

PM Modi's 'Mann ki Baat' Voice of 140 Crore Countrymen: LG

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday expressed confidence that collective efforts will eliminate "narco-terrorism unleashed by the neighbouring country" in Jammu and Kashmir. Sinha was addressing a gathering before flagging off a marathon here to mark the 100th episode of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Mann Ki Baat" radio broadcast.

The Lt Governor also hosted a special programme to celebrate the programme at the Raj Bhawan here, terming it as a "historic moment" as hundreds of eminent personalities came together to listen to Modi's "wisdom and vision that is guiding India's developmental journey".

The marathon, organised by the Hindustan Scouts and Guides and the Dogra Kranti Dal, is one of 100 marathons scheduled throughout the day across the Union Territory to celebrate Modi's monthly radio broadcast.

"The 100 marathons across the Union Territory will also raise awareness and strengthen action and cooperation against drug abuse and trafficking," Sinha told the gathering before flagging off the marathon at the Balidan Stambh (War



Memorial) here.

The Lt Governor said people from different walks of life have come together to fight the drug menace.

"Today, the youngsters of Jammu and Kashmir have stood up against drug abuse. I am confident that our collective efforts will eliminate the narco-terrorism unleashed by the neighbouring country and lead

the way for realising the goals of building a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir," Sinha said, referring to Pakistan.

He said the prime minister has inspired the country's youth through "Mann ki Baat" to overcome challenges and set an ambitious goal in life.

"I the Lt Governor said.

Sinha said Modi, through "Mann ki Baat", **More on P6**

Says Redressal Of Citizens' Complaints Top Priority

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said the top priority of his administration is to ensure timely redressal of public complaints. Interacting with people through the L-G's Mulaqaat online platform, Sinha stressed on coordination and monitoring of schemes at the district level to fulfil the aspirations **More on P6**

Releases Amarnath Yatra Guide Book

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday released "Shri Amarnathji Yatra Guide book" published by Tourism Federation of Jammu, here on Sunday. The LG appreciated the Tourism Federation of Jammu for selfless service to pilgrims, an official spokesperson said. Sinha, he said, also shared the key initiatives **More on P6**

Three Dead As Car Falls Into Gorge

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Jammu: Three people were killed when their car skidded off the road and fell into a deep gorge in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Sunday.

The vehicle was on its way to Karagh from Reasi town and on reaching Tote village, its driver lost control and the vehicle rolled down into a more than 100-metre-deep gorge late Saturday night, a police official said.

He said three people Nasib Singh (65) of Karagh Tote, Karnail Singh (47) of Gull, Tote and Mohan Chand (32) of Devigarh died on the spot. The rescuers **More on P6**

Father-Son Duo Repatriated To Pck

Agencies

Srinagar: A father-son duo from Pakistan administered Kashmir, who were apprehended along the Line of Control in Poonch district, were repatriated on Sunday, officials said.

They said Mohammad Abbas and his father Abdul Hamid of Polas Teh Bandi Bass Rawalakote had crossed LoC yesterday through village Plous. They were repatriated around 18:25 hours via Chakan da Bagh in presence of a Magistrate and Doctor besides Army and Police, they said. Sources told a local news agency GNS **More on P6**

Untimely Snowfall Halts Nomad Migration To Kashmir Valley

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Unseasonal snowfall in higher reaches of Doda hills has caused distress to the nomadic population, prompting them to halt their onward journey along with cattle to highly snowbound pasturelands.

Owing to bad weather conditions, the authorities issued an advisory asking nomads not to go ahead with their journey to upper reaches till May 4.

"We are in grave distress due to cycle of fresh snowfalls in upper reaches. We are trapped in this snowstorms. It is a difficult situation for us and our cattle," Nizam Din Bakarwal said.

As a result of snowfalls, cold wave conditions have engulfed the upper reaches of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts, triggering panic among the nomads who have started their bi-annual migration from the plains in the Union Territory and Punjab.

Officials said fresh snowfall has been reported in Kailash Mountain Range, Kainthi, Padri Gali, Bhaal Padri, Seoj, Shankh Padar, Rishi Dal, Gau-Peeda, Gan-Thak, Khanni-top, Guldanda, Chattar Galla and Asha Pati Glacier surrounding Bhaderwah Valley since Monday night.

Unexpected snowfall was also reported **More on P6**

'Terror Funding' Case

NIA Opposes Nayeem Khan's Bail Petition

Observer News Service

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency has opposed before Delhi High Court the bail plea moved by separatist leader Nayeem Ahmad Khan in a UAPA case of alleged terror funding, the Livelaw reported.

Khan, who has been in

judicial custody since August 14, 2017, has been accused of "creating unrest" in the Kashmir valley by NIA. He was arrested on July 24, 2017. Charges for various offences under Indian Penal Code, including sedition and UAPA were framed against Khan by a special NIA **More on P6**

6 TODAY, THE YOUNGSTERS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR have stood up against drug abuse. I am confident that our collective efforts will eliminate the narco-terrorism unleashed by the neighbouring country and lead the way for realising the goals of building a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir."



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Climate Change Increasing Risk Of New Emerging Viruses, Infectious Diseases In India: Experts

Press Trust Of India

Changing climatic conditions, particularly temperature and moisture variations following events such as extreme rainfall in some places and drought in others, will lead to a surge in the spread of vector-borne and infectious diseases across India, say scientists.

As concerns mount over the recent increase in respiratory viral infections, including H2N3, adenoviruses and swine flu, in many parts of India, the scientists said it might be too early to attribute it to climate change. But is definitely plausible.

The prospect of climate change leading to an increased burden with the spread of diseases such as dengue, chikungunya and malaria looms large.

According to public health expert Poornima Prabhakaran, steadily rising temperatures

affect the pattern of transmission of disease agents like viruses as well their vectors through a number of pathways.

"These include changes in the incubation period, the transmission potential and the duration of transmission - all of which can impact the trends of diseases," Prabhakaran, director, Centre for Environmental Health at Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), told PTL.

Incubation period is the time between exposure to a pathogenic organism and when symptoms and signs are first apparent.

Changing climatic conditions, Prabhakaran noted, also become more favourable for the spread and disease transmission potential of viruses and their vectors.

"Hot and humid conditions can both impact the disease transmission pathways, frequency of disease occurrence and severity of disease," she explained.

Ecologist Abi T Vanak added that changes in climate will also result in the shift of habitat for species, thereby introducing new vectors to some areas, or making some species more susceptible to new viruses that may have the potential to transmit to humans.

"For example, extreme rainfall and flooding in the drier parts of the country can result in outbreaks of diseases that are typically associated with the wetter parts," Vanak, interim director, Centre for Policy Design, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore, told PTL.

"This is applicable to both water-borne diseases such as cholera and dysentery, as well as vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue, and chikungunya," he explained.

Extreme weather events such as heatwaves can also cause high stress of animals, making them more vulnerable to disease prevalence and out-

breaks of potentially zoonotic diseases, he said.

Prabhakaran's team is involved in a collaborative research effort that aims to demonstrate the links between changing climate conditions and patterns of vector-borne diseases like dengue and malaria.

The CHARISMa project aims to build a dashboard of climate-health information services that may aid city-level officials in decision-making for timely and effective interventions with a focus on hotspots.

What could be the way out?

Modelling future scenarios using state-of-the-art techniques that allow predictive future disease patterns or hotspots can be a useful tool to aid decision-makers in planning suitable and timely interventions, researchers have said.

A study published last year in the journal Nature predicted that climate change will

vastly increase the risk of new viruses infecting humans.

There are currently at least 10,000 viruses "circulating silently" among wild mammals and climate change may trigger them to cross over into humans, it concluded.

The finding holds particularly true for countries such as India, Indonesia, China and the Philippines, and some African regions that have been hotspots for deadly diseases spread from animals to humans over the last several decades, including flu, SARS, HIV, Ebola and COVID-19, the researchers said.

