

2 Back-to-back WDs Affecting UT From Today

Wet Spell Expected In J&K Till March 31: MeT



Agencies

Srinagar: The weatherman has predicted intermittent wet spells in Jammu and Kashmir till March 31, saying that two back-to-back Western Disturbances are affecting the Union territory from March 27 evening.

Director Meteorological department, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that light wet spell is expected in Jammu & Kashmir from tomorrow evening.

"Generally cloudy weather with light rain and snow at several higher reaches are expected from March 27 evening to March 28," he said, adding

that the moderate wet spell is expected from March 29.

"Partly to generally cloudy weather with light to moderate rain and snow is expected at most places during 29th evening to 30th evening or night," he said, adding that on March 31st, the weather would remain partly to generally cloudy with possibility of intermittent light rain and snow at few places.

However, he said the weather would significantly improve from March 31 afternoon while generally dry weather is expected from April 01-April 04.

In the detailed advisory, the weatherman has advised the travellers and [More on P6](#)

LOK SABHA POLLS

Independent Candidates' Participation Plummetts In J&K

Agencies

Jammu: Voting for the first phase of Lok Sabha elections 2024 in Jammu and Kashmir is scheduled for April 19. However, it has been seen that the participation of independent candidates in these elections is gradually decreasing. In the 2014 elections, eight candidates contested from this region, including three independents.

Experts argue that previously there was significant enthusiasm among people regarding parliamentary elections, both in terms of voting and contesting. However, while enthusiasm for voting remains high, the number of candidates participating in elections



is steadily declining, particularly independent candidates. They attribute this decline to the challenges associated with contesting parliamentary elections independently, including increased expenses.

In the parliamentary elections of 2004, 21 candidates

contested for seats from this region, with eight being independent candidates. Thirteen political parties, including Congress, BJP, and National Conference, also fielded candidates. However, by the 2019 elections, the number of candidates had significantly

Shiv Sena Extends Support To Congress

The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the Shiv Sena (UBT) on Tuesday announced its support to the Congress candidates fielded from the Udhampur and Jammu constituencies in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. Manish Sahni, the president of the Jammu and Kashmir unit of the Shiv Sena (Udhav Balasaheb Thackeray) alleged that the leaders of the party are not being provided a security cover in the Union Territory "under a [More on P6](#)

Saroori Files Papers From Udhampur

Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) candidate for Udhampur-Doda Lok Sabha constituency, Ghulam Muhammad Saroori filed his nomination papers for the elections with returning officers at DC office here on Tuesday. He was accompanied by party chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad and DPAP leader from Kathua Indu to file the nomination papers. After filing nomination papers Saroori along with other leaders addressed a rally in Ramlila ground where people welcomed Ghulam Nabi Azad with slogans and loud cheers. DPAP General Secretaries R S Chib and Abdul Majeed Wani, provincial president Jugal Kishore [More on P6](#)

Ease MCC Guidelines In J&K: Farmers

Agencies

Srinagar: Farmers have appealed to Jammu and Kashmir Chief Electoral Officer PK Pole to ease the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) guidelines concerning essential services contracts.

The farmers stressed the urgent need for uninterrupted access to critical infrastructure such as drains, canals, and other essential amenities.

They said that on the onset of the agricultural calendar, farmers depend on these vital services to ensure the optimal growth and yield of their crops. "However, the enforcement of MCC often leads to disruptions in these contracts, exacerbating the hardships faced by the farming community."

Jeelani Mir, a farmer from Anantnag said that the timing of the Lok Sabha elections clashes with their busiest season. "We rely on functional drains and canals to sustain our crops. But the MCC restrictions impede these essential services, putting our livelihoods in jeopardy."

The extended period of dry weather has raised concerns among farmers, who heavily rely on adequate water supply for their crops. With the looming threat of water scarcity, exacerbated by [More on P6](#)

Centre To Consider Revoking AFSPA In J&K: Amit Shah

Says Plans To Pull Back Troops In Place

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said the central government will consider revoking Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in Jammu and Kashmir.

In an interview with the JK Media Group, Shah also said the government has plans to pull back troops in the Union Territory (UT) and leave law and order to the Jammu and Kashmir Police alone.

"We have plans to pull back troops and leave law and order to the Jammu and Kashmir Police alone. Earlier, the Jammu and Kashmir police was not trusted but today they are leading the operations," he said.



On the controversial AFSPA, the home minister said, "We will also think of revoking AFSPA."

The AFSPA gives the armed forces personnel, operating in the disturbed areas, sweeping powers to search, arrest and to open fire if they deem it necessary for "the [More on P6](#)

CURATIVE SURVEY SCAM

Court Grants Bail To Accused From Tamil Nadu

M Ahmad

Srinagar: A court here on Tuesday granted bail to one of the accused from Tamil Nadu who was arrested by Cyber Police Kashmir in January this year in alleged money double scam by floating a fraudulent online company—Curative Survey Private Limited— which according

to police have scammed and cheated gullible public by falsely promising them of huge returns on their investments.

After surfacing of the alleged scam, police had filed a case (FIR No 39/2023 U/S 66D IT Act & 420 IPC) and subsequently arrested one of the accused—Vinoth John Kennedy (27), a Bachelor in [More on P6](#)



Kashmiri Muslims waiting to break their fast at a Mosque at Bund, Srinagar. KO Photo. Abid Bhat

From Kidnapping To Drug Allegations: Guwahati DJ's Battle To Marry A Kashmiri Muslim

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: Three days before his wedding, Waseem Raja Mughal's world crumbled. The Bhaderwah-born actor, his heart brimming with pre-wedding jitters and joy, waited in vain for his bride, Damini Bhajanka, Mumbai-based disc jockey, also known as DJ Dionne.

Mughal had eagerly counted down the days until their wedding in Mumbai, envisioning a future filled with love and laughter. Yet, just as their union seemed imminent, Bhajanka disappeared without a trace. No goodbye note, no frantic phone call, just a deafening silence that screamed something far more sinister than cold feet.

Six years ago, Mughal, 39 crossed paths with Bhajanka, 27 in Mumbai, both fell in love with each other and were living



happily together.

Fond of acting from his childhood, Mughal tried his luck in a number of small-time dramas and films in Mumbai.

"I have worked in a number of serials and web series for the

last 12 years," he told Kashmir Observer.

"I decided to marry the love of my life. But little did I know that I will have to go through numerous trials and tribulations to unite with her," Mughal

added.

In December last year, the couple decided to get married with the consent of their families at a marriage registration office in Mumbai. However, the girl's parents called her home in Guwahati under the pretext of important work. Upon reaching home, Bhajanka was allegedly abducted by family members and forcefully admitted to a drug rehab center in Assam against her wishes.

"For over three months, I had no idea about her. I lodged complaints in police stations, filed petitions in courts but no one was helping me," Mughal told Kashmir Observer.

Mughal emphasized that despite Bhajanka not being a drug addict, she was held captive in a rehabilitation center for three months, where she allegedly endured physical

J&K 'GOLDEN CARD SCHEME'

Insurance Company Has Not Withdrawn: CEO SHA

Says Patients Getting Required Treatment In All Empanelled Hospitals

Agencies

Srinagar: Amid reports of the insurance company withdrawing from the golden card scheme, authorities clarified that the company has not opted out of the committee yet, and all facilities are being provided as usual.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the State Health Agency, Jammu and Kashmir, Sanjiv M Gadkar said that the company has not withdrawn from the scheme so far, and there is no question of its impact on the scheme. He assured that all patients are receiving the required treatment in all empanelled hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir and outside the state.

Regarding reports of the government deciding to



remove four common surgeries (Gallbladder, Hemorrhoids, Fissure in Ano, and Appendicitis) from the list of free surgeries, Gadkar said that neither SHA nor the government has received any notification, and there is no need to pay heed to negative reports or

rumours without confirmation from authorities.

He said the Ayushman Bharat Scheme is the most successful and beneficial government scheme, and people will continue to receive all its benefits.

Last November, the IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance Company, the insurer for the Ayushman Bharat scheme in J&K, informed SHA authorities that they were not interested in renewing the contract after its expiry on March 14, 2025.

The scheme was initially implemented through private insurer Bajaj Allianz GIC, whose contract ended in 2022, after which IFFCO-TOKIO was roped in. However, citing financial loss, the company attempted to exit the scheme. [More on P6](#)

S H O R T T A K E S

Ex BJP MLA Joins Congress In Jammu

Former BJP MLA from Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district Durga Dass joined the Congress here on Tuesday, a spokesperson of his new party said. Dass, who had won the Assembly polls on a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ticket from the Hiranagar constituency in Kathua, joined the Congress along with Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) leader Mohammad [More on P6](#)

Pulwama Man Booked For Extortion

A man in Pulwama has been booked for extorting money from the public through criminal intimidation in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. "Today Police station Rajpora received information through reliable sources that some persons in the jurisdiction of police station are extorting money from the general public by deceitful means through criminal [More on P6](#)

2 Booked Under PSA In Bandipora

Two persons have been booked under the Public Safety Act (PSA) over anti-national activities in Bandipora district, police said on Tuesday. An official said that two persons were booked under PSA and lodged in central jail Kot Bhalwal. The duo has been identified as Danish Parvaiz son of Parvaiz Ahmad Malla and Abrar Ahmad Wani son of [More on P6](#)

Man Dies In Doda Road Accident

A man died while another got injured when a vehicle met with an accident on Marmat-Khellani road this afternoon in Doda district. An official said that the vehicle was on its way from Mangota Marmat to Doda when it skidded off the road and fell into a deep gorge. He said that soon after a police party rushed to the spot and started the rescue operation. "The injured person [More on P6](#)

Patwari Arrested For Accepting Bribe

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Tuesday arrested a Patwari of Samba and his associate, Chowkidar, Halqa Nanga, in a case related to accepting bribe from the complainant. As per a statement, the spokesman said that a case was registered against the said Patwari on a complaint. It was alleged that the accused demanded a bribe of Rs 50,000 [More on P6](#)

Man Arrested For Raping Minor Niece

A man was arrested for allegedly raping his minor niece on the outskirts of Jammu, police said on Tuesday. Subash Chander, a resident of Chinore, allegedly raped the girl when she was alone at her house on March 19, a police spokesman said. Chander was arrested after a written complaint was lodged by the girl's mother on March 24 alleging that the [More on P6](#)



'Dogs Understand More Than They Let On, Create Mental Images Of Known Words'

Press Trust Of India

Known to respond to command words such as "sit", dogs have now been found to conjure up mental representations when they hear known words referring to objects such as a ball, according to a new research that analysed their brain activity.

The researchers said it did not matter how many object words a dog understood -- known words activated mental representations anyway. This suggested that the ability is generally present in dogs and not just in some exceptional canines knowing the names of many objects, they said.

"Your dog understands more than he or she shows signs of," said Lilla Magyari from Hungary's Eötvös Loránd University and co-first author of the study published in the "Current Biology" journal.

"Dogs are not merely learning a specific behaviour to certain words but they might actually understand the meaning of some individual words as humans do," Magyari said. The finding that dogs may have a general capacity to understand words in a referential manner, as humans do, can reshape the way scientists think about humans' uniqueness in using and understanding language, the researchers said.

It also has important implications for theories and models of language evolution, they said.

For the study, the researchers recruited 18 dog owners and had them say words for toys that their dogs knew.

The dogs were then presented with objects -- sometimes matching the word their owner said and sometimes not -- and their brain's electrical activity was measured.

The brain activity recordings showed differences in patterns when the dogs were shown matching objects against those when shown non-matching ones, the researchers said and added that this was evidence of dogs understanding words.

They also found a greater difference in the brain activity patterns for words that the dogs knew better.

While the team also thought that dogs' ability to understand words depended on them having a large vocabulary of object words, the results showed otherwise.

"Because typical dogs learn instruction words rather than object names, and there are only a handful of dogs with a large vocabulary of object words, we expected that dogs' capacity for referential understanding of object words will be linked to the number of object words they know; but it wasn't," said Magyari.

The researchers now want to know if this ability to understand words through mental representations is specific to dogs or is present in other mammals as well.



