



Modernised & Faster Railway Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee

Laying of Foundation Stone / Inauguration / Dedication to the Nation of
Redevelopment of **554** Railway Stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme
and **1500** Road Over Bridges / Underpasses
at the cost of **₹41000 crores**



Redevelopment of Railway Station

■ Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra

- Stations to be redeveloped as City Centres with provision of amenities like roof plaza, shopping zone, food court, kids' play area etc.
- Provision of segregated entry & exit gates, multi-level parking, lift, escalator, executive lounge, waiting area, travelator, Divyangjan friendly facilities
- With the integration of multi-modal connectivity the redeveloped stations will become the centre of socio-economic activities of the region

and

Construction of 1 Road Over Bridges / Underpasses in Jammu & Kashmir

- Seamless movement of rail & road traffic
- Safe & convenient passage for local residents across railway tracks
- Decongestion of traffic, reduction in travel time

By

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister

26 February, 2024 | 11:00 AM onwards

(through video conferencing)

In the August Presence of

Ashwini Vaishnav
Minister of Railways, Communications and
Electronics & Information Technology

Raosaheb Patil Danve
Minister of State for Railways
Coal and Mines

Darshana Jardosh
Minister of State for Railways
& Textiles

Watch live broadcast on





Consuming Almonds May Boost Post-Exercise Muscle Recovery, Performance: Study

Press Trust Of India

Eating almonds may reduce some feelings of muscle soreness during exercise recovery and improve performance in specific tasks, according to a small study.

In the study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 25 mildly overweight middle-aged men and women performed a 30-minute downhill treadmill run test after eight weeks of consuming 57 grammes (two ounces) of whole raw almonds daily.



The control group ate a calorie-matched (86 grammes per three ounces) snack of unsalted pretzels. The treadmill test was designed to cause muscle damage to see how almonds affected muscle recovery.

The researchers measured participants' muscle function; blood markers of muscle damage and inflammation, and perceived muscle soreness using a visual scale, before, during and at three timepoints after the treadmill test.

They also measured markers of cardiometabolic health, body composition, and psychosocial assessments of mood,

appetite, and well-being at baseline and after eight weeks of almond snacking.

Study participants who ate almonds experienced an almost 25 per cent reduction in muscle soreness when performing an explosive power exercise (a vertical jump challenge) over the cumulative 72-hour exercise recovery period, the researchers said.

The perceived reduction in soreness translated to better muscle performance during

the vertical jump challenge in the almond group versus the control, they said.

"Our study suggests that snacking on almonds can be recommended to occasional exercisers as a go-to food to help fitness recovery after strenuous exercise," said Oliver C. Witard, Senior Lecturer at Kings College London, UK.

"Almonds are naturally nutritious with protein, good fats and the antioxidant vitamin E. They can be considered an ide-

al food for fitness," Witard said in a statement.

No significant differences were observed in measures of cardiometabolic health, muscle damage or inflammation, mood state, or appetite for the almond group or the control group, according to the researchers.

The study included non-smoking participants who were mildly overweight and occasionally physically active but were not trained athletes.

A limitation of this study is that the results are not generalisable to populations with other demographic and health characteristics, the researchers said.

Sticking to an exercise routine is not easy, so finding dietary strategies to help people be -- and stay -- physically active is important for public health, they said.

The preliminary findings are encouraging in showing that almond snacking may promote adherence to new training programmes among people who are unaccustomed to exercise.

"The noteworthy discovery of a 25 per cent decrease in muscle soreness over the course of the 72-hour recovery period emphasises the significance of incorporating nutrient-dense foods, such as almonds, into a balanced diet to promote general health and fitness," said Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head-Dietetics, Max Healthcare - Delhi.

"The study also highlights the potential of almonds to encourage those who are not used to exercising to stick to new training regimens," Samaddar added.



Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir.

Scholarship Name Bhalodia-Khetan Summer Research Excellence Award 2024

Description: Bhalodia-Khetan Summer Research Excellence Award 2024 is an opportunity offered by the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar to honor and recognise outstanding research conducted by students participating in the Summer Research Internship Program (SRIP) at IIT Gandhinagar.

Eligibility: Open for students who have completed the Summer Research Internship Programme (SRIP) under the faculty guides' evaluation at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Gandhinagar.

- Prizes & Rewards: An award of 50,000 (one-time)
- Last Date to Apply: 05-03-2024
- Application mode: Online Applications Only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/BKSAI

Scholarship Name National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) Internship Programme 2024

Description: National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) Internship Programme 2024 is an opportunity offered by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India for students pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. degree courses in various disciplines.

Eligibility: Open for Indian nationals pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate, M.Phil, and Ph.D. degree courses in specified disciplines.

- Prizes & Rewards: A monthly stipend of 8,000 and a completion certificate
- Last Date to Apply: Round The Year
- Application mode: via post or email at: Deputy Secretary National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) 9th Floor, Chandralok Building, 36, Janpath, New Delhi - 110001 Email ID: naco.internship@gmail.com
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/NACO1

Scholarship Name Summer Research Internship Program (SRIP) 2024

Description: Summer Research Internship Program (SRIP) 2024 is a research opportunity offered by the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, to students pursuing bachelor's or master's degrees at institutions in India.

Eligibility: Open for Indian nationals pursuing a bachelor's or master's degree at an Indian institution.

- Prizes & Rewards: A weekly stipend of 2,000 and other benefits
- Last Date to Apply: 05-03-2024
- Application mode: Online Applications Only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SRIP2

Why Have Efforts To Eradicate Tb Been So Slow

360info

Tuberculosis is the world's most deadly infectious disease. But lofty global plans to stamp out this global killer by 2030 were dramatically slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

When COVID struck, the world swiftly responded, pouring unimaginable amounts of money into the development of new drugs and vaccines. In stark contrast, tuberculosis (TB) has persisted for centuries, yet many people in the developed world remain largely unaware of it, and vaccine development has received little attention.

A new push for action, brought on by rising case numbers around the world, could finally make a difference in the fight against TB but only if that commitment is sustained.

In 2021, global deaths from TB increased for the first time in almost a decade: the disease claimed 1.5 million lives that year, up from 1.4 million in 2020 and 1.2 million in 2019. Lockdowns, disruptions in healthcare, and the redirection of resources hampered active case finding, diagnosis and treatment, reversing gains made in recent years.

Some experts believe that COVID-19 has reversed two decades of progress in the fight against TB a significant setback from which it will take at least five years to recover.

A widespread and sometimes silent disease

TB is a preventable and usually curable disease. But it remains staggeringly widespread: almost one-quarter (23 percent) of the world's population is infected with the TB bacteria.

Many latently infected with TB are unaware they have the disease, as they don't experience symptoms, which include cough, fever, fatigue and weight loss. But for some, it's deadly: over the last two centuries, TB has claimed more than a billion lives.

While TB has plagued humanity for thousands of years with signs of the disease found in Egyptian mummies the global campaign to eliminate TB dates back to 1882, when German physician Robert Koch provided the evidence that TB is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Mtb).

In the 1900s, national public health campaigns spread across Europe and the United States as the disease remained prevalent. Following the rise of drug-resistant TB strains in the 1980s, the World Health Organisation (WHO) issued a declaration of a global health emergency in 1993.

The campaign to eradicate TB gained further momentum in 2014 when the WHO launched the post-2015 End TB Strategy in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. The aim was ambitious: a 95 per cent reduction in TB deaths by 2035. The strategy called for new treatments, improved diagnostics, increased research investment, universal health coverage and, importantly, an

effective vaccine.

Eliminating TB has always been difficult

While progress has been made over the years, the journey towards eliminating TB has been slower than expected and has hit many roadblocks, including the pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

TB deaths declined again in 2022 and 2023 indicating that post-COVID, the fight against TB was back on in earnest but the setbacks of 2020 and 2021 have taken a toll. If the current trajectory persists until 2050, it is estimated that TB could bring more than 27 million deaths and economic losses exceeding USD\$13 trillion.

Several key barriers to stamping out TB remain

First, the bacterium causing TB, Mtb, has developed sophisticated defences to evade the immune response, allowing it to remain dormant within the human body, particularly the lungs, for decades. About 90 percent of infected people will never develop active disease. This is known as latent TB infection (or LTBI), and it makes TB even more challenging to diagnose and treat.

As well as being complex, TB diagnosis is also not always accurate. The disease can be present in several forms latent infection, subclinical disease and active disease.

Each form requires different tests to diagnose

Subclinical TB can be identified only

by looking for abnormalities detectable by rare, ultra-sensitive tools. This is further complicated by resource limitations in low- to middle-income countries, often contributing to underdiagnosis and uncontrolled transmission.

An additional challenge: treating TB involves six to 12 months of antibiotic therapy. This poses a substantial financial strain on healthcare services, especially in developing nations, as well as on patients in countries where out-of-pocket costs are involved.

Poor adherence often results in antimicrobial resistance. Mtb ranks among the most multi-drug resistant bacteria.

Drug resistance is an alarming obstacle to TB prevention and treatment, making treatment of the disease harder and longer. Treatment of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) is complicated. It can take up to two years and requires hospitalisation. It's also expensive. Treating the most drug-resistant form of the disease in the US, for example, can cost USD\$568,000, excluding productivity costs such as lost income.

Extensive and totally drug resistant Mtb strains have also been reported, highlighting the magnitude of drug resistance in TB infections. Papua New Guinea, Australia's closest neighbour, has one of the highest rates of MDR-TB in the world and while Australia reports low rates of these strains, their introduction into Australia is a national health security risk.

Published Since 1997 **KASHMIR OBSERVER**

IS AVAILABLE IN SRIANGAR AT FOLLOWING PLACES

ABDULLAH NEWS AGENCY	AMIRA KADAL	BUDSHAH NEWS AGENCY	AFTAB MARKET
SIKENDER NEWS AGENCY	AMIRAKADAL	RASHEED GAZALA	LAL CHOWK
GUPKARI NEWS AGENCY	LAL CHOWK	RAFIQ NEWS AGENCY	BATMALOO
KHAN NEWS AGENCY	REGAL CHOWK	MEHRAJ NEWS AGENCY	DALGATE
RASHEED NEWS AGENCY	DALGATE	ASHIQ NEWS AGENCY	GAGRIBAL
IMRAN NEWS AGENCY	KOHNKHAH	SAMA NEWS AGENCY	SHALIMAR
KOHINOOR NEWS AGENCY	NISHAT	WANI NEWS AGENCY	HYDERPORA
SHEIKH NEWS AGENCY	HYDERPORA	AL NOOR NEWS AGENCY	NOWGAM
FAIRDEAL NEWS AGENCY	AIRPORT	BISMILLAH NEWS AGENCY	BAGH E MEHTAB
AL FALAH NEWS AGENCY	NATIPORA	FIDA NEWS AGENCY	RAJ BAGH
FIRDOUS NEWS AGENCY	PIRBAGH	HARMINDER NEWS AGENCY	GOGJI BAGH

TANTRAY NEWS AGENCY	RAJ BAGH	BASHIR NEW AGENCY	NOWHATTA
ARIF NEWS AGENCY	JAWHAR NAGAR	AGA NEWS AGENCY	ALI KADAL
MUSHTAQ KALASH-PURI	KALASHPORA	HABBAKADAL NEWS AGENCY	HAB-BAKADAL
ALTAJ NEWS AGENCY	FATEHKADAL	FAROOQ NEW AGENCY	GOJWARA
JEELANI NEW AGENCY	KHAWAJA BAZAR	DAR NEWS AGENCY	QAMAR-WARI
NAZIR NEWS AGENCY	RAINAWARI	CHANDER NEWS AGENCY	BEMINA
KHALID NEWS AGENCY	HAMDANIYA COLONY	JONSON NEWS AGENCY	SEKIDAFAR
BHAT NEWS AGENCY	JAMALLATTA	SHAFAT NEWS AGENCY	HAWAL
BILAL NEWS AGENCY	KAK SARAI	KHALIQ NEWS AGENCY	NOWSHEH-RA
MUZAFFAR ALI NEWS AGENCY	ALAMGIRI BAZAR	BILAL NEWS AGENCY	NOWSHEH-RA
TARIQ NEWS AGENCY	M.K. CHOWK	MUZAMIL NEWS AGENCY	SOURA
GULZAR NEWS AGENCY	SOURA	SUBHAN NEWS AGENCY	SKIMS SOURA
HASAN NEWS AGENCY	SOURA	NISAR NEWS AGENCY	LAL BAZAR
BASHIR NEWS AGENCY	BUCHPORA	BASHIR NEWS AGENCY	HAZRAT BAL
AIJAZ NEWS AGENCY	HAZRAT BAL	YASIR NEWS AGENCY	ZAKOORA

