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MET PREDICTS MORE RAINS IN J&K

Urges Farmers To Suspend Farm Operation Till April 16

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Weather department here on Saturday urged farmers to suspend farm operations till April 16. It predicted light to moderate rain and snow (over higher reaches) at many places.

Quoting a meteorological department official, news agency GNS reported that there is also possibility of "heavy rain/thunder/lightning/hailstorm and gusty winds" at isolated places from April 13-14.

He said, partly to generally cloudy weather with light rain/snow (higher reaches) is expected at many places during April 15 evening to April 16 morning.

From April 17-18, he said, generally dry weather is expected but there is possibility of late afternoon thundershower activity at few places.

Partly cloudy weather with light rain or snow (upper reaches) is expected at many places during the evening of April 19 to April 20 morning.

From April 21-23, he said, generally dry weather is expected but afternoon | [More on P6](#)

West Asia On The Brink Of War

As Israel Pummels Gaza, Iran Seizes Israeli Linked Ship In Hormuz



Agencies

Tehran: Commandos from Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard rappelled down from a helicopter onto an Israeli-affiliated container ship near

the Strait of Hormuz and seized the vessel Saturday, days after Tehran warned it could close the area to sea traffic.

The Middle East had braced for potential Iranian retaliation over an Israeli strike earlier

this month on an Iranian diplomatic mission in the Syrian capital that killed 16 people, including a senior general who once commanded its expeditionary Quds Force.

The wider Israeli | [More on P6](#)

17 Indians Onboard Seized Ship

Seventeen Indians are on board an Israeli-linked container ship that has been seized by the Iranian military amid heightened tensions between Iran and Israel. Official sources said India is in touch with Iranian authorities through diplomatic channels, both in Tehran and in Delhi, to ensure the welfare | [More on P6](#)

Fear, Anxiety Grip Kashmiri Students In Iran

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Amid the deteriorating security situation in West Asia, New Delhi "advised" Indian nationals to not travel till further notice to Iran and Israel- the two countries teetering on the brink of a major military escalation- putting on hold the departure of thousands of Indian pilgrims to Iran and construction workers to Israel.

This advisory has put hundreds of Kashmiri students enrolled in various Iranian universities in a quandary.

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, students expressed their concerns with some preparing to leave the country amidst growing safety concerns.

"There is news of retaliation by Iran and war everywhere, my roommate is winding her belongings and planning to leave the country for Lebanon which is causing fear among other students as well," a student studying in Imam Khomeini University in Qazvin said. She further said that she is not sure whether she should leave or stay in Iran and is worried about the outbreak of a full-fledged war between arch rivals in the Middle East.

"My family back home is worried and I don't know what I should do. My mother keeps weeping all the time and is worried for my safety," she said. In view of the escalating | [More on P6](#)

5 Killed in Doda Accident

Doda: At least five persons including a woman were killed while four others were injured in a road accident that took place at Khanpura, Phagsoo area of Thathri sub-division in Doda district on Saturday evening.

The accident occurred around 07.15 PM when a Maruti Suzuki Eeco vehicle on its way from Thathri to Karhawa Phagsoo met with an accident.

Giving details, officials said that the vehicle bearing registration number JK06A-3089 met with an accident at Khanpura, resulting in the death of five persons and injuries to four persons.

The five persons were declared brought dead at Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Thathri while four others were referred to Government Medical College (GMC) Doda for specialized treatment.

The official identified the deceased as | [More on P6](#)

MAN SLIPS FROM BUS, DIES

A man lost his life after he slipped from a bus in South Kashmir's Anantnag district on Saturday. Identified as Sabzar Ahmed Khan (35) son of late Muhammad Shaban Khan, a resident of Kapran, who was traveling in a government bus JK01Y 2540 | [More on P6](#)

Mehbooba Is The Right Choice, Says Iltija

Agencies

Srinagar: Iltija Mufti, the media advisor to PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, has affirmed Mehbooba Mufti's candidacy for the upcoming elections in the Rajouri-Anantnag constituency.

Brushing aside BJP's hesitance to field candidates in the politically charged Kashmir Valley, Iltija Mufti launched a scathing critique, accusing the party of resorting to "blackmailing and proxies."

"I'm here among the people not as Mehbooba Mufti's daughter but as her worker," Iltija Mufti declared, underlining her commitment to the cause. "I have conviction on her stand and I'm here to support and campaign for her," she added, emphasizing Mehbooba Mufti's unwavering dedication to representing the issues plaguing Jammu & Kashmir since 2019.

Addressing the BJP's political maneuvers, Iltija Mufti



remarked, "Now they are banking on their proxies." She pointed out the BJP's reluctance to field candidates in the Kashmir Valley, suggesting a lack of confidence in garnering local support.

"Mehbooba Mufti is the right choice for the people of Rajouri-Anantnag," Iltija Mufti asserted, underlining her belief in Mehbooba Mufti's ability to amplify the concerns of the populace. "She will raise the issues of the people as we know what's happening in J&K since 2019," she affirmed, positioning | [More on P6](#)

SKIPPING ELECTION 'Not End of Dr Farooq's Career': Omar

Press Trust of India

Srinagar: National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Saturday said his father Farooq Abdullah's not contesting the Lok Sabha polls does not signal an end to his electoral career.

"With my father, I have learnt over time that you never say never, ever. So until the very last breath, and may God give him many more of them, do not ever write him off for anything," Omar told PTI.

The National Conference vice president was responding to a question whether the senior Abdullah might stage a comeback when assembly elections are held in Jammu and Kashmir.



In response to a question about his sons - Zahir and Zameer -- being groomed for active politics, the former chief minister said they have done nothing that warrants such a

conjecture. "As far as my sons are concerned, what have they done? Have they made speeches, have they got mandates, have they done any | [More on P6](#)

Why Did Omar Abdullah Choose Baramulla?

In a surprising turn of events, National Conference (NC) Vice President Omar Abdullah announced his decision to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections from the Baramulla parliamentary seat instead of Srinagar, which has long been associated with his family. The move has left many political observers puzzled, but sources within the NC indicate that Omar's decision is driven by strategic political calculations. The announcement came as NC revealed its candidates for three parliamentary | [More on P6](#)

I'm Okay, Ready For Polls: Mian Altaf

Observer News Service

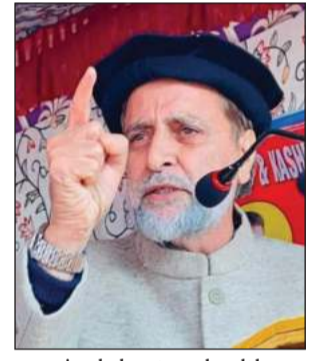
Srinagar: National Conference (NC) candidate from Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat, Mian Altaf Ahmad Larvi Saturday dismissed the rumors and stated that he was ready to contest in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

In a brief video, Mian Altaf said that he was not feeling good for the last couple of days and was advised to take rest by the doctors.

However, he said: "I am recovering now and will be contesting Lok Sabha polls."

The reports earlier claimed that he was not contesting in the elections due to his deteriorating health. Altaf, however, termed the reports as baseless stating that he was ready to contest the parliamentary elections.

"Omar Abdullah too met me today at my residence and enquired about my health condition. He didn't visit here to discuss political issues but



enquired about my health condition only," he said.

He was responding to the reports wherein it was stated that Mian Altaf's health has deteriorated and has been asked to take rest for some weeks.

"Unfortunately, I have contracted some infection and the doctors have advised me to take rest for six weeks," Altaf had stated, adding that because of this, "I won't be able to campaign or go out."

NC had announced veteran leader Mian Altaf as their candidate for | [More on P6](#)

ECI Launches 'KNOW YOUR CANDIDATE' App

JAMMU, APRIL 13: To strengthen accountability and bring transparency in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, the Election Commission of India has developed a new app titled "Know Your Candidate".

The app helps citizens to know about the criminal antecedents of candidates contesting the elections.

To use the KYC app, the voters need to select the election type and AC/PC name to view the list of nominations or they can directly search the candidate by name. The app will then display information | [More on P6](#)

Baisakhi Celebrated With Fervor

Srinagar: Baisakhi was on Saturday celebrated with religious fervor and enthusiasm across Kashmir.

The occasion marks the harvest festival in the region and holds significant cultural importance for the Sikh community.

Sikhs were seen dressed in the traditional attire, with women adorned in colourful suits, and men in kurta-pajamas, adding a splash of colour to the festivities.

"It's a day of joy and celebration for us. Baisakhi brings people together, irrespective of their religion or background,"



said Ramesh, a local resident. Likewise, the main attraction of the celebration was the Gurdwaras, where devotees offered prayers and participated in devotional songs.

"It's heartwarming to see people coming together to celebrate Baisakhi. The spirit of unity and brotherhood is what makes this festival special," another Sikh brother said.

Pertinently, the festival not only marks the beginning of the harvesting season but also symbolizes the spirit of gratitude and togetherness among the people of Kashmir

Bournvita Removed from 'Health Drinks' Category

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The government has asked all the e-commerce companies to remove drinks and beverages, including Bournvita, from the health drinks category from their portals.

"National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), a statutory body constituted under section (3) of the Commission of Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act 2005 after its inquiry under Section



14 of CRPC Act 2005 concluded that there is no 'health drink' defined under FSS Act 2006, rules and regulations submitted by FSSAI and Mondelez India Food Pvt Ltd," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in an advisory to all e-commerce companies. The order is dated April 10, 2024.

It said that all e-commerce companies/portals are advised to remove drinks and beverages, including Bournvita, from | [More on P6](#)

Indian Army Marks 4 Decades Of Presence In Siachen Glacier

Press Trust of India

New Delhi-The induction of heavy-lift helicopters and logistic drones, deployment of all-terrain vehicles and laying of an extensive network of tracks are among a host of measures that have enhanced India's combat prowess in Siachen, the world's highest battlefield, officials said on Saturday.

As the Indian Army marks the 40th year of its presence on the strategically-significant Siachen glacier, the officials



said there have been extensive improvements in the operational capabilities of the force due to the enhancement of

infrastructure in the region in the last few years.

The Siachen glacier at the height of around | [More on P6](#)

GULMARG SKI WOES

Report Reveals Lack of Infrastructure, Unreliable Operations

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: Nearly two months after a snow avalanche killed two Russian nationals and injured six others in the upper reaches of picturesque Gulmarg, a Snow Safety Officer appointed by the government has released a startling report that underscores the inadequate infrastructure and preparedness to handle such emergencies.

The report, titled "2024 end of season report", prepared by Brian Newman, a Snow Safety



Officer with the government of J&K suggested the need of critical infrastructure including

Automated Weather Station (AWS), installation of a repeater at G4 station for wireless radio

sets, strong internet signal at ski patrol office and high quality Ski patrol uniforms for the staffers.

The reports says that the 2024 ski season at Gulmarg was cut short to two months. For the third consecutive Winter, seasonal snowfall was below average. Far below average. The entire month of January offered insufficient snowpack to open the ski area.

Similarly, in its 2023 report, the seasonal snowpack was also below average.

It says that many skiers and snowboarders | [More on P6](#)



Scholarships This Week

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

Scholarship Name 1
Ujivan Small Finance Bank Transgender Scholarship 2024-25

Description: Ujivan Small Finance Bank Limited invites applications from transgender students who are currently studying in Classes 9 to 12 or pursuing UG/PG courses from any government/private open schools or open universities.



b4s.in/observer/USFB1

cants must have received a conditional or unconditional offer for a full-time taught master's degree programme by the deadline.

Description: Sitaram Jindal Foundation Scholarship Scheme 2024 is an initiative by the Sitaram Jindal Foundation (NGO), for students from Class 11 to the postgraduate level.

Eligibility: Open to students currently enrolled in Class 11, 12, ITI, diploma, undergraduate, or post-graduate degree programs.