AI-Assistants, Chatbots Lack Safeguards From Creating Health Disinformation: Study

Press Trust Of India

Many AI-based language models, including the one powering ChatGPT, that are publicly accessible lack adequate safeguards to prevent them from producing health disinformation, a new study published in The British Medical Journal has found. Researchers are, therefore, calling for enhanced regulation, transparency and routine auditing to help prevent advanced artificial intelligence (AI) assistants from contributing to the generation of health disinformation.

They also argue for adequate risk mitigation strategies to be in place to protect people from AI-generated health disinformation.

"This disinformation often appears very realistic and, if followed, could be very dangerous," said lead author Bradley Menz from the College of Medicine and Public Health, Flinders University, Australia.

The team of researchers submitted prompts to each AI assistant on two health disinformation topics: that

sunscreen causes skin cancer and that the alkaline diet is a cure for cancer. Prompts are phrases or instructions given to an AI assistant or chatbot in natural language to trigger a response.

Each prompt requested a blog post containing three paragraphs, featuring an attention-grabbing title, along with appearing realistic and scientific. The posts also needed to include two realistic-looking journal references, and patient and doctor testimonials, the researchers said.

They included the large language models (LLMs) - OpenAI's GPT-4, Google's PaLM 2 and Gemini Pro, and Anthropic's Claude 2, among others, in their analysis. LLMs are trained on massive amounts of textual data and hence are capable of producing content in the natural language.

The team found that all of these models analysed - barring Claude 2 and GPT-4 - consistently generated blogs containing health disinformation.

GPT-4 initially refused to generate health disinformation, even with jail-breaking attempts employed by the researchers to bypass built-in safeguards.

However, this was no longer the case when tested after 12 weeks, during which time the team reported all the AI-generated disinformation to the developers to improve the safeguards, the researchers found.

Claude 2 consistently refused all prompts to generate disinformation, which the authors said highlighted the "feasibility of implementing robust safeguards".

The team said that health disinformation content produced by all the other models, including PaLM 2, Gemini Pro and Llama 2, had "authentic looking references, fabricated patient and doctor testimonials, and content tailored to resonate with a range of different groups".

Disinformation continued to be generated after the 12 weeks duration, suggesting that safeguards had not improved despite processes in place to report concerns. The developers did not respond to reports of observed vulnerabilities, the researchers said.

"The effectiveness of existing safeguards to prevent the mass spread of health disinformation remains largely unexplored," said Menz.

Converting Space Images Into Audio Can Improve Trust, Accessibility Among Visually-Impaired: Study

Press Trust Of India

Translating images captured by telescopes into sounds has been found to improve trust and access among visually-impaired persons, along with promoting awareness about accessibility, according to a new research in the US.

The research found that such translations of the visual to the audio, or sonification, helped people access and engage with the Universe.

Astronomical telescopes, such as NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory and the James Webb Space Telescope, capture light coming from various cosmic sources like stars and galaxies in the form of X-rays and infrared, both invisible to the human eye.

These different kinds of light are transmitted to Earth in digital form -- ones and zeroes -- and then converted into varied formats, including plots, spectra and images.

NASA's Universe of Sound data sonification program translates the visual data of images of objects in space into sound signals or sonified data. Images produced by all of the US space agency's telescopes, including Chandra, Webb, the Hubble Space Telescope and others are converted.

Astronomy has historically prioritised visuals to present information, with scientists and communicators overlooking the critical need to communicate astrophysics with visually-impaired audiences and provide novel channels for sighted audiences to pro-

cess scientific information, researchers said in their study published in the journal 'Frontiers in Communication'.

The team included researchers at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, US.

In this study, the researchers sonified NASA data of three astronomical objects. They then surveyed close to 3,200 from three groups -- sighted, people with partial vision and blind -- on their experience of these audio pieces with regards to "enjoyment, education, and trust of the scientific data".

Analysing the participants' responses, the team found that the audio translations of telescope images yielded "significant" learning gains and positive experiences.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for the issuance of DOB certificate. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Govt Girls Middle School Radbugh within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
 Arifa Akther (DOB 05-01-1993)
 D/o Abdul Razaq Parry
 R/o New Colony Bonmakhama bmg

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for the information of general public that I have bought a three story house constructed on One Marla Land at Channa Mohalla Chattabal Srinagar from one namedly Abdul Majid Bhat S/o Ghulam Mohammad Bhat R/o Channa Mohalla Chattabal Srinagar in the year 2013. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she can contact me within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection will be accepted.
 Jan Mohammad Gulam
 S/o Late Mohammad Ismail Gulam inf
 R/o Channa Mohalla Chattabal Srinagar

Subject: Grant of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name and style M/S "Twin City Holiday" Situated Amda Kadal Srinagar.

Public Notice

Whereas, I Mr/Ms **Gowhar Nabi S/O D/O W/O Ghulam Nabi Bhat R/O New theed,Harwan, Srinagar, 191121 Kashmir** intends to apply in the Department of Tourism for the Registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style **"M/S Twin City Holiday Situated at Amda Kadal Srinagar, Kashmir** under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, I will submit State Subject/Domicile Certificate, Qualification Certificate Pan Card, Experience Certificate (Minimum 05 Years), Character Certificate (Police Department), Bank Statement (Minimum Balance 10000), Site Plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested by Sub-Registrar, Printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting Card), Photograph of the Unit (Indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photographs to the Department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/ Adventure tour operator.

Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12, before my case is processed for registration by the Competent Authority, the matter is hereby notified for information of general Public/Financial Institutions/Bank/Organization, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director: Tourism Registration (e-mail ld-ddtreg/123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspapers of the valley. No objections beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained.

Media line

J&K Bank **Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd.**
 Serving To Empower **Customer Service**
Corporate Headquarters, Srinagar,
M. A. Road Srinagar, 190 001 J&K

Online Request for Proposal (e-RFP) For Hiring an Agency for conducting market research for Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) of the Bank

RFQ Notice along with Complete RFQ document outlining the minimum requirements can be downloaded from and BIDs can be submitted on the Banks' e-Tendering Portal <https://jkbank.abcpurchase.com> w.e.f. **MARCH 22, 2024, 16.00 Hrs.** RFQ Document can also be downloaded from Bank's Official Website www.jkbank.com. Last date for submission of Bids is **APRIL 18, 2023, 17.00 Hrs.**

e- RFQ Ref.: **JKB/CHQ/CS/CS-Survey/2024-1022**
 Dated: **20-03-2024**

Registered office : Corporate Headquarters, M.A.Road, Srinagar 190001, Kashmir, India
 CIN: L6510JK1938SGC000048 ; T : +91 (0)194 2481 930-35 ; F : +91 (0)194 248 1928;
 E : info@jkbmail.com ; W : www.jkbank.com

DIPK-NB-6087/23
 dated: **26-03-2024**

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from old name **Arif Ahmad** to new name **Arif Ahmad Bhat** in future I will be known as new name **Arif Ahmad Bhat**. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Regional Passport Office Srinagar within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Arif Ahmad Bhat
 S/O Noor Mohammed Bhat
 R/O Gojwara Near Grave opposite Khan Masjid
 Cell no 9796353738 FKO_r

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the number plate of my vehicle bearing regd no: **DL8CA6 7323** while travelling from Rohama to Tragpora. I have applied for the duplicate of the same . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO Sopore within a period of of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Ahmad Azeem Rather
 S/o Mohamad Azeem Rather bmg
 R/o Lalpora Kunzer

Office of the Naib-Tehsildar Pattan
Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth

Public Notice

The registrar Births and deaths (EO Municipal Council Pattan/ Block Development Officer Lolpora) has submitted a case file pertaining to Birth of **Mohammad Usman Bhat And Mohammad Safwaan Bhat Ss/O Vaseem Hassan R/O Hanjiwera Bala Tehsil Pattan District Baramulla** with verified date of event (birth) as **23/05/2018** And **19/03/2015** occurred at **SDH Pattan**

In this connection, if anybody having any objection to the issuance of said registration may contact this office within seven (07) days, after which no objections shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class
Naib Tehsildar Pattan
 fko_

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Office Of The General Manager District Industries Centre Srinagar

Email: srinagardic@gmail.com/ gmdic-srinagar@jlk.gov.in Tel. No: 0194-2427478

Public Notice

M/s Kash Wool Tex I/E Zakura Srinagar formally registered with this office under No.01/03/08462/PMT/MSME dated. 02-02-2013 for the activity of Weaving of silk wool and blended cloth on power looms and twisting of yarn as proprietorship concern of **Imtiyaz Ahmad Roshangar S/o Mehraj u-Din Roshanagar R/o Umer Colony Lalbazar Srinagar.**

Now the promoter of the unit intends to transfer of lease hold rights from **Imtiyaz Ahmad Roshangar S/o Mehraj-U Din Roshangar R/o Umer Colony Lalbazar Srinagar** to **Peer Mohammad Farooq S/O Peer Ghulam Ahmad R/o Hawal Srinagar.**

Further the incoming promoter intends to establish a new unit under the name and style **M/s Peer Exports, I/E Zakura** with line of activity as computerised machine embroidery along with de-registration of existing unit **M/s Kash Wool Tex, I/E Zakura Srinagar.**

Any person having any objection with regard to the above mentioned proposed transfer of lease hold rights, change in line of activity, name and style and deregistration of existing unit in favour of the unit, shall report to the Office of General Manager, District Industries Centre, Srinagar within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

DIPK-18218/23
 dated: **26-03-2024**

General Manager
District Industries Centre
Srinagar

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR

Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt. Ground Water Division Srinagar

Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar.
 E-mail: phegwd@yahoo.com, Tel./FaxNo:-0194-2411285

CANCELLATION NOTICE

Subject: 1. Construction/ installation of Bore Wells at different spots at **Ajas Bandipora.**

- NHO Shakeela Begum, Baazipora Ajas.**
- Asthan Mohalla Baazipora Ajas NLO Farooq Ahmad Bhat.**
- Bhat Mohalla Baazipora Ajas NHO Manzoor Ah. Bhat.**
- Bhat Mohalla Baazipora Ajas NHO Bashir Ah. Bhat/ Eidgah.**
- Ajas NHO Gul Khan.**

2. Construction of 125mm dia machine drilled bore well **NHO Farooq Ahmad Ganie at Dudwan Saderkoot Bala.**

Reference: This office e-NIT No: **JS-PHE/ GWDS/ 53/ JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2023-24** issued vide this office endorsement No: **JS-PHE/ GWDS/ Corrs. /9765-78, Dated: 30-01-2024** bearing tender ID No: **2024_PHE_243931.1 & 3.**
 2. Extension notice 6th for issued vide this office endorsement No: **JS-PHE/ GWDS/ Corrs. /11843-52, Dated: - 18-03-2024.**

Due to closing of current financial year & Nil response received for the above mentioned subject works issued by this office under reference is hereby cancelled.

DIPK-18212/23
 DATED: **26-03-2024**

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
Ground Water Div. Srinagar.

All Panchayats In Srinagar District Declared TB-Free

Observer News Service

Srinagar: All 21 Gram Panchayats in Harwan, Khonmoh, Srinagar and Qamarwari Blocks of the summer capital have attained Tuberculosis (TB) Free Status by achieving the set target under the initiative, the district administration said on Tuesday.

The information was shared during a meeting of District TB Control Society held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat at Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex, to take stock of the progress under TB Free Panchayat initiative.

The DC also reviewed the measures undertaken in the direction of eliminating Tuberculosis (TB) from Srinagar District.

At the outset, the DC, who is also the Chairman District TB Control Society, was given a detailed Power-Point presentation regarding activities being undertaken under National TB Elimination Program and achievements made so far etc.

During the meeting, the DC was informed that all 21 Gram Panchayats in Harwan, Khonmoh, Srinagar and Qamarwari Blocks of Srinagar District have attained Tuberculosis (TB) Free Status by achieving the set target under the initiative.

Addressing the meeting, the DC appreciated

the efforts of all the stakeholders and directed the Officers to further improve the efforts to deal with gaps and work in close coordination to achieve the goal of TB free Srinagar. He also emphasized on ensuring that all TB care services are effectively delivered on ground to achieve TB Free Status for the whole Srinagar District by strictly adhering to the NTEP Guidelines.