FOR ANY QUERY, CALL CIRCULATION DEPTT. : 0194-2502327

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Father's name of my wards namely Maryam Binti Rafeeq (DOB 08-11-2022) and Mariya Rafeeq (DOB: 04-08-2020) in their DOB certificate has been wrongly spelled as Rafiq Ahmad Mir while the Correct Spelling is Rafeeq Ahmad Mir which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Block Development office Kakapora within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Rafeeq Ahmad Mir
F/o Maryam Binti Rafeeq and Mariya Rafeeq
R/o Ratnipora Tehsil Kakapora

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار ساہتیہ بیگم
 منضمون: درخواست منجانب شیوان منبول دختر مقبول نیار سید سعید پورہ نواب
 بازار سرینگر برادرانی سوئٹ کاسٹ بڈمرہ تجارت ایش آر او 126
 اشتہار برادرانی سوئٹ کاسٹ بڈمرہ تجارت ایش آر او 126
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل ہے جو کہ زبردستی سے اس بارے میں
 پوری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل واقعی نیار ذات سے تعلق رکھتا
 ہے اور سائل کی مہمانہ آمدنی 7000 روپیہ تک ہے سائل کا کہنا ہے کہ ذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے
 محمد منبول نیار ولد محمد سلطان نیار 49 سال درزی ٹیلر ماسٹر آمدنی 7000
 رحمان زین محمد مقبول نیار 40 سال گھریلو کام
 شیوان منبول دختر مقبول نیار 16 سال زیر تعلیم
 ساحل منبول ولد محمد مقبول نیار 22 سال --
 اس کے علاوہ اوکوئی افراد کو منجانب نہیں ہے۔ سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کہ اگر
 کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ بعد مشورہ اخبار سات دن کے اندر اندر اپنے عذر یا
 اعتراض و دلائل حد کو دفتر ای دقتات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے یہ عدا کوئی عذر یا اعتراض
 قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
 تحصیلدار nj

PM Boosts Healthcare In J&K With 13 New Critical Care Projects

- 100-bed units at GMC Jammu, Budgam
- 50-bed units at other hospitals, medical colleges
- Dedicates 6 'Food Safety on Wheels' facilities
- Projects funded by PM-ABHIM and ECRP schemes

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday virtually laid the foundation stone of 13 critical care projects worth Rs 350.25 crore in Jammu and Kashmir.

He also dedicated six 'Food Safety on Wheels' amounting to Rs 2.63 crore to the people of the Union Territory through virtual mode from Rajkot in Gujarat.

Foundation stone for 100-bedded critical care block units (CCBUs) were laid at Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu and District Hospital Budgam, and 50-bedded CCBUs at district hospitals in Kulgam, Pulwama, Kupwara, Reasi, Poonch and Shopian besides GMC Baramulla, GMC Rajouri, GMC Kathua, SKIMS Bemina (Srinagar) and Public Health Centre Sonamarg.

Approved under PM-ABHIM and ECRP, the critical care units



would provide services of emergency, surgical and intensive care to the patients, an official said.

Most of the critical care services are confined to tertiary care level with limited access to secondary care and referral transport systems.

The top five causes of mortality - coronary artery disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, stroke, diarrhoeal

diseases and neonatal disorders - shall be managed timely at the level of these units itself, the official said, adding it will not only reduce the burden on tertiary care facilities but will also reduce the out of pocket expenses significantly, the official said.

The COVID pandemic has highlighted the need for critical care facilities, especially at the level of the districts. To augment the capacity of the district for assured treatment and management of patients with infectious diseases or critical illnesses by creating critical care hospital blocks or wings at district hospitals and medical colleges, according to the official.

He said the current architecture of the public hospitals is not equipped fully to handle the dual burden of meeting critical care needs and maintaining essential services as was seen during the two waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. | More on P6

Inaugurates India's Longest Cable-Stayed Bridge

Contrasts His Governance With "One-Family Rule"

Press Trust Of India

Dwarka: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday attacked the opposition Congress, saying its entire strength was used to ensure the progress of just one family.

All kinds of scams used to take place under the Congress regime, Modi said, adding that his government stopped all those things in the last 10 years.

The Congress lacked the will and intention to provide amenities to people, he said.

The PM was speaking after inaugurating and laying the foundation stones for various projects in Dwarka, including India's longest cable-stayed bridge between Okha and Beyt Dwarka here in Gujarat.

"Those who ruled the country for a long time did not have the will power, intention



and dedication to provide amenities to the common people," Modi said.

"The entire strength of the Congress has been used to take one family forward. If everything was to be done only for one family then how would one remember | More on P6

Inaugurates 5 New AIIMS

Development was taking place under his government at a rate many times faster than what happened in the past six to seven decades, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday, and emphasised that his guarantee begins from where hope ends from others. He was speaking after inaugurating All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Rajkot in Gujarat, Bathinda in Punjab, Raebareilly in Uttar Pradesh, Kalyani in West Bengal and | More on P6

No 'Mann ki Baat' For 3 Months: PM

Says Model Code Of Conduct Likely From March

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that his monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' broadcast will not be aired for the next three months in line with political ethics in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

In the 110th episode of the programme, he asked first-time voters to poll in record numbers in the elections and said their maiden vote should be cast for the country.

With the general elections expected in April-May, he said there is a possibility that the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) will be enforced in March like it was done in 2019, a reference to the expected announcement of the election schedule sometime next month.

The MCC guidelines of the Election Commission asks governments to not use official events or public-funded platforms for something that may be seen to give the ruling party publicity or political advantage.

The prime minister said it is a big success of the programme that it has been kept away even from the | More on P6

Modi Performs Underwater Puja

Says 'Devotion Over Courage'

Press Trust Of India

Dwarka: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday went scuba diving off the Panchkui beach coast in Gujarat and performed prayers as he witnessed the ancient Dwarka city of Lord Krishna, which is submerged in the waters. To pray there was a "very divine experience," he said. Wearing a white diving helmet and ochre robes, Modi sat cross-legged on the sea bed, folded his hands in prayers while being helped by the Navy divers and waved peacock feathers before offering them to Lord Krishna.

"More than courage, it was faith," he said after coming out of the waters.

Scuba diving is conducted off the coast of | More on P6

LG Greets People On Shab-e-Baraat

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha extended his greetings to people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Baraat.

In a message, the Lt Governor said: "On this sacred occasion, I convey my greetings and best wishes to the people. May the auspicious night foster peace and harmony and inspire each one of us to follow the path of love and compassion".

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE OF THE PUBLIC HOSPITALS is not equipped fully to handle the dual burden of meeting critical care needs and maintaining essential services."

Unstoppable Freight! Train Runs From J&K To Punjab Without Driver

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: A diesel locomotive-hauled freight train travelled more than 70 kilometres from Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua to a village in Punjab's Hoshiarpur district without its drivers on Sunday, officials said.

No casualty or damage to property has been reported, they said and added that an inquiry has been ordered into the incident that took place between 7.25 am and 9 am.

The 53-wagon train loaded with chip stones was on its way to Punjab from Jammu, the officials said.

The train had stopped at the Kathua railway station in Jammu for a driver change and it seems that it began to roll down a slope gradient track on the Jammu-Jalandhar section, a spokesperson of the Northern Railway said, citing preliminary information.

Both drivers -- loco pilot and assistant loco pilot -- were not on board the freight train, the officials said.

The train gained speed along



the way, finally coming to a stop on a steep gradient near Unchi Bassi railway station in Punjab, they said.

Divisional Traffic Manager, Jammu, Prateek Srivastava told PTI that "an inquiry has been initiated to know the exact cause of the incident. Prima facie, it seems that the train started rolling down the slope gradient towards Punjab without the driver and his assistant".

He said the train came to a halt near Unchi Bassi due to steep gradient, after covering a distance of more than 70 km.

The officials said that the train was successfully | More on P6



WINTER WONDERLAND: Gulmarg comes to life under the night lights, casting a warm glow on its snow-covered landscape. KO Photo Abid Bhat.

LeT Module Busted In Kulgam, 4 Arrested

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: A Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror module was busted on Sunday in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district with the arrest of four militant associates, police said.

Security forces arrested four terrorist associates and recovered arms and ammunition from their possession in the south Kashmir district, a police spokesman said.

The arrests were made in connection with case FIR no. 14/2024 registered under various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The spokesman identified the arrested as Zahoor Ahmad Pandit, Basir Hussain Pandit, Imtiyaz Gull, and Gulzar Ahmad Khar, all residents of Wanpora.

A pistol, two magazines, 20 pistol rounds, four UBGs, and 24 INSAS rounds were recovered from their possession, the spokesman said.

Further investigation is going on as more arrests and | More on P6

275 Custodial Rape Cases Filed Between 2017-22: NCRB

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: More than 270 cases of rape in custody were registered from 2017 till 2022, according to NCRB data, with women rights activists attributing such instances to a lack of sensitisation and accountability within law enforcement systems.

The offenders include police personnel, public servants, members of the armed forces, and staff of jails, remand homes, places of custody, and hospitals, according to the data of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

The data highlights that there has been a gradual decrease in such cases over the years. In 2022, 24 cases were registered, down from 26 in 2021, 29 in 2020, 47 in 2019, 60 in 2018 and 89 in 2017.

Cases of custodial rape are registered under Indian Penal Code section 376 (2). It pertains to the offense of rape committed by a police officer, jailer, or any other



person who has the lawful custody of a woman. This section specifically deals with cases where the perpetrator takes advantage of their position of authority or custody to commit the crime of rape against a woman.

Of the 275 cases of custodial rape registered since 2017, Uttar Pradesh accounts for the highest number of cases at 92, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 43 cases.

"Custodial settings provide unique opportunities for | More on P6

Escape to Paradise

Are you ready for an unforgettable journey through the mesmerizing landscapes of Kashmir?

GULMARG

PAHALGAM

SONAMARG

5 DAYS AND 4 NIGHTS
IN THE HEART OF KASHMIR @ **5999**

EXCLUSIVE OFFER

- Airport pick-up and drop-off for your convenience.
- Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonamarg & Local Sightseeing
- Duration: 5 days and 4 nights

GROUP SIZE

MINIMUM 6 MEMBERS

Contact us today to reserve your spot and embark on the adventure of a lifetime.

HOTEL OCEAN

7006752598, 9419069770
WWW.HOTELOCEANSR.COM

IS the culture of book reading dying or flourishing in Kashmir?; “Fading Reading Culture”; “Book Reading Habit on Decline among Youth”; “Dwindling book-reading culture affecting Kashmir’s young generation”; “Decline in Reading Culture”; “The changing habits of reading”; “Reading habits face challenge in internet age”; “Importance of Reading books”; “Books transport us to new worlds”; “Only way to Progress is to Read”; “Attracting youngest to reading culture”; “promotes book reading culture by encouraging establishment of domestic libraries”. These are some of the headings—either of the opinion pieces or write-ups, editorials or news items, that were published in our local daily newspapers, mostly in the last few months (and few in the last year too). However, when we tried to peep into it a bit deeper, we found that last year too, there were few write-ups and news items which highlight the same issue.

