministry said the central government in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of the AFSPA 1958 (28 of 1958) had declared the Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of Namsai and Mahadevpur police stations in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, bordering the state of Assam as 'disturbed area' on September 30, 2022.

One more police station area

has been brought under the ambit of the AFSPA through the fresh notification.

"And whereas a further review of the law and order situation in the state of Arunachal Pradesh has been undertaken. Now, therefore, Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of Namsai, Mahadevpur and Chowkham police stations in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, bordering the state of Assam, are declared as 'disturbed area' under Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 for a period of six months with effect from April 1, 2023, unless withdrawn earlier," one of the notifications said.

In the other notification, the home ministry said the central government in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of the AFSPA, 1958 (28 of 1958) had declared nine districts and 16 police stations in four other districts of Nagaland as 'disturbed area' for a period of six months with effect from October 1, 2022.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K Govt In

all those kinds of questions... Let us understand the reality that it does not happen overnight and it should not happen overnight because it has lots and lots to offer and once it starts it is going to consume lots of things," Sharma said during a conclave on the discovery of lithium reserves in J&K, organised by PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Sharma further said that lithium reserves have been discovered in the foothills of the Salal-Haimana area of the Reasi district and extraction from hills is always a challenge.

Jammu and Kashmir will put on sale the lithium block discovered last month, Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi recently said.

The minister had said that the expected date of extraction of lithium will depend upon the successful auction of the mineral block.

"GSI (Geological Survey of India) carried out a G3 stage project during Field Season 2020-21 and 2021-22 in Salal-Haimana areas of Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir and estimated an inferred resource (G3) of 5.9 million tonnes of lithium ore and the report has been handed over to the Government of Union Territory of J&K," the minister said earlier.

The minister said that GSI generates baseline geoscience data through mapping, e.g. geological, geochemical, and geophysical, which is a prerequisite for identifying the potential area for systematic mineral exploration.

Based on the mapping data, GSI carries out systematic mineral exploration activities for various major mineral commodities, including lithium.

"In part of Jammu & Kashmir, as a follow up of lithium exploration in Salal-Haimana areas of Reasi district, GSI has taken up another reconnaissance G4 stage exploration programme on lithium and associated mineral in Panasa Dugga Baldhanun Chakar Sangarmarg (Saroda-Bas) area of Reasi district during current field season 2022-23 and the work is in progress," he had said.

Based on the mapping outcome more exploration programmes on various mineral commodities, including lithium will be taken up in future in different parts of the country, including Jammu & Kashmir.

Bhagwan Ram

They want to sell in the name of Ram. They do not have a love for Ram but for power," he said.

"I think when elections are announced in J&K they will inaugurate Ram temple to divert the attention of the common man," he said.

On unity among non-BJP parties, he said, "There will be no hurdle in our unity. Whether it is Congress, NC, or Panthers. We will fight and die for people. But we all will remain united."

He raised questions about electronic voting machines and asked people to remain cautious about its use.

He also warned people against religious polarisation ahead of the election in the Union Territory. "They will use 'Hindus are in danger' a lot during the elections... but I request you to not fall prey to it."

Rahul Gandhi

Parliamentary Constituency of Kerala stands disqualified from the membership of Lok Sabha from the date of his conviction i.e. 23 March, 2023," the notification read.

The court in Surat sentenced on Thursday Gandhi to two years in jail in a defamation case, filed on a complaint by BJP MLA Purnesh Modi for his alleged remark, "How come all thieves have Modi as the common surname?" Following his disqualification, Gandhi would not be able to contest elections for eight years unless a higher court stays his conviction and sentence.

Hours before the notification was issued, Gandhi attended Lok Sabha proceedings in the morning session. Before the proceedings commenced, he also participated in a meeting of party MPs in the Parliament complex.

Incidentally, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government, in 2013, had attempted to circumvent a Supreme Court ruling to set aside an RP Act provision under which a person sentenced to imprisonment of two years or more shall be disqualified "from

the date of such conviction" and remain disqualified for another six years after serving time.