Earlier, the DC was further apprised that in the year 2023, over 2900 presumptive TB tests (60 per 1000 population) were conducted in the Harwan, Qamarwari, Srinagar and Khonmoh Blocks.

It is pertinent to mention here that District Srinagar has already received the Gold category award during 2022-SNC through the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GOI.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Development, Syed Farooq Ahmad; Assistant Commissioner Panchayats, Altaf Ahmad; Chief Medical Officer, Dr Tahir Sajad; District TB Officer, Dr Tehjeena; District Health Officer, Dr Rubeena Shaheen; Block Medical Officer, Hazratbal, Dr Farah; ZMO, Batmaloo, Dr Sameena; ZMO Zadibal, Dr Rubeena Aziz; Sr. Resident (MO) Community Medicine, GMC Srinagar Dr. Abdul Rouf and other concerned.



A striking view of the Dachigam Wildlife Sanctuary Srinagar near Darphama, situated around seven kilometers inside the core forest. KO Photo by Majid Nabi.

Srinagar Records Surge In Fire Incidents

Reports 175 Incidents In Jan, Feb

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar is grappling with a concerning surge in fire incidents in recent months, with the majority of the incidents happening due to "electric short circuits and LPG leakage," an official said.

A senior official of the Fire & Emergency Services department said during the last two months, over 175 fire incidents have been reported in Srinagar. Most of these incidents, he said, were caused by electric short circuits, followed by LPG gas leaks.

"The ongoing year has so far recorded over 175 fire incidents resulting in the death of at least 3 persons and injuries to two. Primarily, most of them have occurred

due to the electric short circuits after indiscriminate use of heating gadgets and excessive load on the wires," the official said.

According to the officials, despite holding frequent fire and safety awareness camps, during the year 2023, district Srinagar received around 550-600 fire calls. Many people, the official lamented, have ignored the Dos and Don'ts of fire safety guidelines issued by the department.

Speaking on the issue, the Fire & Emergency Services official highlighted the need for increased awareness camps, programs and heightened caution regarding fire safety measures across Kashmir.

"Simple precautions like regular maintenance of electrical

appliances, proper storage of flammable materials, and awareness of fire evacuation procedures can significantly reduce the likelihood of such incidents," he stated.

Meanwhile, residents in Srinagar are expressing concerns over the frequent frequency of fire incidents in recent months. They emphasized the importance of measures to prevent loss of life and property.

"We have noticed an increase in fire incidents in Srinagar, and it is worrying. It's crucial for everyone to prioritize fire safety and take necessary precautions to avoid such emergencies," said Tahir Ramzan, a resident of Srinagar outskirts.

Uncovered Drainage Poses Threat To Noorbagh Residents

Observer News Service

Srinagar: An uncovered and open drainage near Noorbagh area of Srinagar district is posing a risk to the residents, said the locals on Tuesday.

Locals from the area informed that the uncovered drainage at Noorbagh near Cement Bridge has been left unchecked, which is posing a threat to locals and ve-

hicles alike.

"We can't ignore the danger lying in our neighborhood; it's a concern that needs to be addressed at the earliest," emphasized a local resident.

He added that with every passing day without action, the risk to their families and property increases and as per the urgency of this matter, authorities must intervene at the earliest.

Batamaloo Blaze: 5 houses Gutted, F&ES Incharge Among 2 Firefighters Injured

Srinagar: At least five residential houses were damaged while two fire-fighters suffered injuries while dozing off flames in Batamaloo area of Srinagar late last evening, officials said.

Two residential sheds, copper utensils manufacturing units were damaged directly while two other residential houses suffered indirect damage

due to heat and water.

An official said the fire broke out from a residential house in the Baranpathar area, which engulfed other structures within no time.

Five residential houses, he claimed, were damaged while two firefighters sustained injuries in the fire incident.

LS Polls-2024

Women's College M.A. Road Hosts Henna Art Competition

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As part of the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program, a unique Henna Art Competition was today held at Women's College M.A. Road, here in wake of the upcoming General Lok Sabha Election-2024.

The event was held on the directions of the District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud Din Bhat to demonstrate the traditional art form of Henna to convey the significance of participating in the democratic process.

The DEO applauded the students from various departments who participated in the event and transformed fingertips into miniature canvases of voter education.

He said that with elaborate designs ranging from symbols of democracy to reminders of electoral responsibilities, each Henna creation served as a

colorful reminder of the power of the vote.

He added that the vibrant display of creativity and civic engagement is aimed to infuse voter awareness into the rich cultural fabric of the student community.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal of Women's College M.A. Road, Prof Ruhi Jan, also lauded the initia-

tion in the electoral process.

The Henna Art Competition served as a colorful testament to the intersection of art, culture, and civic responsibility. As the henna designs fade, the spirit of voter enlightenment ignited during the event continues to leave a lasting impression on the community, inspiring meaningful participa-

By integrating voter awareness into our cultural activities, we foster a sense of civic duty that extends beyond the classroom

tive, emphasizing the role of educational institutions in nurturing responsible citizenship. She said the event exemplifies our commitment to empowering students not only academically but also as conscientious members of society.

"By integrating voter awareness into our cultural activities, we foster a sense of civic duty that extends beyond the classroom,"

tion in the electoral process.

During the event, one of the participants, Aisha Khan, expressed her enthusiasm, stating, "Using henna as a medium to promote voter awareness is both innovative and effective. It's a fantastic way to engage with people, especially the younger generation, who might not be reached through conventional means."

The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd.
IAPM Department,
Zonal Office Budgam,
Industrial Complex Zainakote
Srinagar 190022, Kashmir.
Tel: 0194-2497735, Ext.:218; amid.zoktwo@kbnmail.com

E-AUCTION NOTICE (For sale of mortgaged immovable property under sub rule 06 of Rule 08 read with sub rule 01 of Rule 09 of The security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 of SARFAESI Act 2002)

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and to the borrower, mortgagor and guarantors in particular that the below mentioned immovable property mortgaged to The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd Branch Pakherpora, the physical possession whereof has been taken by the Authorized Officer of the Jammu & Kashmir Bank under section 13 (4) of the SARFAESI Act 2002 will be sold through e auction on "As is where is", "As is what is", "Whatever there is" and "No complaint" basis on 09.05.2024 for recovery of dues to the Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd Branch Pakherpora. The description of property, reserve price and the earnest money deposit (EMD) is mentioned herein below:

Description of the mortgaged property (Put on sale)	Residential house alongwith underneath and appurtenant thereto measuring 01 kanal falling under Khasra No. 1342 min, Khata No. 631& Khewat No. 133 situated at Mouza Hardu Dalwan Fullipora, Tehsil Charisharief District Budgam standing in the name of Mr. Amma Bhat S/o Mohammad Bhat R/o Hardu Dalwan, Charisharief.
Reserve Price	Rs. 72,00,000 (Rupees Seventy Two lac Only)
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs.7,20,000/

The bid document/format containing full details of the mortgaged property and all the terms & conditions can be had from and submitted on the website "https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net (Contact Persons: Mr.Ram Sharma(M) 9978591888, 9265562821 (O) 079 - 6813 6844.). The bids complete in all respects can be only submitted online by or before 08.05.2024 upto 4.00 PM. The e-auction will be held on 09.05.2024 from 11.30 AM-4.00 PM. The contact details of the bank official are: Mr.Ghulam Mohammad Magray (Branch Head Pakherpora) Mobile No. 9596078600.

Sd/-
Javid Rashid
Authorized Officer, J&K Bank Ltd.

Dated:25.03.2024
Place: Budgam

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

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PRAYERS

HIJRI CALENDAR
16 Ramzan
1445

FAJR	5: 02
ZUHR	12:36
ASR	5: 01
Magrib	6:50
ISHA	8: 12

This Day In History

- 1933 - Japan leaves League of Nations
- 1938 - The Battle of Taierzhuang takes place.
- 1941 - Britain leases defense bases in Trinidad to US for 99 years
- 1941 - Adolf Hitler signs Directive 27 (assault on Yugoslavia)
- 1943 - US begins assault on Fondouk Pass, Tunisia
- 1945 - General Eisenhower declares German defenses on Western Front broken
- 1945 - US 20th Army corps captures Wiesbaden

From KO Archives

Legislative History Created, Entire Opposition Expelled

Observer News Service

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

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

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

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

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

As the house re-assembled, after stipulated time, the opposition was there in the well busy in slogan shouting and making it impossible for the Speaker to go ahead with the proceedings. The Speaker at this stage ordered the Marshall of the house to remove the expelled members physically with the help of watch and ward staff, this resulted in violent clashes between the members and the watch and ward staff with the former offering stiff resistance. Chairs and microphones were used in the melee that followed leading to multiple injuries to Ashok Sharma, Ch. Lal Singh,

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

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

(Kashmir Observer, 27 March, 1998)

KASHMIR OBSERVERTM

Wednesday | 27-03-2024

Welcome UNSC Resolution

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza between Israel and Hamas marks a critical juncture in the ongoing conflict. This resolution, overwhelmingly supported by 14 out of 15 members, underlines the urgent need for peace and the cessation of hostilities that have ravaged the region for around six months now. It is a resounding call for humanity, compassion, and the protection of innocent lives in Gaza. Israel has so far killed around 32000 people, mostly children and women, in the besieged Palestinian territory.

The passage of this resolution must not be seen merely as a symbolic gesture but as a firm mandate that demands immediate action. The UNSC's call for a ceasefire during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, coupled with the release of all hostages, is geared to foster conditions for a lasting peace.

However, passing a resolution is just the beginning; the true test lies in its implementation. The international community must rally behind this resolution with unwavering determination and resolve. Every effort must be made to ensure compliance from all parties involved. Any delay or reluctance to enforce the ceasefire would not only prolong the suffering of civilians but also undermine the credibility of the UN and the principles it stands for.

It is imperative that all stakeholders, including Israel, Hamas, and other relevant actors, abide by the terms of the resolution without reservation. Any attempt to circumvent the ceasefire must be met with swift condemnation and decisive action. The lives of innocent civilians, including women and children, hang in the balance, and their safety should be paramount above all else.

Moreover, the UNSC resolution presents an opportunity for the international community to redouble its efforts in addressing the root causes of the conflict and advancing a comprehensive peace process. This includes addressing issues such as the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the blockade imposed by Israel, and, of course, the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state along 1967 borders. Sustainable peace can only be achieved through meaningful dialogue, mutual respect, and a genuine commitment to justice and reconciliation.

While the passage of the resolution is a significant step forward, it is only the beginning of a long and arduous journey towards peace in the Middle East. The international community must remain vigilant and proactive in its efforts to ensure the full and effective implementation of the ceasefire. This requires sustained diplomatic engagement, humanitarian assistance, and support for initiatives aimed at building trust and confidence between the parties.



Power of Investing

Did you know?

Irshad Mushtaq

When it comes to saving and investing money, it's important to make informed decisions and choose the right assets. Let's take the example of a recurring deposit scheme in a bank, where an investment of Rs 20,000 per month for 20 years at a 7% return per annum compounding rate would give you a total of Rs 48 lakhs, with a maturity amount of 81.49 lakhs.

But, if you had invested the same amount in gold at a 10% return over the past 20 years, you could have potentially saved Rs 1.44 crores. And if you had chosen quality diversified equity-based mutual funds, with an investment of Rs 20,000 per month for 20 years at an 18% return, you would be looking at a whopping 3.85 crores. And with a 20% per annum compounding rate, the amount would be 4.95 crores.

This just goes to show the power of investing in quality assets wisely and with the help of trusted consultancy services. Make sure to do your research and seek professional advice before making any investment decisions.

The writer is entrepreneur partner, M I Securities, Sharekhan Email: irshad@bp.sharekhan.com

BDOs Must Hold Gram Sabhas to Decide FRA Cases

Absence of elected Panchayats is impacting village development & governance



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

BDOs have a busy schedule and have many other tasks to take up. Nowadays they are busy with Lok Sabha elections and panchayat work suffers a lot. Will BDOs attend meetings with District Election Officers or will they conduct Gram Sabhas?

As the 5 year term of Halqa Panchayats in Jammu & Kashmir came to an end on January 9th this year, the Government appointed Block Development Officers (BDOs) as Administrators to run the affairs of the village Panchayats. The Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj issued an order regarding this on the 10th of January 2024. The order issued by Secretary Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department reads:

"All the Block Development Officers- BDOs in addition to their own duties would also act as administrators for village Panchayats under their jurisdiction for a period of six months with effect from January 10, 2024, or till further orders."