Global warming is linked to the risk of new emerging viruses, agreed Debapriyo Chakraborty, postdoctoral researcher, unit on infectious diseases and vectors-ecology, genetics, evolution and control (MIVEGEC) Research Institute for Development (IRD), Montpellier, France.

Eating Handful Of Walnuts Daily May Boost Attention, Intelligence In Teens: Study

Press Trust Of India

Consuming walnuts regularly may have a positive impact on sustained attention and intelligence scores of adolescents, a study claims.

Walnuts have a significant amount of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), an omega-3 fatty acid essential for the body and which plays a key role in brain development, especially in the early stage, the researchers said.

The study, published in the journal eClinicalMedicine, demonstrates that a healthy, balanced diet that provides essential nutrients, such as those found in walnuts, can have a beneficial effect on the cognitive and psychological development of adolescents.

"Adolescence is a period of brain refinement, connectivity and complex behaviours, so it remains sensitive to a number of environmental and lifestyle factors, including diet, from which it requires a large amount of energy and nutrients for proper development," said Jordi Julvez, principal investigator and coordinator of the Neuro Òpia Research Group of the Institut d'Investigació Sanitària Pere Virgili (IISPV), Spain.

"Walnuts are a nutrient-dense food and a rich plant-based source of ALA, an omega-3 fatty acid that provides energy and is essential for the body and its development. For this reason, walnuts are a great ally of



adolescent health," says Julvez.

This study involved 700 volunteers, specifically, high school students between 11 and 16 years of age from 12 different high schools.

The participants were randomly divided into two groups: the control group and the

experimental group.

The experimental group was given packets containing 30 grams of walnuts (equivalent to a handful) and were instructed to consume them daily for 6 months.

Participants who consumed walnuts for at least 100 days showed improvements in

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attention functions and those with symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) had better behaviour in class, paying more attention to the teacher and being less hyperactive.

In addition, the study found an increase in functions related to fluid intelligence, which is less influenced by learning and inherent to a person's biology, the researchers said.

Participants who followed more closely the recommended dose of walnuts and the number of days of consumption showed improvements in neuropsychological functions, they said.

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Critical care ambulance services can help to improve the accessibility of healthcare services in remote or underserved areas. This can help to reduce health disparities and improve the overall health of the population.



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Don't Trivialise Street Harassment

Dania Sheikh

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An outcry against harassment is the first step in the long haul of subverting the rape culture that exists in our society. Refusing to accept it as something harmless is essential for reclaiming our agency and public spaces and moving around freely with calmness and comfort without the fear of being visually profiled and assaulted

THE recent National Family Health Survey reveals that there has been an upsurge in violent crimes and sexual harassment against women in J&K. The survey report suggests that in 2019-2020, 9.6% women in the age group of 18-49 experienced domestic violence, and 1046 rape cases were registered during this year. These numbers are a grim reminder of the lopsided power dynamics which relegates a lower status to the women in our society. It is this position of authority and power which gives men a sense of impunity and license to get away scott free after committing heinous and barbaric crimes.

Uprooting patriarchy is the only way to end the systemic suppression that women face in our society. Change in social attitudes, coupled with a robust justice system can put an end to the myriad forms of atrocities that women face on a daily basis and make the society a habitable place for women.

Violent and unfathomable crimes do not emerge out of a vacuum, they are a consequence of ignoring and trivialising sexist jokes, catcalling, whistleblowing and groping etc. These behaviours exhibited towards women are not harmless, they create an environment conducive for men to assert their power over women and perpetuate rape culture. A society which tolerates any form of harassment (verbal or physical) against women incapacitates the harasser and gives him the confidence to disregard a woman's agency and violate her consent. An outcry against harassment is the first step in the long haul of subverting the rape culture that exists in our society. Refusing to accept it as something harmless is essential for reclaiming our agency and public spaces and moving around freely with calmness and comfort without the fear of being visually profiled and assaulted. Reports indicate that 50% of the women who face harassment chose not to report it and this is why no statistical survey can reveal the actual extent of the harassment faced by women in the society.

This reluctance to report harassment stems from the warped notion of honour that is fed to women from a very early stage.



Young girls are conditioned to believe that harassment erodes their honour, it leaves them scarred, this stigma and shame attributed to the victim makes rape and harassment an instrument to control women, to subdue them and discourages women from speaking up. Eradicating the stigma and shame attached to the victim is essential to take this power away from men and empower women. The prevalence of victims shaming makes speaking up against harassment more morally reprehensible than harassment itself, this needs to be countered.

The flailing justice system and the apathy shown by the law enforcement agencies dissuades women from reporting instances of harassment. Additionally, the burden of proof that rests on the victim makes seeking justice traumatic. The fear of harassment, harassment and the process of seeking justice are distressing and adversely impact women, their quality of life and their well being. In our society every woman is either a victim or a potential victim and has to live in trepidation and constantly tweak her choices

to ensure her safety. We cannot claim that we live in a civil and democratic state if women have to be hyper vigilant whenever they step out. It is incumbent upon the state to play an active role in ensuring that women's rights are protected and their freedom of movement is not restricted and that they are able to live life freely without fear. Apart from the effective implementation of laws that safeguard and protect women's rights, the government also needs to ensure that women are adequately represented in all spheres of the society, representation is the tool through which women can assert themselves and reclaim their agency, otherwise the only way women can ensure their safety is by being invisible in the public sphere.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The author can be reached at daniashikh8@yahoo.com

Fear, Guilt And Hope In Sudan

An army and a militia are destroying our country, but we cannot give up; we, the Sudanese people, will persevere.

Khalid Albaih

As Muslims all around the world celebrated Eid with their families, I had a hard time getting into a festive mood. I was thousands of kilometres away from where I should have been: in our family home in Omdurman, the Sudanese capital Khartoum's twin city.

Instead of celebrating Eid with my family, I – like millions of other Sudanese people inside and outside Sudan – spent the last few days of the holy month hunched over my phone, watching on social media my people being killed and my home city being destroyed by an army and a militia.

Instead of going to visit relatives, eating out with friends, taking my children to our extended family, enjoying the overcrowded streets, the smell of delicious food and the joyful sounds of Sudanese music blasting from every passing tik-tok, I was watching these places full of childhood memories turn into a war zone in real time.

I would jump from one video to another of Sudanese soldiers shouting Allahu Akbar, celebrating the capture of other Sudanese soldiers wearing a slightly different camouflage uniform, all boasting the Sudanese flag on their chests.

When I was not on social media, I would switch between news channels trying to see if they would say anything new. I would see the same videos replayed, but with the added commentary of foreign military analysts who said nothing of substance.

Other talking heads would affirm the need for negotiations and peace but would fail to mention who or what could make the two warring sides sit down and talk. Meanwhile, spokespeople for the army and the militia would trade blame for yet another broken truce.

No one could say when this nightmare would be over. The only thing that was clear was that the Sudanese people who had been

protesting for four years now, demanding a democratic civilian government, have been right all along and everyone forcing them to compromise with the army and the militia has been wrong. Now these same brave people are held hostage by the army and the militia and their vicious war.

And this was not the first Eid in recent years that the Sudanese people spent mourning the dead instead of celebrating with the living. In 2019, the army and the militia targeted a sit-in in front of the army headquarters in Khartoum, killing more than 120 people, raping dozens and injuring hundreds.

Justice is yet to be served for the crimes committed that Eid. And perhaps to avoid facing accountability for this and other crimes, the leadership of the army and the militia decided to derail the democratic transition in Sudan and capture power. Only they were so greedy that they could not agree on how to share it.

As the fighting intensified, my family – spread across Khartoum and Omdurman – decided to come together to our family house. Amid the horror and chaos, we received some good news – they had all made it safely home, while dodging rocket fire.