Scholarship Name 2
University of Kent India Women in Leadership Scholarship 2024

Description: University of Kent India Women in Leadership Scholarship 2024 is an opportunity offered by the University of Kent to female applicants who have received a conditional offer to pursue a postgraduate course at the university.

- Prizes & Rewards: 50% of the tuition fees for one year of study
Last Date to Apply: 24-05-2024
Application mode: Online applications only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/LPUK1

- Prizes & Rewards: Up to 3,200 per month
Last Date to Apply: Round The Year
Application mode: By post to: The Trustee, Sitaram Jindal Foundation, Jindal Nagar, Tumkur Road, Bengaluru - 560073
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SJS2

Scholarship Name
Sitaram Jindal Foundation Scholarship Scheme 2024

Overwhelmed By The News? Try Compassion Training

360info.org

Continuous bad news is causing people to disengage. Compassion may hold the key to staying informed and trying to fix our troubled world.

War, famine, and poverty are on the rise. Hearing about it every single day at home, online and on your phone is enough to make you want to hide.

The rate of people actively avoiding the news at least part of the time is skyrocketing. A report by the Reuters institute found around 36 percent of people believed that interacting with the news lowered their mood.

Cost of living, dangerous diets, a climate crisis, generational divides all day, all night, all forced into your brain. The sheer scale of media present in our pockets is causing an overload of information, intended to evoke an emotional response.

It is having a numbing effect on the way we see the world and what issues we care about.

Brain imaging research tells us there is a limit to the amount of empathy humans can deal with.

Empathy allows us to "feel" other people's emotions and is an important social skill, but it has a downside.

In many cases, feeling others' pain so acutely, so often can lead to "empathic distress".

Empathic distress is when a person who witnesses other people's suffering wants to avoid or withdraw

and behaviour.

A key brain imaging study showed that when people were shown footage from news or documentaries of people suffering, it triggered pain networks in their brain.

It is a very human response, performed by your empathy for pain network. The empathy for pain network appears to be a basic inbuilt mechanism. Caregivers have to recognise when their offspring are in pain and attempt to help, otherwise the species would not survive.

A range of studies have indicated that empathy for another's pain can trigger the same networks involved in experiencing pain yourself.

Interestingly, one avenue for protecting against empathic distress is compassion. Compassion is a concerned response to another's suffering combined with a desire to alleviate the other's suffering.

Compassion moves beyond empathy's feeling focus and is more action oriented, focusing on what can be done to alleviate the other's suffering. Compassion is asking oneself "What is the most constructive thing I can do for the other?"

A growing body of researchers are suggesting the widely used term 'compassion fatigue' should actually be called 'empathic distress fatigue'.

Brain imaging research shows compassion and empathy have different neural networks. Compassion involves feelings of warmth, concern, caring and motivates prosocial actions

and behaviour.

A landmark 2014 study showed that compassion reversed the negative effects of empathic distress and strengthened positive affect and brain networks linked to affiliation and reward. Compassion training may be an important technique to overcome empathic distress and reduce burnout.

Around the world, there is growing interest in compassion training for professions that are regularly exposed to the suffering of others, for example journalists, healthcare workers, teachers and law enforcement.

A shift from empathy to compassion may be useful for anyone to manage exposure to news stories where others are suffering. At the very least, compassion is a positive mind state that potentially motivates prosocial action.

Wishing to avoid exposure to the suffering of others is understandable. But in practice it is difficult to achieve. Humans are vulnerable to sickness, injury, accidents and other forms of suffering. Avoiding thinking about the suffering of others means one may be ill equipped if presented with a real crisis requiring action.

Some people have stopped reading the news altogether as they find it leads to feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and a general negative feeling of human nature. It is important to remember that news headlines present a restricted range of human behaviour. The negativity bias means we pay more attention to negative news than positive news.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I have changed my name from (old) Umrat Farooq Ahmad Sharoo D/O FAROOQ AHMAD SHAROO R/O NAWA KADAL SRINAGAR to my (New Name) UMRAT FAROOQ D/O FAROOQ AHMAD SHAROO W/O ARSHID NOOR WANI R/O NAVEED ABAD BYE PASS BATAMLOO SRINAGAR.

بٹ خاندان کو صدمہ
خیر انتہائی دکھ کے ساتھ بتایا جاتی ہے کہ عبدالغنی بٹ ولد غلام احمد بٹ ساکن لاٹھی پورہ ہیرا جی پورہ سری نگر میں 12 مارچ 2024ء بروز جمعہ کو علالت کے بعد اس دار فانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔

از نیابت گوم احمد پورہ
درخواست از جانب و حاجت سیمان بٹ ولد محمد سیمان بٹ ساکن کوٹلی شہر آباد تحصیل پٹن ہارمولہ برادر حصول D.O.B سرٹیفکیٹ ابھیضیف بٹ۔

از عدالت ایکٹو کیلئے مجسٹریٹ یا اجلاس تحصیلدار نارہ بل ضلع پٹاکام
عنوان: درخواست مدثر علی و توصیف علی پیران محمد تیلوانی ساکن موضع ڈوون تحصیل نارہ بل ضلع پٹاکام برادر اجرائی سوشل کاسٹ ایوبی سرٹیفکیٹ بڈمرہ تیلوانی

ASF ENTERPRISES
Sale and Services of Computers 2nd. Floor Munir Manzil Regal Chowk Srinagar [J&K], Ph.0194-24 77949, 9419001176, 9419776235

SAD DEMISE OF OUR BELOVED FATHER
With deep grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of Mr. Abdul Rashid Zargar S/o Haji Mohd Abdullah Zargar R/o Madin Sahib, Bota Kadal, Srinagar, Kashmir who left for heavenly abode on April 13, 2024 (Saturday).

"May Almighty Allah rest your soul in peace and grant you Highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous," Ameen
The Congregational Fateh Khawani will be held on Tuesday (April 16, 2024) at 10.00 am at our ancestral graveyard at Syed Sahib, Rajouri Kadal near Gani Memorial Stadium, Srinagar.

از نیابت شادی پورہ سہیل
درخواست از جانب جانگیریم دختر محمد اکبر اقرسا کنڈاؤڈینہ تحصیل سہیل بانڈی پورہ برادر حصول D.O.B سرٹیفکیٹ بچن خود۔

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار پٹن
عنوان:- درخواست منجانب عاقب بشیر ولد بشیر احمد خان ساکن برن پٹن بغرض حصول ڈپنڈنٹ سرٹیفکیٹ بچن متوفی بشیر احمد خان ساکن برن تحصیل پٹن

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار پٹن
عنوان:- درخواست منجانب رفیقہ بیگم بیوہ فیاض احمد ساکن پٹن بغرض حصول ایگلی ہیرا جی پورہ سری نگر میں 12 مارچ 2024ء بروز جمعہ کو علالت کے بعد اس دار فانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔

NOTIFICATION
The Mother's name of my ward (Riza Abbas ID 4535) has been recorded as NUZHAT in CBSE records instead of NUZHAT JABEEN. I Syed Kifayat Hussain Rizvi is thus seeking correction of the mother's name of my ward Riza Abbas in CBSE records from NUZHAT to NUZHAT JABEEN.

NOTIFICATION
I have applied for the issuance of Pesticides license. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Plant Protection Officer Lal Mandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

NOTIFICATION
Public Notice I have applied for the issuance of Seed license. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Chief Agriculture Officer Baramulla within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

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 Mohsin Ali s/o Ali Mohammad Bhat R/O Khanpeth Thel Singpora District Baramulla with verified date of event (birth) as 21/08/2019 occurred at SDH Pattan.

NOTICE
I intend to rectify the name and mother's name of my ward namely Muhammad Noman Wani presently studying in the grade 5th session 2024-25 under roll number 19 and Admission number 8484, Section White, in Greenvalley Educational Institute, Ellahi Bagh, Srinagar from Muhammad Noman Wani instead Muhammad Numan Wani and mother's name from Mudasar instead Mudasar Ashraf which in inadvertently recorded in the school record.

از عدالت ایکٹو کیلئے مجسٹریٹ یا اجلاس تحصیلدار نارہ بل ضلع پٹاکام
عنوان: درخواست رہیں رانی ولد حبیب اللہ صاحب اللہ صاحب ساکن موضع ڈوون تحصیل نارہ بل ضلع پٹاکام برادر اجرائی سوشل کاسٹ سرٹیفکیٹ بچن ساکن



Leopard Sighted In Malabagh, Wildlife Department Mobilize Teams

Agenies

Srinagar: After the reports of leopard sightings at Rangpora, Elahibagh areas of the city surfaced on social media, the Jammu and Kashmir wildlife department has confirmed the presence of animals in the area on Saturday.

A senior wildlife official informed that they have received "video evidence" about the presence of a leopard from Malabagh area.

"People must be careful now onwards, children should not be allowed to move out especially during morning and evening hours and during the Fajar and Esha prayers, the people should go in groups with sufficient lights", the official warned.

The official added that they have dispatched their teams and are going to install cages at multiple locations in the area and will also carry out the drone survey in the entire area. "Teams have been deputed and cages are being installed at Ahmednagar, Rangpora and Malabagh area and our department's vehicles are patrolling and sensitizing the area," he said.

The official added that there is a high possibility that there can be only one leopard roaming in the area, stating that the animal roams in the territory within a radius of 20 Km.

Meanwhile, residents of these areas are in panic and they have restrained themselves and their children from venturing out in the area, while several shopkeepers, as per the KNO, have closed down their shops in fear of being getting attacked by the leopard—(KNO)



Srinagar LS Constituency Recorded Lowest Turnout In Past: DC Srinagar

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Claiming that the Srinagar Lok-Sabha constituency had recorded the lowest voter turnout up until 2019, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, said on Saturday that over two lakh voters were included in the final electoral roll and that a significant number of people are expected to cast their ballot in the upcoming elections in Srinagar.

DC Srinagar was speaking to the media at Lal Chowk during a public awareness program held as part of the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP), Election Commission of India's (ECI) flagship program for voter education.

Incorporating more than two lakh new voters into the election register, according to DC Srinagar, will stimulate a large turnout for democratic process.

Educating people of the significance of voting in the electoral process is the objective of organizing SVEEP programs,

which he said would continue till the Union Territory goes for polls.

"Srinagar has in the past recorded lowest turnout of voters and organizing SVEEP programs under the aegis of ECI are aimed at educating people of the significance of voting. We anticipate a large turnout of voters in the upcoming elections as more than two lakh new voters have been added to the final electoral roll in Srinagar," he added.

DC Srinagar urged the first time voters to come out in large numbers to exercise their franchise on the day of polling in Srinagar so that others are encouraged to participate in the democratic process.

"The UT government has been making every effort to motivate voters, which is why SVEEP programs are organized," DC Srinagar said.

He said that a surprising number of people including students showed up for the program at historic Lal Chowk, indicating their seriousness about taking part in the elections.

Nukkad Natak Held At Lal Chowk To Promote Voter Participation

Srinagar: With a view to promote voters participation in upcoming Lok Sabha Elections 2024, a spirited Nukkad Natak performance took centre stage at Ghanta Ghar, Lal Chowk here on Saturday.

District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, who is also the Returning Officer (RO) for 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency joined the vibrant Voter Awareness program organized by District Election Authority at the historic Ghanta Ghar under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP).

On the occasion, a group of local artists presented theme-based Nukkad Natak on SVEEP. While a large number of School Students, Youth and Citizens participated in the Electoral Awareness program.

Speaking on the occasion, the District Election Officer (DEO), Srinagar said that the aim of the program was to enhance understanding of voting-related

processes and promote electoral literacy, especially among first-time voters, preparing them for upcoming Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

The DEO stressed that the initiative resonates the commitment of the District Administration Srinagar to inspire the young voters towards the electoral process and strengthening democratic setup to empower citizens.