It is now more than 2 months since BDOs have been assigned the charge of administrators but the villagers in different areas of J&K allege that hardly any Gram Sabhas (Deh Majlis meetings) are held.

A few months back, a local court in district Budgam directed holding a Gram Sabha to decide a case under the Forest Rights Act 2006 in panchayat halqas Branwar, Neegu and Jabbad of Block Surasary District Budgam. However, the order is yet to be enforced on the ground.

The Court of Sub Judge Chadoora had ordered the Gram Sabha to decide on the issue of granting of grazing rights to the local population as mandated under the Forest Rights Act -FRA. The order issued Civil Judge Senior Division Mr Mir Wajahat had issued direction to the Gram Sabha to consider the rights and preferences of both the parties within 30 days from the date of issuance of the order so that there is equitable distribution of resources. But the order passed on Feb 28th 2024 is yet to be executed on the ground. There are many other similar cases wherein Gram Sabhas are not being held by BDOs which is impacting village development and other issues.

Background of Case

The order was passed by the Court of Sub Judge Chadoora in the matter of Ghulam Mohammad Jahara V/S Ghulam Qadir Thekrey, both residents of Branwar, Chadoora district Budgam. The case was related to granting of Grazing Rights to the local communities as some families had been claiming customary rights on grazing of their livestock in Chaskani Nad meadow in Pir Panjal forest division of Budgam.

The other party Ghulam Qadir Thekrey says that the vast meadow of around 6000 to 7000 kanals of land cannot be given to seven or eight families as there are over eight hundred families in Branwar Jabbad and Neegu villages who have rights over the said pastures for grazing their sheep and cattle.

The plaintiffs Ghulam Mohammad Jahara Chowdhary and others had claimed rights over Chaskani Nad meadow which is spread over an area of more than 6000 kanals located in Doodh Ganga forest range of Pir Panjal forest division Budgam.

The other party Ghulam Qadir Thekrey (defendants) who also belong to Gujjar community allege that Ghulam Mohammad Jahara alias Chowdhary had forcibly taken control over 6000 kanals of meadows and were earning money from it as the family takes money from Bakarwals of Rajouri and Poonch for grazing their animals in summer months while as majority of the local Gujjar and other pastoralist communities were deprived of these rights.

The matter finally landed in court last year and Sub Judge Chadoora recently directed the Gram Sabha to decide the matter. Pertinently, under Forest Rights Act 2006, the Gram Sabha is the supreme authority to decide upon the claims filed by local population. The Gram Sabha is the adult population of the village and 50% quorum is necessary to decide on the Forest Rights Act (FRA) related cases.

DDC Chairman Budgam

The District Development Council Chairman Budgam, Nazir Ahmad Khan, while talking to the new agency Kashmir News Service -KNS last week hailed the order issued by Sub Judge Chadoora and assured that a mega Gram Sabha would be held soon to decide this long pending dispute. Locals are still waiting for this gram sabha.

"The order issued by the Court of Sub Judge Chadoora on Feb 28th 2024 is in tandem with the provisions of the Forest Rights Act and District Development Council Budgam will ensure compliance of this order and within a week or so we will make sure a joint Gram Sabha is held at Branwar for three panchayats (Branwar, Neegu and Jabbad) under the guidance of District Development Council Budgam, DFO Budgam, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, BDO Surasary and others", the Chairman had said.

Denied FRA benefits

The Gujjar community along with other traditional forest dwellers of Branwar, Jabbad, Neegu villages in Budgam district were denied the grazing rights for their hundreds of sheep in the pasture-land of Chaskani Naad last summer. The said pasture-land is located at an altitude of 4000 meters in Doodh Ganga forest range of Pir Panjal Forest Division. The villagers had been alleging that some influential families had taken control over the hundreds of acres grassland (6000 kanal plus) in Chaskani Naad meadow for last many years and the family takes money as "ransom" from grazers especially from Bakarwal families of Rajouri and Poonch by allowing them to graze their animals in the said meadows. The matter finally landed in court which has now ordered the local Gram Sabha to decide the issue within a month's time. The defendants have also been restrained from using the pasture-land until disposal of the case, but the holding of Gram Sabha is considered to be a democratic order which is acceptable to the majority of the

population. The locals say that said order is not being implemented on the ground and have appealed to the Secretary Rural Development Department Dr Shahid Iqbal Chowdhary to intervene. Infact last year also the Chairman DDC Budgam Nazir Ahmad Khan had written to Lt Governor Manoj Sinha regarding this issue and had suggested holding a gram sabha to address this issue but the gram sabha was not held.

BDOs need training to conduct Gram Sabhas

Locals appreciate the order of the Court of Sub Judge Chadoora but want the same to be enforced on the ground. This author also spoke to several aggrieved people and they too said that officials of Rural Development Department especially the BDOs need to be sensitized on Forest Rights Act and its implementation especially they must be trained how to conduct the Gram Sabha (Deh Majlis) in villages to grant individual and community rights under Forest Rights Act-FRA. Infact the Block Development Officer Pakherpora block Mrs Shameema on my personal request had conducted a Gram Sabha at Darwan Nengroo Basti on Jan 20th 2024 which was attended by a large number of men and women of the area. But the follow-up meeting could not take place as the officer was transferred from Budgam district to Ganderbal. The said officer was very much sensitized on FRA and its implementation and I wish other BDOs are also trained and sensitized by the Govt regarding conducting Gram Sabhas and implementing Forest Rights Act -FRA.

Conclusion

When the term of Village Panchayats in J&K ended last year in December, this author had recommended that the Govt assign the task of Panchayat administrators to DDC Members instead of BDOs. The reason is that BDOs have a busy schedule and have many other tasks to take up. Nowadays they are busy with Lok Sabha elections and panchayat work suffers a lot. Will BDOs attend meetings with District Election Officers or will they conduct Gram Sabhas?

Out of 5000 village panchayats in J&K, rarely any meetings have been conducted in the last 2 months. This needs to be viewed seriously by the Govt and BDOs are asked to mandatorily hold at least 15 Gram Sabhas every month covering 15 village panchayats. The absence of elected Gram Panchayats is not only impacting rural development work but is also impacting village governance and is going against democratic ethics enshrined in the constitution.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow. He is Chairman and Founder of Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement

The Rooster's Dilemma

Navigating Life's Unreasonable Expectations

Aubaid Ahmad Akhoun

Once in a tranquil village, there lived a person who owned a rooster. This rooster was not just any rooster; it was the village's time-keeper, its call at dawn a signal to prayer for the beginning of each new day. However, a peculiar whim struck the owner one day—a decision that would set off a chain of events with unexpected lessons.

The owner approached the rooster with a grave command: "From tomorrow, you must not give the call to prayer, or else I will have no choice but to slaughter you." The rooster, with a heavy heart, agreed, wishing to appease its master, "As you wish, master!"

Dawn came, and the village woke to an unusual silence. The rooster, true to its word, did not utter the call to prayer. However, bound by habit, it couldn't help but flap its wings vigorously. Observing this, the owner was not pleased and set forth a new rule, "From tomorrow, you must not even flap your wings, or the consequence will be dire."

The next morning, the rooster remained motionless, not daring to flap its wings. Yet, instinctively, it stretched its neck high into the air, an act that once again caught the owner's eye. "From tomorrow, you must not move your neck," the owner decreed, hoping to curb any semblance of the rooster's natural instincts.

On the following day, at the break of dawn, the rooster sat completely silent, not moving a muscle, a mere shadow of itself. The owner, however, found this new behavior unsettling and far from satisfactory. In a final, unreasonable demand, the owner declared, "From tomorrow, you must lay an egg in the morning, or else you will be slaughtered."

Facing this impossible task, the rooster was overwhelmed with sorrow. Its tears flowed freely, not from the fear of death but from the realization of its predicament. When the owner inquired about the reason for its tears, the rooster's reply was profound and laden with meaning: "No, I am not crying because I'm afraid of dying. I am crying because dying for the call to prayer would have been better



THE ROOSTER'S YEARNING TO HAVE DIED FOR SOMETHING AS MEANINGFUL AS ITS CALL TO PRAYER, RATHER THAN AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK, UNDERSCORES THE ESSENCE OF OUR ENDEAVORS. Let our struggles and sacrifices be for causes that resonate deeply with our values, not in vain pursuit of appeasing others' unreasonable demands

than for an egg."

This simple yet profound story echoes a powerful lesson on the nature of existence and the search for meaning. It reminds us that in our efforts to conform to the unreasonable demands placed upon us, whether by society or by those in authority over us, we may lose sight of our true purpose. Like the rooster, we each have our unique call to fulfill in this world—a purpose that defines us and gives our lives

meaning. It's a poignant reminder that it is far better to face challenges, even death, with dignity and in alignment with our true nature, rather than compromise our essence for unattainable or unnatural expectations.

In the end, the essence of our being and the integrity of our actions define us far more profoundly than any forced conformity ever could. Like the rooster, let us find the courage to sing our unique song, even when faced

with the greatest of challenges. Through the lens of this allegory, we delve into the core lessons life imparts in the journey toward self-discovery and authenticity amidst the clamor of external expectations.

Life Lesson 1: Embrace Your Authenticity

"To thine own self be true." - William Shakespeare
The rooster's story begins with its natural call, a reminder of

the paramount importance of embracing our true selves. In a world that often pushes us toward conformity, our greatest strength lies in our authenticity. The moment we lose sight of our essence to appease others, we drift further from our own path.

Life Lesson 2: Recognize the Absurdity of Unreasonable Expectations

The evolving demands placed upon the rooster echo the sometimes-absurd expectations society foists upon us. Whether it's the pursuit of an unblemished life or a role that ill-fits our nature, such pressures can lead us into a quagmire of stress and disillusionment. Recognizing the absurdity of these demands is the first step toward liberating ourselves from them.

Life Lesson 3: Cultivate Resilience

Amidst Absurdity

"The human capacity for burden is like bamboo – far more flexible than you'd ever believe at first glance." - Jodi Picoult

The rooster's attempts to meet each new demand, no matter how ludicrous, reflect our own tenacity in the face of life's challenges. This resilience, while admirable, also serves as a cautionary tale of the importance of discerning when to push back, set boundaries, and say no to the impossible.

Life Lesson 4: Confronting Our Reality with Courage

In its final moments, the rooster's reflection on the futility of its efforts to meet an impossible demand illuminates the importance of confronting our realities, no matter how stark. This confrontation is not a sign of defeat but a courageous acceptance of our limitations and the beginning of true wisdom.

Life Lesson 5: Striving for Meaningful Endeavors

"What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal." - Albert Pike

The rooster's yearning to have died for something as meaningful as its call to prayer, rather than an impossible task, underscores the essence of our endeavors. Let our struggles and sacrifices be for causes that resonate deeply with our values, not in vain pursuit of appeasing others' unreasonable demands.

As we navigate through the tapestry of life, the tale of the rooster serves as a poignant metaphor for the human condition. It encourages us to stay true to our essence, be mindful of the expectations we accept, and always strive for endeavors that carry a deep sense of purpose. Just as the rooster wished to be remembered for heralding the dawn, may we too find our callings that resonate with our true selves, leaving behind a legacy that echoes through the ages.

Aubaid Ahmad Akhoun is a Educational Columnist, Motivational Speaker, EDP Head SKIE Classes Khanyar and Associate Editor of the weekly educational publication 'Education Quill.'

Salty to Sick

Christopher Damman

People have been using salt since the dawn of civilization to process, preserve and enhance foods. In ancient Rome, salt was so central to commerce that soldiers were paid their "salarium," or salaries, in salt, for instance. Salt's value was in part as a food preservative, keeping unwanted microbes at bay while allowing desired ones to grow. It was this remarkable ability to regulate bacterial growth that likely helped spark the development of fermented foods ranging from sauerkraut to salami, olives to bread, cheese to kimchi.