Gandhi himself had opposed the ordinance at that time and tore the ordinance in a press conference as a token of protest.

Reacting to Gandhi's disqualification, the Congress said it was "a black day for Indian democracy" and asserted that the battle will be fought both "legally and politically".

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the BJP made all efforts to get him disqualified as he was speaking the truth.

"He has been removed from the House for speaking the truth, fighting for the Constitution and for people's rights," Kharge alleged.

"This was not a question of backward class, Lalit Modi and Nirav Modi are not of backward class. They are trying to build a perception that Rahul Gandhi spoke against the backward class. Gandhi was putting forward the truth before the country so they were not liking it," he said in an apparent reference to BJP chief J P Nadda's remarks that Gandhi had compared OBC communities to thieves.

The BJP would be thinking that their problem is solved by ousting him from Lok Sabha but it is not so as the demand for Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) would continue to be raised, he said. Opposition leaders have been demanding a JPC probe into the Adani issue.

"We will keep fighting for protecting democracy and even if we have to go to jail, we will do so. Our people are ready to fight," Kharge said.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said in a tweet, "We will fight this battle both legally and politically. We will not be intimidated or silenced. Instead of a JPC into the PM-linked Adani Maha Mega Scam, Rahul Gandhi stands disqualified. Indian Democracy Om Shanti." Congress general secretary in-charge organisation K C Venugopal also lashed out at the government and said the day Gandhi raised questions about the Adani issue against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP planned a "conspiracy" to silence the voice of Gandhi.

"This is a clear case of anti-democratic, dictatorial attitude of the BJP government," Venugopal said in a video statement.

In a tweet later, he said, "Rahul Gandhi ji's disqualification is the final nail in the coffin. This is a black day for Indian democracy. It is a well-orchestrated move of the Modi government to silence his voice in Parliament. We will fight this legally and politically on every front, the truth will prevail." Defending Gandhi's disqualification, Union Minister of State for Law and Justice S P S Baghel termed it as "lawful" and asserted that "everyone is equal before law". He also noted that a BJP MLA was also recently disqualified in Uttar Pradesh following his conviction in a criminal case.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said the decision was a legal one and alleged the Congress was questioning the judiciary. "It was a legal decision and not a call taken by the political party. It was taken by a court. The Congress should clarify who they are protesting against," he said.

Senior BJP leader Bhupender Yadav said Gandhi had got enough opportunities to explain himself, provide evidence and all rules have been followed leading to his disqualification.

The disqualification also saw many Opposition parties rallying in support of Gandhi with Trinamool Congress, AAP, the Left parties, Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray), and NCP, among others, backing the former Congress chief.

West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee in a tweet highlighted how the BJP is targeting leaders of the opposition.

"In PM Modi's New India, Opposition leaders have become the prime target of BJP! While BJP leaders with criminal antecedents are inducted into the cabinet, Opposition leaders are disqualified for their speeches. Today, we have witnessed a new low for our constitutional democracy," she said in a tweet.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader, Priyanka Chaturvedi questioned the state of democracy in the country. "Vindictive and shameful action against Rahul Gandhi. This disqualification yet again proves that we are living in the times of caged democracy," she said in a tweet.

CPI-ML general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya remarked at the alacrity of the government in taking action against Gandhi.

"The sentence against @RahulGandhi in the alleged Modi defamation case was announced yesterday and within a day he is now disqualified from the Lok Sabha! Nothing short of a surgical strike on democracy! Time for the entire opposition to rally against this unbridled emergency!" he said. PTI

30 MPs Detained

Manickam Tagore, Imran Pratapgarhi and Mohammed Javed, were stopped by the police and detained at Vijay Chowk here for violating prohibitory orders, the opposition said.

"Over 30 MPs from opposition parties had to be detained for violation of Section 144 (prohibitory orders)," a senior Delhi Police officer said. The Delhi Police said those detained have been taken to a nearby police station.

Earlier addressing the media at Vijay Chowk, several leaders, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, also raised the issue of Rahul Gandhi's conviction in a 2019 criminal defamation case by a Surat court and alleged that the government was targeting the opposition with cases to suppress their voices.