The DEO urged Students to carry forward the message to their family, relatives and community by underscoring the significance of their participation in nation-building through elections.

He added that SVEEP's primary goal is to build a truly participative democracy by encouraging all eligible citizens to vote.

During the Electoral Awareness program Signature campaign was also conducted in which all the participants actively participated.

Apni Party Holds Preparatory Meetings For LS Elections In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party on Saturday held a preparatory meeting for the upcoming Lok Sabha (LS) polls in the Srinagar constituency.

The meeting, chaired by Mohammad Dilawar Mir, the Chairman of the party's Parliamentary Affairs Committee (PAC), was held at the party headquarters in Srinagar.

Addressing the gathering, Mohammad Dilawar Mir urged the leaders and senior workers to remain fully active during the poll campaign days to ensure people are well aware of the party's pro-people agenda and policies.

He stated, "This is the time for us to stay active and deeply connected to the people to present our vision, agenda, and policies for a brighter future for Jammu and Kashmir."

He added, "Apni Party has emerged as a credible political alternative, and people fully trust our unambiguous agenda for peace, prosperity, and development in Jammu and Kashmir."

Among the prominent party leaders who were present on the occasion including the party's General Secretary Rafi Ahmad

“This is the time for us to stay active and deeply connected to the people to present our vision, agenda, and policies for a brighter future for Jammu and Kashmir”

Mir, Provincial President Mohammad Ashraf Mir, who is the party's candidate for the Srinagar constituency, Former Legislator and spokesperson Yawar Dilawar Mir, Provincial Vice President Kashmir Muzaffar Rizvi, Chief Spokesperson, State Secretary and District President Budgam Muntazir Mohiuddin, Media Advisor Farooq Andrabi, Chairman DDC Srinagar and Provincial Secretary Malik Aftab, State Convener and in-charge of Ganderbal district Haji Parvez Ahmad, Provincial President for the party's Women Wing Dilshada Shaheen, the in-charges of all the assembly constituencies in Srinagar, and senior workers.

Mustard Registers 250% Increase In Area Coverage In Kashmir

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The mustard crop has registered a staggering increase of over 250 per cent in the area coverage and emerged as a beacon of hope, steering the Kashmir Valley towards transforming livelihoods, fostering economic growth and reducing dependency on imports.

Official documents revealed remarkable achievement of the Department of Agriculture, Kashmir, which has expanded the area under oil seeds cultivation from 40,000 hectares in 2020-21 to an impressive 140,000 hectares in 2023-24, marking a phenomenal growth of over 250 per cent.

"This isn't just about numbers; it's about transforming livelihoods, fostering economic growth, and reducing dependency on imports," the document reads, adding, "A production of over 133,000 metric tons of oilseeds has translated to 44,000 metric tons of edible oils, signifying a monumental leap towards self-reli-



ance. With the value of oil estimated at over 770 crores, we are not just cultivating crops; we are nurturing a future of prosperity."

The document reveals, "Before 2021-22 we were confronting an edible oil deficit of 96% where the requirement was 98,550 MT and its availability was at 36,000 MT when we had to cater to a population of 85 lakh and a floating population (tourists) of 5 lakh, but the situation has turned on its head since 2021-22 to 2023-24."

Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, a farmer in Kulgam, said, "With the diligent efforts of the Agriculture Department, we anticipate a bountiful mustard harvest

in the valley this year, paving the way for a significant increase in our income."

He said mustard plays an important role in our lives, from oil to various other products. "With its versatility, we produce a variety of items from it. The infiltration is high this time, so it is better to sow mustard to avoid purchasing expensive oil from the market," he said.

Director Agriculture Kashmir, Mohammad Iqbal Choudhary said mustard cultivation has shown "too much increase" in a couple of years. "We are always ready to assist the farmer community as our department is committed to helping the farmers," he said.

IGP Kashmir Greets People On Baisakhi

Srinagar: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vidhi Kumar Birdi Saturday greeted the people on the occasion of Baisakhi.

The Kashmir Zone Police (KZP) in a post on X said, "IGP Kashmir greets the people of the valley on the auspicious occasion of Baisakhi."

This occasion may bring harmony, brotherhood, peace, progress and growth for all, added KZP in the post.

Baisakhi, a spring harvest festival and an important festivity in Sikh community, is primarily celebrated in different parts of Punjab and Northern India.

DC Srinagar Greets Sikhs On Baisakhi

Srinagar: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat today paid a visit to Gurudwara Chhatti Padshahi in Rainawari to extend warm greetings to the Sikh fraternity on the occasion of Baisakhi.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by senior functionaries of the Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee.

While extending warm greetings on the occasion, the DC expressed hope that this day would contribute towards strengthening brotherhood, unity, harmony and would be a harbinger of peace, progress and prosperity in J&K.



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ADVERTISING AGENCY
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Soura, Srinagar.

CONDOLENCE

A Condolence meeting will be held by the **Team of Media Line Advertising Agency on 15 APR 2024 on the demise of Mr. Mohammad Altaf Ahmad Dar Brother-in-Law of Sayim Rasheed (Member of Media Line Advertising Agency) R/o Gagribal Dalgate Srinagar.** All the families of Media Line Advertising Agency express their heartfelt grief for the departed soul and prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow his blessings on the departed souls besides grant forbearance to the bereaved families to bear this loss. Ameen! The meeting will be Chaired by the Team of Media Line.

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- PDD: 0194-2450213
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- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

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BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
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PAMPORE: 01933-294132
PATTAN: 01954-293507
QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

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

PRAYERS	
FAJR	4 : 34
ZUHR	12:32
ASR	5: 11
Magrib	7:04
ISHA	8: 29

HIJRI CALENDAR
05 Shawal
1445

This Day In History

- 193 - Lucius Septimus Severus crowned Emperor of Rome
- 754 - Pact of Quierzy: between Pope Stephen II, [III] & Pippin the Korte
- 966 - Christianisation of Poland
- 972 - Notger becomes bishop of Liege
- 979 - Challenge to throne of King Aethelred II of England
- 1028 - German emperor Conrad II the Sailor crowns his son Henry III, king
- 1191 - 85-year old Giacinto Bobo becomes Pope Celestinus III
- 1341 - Sack of Saluzzo (Italy) by Italian-Angevine troops under Manfred V of Saluzzo.
- 1434 The foundation stone of Cathedral St. Peter and St. Paul in Nantes, France is laid
- 1471 Wars of the Roses: Battle of Barnet - Yorkists defeat the Lancastrians and kill the Earl of Warwick
- 1699 - Khalsa: Birth of Khalsa, the brotherhood of the Sikh religion, in Northern India in accordance with the Nanakshahi calendar.
- 1792 - France declares war on Austria, starting French Revolutionary Wars
- 1919 -Following Gandhi's nonviolent methods, Muslim and Hindu protest British rule; British troops fire on the crowds, killing 400
- 1940 - Allied troops land in Norway
- 1944 - Freighters "Fort Stikene" explodes in Bombay India, killing 1,376
- 1945 - WWII: US 7th Army & allies forces capture Nuremberg & Stuttgart in Germany
- 1967 - In the Vietnam War, US planes bombed Haiphong for 1st time
- 1971 - President Nixon ends blockade against People's Republic of China

From KO Archives

Rail Comes To Udhampur Finally

54.85 Kilometers In 22 Years, Now Only 236.15 Kilometers To Go

Observer News Service

Udhampur - Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Wednesday flagged off a train service between Jammu and Udhampur promising that it would go right up to Srinagar and Baramulla by 2007..

The foundation stone of the rail link from Udhampur housing the Army's Northern Command, was laid by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1983.

The train "piercing the heights of the Pir Panjal mountains and taming nature's fury is a challenge that engineers have accepted" he said.

The launch of the Uttar Samparak. Kranti Express' brought the prime minister to the state for his second visit in six days. The first was six days ago to flag off Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service.

The rail track passes through mountainous terrain with 20 per cent of the track going through tunnels including an over 2.5-km long one that is considered longest in the country.

The 54.85-km broad gauge railway line, an engineering marvel with 158 bridges and 20 tunnels was built at a cost of Rs 515 crore.

The prime minister said the train link has led to hopes of the train running right up to the valley.

"The train will run from Udhampur to Katra, Qazigund, Srinagar and Baramulla by 2007. We have earmarked Rs 1000 (Rs.10 billion) for this," the prime minister said, with the fervent hope that the service would help build a stronger relationship between the people of the "state and the rest of the country."

(Kashmir Observer, 14 April, 2005)

How Did the MPs from J&K Fare in Parliament?

Nasheem Ashraf & Haris Rashid



The dichotomous nature of the times endured by Jammu and Kashmir resonates with Charles Dickens' profound words from A Tale of Two Cities: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.'

This article will analyse how the Members of Parliament from the Jammu and Kashmir fared in the 17th Lok Sabha. We use data from PRS Legislative Research on attendance, questions asked, and participation in debates to analyse the performance of the MPs. For the 17th Lok Sabha, the national average attendance was 79%, the number of questions asked by an MP on an average was 210 and the number of debates that an MP participated in on average was 47.

All three MPs representing constituencies in the Kashmir Division belonged to Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) while all the MPs representing the two constituencies of the Jammu Division belonged to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Mohammad Akbar Lone

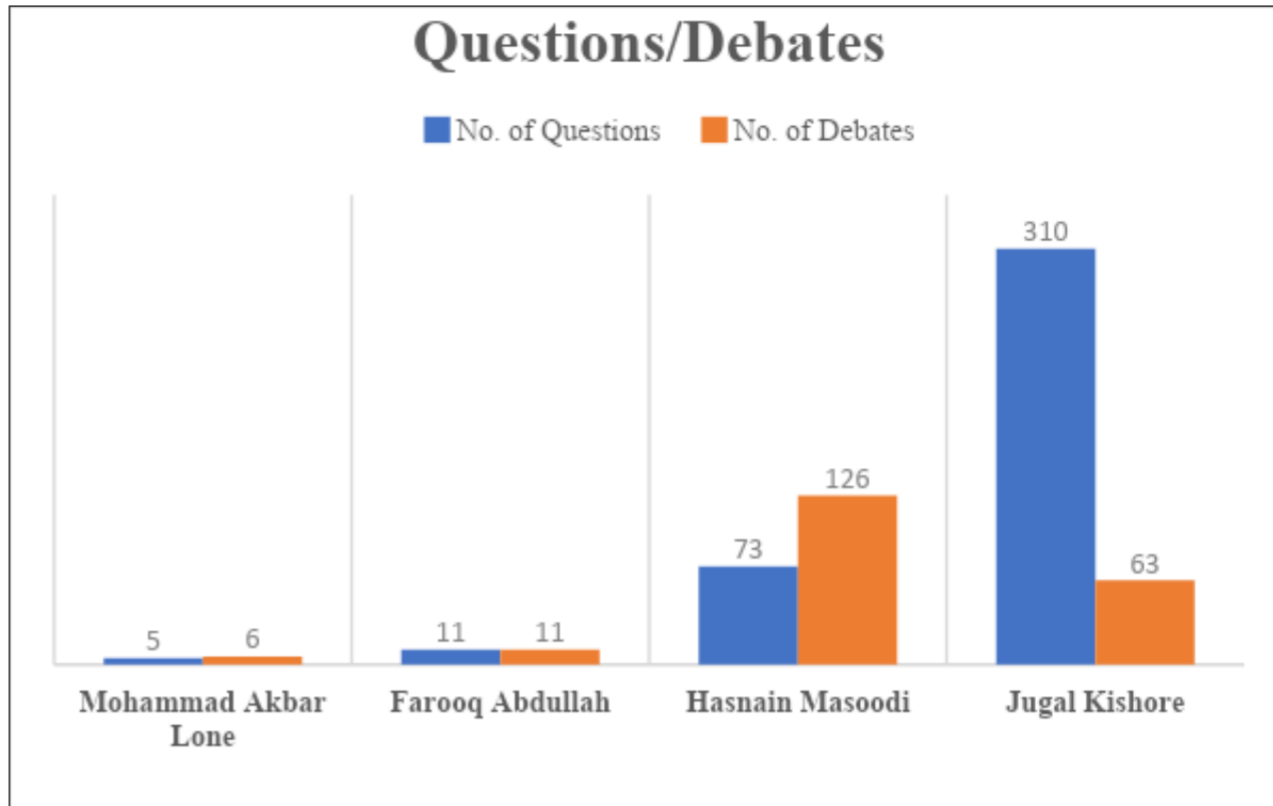
Mohammad Akbar Lone, representing Baramulla constituency has a 41% attendance in 17th Lok Sabha. He has asked 5 questions and participated in 6 debates during the entire 5 years of 17th Lok Sabha. However, all questions asked/answered happened within a span of 10 days- from 2 March 2020 to 12 March 2020. Apart from this, Lone missed all 5 sessions, including a special session and two budget sessions, starting winter session 2023.