They found our 100-year-old house scarred by the fighting. My cousin sent a video to the family WhatsApp group showing the outside walls riddled with bullet holes and an exploded rocket that had landed in the backyard next to our lemon tree.

It was hard to believe that this was the same house where I had spent all Eids together with my big family; this was the same tree that we would climb as children and pick lemons to make juice for our guests; this was that same backyard that most of our neighbours used as a venue for their weddings and funerals.

In that backyard – our elders had told us – a great-grandmother had buried her gold in 1897, when she and her family fled their hometown of El Matama to Omdurman. They escaped a massacre by the Mahdist forces, which ruled over Sudan at that time and which had at-

No one could say when this nightmare would be over. The only thing that was clear was that the Sudanese people who had been protesting for four years now, demanding a democratic civilian government, have been right all along and everyone forcing them to compromise with the army and the militia has been wrong

tacked the town, targeting a dissenting local emir and his supporters. Still feeling insecure, my great-grandmother decided to hide her valuables, just in case she had to flee again.

Ironically, more than 100 years later, my family decided to go back to El Matama, as Omdurman – once a haven – has turned into a war zone.

We all participated in the preparations for the trip. All of us got on WhatsApp groups and social media, gathering information about the safety of the roads, the location of checkpoints run by the army and the militia, the best times to move to avoid shelling or crossfire, the numbers of microbus drivers and their ever-growing rates, etc.

As we discussed the best way to do the evacuation, I suggested to my aunts that they bury their gold in the backyard, just like our great-grandmother. No one replied.

Although many of our acquaintances made

it out of Khartoum and Omdurman, my family is still stuck there. Until now, they haven't been able to find a vehicle big enough to take all of them and a route safe enough to get them to El Matama, which is about a four-hour drive north of Omdurman. The internet blackouts have not helped.

As the days passed, I felt double guilt. On the one hand, I felt bad that I could not bring myself to celebrate with my children, who love Eid and its traditions. On the other, I felt guilty for sitting in the safety of my home in Norway, while my friends and family were trapped in their homes, offices and even schools in Sudan, praying that they survive this devastating war.

Yet, I have also felt pride in how my people have mobilised yet again in the face of a calamity. As the Sudanese state crumbled and international aid organisations suspended operations, the Sudanese resistance committees took over their vital functions. They maintained the provision of medical assistance, kept some hospitals and clinics open, scrambled to supply staff and medication, coordinated food deliveries and evacuations, did the impossible to find fuel for much-needed transport vehicles and spread information about safe routes out of combat hot spots.

Before the conflict broke out, these loosely organised grassroots committees kept the pro-democracy movement in Sudan going. Despite the coup, despite the repression and the threats, they held weekly protests demanding civilian rule.

In this dark moment of fear and despair, these people give me hope that Sudan can and will have a better, brighter future. They give me hope that soon, my family and I will celebrate Eid in our home in Omdurman, in the safety and security of a prosperous new Sudan, led by a democratically elected civilian government.

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 Al Jazeera

Boosting India-Bangladesh Defence Ties

Indrajit Kumar

India and Bangladesh have a close and friendly defence relationship that covers diverse areas of cooperation and is guided by the spirit of their shared sacrifices during the Liberation War of Bangladesh. Defence cooperation between India and Bangladesh has made significant progress in the last few years. It is depicted in the exchange of visits between the leaders of the two countries, as well as the conduct of training programmes, joint exercises, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR). Bangladesh Army Chief General S.M. Shafiuddin Ahmed has just completed a tour to Delhi to further strengthen the defence and bilateral ties between the two nations. Bangladesh General's tour destination in India, manifests his respect for Bangladesh and the historic and existing good relations between the two armies.

Bangladesh Army Chief General S.M. Shafiuddin Ahmed, who on Thursday arrived India for a three-day visit, met General Manoj Pande, the Chief of the Army Staff, and discussed anti-terrorism collaboration and overall bilateral cooperation. Apart from this, the two Army chiefs also discussed various issues pertaining to enhancing and strengthening interoperability, training, and overall bilateral cooperation as part of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two nations. During General Ahmed's visit, he will also meet India's senior military and civilian leadership where he will discuss avenues for enhancing India-Bangladesh defence relations.

After meeting General Manoj Pande, General Ahmed later called on General Anil Chauhan, Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral R. Hari Kumar, Chief of Naval Staff, Air Marshal A.P. Singh, Vice Chief of Air Staff, Defence Secretary and the Foreign Secretary. The Ministry of Defence informed that he was also briefed on the Indian indigenous defence equipment manufacturing eco-system by the Department of Defence Production (DDP) and the Army Design Bureau. An 'Implementing Arrangement' for UN Peacekeeping Operations and Training Cooperation between Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), India and Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training (BIP-SOT), Bangladesh was signed between both Armies during the visit, the defence ministry official added. The Bangladesh Army Chief was the Reviewing Officer for the Passing Out Parade at Officers Training Academy, Chennai on April 29. He also visited the Officers Training Academy Museum and interacted with the cadets of the passing out course.

The Ministry of Defence said that India and Bangladesh share the historical legacy of cooperation and support during the Liberation War of 1971. The active engagement on the defence side includes high-level exchanges at the level of Service Chiefs, conduct of the inaugural Annual Defence Dialogues by the Defence Secretaries, Tri- services and Service-specific Staff Talks. The ex-



change visits of Bangladesh Mukti Jodhas and Indian war veterans take place every year in December to mark the Victory Day celebrations in Dhaka and Kolkata, the ministry officials added.

The Bangladesh Army Chief commenced his visit by paying tributes to the fallen heroes of the Indian Armed Forces by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial on Thursday. The General was accorded a Guard of Honour at the South Block Lawns after which he called on General Manoj Pande, the Chief of the Army Staff.

SIGNIFICANCE OF REGULAR BILATERAL VISIT

At present, India and Bangladesh share a warmer relationship, and they are cooperating in the various socio-economic, political, military, technological, and cultural contexts of South Asia. There are now regular reciprocal visits by leaders of their governments and armed forces.

President Ram Nath Kovind and PM Narendra Modi paid a landmark visit to Bangladesh in December and March 2021 respectively. Undoubtedly, these regular top-level visits play a significant role in consolidating the dynamism of contemporary ties. Because, the visits provided an opportunity to renew bonds between the two countries based on a shared geographical space, shared heritage, and shared history.

Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Pranay Verma last month proposed Dhaka to develop and produce defence equipment jointly while inviting Bangladesh Armed forces to



THOUGH BANGLADESH IS HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON CHINA FOR CONVENTIONAL MILITARY WEAPONS, some security expert views that time has come to move away from a single source supply of defense equipment and thus China needs to be balanced by strengthening defence cooperation with India and Russia too

benefit from India's cost-effective and high-quality military gear.

The envoy also expressed India's readiness to partner with Bangladesh in its defence modernisation through the \$500 million Defence Line of Credit extended by New Delhi to Dhaka earlier.

The Bangladesh Army chief praised India's defence manufacturing capabilities and proposed closer cooperation between the two sides for closer defence industry partnership.

The visit of Bangladesh General is testimony to the high priority that both countries attach to each other and their desire to further strengthen this relationship based on shared values, mutual trust, and understanding. It will act as a catalyst for closer coordination and cooperation on a host of strategic issues. Ongoing talks between the top leadership of the armed forces can help dispel misconceptions harboured by both parties and are contributing to a mutual understanding of each other's viewpoints.

GROWING INDO-BANGLA RELATIONS

It is noteworthy that India's relationship with Bangladesh is one of the main pillars of its 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East Policies'. Recently, India and Bangladesh enjoy robust and multifaceted bilateral cooperation in diverse areas, including trade and connectivity, energy and power, border management, defence and security, culture, and people-to-people links.