After a protest inside the Parliament House complex, a host of Opposition leaders from parties such as the CPI, CPI(M), Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray), JD(U) and Aam Aadmi Party, marched to Vijay Chowk, holding placards like 'We demand JPC' and 'Save LIC' and a huge banner in front of them with 'Democracy in Danger' written on it.

"We're fighting for JPC into Adani issue for months. They have a majority but the BJP is scared as there's something fishy. We'll keep fighting unitedly for it," Kharge said.

He also hit out at BJP chief J P Nadda over his allegation that Rahul Gandhi misled OBC communities to thieves and accused the BJP of indulging in "caste politics".

AAP's Sanjay Singh said Gandhi's conviction shows that the government wants to finish off the opposition by slapping cases on them.

Security was stepped up around Parliament House and Vijay Chowk area to ensure that no untoward incident takes place, a senior police officer said.

Gujarat Police

of Police, Crime, Chaitanya Mandlik, on Thursday.

Patel's wife Malini Patel has been shown as a co-accused in the FIR (first information report), he said.

"As per our information, four FIRs related to cheating have been registered against Kiran Patel in different police stations of Gujarat in the past. Since he is in judicial custody, we will try to bring him here through a transfer warrant," Mandlik said.

In the latest FIR, it is alleged that Patel tried to grab a bungalow in a posh locality in Ahmedabad by winning the trust of its owner through false claims of being a "Class 1 officer in the PMO" and having close relations with politicians.

The complainant, 63-year-old Jagdish Chavda, owns a bungalow in the Shilaj area but wanted to sell it because of personal reasons. Patel approached Chavda in February 2022, claiming to be a real estate agent, and told the owner his property would fetch a good price if it was renovated.

To win Chavda's trust, Patel then identified himself as a "Class-1 officer in the PMO" as well as a partner in a cafe chain.

When Chavda agreed for the bungalow's renovation, Patel, his wife Malini and an interior designer started the work and took Rs 35 lakh in instalments from him, the FIR said.

As renovation was underway, Chavda shifted to his friend's residence in the Shela area. After some time, Chavda learnt that Patel and his wife had put their own name plate outside the bungalow and also did a house-warming ritual as if they were the owners.

When confronted, the Patel couple left the bungalow without finishing the renovation work, following which Chavda and his family moved back into the house, according to the police.

In August 2022, Chavda learnt through a court notice that Patel had filed a civil suit claiming ownership of the property, said the FIR.

In August 2019, a city-based decorator had lodged a complaint in Vadodara against Patel and two others for allegedly duping him of Rs 1 crore.

As per the FIR registered at the Raopura police station in 2019, Patel along with two event organisers - Dipesh Sheth and Dhara Sheth - had approached the complainant, Paritosh Shah, to decorate Navlakh ground in Vadodara for a Navratri event held in October 2018.

While the trio paid nearly Rs 50 lakh to Shah in various instalments for the work done, they started giving excuses to clear the remaining bill of Rs 1 crore, as per the FIR.

At one point, Patel even threatened Shah with dire consequences claiming he was politically well-connected. When the trio refused to pay the pending money, Shah lodged a complaint with the Raopura police in August 2019.

A similar complaint of cheating and breach of trust was registered against Patel in Bayad town of Arvalli district in August 2020.

As per the FIR registered by the Bayad police, Patel along with his brother Manish Patel and the latter's wife Darshna had convinced three persons of Bayad to invest their savings in tobacco and cattle feed business for good returns.

In all, the accused took Rs 1.75 crore from one Ashish Patel and two of his friends by promising high returns on their investments, said the police document.

When cheques given by the accused got dishonoured, complainant Ashish Patel and others sought their money back, following which, the trio returned nearly Rs 50 lakh, but refused to pay the remaining sum of Rs 1.25 crore, said the FIR.

J&K Govt Issues

directly or indirectly, shall not publish, post or release any information on social media that is considered confidential or that is not meant for public dissemination, nor shall they pass any official document or any part thereof to any Government employee or any such person to whom he is not authorized to communicate such document or information.