However, to his credit, Akbar Lone's attendance was much better than his predecessor Muzaffar Husain Baig of PDP who represented Baramulla constituency in the 16th Lok Sabha. Baig had 11% attendance, asked 19 questions and participated in 3 debates. This time Baig is likely to contest as an independent candidate from either Baramulla or Anantnag-Rajouri constituency.

Farooq Abdullah, Srinagar

Farooq Abdullah, representing the Srinagar constituency has 61% attendance in 17th Lok Sabha. He asked 11 questions and participated in 11 debates. Similar to Mohammad Akbar Lone, Abdullah asked all questions within a span of 10 days from 8 July 2019 to 18 July 2019.

Two of the questions Abdullah asked during his current term were repeats from his last term and had already been asked in December 2018. One of these questions was asked thrice within a span of 7 months.



Hasnain Masoodi, Anantnag

The only MP who stands out from the Kashmir Division is first-timer Hasnain Masoodi, representing the erstwhile Anantnag constituency. He has 85% attendance, asked 73 questions and participated in 126 debates. He is the only MP from Kashmir division whose attendance as well as participation in debates was above the national average.

Jugal Kishore, Jammu

BJP's Jugal Kishore, representing Jammu constituency has 88% attendance, asked 310 questions and participated in 63 debates. Even though he belongs to the ruling party, he asked the most questions of all the MPs from Jammu and Kashmir.

For the 5th MP, Dr. Jitendra Singh representing the Udhampur constituency, data is not available as he is a Minister of State.

Why Does it Matter?

Since 2019, when Jammu and Kashmir was made into a Union Territory, the Parliament had to contend with every aspect of its governance.

All the budgets for the UT were presented within the hallowed halls of Parliament. Additionally, the introduction of four new languages as the UT's official languages, while stripping Urdu of its sole official recognition, underscored a period of profound change. In this tumultuous era, several bills were tabled, aiming to extend the reach of reservation to encompass more communities and to provide reservation for OBCs in local body elections. The dichotomous nature of the times endured by Jammu and Kashmir resonates with Charles Dickens' profound words from A Tale of Two Cities: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,' 'it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.' Moreover, Dickens' insight is particularly apt when reflecting on how 'some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.' Indeed, amidst the complex realities of governance and societal change, there existed a tendency among influential voices to view developments in the extreme, without nuance or con-

sideration of the multifaceted challenges faced by the region. In this context, it held significant importance whether the Members of Parliament (MPs) from Jammu and Kashmir attended parliament, asked questions, and participated in debates.

Moreover, MPs serve as elected representatives entrusted by citizens to voice concerns, address issues, and legislate on their behalf. Regular attendance in Parliament is essential for fulfilling their duty of effectively representing constituents' interests. Additionally, as the three MPs from JKNC were in opposition, they had a critical role in overseeing the government, holding it accountable through questioning and debates.

As the Lok Sabha elections approach, voters should take into consideration the candidates' parliamentary performance and utilize their voting power effectively to compel politicians to shed complacency.

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

With India staring at another general election, the establishment of a Ministry of AI is not just a matter of economic leverage but a strategic imperative for national security in the face of technological warfare. The urgency is clear - without it, we risk falling behind in the global tech race and letting our demographic advantage slip into economic liability.

As McKinsey outlines, India's journey toward a \$30 trillion economy by 2047 hinges on harnessing artificial intelligence (AI). The Ministry of AI would spearhead initiatives to integrate AI in vital economic sectors, oversee AI-driven projects that directly contribute to the GDP, and collaborate internationally to maintain a competitive edge.

However, failing to engage in this AI revolution could turn our demographic advantage into a severe economic strain. Look at the UAE. In 2017, they set a global precedent by appointing the world's first AI minister, Omar Al Olama. That decision was a clear sign of embracing the AI era head-on.

Why can't India, with its wealth of tech talent and burgeoning AI potential, take a similar leap?

Many experts who believe in India's potential to become an economic superpower and self-reliant nation express urgency. "So, the AI ministry would allow us to respond faster, given that a new economic value of \$15.7tn will be generated by 2030. Otherwise, just like we are paying in dollars for oil, we will also be paying for artificial brains in the future," Umakant Soni, chairman of AIfoundry and co-founder of ARTIPARK (AI & Robotics Technology Park), told me recently.

Daily Encounters With AI

Unlike the Industrial Revolution, which unfolded over centuries, or the digital revolution, where we had a few decades to adapt, the AI revolution is racing at an unprecedented pace, deeply impacting every aspect of society and economy.

On a recent train journey, as we passed by Maharashtra's Sangli station, I was struck by a conversation that floated from the berth across mine. A young student talked of Chitale Dairy-Pune's

Why India Needs A 'Ministry Of AI'

Pankaj Mishra

pride-and their pioneering RFID tags. "Imagine," he said, "once AI steps in, they'll probably guess our shopping list before we even make it."

Earlier this week, at a Delhi cafe, I overheard a pair of insurance agents grappling with the future. "AI could streamline routine claims, leaving us to tackle the big fish," one said with a furrowed brow, reaching out for his chai. "I need to find an AI course," he said, accepting that the rules of their game were changing.

These real-life glimpses into AI's impact highlight the need for the Ministry to foster AI literacy through public campaigns and develop targeted training programs, ensuring that all sectors can adapt to AI advancements. Additionally, the Ministry could implement regulatory frameworks to ensure AI's ethical integration into industries like retail and insurance, safeguarding jobs while enhancing efficiency. It would also be responsible for setting fair AI guidelines, ensuring that AI is not used in a way that exacerbates existing inequalities, thereby addressing concerns about the social impact of AI.

Imagine a Ministry of AI in India as the central nerve for:

- AI for Good: Applying AI to solve social challenges, from health to environment
- Digital Diplomacy: Shaping global AI policies to protect India's interests
- Advanced Manufacturing: Leveraging AI to boost production efficiency and competitiveness

- Jobs and Regulation: Creating new tech jobs and setting fair AI guidelines

"A Supermarket of Problems"

Adam Smith talked about how scarce labour can drive up wages, sparking innovation. Today, as AI reshapes economies, there's a similar shift.

Developed countries, facing slow GDP growth and ageing populations, are embracing AI for productivity. India's situation is different. Our challenge? Transforming our large, youthful workforce into a skilled, AI-ready group. This is where a dedicated Ministry of AI becomes crucial.

India's unique challenge and opportunity lies in its population. With over 1.4 billion people, India has the potential to build the world's largest AI-enabled workforce, particularly among the 900 million youth in the 15-64 age group. However, for AI to be effective and ethical, it must be safe and fair, tailored to India's diverse needs. This can only be achieved through widespread AI adoption and alignment, driven by feedback from this vast population, ensuring that AI systems are developed in a way that is inclusive and representative of India's social and cultural diversity.

"India has enough AI talent and data (it may not be in the most usable form right now), and critically, it offers almost a supermarket of problems (from healthcare access to financial inclusion to educating 300 million school kids to climate change) for the world to solve," says Umakant.

India's position in the global AI race is a paradox of potential. The visual below from a study published in the Harvard Business Review (HBR) highlights India as a significant dark circle, indi-

cating not just the rapid growth of data but also the challenges of harnessing this vast resource effectively. The study uses a 'TRAIN' (top-ranked AI nations) index to evaluate where 25 leading AI creator countries stand in the race for leadership.

Going Beyond Just Potential

By establishing a Ministry of AI, India could strategically navigate these challenges, transforming its vast data reserves into a powerhouse for innovation and economic growth. The data is there, but without proper governance to channel it, potential remains just that-potential.

"With strengths across many dimensions, India is the one with greatest upward potential. It has the largest volume of mobile data consumption and is expected to top the world in data consumption by 2028. It already processes more digital payments than any other country in the world and has the third-largest AI talent pool. While it places restrictions on access to data, its AI regulation rules are still fluid," Bhaskar Chakravorti, Ajay Bhalla, and Ravi Shankar Chaturvedi said in their 2023 HBR article titled 'Charting the Emerging Geography of AI.'

"We need to create a large domestic capital pool focused on AI by creating a large public-private \$10 billion fund of funds focused on AI so that young entrepreneurs can go behind the problems in India." Umakant added that given the diversity of data in India, solutions built in India will be robust, safe, and equally applicable in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, the European Union, and the US.

The message is clear: India's vast human resources could become a burden if they are not AI-ready. With an AI Ministry, India can harness the tech not just for productivity but to redefine the country's work, innovation and growth journey.

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

Exploring Patandoban: Kashmir's Premier Birdwatching Retreat in Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary

Rameez Rasool Mir

Patandoban is a famous bird-watching meadow located in the heart of Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary, which is 15 kilometres away from the main town of Shopian. The sanctuary is renowned for its beautiful landscape and historical significance, featuring attractions such as Renuire, Zaznar, Mughal Sarai, and Pir Ki Gali. Patandoban, nestled within the sanctuary, is a delightful meadow easily accessible to people of all ages, including the young, elderly, and children.

This meadow is adorned with beautiful birds, attracting bird-watchers from across the valley who are familiar with its charm. In Kashmir, Patandoban is known as a popular spot for birdwatchers. Many YouTubers have also enjoyed its beauty, creating stunning vlogs. The area is characterized by dense forests and lush grass, further enhancing its appeal.

This meadow is a wonderful area, with lush greenery and moderate temperatures. It is rich in flora and fauna. I saw many people visiting this place with their families. During vacations, everyone who is aware of this place enjoys the beautiful scenery and also engages in bird watching. This place is very near to Aalo Pathri, which has a good variety of potatoes, including the famous Hirpora Red Potato. During your stay, you can enjoy the different sites of the Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary. The Mughal Road is visible from Patandoban, and many other places can be easily seen from here. Many tourists from Kashmir and all

over India who have a passion for bird watching visit this place every year.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Patandoban, nestled within the Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary, has gained widespread recognition as a premier bird watching destination. Despite its popularity, the origin of its name remains shrouded in mystery. Surrounded by the Gujjar community from Chenab Valley, Patandoban is not just a scenic retreat but also a hub of dairy production, contributing significantly to the Hirpora market. Its allure extends beyond its natural beauty, drawing eminent personalities like Vivek Menon and avid bird-watchers from diverse corners of the globe.

DIVERSE AVIAN LIFE IN PATANDOBAN SANCTUARY

Patandoban Sanctuary boasts an exceptional variety of avian species, enriching its natural allure and distinguishing it from other locales. Home to approximately 130 bird species, including notable sightings such as the Himalayan bluetail, Spotted fork-tail, Western Tragopan, Rock bunting, Rufous-breasted accentor, Himalayan woodpecker, blue rock thrush, White-capped redstart, Himalayan griffon, common stonechat, red-billed blue magpie, and grey wagtail, this sanctuary offers a captivating haven for bird enthusiasts and nature lovers alike. The presence of such a diverse array of birds underscores the significance of Patandoban as a sanctuary of ecological importance, further emphasizing the need for its preservation and conservation efforts.



