

## Incessant Rains Pummel Kashmir



### Agencies

Srinagar: Rains lashed plains of Kashmir while higher reaches received fresh snowfall for the second straight day on Friday. The downpour brought the mercury down in the valley while the weatherman has predicted an improvement in the weather conditions from Friday night.

Several higher reaches including Sadhna Top, Pir Ki Gali, Zo-jila, Sinthan Top, Razdan Pass and Tulail in Gurez received fresh snowfall while the plains

including Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir, were lashed by the intermittent rainfall.

Although the weather conditions are expected to improve gradually from Friday night, Director Meteorological department (MET), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad Khan said that the possibility of rains at scattered places on April 20 cannot be ruled out.

From April 21-25, he said the weather is expected to remain generally dry while the possibility of afternoon thundershower | [More on P6](#)

## Udhampur LS Seat Witnesses High Voter Turnout

### Voters Call For State Polls Before Sep 30

### Press Trust Of India

Udhampur: In the first major electoral battle in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370, the Udhampur constituency witnessed enthusiastic voters' participation as the seven-phase Lok Sabha polls began Friday. The electors said they now want assembly polls to be held before the September 30 deadline set by the Supreme Court.

The Udhampur constituency recorded more than 65.08 percent turnout till 5 pm, with officials saying the final turnout figures would be higher as data from remote locations and ballot papers are compiled.

"People voted with enthusiasm despite pouring rain. And you will see the enthusiasm reaching its crescendo during the much-awaited assembly elections," said Satosh Bandari, a voter from the



Inderwal constituency of Kishtwar, appealing to the Election Commission to announce assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir after the completion of Lok Sabha elections.

"We voted for development, security, and for employment generation. These issues will also reverberate during assembly polls."

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is presently run by the Lt Governor-led administration after the PDP-BJP

government collapsed in June, 2018 with the national party pulling out of the alliance. The last assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir were held in 2014.

While the voters mostly talked about the issues related to their rights, development and national agenda, they also listed out certain demands: restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, holding of assembly elections, as well as Urban | [More on P6](#)

## 'Silent Village' Votes For Special School

The residents of Dhadkahi, known as the "silent village" in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district due to its large deaf-and-dumb population, exercised their right to vote in the Lok Sabha polls on Friday in the hope of getting basic amenities, such as roads, water, healthcare facilities and education. "We have voted to garner support for our long-standing | [More on P6](#)

## Women Throng 'Pink Booths'

Amid multi-tier security arrangements, 'Nari Shakti' (women power) was on display at the all-women staffed booths known as 'pink booths', in the Doda district of the Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency. These 'pink booths' attracted more women voters, especially from the Muslim community. As polling began this morning, a large number of | [More on P6](#)

## ANANTNAG-RAJOURI LS SEAT 25 Candidates File Nominations

### Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: A total of 25 candidates have submitted nomination papers from Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency, which will go to polls on May 7, officials said on Friday.

"A total of 28 nomination papers have been received. Three candidates have submitted two nomination papers each, so we have 25 candidates," Anantnag Deputy Commissioner Syed Fakhruddin, who is the returning officer of the constituency, said.

He said the scrutiny of the nomination papers will be done on Saturday, April 22 is the last date for withdrawal of nominations.

The allotment of poll symbols will be done on April 23, Fakhruddin said.

The key candidates from the constituency are former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti, senior National Conference (NC) leader Mian Altaf, Zaffar Iqbal Manhas of the Apni Party and Mohammad Saleem Parray of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP).

There are also candidates from smaller political parties and several | [More on P6](#)

## National Highway Closed

Jammu-Srinagar highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir valley with the outside world, was blocked due to mudslide at Mehad, Ramban and shooting stones at Kishtwari Pather, Banihal, officials said. Earlier the | [More on P6](#)

## Woman Dies In House Collapse

A 50-year-old woman died after her 'Kotha' (mud house) collapsed due to a mudslide in Kokernag belt of South Kashmir's Anantnag on Friday. An official said that a mudslide, caused by incessant rains at Takiya Magam, Kokernag, damaged a Kotha belonging to Abdul Hamid, son of Abdul Rehman Ahanger. During the incident, | [More on P6](#)

## Overstaying In Govt Accommodations Eviction Notices Issued To 42 J&K Politicians

### Agencies

Srinagar: The Estates Department of Jammu and Kashmir has issued show-cause notices of eviction to 42 political figures. The department issued these notices on the directions of the Court.