II. No Government employee shall, through any post, tweet or otherwise, discuss or criticize on social media, any policy pursued or action taken by the Government, nor shall he/she, in any manner, participate in any such discussion or criticism on social media pages/communities/microblogs.

III. No Government employee shall post, tweet or share content that is political or anti-secular and communal in nature or subscribe to pages, communities or twitter handles and blogs of such nature.

IV. No Government employee shall himself/herself or through any person dependent on him/her for maintenance, or under his care or control, undertake any such activity on social media which is, or tends directly or indirectly to be, subversive of the Government as by law established in the Country or in the Union territory.

V. A Government employee may, for the purpose or removing misapprehensions, correcting misstatements, and refuting disloyal and seditious propaganda, defend and explain to the public the policy of Government in his posts and tweets on social media.

VI. Government employees shall not post on social media, any such content or comments about co-workers or individuals, that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating or that violate the conduct rules or employees.

VII. No Government employee shall post grievances pertaining to their workplace on social media in the form of videos, posts, tweets or blogs or in any other form, but will follow the already established channels of complaint redressal existing in the departments.

VIII. Government employees shall not indulge in sharing/partaking in so-called giveaways and contests on social media platforms, which are actually scams in disguise, as they could unknowingly spread malware or trick people into giving away sensitive data by sharing it on their profiles.

The government order, however, clarified that the above guidelines are not intended to dissuade employees/departments from using social media for positive and constructive purposes.

"It is accordingly enjoined upon all employees working in various government departments/PSUs/Corporations/Boards/Autonomous Bodies etc. to strictly adhere to the guidelines and legal principles reproduced herein above and issued vide Government Order and refrain from indulging in unwarranted debates/discussions and sharing/commenting/posting inappropriate posts/content on social media platforms," the order says.

It further warns employees that any violation of these guidelines/rules shall tantamount to misconduct and invite disciplinary action against the delinquent official under the relevant rules.

"All Administrative Secretaries/Deputy Commissioners/Heads of Departments/Managing Directors shall immediately proceed against the employees working in their departments/offices who are found to have violated the aforesaid guidelines and rules, in terms of the relevant disciplinary framework," the order reads.

Gandhi Did

the policies and schemes of the government are people-centric, which have taken the form of mass movement. What seems to be unthinkable a decade ago has now become possible," he said.

"Change in each and every individual is necessary for the complete transformation of society. We must dedicate ourselves towards establishing an egalitarian and inclusive society as a befitting tribute to Dr Ram Manohar Lohia ji", he added.

On this occasion, the LG invited the students to visit Jammu Kashmir and experience the new and transformed Union Territory.

4% DA Hike

on Economic Affairs (CCEA).

The release of the additional instalment of dearness allowance to employees and dearness relief to pensioners will be effective from January 01, 2023.

This increase is in accordance with the accepted formula, which is based on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission.

Intruder Killed

recovered from the scene, the officials said.

Missile Misfire

adjoining fields. "No damage rendered to any personnel and property. Issue is being investigated," he added.

Cleric Killed In

injured identified as Molvi Qaiser of Fraw Gund Kangan was referred to SKIMS Soura where he succumbed to his injuries.

The injured have been identified as Sirajuddin Mir, Tariq Ah Rather and Muhammad Shafi Sheikh.

Meanwhile, police said that a case in this regard has been registered under relevant sections of law.

Mother Arrested

Avinash Kumar said. Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, Kumar said police seized Rs 1 lakh from Asha Devi.

Her arrest led the police to a 'Sahiya didi', identified as Dimple Devi. Based on the lead provided by Dimple Devi, police apprehend the other accused and rescued the baby from Bokaro, the officer said.

A couple from Badkagaon village in Hazaribag district struck deal with two brokers of Chatra and Bokaro for the newborn for Rs 4.5 lakh, he said.

While Rs 1 lakh was given to the mother of the baby, the rest Rs 3.5 lakh was shared among the brokers, he added.

A case was registered at the Chatra police station on the statement of Deputy Superintendent of Sadar Hospital doctor Manish Lal.