In fact, some studies have been published in journals as well on this issue; two such examples (published in 2010 and 2019) are: “Reading Habits among College Students of Kashmir across Genders” (by S. M. Shafi and Fayaz Ahmad Loan, both from University of Kashmir) published in Trends in Information Management/ TRIM (6, 2, July-Dec 2010, pp. 92-103) and “Reading Habits of College Students of Jammu & Kashmir: A Case Study of District Anantnag” (by Haamid Amin Mir, Ashfaq Ahmad Rather and Mohammad Rayees Bhat) in Library Philosophy and Practice (2019, pp. 1-12). Prof. Shafi and Dr Loan, in their study, concluded that gender is “the principal factor affecting reading habits of students as reading tastes and preferences between genders differ quite drastically” (p.101). Mir et. al., (who are working as Librarians in the J&K Education Department) in their study focused on the students of four (4) colleges of South Kashmir’s Anantnag district with the objectives to ascertain and assess their “reading habits” and (most importantly) “the role of parents, teachers and librarians in promoting the reading habits”. Their findings reveal that the “students mostly read books and other materials with an intellect of resolution and with explicit objectives” and they are mostly “assisted and motivated by their parents in promoting their reading habits”.

All these titles, whether opinion pieces, news items or research studies, have one theme in common: ‘Book Reading Culture in Kashmir’. While some question on this narrative, others are of the opinion that the general trend is that book reading culture has declined in recent years and the major reasons put forward by most of them are the use of smartphones, social media platforms and handles by youth—for they spend most of their time either on using social media (like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc.) and (playing) online games.

Reading, no doubt, is a wonderful habit; it is a kind of therapy, which not only works wonders but acts as a relaxing balm to frenzied minds and distressed nerves as well. Reading is considered one of the pleasant practices and spending time with books, or making friendship with books is considered as one of the most loyal camaraderie for books never betray the reader; they stay with him in ups and downs, in delight and distress, in company and solitude. Garrison Keillor has rightly said that a “book is a gift you can open again and again”.

Reading, no doubt, increases knowledge; improves language; helps us to remain updated; increases our creative and critical thinking; imagination; clear perspective on various topics and issues; communicating one’s ideas in different ways; and in understanding the actual picture.

However, we are living in an era, which is described either as the age of internet, age of smartphones or an era of technology and electronic gadgets (like i-pads, kindle, etc.). That is to say, modern technology and the revolution it brought have impacted the functional activities of all walks of life, forcing some drastic lifestyle changes in humans everywhere in the world” (Haroon Reshi, “Is the culture of book reading dying or flourishing in Kashmir?” Kashmir Images, 13th December 2021). The ‘technological revolution’, and the changes that the world went through in the last few years (including the COVID-19 global pandemic), have reinforced many of these changes; and Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is no exception to these changes and challenges. All these changes have transformed our world significantly; and one such significant change is the use of internet-driven devices (especially smartphones and digital media) which has had an impact on the (style of) book reading culture in Kashmir.

It is generally observed that people now prefer to watch visuals and read electronic mode of content than (physical) book reading. “Earlier, the book lovers would be enthused to hold a book in hand, shuffle through its pages and smell the paper and ink. Now it is a small device you scroll, no smell of ink or paper, just lifeless words” (Reshi, 2021).

The fact is that the ‘age of internet’ and the ‘era of smartphones’ as well as ‘excessive use of social media platforms/ handles’ have impacted (significantly) the book reading culture. How much helpful or harmful has this impact been? What changes has the use of the internet/ smartphones brought (especially in book reading culture)? Has book reading culture faded or flourished with the use of the internet and smartphones?

In this context, we contacted and communicated with different stakeholders—academicians, officers, avid/ voracious readers, renowned writers/ columnists, budding writers, (school and college) students, booksellers, etc. to know their opinion and viewpoint on these questions (especially on this question: Is the Book Reading Culture in Kashmir Declining in the Age of the Internet?). Interestingly, there are varied opinions on the question/ issue at hand. Some say it’s good and has helped in making accessible the books which were unavailable or inaccessible; others believe that technology has no doubt brought changes, but it has not reduced the number of avid and voracious readers in our society. While others are of the opinion that the internet and smartphones have increased the number of readers, still others offer different opinions.

Kashmir’s Reading Culture

Fading, Flourishing or Fluctuating?

Dr Tauseef Ahmad Parry and Rehana Imtiyaz Wani



“The avid readers, in the opinion of many, are always present in every society; but are found in the minority. This “Reading Section”, despite different odds, keeps intact with the books, but history is witness to the fact that “Reading as an intellectual exercise ... can never be a mass activity.”

Below are provided all these types of opinions and are arranged thematically.

VIEWPOINT 1: Avid Readers (Reading Section) in a society are always there, but in minority. Internet and Technology has affected them but their number has not declined

The avid readers, in the opinion of many, are always present in every society; but are found in the minority. This “Reading Section”, despite different odds, keeps intact with the books, but history is witness to the fact that “Reading as an intellectual exercise ... can never be a mass activity.”

Dr Muhammad Maroof Shah (scholar, author and a prominent columnist) refutes the argument that internet has brought book reading culture to a standstill and is of the opinion that “there was no great book reading culture (in Kashmir) before internet that could decline. Only insignificant percentages (among avid readers) have shifted to e-books or soft copies (PDFs) of books. The rest keep their attachment to books intact.” For him, there has been a “marked shift” in mode and style of reading, for “e-books (have) replace(d) conventional books and as such (there is) decline in the conventional mode of reading but not (in overall) reading culture” in our society.

Prof. Javaid Hassain (Assistant Professor of Urdu at GDC Sogam) also shared a similar viewpoint on this question.

For Dr Altaf Hussain Yatoo (Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and a regular bilingual columnist), “reading culture” in Kashmir has not declined but has been affected because he believes that the “‘Reading Section’ of our society, amid all odds and pressures, is always on book hunt! However, that section which is over-possessed in phubbing was never serious in reading. The case of students, in my opinion, has not changed, because students, by and large, have always been note gatherers which now they find in the digital form. It is a positive sign that the number of booksellers, publishers and writers has shown no decline at all.”

Similarly, Mushtaq Ul Haq Ahmad Sikander (a Srinagar-based Writer-Activist and Researcher) believes that the general trend found in Kashmir is that reading as an intellect activity has remained confined to a minority only and the use of social media handles has reduced this number further though he appreciates the use of electronic gadgets for reading purpose. “Reading culture in Kashmir like other parts of the world”, for him, “is declining”. Earlier too, only a few literate people were avid readers”. For him, it is an “irony” that even “teachers and academics (in our society) have very poor reading habits” and “with the advent of social media, the attention span of people has gone down. The constant habit of remaining connected 24x7 has adversely impacted the reading habit.” However,

“many readers are now opting for digital, kindle, e-books and audio-books which gives the perception about the declining culture of manual hard copy book reading”, he argues. “Reading as an intellectual exercise”, he asserts, “will continue among the minority, as history is a witness and will continue like that, and it can never be a mass activity.”

“Reading, no doubt, increases knowledge; improves language; helps us to remain updated; increases our creative and critical thinking; imagination; clear perspective on various topics and issues; communicating one’s ideas in different ways; and in understanding the actual picture.”

VIEWPOINT 2: Internet and Smartphones have affected the readership Qualities especially among youngsters

Syed Mustafa Ahmad (a columnist from Hajibagh, Budgam), who has himself published a few write-ups on the theme of “Decline in Book Reading Culture”, is of the opinion that the internet has affected the readers and readership qualities in the valley, especially among the young generation. Sharing his views, he said: “The book reading culture in Kashmir in the age of the internet has almost vanished. There are hardly any people who read books. The new generation has lost touch with the book reading culture—thanks to the omnipresence of the internet (especially social media)”. Book lovers are very rare these days and owing to excessive use of smartphones and social media sites/ handles, “book reading culture in Kashmir is on the verge or brink of extinction.”

Peer Jafar Akbar (a BA 6th semester student from our college, GDC Sogam), an avid reader, shares a similar viewpoint. For him, from the last decade, “technology boom has hit the reading habit in the younger generation. Students in this age of the internet prefer to spend time on mobile phones rather than reading some productive book”. For him, “Kashmir valley, which was the hub of intellectualism once, is gradually losing its charm (of reading culture and readership qualities)”. Few other students, being budding writers as well, also shared a similar viewpoint. All of them see excessive use as well as misuse (especially by spending more time on social media sites/ handles) as the main cause of the fading of book reading culture. “Book reading is of utmost importance”, says Shahid Shafi Shah (pursuing BSc from GDC Sogam and a budding writer) for they help “not only to improve the writing skills but also enable us to build a great vision”. But “haplessly the habit of book reading had been diminished in Kashmir amid various causes. The root cause is the internet because nowadays, the youth of Kashmir are indulged in myriad execrable activities like (excessive use of) social media, drugs and other awful things which later have havoc ramifications”. Another student from our college, Saqib Sarwar (an avid reader and a budding and passionate writer) also agrees with our question saying that the activity of “book reading is being ignored with the passage of time, because of quick access to the information through the internet”. Fayaz Ahmad (BA 6th semester student and a writer) also shares a similar opinion on the harmful effects of reading culture; for him, “it’s right to say that the internet (has) snatched book reading culture from us. Nowadays, every literate youth is busy with using social media and hardly anyone finds time for reading books”, and thus one finds the “reading culture on a decline”. Shayista Shaban (BSc 6th semester at GDC Sogam), shared similar opinions. She blames the internet for the cause of decline in book reading culture, especially in the younger generation. For her, “internet has affected badly the book reading culture in Kashmir”, for everyone in his/ her “day-to-day life, depends wholly and solely on the internet”. Even for finding quick answers to their minor problems or in clarifying their basic concepts, students hardly “consult any book or discuss (with their colleagues or teachers). They consult the internet for solving their problems and in getting quick answers for their questions”. She further states that, “no doubt using the internet provides us basic information on all topics but it doesn’t increase our mental ability and intellectual power.”

It is interesting to add here that school students also view the use of the internet as the main cause of decline in book reading culture in Kashmir. Saniya Zehra Dar (a class 9th student at the Army Goodwill School, Hanjlik, Shariefabad, Budgam and a writer who has published a number of write-ups) also shared a similar opinion. For her, it’s true that “the book reading culture in Kashmir is on decline in the age of the internet. Being a student, I have witnessed there is no inclination among the students towards reading books. The main topic of discussion among the students is social media. There is hardly any student who talks about books”. For her, “the internet has brought the book reading culture to its knees and reviving it needs a collective effort and some serious thinking.” Nighat Wani (a teacher from North Kashmir’s Kupwara) too agrees with this viewpoint and considers use of internet, or spending extra time on screen, as a matter of serious concern: “Obviously book reading culture is declining in Kashmir; only a handful of book readers are present in the whole valley, that too of old generations. Our younger generation is least interested in reading books, magazines, etc. because they have become attracted to screens. It is a major concern and needs to be addressed”. However, another school teacher (wishing anonymity), while sharing her viewpoint on the basis of her experiences and observations in the school, says that the diminishing book reading culture in Kashmir is because of two major reasons: (1) “books are expensive and school libraries have no updated stock of books”; and “students are not encouraged to spend their leisure time in the library”, and thus it has “become very easy and cheap to find desired content on digital platforms.”

Bilal Ahmad Sofi (a teacher and writer from Khushipora, HMT, Srinagar with a Master’s in English Literature) also shares similar opinion and agrees with the question (posed) and is of the opinion that a reader of (physical) books is disregarded and someone reading on a gadget is considered to be a ‘modern’. For him, “Teachers, as well as students, are not interested in reading books. The person who reads books now is being looked down upon, though exceptions are there. In the present times, book reading culture is (considered) a symbol of the traditional society. Modern age is all about PDFs and e-learning. So, reading books is an affront to society. In short, it is on decline”.