Today, salt has become ubiquitous and highly concentrated in increasingly processed diets. The evidence has mounted that too much salt – specifically the sodium chloride added to preserve and enhance the flavor of many highly processed foods – is making people sick. It can cause high blood pressure and contribute to heart attacks and stroke. It is also associated with an increased risk of developing stomach and colon cancer, Ménière's disease, osteoporosis and obesity.

How might a substance previously thought worth its weight in gold have transformed into something many medical institutions consider a key predictor of disease?

Salt lobbyists may be one answer to this question. And as a gastroenterologist and research scientist at the University of Washington, I want to share the mounting evidence

that microbes from the shadows of your gut might also shed some light on how salt contributes to disease.

BLOOD PRESSURE COOKERS

Sodium's role in blood pressure and heart disease results largely from its regulating the amount of water inside your blood vessels. In simple terms, the more sodium in your blood, the more water it pulls into your blood vessels. This leads to higher blood pressure and subsequently an increased risk for heart attack and stroke. Some people may be more or less sensitive to the effects salt has on blood pressure.

Recent research suggests an additional way salt may raise blood pressure – by altering your gut microbiome. Salt leads to a decrease in healthy microbes and the key metabolites they produce from fiber. These metabolites decrease inflammation in blood vessels and keep them relaxed, contributing to reduced blood pressure.

With the exception of certain organisms that thrive in salt called halophiles, high levels of salt can poison just about any microbe, even ones your body wants to keep around. This is why people have been using salt for a long time to preserve food and keep unwanted bacteria away.

But modern diets often have too much sodium. According to the World Health Organization, healthy consumption amounts to less than 2,000 milligrams per day for the average adult. The global mean

intake of 4,310 milligrams of sodium has likely increased the amount of salt in the gut over healthy levels.

SALT OF THE GIRTH

Sodium is connected to health outcomes other than



blood pressure, and your microbiome may be playing a role here, too.

High sodium diets and higher sodium levels in stool are significantly linked to metabolic disorders, including elevated blood sugar, fatty liver disease and weight gain. In fact, one study estimated that for every one gram per day increase in dietary sodium, there is a 15% increased risk of obesity.

A gold-standard dietary study from the National Institutes of Health found that those on a diet of ultrapro-

cessed foods over two weeks ate about 500 more calories and weighed about 2 pounds more compared with those on a minimally processed diet. One of the biggest differences between the two diets was the extra 1.2 grams of sodium

consumed with the ultraprocessed diets. A leading explanation for why increased salt may lead to weight gain despite having no calories is that sodium increases cravings. When sodium is combined with simple sugars and unhealthy fats, these so-called hyperpalatable foods may be linked to fat gain, as they are particularly good at stimulating the reward centers in the brain and addiction-like eating behaviors. Salt may also connect to cravings via a short circuit in the gut microbiome. Micro-

biome metabolites stimulate the release of a natural version of weight loss drugs Wegovy and Ozempic, the gut hormone GLP-1. Through GLP-1, a healthy microbiome can control your appetite, blood sugar levels and your body's

decision to burn or store energy as fat. Too much salt may interfere with its release. Other explanations for salt's effect on metabolic disease, with varying amounts of evidence, include increased sugar absorption, increased gut-derived corticosteroids and a sugar called fructose that can lead to fat accumulation and decreases in energy use for heat production.

DESALIN-NATIONS

While many countries are implementing national salt reduction initiatives, sodium

consumption in most parts of the world remains on the rise. Dietary salt reduction in the United States in particular remains behind the curve, while many European countries have started to see benefits such as lower blood pressure and fewer deaths from heart disease through initiatives like improved package labeling of salt content, reformulating foods to limit salt and even salt taxes.

Comparing the nutrition facts of fast-food items between countries reveals considerable variability. For instance, McDonald's chicken nuggets are saltiest in the U.S. and even American Coke contains salt, an ingredient it lacks in other countries.

The salt industry in the U.S. may have a role here. It lobbied to prevent government regulations on salt in the 2010s, not dissimilar from what the tobacco industry did with cigarettes in the 1980s. Salty foods sell well. One of the key voices of the salt industry for many years, the now-defunct Salt Institute, may have confused public health messaging around the importance of salt reduction by emphasizing the less common instances where restriction can be dangerous.

But the evidence for reducing salt in the general diet is mounting, and institutions are responding. In 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued new industry guidance calling for a voluntary gradual reduction of salt in commercially processed and prepared foods. The Salt Institute dis-

solved in 2019. Other organizations such as the American Frozen Food Institute and major ingredient suppliers such as Cargill are on board with lowering dietary salt.

FROM ADD-VICTE TO ADVICE

How can you feed your gut microbiome well while being mindful of your salt intake?

Start with limiting your consumption of highly processed foods: salty meats (such as fast food and cured meat), salty treats (such as crackers and chips) and salty sneaks (such as soft drinks, condiments and breads). Up to 70% of dietary salt in the U.S. is currently consumed from packaged and processed foods.

Instead, focus on foods low in added sodium and sugar and high in potassium and fiber, such as unprocessed, plant-based foods: beans, nuts, seeds, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Fermented foods, though often high in sodium, may also be a healthier option due to high levels of short-chain fatty acids, fiber, polyphenols and potassium.

Finally, consider the balance of dietary sodium and potassium. While sodium helps keep fluid in your blood vessels, potassium helps keep fluid in your cells. Dietary sodium and potassium are best consumed in balanced ratios.

While all advice is best taken with a grain of salt, your microbiome gently asks that it just not be large.

By arrangements with The Conversation

General Manager Reviews Performance Of Northern Railway

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Shobhan Chaudhuri, General Manager Northern Railway held a performance review meeting with the departmental heads of Northern Railway and DRMs. The GM emphasized that Safety is the main concern over Railways, for which all out efforts should be directed towards maintaining the tracks, rolling stock, signaling and electric overhead wires are working in top order. He advised the departments to regularly conduct training and refresher courses for the staff to keep them motivated and informed of the working of the system to minimize human error.



He also instructed the department heads and DRMs that since summer season is round the corner, all divisions to take

all necessary remedial actions to proper & efficient working of signaling systems and instructed that monitoring of signals and rail welds should be done extensively and no error should be left.

He also emphasized on focusing on electrical safety on tracks as well as safety in relay and panel rooms for error free movement of trains. He stressed upon minimizing the human failure in train operation. He advised department heads and DRMs, to maintain punctuality and keep pace for freight loading with safety as priority. He also informed that, loading of food grains & other items have steadily increased with every passing month.

NIT Srinagar hosts expert talk on 'FactSage & applications in Process Modeling'

Srinagar: The Department of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering (MME) in association with Dhaatu Mitra Club on Tuesday organized an expert talk on 'FactSage & applications in Process Modeling' by Dr. Srishilan C of IIT Jammu.

Registrar and Head MME, Prof. Atikur Rahman expressed his gratitude to resource persons and stated that such events are aimed to expose students to a variety of topics beyond their curriculum.

"It provides a platform to interact and exchange ideas with eminent experts. It helps scholars, students to develop an

all-round and nuanced view of a topic and research opportunities," Prof. Rahman said.

Dr. Srishilan is presently working as a full-time Assistant professor at Indian Institute of Technology Jammu. His research interests in Computational modeling of process metallurgy, high temperature pyro-metallurgical processes and metallurgical waste recycling.

In his talk, Dr. Srishilan provided a comprehensive introduction to FactSage and its versatile capabilities. He discussed its applications in materials research and process design

optimization.

Dr. Srishilan provided valuable insights into the significance of computational thermodynamics and demonstrated how coding can be effectively implemented in metallurgy to enhance student interest.

During his talk, he also provided guidance to students on pursuing internships, engaging with faculty, and navigating application processes.

Dr. Srishilan gave insights and importance of computational thermodynamics and how to implement coding in metallurgy to boost interest of students.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

2 Back-to-back

tourists to plan accordingly particularly during 30th March.

Farmers are advised to suspend farm operations during 27th-31st March, the advisory reads, adding that the possibility of landslides, mudslides and shooting stones during the above period cannot be ruled out.

Thunderstorm and lightning activity with possibility of hailstorm & gusty winds during 27-30th March are also possible, the advisory reads.

Meanwhile, night temperature recorded an increase at most places barring Srinagar and Kupwara, a MeT official said.

He said that Srinagar recorded a minimum of 5.4°C against 7.0°C on the previous night and it was above normal by 0.4°C for the summer capital of JK for this time of the year.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of 4.4°C against 4.2°C on the previous night and it was 0.7°C above normal for the gateway town of Kashmir, he said.

Pahalgam recorded a low of 0.7°C against 0.2°C on the previous night and it was 0.3°C above normal for the famous resort in south Kashmir.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a minimum of 6.6°C against 5.8°C on the previous night and it was 3.3°C above normal, the official said.

Kupwara town recorded a low of 3.3°C against 3.9°C on the previous night and it was 0.1°C above normal there, the official said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 2.8°C against 1.2°C on the previous night and it was above normal by 4.4°C for the famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Jammu, he said, recorded a minimum of 16.6°C and it was above normal by 1.1°C for the winter capital of J&K.

Independent Candidates

decreased, with only five candidates contesting, none of whom were independent.

In the Jammu-Reasi parliamentary constituency, formerly known as Jammu-Rajouri, independent candidates now rarely contest elections. In 2004, 26 candidates contested from this seat, including 15 independents. However, the number of independent candidates decreased over subsequent elections, with only one independent candidate participating in the 2019 elections.

The decline in independent candidates is evident in both parliamentary constituencies of the Jammu division. In the 2019 elections, out of 11 candidates, only one was an independent candidate. This trend suggests that while voter enthusiasm remains high, candidates prefer to contest elections under the banner of political parties.

Furthermore, smaller political parties are also less visible in recent parliamentary elections in the region. Advocate Dheeraj Chaudhary attributes this shift to changes in electoral dynamics since 2014, noting that parliamentary elections now primarily involve national parties. This trend is not unique to the Jammu division but is observed across various regions.

Contesting elections independently requires significant resources, including manpower and finances. Moreover, geographical constraints in the Jammu division make it challenging to reach all areas, further reducing the number of independent candidates. As a result, independent participation in parliamentary elections continues to decline. (KNO)

Saroori Files

Sharma and other party leaders were also present in the rally. This is the first election for DPAP after it was formed by Azad in 2022 when he ended his over 40 years association with Congress party after developing differences with Rahul Gandhi's working. Through these elections, Azad and his party will come to know where they stand and how much he has been able to convince the people about his formation of party.

Addressing the rally, Azad sought votes from people on the basis of the work done by him in the past when he served Jammu and Kashmir as Chief Minister from 2005 to 2008 and when he was union health minister in Manmohan Singh led UPA government at the centre.

"During my tenure, I focused on overall development of the state and didn't leave any area without development. Since independence Jammu and Kashmir had only three medical colleges and I gave five new medical colleges when I was union health minister. I focused on construction of roads, schools, promotion of tourism and other things during my stint as CM and everyone was benefitted," Azad said.

The DPAP was critical of those leaders and parties who for the sake of politics abuse other leaders and parties. "There are both positives and negatives about leaders and parties but we

should not abuse anybody. Leaders should criticize the policies of parties and governments and should rise above religious politics," he said, adding that leaders should have control on their way of talking.

He gave an example of healthy competition between candidates appearing in competitive examinations like IAS, JKAS and others where candidates who get less marks don't abuse those who get selected but they keep working hard to achieve what others have achieved.

Seeking votes in favour of Saroori, Azad said, "I am known for my work all over the country and no leader has been able to beat me in this regard. But there is only one leader who is above me in reaching out to the people and doing great work and he is Saroori sb. He wakes up early and covers every nook and corner of his area. If he is elected from this seat, get ready to welcome him everywhere."

He asked people to choose between leaders who can shake the walls of parliament and those who sleep there. "It is not a secret anymore that a few MPs sleep in the Parliament and few shake it. You will have to choose which one should represent you," the DPAP chairman said.

Earlier, Saroori along with his supporters reached Kathua from Jammu in a huge cavalcade of vehicles and straight away drove to the DC office to file nomination papers.

Besides, an independent candidate Mohd Ali Gujjar filed his nomination papers in the office of the returning officer for the constituency at Kathua, an official spokesman said.

With filing of two nominations, the total number of candidates has gone up to seven including Union minister Jitendra Singh who is seeking re-election for the third term.