Had Rahul Apologised, Situation Would Have Not Reached His Disqualification: Athawale



Press Trust of India

JAMMU: Union minister Ramdas Athawale on Friday claimed Rahul Gandhi would not have been disqualified from Lok Sabha had he apologised for his alleged critical remarks about the Indian democracy.

Gandhi is a senior leader and was the president of the Congress, he should have known he should not speak "against the country" during a visit abroad, Athawale told reporters here.

"Had Rahul Gandhi apologised, the situation would not have reached his disqualification," he said.

The minister of state for social justice and empowerment also said that Gandhi had "insulted" a large group of people with his remark, "How come all thieves have Modi as the common surname?"

"Someone moved to the court, which awarded him (Gandhi) two years punishment," he said.

Athawale said the BJP and the NDA had protested over Gandhi's remarks but "there was no effect on Rahul Gandhi".

The Congress leader was disqualified as a Lok Sabha member after a Surat court convicted him in a 2019 criminal

defamation case and sentenced him to two years in jail. Gandhi has been given bail and 30 days to appeal against the order in a higher court.

Congress has said it will fight the case "legally and politically".

"The decision taken by our Speaker Om Birla is right. It was necessary to punish Rahul Gandhi. The issue of the court is a separate thing," Athawale said, justifying the Lok Sabha Secretariat's decision to disqualify Gandhi.

"Rahul Gandhi is the leader of Congress. He has remained president of the party. Congress party has remained in power for 60-70 years. Rahul Gandhi should have known that he should not speak against the country after travelling outside the country. We have a democracy," the Union minister said.

The democracy in the country is very powerful, he said, adding that the government of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee fell by just one vote in 1999.

"The country is governed by the Constitution given to us by Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar," he said.

During a visit to the UK earlier this month, Gandhi had alleged that the structures of Indian democracy are under "brutal attack" and there is a full-scale assault on the institutions of the country.

His comments triggered a major political row in India and the BJP launched an offensive against him demanding a public apology from him for what it alleged has insulted the country and its institutions on foreign soil.

Article-370 Was Obstacle To J&K's Development: Minister

'Centre Is Committed To Develop Jammu & Kashmir At All Fronts'

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Ramdas Athawale said on Friday that Article-370 and 35-A were the obstacles in the development of Jammu and Kashmir and were revoked for the welfare of the people of the Union Territory.

Addressing a news conference here, the Minister also said that the central government is committed to develop Jammu and Kashmir at all fronts.

He said development, peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir is the top priority of the Prime Minister Modi led government, which is evident now with the beginning of investment of thousands of crores in different sectors in J&K for the welfare of the people.

For several years, the Minister said, the gates of development have opened for J&K which is evident from the fact that all the centrally sponsored schemes and programmes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Jan Dhan Yojana, MUDRA, PM Ujjwala Yojana, Scholarship Schemes for Students, Welfare Schemes for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes are now implemented in the Union Territory.

"Hundred percent implementation of many central schemes in J&K is the outcome of the steadfast approach of Government of India to provide social stability at all fronts be it housing, livelihood etc. to the people of J&K," he said.

Giving further details, Athawale said that under PM Jan Dhan Yojana, between 2014-2023 (March), Rs 48 crore, 36 lakh accounts were opened out of which 26 lakh, 32 thousand accounts have been opened in J&K.

Under PM Ujjwala Yojana between 2016-22 (March), 12 lakh 45 thousand gas connections have been allotted to the beneficiaries in J&K. Under PM Awas Yojana (Urban) between 2015-23 (March), 20 thousand 7 hundred houses have been constructed in J&K, under PM Awas Yojana (Rural) between 2014-23 (March), 13 thousand 8 hundred houses have been constructed in J&K, under PM Arogya Yojana, 07 lakh 66 thousand have benefited in J&K and under Ujjwala Yojana, 84 lakh 86 thousand LED bulbs have been issued in J&K," he added.

The Minister further said that between 2019-23 (March), 1720 de-addiction centres have been either funded or established under Financial Assistance for the establishment of De-addiction centres.