These politicians continued to occupy the Government bungalows, even after being directed by the Estates Department to de-occupy them.

The Estates Department evicted hundreds of people mostly working journalists from their quarters but failed miserably to evict influential politicians both in Kashmir and Jammu.

After the abrogation of Article 370, some media houses were rendered office-less by the Estates Department.

Some of the political and social figures as per the news

agency Kashmir News Trust who have been issued show cause notices include Ghulam Nabi Azad, Muzaffar Hussain Beigh, Kavinder Gupta, Sajjad Gani Lone, Moulvi Imran Raza Ansari, Sat Sharma, G.M. Saroori, Sunil Sharma, Abdul Gani Vakil, Abdul Majid Padder, Hakeem Muhammad Yasin, Ravinder Raina, R.S. Pathania, Pardeep Sharma, Vibodh Gupta, Daleep Singh Parihar, Ravinder Sharma, Neelam Langhe, Shoaib Nabi Lone, Haji Abdul Rashid, MS Panditpuri, Raja Manzoor, Nizam-u-Din Bhat, Mir Muhammad Fayaz, Zafar Iqbal Manhas, Abdul Rahim Rather, Bashir Ahmed Dar, Muhammad Amin Bhat, Sofi Yousaf, M.Y. Tarigami, Yasir Reshi, Surinder Ambardar, Muhammad Abbas Wani, Shafiq Mir, Shilpi Verma, Tariq Ahmed Keen,

## SRINAGAR BOAT TRAGEDY

### Day 4: Frantic Searches For Missing Amid Pouring Rain

### Agencies

Srinagar: Despite incessant rains and wet weather conditions, the rescue operation to retrieve the missing bodies of three persons enters its fifth day with unwavering efforts from rescue agencies and local volunteers.

The three missing persons

include Showkat Ahmad, who sacrificed his life to save his son, Haziq Showkat, and another minor boy, Farhan Parray.

Reports said that despite the challenging weather, civilian volunteers, rescue teams from the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Indian Army's MARCOS were tirelessly

continuing the operation in the Jehlum waters. As of now, no traces of the missing individuals have been found, they said.

Abdul Rashid, ASI SDRF, said the efforts to retrieve the bodies continue despite the adverse weather conditions. "It has been raining since yesterday, and we are continuing our searches to locate | [More on P6](#)

## All Possible Efforts Underway: IGP

Inspector General of Police V.K Birdi on Friday said that all efforts are underway to recover the three persons gone missing after a boat capsized incident here on Tuesday. Birdi, talking to the media, said that the search operation is continuing amid inclement weather conditions. "All efforts are being made to recover the three missing bodies to bring respite to the grieving families," Birdi said. "Nothing new can be said as of now given as we continue to look for the | [More on P6](#)

## PDP Releases Manifesto For LS Polls Will Become Voice Of J&K, If Elected: Mufti

### Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidates, if elected, will raise the issues of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and become their voice in the Parliament, party chief Mehbooba Mufti said here on Friday.

Mufti made the remarks at a press conference at the party



headquarters while releasing the | [More on P6](#)

## 'Unilateral Decisions In Kashmir Unacceptable'

People's Democratic Party president Mehbooba said that the main purpose of the PDP to seek votes is to tell the country through parliament that what BJP did in 2019 is not acceptable. Addressing an election | [More on P6](#)

## Gujjars, Bakarwals Move HC Against Pahari Inclusion In ST

### Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: A group of activists from the Gujjar and Bakarwal community has filed a writ petition before the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh against the government for granting the tribal status of Paharis and other communities in Jammu & Kashmir.