Dr Tauseef Ahmad Parry is Assistant Professor, Islamic Studies (and Convener, Debates & Seminar Committee), Govt. Degree College Sogam, (Kupwara). Feedback at tauseef.parry21@gmail.com

Rehana Imtiyaz Wani is a BA 6th Semester Student at GDC Sogam. Feedback at rehanaimtiyazwani@gmail.com

4 Hadiths on the Importance of Sha'ban and 12 Ways to Act on Them

AMALIAH TEAM

What is Sha'ban?

Sha'ban is the eighth month of the Islamic Lunar Calendar, or Hijri Calendar, falling in between Rajab and Ramadan. Sha'ban is translated from Arabic to mean the "month of separation". It is also referred to in several sayings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the neglected month as people tend to overlook its importance.

What is the significance of the month of Sha'ban?

The importance of the month of Sha'ban has been strongly emphasized in the Sunnah as a warm-up to Ramadan, a time to prepare ourselves – mind, body and soul. While Ramadan is the most important time of the entire year, both a test of endurance and a mercy from Allah, The Messenger ﷺ stressed on giving Sha'ban its due as well. This is a clear lesson in mindfulness and organisation, a reminder to get into the headspace for Ramadan a whole month before it arrives.

The four hadith quoted below include many practical, proven ways to observe Sha'ban:

Hadith 1 – On offering night prayers and making dua in the month of Sha'ban:

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "When it is the night of the middle of Sha'ban, spend its night in prayer and observe a fast on that day. For Allah descends at sunset on that night to the lowest heaven and says: 'Is there no one who will ask Me for forgiveness, that I may forgive him? Is there no one who will ask Me for provision so that I may provide for him? Is there no one who is afflicted by trouble, that I may relieve him?' And so on, until dawn comes." – Sunan Ibn Majah

1) Seeking forgiveness from Allah

What better time to double down on seeking forgiveness from Allah than a month before the most spiritual time of the year? As we increase our taubah (repentance), we purify our hearts and keep our tongues moist with remembrance. Read this post on 13 ways to seek



forgiveness.

The Messenger ﷺ taught us the following dua:

Allahumma innaka 'Afiwwun Tuhibbul 'Afwa Fa'fu 'Annii.

"O Allah, you are the Forgiver, You love to forgive, so forgive me."

2) Making dua for provision and relief

Acknowledging Allah as The Provider and The Most Merciful, we turn to him to ask for an increase in our livelihood and relief from our troubles. The below dua includes all of this and more:

Allaahumma ighfirlee, warhamnee, wahdinee, wa 'Aafinee, warzuqnee

"O, Allah! Forgive me, show mercy to me, guide me, grant me health, and grant me provision." (Sahih Muslim)

3) Waking for Tahajjud

Sha'ban is an excellent time to get into the habit of waking up during the last third of the night to offer nafl prayers. Nothing matches the tranquillity of Tahajjud and the closeness to Allah we feel while the rest of the world sleeps.

4) Starting a dua list

We all have our Ramadan dua lists from previous years, whether written down or not. This is an excellent time to bring them out and update them to reflect our current situations. Journaling or mind mapping is a great way to organize and plan duas.

Hadith 2 – On the importance of fasting in Sha'ban:

Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "The Messenger ﷺ used to fast until we thought he would never break his fast, and not fast until we thought he would never fast. I never saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ fasting for an

entire month except in Ramadan, and I never saw him fast more than he did in Sha'ban." – Sahih al-Bukhari

5) Making up missed fasts

The Messenger ﷺ is reported to have observed more voluntary fasts in the month of Sha'ban than any other month. So while it may seem as though we have procrastinated making up our missed fasts, this is a great time to catch up!

It was narrated that Aishah (RA) said: "One of us (women) would miss some fasts in Ramadan and she would not be able to make it up until Shaban began..." – Sunan an-Nasa'i

6) Fasting the white days

While there are many differences in opinion on the significance of the 15th of Sha'ban in particular, fasting on the white days – the 13th, 14th and 15th of each month

has special significance regardless, due to the immense reward in it.

The Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said: "If you fast three days of the month, then fast the 13th, 14th and 15th." – Tirmidhi

And

"Fast for three days a month, for the reward of a good deed is multiplied by ten, and so the fasting of three days a month equals the fasting of a year." – Sahih al-Bukhari

Hadith 3 – Evidence that our deeds are lifted up to Allah in Sha'ban:

Usamah ibn Zayd (may Allah be pleased with them both) said: "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I do not see you fasting in any other month as you fast in Sha'ban.' He ﷺ said, 'That is a month to which people do not pay attention, between Rajab and Ramadan, and it is a month in which deeds are lifted up to the Lord of the Worlds. I like for my deeds to be lifted up when I am fasting.'" – Sunan an-Nasa'i

7) Reciting and memorizing Quran

Yaqeen Institute has produced a detailed infographic on increasing good deeds in this month "to which people do not pay attention," a month which is often overlooked. Other ways to make the most of Sha'ban, apart from prayer and fasting, include taking this time to renew our relationship with the Quran – by planning our recitation, revising what we have memorized and looking into translations and tafsir.

8) Giving sadaqah (charity)

There are so many different types of sadaqah, other than giving from what Allah has blessed us with financially. Think about how a mere smile is a form of charity! Other simple ways to do this could be to include others in our duas, to spread knowledge and share our time.

9) Offering voluntary prayers

We've covered Tahajjud, now it's time to reflect on voluntary prayers that can be offered during the day, including extra sunnahs, and nawafil such as the Doha prayer:

Anas ibn Malik narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever prays the dawn prayer in congregation and then continues to make dhikr until sun has fully risen and then prays two rakahs, he will gain rewards of a full Hajj and Umrah combined." – Tirmidhi

10) Increasing dhikr (remembrance of Allah)

This is a great time to practice mindfulness by remembering Allah as we go about our days and renewing our intentions no matter what we're doing. Have a look at Productive Muslim's infographic on practical things to do in Sha'ban for a visual checklist.

Hadith 4 – Sha'ban is a reminder to purify our hearts:

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "Allah Almighty looks upon all those created by Him in the middle Night of Sha'ban and forgives all those created by Him, except the one who associates partners with Him or the one who has malice in his heart (against a Muslim)." – Sunan Ibn Majah

11) Forgiving others

What a powerful hadith! Sha'ban is an annual reminder to look into our hearts and remove any bitterness we may be holding onto. Reflect, have those difficult conversations (if possible) and forgive. Omar Suleiman has an extremely beneficial (and pretty short) talk on this hadith that is worth a listen.

12) Seeking forgiveness from others

The flip side of this is to seek forgiveness for any hurt we may have caused ourselves while keeping in mind the proper etiquette of seeking forgiveness and committing to changing ourselves for the future.

Allahumma barik lana fi Rajab wa Sha'ban wa ballighna Ramadan.

"O Allah, bless us in Rajab and Sha'ban, and let us reach Ramadan."

May Allah allow us to reap the benefits of Sha'ban. Ameen.

The article was originally published by Amaliah

Obituary

Shabib Rizvi – A Revered Scholar & Elegist

Mohammed Saleem

Sayyid Mohammed Shabib Rizvi, fondly known as Shabib Sahib, visited Kashmir around 1961, married and settled here for good. He spent his early days at Khanqah e Sokhta with late Moulana Iftikhar Hussain Ansari, being his classmate at Sultanul Madaris Lucknow, and finally shifted to Kathidarwaza. Besides being an effective Unani doctor, he was a learned Islamic scholar. Hespered in the J&K State

Health Department, ISM, for 30 years and retired as Asstt. Director. Poetry, marsiya nigari, maada-estareekh (set of words in which abjad numbers associated with each letter are added to get a certain year) and calligraphy remained his gems. Had mastery over Urdu, Persian and Arabic languages, though chose to write in Urdu and Persian. He started poetry at the age of 11 years. His father and elder brother have been the poets. His contemporaries and admirers admit that Shabib Sahib's poetry possess magical metre, basic rhythmic structure of verse. His nasr, rubayaat, ghazals, qasidas, nouhas and even letters reflect beauty of articulation and persianised Urdu form which mesmerise the readers – Urdu and Persian alike.

Shabib Sahib remained involved with DDK & Radio Kashmir for about 50 years and gave nearly 400 programs on Radio Kashmir over Sehat e Urdu Zuban and oftenly participated in Mushairas even of national level held once at Tourist Reception Centre. These institutions were his second home, all had reverence for this man of letters from gameten to directors. His contemporaries too loved his scholarship, simplicity and manners. Some of his notable fellow poets and scholars include: Farooq Nazki, Mohammad Amin Indrabi, Mohammed Yousuf Teng, Shafaq Sopori, Mohammed Zaman Azurda, Syed Muhammed Reza, Rukhsana Jabeen, Akbar Jaipuri, Margoob Ban-



hali, Akbar Ali Ansari (Shahbaz Premi), Showkat Ansari, Zamir Ansari, Nishat Kishtwari etc. Among the seniors, Ali Sardar Jafri, K.K.Nayyar (former Director Radio Kashmir), Kamal Ahmed Siddiqui, Firakh Gorakhpuri, Sagar Nizami, Aal e Ahmed Saroor, Mir Ghulam Rasool Nazki, Tanha Ansari, Rasa Javedani, Ghulam Rasool Kamgaar etc.

During my youth like others, I would oftenly participate in the Muharram procession daera (orbicular grouping) of Bota Rajas of Kathidarwaza as elegy lyrics and message of Karbala in their Nouhas would invite attention and melodious voice of Raja Jahangir and others would fill the air with notes of devoutness and valour of the martyrs. Later I came to know about the poet behind it - Shabib Sahib! He penned the pain and chivalry of the martyrs of Karbala and their accomplices in a most symbolic manner and portrayed the canvass of tragedies, exemplary patience, willingness, sacrifice of Aale Abba, alyhissalam, in a dignified manner.

First time I met Shabib Sahib in 1988 perhaps in Radio Kashmir. A humble and a noble soul with captivating voice and a bit of humour. Ever since we met frequently. In our journey of affinity, we met another friend, late Prof. Syed Mohammed

Reza, an able Urdu scholar and articulate Kashmiri Marsiya Nigar. We were fortunate to work together around 1999 to 2003 regarding Moharram programs on DDK, Radio Kashmir & local cable networks – a novice venture then. Around 2000 AD Shabib Sahib headed the Imam Hussain (a.s.) Chair of Educational Trust Kashmir and I served its Secretary. Oftenly we would meet Di-

& Kashmiri Nouhas (recited decades back during the Muharram processions), discussion topics, speakers, graphics, fills etc. Challenge remained the vocalists / nouha khwans to recite around typical central tunes of the Nouhas. We involved the best vocalists and traditional nouha khwans, young & old. For Kashmiri Salam late Molvi Manzoor Ahmad of Pampore and for Arabic Salam Molvi

Iqbal Khomeini Hall with enormous men & material. Shabib Sahib was warmly active and keenly oversaw the process. Subsequently, on my request, he wrote brief events of Karbala based on authentic sources and named it "Mukhtasar Waqayat e Karbala". I got his voice recorded. Subsequently, in a Hussaini Conference organised by Mohibbane Ahlulbayt at SKICC Srinagar in No-

magazines like Mahnam e Islah, Shab o Roz, Hadees etc. A newspaper street vendor named Showkat on footpath side opposite Tyndale Biscoe School would specially get him copies of Hadees magazine for its rare readership. Shabib Sahib would easily convert Islamic calendar dates into Gregorian and vice versa; before onset of internet and google it was an art. He had excellent knowledge of geometrical sequence of numbers called abjad.