Termining the budget as 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Ka Budget', Athawale said in comparison to the FY 2022-23, there is an increase of 10.18% for the social welfare department in the FY 2023-24.

"In the next three years, 38,880 teachers and supporting staff will be recruited for 740 Eklayva Model Residential Schools. Railways have also been allocated Rs. 2.4 lakh crores in the FY 2023-24", the Minister added.



THOUSANDS OF DEVOTEES OFFERED congregational prayers at Jamia Masjid in the Old City on the first Friday of the holy month of Ramadan. KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

Rains Lash Plains, MeT Forecast More Precipitation

Farmers Urged To Postpone Spraying Orchards

Agencies

SRINAGAR: While rains lashed plains, the weather department here on Friday forecast more precipitation and thunderstorms with possibility of snowfall over higher reaches at most places of Jammu and Kashmir till weekend.

A meteorological department official here said that there was a possibility of hailstorm in plains during the time—March 24-25.

"Thunderstorm may be accompanied by strong gusty winds," he said.

The weather department also urged farmers to "postpone" spraying of orchards while commuters intending to travel on highway and other hilly areas have been asked to confirm road status from concerned traffic police before starting their journey.

Regarding temperature, the MeT official said, Srinagar recorded a low of 5.3°C against 5.2°C on the previous night and it was 0.3°C above normal for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 4.0°C against 3.2°C on the previous night and it was 0.3°C above normal for the gateway town of Kashmir.



Pahalgam, he said, recorded a low of 0.6°C against minus 0.2°C on the previous night and it was 0.2°C above normal for the famous tourist resort in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Kokernag recorded a low of 4.7°C against 4.5°C on the previous night and it was 1.4°C above normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 0.0°C, the same as on the previous night and it was 1.6°C above normal for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said.

In Kupwara town, he said, the mercury settled at 4.0°C against 3.7°C on the previous night. It was 0.8°C above normal for the north Kashmir area.

Jammu recorded a low of 14.9°C against 13.8°C on the previous night. It was 0.6°C below normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal, he said, recorded a low of 5.0°C (below normal by 0.3°C), Batote 7.5°C (below normal by 0.6°C), Katra 12.0°C (0.5°C below normal) and Bhadarwah 5.6°C (1.7°C above normal).

Ladakh's Leh and Kargil, he said, recorded a low of minus 3.0°C and minus 1.9°C respectively. (GNS)

DODA LAND SINKING

Govt Forms Panel To Suggest Remedial Measures

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The government on Friday formed a committee to suggest remedial measures regarding sinking of land in Doda district.

Headed by the Chief Secretary, the committee has been formed in compliance with the orders by National Green Tribunal on February 17 last, according to a government order.

The committee has been asked to suggest measures for preventing environmental damage in light of carrying capacity, hydro-geology and geomorphological studies along with covering other allied and incidental issues of land subsidence at District Doda, J&K.

The other members of the committee include Principal Secretary to Government, Forest, Ecology & Environment Department (Nodal agency for coordination & compliance); Prof. J. S. Rawat, Kumaon University, Almora; Representative of Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun; Representative of Govind Ballabh Pant National Institute of Himalaya and Environment, Representative of National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee; Representative of Space Application Centre, Representative of National Institute of Rock Mechanics, Bangalore and Representative of Central Pollution Control Board.

"The Committee shall be at liberty to take assistance from any other expert/institution," the government order reads, adding, "The Committee shall be free to interact with the stakeholders including the inhabitants and members of civil societies and may also consider the concerns in the media report."

The Committee has been asked to complete its studies within two months and furnish its report to NGT by e-mail on or before May 15.

The Committee has been asked to meet within two weeks and complete its studies within two months. It has been asked to be serviced by the Department of Forest, Ecology & Environment, the order added.

PM Felicitates J&K For Implementation Of TB Elimination Programme

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, felicitated the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for successful implementation of Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan.

Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department, J&K, Bhupinder Kumar, received the bronze medal for significant achievement of more than 20 per cent reduction (compared with the baseline of 2015) in the TB incidence in J&K during the ONE WORLD TB SUMMIT ("World TB Day 2023") held at Rudraksh International Cooperation & Convention Centre, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

On the occasion, Pulwama and Anantnag districts of J&K

were also honoured with District Level award for achieving TB free district status for more than 80 per cent reduction in the incidence of TB from the baseline of 2015. These awards were received from the Prime Minister by the respective Deputy Commissioners.

Further, District Srinagar was awarded with gold medal for achieving more than 60 per cent reduction in TB incidence while Jammu and Kathua districts were awarded with bronze medal for achieving more than 20 per cent reduction in TB incidence.

Pertinently, the Government of India has set the target to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) related to TB Elimination by the year



2025 ahead of the global target of 2030 and has launched National Strategic Plan 2017-25 under the ambit of National Health Mission to end TB by 2025.

Earlier, Budgam achieved the distinction of being the first district in the country to be declared TB Free. During the previous year, three districts

namely Kupwara, Anantnag and Pulwama received gold medals for more than 60 per cent reduction in TB incidence whereas District Baramulla and Udhampur bagged bronze medals for achieving more than 20 per cent reduction.

Jammu and Kashmir was one of the only two States/UTs which were felicitated during the event. Also, Pulwama and Anantnag were two of districts of the total of three districts in the country to achieve TB Free status this year.

Under the dynamic leadership of Bhupinder Kumar, the team of Health & Medical Education Department comprising Ayushi Sudan, Mission Director, National Health Mission, Directors of Health Services, Jammu and Kashmir, has taken proactive measures in proper implementation of National Tuberculosis Programme. The host of measures for reducing TB incidences included door-to-door awareness campaign "Har Ghar Dastak", robust screening for TB incidence and Active Case Finding (ACF) and Contact Tracing.

Extrapulmonary Tuberculosis Cases On Rise In Kashmir: DAK

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: On World Tuberculosis Day, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Friday said extrapulmonary tuberculosis cases are on the rise in Kashmir hospitals.

"We see many patients coming to our hospitals with tuberculosis of brain, spine, intestines, genitourinary tract, heart and lymph nodes," said DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan.

Dr Hassan said tuberculosis commonly affects lungs, but if it affects other parts of the body other than the lung, it is known as extrapulmonary tuberculosis.

"The number of undetected extrapulmonary tuberculosis cases in the community could be greater than the number of notified cases," he said.

The DAK President said despite advances in diagnosis and expansion of TB services, extrapulmonary case detection efforts are usually unsuccessful.

"Since extrapulmonary tuberculosis has vague clinical presentation as compared to pulmonary tuberculosis, timely detection is challenging. Patients seek medical attention late which leads to the diagnostic delay of the illness,"

he said.

"Even the healthcare personnel don't catch the disease early," he said adding "lack of rapid, simple and accurate diagnostic tools for diagnosing extrapulmonary tuberculosis prolong diagnostic delay."

Dr Nisar said the microbiological tests in extrapulmonary tuberculosis are usually negative and patients are mostly picked up by clinical judgment and treated empirically.

"Since extrapulmonary tuberculosis is rarely infectious, the aspect of transmission is not as important as in pulmonary tuberculosis, but delay in diagnosis and treatment leads to increase in death and disability," he said.

General Secretary DAK Dr Arshad Ali said there is an urgent need to make general public aware about the disease and impart continuous training to healthcare workers to pick up these cases early.

"Timely detection and treatment is key to eradicate the disease from the community," he said.

"Every year on March 24, world TB day is observed to raise public awareness about the disease and to set efforts to end global TB pandemic," he added.

CS Launches Auto Appeal System For Vital Services Of Revenue Dept

Asks For Integrating It For Designated 43 Services Till 31st March; Speeding It Up For All 105 PSGA Services

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta Friday launched the PSGA auto-appeal feature for the 08 online services offered by the Revenue Department. The feature is going to auto escalate the appeals in case the services are not provided to the applicant within the time limit set under the Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA).