In February this year, the Lok Sabha, passed the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023,

granting scheduled tribe status to the community. The bill provides reservation in jobs, educational institutions. A month later, the LG administration approved 10% reservation for them and added 15 new castes in the Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

The move was seen as an attempt to please the community ahead of Lok Sabha elections. The Gujjar and Bakarwal community are up in arms against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led government for | [More on P6](#)

## J&K Govt Proposes DA Hike For Employees, Pensioners

### Seeks Election Commission's Approval

### Agencies

Srinagar: In a proactive move aimed at fortifying the well-being of government employees and pensioners/family pensioners across Jammu and Kashmir, the General Administration Department has initiated a concerted effort by submitting a proposal to the Chief Electoral Officer.

The proposal seeks approval from the Election Commission of India for a significant revision in Dearness Allowance (DA) rates, with the intention of enhancing them from the current 46% to 50% of basic pay/basic pension.



recent developments in central government policies, wherein Dearness Allowance rates for central government employees have been increased, as indicated by the Office Memorandum issued by the Ministry of Finance. In light of these developments,

the Jammu and Kashmir administration is keen on aligning its policies to ensure parity and equitable treatment for its employees.

As per the letter, the proposal, with a projected annual financial implication of 626.88 crore, underwent meticulous scrutiny and discussion in a Screening Committee meeting.

Recognizing the significance of timely implementation, especially considering the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and the subsequent enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, the department has deemed it imperative to seek guidance and approval from the Election Commission of India. | [More on P6](#)

## Pollution Of Bonar Nallah Due To KGHP

### HC Orders Strict Monitoring For Environmental Damage

### M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has closed a public interest litigation (PIL) concerning potential pollution of Bonar Nallah. This tributary of the Jehlum River receives water discharged from the Kishanganga power project before flowing into Wular Lake in Bandipora district of north Kashmir.

However, a division bench of Chief Justice N. Kotiswar Singh and Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi made it "clear" that Jammu and Kashmir Pollution Control Board "will undertake necessary steps in accordance with the law to ensure that no environmental damage has



occurred, and if any damage has occurred, the relevant authorities will take appropriate steps and actions as required by law."

"In the absence of any specific denial or material indicating a breach of environmental safeguards, we do not deem it

necessary to continue with this PIL and accordingly, the same is closed," the court said while hearing the PIL filed in 2020 regarding pollution of the Bonar Nallah at Chandagee by dumping construction material and other refuse on the embankments. The PIL had also sought

the Court's direction to suitably compensate the residents of the project affected area whose residential houses got damaged due to blasting while constructing Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project (KGHP).

It had also sought court direction to the authorities concerned to engage the uneducated youth of the project affected area [Non land occupied] as they have been rendered without any source of livelihood.

"The contesting respondents, specifically respondent No. 2 (Chairman & Managing Director, NHPC) and respondent No. 7 (General Manager, NHPC), who have been assigned the task of construction of Kishanganga | [More on P6](#)



## 324 Cases Of Crime Against Women Registered In Srinagar Since 2019

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In the past more than five years, at least 324 cases of crime against women have been registered in district Srinagar.

According to the official figures available here, under the Crime Against Women (CAW) head, at least 324 cases of crime against women have been registered in district Srinagar from 2019 to January-31-2024 including one dowry case in the year 2022.

This information was revealed by the Public Information Officer (PIO) in a reply to Right to Information (RTI) application filed by the activist M.M Shuja.

According to the official figures, in the past more than five years, the highest number of cases registered under

the Crime Against Women (CAW) head in Srinagar was in the year 2023 wherein at least 113 such cases have been registered.

Similarly, the lowest numbers of such cases in the region were registered in the year 2021.

The official figures reveal that in the year 2019 at least 48 cases of crime against women were registered in Srinagar under the crime head CAW followed by 47 cases in 2020. In the year 2021, at least 41 such cases registered in the region followed by 70 cases in 2022 and 113 in 2023.