The published works of Shabib Sahib include: Four Elegy Compilations (Rasae e Majmooye, 1961), Aatash e Chinar, selection of Nazms & Ghazals (1969), Harf e Faroozan on Hamd, Naat & Manqabat (2000), Bachoon ke Mushairey (2010), Laho Laho Ghazal, selection of Ghazals (2012), Mouj e Furaat, Compilation of Nouhas (2016), Abshaar e Noor, Urdu translation of Kalam e Shaikhul Alam (2017) published by J&K Cultural Academy, Nagma'e Kohsaar, Nazms about Kashmir (2021) - 150 nazms by him on Kashmir in Urdu being highest. And wrote more than 65,000 couplets and nearly 1,000 maada'e tareekh. He contributed immensely to Urdu literature in Kashmir and remained closely associated with J&K Cultural Academy, Door Darshan and Radio Kashmir. During my last posting he was honoured by the Cultural Academy in a special programme "Meet the Urdu Poet & Scholar" in presence of eminent scholars. I was fortunate to be present there as Government Secretary.

Best tribute to Shabib Sahib would be to bring forth his unpublished writings to the charm of readers and his eldest son Sayyid Shamim Rizvi seems able to do it.

To conclude in his words:
Faasla ta ba sarre hadey nazar kitna hai
Kis se poochein ke abhi aur safar kitna hai

Mohammed Saleem is the Former Commissioner/Secretary to J&K Government Culture Department



A rare photo of Kashmir's literati at a symposium

rector DDK and Radio Kashmir on Muharram program formats and speakers. Two TV programs were conceived and produced by us in the process – Yaadein Shahidoun Ki (6 episodes) and Shyam Hoyee Sahra Sahra (2 episodes), both were repeatedly telecast on DDK & local cable networks. We shortlisted Urdu

Nasir Ali Nasri of Leh. Late Akhtar Rasool did graphics part. Shabib Sahib, late Syed Yaqoob Dilkash and I tirelessly attended the Audio Lab of NA Qazi & Waheed Jeelani at Zero Bridge for continuous audio recordings during chilling cold winters. Then followed hectic professional videography at Imambara Zadibal &

November 2012 we chose to show the Persian Musaddas of Sheikh Saidi on the Twelve Imams, a.s., with Urdu translation. Shabib Sahib was kind enough to recite the Persian Musaddas in an audio lab for graphic portrayal which was immensely liked by the audience. Shabib Sahib would oftenly read

PM Modi To Inaugurate 2,000 Rail Infra Projects Worth 41,000 Cr

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone, inaugurate and dedicate to the Nation around 2000 railway infrastructure projects worth more than Rs. 41,000 crores on 26th February at 12:30 PM via video conferencing.

Prime Minister has often emphasised the importance of providing world class amenities at railway stations. In a major step in this endeavour, Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for redevelopment of 553 railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. These stations, spread across 27 States and Union Territories, will be redeveloped at a cost of over Rs. 19,000 crores. These stations will act as 'City Centres' integrating both sides of the city. They will have modern passenger amenities like roof plaza, beautiful landscaping, inter modal connectivity, improved modern facade, kids play area, food courts, etc. They will be redeveloped as environment friendly and also Divyang friendly. The design of these station buildings will be inspired by local culture, heritage and architecture.

Further, Prime Minister will inaugurate Gomti Nagar



station in Uttar Pradesh which has been redeveloped at a total cost of around Rs 385 crores. To cater to the increased future passenger footfall, this station has segregated arrival and departure facilities. It integrates both sides of the city. This centrally air-conditioned station has modern passenger amenities like Air Concourse, congestion free circulation, food courts and ample parking space in upper and lower basement.

Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone, inaugurate and dedicate to the nation 1500 Road Over Bridges and Underpasses. These Road Over Bridges and Underpasses spread across 24 States and Union Territories, the total cost of these projects is around Rs. 21,520 crores. These projects will reduce congestion, enhance safety and connectivity, improve capacity, and efficiency of rail travel.

Drones, Missiles, Radars, Fighter jets: Indian Armed Forces To Get Nearly 1 lakh Cr Infusion For Game-Changer Tech

KO WEB DESK

New Delhi: In the past week, the Cabinet Committee on Security approved several major defence deals, collectively worth over Rs 92,000 crore, to bolster the combat capabilities of the armed forces. These investments are part of India's broader strategy to enhance its defence capabilities and promote self-reliance in defence manufacturing. The recent approvals build upon India's existing defence infrastructure and partnerships, particularly in the realm of missile technology.

IAF's Sukhoi fighter jet upgrades

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), supported by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has secured approval from the defence ministry for a major upgrade of the Su-30MKI fighter jet fleet. This Rs 60,000 crore project aims to bolster the aircraft's capabilities through the integration of new radars, mission control systems, electronic warfare capabilities, and weapon systems.

This project reflects India's commitment to self-reliance in defence manufacturing, as indigenous systems will replace several Russian-origin components. Key upgrades include the installation of a new indigenous radar system, enhancing target detection and engagement capabilities. Additionally, the

aircraft will be equipped with a new electronic warfare system to counter incoming threats and disrupt enemy communication.

Killer Drones and Supersonic Missiles

One of the most significant contracts approved is for the acquisition of over 220 extended-range BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles. These missiles, with a strike range of 450 km, will be deployed on frontline warships of the Indian Navy. This deal, valued at approximately Rs 19,500 crore, marks the largest-ever contract for the BrahMos missiles.

According to top government sources, the contract between BrahMos Aerospace and the ministry of defence is expected to be signed in the first week of March. "The BrahMos is the main weapon for anti-ship and attack operations for the Indian navy warships which have been regularly firing the weapon system," they noted.

BrahMos Missile Contract

The contract for over 220 extended-range BrahMos missiles, with a strike range of 450 km, was approved to arm frontline warships of the Navy.

The contract, to be inked in early March, is the first consolidated order for the extended-range BrahMos missiles and will be delivered over five to six years.

Advanced Engines for Fighter

Jets

In addition to the BrahMos deal, the Indian government also greenlit a project for the manufacture of new advanced engines for the existing fleet of MiG-29 fighters in the Indian Air Force (IAF). The engines, to be produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in collaboration with Russia, will cost about Rs 5,300 crore.

High-Powered Radars and Air Defence Guns

Further enhancing India's defence capabilities, the government approved two other projects for the acquisition of high-powered radars and new versions of the L-70 air defence guns. Larsen and Toubro (L&T) will manufacture these systems with some foreign technology, with each project valued at around Rs 6,000 crore.

The Indian Air Force will procure new radars to replace and augment the existing chain of radars along both borders. This move aims to strengthen India's radar coverage in strategic areas. The Cabinet Committee has also approved the ambitious Made in India Close-in Weapon System project, valued at around Rs 7,000 crore. This system, based on a derivative of air defence guns, will provide enhanced protection to vital assets and points against potential attacks by drones and aircraft.

Other Defence Deals

Hindustan Aeronautics will manufacture new advanced engines for existing MiG-29 fighters in IAF fleet, in collaboration with Russia, for about Rs 5,300 crore.

L&T will manufacture high-powered radars and new versions of the L-70 air defence guns, each deal valued at almost Rs 5,000 crore.

Strengthening National Security and Indigenous Manufacturing

These investments highlight India's commitment to bolstering its defence capabilities and promoting indigenous manufacturing. The BrahMos missiles, jointly manufactured with Russia in India, have already become a key precision-strike weapon for the armed forces, with contracts worth over Rs 38,000 crore. The recent approvals further solidify India's position as a key player in the global defence market and underscore the country's drive towards self-reliance in defence production.

Future Outlook

India's defence sector is witnessing a paradigm shift towards indigenization and self-reliance, with significant deals and projects being approved. The strategic move to enhance the Indian Navy's firepower with BrahMos missiles and the push for 'aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in defence manufacturing reflect India's

broader defence strategy. These developments not only aim to strengthen national security but also position India as a key player in the global defence export market.

Rs 3 lakh crore Annual Defence Production by 2028-29 India is set to achieve a milestone in its defence sector, with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announcing that the country's annual defence production is expected to reach Rs 3 lakh crore by 2028-29. Singh emphasized the Modi government's focus on "long-term gains" in all sectors, aiming to develop India into a developed nation by 2047. He highlighted the significant progress India has made in defence exports, which have increased from under Rs 1,000 crore to Rs 16,000 crore.

Budget Allocation and Strategic Acquisitions

The defence ministry has been allocated Rs 6.2 lakh crore in the 2024-25 budget, the highest among all ministries. Singh highlighted that capital acquisitions worth over Rs 4.3 lakh crore have been approved, reflecting the government's commitment to enhancing national security. He emphasized the importance of jointness among the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force, noting improved coordination to address challenges jointly.

Courtesy: The Economic Times

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

PM Boosts Healthcare

Many hospital buildings, especially in the districts, do not have provision for segregating a part of the building as an infectious disease treatment blocks, the official said.

Inaugurates India's

to build the country? Its (Congress) entire energy was focused on how to run the government for five years and how to hide scams," Modi said.

The Congress could make India's economy only the 11th largest because the party did not have the capacity to fulfil big dreams of the people of a vast nation, Modi said.

His government's commitment to put an end to all scams has resulted in the country's progress and the creation of grand infrastructure like the longest cable-stayed bridge connecting Beyt Okha and mainland Okha, the PM pointed out.

"Sudarshan Setu" boasts of a unique design, featuring a footpath adorned with verses from Srimad Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna on both sides.

On the 'Sudarshan Setu', the PM said he laid the foundation stone for this bridge six years ago and inaugurated it today.

"This is Modi's guarantee," he added.

When the economy was small, it did not have the capacity to fulfil huge dreams of a vast nation, he said, adding that whatever little budget was earmarked for infrastructure was looted by way of scams.

When the time came to improve telecom infrastructure, the Congress created the 2G scam and when it was time to strengthen sports infrastructure, the Congress created the Commonwealth scam, the PM said.

When it was the time to strengthen the defence infrastructure, the Congress indulged in the helicopter and submarine scam, he added.

"The Congress can only betray every need of the country. In 2014, when you all blessed me and sent me to Delhi, I had promised you all I will not let the country be looted. Scams worth several thousands of crores that used to happen during the Congress era have all been stopped," he asserted.

In the last 10 years, his government has made the country's economy the fifth largest in the world, and as a result such grand and divine constructions are taking place all over, which was creating "the new picture of new India", he said.

The sea bridge (Atal Setu) in Mumbai, the (railway) bridge on Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir, the under construction vertical lift bridge in Tamil Nadu and a river bridge in Assam are examples of such mega projects, he pointed out.

The PM said he was fortunate to get a chance to inaugurate the bridge, the foundation stone of which he had laid six years ago.

"The bridge will connect Beyt Dwarka island to Okha mainland and add to the beauty of the place. Whatever was dreamed of, and whose foundation stone was laid was fulfilled. This is the guarantee of Modi, a servant of the public," he asserted.

The 'Sudarshan Setu' is not just another bridge but an engineering marvel that will reduce dependency of tourists and pilgrims on ferry boats.

"Modern connectivity is a way to build a prosperous and strong nation," the PM reiterated.

As chief minister of Gujarat, he had placed the idea of such a bridge in front of the (Congress-ruled) Centre several times but the latter never paid attention to it, Modi said.

Asserting that several tourist and pilgrimage spots in Gujarat had been improved leading to these become favoured places for international tourists, he asked people to ensure cleanliness

of Dwarka for tourists.

Out of 85 lakh tourists who visited India, a fifth visited Gujarat.

"Till August last year, 15.5 lakh tourists visited Gujarat. The e-visa facility for international tourists has helped Gujarat, and created new opportunities of employment and self-employment," he said.

Inaugurates 5 New

Mangalagiri in Andhra Pradesh.

At the function held here, the PM also dedicated to the nation various development works costing Rs 48,000 crore, including more than 200 health care infrastructure projects costing Rs 11,500 crore in 23 states and Union Territories.