Understandably, Bangladesh is key to India's land links eastwards. When Prime Minister Hasina came to power in 2009, Dhaka assured Delhi that it would never allow even "an inch of its territory" to be used by any extremist activity against India in line with the former's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism and militancy.

New Delhi's major "security concerns" in seven sisters had already been addressed significantly by Bangladesh. Former DG of the Indian National Security Guard said recently that the security challenges India faced in its northeastern region have been controlled and managed, in part thanks to the enormous assistance Bangladesh has provided.

India is today one of Bangladesh's most important economic partners. Bangladesh is India's largest trade partner in South Asia and India is the second largest trade partner of Bangladesh. Despite the pandemic, bilateral trade grew at an unprecedented rate of 14 percent from USD 9.46 billion in the year 2019-20 to USD 10.78 billion in 2020-21. Bangladesh is also India's most important development partner both in terms of value and range of cooperation. India extends about a third of its total global development assistance under the lines of credit to Bangladesh.

THE RECENT TREND OF MILITARY TIES

Bangladesh is one of the most outstanding strategic military partners of India from a security standpoint. Defence cooperation has seen significant progress in the last few years. This push is demonstrated in the exchange of visits between leaders of the two nations, as well as the conduct of training programmes, joint exercises, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR). Bangladesh is a long-time tested

and genuine strategic friend of India. Apart from economic cooperation, major engagements in border management, counter-terrorism, capacity-building, technology exchange, space research, cyber security, connectivity, shipping, and other areas of cooperation are expanding.

Under 'joint training and exercises, the defence services of both countries are now participating in joint exercises, medical assistance, and training programmes. SAMPRI-TI, the joint military exercise operation to counter terrorism completed its 10th edition at Jashore Military Station on June 16, 2022.

The exercise provided an opportunity for the contingents from both Armies to understand each other's tactical drills and operational techniques as well as to share their experience in Counter Insurgency/Counter Terrorism, Peace Keeping, and Disaster Relief Operation under the United Nations mandate.

As the Bay of Bengal, regions are prone to cross-border organized crimes such as human trafficking, and fake currency, arms, and narcotics smuggling, a high level of cooperation between security agencies can help tackle such challenges as well as secure maritime trade for littoral countries, especially for Bangladesh.

Though Bangladesh is heavily dependent on China for conventional military weapons, some security expert views that time has come to move away from a single source supply of defense equipment and thus China needs to be balanced by strengthening defence cooperation with India and Russia too. It is worth mentioning Bangladesh and China have an umbrella agreement on defence cooperation signed in December 2002, under former PM Khaleda Zia.

During Prime Minister Hasina's 2017 visit to India, the two countries signed a series of agreements and MoUs for enhancing cooperation in the field of national security, and strategic and operational studies. Both the countries inked a pact on the defence cooperation framework apart from signing an agreement for extending a \$500 million Line of Credit (LOC) for the purchase of military hardware.

To conclude, India-Bangladesh bonhomie in the security dimension has undeniably reached new heights in the past few years and it can easily be speculated that Indo-Bangladesh strategic relations will continue to add "more depth and momentum" in the defence and security aspect of the bilateral relationship as both countries are committed to address each other's concerns and work towards common solutions. India can assist Bangladesh in achieving the goal of implementing Bangladesh's visionary military plan, "Forces Goal 2030. This could assist in bolstering bilateral ties and reflecting better bilateral understanding. This visit is highly important for Bangladesh and India in the region.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

The Psychology of Writing

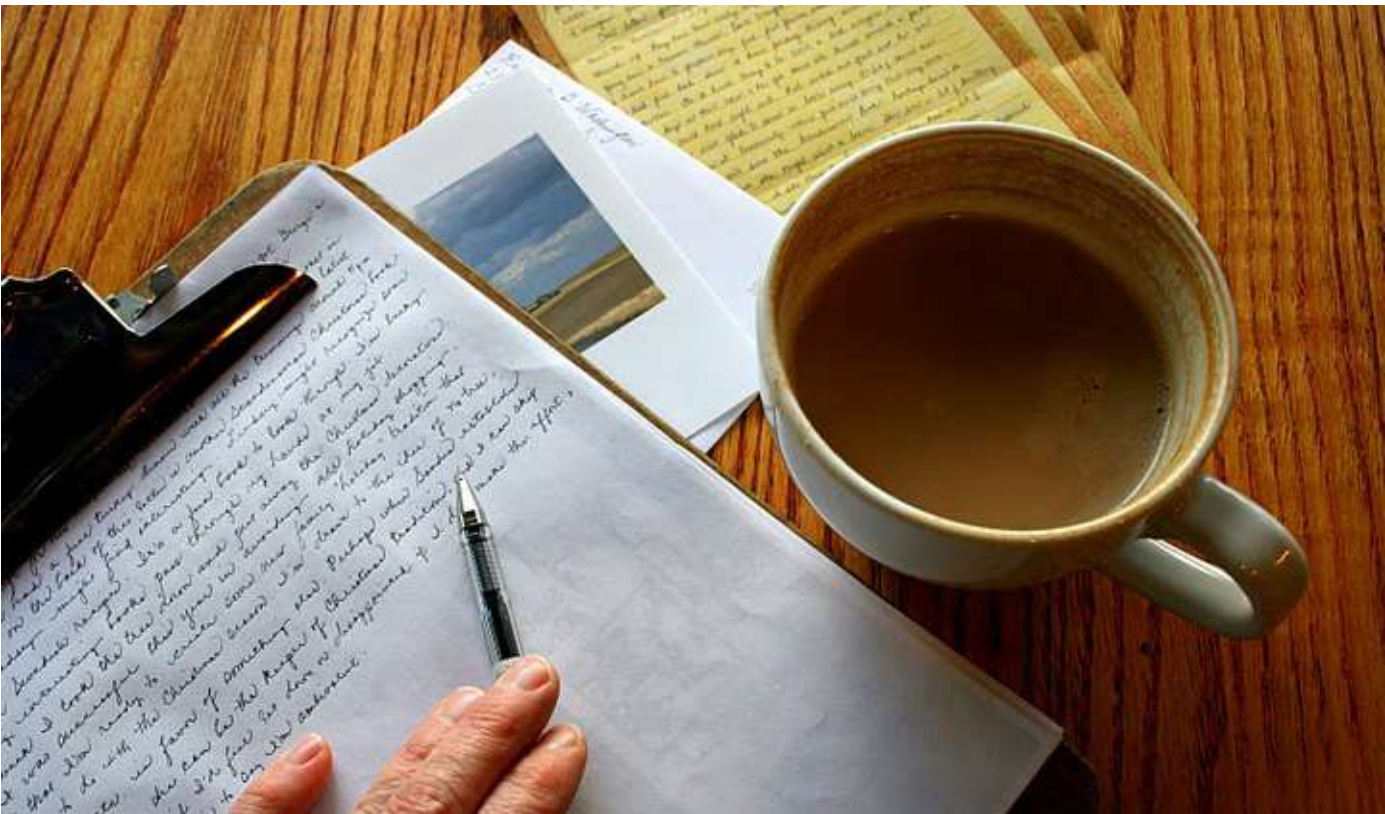
Lawrence R. Samuel

Why do some of us feel compelled to put words on paper or on screens? As a serial non-fiction author specializing in not particularly commercial American cultural history, I certainly do. I admittedly can't stop writing, even though a big part of me would like to. However, as soon as I finish a book, I start another, sometimes even on the same day. With my uncontrollable urge to repeat the laborious, decidedly financially unrewarding book-writing process over and over, a therapist might suggest I show signs of compulsion.