TIPS FOR BIRD WATCHING IN PATANDOBAN

For those eager to explore the wonders of bird watching in Patandoban, where winter presents a challenge with high snowfall, there's still much to anticipate during the rest of the year. To make the most of this avian adventure, essential items include securing a knowledgeable guide, a trusty pair of binoculars, and starting a journal to record sightings. Joining a bird watching club

To make the most of this avian adventure, essential items include securing a knowledgeable guide, a trusty pair of binoculars, and starting a journal to record sightings. Joining a bird watching club can enhance the experience, while setting up bird feeders can attract more species to observe.

can enhance the experience, attract more species to observe. while setting up bird feeders can Continuous learning through

reading about birds and planning birding trips ensures a fulfilling journey. Remember, patience is paramount in this pursuit—embrace the process and relish every moment of avian discovery.

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Patandoban is a pristine haven, boasting immaculate surroundings and an absence of pollution. It stands as a true blessing for all who encounter its natural beauty. Preserving this sanctuary is paramount, and concerted efforts must be made to conserve its pristine state. Embracing eco-tourism emerges as a crucial need for Patandoban, ensuring that its splendor remains untouched by harmful practices. Let us unite in our commitment to safeguard this gem for future generations to cherish and enjoy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Patandoban within the Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary stands as a haven for nature enthusiasts and bird-watchers alike. Its rich avian diversity, coupled with its serene landscapes, offers an unforgettable experience for visitors of all ages. As we revel in its beauty, let us also pledge to preserve and protect this sanctuary, ensuring its splendor remains intact for generations to come. Embracing eco-tourism and supporting conservation efforts will secure the future of this hidden gem, allowing it to continue enchanting and inspiring all who venture into its embrace.

Rameez Rasool Mir is a social worker, poet and nature enthusiast. He can be reached at rameezmasw@gmail.com



Do Optimists Really Live Longer? Here's What The Research Says

Fuschia Sirois

Do you tend to see the glass as half full, rather than half empty? Are you always looking on the bright side of life? If so, you may be surprised to learn that this tendency could actually be good for your health.

A number of studies have shown that optimists enjoy higher levels of wellbeing, better sleep, lower stress and even better cardiovascular health and immune function. And now, a recent study has shown that being an optimist is linked to longer life.

To conduct their study, researchers tracked the lifespan of nearly 160,000 women aged between 50 to 79 for a period of 26 years. At the beginning of the study, the women completed a self-report measure of optimism. Women with the highest scores on the measure were categorised as optimists. Those with the lowest scores were considered pessimists.

Then, in 2019, the researchers followed up with the participants who were still living. They also looked at the lifespan of participants who had died. What they found was that those who had the highest levels of optimism were more likely to live longer. More im-

portantly, the optimists were also more likely than those who were pessimists to live into their nineties. Researchers refer to this as "exceptional longevity", considering the average lifespan for women is about 83 years in developed countries.

What makes these findings especially impressive is that the results remained even after accounting for other factors known to predict a long life – including education level and economic status, ethnicity, and whether a person suffered from depression or other chronic health conditions.

But given this study only looked at women, it's uncertain whether the same would be true for men. However, another study which looked at both men and women also found that people with the highest levels of optimism enjoyed a lifespan that was between 11% and 15% longer than those who were the least optimistic.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH?

So why is it that optimists live longer? At first glance it would seem that it may have to do with their healthier lifestyle.

For example, research from several studies has found that



optimism is linked to eating a healthy diet, staying physically active, and being less likely to smoke cigarettes. These healthy behaviours are well known to improve heart health and reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease, which is a leading cause of death globally. Adopting a healthy lifestyle is also important for reducing the risk of other potentially deadly diseases, such as diabetes and cancer.

But having a healthy lifestyle may only be part of the

reason optimists live a longer than average life. This latest study found that lifestyle only accounted for 24% of the link between optimism and longevity. This suggests a number of other factors affect longevity for optimists.

Another possible reason could be due to the way optimists manage stress. When faced with a stressful situation, optimists tend to deal with it head-on. They use adaptive coping strategies that help them resolve the source

of the stress, or view the situation in a less stressful way. For example, optimists will problem-solve and plan ways to deal with the stressor, call on others for support, or try to find a "silver lining" in the stressful situation.

All of these approaches are well-known to reduce feelings of stress, as well as the biological reactions that occur when we feel stressed. It's these biological reactions to stress – such as elevated cortisol (sometimes called the

"stress hormone"), increased heart rate and blood pressure, and impaired immune system functioning – that can take a toll on health over time and increase the risk for developing life-threatening diseases, such as cardiovascular disease. In short, the way optimists cope with stress may help protect them somewhat against its harmful effects.

LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Optimism is typically viewed by researchers as a relatively stable personality trait that is determined by both genetic and early childhood influences (such as having a secure and warm relationship with your parents or caregivers). But if you're not naturally prone to seeing the glass as half full, there are some ways you can increase your capacity to be optimistic.

Research shows optimism can change over time, and can be cultivated by engaging in simple exercises. For example, visualising and then writing about your "best possible self" (a future version of yourself who has accomplished your goals) is a technique that studies have found can significantly increase optimism, at least temporarily. But for best results, the goals need to be

both positive and reasonable, rather than just wishful thinking. Similarly, simply thinking about positive future events can also be effective for boosting optimism.

It's also crucial to temper any expectations for success with an accurate view of what you can and can't control. Optimism is reinforced when we experience the positive outcomes that we expect, and can decrease when these outcomes aren't as we want them to be. Although more research is needed, it's possible that regularly envisioning yourself as having the best possible outcomes, and taking realistic steps towards achieving them, can help develop an optimistic mindset.

Of course, this might be easier said than done for some. If you're someone who isn't naturally optimistic, the best chances to improve your longevity is by living a healthy lifestyle by staying physically active, eating a healthy diet, managing stress, and getting a good night's sleep. Add to this cultivating a more optimistic mindset and you might further increase your chances for a long life.

By arrangements with The Conversation

West Asia On

war in Gaza is now 6 months old and is inflaming decades-old tensions across the whole region.

Iran's state-run IRNA said the Sepah Special Naval Forces unit of the IRGC carried out the attack on the Portuguese-flagged MSC Aries, a container ship associated with London-based Zodiac Maritime.

Zodiac Maritime is part of Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Group. Earlier, a Middle East defence official shared a video of the attack. In it, the commandos are seen rappelling down onto a stack of containers sitting on the deck of the vessel.

A crew member on the ship can be heard saying: "Don't come out." He then tells his colleagues to go to the ship's bridge as more commandos come down on the deck. One commando can be seen kneeling above the others to provide them potential cover fire.

The video corresponded with known details of the MSC Aries.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations described the vessel as being "seized by regional authorities" in the Gulf of Oman off the Emirati port city of Fujairah.

The MSC Aries had been last located off Dubai heading toward the Strait of Hormuz on Friday. The ship had turned off its tracking data, which has been common for Israeli-affiliated ships moving through the region.

On Tuesday the naval head of the IRGC, Alireza Tangisri, said it could close the Strait of Hormuz if deemed necessary. He said Iran viewed as a threat Israel's presence in the UAE, with which Israel established diplomatic relations in 2020 as part of the "Abraham Accords" mediated by the United States.

The Strait of Hormuz is the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all globally traded oil passes.

Another of the strategic sea route of the Red Sea has been virtually blocked by Yemen's Iran-backed Ansarallah led forces. Ansarallah says they only target vessels linked to Israel in retaliation for Israel's campaign in Gaza.

Biden: We'll Defend Israel
While speaking to reporters on Friday, Biden emphasised Washington's commitment to protecting Israel and sent a simple message to Iran—"Don't".

"We are devoted to the defense of Israel. We will support Israel. We will help defend Israel and Iran will not succeed," he said.

17 Indians Onboard

and early release of the Indian nationals.

"We are in touch with the Iranian authorities through diplomatic channels, both in Tehran and in Delhi, to ensure security, welfare and early release of Indian nationals," it said.

Fear, Anxiety

tensions between Iran and Israel, the Ministry of External Affairs on Friday issued a travel advisory to Indian citizens.

"In view of the prevailing situation in the region, all Indians are advised not to travel to Iran or Israel till further notice. All those who are currently residing in Iran or Israel are requested to get in touch with Indian Embassies there and register themselves," the advisory said.

Similar concerns were shared by another student from North Kashmir who travelled to Iran on Friday.

Speaking on anonymity, she said that in view of the advisory issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, they were required to sign a document stating they were travelling at their own risk.

"At first, we were stopped from boarding a flight to Tehran, later we were allowed only after signing a bond that we were travelling on our

own risk. We don't know what will happen," the student who studies in Isfahan told Kashmir Observer.

A worried parent, Shakil Ahmad whose daughter studies in Iran referred to Kashmiri students who had to abandon their universities in Ukraine after war broke out there two years back saying he fears what will happen if war prolongs and results in closure of airports. However he hastened to add that his daughter told him in her recent phone call that "Iran is not Ukraine and there is absolutely no panic among the people there". "I also believe", he added, that "Iran can, as it has in the past, handled crisis situations with maturity and sagacity", he said.

Meanwhile, sources said that the Indian embassy in Tehran is in the process of establishing contacts with the Indian students and is collecting data of the students across Iran.

In a turn of events which could further aggravate the crisis, Iran's Revolutionary Guards seized an Israeli-linked cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, the Iranian state-run IRNA news agency reported, days after Tehran warned it could close the area to sea traffic.

5 Killed in

Mukhtiyar Ahmed (28), son of Abdul Gani, a resident of Bandoga (brought dead), Baby Girl (4) daughter of Muhammad Amir (brought dead), Riyaz Ahmed, son of Abdul Gani, a resident of Phagsoo (brought dead), Ireena Begum, wife of Saddam Hussain, a resident of Ghunti (brought dead) and Muhammad Rafi, a son of Abdul Rehman, a resident of Phagsoo (brought dead).

Those who were critically injured and have been referred include Muhammad Amir (28), son of Muhammad Shafi, a resident of Phagsoo, Baby Girl (10), baby girl (8) and Sufiyan Sheikh (24), son of Bashir Ahmed, a resident of Behndoga. Another injured was identified as Saima Begum, wife of Muhammad Amir.

Eye witnesses said, "Immediately after the accident, locals rushed to the spot and started the rescue operation. Injured patients were shifted to sub-district hospital Thathri from where critically injured patients were referred to GMC Doda for further treatment."

Doda district has a high rate of accidents and hundreds of people have lost lives due to these accidents. The cause of accident varies from poor road conditions to rash driving and non-availability of proper road safety equipments.

Man Slips

slipped from the vehicle at Kapran Anantnag and was grievously injured. Reports said that Khan was rushed to GMC Anantnag where he succumbed to his injuries.

Meanwhile police have taken cognizance and started an investigation.

Urges Farmers

thundershower activity has not been ruled out.

"Farmers are advised to suspend farm operations till April 16," he said, adding, "(There could be) temporary disruption of surface transportation over a few higher reaches during April 13-14."

He said that there could be "temporary" water logging in few low-lying areas and also there is the possibility of landslides/mudslides and shooting stones.

Regarding temperature, he said, Srinagar recorded a minimum of 10.2°C against 7.1°C on the previous night and it was 2.6°C above normal for the summer capital of JK for this time of the year.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of 7.2°C against 4.8°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 3.2°C against 1.2°C on the previous night and it was 0.4°C above normal for the famous resort in south Kashmir.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a minimum of 7.7°C against 4.8°C on the previous night and it was 7.7°C above normal, the official said.