It further reveals that in the first month of 2024; at least five cases of crime against women were registered in Srinagar under the crime head CAW—(KNO)

## Not Leopard, But Wild Cat Spotted In Zakura, Say Wildlife Authorities

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The wildlife department on Friday clarified that the animal spotted in Zakura area was wild cat (Felis chaus) and not leopard.

A senior wildlife official informed that the reports and CCTV footage suggest the presence of a leopard-like animal in the vicinity; a team was promptly dispatched to verify the claim during the night hours.

"After thorough spot verification and cross-checking of CCTV videos, it was established that the animal sighted in Bilal Colony Zakura was indeed a wild cat," the official confirmed.

The official stated that, furthermore, samples of the

animal's pug marks were collected and compared with earlier recordings from Elahibagh area and that the analysis led to the conclusion that the same wild cat had been previously observed in Elahibagh and surrounding areas.

"It is now confirmed that there was no leopard in the area. Our observations indicate that this is the same wild cat, which has been roaming in the vicinity. We are taking measures to trap the animal by placing a cage," the official added.

The official said that the clarification by wildlife should end the panic in the area, urging residents to maintain caution always during morning and evening hours while venturing out—(KNO)

## Bhartiya Krishak Samaj Holds Maiden Meet In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Bhartiya Krishak Samaj on Friday held its maiden meet in Srinagar, the summer capital of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir

Krishak Samaj, M.Y Zargar said that the forum has been made with an aim to highlight the problems and issues of the farmer community.

He said that the forum demands uniform charges in cold storage houses and other issues.



Due to the heavy traffic flow towards Tulip Garden, an ambulance transporting a patient was stranded in a massive traffic jam on Boulevard Road on Friday amidst rainfall. KO Photo by Abid Bhat

## 69 Militants Killed In Srinagar In Five Years, Official Data Reveals

200 Odd Militants Arrested, No Killing In 2023

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In the past more than five years, at least 69 militants have been killed in district Srinagar while more than 200 militants have been arrested in the area.

According to the official figures available here, at least 69 militants have been killed in district Srinagar from 2019 to January-31-2024.

The official, however, said that in the year 2023 and in the first month of 2024, no militant was killed in the district.

It further said that from 2019 to 2023, at least 204 militants were arrested. However, till the first month of 2024, no militant was arrested in district Srinagar.

**The official figures reveal that in 2019 at least four militants were killed in Srinagar followed by 22 in 2020. In the year 2021, at least 24 militants were killed followed by 19 militant killings in 2022**

This information was revealed by the Public Information Officer (PIO) of district police

Srinagar in a reply to Right to Information (RTI) application filed by the activist M M Shuja.

The official figures reveal that in 2019 at least four militants were killed in Srinagar followed by 22 in 2020. In the year 2021, at least 24 militants were killed followed by 19 militant killings in 2022. The official figures further reveal that in 2023 and till month end of January-2024, no militant was killed in Srinagar district.

According to official figures, from the year 2019 to 2022, the lowest number of killings of militants in Srinagar was in the year 2019 and highest numbers of militants were killed in the year 2021—(KNO)