I recognize there are far worse things to be compelled to do, but I cannot help but wonder what my daily craving to write is all about. Ronald T. Kellogg, at the time a cognitive psychologist at the University of Missouri-Rolla, provided the answer. His 1994 book *The Psychology of Writing* showed that humans have an innate desire to create meaning in symbolic form, whether through an artistic medium or speech. Those in the emergent field of composition research,

which is part of cognitive psychology, have found that people formulate and express their thoughts with written text in order to make sense of abstract ideas. Writing is thus a defining feature of human cognition, Kellogg, now at Saint Louis University, argued, making me feel not so bad about my impulse to construct literature, much like how a beaver builds a dam.

Kellogg went further in his adroit analysis of the psychology of writing, revealing interesting insights into why scribes like me spend their time alone in a room (or Starbucks) for hours at a time when they might be enjoying life. Writers "confront the challenge of creating coherent ideas in the private realm of thought and mapping those ideas into the public world of linguistic symbols," he wrote, the process (which he was doing as he wrote those very words) an attempt to "create meaning for themselves and potentially for their readers." Kellogg added that humans appear to be hard-wired to engage in such a process, making meaning "one of the most unique characteristics of our species."



I can easily relate to such neurological decoding of the deep desire to translate vague concepts rattling around my

brain into a nicely organized text package, complete with an attractive cover. I've more than achieved my initial goal

to create a body of work that will be around after I am gone. When not writing a book, I've dashed off hundreds of ar-

ticles or blog posts like this one, ensuring that I've strung millions of words together in a more or less coherent fashion

over the years.

How did I get hooked on this annoying yet at the same time satisfying literary habit? I caught the writing bug after my dissertation was published, and I still enjoy seeing a tangible thing produced that I baked from scratch. Perhaps I write only to please myself, specifically to learn about a subject I'm interested in researching and then offer my own take on it. While hoping that readers respond favorably to my work, I never cater to the marketplace's interests, likely explaining why I've never had anything close to a bestseller.

I admit that it's nice to say, when asked what I do, that I'm an author, as for whatever reason there is a certain social currency attached to the occupation. I know I'll be done one day, having felt I've said all I had to say. But, until then, I'll continue to stack my linguistic bricks on top of each other to manufacture sentences, paragraphs, and pages, too, as Kellogg suggested, to make some sense out of our chaotic world.

– Psychology Today

Bengal: Life in violence-hit Kaliaganj limps back to normalcy

Kaliaganj (WB): Life in violence-hit Kaliaganj in West Bengal's North Dinajpur district limped back to normalcy even as heavy deployment of police remained in place to maintain law and order.

A violent stir took place in Kaliaganj after the body of a girl was found in a canal, following which the local police station was razed by angry locals and a man was shot dead allegedly in police firing.

Internet connectivity, which was suspended in parts of Kaliaganj three days ago as a security measure, was restored at 6 pm on Sunday, a police officer said.

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC, however, would remain imposed till the situation is reviewed again, he said.

"The situation has improved gradually over the last couple of days. Markets and shops are operational and we have decided to restore internet connectivity. However, a decision on revoking prohibitory orders will be taken following another round of evaluation. Police deployment will continue for the next two days till there is further improvement in the situation," the police officer told PTI over the phone.

The minor's body was found

floating in a canal on April 21, a day after she went missing after leaving home for tuition classes.

After fishing out the body, police allegedly dragged it on the road for a few metres, triggering widespread criticism and eventually leading to the suspension of four Assistant Sub Inspectors (ASIs).

The girl's family alleged she was raped and murdered, and filed a police complaint against a 20-year-old man and his father, who were subsequently arrested.

The deceased's family has moved to Calcutta High Court demanding a CBI inquiry into the death of their child after a post-mortem examination revealed she had poison in her system and was not sexually assaulted.

The Kaliaganj Police Station was razed by an agitating mob during a protest against "police inaction".

A man was allegedly shot dead in police firing during a raid conducted in and around Kaliaganj to nab those involved in the razing of the police station, leading to a political slugfest between the ruling Trinamool Congress and the BJP and subsequent imposition of prohibitory orders and suspension of internet services.



SC To Hear Pleas Challenging Validity Of Penal Law On Sedition

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a batch of pleas, including one filed by the Editors Guild, challenging the validity of the colonial era sedition law.

The Centre is expected to apprise the court of the steps taken so far with regard to reviewing the contentious penal provision.

On October 31 last year, the top court had extended its May 11 direction putting on hold the sedition law and the consequential registration of FIRs while granting additional time to the government to take "appropriate steps" for reviewing of the provision.

According to the apex court's website, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice J B Pardiwala has listed as many as 16 petitions challenging the validity of the law for hearing.

The central government, which has to review the provision, on October 31 last year, had told the bench that it be granted some more time as "something may happen in the winter session of Parliament".

Attorney General R Venkataramani had said the issue has been under consideration of authorities concerned and moreover, there is "no reason to worry" in view of the May 11 interim order, which put the use of the provision on hold.

"Mr R Venkataramani, the attorney general, submits that in terms of the directions issued by this court in order dated May 11, 2022, the matter is still engaging the attention of the relevant authorities. He submits that some additional time be granted so that appropriate steps can be taken by the government," the bench had said.

"In view of the interim directions issued by this court...dated May 11, 2022, every interest and concern stand protected and as



such there would be no prejudice to anyone. At his request, we adjourn the matter to the second week of January 2023," it had said.

In response to a query on whether the government had issued any communication to states on the penal provision, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had said the directions in consonance with the apex court's order have been sent to the chief secretaries of states.

In the landmark order passed on May 11, the court had put the contentious law on hold till the Centre completed its promised review of the colonial relic and also asked the Union and state governments not to register any fresh case invoking the offence.

It had also directed that the ongoing probes, pending trials and all proceedings under the sedition law will be kept in abeyance across the country and those in jail on sedition charges could approach the court for bail.

"This court is cognisant of the security interests and the integrity of the State on one hand, and the civil liberties of citizens on the other. There is a requirement to balance both sets of considerations, which is a difficult exercise," the court had said.

The offence of sedition, which was included in section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in 1890, has been under intense public scrutiny for its use as a

tool against expressions of dissent, including on social media.

During the colonial era the sedition law was primarily used to suppress dissent and imprison freedom fighters.

"We expect that till the re-examination of the provision is complete, it will be appropriate not to continue the usage of the aforesaid provision of law by the governments," the top court had said.

Any affected party is at liberty to approach the courts concerned, which are requested to examine the reliefs sought, taking into consideration the present order, it had said.

The Editors Guild of India, Major General (Retd) S G Vombatkere, former Union minister Arun Shourie and the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCI) have filed the petitions on the issue. The petitions have contended that the law causes a "chilling effect" on free speech and is an unreasonable restriction on free expression, a fundamental right.

Between 2015 and 2020, 356 cases of sedition -- as defined under section 124A of the IPC -- were registered and 548 people arrested, according to data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). However, only 12 people arrested in seven sedition cases were convicted in the six-year period.

85-yr-old woman stops receiving pension after being declared 'dead' on paper

Jaipur: Eighty-five-year-old Gattu Devi who lives in a village in Rajasthan's Ajmer district with her family was in for a shock when she learnt that her widow pension was stopped by the government declaring that she was dead.

A resident of Banjari village under Todgarh tehsil, the grandmother of three received her last pension of Rs 1,500 in February 2022, which too she discovered recently.

"We did not check the account as we thought the pension was being deposited regularly for the past many years. I went to the panchayat samiti and realised that my mother was declared dead and pension was stopped in February last year," Chunnilal Regar, Gattu Devi's son said.

The authorities of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment have initiated an inquiry to ascertain the loophole that led to the mistake. In the meantime, the department has verified Gattu Devi's identity and said her pension along with the arrears will be released next month. According to officials, the octogenarian was declared dead by the panchayat samiti without verification.

To declare someone dead, the panchayat requires a death certificate without which it is impossible to update the system. However, my mother's name was not even present in the list of dead persons, said Regar.

Gattu Devi, accompanied by her son, also visited the e-Mitra centre for biometric identification with a fractured leg, but to no avail.