"Modi's guarantee begins from where hope ends from others," he asserted, adding that even the country was saying this looking at the pace of development.

"For 50 years after Independence, there was only one AIIMS in the country, and that too in Delhi. In the seven decades since Independence, only seven AIIMS were approved but even these were never completed," Modi said in a swipe at previous governments.

"But in just 10 days, seven new AIIMS were either inaugurated or their foundation stones laid. That's why I am saying that we are developing the country many times faster than what happened in the last six to seven decades and are dedicating it at the feet of the citizens," he said.

In the past, people from different states used to get tired seeking AIIMS in their areas from the Union government, whereas today modern hospitals and medical facilities like AIIMS are opening one after the other, he said.

Asserting that he had fulfilled his guarantee of setting up a large number of AIIMS, Modi said his government had approved 10 AIIMS in the last 10 years.

"I had given a guarantee of (setting up) AIIMS to UP's Raebareli. The royal family of Congress only indulged in politics in Raebareli, while the work was done by Modi," he said.

India managed to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic because of changes in the health care system brought about in the last 10 years, the PM said.

"Today in Rajkot we got a glimpse of how the health sector of the world's fifth largest economy should be and what will be the level of health facilities in developed India," he said.

Modi said his government had carried out unprecedented expansion in AIIMS and medical colleges as well as critical infrastructure network by opening more than one lakh 'Ayushman Arogya Mandirs' in villages, and taking the number of medical colleges to 706 from 308-309 a decade back.

The number of MBBS and medical PG seats have increased during this period to more than one lakh and 70,000, respectively, from 50,000 and 30,000, he informed.

The priority of his government was towards prevention of diseases by increasing the capacity to fight them, the PM said.

"We have focused on nutrition, Yoga, AYUSH and cleanliness so that diseases can be prevented," he said.

Two hospitals and research centres for Yoga and naturopathy have been inaugurated in Maharashtra and Haryana as part of such efforts, the PM said.

It is the constant endeavour of the Union government to ensure the poor and the middle class get quality medical treatment, he said.

The Ayushman Bharat scheme has helped the poor save Rs 1 lakh crore, while medicines at 80 per cent discount have helped the poor and the middle class save Rs 30,000 crore, the PM told the gathering.

The Ujjwala Yojana (to provide clean fuel

through LPG connections) has helped poor families save Rs 70,000 crore, he said.

Cheaper data has helped every mobile phone user save Rs 4,000 every month, and tax reforms have helped taxpayers save Rs 2.5 lakh crore, the PM said.

No 'Mann ki Baat'

shadow of the government during its 110 episodes and asserted that the broadcast has been dedicated to the country's collective strength and achievements.

"It is a programme of the people, for the people and by the people," Modi said.

"However, following political ethics the 'Mann ki Baat' will not be broadcast for the next three months during this period of the Lok Sabha elections," he said.

"When we meet the next time, it will be the 111th episode of the 'Mann ki Baat'," Modi added, noting the auspiciousness associated with the number. What can be better than this, he said.

The prime minister has frequently expressed confidence of retaining power in the elections. The programme was deferred before the 2019 general elections as well.

Modi also appealed to first-time voters to cast their votes in record numbers, asserting that the 18th Lok Sabha will be a symbol of their aspirations.

Citizens are eligible to vote after turning 18. The youth should not only be a part of political activities but also remain aware of debates and discussions during the period, Modi said.

"You should keep in mind that your first vote should be for the country," he said, urging influencers and other prominent personalities to motivate first-time voters.

The Election Commission, he said, has launched a campaign "Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye", urging first-time voters to use their franchise in maximum numbers.

The bigger the participation of the young voters in the electoral process, the more beneficial its consequences will be for the country, the prime minister said.

Days ahead of International Women's Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed 'nari shakti' and said it is touching new heights of progress in every field.

Modi said that International Women's Day on March 8 is an opportunity to salute the contribution of woman power to the country's developmental journey.

"Great poet Bharatiyar ji has said that the world will prosper only when women get equal opportunities. Today the 'nari shakti' (women power) of India is touching new heights of progress in every field," the prime minister said.

Who would have thought till a few years ago that in India, women living in villages too would fly drones, he said.

"But today this is becoming possible. Today there is so much discussion about Drone Didi in every village. 'Namo Drone Didi, Namo Drone Didi' is on everyone's lips," he said.

The prime minister also spoke to 'Drone Didi' Sunita from Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur. She talked about her drone training and how it helps in farming.

"Today there is no region in the country where woman power has lagged behind. Another area where women have demonstrated their leadership abilities is natural farming, water conservation and sanitation," he said.

The 'matrishakti' of the country is playing a big role in saving Mother Earth who is suffering pain and hardships due to chemicals, he said.

"Women are now extending natural farming to every corner of the country. Today, if so much work is being done in the country under the Jal Jeevan Mission, water committees have

had a big role to play in it. The leadership of these water committees lies only with women," Modi pointed out.

Apart from this, sisters and daughters are making all-out efforts for water conservation, he said.

Modi also spoke with Kalyani Prafulla Patil from Maharashtra and lauded her work in moving towards natural farming.

"Whether it is Sunita ji or Kalyani ji, the success of woman power in myriad fields is very inspiring. I once again appreciate this spirit of our woman power from the core of my heart," the prime minister said.

In his broadcast, Modi also talked about the increasing importance of technology in people's lives.

Modi Performs

Dwarka near Beyt Dwarka island, where people can see the underwater remains of ancient Dwarka that have been excavated by archaeologists.

Sharing his experience while addressing a gathering here later in the day, Modi said when he was touching the ancient city, the picture of India's grandeur of the 21st century flashed before his eyes, and he remained inside the waters for a long time.

"The vision of Dwarka in the sea has further strengthened my resolve of a developed India," he said.

The PM also shared his experience with some photographs on X.

"To pray in the city of Dwarka, which is immersed in the waters, was a very divine experience. I felt connected to an ancient era of spiritual grandeur and timeless devotion. May Bhagwan Shri Krishna bless us all," he said in the post on X.

Addressing the gathering here, Modi said he was overwhelmed with joy by the experience and fulfilment of his decades old dream of touching the sacred city.

"I went deep into the sea and saw the ancient Dwarkaji. Archaeologists have written a lot about Dwarka which is immersed in the sea. A lot has been said about Dwarka in our scriptures also. It is said that Lord Vishwakarma himself had built the city of Dwarka," the PM said.

He said the ancient Dwarka city was a good example of planning and development of a great city, and when he was having its darshan in the sea, he experienced "the same ancient grandeur and divinity."

"I bowed to Lord Shri Krishna there. I also took peacock feathers with me which I offered to Lord Krishna," he said.

The prime minister said that for many years, he was very curious about going into the sea and touching whatever remains of the ancient city of Dwarka and paying his respects.

"My wish of many years was fulfilled today. I am thrilled, overwhelmed with emotions. You can imagine how much joy I would have felt when the dream that I had nurtured for decades was fulfilled today by touching that sacred land," he said, sharing his experience.

Modi also offered prayers at the Lord Sri Krishna temple at Dwarka.

In the morning, he inaugurated 'Sudarshan Setu', the country's longest cable-stayed bridge of 2.32 km, on the Arabian Sea connecting Beyt Dwarka island to mainland Okha in Devbhumi Dwarka district.

He also inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of Rs 4,100 crore projects covering the districts of Devbhumi Dwarka, Jamnagar and Porbandar.

Train Runs From

halted with the assistance of sandbags. Whether the train had been "secured" properly at Kathua on the down gradient is a matter

of investigation, the spokesperson said and added that an in-depth probe is underway.

Railway officials and staffers were put on alert along the route.

Government Railway Police (Jalandhar) Sub-Inspector Ashok Kumar said upon receiving information about the runaway train all rail-road crossings on the Jalandhar-Pathankot section were secured.

Let Module

recoveries are expected in the case, he added.

275 Custodial

abuse, with state agents often using their power to force or coerce sexual access," Population Foundation of India, executive director, Poonam Muttreja said.

"There are instances where women taken into custody for their protection or due to their vulnerable status, such as victims of trafficking or domestic violence, are subjected to sexual violence, reflecting a misuse of power under the guise of state protection," she said.

Ms Muttreja highlighted that there is a complex interplay of factors contributing to custodial rape, including patriarchal social norms, inadequate gender-sensitivity training for law enforcement, and stigma surrounding victims.

She stressed the urgent need for a victim-centric approach, strengthened legal frameworks, and institutional reforms to address the root causes and consequences of custodial rape effectively. "The reported cases of custodial rape are often a manifestation of power imbalances and a lack of accountability within our law enforcement systems," Ms Muttreja said.

She said such rape causes include patriarchal social norms, abuse of power by authorities, lack of gender-sensitivity training for police, and societal stigma attached to victims.

"These elements contribute to an environment where such heinous crimes can occur and, in many cases, go unreported or unaddressed," she said.

Ms Muttreja said that to address the root causes and consequences of custodial rape effectively, the government must take a multi-faceted approach.

"This should include legal reform, better training for law enforcement, social and behaviour change communication to change social norms, and stronger mechanisms for accountability. Additionally, fostering partnerships with NGOs, civil society and community groups can help in creating a more inclusive and informed response to this grave situation," she said.

Reflecting on her experiences as a Nguvu Change Leader from the women's leadership organisation Nguvu collective undertaking rescue operations, Pallabi Ghosh shared troubling accounts of survivors alleging rape by police officers.

Ms Ghosh highlighted that "the pervasive culture of impunity and victim-blaming within law enforcement is hindering survivors from seeking justice."

"Custodial rape is a very common scenario in police stations. The way the junior police officers, even lady constables talk to survivors, show that they have zero empathy for them," she said.

She emphasised the critical need for sensitisation and awareness among police personnel, coupled with legal mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable.

Ms Ghosh expressed frustration over the difficulty in lodging complaints for custodial violence unless survivors name perpetrators, highlighting a systemic barrier to seeking justice. "Only if you convict a police officer for custodial rape, we can hope for justice," she added

Two-Day Winter Carnival Concludes At Kulgam



KO NEWS SERVICE

KULGAM: The two-day Winter Carnival, organised by the District Administration Kulgam in collaboration with the Tourism Department, concluded today at Aharbal tourism destination, here.

Over the period of two days, the event attracted massive participation of students, tourists and locals.

The Winter Carnival witnessed multifarious activities and programmes that kept the visitors hooked to the event.

Scintillating cultural performances presented by local youth, students and professional bands including Pir Panjal Strings, Malang Band, Achaal open Mike remained one of the attractions of the event which mesmerized the audience and guests present.

Carnival also hosted snow sports events including Snow Cricket, Snow Volleyball and other games witnessing active participation from sports persons and students across the district.

Multiple stalls were also put up by departments including Agriculture, Horticulture,

Tourism, Handicrafts, Fisheries, Employment, NRLM and others disseminating information regarding key government schemes and programmes.

A snow art cum heritage exhibit which includes snow figures and traditional art was on display, and attracted overwhelming response from the public.

To encourage the artists, students and other participants who enthusiastically participated in different events a felicitation ceremony was held during which they were awarded with certificates, medals and mementoes.

Aharbal's picturesque area hosts breathtaking spots ranging from famous Waterfalls, to mesmerizing views of Gurwattan and Sangam and the expansive meadows of Kungwattan, gushing waters of turbulent Vishaw besides the fascinating upstream

Alpine Lake, Kousarnag, which is a trekker's paradise.

All the beautiful areas are full of adventure tourism avenues, trekking, sight viewing, camping and are famous for picnicking and leisure activities.

Talks Going On With INDIA Bloc Partners On Seat-Sharing : Cong

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Vikar Rasool Wani on Sunday said that talks are going on with INDIA bloc partners National Conference and PDP on seat-sharing in the Union Territory for the Lok Sabha elections.