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

**AIRPORTS**  
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

**RAILWAYS**

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

**HIGHWAY STATUS**

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

**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
11 Shawal  
1445

**PRAYERS**

FAJR 4:27  
ZUHR 12:32  
ASR 5:13  
Magrib 7:09  
ISHA 8:35

### This Day In History

- 1611 - First known performance of Shakespeare's tragedy Macbeth at the Globe Theatre, London, recorded by Simon Forman
- 1650 - Dutch East India Company (VOC) management sets new guidelines
- 1657 - Battle in Santa Cruz Bay, Tenerife: English fleet under Robert Blake sinks Spanish silver fleet
- 1689 - The former King James II of England, now deposed, lays siege to Kerry
- 1702 - Comet C/1702 H1 approaches within 0.0437 AU of Earth
- 1792 - France declares war on Austria, Prussia & Sardinia
- 1809 - Napoleon I and French forces defeat Austria at Battle of Abensberg, Bavaria
- 1862 - The first pasteurization test is completed by Frenchmen Louis Pasteur and Claude Bernard.
- 1910 - Halley's Comet passes 29th recorded perihelion at 87.9 mn km
- 1915 - The Armenians rise and seize the Turkish town of Van, which they hold until Russians relieve them on 19 May; thousands of Armenians are killed
- 1916 - German-British sea battle off Belgian coast
- 1940 - 1st electron microscope demonstrated (RCA), Philadelphia, Pa
- 1958 - Morocco demands departure of Spanish troops
- 1961 - American Harold Graham makes 1st rocket belt flight
- 1962 - NASA civilian pilot Neil Armstrong takes X-15 to 63,250 m
- 1965 - People's Republic China offers North Vietnam military aid
- 1967 - US Surveyor 3 lands on Moon
- 1967 - US planes bomb Haiphong for 1st time during Vietnam War
- 1968 - Pierre Trudeau sworn in as Canada's 15th Prime Minister
- 1972 - Apollo 16's Young & Duke land on Moon with Boeing Lunar Rover #2
- 1983 - Soyuz T-8 launched; mission aborted when capsule fails to dock
- 1983 - Soyuz T-8 is launched (lands 2 days later)
- 1988 - US accuses Renamo of killing 100,000 Mozambiquians
- 1993 - Uranus passes Neptune (once every 171 years)
- 1994 - Serbian army bombs hospital in Goradze Bosnia, 47 killed
- 1994 - Sohai & Inzamam make world record ODI partnership of 263

*From KO Archives*

### 'Onus Both On India, Pak For Safe Bus Travel'

Observer News Service

**N**EW DELHI - Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said that it is the joint responsibility of India and Pakistan as also the local authorities on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) to ensure full security cover to passengers of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service.

"Notwithstanding the recent dastardly attempt to disturb the bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad by terrorists, the people of Jammu and Kashmir came out on the streets as one to welcome this gesture of reconciliation," he said addressing the Chief Ministers' Conference on Internal Security here.

"I hope the terrorists and extremists in the region have grasped the mood of the people and will not try to disturb this bus service again," he said.

Singh said it was the joint responsibility of the governments of India and Pakistan and the local authorities on both sides of the LoC to work together in providing full security to passengers.  
(Kashmir Observer, 20 April, 2005)

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The Chief Medical Superintendent Northern Railway, Firozpur Cantt for and on the behalf of the President of India, invites tenders for the following work

Name of Work	Registration of supplier for Local Purchase of medicines and other hospital items for Divisional Railway hospital Firozpur (Punjab)		
Completion period	Two year from the Date of starting.		
App. Cost of the work	Divisional railway hospital Firozpur Rs.57,00,000/- Per year		
Earnest money	Rs.114000/-		
Last date and time of submission of tender on IREPS portal	16.05.2024 up to 17.00 Hrs		
Date of opening	17.05.2024 at 11.00 Hrs		

No.43-Med/ Firm Registration/ FZR Dated:- 18/04/2024

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE** 1179/24

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**E-Tender Notice**

Dy.CE/GSU/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites Open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) with closing date-09.05.2024 up to 15:00 Hrs. and closing date-09.05.2024 up to 17:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/ revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker Cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information logon to [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System
Open	GSU	Two packet system
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time
18.04.2024/ 11:51 Hrs.	25.04.2024	09.05.2024/ 15:00 Hrs.
18.04.2024/ 16:19 Hrs.	25.04.2024	09.05.2024/ 17:00 Hrs.

S.No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender
1.	OP-03-GSU-FZR-2024-25	Upgradation/Improvement of Anantnag Good Shed on BAHL-BRML Section under ADEN/BAHL.
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.) Validity of Offer Period of Completion
	10,92,67,796.66/-	6,96,300/- 90 Days 08 Months
Similar Nature of work:- "Any civil work other than track work".		
2.	OP-04-GSU-FZR-2024-25	Upgradation/Improvement of Pampore Good Shed on BAHL-BRML Section under ADEN/BAHL.
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.) Validity of Offer Period of Completion
	12,72,55,794.18/-	7,86,300/- 90 Days 08 Months
Similar Nature of work:- "Any civil work other than track work".		