"We went to the centre three-four times. However her finger prints could not be taken due to old age," her son said.

The issue was resolved after it came to the notice of authorities.

"The matter has come to our notice. Why would the department declare someone dead? There must be some

technical error. We will get the matter checked. We have also sent a person to the beneficiary's residence for verification, which has been completed. The pension will be resumed from next month and arrears will also be deposited," said Hari Mohan Meena, Director of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment.

The authorities also pointed out that the verification process is carried out by field workers, which is subject to inquiry.

This process contains three layers which takes time, after the completion of which the pension and arrears are released.

According to authorities, the department has also started self-verification through a mobile application through which anyone, including the elderly and disabled, can get themselves verified while sitting at home. The step has been taken considering the problems that came to notice for getting biometric verification done.

After learning about Gattu Devi's case, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Department Tika Ram Jolly instructed his officer on special duty to take necessary steps and start the pension immediately after taking complete information about the account.

Minister's action was called for as the state government is holding inflation relief camps where the government is providing information and benefits of its 10 ambitious schemes, including pensions, for various kinds of beneficiaries.

The inquiry revealed that the verification was pending due to an amendment in Jan Aadhar Card (ID for the citizens of Rajasthan) by the pensioners in April 2023. The Jan Aadhar team has been asked to complete the verification work at the earliest. After which, the department has activated the pension account and from next month, the pension will be resumed.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

PM Modi's

has inspired people to take pride in their heritage and acknowledge the remarkable contribution of scientists, teachers, litterateurs and artists in raising India's stature in the world.

Speaking at the Raj Bhawan later, Sinha said "Mann ki Baat" is the voice of 140 crore countrymen.

"It echoes their aspirations, dreams, challenges, success, failure, resolve and the new beginning. 'Mann ki Baat' is deeply rooted in our spiritual and cultural traditions and its ideas and ideals," he said.

Sinha added that "Mann ki Baat", since the beginning of October 2014, has touched every section of society and influenced behavioural change to shape a new social revolution.

"Mann ki Baat" is not only a powerful radio programme but also a source of inspiration to realise dreams and resolve of the society. Dialogue is the soul of democracy. The direct communication between a statesman and citizens ensures that the foundation of democracy is strong, participation of citizens in governance is ensured and their voice is at the centre of policies," he said.

On the occasion, the BJP's Jammu and Kashmir unit organised special programmes across the Union Territory to facilitate people to listen to the broadcast on Sunday.

The programme was organised at 5,000 booths and was attended by lakhs of people, a party leader said.

Says Redressal Of

of every section of society.

"Timely redressal of citizens' complaints is our top priority and LG's Mulaqaat is an effective medium to achieve this objective," Sinha

said.

It is a new era of challenges and opportunities and every citizen must be empowered to contribute to nation building, he added.

Sinha also heard citizens' grievances and issued directions for their immediate redressal.

Hearing a complaint from a Kathua resident about cleaning the village pond, Sinha impressed on the collective efforts of the residents in ensuring clean and pollution free surroundings.

He also directed the senior officials to attend at least one event of the ongoing Kisan Sampark Abhiyan, a training programme launched under the agriculture and allied sector's holistic development plan.

Releases Amarnath

taken by his government and Shrine Board to facilitate the hassle-free & smooth pilgrimage of the devotees.

He further highlighted the efforts to promote spiritual tourism in Jammu Kashmir.

The representatives of Tourism Federation of Jammu expressed gratitude to the Lt Governor-led UT Administration and the Shrine Board for augmenting the facilities for pilgrims and service providers.

The 62-day long annual pilgrimage will commence on 1st July this year and it will culminate on 31st August 2023.

Three Dead

had a tough time to retrieve the bodies as the vehicle also caught fire, the official said.

Father-Son

that the father-son duo had inadvertently crossed the LoC and during interrogation,

nothing unusual was found.

Untimely Snowfall

from Braid Bal, Nehyed Chilly, Sharonth Dhar, Katardhar, Kainthi, Laloo Paani, Kaljugasar, Duggan Top, Goha and Sinthan Top besides the high altitude meadows of Gandoh, they said.

These high-altitude and vast grazing meadows remain inhabited by the Gujjar and Bakarwal tribes during summers but due to harsh weather conditions and unseasonal snowfall, which covered the otherwise green meadows under thick blanket of snow, hundreds of tribal families who are heading towards their summer abode have got stuck up either on the roadsides or in the snow-filled mountains at different parts of Chenab valley and are compelled to survive under open sky with their cattle and toddlers without fodder.

Shepherd Satish Kumar said they have lost dozens of goats after they got trapped in snowstorm continuously for one week from Sarthal to Guldanda area.

Doda Deputy Commissioner Vishesh Paul Mahajan, while assuring all the required help from district administration, advised that the nomads should postpone further journey for another couple of days in view of harsh weather conditions.

The Meteorological (MeT) Department has predicted spells of rain and snow for of May in entire Chenab Valley, however some improvement in weather is likely from May 5.

According to the 2011 census, high-altitude meadows of Chenab Valley which are spread from Bhadarwah to Jawahar tunnel (Banihal) and Marmat (Doda) to Paddar and Marwah (Kishtwar), house 30,000 nomads and their lakhs of cattle including sheep, goats,

Buffalows, horses, mules etc during summers but some tribal organizations claimed that the number has increased more than 1 lakh.

NIA Opposes

court on March 16 last year.

According to the report, the NIA has submitted that evidence collected in the case clearly establishes a prima facie case against Khan and that he was involved in terrorist and funding activities.

The report said that NIA has claimed that certain letters were found during search and seizure from Khan's residence showing that he was getting students admitted for MBBS Courses in Pakistan. This shows the involvement of applicant in terror funding out of commission earned from getting students admitted to MBBS courses in Pakistan, the agency has alleged.

Various videos have also been relied upon by NIA to allege that Khan is seen leading a "pro-ISIS rally" and "visiting areas where terrorists were killed." NIA has stated that the videos have conversations by Khan about funding from Hizbul Mujahideen.

"Statement of [a defence witness] show that a mega meeting was held at the residence of Syed Geelani in 2016 calling for shutdown after killing of Burhan Wani. At the same meeting, a calendar was also issued for protests and unrest in Jammu & Kashmir. This meeting was attended by Accused No.5 [Khan]," the response reads.

According to the report, NIA has further been submitted that Khan has not challenged the order framing charges against him and that the special court rightly concluded that there is sufficient oral and documentary evidence to believe that accusations against him are true.

"Thus, a prima facie case being made out against the Applicant and Section 43D(5) UAPA creates a statutory bar to grant of bail as the offences have been held to be prima facie true and that test has not been met by the accused in the Application for bail," the reply reads.

The matter will be heard on May 03 by a division bench of Justice Siddharth Mridul and Justice Talwant Singh.

The case alleges that there was a larger criminal conspiracy for causing disruption in the Kashmir valley by way of "pelting stones on the security forces, systematically burning of schools, damage to public property and for waging war against India."

The case has been registered under Sections 120B, 121, 121A and 124 A of the Indian Penal Code and sections 13, 16, 17, 18, 20, 39 and 40 of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967.

While denying him bail, the report said that the special NIA judge had noted that a detailed scrutiny of evidence and statements of various witnesses was done at the time of framing of charges and it was concluded that there is sufficient evidence available raising "grave suspicion" regarding Khan's involvement.

NIA had registered the FIR on a complaint by Ministry of Home Affairs alleging that based on "secret information" received from an informant, it was learnt that Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and various separatist leaders including the members of the Hurriyat Conference were raising funds "through hawala" and also had entered into conspiracy to cause violence in Kashmir.

Taking note of the fact that charges have already been framed against Khan, the judge had said that the court cannot re-appreciate the evidence at the stage of bail.