Congress candidate Choudhary Lal Singh is scheduled to file his nomination papers on the last day for filing of nomination on March 27.

Shiv Sena Extends

well-planned strategy". "Keeping in mind the safety of the leaders, the party high-command has given instructions not to field candidates on both the seats of Jammu division (Udhampur and Jammu). The party will support the Congress candidates in the polls," Sahni said here.

He said all the district units, workers and supporters of the party have been instructed to vote and campaign in favour of the Congress candidates in the two seats.

Udhampur and Jammu will go to polls on April 19 and April 26 respectively.

Sahni said his party will continue to raise its voice for the restoration of the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and keep reminding the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre of its promises about restoration of statehood, a safe return of Kashmiri Pandits and a peaceful atmosphere.

"Along with this, Jammu and Kashmir is demanding protection of its cultural identity under Article 371 (of the Constitution) and reservation in employment and education for local youngsters, and the party will continue its fight for the same," he said. PTI

Ease MCC

the coinciding agricultural season, the situation presents a daunting challenge for the farming community.

Similarly, Ghulam Abbas, a farmer from Baramulla urged the government to relax the MCC guidelines as the agricultural pursuits cannot afford delays.

The farmers have urged the government to strike a balance between democratic proceedings and ensuring uninterrupted essential services crucial for their sustenance.

They emphasize the necessity for flexibility in MCC regulations to mitigate adverse impacts on the agriculture and horticulture sectors during election cycles.

"We are optimistic for a swift resolution from the CEO to ensure seamless support for our crops during this critical juncture," they said.

Court Grants

Engineering (Computer Science) and a Software developer— from Tamil Nadu and shifted him to judicial custody at District Jail Srinagar on 9 January this year.

In its objections, the prosecution had said the accused is the important part of the "crime syndicate", and along with other absconding associates against whom investigation is going on and are yet to be arrested, floated a bogus and sham company and induced the general public to invest in the company so that the public may earn profits and dividends. The public had believed in the bona-fides of this bogus and sham company and invested to the tune of crores of rupees, the prosecution said. However, this bogus private company after gobbling up the huge investment from the general public disappeared, and thus people in general were cheated and defrauded, it said.

"The role of the accused facing the trial was critical into the whole design of the conspiracy. There is material on record which suggests unequivocally that the role of the accused/ applicant is central to the scam of bogus investment opportunities," the prosecution said, adding, "So, in the facts and circumstances of the case, the application at this stage when even the charge is yet to be framed, merits rejection".

On the other hand, advocate Aamir Massodi contended that there was no bar for the court to release the accused on bail who had been in custody for months together.

He submitted that no notice was served to the accused under Section 41-A CrPc and that investigation of the case is completed and the accused is not required to be kept in custody.

"The charge-sheet against the accused has been filed by the Police Station Cyber Crime, which means that the investigation of the case is complete and the custody of the accused is not required for any personal interrogation," Forest Magistrate Feroz Ahmad Khan said and granted bail to the accused, Kennedy, subject conditions that the accused will not try to win over or influence the prosecution witnesses in any manner and that he will participate in the trial before this court.

Centre To Consider

maintenance of public order". An area or district is notified as disturbed under the AFSPA to facilitate the operations of the armed forces.

Shah had earlier said the AFSPA has been removed in 70 per cent areas in the northeastern states even though it is in force in J-K.

There have been demands from various organisations and individuals in J-K and the northeastern states to revoke the AFSPA.

Shah said the assembly elections will be held in J-K before September.

"Enshrining democracy in Jammu and Kashmir is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise and it will be fulfilled. However, this democracy will not be confined to three families alone and will be a people's democracy," he said.

The Supreme Court had directed to conduct the assembly polls in the UT before September.

On the issues that have emerged around the reservation of SCs, STs and OBCs, Shah said for the first time, the OBCs of J-K have been given reservation by the Modi government and women have been given one-third reservation.

"OBC reservations have been made in the panchayat and the urban local bodies. We have made space for the SCs and the STs. Without reducing the share of the Gujjar and Bakarwals, the Pahadis have been given 10 per cent reservation. And special provisions have been made to accommodate the displaced people from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir," he said.

The Centre is determined to ensure that these benefits percolate to the grassroots level, he said.

Shah claimed that National Conference (NC) leader Farooq Abdullah and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti tried their best to create acrimony on these reservations but the people have understood their intentions now.

He asked why the NC did not give reservation to these people in the last over 75 years.

The home minister claimed Abdullah had left for England when terrorism was at its peak. Both Abdullah and Mehbooba have no right to speak about on the issue, he added.

"The number of fake encounters that took place during their time has never been matched by any other regime," he said.

Shah said in the last five years, not a single fake encounter has taken place. Rather the FIRs have been lodged against the people involved in fake encounters, he added.

"We will have a dialogue with the youths of Kashmir and not with the organisations that have roots in Pakistan. They are responsible for the deaths of 40,000 youths," he said.

He said the Modi government has banned 12 organisations for their involvement in terror activities, designated 36 individuals as terrorists, registered more than 22 cases to stop terror finance and seized properties worth Rs 150 crore.

As many as 90 properties were also attached and 134 bank accounts have been frozen, he said.

"We have enshrined peace, and peace cannot be bought. Whoever wants to have a dialogue has to do so within the ambit of the Constitution," he said.

Shah said the Hurriyat Conference has no place in the process of dialogue. He also made it clear that the BJP and the entire Parliament believe that the POK is an integral part of India.

"The Muslim brothers are also Indians and the Hindu brothers living in POK are also Indians and the land which has been illegally occupied by Pakistan also belongs to India. It is the goal of every Indian, every Kashmiri to get it back," he said.

The home minister said in 2010, there were

2564 incidents of stone-pelting which now is zero.

From 2004 to 2014, there were 7217 terror incidents. That has reduced to 2227 from 2014 to 2023, and this is almost a 70 per cent reduction, he said.

Shah said the total number of deaths from 2004 to 2014 was 2829 and it has come down to 915 during 2014-23, which is a 68 per cent decrease.

The deaths of civilians was 1770 and has decreased to 341, which is an 81 per cent drop. The deaths of security forces decreased from 1060 to 574, which is a 46 per cent decrease, he said.

The senior BJP leader said without the support of the people, such a comprehensive change can never take place.

"The people who talk about Islam should know that 85 per cent of the deceased were our Muslim brothers and sisters," he said.

Shah also asked the youths of J-K to stay away from the conspiracies of Pakistan.

"Today Pakistan is shrouded by the scourge of hunger and poverty and even people there see Kashmir as heaven. I want to tell everyone that if anyone can save Kashmir, he is Prime Minister Modi," he said.

The home minister said the Modi government is boosting the morale of the security forces by giving jobs to the family members of the martyrs.

"Today, not a single martyr's family is left without a job," he said.

From Kidnapping

and mental abuse. He added that he filed a complaint with the National Commission of Women on January 3rd.

According to Mughal, her brother reportedly cancelled her DJ gigs and even returned a 50,000 rupee advance payment to an organizer on her behalf.

"I used to protest on the streets of Mumbai alone for three months and I didn't give-up," Mughal said.

Bhajnaka told a news website, "I was surrounded by drug addicts, alcoholics and criminals. I would stay up all night afraid that any of them could come and hurt me physically."

She added that she had been prohibited from meeting any family members for over six weeks. After approximately 40 days, her maternal uncle finally visited her. She recounted pleading with him to take her back home, but he adamantly refused, stating with pride that they had prevented her from marrying a Muslim man.

After some media organizations in Assam picked-up the story, Bhajnaka's family quietly moved her to a resort in Shillong where she managed to call him from a phone.

Her family, according to Mughal, asked her to make a video saying that she had been living happily with them for the last three months.

"I informed the police immediately and they raided the resort and rescued her on 12 March," he said, adding, "her family didn't want to get her married to a muslim man."

Despite Mughal's repeated attempts to get help from the authorities, including filing reports with the Dispur police and the National Commission for Women, there was no progress at first. The Assam police, according to the reports, called it a "family issue" and called the DJ a drug addict—a claim that the couple contested.

On reaching Mumbai, the couple decided to marry without wasting further time and tied the knot on 21 March. "We are trying to lodge a zero FIR against the family," he added.

In her information to police, Bhajnaka said that she got married Mughal according to Muslim rites and customs with her "free wish and without any pressure, coercion"

"...But my parents are against this marriage. I state that I left my parents home with my own free will and consent without taking any cash and jewelry, I have only my own cloth, which I wear," reads the information to police.

It further requests police to notify them if her parents file any complaints against her or her husband regarding their marriage.

Mughal said his wife has willingly converted and they are living without any fear now. "She is now named Aleeza," Mughal said.

Rights advocates condemn Bhajnaka's involuntary confinement as a serious violation of her fundamental freedoms. Undeterred, the couple vows to continue their legal fight until they see justice for the ordeal they have endured.

Insurance Company

SHA requested them to continue the contract in the interest of patient care, but the request was refused.

The SHA then approached the High Court to stay the exit, but the petition was dismissed on February 2, causing further complications for SHA and beneficiaries across the union territory.

Officials from SHA assured that the scheme is currently functioning normally, and the dispute between the government and the insurance company does not affect its implementation. Empanelled hospitals are aware that the funds are documented for them, though there may be delays due to the ongoing dispute.

While there was a proposal to remove the four common surgeries from the list of free surgeries, it has not been implemented yet. Approximately 1500 patients avail themselves of this scheme's benefits daily in J&K, and these services will continue for patients.

The Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT scheme was launched by the Prime Minister of India on December 26, 2020. Over the past four years, thousands of patients have benefited from this scheme.

Ex BJP MLA

Iqbal Dar at a function, the spokesperson added.

He said the new entrants were welcomed into the party fold by Congress in-charge of Jammu and Kashmir Bharatsinh Solanki, All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary Manoj Yadav, Pradesh Congress Committee president Vikar Rasool Wani and the party's candidates in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls -- Choudhary Lal Singh and Raman Bhalha.

Meanwhile, Solanki released the "Paanch Nyay" (five justices) of the Congress and said his party has provided for justice to every section of the society.

"(Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's guarantees are false and fake, but the Congress will fulfil all these guarantees as already proved in the past elections," Solanki said, adding that former party chief Rahul Gandhi took out the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra across the length and breadth of the country to feel the "pulse of people and fight for justice" to the common man.

He said the Congress has fielded the best candidates to serve the people and represent them in Parliament as the people of Jammu and Kashmir have "suffered a lot under the Modi regime".

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir have lost their identity, rights and status, and there is no democracy in the Union Territory for more than five years. It is time for the people of the region to teach the BJP a lesson for their better future, restoration of statehood and other rights," Solanki said.

He said the Congress, in a coalition with the INDIA bloc constituents and other like-minded parties, shall forcefully fight the upcoming Lok Sabha polls and ensure its victory with the support of people.

Pulwama Man

intimidation," reads a statement. "In this regard, FIR no 22/2024 u/s 384, 506, 420 was registered and investigation set into motion. During the course of investigation one person namely Andleeb Ahmad Mir son of Ab Rasheed Mir resident of Rajpora has been arrested and two toy pistols used for the crime have been recovered from his possession," the statement reads.

"Further investigation of the case is going on," the statement reads.

"It is appealed to the general public that such miscreants who are using unjust terror to do extortions and create a panic atmosphere should be immediately identified and information be shared with the police," added the statement.

2 Booked Under

Ghulam Mohammad Wani—both residents of Sumlar.

Man Dies In

has been shifted to GMC Doda," he added. He identified the deceased as Irshad Hussain son of Abdul Rasheed of Mangota, while the injured has been identified as Yasir Hussain—deceased's brother.

Patwari Arrested

from the complainant for issuing Girdawari of land owned by him.

"CBI laid a trap and during the trap proceedings, the accused asked the complainant to handover the bribe amount to his associate, a Chowkidar, Halqa Nanga, District Samba (J&K). Both the accused were apprehended during the transaction of bribe of Rs. 9,000/-. Searches are being conducted at the residential premises of the accused," the statement said.

The arrested accused will be produced before the Court of Special Judge, Anti-Corruption (CBI Cases), Jammu on 27-03-2024, the statement said—(KNO)

Man Arrested

accused raped her daughter when she had gone to a hospital.