Dr Mehta called this step revolutionary. He applauded the IT Department for integrating

appeal feature active for services related to everyday life of the people like availing of documents like income, domicile, legal heir, Marriage, Unemployment, Character and Category certificates are very pivotal in furthering the career or securing jobs for the youth and therefore have been prioritized for inclusion in the Auto-appeal system.

He made out that the benefits like old age, widow pensions besides scholarships under various social security schemes etc should also be included in the



this feature in the vital digital services offered by the Revenue Department to the citizens. He directed for integrating this Auto-appeal feature for all the designated 43 online services by March end this year. He also advised them to work for activating this feature for all the 105 services specified under the Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA) at the earliest.

The Chief Secretary stated that these services form the bulk of the applications of citizens. He called that making the auto-

system forthwith.

He observed that this feature would act as a turning point in maintaining the transparency and accountability in services to the public and eradicating corruption. He stated that auto escalation feature of online services is going to put an end to malpractices besides promoting fairness, a priority set by the current dispensation in all of its affairs including offering of government employment and public contracts to its citizens on the basis of merit alone.

CUK VC Interacts With Class Representatives

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: Central University of Kashmir (CUK) Vice Chancellor, Prof. Farooq Ahmad Shah, accompanied by Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar and Finance Officer and Dean DSW, Dr. Mehraj ud Din Shah held a detailed interaction with the Class Representatives (CRs) of different departments of the varsity (online) here on Friday.

Vice Chancellor, Prof. Farooq Ahmad, inquired about the grievances and problems faced by the students and discussed threadbare the mechanism with the functionaries to mitigate the same at an earliest.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Farooq Ahmad, said the university has always taken a lead and proactive approach vis-à-vis mitigating the genuine demands of the students. He said the university is marching ahead on the academics and research front, adding the varsity has already shifted more departments to the designated Tulmulla Campus. Prof. Shah added that the work on permanent structures at Tulmulla is going on at a good pace. He further said that additional recreational facilities would be soon provided to the students in their respective university

campuses.

Describing CRs as a bridge between the university administration and the students, Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, said CRs play a pivotal role in percolating the message from the university administration about various issues and orders to the student community. Prof. Zargar said that it was imperative upon the CRs as spokespersons of their respective classes to raise the genuine issues confronting the student community. He added that the university administration is always receptive to the genuine demands of the students and has been able to resolve the majority of the problems and issues confronted by them. He further asked the students to spread the message about the university among others so that they would also join it to pursue higher education.

Dean DSW and Finance Officer, Dr. Mehraj ud Din Shah in his address, said the DSW, under the G20 University Connect programme is conducting frequent events thus providing students a platform to showcase their latent talent. He said that in addition to the academic excellence, holistic development of the students is a must for the overall growth of the society.



Caringly yours



Make your existing health policy more comprehensive by adding



HEALTH PRIME RIDER



Preventive Health Check-up

(45+ Test Parameters at Network Centres)



24x7 Unlimited Tele-Consultation

Individual and family members



90,000+ Doctors

(35+ Specialisations for Tele-Consultation)



Rider for both Individual & Family Floater Basis*

*Based on the variant opted in your health plan

Health Prime Rider can be opted only with Bajaj Allianz Health and PA products

To know more:

Contact your nearest J&K Bank Branch

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd., Bajaj Allianz House, Airport Road, Yerawada, Pune - 411006. IRDAI Reg No.: 113. | CIN: U66010PN2000PLC015329 | Health Prime (Rider) UIN: BAIHLIA22169V012122 | Health Prime Rider (Group) BAIHLGA22166V012122
For more details, log on to: www.bajajallianz.com or call at: Sales - 1800 209 0144 / Service - 1800 209 5858 (Toll Free No.) | For more details on risk factors and Terms and Conditions, please read the sales brochure before concluding a sale. | BIAZ-O-JK-0016/25-May-22

J&K Bank Ltd. is a licensed Corporate Agent [bearing License No.: CA0029] of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Ltd. [IRDA registration No. 113]. The benefits/features of products are indicative and for more details on risk factors and Terms and Conditions, please read the sales brochure before concluding a sale.

*T&C apply