Despite being geographically distant from Kashmir how Kashmiris in West maintain cultural, social, and emotional linkages with their homeland. Tune-in to latest KO podcast

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

KO PODCAST

Expelled NC Leader Trains Guns At Dr Farooq, Omar

Omar Abdullah First Kashmiri To Ally With BJP; Farooq Preferred Power Over Autonomy: Ishfaq Jabbar

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Former MLA Ganderbal Ishfaq Jabbar on Sunday said that he wouldn't join any political party, but would continue to work as an independent political leader for the welfare of the people.

Speaking to mediapersons on the sidelines of a rally organised by him to observe the 34th death anniversary of his father Sheikh Jabbar, Ishfaq, who was suspended from membership National Conference, said that he wouldn't join any political party.

"I don't have plans to join any political party, however, I along with other like-minded people would continue to work independently for the welfare of my people," he said.

He said that he has no plans to form any new party. "It is premature to say that a new party will be formed, because there are already so many parties," he said.

Ishfaq may have organized

an impressive show of strength today, but it wouldn't be easy for him to win from Ganderbal –which is considered bastion of Abdullah's. Similarly, it would also not be a cakewalk for NC.

The political equations have changed in Ganderbal after de-limitation.

In a statement released to media later, Ishfaq said "Omar Abdullah is the best separatist when out of power and a tyrannical mainstreamer when in power".

He said Omar Abdullah also seems to have forgotten that he was the first person from Kashmir to be part of the BJP government at the Centre in 1999.

Jabbar said Omar Abdullah's father unleashed the brutal Ikhwan regime on to the hapless Kashmiris between 1996 and 2002.

He said that New Delhi was willing to give autonomy to Kashmir in 1995-96, but Farooq Abdullah preferred power over it—(KNO)

Maiden 2 Day 'Sinthan Festival' Concludes

Over 12000 Tourism Enthusiasts Attended Event On Second Day

Observer News Service

KISHTWAR: The two day maiden 'Sinthan Festival' concluded Sunday at Sinthan Maidan Kishtwar which was organized by the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu in close collaboration with District Administration Kishtwar, Indian Army and J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

The culmination ceremony was attended by DIG Doda -Kishtwar Dr. Sunil Gupta; Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Devansh Yadav; SSP Kishtwar, Khalil Poswal; CEO Kishtwar Development Authority, Inderjeet Parihar and Deputy Director Tourism (Adventure & Publicity) Jammu, Abdul Jabbar.

The two day event witnessed cultural and adventure activities which were enjoyed by the visiting guests and tourists.

Much enthusiasm was witnessed for the maiden Paragliding activity, Tug-of-War, snow based activities, musical fiesta of live performances by Waqar Khan, Shubham Shiva, Zahida Tarannum and other local star performers.

The Finale of First ever 'Kishtwar Idol' was also held on the occasion and the winners were felicitated by the dignitaries present.

It is pertinent to mention here that Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar had organized the first ever mega singing competition which provided a platform to local talented singers and performers. He also initiated the District level 'Inter College Dance Competition' which concluded on 29th April amid loud cheering from the audiences.

Fire At Under-Construction Building At AIIMS In Samba

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A fire broke out at an under-construction building on the premises of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday evening, officials said.

The blaze was noticed on the first floor of the OPD block of AIIMS Jammu around 6.30 pm and was brought under control by the fire and emergency services department within half an hour, the officials said.

"Welding work led to a minor fire on the first floor of the

OPD block of AIIMS Jammu," Jammu AIIMS Director Shakti Gupta said.

Gupta said that he will review the standard operating procedure at the site on Monday and will subsequently submit his report to the government.

Deputy Commissioner of Samba Abhishek Sharma said the fire was reported from tower number six and the fire fighting operation was completed around 6.55 pm.

"There was no casualty in the incident as there were no labourers present inside the building," he said.

Mediation Existed In Indian Culture As A Dispute Resolution: Justice Tashi Rabstan

Observer News Service

JAMMU: An extensive forty hours Mandatory Mediation Training programme for the Advocates of various districts of Jammu province spreading over five days concluded Sunday at J&K Judicial Academy, Jammu with the valedictory address delivered by Justice Tashi Rabstan Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Chairman, Mediation and Conciliation Committee.

In his address, Justice Tashi said that considering the shortage of trained mediators the present training programme was devised for the Advocates of Jammu Province. Justice Tashi who has been heading the Mediation and Conciliation Committee from last about 8 years said that the Mediation rules framed by the High Court of J&K and Ladakh are exhaustive and referral judges are required to identify and refer the cases having potential of being settled through the process of mediation. He further said that now-a-days many big companies having enormous economic activities are witnessing upsurge in disputes which they want to be settled through the process of Mediation.

Justice Tashi appreciated the participants in the training programme for showing keen interest besides actively participating and interacting with the trainers during the said programme. Justice Tashi impressed upon the trainees to work with dedication and ensure that the mediation becomes result oriented.



Speaking on the occasion V.K. Bansal, Principal Judge, Family Court, Tis Hazari, Delhi and Senior Trainer said that this was his 5th or 6th programme as a trainer in Jammu and Kashmir and was more than happy to receive an invitation from MCPC, Supreme Court of India for being deputed as a trainer to Jammu and Kashmir.

He further said that he was overwhelmed by the reception and hospitality extended to him and appreciated the enthusiasm with which the trainees participated in the programme.

Dr. Aditi Choudhary, Director Delhi Judicial Academy also acknowledged that the participation of the trainees in the programme was beyond her expectation and queries raised by them during the programme gave a food for thought to the trainers. She hoped that the participants would prove to be an asset for carrying on the mission of mediation in UT of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The Training Programme was spread over a total of 12 sessions and day one started with the inaugural session followed by technical sessions on various aspects of mediation

that included Ground Rules, Principles of Learning and Training, Conflict Management and Resolution, Role Play, ADR with special reference to Section 89 of Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 and its types.

On the second day of training various aspects including Role of Lawyers and the concept of Mediation and Conciliation Rules, were discussed. The focus was on meaning and process of communication, its effectiveness including its types and modes. Special emphasis was laid on various communication skills like active listening, body language, questions and empathy with neutrality.

On 3rd and 4th day of the training, priority was given to the concepts of Bargaining, Negotiation, Impasse including its causes, stages, management and strategies, false and avoidance impasse. During these two days the participating advocates were practically involved in experiencing various techniques learnt during these sessions. At the end of day 04, various professional ethics including ethical principles for a mediator, role and responsibilities of a referral judge u/s 89 of Code of Civil Procedures 1908, were targeted.

The concluding day, commenced with the concept of ethical principles for Judicial and Advocate mediators followed by an informative documentary. The highlight of all the days of training program was the Role Play on Mediation by the participants which also boosted their morale for mediation process.

Azad Vows To Fight For J&K Statehood, Land; Job Security

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: Democratic Progressive Azad Party chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad on Sunday said that the time has come for the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir and it is undemocratic to deprive the people from elected government for a long time.

He said that DPAP is a party that believes in democratic values and will ensure various pro people initiatives are launched to benefit the weaker sections of people in our society if elected to power.

"If the DPAP is elected to power we will ensure poor are provided free electricity and other benefits so that they won't face burden on their budget. We will also work to create diverse economic opportunities in various sectors including tourism, agriculture and horticulture so that the economy of common people improve," he said while addressing a public gathering at Bandipora.

Azad said that when he was the Chief minister of erstwhile J&K state, he granted the district status to Bandipora, opened hospitals, colleges and set up a long network of roads to benefit the people.

However, it has been a long time since then and the development in the district seems at halt now and successive governments have overlooked the growing infrastructural requirements of the district. Azad said that unlike other people, he won't make false promises and keep people in the dark. "I will make promises and will deliver on that. Unlike most of the politicians who visit you and make number of promises never to deliver," he said.