"People will hear good news soon as talks with the NC and the PDP (on seat-sharing agreement) are going on and we will fight the parliamentary elections together," Wani told reporters on the sidelines of a function here.

Several political and social activists from the twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch joined the Congress in presence of Wani and other senior leaders.

"My appeal to the people is to strengthen the Congress and our alliance partners so that all of their issues are resolved and J&K is pulled out of the prevail-



ing crisis," he said.

Accusing the BJP of destroying Jammu and Kashmir, he said, "Only the Congress can mitigate the problems of the people, restore statehood, ensure protection of their rights over land and jobs, hold assembly, municipal and local bodies elections and take development and tourism sector to new heights and make J&K prosperous.

The Congress leader alleged that BJP tried its best to frighten the INDIA bloc partners before the Lok Sabha elections to disintegrate the united opposition.

"The INDIA alliance is getting stronger with each passing day and we are sure that Congress

and its alliance partners will form the next government at the Centre," he said.

Asked to comment on National Conference president Farooq Abdullah's statement that his party will fight the elections on its own strength, Wani said, "We will also fight the elections on our own strength. And where they will put up their candidates, we will support them. The alliance partners will not escape under the pressure of the BJP and we will fight together in the coming Lok Sabha polls."

Welcoming the new entrants, he said the party is getting stronger as people in large numbers are joining the party from every nook and corner.

Wani reiterated his party's commitment to upholding the values of democracy, justice, and equality, and called on all supporters to join hands in building a better future for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Construction Company Fined Rs 5 Lakh For Illegal Mining

KO NEWS SERVICE

KATHUA: Over Rs 5 lakh penalty was imposed on a construction company for illegal mining in Sahar Khad near local Bridge by using heavy Machinery.

A Chain Machine and Dumper of the Construction Company were fined by the District Mineral Officer Kathua Rajinder Singh.

It was observed that the excavator engaged by the executing agency of NHAI was excavating River Bed Material (RBM) downstream Sahar Khad near National Highway bridge without obtaining permission required under rules.

On Spot assessment revealed that a total of 2200 MT of RBM has been raised from the river



bed and used in widening work of National highway

After taking the custody of machinery, the DMO called a police party on the spot and both the excavator and dumper were handed over to

Incharge of the police team after necessary formalities re-

quired under the extant rules of the department.

The District Mineral Officer informed that the action was initiated keeping in view the safety of bridges of National highway where mining is totally banned and also in order to save the precious mineral.

Rusted Grenade Found In Kishtwar

Agencies

KISHTWAR: A rusted grenade was found on the roadside in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district on Sunday, police said.

Kishtwar Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Abdul Qayoom said the explosive device was noticed at Zargar Mohalla by a local resident, who immediately informed the police.

Qayoom said a bomb disposal squad was summoned

and the HE-36 hand grenade was safely removed from the scene.

"The grenade is in a rusty condition, indicating that it was lying there for a very long time. There was some construction work undertaken about four to five months ago and the debris was dumped here. Prima facie, it appears that the device was present in the debris and was exposed due to recent rains," the SSP said.

Awareness Camp On HADP, E-NAM, PMFME Scheme, CSSs Held At Nowgam



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Area Marketing Officer Srinagar organized an Awareness Program on Holistic Agricultural Development Program (HADP), Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME), eNAM and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) at Nowgam (A) Srinagar.

The camp was specially targeted for women entrepreneurs besides, Traders, PRIs, Multiple Business Unit Holders of the area interested in upgrading their existing units/setting up of new units etc.

Awareness camp was attended by Officers of Horticulture Production Department, Agriculture Department, Manager J&K Bank Budgam etc.

Experts from different allied departments deliberated upon the schemes pertaining to the Horticulture Sector in detail.

Area Marketing Officer Srinagar, Shamma Manzoor apprised the participants about the Departmental Activities.

Assistant Marketing Officer Bashir Ahmad Wani/Marketing Inspector Shabir Mufti apprised the audience about HADP, PMFME, eNAM & other Centrally Sponsored Schemes pertaining to Food Processing Sector in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir and need to integrate the existing unorganized Micro-food Processing Units of the district.

In order to accomplish the objective of self-reliant India (Atma Nirbhar Bharat), the Of-

ficer apprised that the Govt. is providing 50% subsidy under HADP Program and the Ministry of Food Processing Industries provides financial, technical and marketing support to upgrade the existing micro-food processing units/establish new units under PMFME thereby integrating around two lac micro-food processing enterprises in the unorganized sector with formal supply chain.

The Manager J&K Bank Branch Fruit Nowgam explained to the participants about the financial assistance and subsidy disbursement process at Bank level.

The District Resource Person of PMFME apprised the participants about different requirements/formalities of the project under the said scheme like financial assistance and technical knowledge, besides preparation of DPRs were discussed threadbare with the participants.

The educated unemployed youth were urged to set up their own micro-food processing units and avail credit linked subsidy of 35% of the eligible project cost with a maximum ceiling of Rs 10 lac per unit and interest subvention of 3% available under the scheme.

He requested the interested applicants to contact him for assistance in the submission of application, DPR preparation, follow up of cases at bank level etc. In the end on spot assistance was provided to the beneficiaries to register them under the different schemes.

Body Of Missing Man Recovered From Jhelum After 20 Days

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The dead body of a man, who was missing for the last 20 days, has been retrieved from river Jhelum at Safa Kadal area in the old city this afternoon.

A police official confirmed that an unidentified decomposed male body was retrieved from Jhelum at Safa Kadal this



afternoon.

The deceased, he said, was

identified as Basharat Ah Bhat son of late Ali Mohammad Bhat, a resident of Naid Kadal Srinagar who was missing for the last 20 days.

He said the police took the dead body into its procession and after conducting necessary formalities hand it over to his family for the last rites, while investigation in this regard has been taken up.

Principal, Faculty GCE Condoles Prof. Madosh's Demise

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Principal, Government College of Education (GCE), Dr. Seema Naz and other faculty members of the college condoled the sad demise of Prof. A.G Madosh.

Chairing a condolence meeting in this regard Dr. Seema said that he was a renowned educationist and psychologist who will be remembered for his contributions towards this institution in particular and education in general.



He added that we mourn the loss of this noble person and pray to Allah to grant him

the highest place in paradise. "We also stand with his family and friends and pray to Allah to give them patience for bearing this loss", she said.

Meanwhile, the alumni and former faculty members also expressed their deep grief over the demise of Prof. A.G Madosh. They remembered him for his valuable contributions and support for the academic growth of the college and said that his death is a great loss to the educational fraternity.

IGP Kashmir Promotes 716 Policemen To Next Ranks

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: On the recommendations of Departmental Promotion Committee constituted for assessing the suitability of eligible Constables for their elevation to the next rank, vide ZPHQ Kashmir order No. 562 of 2024 dated 13.02.2024, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir rnage, V. K. Birdi has



approved the promotions of 716 Constables having their lien and seniority with Kashmir Zone to the rank of SgCts.

IGP Kashmir has felicitated the promoted officials and their families and expressed the hope that they will strive to work hard for maintaining public peace, tranquillity and law and order in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Director Agriculture Tours Bandipora, Ganderbal, And Srinagar Districts



KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhury Mohammad Iqbal today conducted an extensive tour of Bandipora, Ganderbal and Srinagar districts.

During the tour, he convened three separate review meetings of Chief Agriculture Officers, district agriculture officers, sub divisional officers, zonal officers Bandipora, Ganderbal and Srinagar and took stock of the progress under HADP projects, regular CAPEX and CSS's, scope of convergence between MGNREGA and HADP and issues related to procurement of Seed under SVP, organic farming, Natural farming, PMKISAN, PMFMY and Soil Health Card schemes in Bandipora, Ganderbal and Srinagar.

The meetings discussed in detail different centrally sponsored schemes being implemented by the department including RKVY, MIDH, ATMA, NFSM, PM KISAN, Soil Health Card Scheme, KCC Scheme etc. The implementation of projects under the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) were especially threat-

bare. The Director highlighted the importance of projects under HADP.

Addressing the meetings, Director Agriculture underlined the importance of expeditious and judicious expenditure of funds under different centrally sponsored schemes, projects under HADP and CAPEX. He asked the officers that funds allocated under different components of centrally sponsored schemes must be expended in a time bound manner. He reiterated the importance of maintaining the highest level of transparency and accountability during all the expenditures.

The Director asked the concerned officers to work in close coordination with concerned district administrations during the implementation of different initiatives at district level. He also directed them to reach out to the farmers of every area and make them aware vis-a-vis latest farmer friendly technologies in the agriculture sector.

He asked the officers to work in collaboration with the representatives of local communities for the successful implementation of different schemes at grassroots level.

A K Choudhary Is New PSC Chairman

KO NEWS SERVICE

Jammu: A K Choudhary, a 1991-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, has been appointed as the new chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, an official said on Sunday.

Choudhary, Special Director General of Police, Crime, will succeed IAS officer Satish Chandra, who retired on No-

ember 1 last year after an 18-month tenure as the JKPSA chairman.

"...the Lieutenant Governor of UT of Jammu and Kashmir is pleased to appoint A K Choudhary as Chairman, Public Service Commission for UT of J&K. He shall hold the position of the Chairman, PSC, till he attains the age of 62 years," the official said, quoting an order issued by the General Administration Department (GAD).

DC Chairs Valedictory Program Of ESDP Programs At KVK Srinagar



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat chaired the valedictory program of 2 ESDP Programs titled "Mushroom Farming as an Agri-business" and Vocational Training Program on "Cutting & Tailoring" organized by KVK Srinagar.

The valedictory program was held at Conference Hall of KVK Srinagar where Head KVK, Prof. S. A. Simnani welcomed the Deputy Commissioner who was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner exhorts upon the youth to get benefitted from the entrepreneurship and skill development programs organized by KVK Srinagar through establishment of sustainable units to double/triple farming income with ultimate aim to attract the distressed youth towards agriculture and allied sectors.

The DC further emphasized the need to register a maximum number of unemployed youth under different self-employment generation schemes on Daksh Kisan Portal under HADP schemes.

The DC also lauded the role and efforts of KVK Srinagar in organizing and conducting a series of entrepreneurship and skill development programs in an effort to devise strategies to promote self-employment

among the youth.

During the program, the DC distributed Certificates among the aspiring entrepreneurs and trainees were distributed by DC Srinagar in august presence of the dignitaries and officers present.

Earlier, on his arrival to KVK, the Deputy Commissioner inaugurated the Biodiversity Park by planting saplings of diverse bee flora plants in presence of CO 10 BN/SSB, Joint Director Agriculture and other dignitaries.

Later, addressing the program, Professor DOE, SKUAST-K, Dr. Afshan Gul, appreciated the efforts of Kendra in accomplishment of their targets and goals and expressed hope that the Kendra shall further flourish under the guidance of Prof. S. A. Simnani.

Commandant 10 BN, R.S. Rawat thanked the Kendra for their efforts in conducting successful ESDP Programs for the benefit of unemployed youth.

Besides, Joint Director Agriculture, Tabassum Naz and Chief Agriculture Officer Srinagar, Manohar Lal also shared their experience on the occasion and advised the youth to transform the skill training into viable agriculture units.

The event concluded with the vote of thanks by Dr. Rayees A. Wani (Scientist KVK Srinagar) while Dr. Aasima Rafiq (Scientist KVK Srinagar) anchored & hosted the program.

Khelo India Winter Games 2024 Conclude: Army No. 1, J&K 9th



Abid Bhat/KO

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The five-day long snow sports event Khelo India Winter Games 2024 came to an end on Sunday with a closing ceremony at Golf Course, Gulmarg. J&K Sports Council Secretary Nuzhat Gull was the chief guest on the occasion. The ceremony was attended by Gulmarg Development Authority CEO Waseem Raja, GM Cable Car Corporation, SSP Traffic Rural, six Olympians, athletes, officials and a large number of local people. The 4th edition of Khelo India Winter Games saw Army crowned as the new champions, clinching the top spot with 10 gold, 5 silver and 6 bronze medals. The first runner up, Karnataka, earned 9 gold and 2 silver medals, while the second runner up, Maharashtra, had 7 gold, 8 silver and 7 bronze medals.