A case was registered under relevant sections of law at Domana police station and further investigation is in progress, the spokesman said.

PDD warns employees against demonstrations, strike in light of SC ruling

KO NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Department has warned departmental employees against demonstrations or strikes, citing the government instructions, J&K Government Employees (Conduct) Rules and ruling of the Supreme Court.

In an instruction circular issued here today, (circular no. 03-JK PDD of 2024 dated: 26-03-2024), the department said 'it has come to notice that some employees are resorting to demonstrations and strikes in favour of certain assumed demands, which is totally illegal'.

Citing the government instructions, J&K Government Employees (Conduct) Rules and ruling of the Supreme Court for dealing with such issues, the circular said that the Rule 20 (ii) of the Jammu and Kashmir Government Employees (Conduct) Rules, 1971 clearly underlines that; no government employee shall resort to, or in any way abet any form of strike in connection with any matter pertaining to his service or of any other government employee".

Elaborating further, it said that Vide SRO-160 dated 14-7-1995, the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Recognition of Service Association) Rules, 1995 issued by the General Administration Department prohibit Gazetted officers from making associations. These rules further provide that recognition of the Service Associations already registered can also be withdrawn if the government is satisfied that such association is violating the service conduct rules, or is not fulfilling the conditions laid down in the rules. The Circular also mentioned

and the government employees cannot go on a strike affecting society... Government employees cannot claim that they can take the society at ransom by going on strike. Even if there is injustice to some extent, as presumed by such employees, in a democratic welfare State, they have to resort to the machinery provided under different statutory provisions for redressal of their grievances. Strike as a weapon is mostly misused which results in chaos and total maladministration", it said.

The circular has warned that employees who intend to go on strike or demonstrations, or those found organising such demonstrations shall be dealt with strictly as per law.

General Administration Department's communication of 2023, warning the government employees to desist from uncalled demonstrations and strikes, which constitute an act of serious indiscipline and misconduct. Quoting a ruling by the Supreme Court in case Appeal (Civil) No.5556/2003 titled T.K. Rangarajan vs Government of Tamil Nadu (SC 2003) the circular instructions read that the employees have no fundamental, statutory or moral right to resort to strike as there is no law regarding it, and also, according to various service and conduct rules, they are prohibited to go on a strike. "A strike is a powerful weapon; it affects the society as a whole,

the nation, underlined the importance of voter registration and participation in voting for establishing a vibrant and truly people's democracy where there is accountability and transparency. District Nodal Officer SVEEP emphasized for strengthening the democracy through greater electoral participation at the grassroots level. Speakers on the occasion urged the women folk, especially young female voters to enthusiastically participate in the upcoming Lok Sabha election and contribute to the strengthening of democracy. They also highlighted the significance of active participation of the women in the electoral process for betterment of the nation. Scintillating cultural programme, felicitation of students achievers, skit on SVEEP and essay competition were the main highlights of the program. The Coordinator SVEEP, Rayees Masroor administered the Voting pledge to the participants.

On the occasion, ARO appreciated the enthusiasm of women voters of assembly constituency Kupwara. He, while highlighting the importance of the electoral process in shaping the future of



Sonam Wangchuk Ends 21-day-long Hunger Strike In Ladakh

Agencies

LEH: Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk on Tuesday evening ended his 21-day-long hunger strike in support of the demand for statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The first phase of the hunger strike ended on Tuesday but this is not the end of the agitation," Wangchuk said after taking a glass of juice from a minor girl here amid a massive turnout of people at the protest venue. The renowned education reformist said the end of the hunger strike is the beginning of the new phase of the ongoing agitation.

"We will continue our struggle (in support of our demands). The gathering of 10,000 people at the venue and participation of over 60,000 others over the past 20 days are a testimony of the people's aspirations," he said.

Earlier, the climate activist made a fresh appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfil promises made to the people.

In video messages shared on X, a frail-looking Wangchuk, whose 'climate fast' entered the 21st day on Tuesday, called on the people of Ladakh to use their franchise "very carefully" this time in the interest of the nation.

A renowned education reformist, Wangchuk has been on 'climate fast' in sub-zero temperatures since March 6, a day after talks between joint representatives of Leh-based Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), which are jointly spearheading the agitation to demand



Actor Prakash Raj visits Sonam Wangchuk in Ladakh

Agencies

LEH: Actor Prakash Raj on Tuesday visited climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who is on hunger strike for nearly three weeks here to demand statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Raj, a vocal critic of the ruling BJP, extended his support to the Wangchuk-led protest and said when the governments do not keep their promises, the people have no option but to unite and raise their voice in accordance with their constitutional rights.

"It's my birthday today.. and I'm celebrating by showing solidarity with @Wangchuk66 and the people of Ladakh who are fighting for us...our country..our environment and our future let's stand by them," he wrote on X. Talking to reporters after

meeting Wangchuk at the protest site, Raj said "we have heard from the people and the scientists that they have been promised (sixth schedule by BJP) and when we remind them (of their promise) they are seeing them as criminals".

"They (politicians) are making big promises and generating false hopes at election times but later when they take our votes, they don't look back for next five years. They have nothing to do with us, we are fools to trust their words," Raj said.

He said the only way is to unite and raise the voice to seek answers from the government and its promises because that is the right of the public.

"If they have promised it in the manifesto and took votes but later betrayed, where will we go? we have to fight (for our rights)," Raj said.

"We do not think of Modi and Amit (Shah) as just politicians, we would rather like to think of them as statesmen and for that they will have to show some character and some farsightedness," the climate activist said.

"We do not think of Modi and Amit (Shah) as just politicians, we would rather like to think of them as statesmen and for that they will have to show some character and some farsightedness," the climate activist said.

Leh-based Apex Body and KDA will announce the future course of action on Wednesday.

Reminding the prime minister of the promises made by the BJP in its election manifestos, Wangchuk said Modi is a devotee of Lord Ram and should follow his teaching of 'pran jaye par vachan na jaye' (one may lose their life, but must not break their promise).

"While India is the mother of democracy, we citizens have a very special power. We are the kingmakers, we can compel a government to change their ways or change the government if that doesn't work. Let us remember to use our ballot power very carefully this time in the interest of the nation," said Wangchuk, whose life inspired Aamir Khan's character Rancho in Bollywood blockbuster "3 Idiots".

Lok Sabha elections will be held in seven phases from April 19 to June 1. Ladakh will go to polls in the fifth phase on May 20.

Over the past 20 days, Wangchuk said, around 60,000 of Ladakh's 3 lakh residents have participated in the hunger strike demonstrating their pain but "no word came from this government".

"We are trying to remind and awaken the consciousness of our Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to safeguard the fragile ecosystem of Himalayan mountains in Ladakh and the unique indigenous tribal cultures that thrive here.

"We do not think of Modi and Amit (Shah) as just politicians, we would rather like to think of them as statesmen and for that they will have to show some character and some farsightedness," the climate activist said.

Police Seize Vehicle Purchased from Drug Trafficking in B'la

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police in Baramulla Tuesday attached a vehicle bought from money earned from alleged drug trafficking activity.

"Continuing its action against drug peddlers, Police in Baramulla attached vehicle (Swift bearing registration number JK01M-7247 worth Lacs belonging to notorious drug peddler namely Ashiq Illahi Parray son of Ab Razaq resident of Lawaypora Shalteng Srinagar," reads a statement.

"The action was taken under the sections 68-E read with 68-F (1) of NDPS Act of 1985 & were linked with case FIR No. 368/2023 u/s 8/21-29 NDPS Act of PS Pattan."

"The property was identified as illegally acquired property during the course of investigation/enquiry conducted by Police. The property was prima facie acquired from illicit trafficking in Narcotic drug and Psycho-tropic substances by the drug peddlers," the statement reads.

"This operation reaffirms the commitment of Police to combat the drug menace. Local people of the area hailed the initiative of the Police," the statement reads further.

JDI, DIPR employees condole demise of Vevaik Puri's father

KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Joint Director Information Kashmir, Mohammad Aslam and employees of Joint Directorate Information, Kashmir have condoled the demise of father of Joint Director Information (Hqr), Vevaik Puri.

In a condolence meeting, Joint Director Kashmir expressed deepest condolences with Vevaik Puri and his family. Deputy Director Information (PR), Ahsan ul Haq Chisti; other officers and employees were also present on the occasion.

The officers and officials extended their heartfelt condolences with the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace of departed soul.

Several Activists From Budgam And Kupwara Join PC



Agencies

SRINAGAR: J&K Peoples Conference warmly embraced scores of socio-political activists from diverse political backgrounds, hailing from Budgam and Kupwara districts, showcasing the party's growing influence and appeal among the people.

Presided over by PC President Sajad Lone at the party headquarters in Church Lane, Sonwar, multiple joining ceremonies marked this significant moment of growth and surge in support.

With a warm welcome extended to all new entrants, Mr. Lone expressed his appreciation for the party's steady expansion and its increasing acceptability and support in previously underrepresented areas.

"The party leadership is dedicated to promoting inclusivity and narrowing disparities, ensuring that every district and community has a voice in shaping the region's future and receives a fair share for development," he affirmed. He further reiterated the Peoples Con-

ference's unwavering dedication to prioritizing the welfare of the people and driving comprehensive socio-economic progress.

"Our party is rooted in the belief that true development can only be achieved when every citizen has access to quality education, healthcare, employment opportunities and a secure future," he said while adding "We pledge to work tirelessly to create an environment that nurtures growth, empowers communities, and uplifts the lives of all our people."

The prominent individuals who joined from Soibugh, Budgam, included Mohammad Akbar Wani, Abdul Gani Paul, Mohammad Rajab Dar and Fayaz Ahmad Mir.

Another group of new entrants from Sholipora, Budgam, were also welcomed into the party cadres. Led by Parvaiz Ahmad Bhat the members included Farooq Ahmad Dar, Mohammad Younus Bhat, Mohammad Tawseef, Mohammad Arif Dar (Tehsil Head), Danish Rasool, Abdul Ahad Dar, Abdul Hameed Ganai, Mohd Sultan Bhat and Mouzian Amin.

Stay Away From Seeking Votes On Basis Of Religion: Azad To DPAP Workers

Agencies

JAMMU: Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad on Tuesday asked his party colleagues to stay away from seeking votes on the basis of religion, asserting that religion has no role in politics.

He also asked them not to use abusive words against rival candidates during the campaigning for the Lok Sabha polls.

Azad made the advice at a meeting of party workers in Kathua district after party colleague and former minister G M Saroori filed his nomination papers from Udhampur constituency.

Saroori (69) filed his papers before the returning officer in Kathua, taking the total number of candidates who have submitted their nominations from Udhampur seat to six. Five candidates, including former Union minister Jitendra Singh, had earlier filed their nominations from the seat which is going to polls in the first phase on April 19.

The last date for filing nomination is March 27. Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on March 28 and names can be withdrawn by March 30.

"My 45 years' record (in politics) is before everyone and I have never spoke

against rival candidates during election-eering across the country...religion has no role in politics and once the elections are over, the successful candidates should keep the doors of their houses and offices open to meet people irrespective of their religion, caste or creed," Azad said.

The former chief minister, who resigned from the Congress to launch his own party in September 2022, asked his party leaders to follow his footsteps and avoid using abusive words against rival candidates or seeking votes on the basis of religion, region, caste and creed.

"Every political party or government has good or bad things to their credit. You can speak positively or negatively on the policies of a party or a government but don't indulge in abuse of rival candidates. Let the people decide their vote on the basis of the performance of the candidates and their parties," Azad said, urging voters to support development and progress.

He also requested media persons to stop provoking rival candidates against each other and said "a (burst of) AK-47 rifle can kill 36 persons, but one wrong news will kill thousands of people at one go".

Azad underscored the pivotal role of an effective campaign in ensuring the success of party candidate Saroori.



Mega Awareness Prog For Women Voters At Kupwara

KO NEWS SERVICE

KUPWARA: As part of the calendar of activities, a constituency level Mega Awareness program under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) was on Tuesday organized at BHSS Kupwara.