Azad said the socioeconomic

indicators of Jammu and Kashmir are concerning since it is being pushed to dark era. He said the economic opportunities are dwindling so is the per capita income. Similarly, no new avenues and job opportunities are created despite thousands of our youth every year completing their education.

"There is no hope, only despair and anxiety. Someone has to come forward and fight it out for our bright future," he said and reiterated that DPAP is the only platform to take UT out of this quagmire.

Azad said that he and his party will never sit silent whenever injustice with the people is done. He said the protests against land eviction was one of the examples when hundreds of party workers marched peacefully on the streets and forced government to stop the coercive measures.

LG Hands Over Offer Letter To Wife Of Slain KP

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday handed over a government job appointment letter to Sunita Sharma, wife of Sanjay Sharma, a Kashmiri Pandit who was shot dead by militants in Pulwama early this year.

Sinha assured all possible assistance and support from his administration to Sharma's family who met him at Raj Bhanwan here, a spokesperson said.

Sharma (40), who worked as an ATM guard, was shot dead by militants from point-blank range



in the Achan area of the south Kashmir district on February 26.

Sharma's family moved to Jammu in March and applied for their registration as migrants.

Sunita had sought the inter-

vention of the LG in providing them with a proper rehabilitation package including accommodation, a job on compassionate grounds and free education for the orphaned children.

LG Inaugurates Sant Eshwer Foundation Premise In Udhampur

Addresses Annual Day Celebration of Bhartiya Vidya Mandir Vidyalaya



Observer News Service

UDHAMPUR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated Sant Eshwer Foundation's premise in Udhampur and addressed the Annual Day Celebration of Bhartiya Vidya Mandir Vidyalaya, on Sunday.

The Lt Governor lauded the Sant Eshwer Foundation for its immense contribution in the field of public service, and providing quality education to children from rural and marginalised community.

"Sant Eshwer Foundation, established by Shri Khairati Lal Khanna Ji, is caring for the poor and needy people in improving their livelihoods. Foundation run Bhartiya Vidya Mandir at Udhampur is empowering and improving educational status of Children of 20 villages," said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor stressed upon the teaching community and the educational institutions for adopting a future-oriented, value-based and aspirational education system.

"Education is the most powerful tool for social transformation. It is important for our boys and girls to develop, right from their school years, scientific temper, critical thinking, wisdom & values to enrich their personality," observed the Lt Governor.

"Quality education ensures all-round development, economic progress of family & society. Education is the main pillar of nation's development. The efforts of Sant Eshwer Foundation, their dedication & commitment to selfless service can show the way to prosperity and contribute to economic growth," the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor also highlighted the key role of the National Education Policy in providing a roadmap to establish India as a knowledge economy.

Earlier, the Lt Governor interacted with the students who had displayed their models and prototypes based on robotics. A colorful cultural program was also presented by the students of the Bhartiya Vidya Mandir Vidyalaya.

Why Centre Is Presenting Pakistan As Lion Before Us: Bukhari

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari on Sunday rejected the Army's statement that the Pakistan does not want a stable government in Jammu and Kashmir, saying why the Centre is presenting the neighbouring country which is in deep crisis as a "lion before us".

Bukhari, a former minister, asked how can a neighbouring country object to the formation of government in J-K as the decision has to be taken by the election commission or Central government.

The Army on Saturday said Pakistan neither wants peace nor a stable government in Jammu and Kashmir, even more since the abolition of Article 370 in 2019.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a public rally at Mandi in the border district of Poonch, Bukhari in his reaction to the Army's statement said he felt sad and surprised as Pakistan is in deep crisis and is hardly alive.

"Why are you presenting it (Pakistan) as a lion before us? We are not ready to accept it (statement) from a government with a powerful Prime Minister and Home Minister. The government is saying it has a 56-inch chest," Bukhari said.

He said there is no role of any of the neighbouring countries in the holding of elections in J&K. "The Centre owes an explanation and should ensure early assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir without making any excuse."

"Tell us directly if you are not willing to hold assembly elections and restore democracy in J&K. It is not acceptable to us that Pakistan does not want the formation of a government in J&K," the Apni Party leader said.

He alleged that the assem-

bly elections are being delayed without justification in the Union territory.

"Who will conduct elections in J&K? As far as we know, elections are conducted by the Election Commission/ Government of India and no other power on this earth has any right to interfere in J&K," he said.

Bukhari said panchayat elections are no alternative to the assembly polls. "If they (BJP) are satisfied with panchayats, the Parliament should be turned into a panchayat house as well."

Referring to the militant attack in Poonch that left five soldiers dead on April 20, Bukhari said his party is concerned over the militant attack but requested that the innocent people should not be harassed.

However, those people who provided any kind of support to the militants should be handled as per the law, he said.

He said his party will not make any promise to the people which it could not fulfill after the formation of the next government.

"We believe that the government should always speak the truth. We will not promise anything which we could not do later. We promised protection to land and jobs for the local population and we have done it," he said, adding "we will ensure restoration of statehood as well."

He said the BJP has promised a lot but has done very little on the ground.

"Why is the BJP not going for assembly elections? Those in power are habitual of making claims of development...they have been talking about an artificial lake in Jammu for the last four years but where is the lake?" Meanwhile, dozens of social and political activists led by former Aquaf administrator Raiz Atish joined the Apni Party.

FCIK Urges For Action Against Violators Of Govt Orders

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) has expressed concern over non-compliance of government orders by various departments regarding procurement of 25% of their total annual procurement of goods or services from Micro, Small and Medium enterprises and has urged for strict action against violators of orders.

In a statement issued here, the FCIK regretted that a government circular issued under No:

FD-Code/240/2022-02-1899 dated 24-02-2023 issued by Finance Department Codes Division which makes it mandatory upon all government departments and Public sector undertakings to earmark and procure minimum of 25% of the total overall annual procurement of goods or services from MSMEs besides earmarking 3% from within 25% target for earmarking for micro and small enterprises owned by women, was openly being flouted.

FCIK has informed that the violation was mainly being

done by the engineering departments under the garb of "providing and fixing" affixed to the nomenclature of any industrial product in their NITs to convert its configuration to a so called works contract. "In some cases where the engineering departments make it open for both MSMEs and the contractors, the work order is grabbed by the later for having quoted lesser rates than a manufacturing unit", said the spokesman of FCIK, surprised that "how was it possible that a contractor who ought to

procure industrial goods from a manufacturing unit before their installation could win the very contract from the same manufacturing unit in a tendering competition".

FCIK has drawn attention of the government towards use of untested, unauthentic, low quality and deviation in use of material in many of these works contracts. "Whereas the power transformers, conductors and other equipment manufactured by local industry were subjected to multiple and rigorous testing before

delivery, such a process was dormant in most of the works contracts", said FCIK, adding that this paved way for installation of untested and substandard goods. It has also been observed that many contractors were using imported deodar-resembling timber against specified deodar specie mentioned in the contracts, informed FCIK.

"Such imported timber is far less in cost than Deodar which is sold only by the J&K State Forest Corporation alone" said FCIK, adding that "depart-

ments required to ascertain in the first instance that how could a contractor quote rates below the average sale price of JKSF if he didn't intend to deviate from specifications later". FCIK had recently taken up matter of use of Rajasthani Kota stone in place of local devri stone tiles in "smart city project" which amounted to brazen deviation from the specifications. All such quality issues could be taken care of only when these industrial goods were procured by industrial units, claimed FCIK.

FCIK has urged upon all Administrative departments to monitor that their subordinate offices adhere to the government instructions regarding earmarking and procurement of 25% of their annual requirements from MSMEs besides segregating industrial goods from works contracts. The Finance department has already established that a meager cost towards installation of an industrial product could not change its nomenclature to a works contract, informed FCIK.

There were no specifics about the likely location of the events or the precise start time.