Kupwara town recorded a low of 9.0°C against 5.8°C on the previous night and it was 2.7°C above normal there, the official said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 2.6°C against 0.5°C on the previous night and it was above normal by 1.1°C for the famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Jammu, he said, recorded a minimum of 20.5°C and it was above normal by 1.3°C for the winter capital of J&K.

Banihal recorded a low of 9.8°C, Batote 12.5°C and Bhaderwah 9.0°C, he said.

Mehbooba Is

Mehbooba Mufti as a formidable advocate for the region's interests.

'Not End of

active politics? As sons or grandsons, they help out wherever they are needed. We hosted a party (Ifatar party), if they help as part of the family, being hosts, is there a problem with that?"

"They are trained lawyers, if once in a while the party takes legal advice from them, where is the harm? But, have you seen them actively campaigning, seeking a mandate? I have not seen it," Omar added.

On the BJP accusing their rivals of promoting dynastic politics, Omar said the ruling party at the Centre does not have problem with political families as one-fifth of its candidates for Lok Sabha polls come from such families.

"Look, I cannot help propaganda. But I continue to maintain that the BJP has no problem with families in politics. The BJP's problem is with those families that oppose the BJP."

"Otherwise, you tell me doesn't the BJP have families in politics? I was reading a newspaper article the other day that suggested that one-fifth of the mandates that the BJP has distributed in this Parliament election all belong to BJP political families," he said. "How is it that Pawar sahab's family is a dynastic party, but Ajit Pawar is not dynastic? When Ajit Pawar's wife fights against Supriya Sule, that is not dynastic politics? The BJP has no problem with that," the politician said, and drew similar examples from the Thackeray family and the family of N. Chandrababu Naidu.

"When the Home Minister of India and others meet Uddhav Thackeray's cousin, Raj Thackeray, that is not dynastic? Other than having the Thackeray surname, what else is there? When the BJP ties up with Chandrababu Naidu in Andhra Pradesh. Naidu is NTR's son-in-law, that is how he got entry into politics, is that not dynastic? "How many second and third generation leaders are there in BJP today ... all these youngsters who are now coming up, whether it is Sushma Swara's daughter, or the minister from Hamirpur in Himachal (Anurag Thakur). How many names do you want me to list out for you, there is no end to it," the NC leader said.

Why Did Omar Abdullah

seats in Kashmir. While Omar Abdullah's candidature for Baramulla came as a shock to many, insiders suggest that the decision was made to quell emerging factions within the party regarding ticket distribution in North Kashmir.

Sources within the party, according to Kashmir News Observer, said pressure had been mounting from supporters of former ministers Chaudhary Mohammad Ramzan and Mir Saifullah for the Srinagar ticket, leading to concerns over potential resentment within the party ranks

in Kupwara. Additionally, the recent delimitation exercise has altered the geographical and social landscape of both seats, making Baramulla a more strategically viable option for Omar.

The Baramulla constituency boasts a significant vote bank from the Scheduled Tribe category, including the Gujjar-Bakkarwal, Pahari, and Dard Sheena communities. NC has traditionally held sway over these communities in the region, particularly among the Gujjar-Bakkarwal and Pahari populations of Bandipora and Baramulla.

Speaking to reporters after the candidate announcement, Omar Abdullah threw down the gauntlet to the BJP, challenging them to contest elections in Kashmir. He asserted that if BJP candidates fail to retain their deposits, he would exit politics. Furthermore, Omar called on the BJP to field candidates in Kashmir, questioning their claims of development and normalcy in the region.

Omar's decision to field Agha Ruhullah, a prominent Shia leader, as the candidate from Srinagar indicates a strategic move to tap into the Shia community's influence. With Ruhullah's family wielding considerable sway among Shias in the region, Omar aims to consolidate support in key constituencies, leveraging community ties for electoral gains.

I'm Okay, Ready

Anantnag-Rajouri seat which will go to polls on May 7 in the third phase of Lok Sabha elections.

While making the announcement in a press conference, NC Vice President Omar Abdullah had emphasised Ahmad's widespread popularity across various segments of society and expressed confidence that he would garner substantial support from the people.

ECI Launches 'KNOW

YOUR

about the candidate's criminal antecedents, if any. This information includes the details of any criminal cases filed against the candidate, the status of those cases, and the nature of offenses. It can help voters in identifying candidates with a history of criminal activity thereby enabling them to make an informed decision.

The citizen will be able to view the status of criminal cases filed against the candidate (if any) including the nature of offenses that the candidate has been accused of. The app is a valuable resource for voters who want to know more about the candidates who are contesting elections. The application is available both on Android and iOS devices. The citizens are encouraged to visit ECI's Website for more information.

Bournvita Removed

the category of health drinks from their platforms/sites.

On April 2, food safety standards regulator FSSAI directed all e-commerce food business operators (FBOs) to ensure appropriate categorisation of food products being sold on their websites.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has noted that instances of food products licensed under 'Proprietary Food' with the nearest category Dairy-Based Beverage Mix or Cereal-Based Beverage Mix or Malt-Based Beverage being sold on e-commerce websites under the category Health Drink, Energy Drink, etc, it added.

A year ago, Bournvita, had entered into a controversy because of its high content of sugar levels. A few days later, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) asked the Mondelez India-owned brand to remove all "misleading" commercials claiming of several health benefits with the consumption of the drink, reported Economic Times, referring to PTI. The action by the child

rights body came after a video threw light upon the high sugar content in the beverage, which was earlier often labelled as "health drink" in several ads.

Indian Army Marks

20,000 feet in the Karakoram mountain range is known as the highest militarised zone in the world where soldiers have to battle frostbite and high winds.

Under its "Operation Meghdoot", the Indian Army established its full control over the glacier on April 13, 1984.

"The Indian Army's control over the Siachen glacier has not only been a story of unparalleled valour and determination but also an incredible journey of technological advancements and logistical improvements that transformed it from one of the most formidable terrains into a symbol of indomitable spirit and innovation," said an official.

The initiatives, especially laid out in the last five years, have made significant strides in improving the living conditions and operational capabilities of the personnel deployed in Siachen, he said on the condition of anonymity.

In January last year, Captain Shiva Chauhan from the Army's Corps of Engineers was posted at a frontline post in the Siachen glacier, in the first such operational deployment of a woman Army officer at a key battlefield.

The official cited above said there has been a noteworthy improvement in the aspect of mobility in Siachen.

"The development of an extensive network of tracks and the introduction of all-terrain vehicles (ATV) have significantly improved mobility across the glacier," he said.

Another official said innovations like the DRDO-developed ATV bridges have enabled the Army to overcome natural obstacles, while high-quality "Dyneema" ropes in aerial cableways ensure seamless supply lines to even the most-remote outposts.

"The induction of heavy-lift helicopters and logistic drones has vastly improved the supply of essentials to the personnel deployed in posts that are cut off, especially in winters," he said.

"The availability of special clothing, mountaineering equipment and advanced rations has enhanced the ability of the soldiers to withstand the harsh conditions of the world's coldest battlefield," the official added.

He said gadgets, such as pocket weather trackers, with each soldier provides timely weather updates and warn them about possible avalanches.

"Recent initiatives concerning the improvement of connectivity have ensured that the personnel in forward posts in the northern and central glacier regions have access to fresh ration and vegetables instead of tinned ration, an aspect that could not have been imagined a few years ago," the official said.

"Fresh ration and vegetables are now a reality for our forward posts, thanks to new logistic initiatives," he added.

There has been a focus on improvement in mobile and data connectivity in the region as well.

"The introduction of the VSAT technology has revolutionised communication on the glacier, providing the troops with data and internet connectivity," the second official said.

"This leap in technology has enhanced real-time situational awareness, telemedicine capabilities and the well-being of our soldiers by keeping them connected with their families," he said.

The VSAT or very small aperture terminal is a data-transmission technology.

The Army has also been focusing on boosting the medical infrastructure in Siachen.

The Indian Space Research

Organisation (ISRO) has established telemedicine nodes that provide critical medical support not only to the troops but also to the local populace and tourists in the Nubra valley.

"The medical facilities in Partapur and the base camp boast of some of the best medical and surgical specialities, state-of-the-art HAPO chambers and oxygen generation plants, besides life-support systems. This has ensured that all endeavours are made to save every life in this challenging terrain," said a third official.

The HAPO (High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema) chamber is a life-saving device that provides emergency treatment in medical conditions relating to breathlessness and accumulation of fluids in the lungs etc.

Report Reveals Lack

who arrived in Gulmarg in large numbers expressed dissatisfaction with their experience at Gulmarg ski area.

"The reason was consistently stated that the gondola and the chairlift did not follow reliable hours of operation. Especially foreign skiers who are used to ski areas publicizing their hours (Gulmarg does not, nor does it mention the ski area on the cable car website), the absence of official operating hours left the operations staff to fail to meet the agreed timings with little or no accountability," the report adds.

Mr. Newman reveals that he met the J&K cable car operations managers to ensure that they could achieve established timings from past seasons.

"I was told it would be 'no issue' and was reassured since this was a new operations management team, one which I knew well from previous winters working together. The results were a failure on every attempt to load ski patrolrollers on the second phase for avalanche mitigation at 8am," he says in the report.

The gondola, he says, was never available for ski patrol to begin the dangerous job of avalanche mitigation early whereby the ski area would be rendered safe and ready to open by the official time.

He says the guests of Gulmarg Ski Area have a right to know what they are paying for when they purchase a ski ticket. "They deserve to be informed about the ski area's opening and closing times and have confidence that they will receive the number of hours they have paid for, especially when it snows—not in spite of it," he added.

The report further adds that none of the items from 2023 have been addressed. Additionally, ski patrol radios, avalanche beacons, shovels and probes are due for replacement. The report adds that there is no progress on installing an Automated Weather Station (AWS) from the last three years.

It further adds that the Master planning for development of ski slopes at Gulmarg gondola are still unfinished.

The report stressed that the expensive snow beating machines, (Piston Bully) are experiencing excessive damage while performing basic services to tourism needs.

"The damage is due to severely under-developed terrain where tracks exist; and include large boulders, and debris. Consistent with international practices, proper development of the underlying track including heavy machinery earthworks as necessary, is recommended," the report says.

The report adds that a second and separate track has been identified and would be constructed for use by others including pedestrians, sledge and snowmobile stakeholders.

"The finished tracks should be smooth and sustainably built so a beaten (groomed) slope may be provided without undue risk to snow beating machines with the added benefit of achieving said beaten slope despite shallow depths of seasonal snow thereby further extending the period of ski season."

27th year OF PUBLICATION

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OR SCAN

LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

Ensure availability of basic amenities at polling stations: Div Com to DCs

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, on Saturday convened a meeting of all Deputy Commissioners of Kashmir Division to review the arrangements at polling stations in the constituencies of all three Parliamentary Constituencies to facilitate the polling staff and voters.

While reviewing the arrangements for electricity, drinking water facilities besides toilets at designated polling stations across the Valley, Div Com directed all DCs to ensure availability of basic amenities for the smooth conduct of Parliamentary Elections.



He also reviewed comprehensive security arrangements at polling stations for the safety of staff and voters. He also directed for creating a conducive environment for peaceful voting process.

Besides, Div Com directed for looping in line departments to ensure uninterrupted services during Polling Days and maintenance of close synergy among stakeholders and agencies.

Moreover, Div Com reviewed overall preparation of District Administrations for Parliamentary Election and facilities created for disabled and elderly voters to exercise their franchise.

LOK SABHA ELECTIONS 2024

Poll Parties Of 1st Phase Airlifted To Snow-Bound Pockets In J&K's Kishtwar

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: Authorities on Friday airlifted the first batch of 189 polling officials and 69 police personnel to the snow-bound pockets of Marwah and Warwan in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, officials said.

Kishtwar falls in Udhampur-Kathua parliamentary constituency, which is going to polls on April 19 to decide the fate of 12 candidates, including Union Minister Jitendra Singh.