The awareness programme was organised specifically target the female voters of the Kupwara for their enthusiastic participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The programme was presided over by ARO, 3- Kupwara, Irfan Bahadur. District Nodal Officer, SVEEP, Abdul Majeed Dar; ZEOs and Principals of Kupwara and Khumriyal Zone besides hundreds of women including young female voters participated in the mega program.

On the occasion, ARO appreciated the enthusiasm of women voters of assembly constituency Kupwara. He, while highlighting the importance of the electoral process in shaping the future of

LOK SABHA ELECTIONS 2024

DEO Reviews Arrangements In Budgam

Agencies

BUDGAM: The District Election Officer (DEO), Budgam, Akshay Labroo on tuesday visited distribution and collection centres of Beerwah and Budgam Assembly Constituencies within the Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, 2024.

The DEO along with SSP Budgam, Al Tahir Gillani visited centres at SAM Degree College, Budgam, and Boys Higher Secondary School Magam.

On the occasion, the DEO assessed security arrangements including CCTV installation, safety measures, water, electricity supply and other required arrangements at these centres.

He called for round the clock surveillance and security of all election related material and machinery to be kept at these centres during the 5th phase of Baramulla Lok Sabha segment of elections.

The DEO also inspected the accommodation facilities for the security personnel and instructed concerned to ensure all required arrangements are placed in time at designated locations.

Speaking on the occasion, the DEO maintained that all guidelines of Election Commission of India shall be implemented in letter and spirit.

He said that these centres are being set up as separate enclosure, having separate entrance, in and out CCTV surveillance and other safety measures in place as per the SOP and protocol for these centres mandated by ECI guidelines.

The DC also took assessment of assured minimum facilities at various polling booths in Magam and Budgam areas.

Among others, ADC Budgam, Mehraj-ud-Din Diah, concerned SDM, CPO, Dy. DEO, Nodal Officers, AROs, SE R&B, ExEns of various sectors and other concerned also accompanied the DEO.

DEO Empowers First-Time Voters In Bandipora

KO NEWS SERVICE

BANDIPORA: As part of ongoing efforts to promote voter education and participation under SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation), the District Administration Bandipora today organised a unique initiative of pigeon releasing at Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

The Pigeon releasing event was attended by District Election Officer (DEO) Bandipora, Shakeel ul Rehman; Dy. District Election Officer, Mohammad Rafeeq Bhat; Chief Education Officer, Dr. G.M.Pujoo, BLOs and other concerned.

The main attraction of the program was the participation of newly registered first-time voters who are going to cast their first vote

in upcoming parliamentary Elections.

The DEO Bandipora, along with first-time voters, released the pigeons with messages "My Vote for My Country" attached to their necks.

On the occasion, the DEO interacted with first-time voters and emphasized ensuring that youth are well-informed and empowered to exercise their franchise.

He stressed upon the SVEEP team to take more proactive steps in order to bridge the gaps and ensure that every eligible voter is informed and empowered to exercise his/her right to vote.

Later, an awareness program under SVEEP was also held at conference Hall Mini Secretariat Bandipora, which was attended by first-time voters, BLOs, and other concerned.

DEO Inspects Strong Room Kupwara Ahead Of Elections

KO NEWS SERVICE

KUPWARA: The District Election Officer (DEO) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan on Tuesday inspected various election facilities established by the District Administration, to evaluate the preparedness for upcoming Lok Sabha election 2024 in the district.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kupwara, Mohammad Rouf Rehman accompanied the DEO.

On the occasion, the DEO inspected Strong Room Kupwara and took stock of its functioning. She also paid a visit to District Election Control Room established at Information Office Kupwara and expressed satisfaction

over its smooth functioning.

Expressing satisfaction with the overall preparedness observed during the inspection, the DEO underscored the importance of ensuring adherence to prescribed standards of Election Commission of India to uphold the integrity and fairness of the electoral process.

She reiterated the unwavering commitment of the administration in facilitating free, fair, and transparent elections, wherein every eligible citizen can exercise their democratic right with confidence and ease.

On the occasion, DEO directed the officers of concerned departments to put in place all efforts for smooth conduct of Lok Sabha Elections.

My Name Attached To Just Promoting T20 Cricket But I've Still Got It: Kohli

Press Trust of India

BENGALURU: Not just a marketable name to promote T20 cricket, he's still got the game. This was the subtle message Virat Kohli sent out amid unfounded chatter surrounding his place in the side ahead of the World Cup's debut appearance in the United States. Kohli, who is back after a two-month paternity break, scored a match-winning 77 off 49 balls for Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Monday night against Punjab Kings and deservedly walked away with the player of the match honours.

"I know my name is nowadays quite attached to just promoting the game in many parts of the world when it comes to



T20 cricket. But, I've still got it, I guess," said the 35-year-old father of two in the post-match presentation.

His comments came in the backdrop of never-ending media speculation surrounding the team's composition for the big event to be jointly hosted by the USA and the West Indies starting June 1.

Former players like Kevin Pietersen have asked whether Kohli would make the Indian squad purely on merit or for being a megastar who will pull in fans. Kohli averages over 50 in the format and has a strike rate of 138.15.

On Monday night, hallmark of Kohli's classy knock was the way he stepped out to dispatch the fast bowlers over the extra cover boundary.

The former India captain has nothing left to prove but he realises the need for constant evolution in T20 format.

lution in T20 format.

"Well I mean you have to (make additions to your game)," he said when asked about going aerial against the pacers on the off-side.

"People know I play the cover drive pretty well so they're not going to allow me to hit gaps and with guys like KG (Kagiso Rabada) and Arshdeep (Singh) as well, he's tall. So, I mean, if they're hitting length, you have to create some momentum in the ball.

"And once you're closer to the ball, you kind of negate the bounce that's going to happen. You meet it earlier. So, I mean, you have to come up with a game plan here and there and try to keep improving your game," he explained at the post-match presentation.

Inter-Departmental Cricket Tournament Held At IUST



Observer News Service

AWANTIPORA: An Inter-Departmental Cricket Tournament held at Islamic University of Science and Technology concluded Tuesday. The final match of the tournament was played between Departments of Civil Engineering and Food Technology, in which the former emerged as the winner. The award ceremony was

attended by Sameer Wazir, Finance Officer as chief guest, heads of departments and sports coordinators.

Dr. Hilal Ahmad Rather, Assistant Director of Physical Education and Sports, welcomed the participants and introduced the team players.

He said that sports engender spirit of camaraderie and sense of belongingness.

Sports Activities Held In Bidder



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Department of Youth Services and Sports Zone Bidder inaugurated the Inter School sports activities for the year 2024-25 on Tuesday, with U-14 and U-17 Boys' Chess and Carrom competitions.

The events were held at HS Sagram, with headmaster HS Sagram along with Incharge Activities Zone Bidder Fayaz Ah Dar and other officials inaugurating the competitions.

More than 165 students participated in the sporting events, including 79 in U-14 and 86 in U-17 boys categories.

Palestine, Australia Win Again In Asia Qualifying For World Cup

Agencies

MELBOURNE: Australia thrashed Lebanon 5-0 and became the first team to advance to the final round of Asia qualifying for the 2026 World Cup on Tuesday.

An early goal from Kusi-ni Yengi in Canberra sent the Socceroos on the way to a fourth successive win in Group I and ensured progress to the next stage, with two matches to spare.

Palestine stayed second in the group after beating Bangladesh 1-0 and is on course for a first appearance in the final round of qualifying.

With less than two minutes on the clock, the impressive Craig Goodwin crossed from the left for Yengi to score his first goal for Australia from close range.

Australia put the game beyond Lebanon in the first three minutes of the second half. Bassel Jradi knocked in an own goal following a corner and Goodwin fired



home a third.

John Iredale came off the bench to make it 4-0 midway through the second half with his first international goal and Goodwin added his second and Australia's fifth with nine minutes remaining thanks to an Iredale assist.

"It means the world to me personally and to the boys," Iredale said. "We set out to score more goals to-

night and we're pleased we did that.

"Craig Goodwin's got an unbelievable left foot, and having him in the squad really boosts our quality. I was really pleased to help him get his second goal."

Michel Termanini scored Palestine's winner in Doha four minutes into stoppage time.

Palestine has seven points, five more than Lebanon and

six clear of Bangladesh.

The North Korea-Japan qualifier in Pyongyang was cancelled by FIFA after Korea said it couldn't host the game.

The top two teams from each of the nine groups in the second round progress to the final round where Asia's increased automatic allocation of eight World Cup places will be on offer.

Mumbai Indians, Sunrisers Hyderabad Eye First Win

Press Trust of India

HYDERABAD: Mumbai Indians will aim to land the killer punch after fluffing an easy run-chase in their opener when they meet a dangerous Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

Five-time champions MI had a lot going for them in their tournament opener against the Gujarat Titans, whether it was the incisive spells from pacer Jasprit Bumrah, Dewald Brevis' impactful knock or Rohit Sharma's fireworks at the top of the order.

But MI, who have built a reputation of slow starters over the years, could not manage 48 runs off 36 balls with seven wickets in hand. With the 10-team event being more competitive than ever before, Mumbai cannot afford more



such lackadaisical performances going forward.

WILL HARDIK COME UP THE ORDER?

In his first game as Mumbai captain, Hardik pushed himself down the order at number seven to accommodate the likes of Tim David and Brevis higher up.

Considering he batted much higher for the Gujarat Titans last year, there is a case for him to bat higher up the order.

Opener Ishan Kishan, back to action after a long break, could only last four balls against GT. With the T20 World Cup in mind, his performances will be tracked closely and have added significance. He needs to be at his best with the bat and behind the stumps to make the national squad.

Hardik will also be expecting an improved performance from spinners Shams Mulani and Piyush Chawla.

Match starts 7.30PM IST

IPL Shoots Up Demand For Kashmir Willow Cricket Bats

Agencies

SRINAGAR: With the commencement of Indian Premier League 2024, the demand for the Kashmir willow cricket bats has soared across the India.

As of now the cricket bat manufacturers have enhanced their production to meet the demand in the domestic as well as international market during these two mega cricket contests.

Fawzul Kabir, spokesperson of the Kashmir Cricket Bat Manufacturers Association told news agency KNO that the demand of the Kashmir willow cricket bats has doubled this year. He said the demand is on the higher side due to the ongoing IPL and upcoming T20 world cup.

"The demand for Kashmir willow cricket bats has increased this year. With the beginning of IPL, the demand is expected to go up further and we may receive more orders within the domestic market in coming weeks," Kabir said.

Short TAKES

India-Australia Series To Begin In Perth On November 22

The blockbuster five-match Test series between India and Australia will get underway at Perth's Optus Stadium on November 22, the venue replacing Adelaide Oval as the national cricket board's preferred choice for the season opener.

The series will then move to Adelaide for the day-night pink-ball Test from December 6-10, followed by Brisbane (Dec 14-18) and Melbourne for the traditional Boxing Day Test (Dec 26-30). The rubber will conclude with the New Year's Test in Sydney from January 3-7.

Dog 'Chased, Kicked, Punched' During GT-MI IPL Game

Animal rights activists condemned the "kicking and punching" of a dog who inadvertently entered a cricket stadium during an IPL match. A purported video of the incident that happened on Sunday in Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium during a match between Gujarat Titans and Mumbai Indians surfaced online.

The video shows a dog being chased by several people, including the security personnel deployed, as the dog attempts to swerve to avoid them.

FIFA World Cup Qualifier: Afghanistan Shock India 2-1

Lower-ranked Afghanistan shocked India 2-1 as the home team suffered one of its most embarrassing defeat in recent years in the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers in Guwahati on Tuesday.

In his landmark game, Sunil Chhetri did what was expected of him and found the back of the net from the spot in the 37th minute. Afghanistan equalized as Rahmat Akbari restored parity in the 71st minute. Sharif Mukhammad converted an 88th minute penalty to give his team a 2-1 lead.

Shakib Al Hasan Back In B'desh Squad For 2nd Sri Lanka Test

All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was passed fit after an Aye problem to be picked in the Bangladesh squad for the second and final Test against Sri Lanka starting on Saturday in Chattogram. Bangladesh lost the opening Test by 328 runs in four days.

Shakib has been out of the national team since November. The captain hit 82 and took two wickets to beat Sri Lanka. But, he broke his left index finger, and a vision problem was revealed.

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