J&K was placed at ninth position in the medals tally, with 1 gold, 6 Silver and 4 bronze medals. For the hosts, Shahid Ahmad Chachi clinched sole Gold medal in Vertical Ski Mountaineering. He also won silver in another discipline of Sprint and shared a bronze with three other colleagues in Ski Mountaineering Men Relay event. Besides Chachi, Shazi Hassan, Sobia Nabi, Shaista Shabir and Vikar also bagged silver medals in Ski Mountaineering Women Sprint, Alpine Skiing Women Slalom and Alpine Skiing Women Parallel and Men Parallel Slalom, respectively. J&K also bagged a Silver in Ski Mountaineering Women Relay in which Shazia Hassan, Maryam Farooq and Noorian Latief teamed up to display enthusiastic spirit to clinch the title. Further, four bronze medals

also came in the bucket of J&K including one from Men Relay Ski Mountaineering team and three others from Gousia Gulzar, Mehraj ud Din Bhat and Mehraj Ud Din Khan in individual events. Speaking at the concluding ceremony, Secretary, Sports Council, Nuzhat Gull expressed gratitude to the officers and officials of Divisional Administration, District Administration, Civil Departments and security agencies for rendering their services for successful conduct of 4th Edition of Khelo India Winter Games. She also thanked athletes who came from different parts of the country and displayed their talent and spirit of sportsmanship. The mementos & appreciation certificates were also distributed among the guests and service providers.

SHAHID CHACHI

The 'King Of Kangdoori Slopes'



Observer News Service

GULMARG: Shahid Ahmad Chachi, the sole gold medal winner for J&K in 4th Khelo India Winter Games at Gulmarg brought cheers to the hosts on Saturday. Shahid won hearts of fans and sport lovers with a phenomenal performance in Vertical Ski Mountaineering at Kangdoori, when he mounted the distance taking 35 minutes 29 seconds earning the title by defeating Mayank Dimri with marginal duration of 41 seconds. Shahid Chachi, local boy from Tangmarg coming from humble background, is a self taught athlete who has been working hard to embark on a successful sports career. Thanking Almighty for the success, Chachi said, "I put tremendous effort during my training and my God bestowed me with result. My family support and prayers rejuvenated my energy and made it convenient for me to obtain the goal." Initially, he had topped

the event organized by local Ski association. After assessing the inbuilt potential that Chachi possesses, association members encouraged him and mentored his talent by working on his techniques and skill. Acknowledging the role of coaches for the latest success, Chachi thanked Mehraj Ud Din Bhat and Younis Ahmed for the support, valuable guidance and mentorship. The coaches saw glimpse of fine talent in the youngster and invited him to register for 4th Khelo India Winter Games 2024. The Gold medal was his 3rd medal in the event after winning silver in Sprint and a shared bronze in Men's Relay of Skiing Mountaineering alongside Mehraj Ud Din Bhat, Ghulam Mohammad and Shiekh Mohsin. "Given the opportunity to represent the J&K and the country, I will surely bring medals," Shahid said. "We have great facilities here, we only need willpower to participate in games."

SHAZIA HASSAN

Anantnag's Ski Mountaineering Trailblazer

Observer News Service

GULMARG: Shazia Hassan, a 35-year-old resident of Uran-hall village in Anantnag, has emerged victorious at the Khelo India Winter Games 2024, securing two silver medals in Ski Mountaineering. Her triumph not only signifies personal achievement but also breaks barriers in a region where such feats are a rarity. Facing adversity from an

"Ski Mountaineering is not just a sport, it is a way of life," she said, emphasizing the values of overcoming obstacles, facing challenges, and appreciating nature. Undeterred, she pressed on, determined to prove herself and inspire others. Friends describe her as brave and resolute, refusing to succumb to pressures. The turning point in Shazia's journey came with the opportunity to participate



early age after losing her father, Shazia took on the responsibility of caring for her family. However, her journey took an unexpected turn when she discovered her passion and talent for Ski Mountaineering upon joining the Jawahar Institutions of Mountaineering and Winter Sports (JIM & WG) in 2010. Becoming the lone female representative from her locality at the institution, Shazia not only excelled in the sport but also became an instructor, sharing her skills and knowledge with fellow enthusiasts.

in the Khelo India Winter Games 2024, a national platform aimed at fostering youth engagement in sports. Competing in the Ski Mountaineering vertical race and individual race, Shazia's talent and spirit shone through, securing two silver medals. Expressing her gratitude, Shazia acknowledged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the J&K Sports Council for providing a platform like Khelo India. "I am lucky to live in India, a country that supports and encourages sports. Khelo India has changed my life and inspired many others," she remarked.

India Sniff Series Victory After Spinners Rout England

Agencies

RANCHI: Spin twins Ravichandran Ashwin and Kuldeep Yadav combined to rout England in their second innings and put India on course for a series-clinching victory in the fourth test on Sunday. Off-spinner Ashwin (5-51) and left-arm wristspinner Kuldeep (4-22) shared nine wickets on a turning track to bundle out England for 145 inside two sessions. Chasing 192 for a victory that would fetch them an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series, India cruised to 40 for no loss at stumps on day three. Skipper Rohit Sharma (24) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (16) have looked unperturbed on a pitch, where the ball spun sharply and stayed low occasionally. Earlier, when action resumed on Sunday, Dhruv Jurel (90) led a spirited rearguard action to rescue India, who posted 307 all out in reply to England's first innings 353. Jurel combined in a 76-



run partnership with Kuldeep (28), whose 131-ball vigil was the longest in his test career. Jurel smashed four sixes and six fours in his knock but fell short of a hundred when Tom Hartley (3-68) bowled him. Off-spinner Shoaib Bashir (5-119) claimed his first five-wicket haul in test cricket. A lead of 46 was much lower than England probably had expected having reduced India to 177-7 before the hosts roared right back into the contest after Ashwin's triple strikes. The off-spinner had Ben Duckett caught short leg for 15 and trapped Ollie

Pope lbw with his next delivery. Pope fell for his second duck in the match. While Ashwin could not complete a hat-trick, he got the important wicket of Joe Root (11) lbw. Root, who made a classy century in the first innings, was initially adjudged not out, but Ashwin coaxed his captain Rohit Sharma into challenging the decision. The hosts were rewarded when replays confirmed the ball would have gone on to hit the stump. Opener Zak Crawley smashed seven fours in his 60 before losing his middle stump to Kuldeep.

The spinner struck another telling blow when he had Ben Stokes bowled for four before the tea break. The England captain missed the ball, which hit his pad before spinning back between his legs and went on to hit the stumps. Jonny Bairstow (30) fell in the first ball after the tea break and Kuldeep dismissed Hartley and Ollie Robinson in the same over to pin England on the mat. Ashwin went on to dismiss Ben Foakes and Anderson in the same over as England lost their last six wickets for 25 runs in a remarkable meltdown.

India, Pakistan Drive US Ticket Demand For T20 World Cup

Agencies

FORT LAUDERDALE: Organisers of June's ICC T20 World Cup games in the United States say that early ticket sales have shown there is a huge demand for the sport among cricket lovers in the country. The highly anticipated clash in New York between cricket rivals Pakistan and India was over-subscribed by 200 times in the public ballot for tickets, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said. The 34,000-seat temporary venue, Nassau County International Cricket Stadium on Long Island, has yet to be completed but is already assured of a sell out crowd for the June 9 encounter. The tournament is being co-hosted by the West Indies and the United States. While big crowds are expected in the traditional cricket countries in the Caribbean, this will be the first time that an in-



ternational tournament is held in the US with the 16 games in the country also including matches in Lauderdale, South Florida and Grand Prairie Stadium, near Dallas. "We had amazing ticket interest. The ballot process showed there's a really big demand," T20 World Cup USA, Inc. chief executive Brett Jones told AFP on Friday. "India-Pakistan is obviously a game that at every World Cup carries great interest. I think it's really

pleasing to see those two countries come to the US," he added. Powerhouses India and Pakistan will play all their group games in the US and are sure to attract packed crowds from the diaspora living in the country. While organisers hope that they can "convert" some Americans to the game, they are well aware that there is already huge interest among immigrant populations and their focus is on serving those fans. "I think, number one,

we want to celebrate those that are already fanatical lovers of cricket. They deserve to see the best players in the world come into their backyard and have that chance," said Jones. "So, number one, we want to make sure that happens and they get to feel like they're close to a game they love. Number two, I think it's about spiking curiosity in the game," he said. Americans have never fallen for the charms of cricket, preferring baseball for their bat and ball action, but the sport is set to get an unprecedented platform in the country with the T20 format, including in the Los Angeles Olympics in four year's time. Ireland, Sri Lanka, South Africa, the Netherlands, Bangladesh and Canada will also play in the US along with the host nation themselves. The WC starts on June 1 with the US facing Canada in Texas. (AFP)

Man United's New Era Begins With A Loss, City Close Gap On Liverpool

Agencies

MANCHESTER: The week started at Manchester United with Jim Ratcliffe completing his purchase of a minority stake and setting out a three-year plan to return the club to the top of English soccer, knocking local rivals Manchester City and Liverpool "off their perch" in the process. It ended with the team getting mostly outplayed in its own stadium by Fulham — an opponent in the bottom half of the standings — and beaten 2-1 to lose ground in the race for Champions League qualification. Not only did sixth-place United's four-game winning run in the league come to an end on Saturday, fourth-place Aston Villa beat Nottingham Forest 4-2. That left an eight-point gap between Villa and United after 26 of 38 games.

It remains to be seen if the Premier League will have four or five places in next season's Champions League. Fifth-place Tottenham is three points ahead of United and has a game in hand. Failing to qualify for the lucrative competition will be a huge blow to United's status, not to mention its finances. It could also spell the end for United manager Erik ten Hag as Ratcliffe looks to raise the standards at the fallen giant. Dave Brailsford, the sporting director of Ratcliffe-owned INEOS and now a member of United's board, was in the directors' box at Old Trafford to see the team concede the deciding goal on a counterattack in the seventh minute of stoppage time. Alex Iwobi tucked home the finish, sealing Fulham's first win at Old Trafford since 2003, with United's players having poured forward seeking a win-



ner after Harry Maguire's equalizer in the 89th. "After one defeat, you have to see the bigger picture," Ten Hag said, "and the bigger picture looks very good." Douglas Luiz scored two of Villa's goals, with Ollie Watkins and Leon Bailey also netting in its first home win of 2024. One of the three defeats at Villa Park this year came at the hands of United. "If we arrive to game 33 in the same position, we maybe look to Champions League," Villa manager Unai Emery said. "For now it is about being in the top seven positions." **MAN CITY WINS** Second-place City trimmed the gap to Liverpool to one point in the title race by beating Bournemouth 1-0, with Phil Foden grabbing the 24th-minute winner from a rebound after Erling Haaland had a shot parried out.

Arsenal will look to follow suit when Mikel Arteta's team, which is four points behind City in third place, hosts Newcastle later Saturday. It was Foden's 16th goal of the season in all competitions, already tying his most in a single season. **EVERTON DENIED** Relegation-threatened Everton conceded an equalizer in the fifth minute of stoppage time to draw 1-1 at Brighton. A victory would have pushed Everton three points clear of the bottom three and ended an eight-match winless run in the league. Instead, Lewis Dunk headed in Pascal Gross' cross to cancel out Jarrad Branthwaite's opener for Everton at Amex Stadium. Newly hired Crystal Palace manager Oliver Glasner's tenure got off to strong start as his team beat next-to-last Burnley 3-0.