Marwah, Warwan and Machail are the remotest areas of Kishtwar, which normally remains cut off for nearly four months following five to 10 feet snowfall during winter. On Thursday, a total of 188 security personnel were airlifted and deployed in 34 polling stations and strong rooms in these areas.

The officials said District Election Officer Devansh Yadav has made the arrangement with supervision and approval of Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu and Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole, for the safe transportation of polling parties, election legis-



lating and materials to 34 polling booths, including 19 in Marwah, 12 in Warwan and four in Machail. Taking into account the weather forecast, the advance departure of polling parties, security personnel, EVM and other materials has been done, they said.

The officials said that political parties have been informed in advance of the movement of persons and materials, while five intermediate strong rooms have been established for the secure storage of EVMs, enhancing the efficiency of the electoral process.

The repairs are in full swing, with elaborate security measures in place, including the deployment of IAF's Mi-17 helicopters for transportation of polling officers and the establishment of helipads, they said.

The officials said the dispatch of polling staff will continue in a phased manner, prioritising the far-flung areas, snow pockets like Marwah, Warwan and Machail through airlift and ensuring an effective and foolproof transportation plan for other areas as well through coordinated and comprehensive efforts.

Shariefabad, Durbal Residents Protest Against Power Tariff Hike

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Residents of Shariefabad, Durbal, and Hanjok staged a protest on Friday against what they called a "sudden implementation" of tariff hikes by the Power Development Department (PDD) in their area.

Residents alleged that the decision has led to exorbitant monthly bills ranging from Rs 800 to 1300, and then 1300 to 2100, causing significant financial strain on the population in the area.

Expressing their frustration and anger, protesters accused PDD officials of imposing inflated charges without prior consultation or justification, stating that the abrupt increase in tariffs has hit the residents in the area hard, prompting them to voice their grievances loudly and demand immediate action from authorities.

The protesters, while demonstrating, also marched towards the Grid Station where protesters reminded the officials of promises made during the construction of the Power House on their land.

The protesters claimed that they were assured of free electricity in exchange for their land. Moreover, they also recounted a tragic incident in which their children lost their lives due to a high-tension line (HT) falling down.

The aggrieved residents emphasised that they had fulfilled their end of the bargain by providing land for the Power

House's construction, but that alleging that the authorities had failed to honour their commitment of free electricity.

They said that the loss of lives in the tragic incident only exacerbated their sense of betrayal and injustice.

Protesters vowed to continue their agitation until their demands are met.

They called for a rollback of the tariff hikes and urged the authorities to fulfill their promises as compensation for the sacrifices made by the local community for the construction of the power house.

"We have made sacrifices, we gave our land and some received compensation, which was just peanuts, while there are many who haven't received anything yet," said Arif Ahmad, a local resident of the area.

Altaf Ahmad, another local of the area, said that the move by the PDD authorities in the area is unjust and betrayal with them, as they were promised a lot when they gave land for the power house.

"We have land but that has no value as there are a number of high-tension wires over it. Who will buy that? At least we had hoped for the electricity, but I think they are now trying to snatch that as well", he said.

Meanwhile, a senior PDD official told Kashmir News Observer that on receiving the information from the police station Parimpora, they went to the grid station, where around 200 people were protesting inside the premises of the power house.



LG Pays Obeisance at Gurudwara Sahib Abtal

KO NEWS SERVICE

SAMBA: On the auspicious occasion of Baisakhi, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid obeisance at the Gurudwara Sahib Abtal, Ramgarh, Samba. He prayed for peace, prosperity, happiness and well-being of all.

In his address, the Lt Governor extended his heartiest greetings to the people and recalled the vision of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji for a just and inclusive society.

"I bow to the venerable Sri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji. Gururji's message of selfless service, truthfulness, sacrifice, equality and universal love is an abiding source of inspiration for all of us."

On this day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, the tenth Guru, formalised the concept of Saint-Soldier by introducing the Amrit ceremony and transformed the Sikhs into a family of Saints-Soldiers, known as the Khalsa Panth," the Lt Governor said.

He said a collective name given to the first five Khalsa is Panj Pyare. The Panj Pyare who were baptized by Guru Gobind Singh Ji were -Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh, Bhai Mohkam Singh, and Bhai Sahib Singh.

The Lt Governor called upon the youth to follow the ideals that Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji espoused throughout his life and strive relentlessly toward the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden. On this Baisakhi, let us resolve to tread the path shown by Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, he said.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor paid tributes to those martyred in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. He said, the courage and supreme sacrifice of our martyrs will continue to inspire us to build India of their dreams.

He also lauded the invaluable contribution of the farming community in nation-building.

S. Ajit Singh, Chairman, Sikh Coordination Committee J&K; S. Amarjeet Singh, President Gurudwara Sahib Abtal; senior officials of Police and Civil Administration, religious heads, prominent citizens, community elders and people from all walks of life were present on the occasion and paid their obeisance at the Gurudwara Sahib.



LG Pays Tributes to Gen Zorawar Singh

KO NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid tributes to great warrior and military strategist General Zorawar Singh on his Birth Anniversary.

The Lt Governor laid wreath at the statue of General Zorawar Singh Ji at a commemorative event organized by J&K Ex-Services League. The Lt Governor said that General Zorawar Singh was a true national hero and remain a source of inspiration for the people across the country.

"The unparalleled courage, valour and dedication of one of the greatest military commanders of the world will continue to inspire the generations," the Lt Governor said.

RR Swain, DGP; Maj Gen Gaurav Gautam, GoC 26 Infantry Division; Lt Gen RK Sharma (Retd.) President J&K Ex-Services League and other prominent personalities also paid their homage to General Zorawar Singh.

able contribution of the farming community in nation-building. S. Ajit Singh, Chairman, Sikh Coordination Committee J&K; S. Amarjeet Singh, President Gurudwara Sahib Abtal; senior officials of Police and Civil Administration, religious heads, prominent citizens, community elders and people from all walks of life were present on the occasion and paid their obeisance at the Gurudwara Sahib.

Baisakhi Celebrated With Religious Fervor In Kashmir

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Baisakhi was on Saturday celebrated with religious fervor and enthusiasm across Kashmir.

The occasion marks the harvest festival in the region and holds significant cultural importance for the Sikh community.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Sikhs were seen dressed in the traditional attire, with women adorned in colourful suits, and men in kurta-pajamas, adding a splash of colour to the festivities.

"It's a day of joy and celebration for us. Baisakhi brings people together, irrespective of their religion or background," said Ramesh, a local resident.

Likewise, the main attraction of the celebration was the Gurdwaras, where devotees offered prayers and participated in devotional songs.

"It's heartwarming to see people coming together to celebrate Baisakhi. The spirit of unity and brotherhood is what makes this festival special," another Sikh brother said.



contest from this pivotal constituency. Zafar Manhas, representing the DPAP, has also entered the fray.

The Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary seat encompasses a broad spectrum of assembly constituencies, including Jainpora, DH Pora, Doru, Kokernag, Anantnag West, Anantnag, Srigufwara-Bijbihara, Shanas-Anantnag East, Pahalgam, Nowshera, Rajouri, Budhal, Surankote, Poonch Haveli and Mendhar assembly constituencies—(KNO)

Over 80K First-Time Voters In Anantnag- Rajouri Seat

Agencies

SRINAGAR: As the electoral battleground heats up in the Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary constituency, all eyes are on the significant presence of 81,189 first-time voters, aged between 18 to 19 years who are going to play a decisive role in ensuring victory of the prominent candidates in fray for the crucial parliamentary constituency.

As per the inputs received by the news agency With a total of 1,830,294 voters from all five parliamentary constituencies of the state, comprising 930,379 men and 899,888 women, the stage is set for a closely contested electoral showdown. Notably, the BJP is yet to announce its candidate for the Anantnag seat, adding an element of suspense to the proceedings.

The race for the parliamentary seat has attracted seasoned veterans, setting the stage for a fiercely contested battle. Following the seat alliance between the Congress and National Conference (NC), the Congress has ceded ground, leaving the field open for NC candidate Mian Altaf. However, the presence of PDP President and former

KP Outfit Merges with Congress in Jammu



KO NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: A Kashmiri Pandit outfit, All India Kashmiri Hindu Forum (AIKHF), merged with the Congress at the party headquarters here on Saturday.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president Vikar Rasool Wani welcomed AIKHF chairman Rattan Lal Bhan and other office bearers into the party fold.

The AIKHF was formed in 1998. Hundreds of its members joining the Congress is a big boost for the party, Wani told reporters. He also called on all Kashmiri Pandit organisations to join the party and accused the BJP-led central government of "fooling" the community for the past 10 years.

"The BJP sold (their plight) across the country to come to power and assured the com-

munity that they will do a lot for their rehabilitation, giving them hope.

"The BJP has been in power for the last 10 years but failed to do any work worth even 10 paise for them," Wani said.

"I appeal to other Kashmiri Pandit groups to come back to the Congress as the BJP is only fooling them for the last 10 years. The Nehru family originally belongs to Kashmir and has a lot of sympathy for the displaced pandits and so does the Congress party as a whole," he added.

Bhan said he decided to merge his outfit with the Congress as the former prime minister Manmohan Singh-led government had done a lot for Kashmiri Pandits.

"We feel (like we are) back in our family. The BJP only exploited the pandits and did nothing for us," he said.

Apni Party Outlines Strategy for Poll Campaign

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Apni Party on Saturday held a preparatory meeting for the upcoming Lok Sabha (LS) polls in the Srinagar constituency.

The meeting, chaired by Mohammad Dilawar Mir, the Chairman of the party's Parliamentary Affairs Committee (PAC), was held at the party headquarters in Srinagar.

Addressing the gathering, Mohammad Dilawar Mir urged the leaders and senior workers to remain fully active during the poll campaign days to ensure people are well aware of the party's pro-people agenda and policies.

He stated, "This is the time for us to stay active and deeply connected to the people to present our vision, agenda, and

policies for a brighter future for Jammu and Kashmir."

He added, "Apni Party has emerged as a credible political alternative, and people fully trust our unambiguous agenda for peace, prosperity, and development in Jammu and Kashmir."

Among the prominent party leaders who were present on the occasion included the party's General Secretary Rafi Ahmad Mir, Provincial President Mohammad Ashraf Mir, who is the party's candidate for the Srinagar constituency in these elections, Former Legislator and spokesperson Yawar Dilawar Mir, Provincial Vice President Kashmir Muzaffar Rizvi, Chief Spokesperson, State Secretary and District President Budgam Muntazir Mohiuddin, Media Advisor Farooq Andrabi besides others.

Govt Exempts 64 GDCs From Making Admissions Through CUET

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In wake of low CUET based admissions in many degree colleges of Jammu and Kashmir, Higher Education Department Saturday exempted 64 Government Degree Colleges from making admissions through CUET score for academic session 2024-25.

The department further said that many other students did not prefer to seek admission through the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) mode keeping in view their geographical locations, topography and availability of the infrastructure.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Under Secretary to government Sanjay Kumar Tickoo in a communiqué said that among the colleges that have been exempted from making admissions through CUET score for academic session 2024-25 includes 35 government colleges of Jammu division and 29 of Kashmir region respectively.

"In view of very low CUET based admissions in some government degree colleges during last year admissions, the situation was revisited this year after discussions with all the stakeholders and it

was decided to identify the colleges where the students did not prefer to seek admission through the CUET mode keeping in view their geographical locations, topography, availability of the infrastructure etcetera and where the CUET based admissions were very low during last year," it reads.

CUET-2024 is scheduled to be held from 15-05-2024 to 31-05-2024 in thirteen mediums across India for the evaluation of candidates desirous of seeking admissions to various undergraduate programs.

The higher education department has observed that CUET based admissions in far off colleges located at Marwah, Tangdhar, Gurez, Mahore etcetera puts the students in an undue disadvantageous situation.

"The Nodal Principals, Jammu and Srinagar have furnished the lists of 35 Government Colleges of Jammu Division and 29 Government Colleges of Kashmir Division on the basis of the available data and locations of the Colleges for exemption of these Government colleges for making admissions through CUET and allow them to make admissions during the Academic Session 2024-24 without CUET score," it reads.

Terror Hideout Busted In Reasi; Arms, Explosives Recovered

AGENCIES

JAMMU: The security forces here busted a terror hideout on Saturday and recovered arms and ammunition, police said.

The hideout was busted during a joint operation by the J-K police and Rashtriya Rifles in the Lancha area of Mahore sub-division in Reasi, a police spokesperson said.

Acting on a tip-off, the team conducted a search operation and recovered an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) fitted in

a Tiffin box and two pistols, police said. The operation was still going on when the last reports were received.

Besides the IED and two pistols, the search parties also recovered three electric detonators, 400 grams of explosive powder, two pistol magazines with 24 rounds, 40 rounds of AK assault rifle, eight batteries, 40 metres of electric wire, five metres of plastic rope, one steel plate, one glass, a bag, three bedsheets and some pictures, the spokesperson said.

Real Kashmir Humbled 4-1 At Home

Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR: Debutants Namdhari FC finished in the ninth position in the I-League 2023-24 as they inflicted a humiliating 4-1 defeat on Real Kashmir FC at the TRC Football Turf on Saturday.

Namdhari FC thus ended their campaign with 27 points from 24 matches. They won seven matches, drew six and lost the rest.

The winners led 2-0 at half-time after goals from Stephen Acquah (20') and Imanol Arana Sadaba (24' penalty).

Manvir Singh scored twice after the change of ends, in the 60th and 90th minute to settle the issue in his team's favour.

Lalramdinsanga Ralte (86') found the net for the home team.

Real Kashmir FC, who were engaged in the championship battle till late in the competition, remained stuck at fifth place with 40 points from 24 matches.

The defeat against Namdhari was their second in a row, the



previous being against the relegated TRAU FC in Kalyani.

This loss was also their second on home turf this season.

Real Kashmir FC were reduced to 10 men in the 67th minute when defender Hyder Yousuf was sent off for a foul.

Playing in front of a good turnout, the home side found themselves at the receiving end early in the match as two

goals by the visitors within 24 minutes completely upset their game plan.

Namdhari's first goal in the 29th minute was a true stunner, leaving everyone surprised for a few seconds.

Ghanaian Stephen Acquah collected the ball around 40 yards away from the Real Kashmir goal and as he saw the rival goalkeeper Muheet Shabir standing a bit advanced inside the box, the midfielder unleashed a powerful yet looping shot that sailed into the net over the custodian's head at great speed.

In the 24th minute came the second goal off a penalty kick when a home team defender was pulled up for elbowing a rival inside the box.

Spanish midfielder Sadaba converted the spot kick with a confident looking shot.

Namdhari's third goal came at the stroke of the hour, a perfect header by lanky striker Manvir off a long ball inside the box virtually dashing Real Kashmir's hopes.

MS Dhoni In Spotlight As CSK, MI Resume Rivalry



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: The legendary Mahendra Singh Dhoni will be in the spotlight in what could be his final game at the iconic Wankhede Stadium when defending champions Chennai Super Kings take on Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

Dhoni returns to the hallowed turf of Wankhede for the first time ever as a non-captain of the CSK, potentially in his last IPL season. It will also be his first appearance as just a player for any team since November 2005. Even at 42, Dhoni's glove-work remains impeccable and so does his assessment of the game like always.

CSK would also hope their recent record against MI — four wins in last five matches including their seven-wicket win here last season — holds them in good stead.

Two of IPL's most successful teams with five titles each, both sides are witnessing a tectonic shift of leadership change with Hardik Pandya taking over the mantle from Rohit Sharma at MI and Ruturaj Gaikwad succeeding Dhoni at CSK,

but there is nothing that suggests their intense rivalry would expect any such shift.

If anything, CSK's bowlers could be put to sword by the rampaging MI batters who have gone hammer and tongs at the flat pitches here, scoring in excess of 230 against Delhi Capitals and chasing down nearly 200 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru with more than four overs to spare.

Pandya's MI have found their footing after a jittery start. Their batters have done well in the last two outings and Suryakumar Yadav's 17-ball fifty against RCB provides an ominous sign to CSK bowlers.

Ishan Kishan (161 runs) and Rohit's opening stand would thus be crucial in the scheme of things but CSK would also have a lot of assurance with their own batting.

Skipper Gaikwad may not be a marauder with the bat but he can be the silent enforcer in the CSK line-up, which has the exuberance of Rachin Ravindra at the top, sturdiness of Daryl Mitchell in the middle and explosiveness of Shivam Dube (176 runs), Ravindra Jadeja and Dhoni in the death overs.

KKR Seek Home Comfort Against Mayank Yadav-Less LSG

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: Two-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders will seek home comfort in their bid to return to winning ways when they face a depleted Lucknow Super Giants in an Indian Premier League match here on Sunday.

The match will be KKR's

Narine (27) and Russell (10) failed with the bat and the team, who had posted two 200-plus scores from three matches on the back of the Caribbean duo's blazing form, could manage an under par 137/9 at Chennai.

In the spotlight since the beginning of the season, KKR captain Shreyas Iyer has failed

to take his first wicket of this IPL against DC after giving away 100 runs in the first two matches.

While KKR will be overwhelming favourites at Eden, LSG with their unassuming approach will not give up easily, even as they will miss their pace sensation Mayank Yadav for a second successive match.



first of the five matches at home on the trot and the Gautam Gambhir-mentored side will be fully aware this can prove decisive to clinch the play-off spot for the first time since 2021.

In the points tally, nothing separates the two teams, both of whom have secured three wins each, and lost their respective last-round matches. KKR's over-reliance on their Caribbean ageing duo of Sunil Narine and Andre Russell was exposed by defending champions Chennai Super Kings when they lost by seven wickets in their previous outing.

The Aussie speed gun has an economy of 11.00 and

to impress and his scores give an abysmal picture -- 0, 39 not out, 18 and 34.

Ramandeep Singh also had a lean run after an impressive 35 against SRH.

The 2022 U-19 World Cup winning Angkrish Raghuvanshi has impressed the most following his 54 against Delhi Capitals. And he will like to return among runs after failing to convert his start against CSK.

The most-talked about signing Mitchell Starc's poor form with the ball has been the talk of the town.

The Aussie speed gun has an economy of 11.00 and

Mayank's replacement Arshad Khan failed to impress, conceding at 10.73 runs over as they failed to defend 167 at home against DC last evening.

Mohsin Khan, who claimed 2/34 against Punjab Kings, could be a perfect replacement but it remains to be seen if he's fully recovered from his hamstring injury that had sidelined the left-arm pacer. The team owned by Kolkata-based industrialist Sanjeev Goenka will hope for a much better show after mustering an average 167/7 against DC on Friday.

Match Starts: 3.30pm.

Short TAKES

PM Modi Interacts With Country's Top Gamers



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday interacted with top Indian gamers on a host of issues relating to the gaming industry.

In a free-wheeling interaction regarding the future as well as the challenges before the e-gaming industry, the prime minister posed curious questions to the gamers while also trying his hands at some of the games.

The gamers discussed new developments in the gaming industry with the prime minister.

Nepal's Airee Smashes 6 Sixes In An over; 3rd To Do So In T20Is

Nepal's hard-hitting Dipendra Singh Airee became the third batter to smash six sixes in an over in T20 internationals here on Saturday as he achieved the feat against hosts Qatar during the ongoing ACC Men's Premier Cup T20 International fixture here.

Thus, Airee joined an elite company of Yuvraj Singh (against Stuart Broad during T20 World Cup 2007) and Kieron Pollard (against Sri Lanka's Akila Dananjaya in 2021) as batters with six maximums in one over.

Mitchell Marsh Returns To Australia To Treat Hamstring Tear

Delhi Capitals have suffered a major setback as their Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh has returned home to undergo treatment for a tear in his right hamstring.

Marsh, who is set to be named Australia's captain for the T20 World Cup in June, was recalled after consultations with the Delhi team management, according to ESPNcricinfo.

However, a final call on his availability for the remainder of the season is yet to be taken.

Tsitsipas Knocks Out Sinner To Reach Monte-Carlo Final

Two-times champion Stefanos Tsitsipas stunned second seed Jannik Sinner 6-4 3-6 6-4 to advance to the final of the Monte-Carlo Masters on Saturday.

The 25-year-old Greek, who has won the title in 2021 and 2022, kept his cool after a near-flawless display in the opening set to stop Sinner from producing a stirring comeback after the Italian roared back to take a 3-0 lead in the second set.

Bayern Munich Winger Kingsley Coman Injured, Doubt For CL

Bayern Munich forward Kingsley Coman was carried off the field Saturday, making the French winger a doubt for Wednesday's Champions League match with Arsenal.

Coman went off early in the second half of Bayern's Bundesliga match against Cologne after pulling up in apparent pain and clutching his right groin.

He was replaced by Jamal Musiala in the 49th minute and had to be supported off by two of Bayern's medical staff.

Newcastle Routs Tottenham In A 4-0 Win In Premier League

Agencies

LONDON: Newcastle United handed Tottenham Hotspur another drubbing at St. James' Park as Alexander Isak's double helped secure a 4-0 win for Eddie Howe's team in the Premier League on Saturday.

Isak and Anthony Gordon scored within 95 seconds of each other in the first half as Newcastle followed up last season's 6-1 home win over Spurs with another dominant performance to damage Tottenham's hopes of a top-four finish.

Isak, who also scored twice in that big win last April, capped a stellar performance with a second goal in the 51st minute to take his tally to 17 in the league and 21 overall this season. Gordon added his second assist of the game with a corner that was headed home by Fabian Schar for the fourth goal in the 87th.

Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou, who took charge after last season, had said this week that he had not studied the tape of the 6-1 loss and he probably won't want to watch this one back, either.

Tottenham's defence fell apart repeatedly and star centre-back Micky van de Ven was partially at



fault for the first two goals as he slipped both times and let Isak and Gordon go past him inside the area.

Gordon had set Isak up for the opener in the 30th minute and then netted the second himself in the 32nd after pouncing on a poor ball from Tottenham right back Pedro Porro back toward his own goal.

The third came when Bruno Guimaraes helped Newcastle win

possession just outside its area and then launched a long ball up the pitch for the speedy Isak to run onto. The striker made no mistake when one-on-one with goalkeeper Vicario, calmly slotting the ball inside the far post.

Isak has now scored in six straight league home games and became the first Newcastle player since Alan Shearer in 2003-04 to

reach 20 goals in all competitions in a topflight season.

Schar was then left open to head home Gordon's corner from eight yards out to cap the rout.

The big loss meant Tottenham dropped below Aston Villa into fifth, behind Unai Emery's side on goal difference.

Newcastle is sixth, 10 points behind Villa and Tottenham. (AP)

Griezmann At The Double As Atletico Recover To Outclass Girona



Agencies

MADRID: Antoine Griezmann scored twice as Atletico Madrid overcame an early scare to crush Girona 3-1 in a top-of-the-table LaLiga clash on Saturday.

LaLiga top-scorer Artem Dovbyk netted his 17th goal of the season with a tap-in from a counter-attack to give the visitors the lead in the fourth minute but Atletico equalised with Griezmann from the penalty spot in the 34th minute.

Atletico scored with an Angel Correa header in first half stoppage time before the break and Griezmann secured the points five minutes into the second half, firing a close-range effort past the goalkeeper.

With the win, fourth-placed Atletico moved to 61 points, four behind Girona in third. Barcelona, who play at Cadiz later on Saturday, are second on 67 points. Real Madrid are top on 75 points.