Note: 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender.  
No. OP-03 & 04-GSU-FZR-2024-25 Date: 18.04.2024 1165/2024

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**HAPPY AND HEALTHY MINDS**  
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ذہنی صحت کی حفاظت کے لئے  
**مفت مشاورت**  
ہمارے کلینک پہ روزانہ میسر ہے۔  
اور ساتھ ساتھ ہم آن لائن موڈ میں بھی  
مشاورت کے لئے دستیاب ہیں

ہمارے پاس پیشہ ور اور تربیت یافتہ ماہرین کی ٹیم تجربہ کار ماہر نفسیات کی سربراہی میں مختلف اقسام کے نفسیاتی اور منشیات امراض سے چھٹکارہ پانے کے لیے سماج کے متاثرہ افراد کی مدد کے لیے دستیاب ہیں۔

درج ذیل ذہنی صحت سے وابستہ مسائل پہ قابو پانے کے لیے رجوع فرمائیں:

- عصبانیت اور زہنی تناؤ کا درمان
- بھیانک حادثات اور واقعات کے بعد آنے والا ذہنی عارضات، مثلاً بد خوابی، شدید تشویش اور واقعات کے بارے میں قابو میں نہ ہونے والے خیالات - (PTSD)
- انفرادی ترقی اور مثبت تبدیلی کی خاطر اپنے فیصلوں پر عملدرآمد کرنے کا عمل اداسی کی کیفیت۔
- ذہنی پریشانی کے آثار
- منشیات کی لت پر قابو پانے کے لیے مشاورت
- خودکشی کے انتہائی اقدام سے روکنے کی مشاورت

**مفت ذہنی مشاورت کے لئے پیر سے ہفتہ، صبح 10 بجے سے شام 5 بجے تک رابطہ کریں۔**

**9070806160**

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# Fragmented Politics

As the Lok Sabha election campaign gains momentum in J&K, the once-united opposition finds itself fractured and scrambling to maintain relevance.

RIYAZ WANI

“  
The NC's decision to contest the upcoming elections independently, retaining its stronghold in the Kashmir Valley while extending support to Congress in Jammu, reveals a move to safeguard its traditional base. In response, the PDP has opted to vie for seats in the Valley, further fragmenting the opposition vote

Despite the advancing parliament election campaign in Jammu and Kashmir, the atmosphere on the streets is shorn of any excitement. Most of the campaign is confined to social media and media interactions. There have been no major public rallies despite the apparent normalcy, nor have any of the issues that have been raised resonated with people. It is not that there aren't issues that concern people but the parties are choosing not to touch them. The reason may be that some of these are too hot to handle and could have personal consequences for the parties and the politicians. Instead, they are making do with the blame game and muck-raking against rivals, some dredging up decades-old history so as to avoid dealing with the present. Biggest current issue so far is the alleged support of the BJP to some parties and the latter's inability to dispel the impression.

People on their part remain largely indifferent, making it challenging to gauge their partiality towards any party. It has now been ages since Kashmir has witnessed a visible wave in favour of any party or a politician. The parties have mostly won for the simple reason of being the default option for the voters.

That said, the ongoing polls remain crucial for Kashmir: they are the first major electoral exercise being held following the repeal of Article 370 in 2019. And over the past five years, Kashmir has more or less altered beyond recognition in almost every aspect. Mainstream politics has transformed too, with not just new political actors emerging on the scene but its frame of reference has also changed. Many issues that they freely raised have become taboo. Similarly alliances forged in recent years have come unstuck.

As the Lok Sabha election campaign gains momentum, the once-united opposition finds itself fractured and scrambling to maintain relevance. This fragmentation, coupled with the BJP's strategic maneuvering, presents a formidable advantage for the ruling party at the centre.

The unraveling of the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), reflects the deep-seated divisions within the opposition ranks. Originally formed with the lofty goal of advocating for the restoration of Article 370, the PAGD has devolved into little more than a memory, with its constituent parties failing to even convene, let alone pursue their shared objectives. The National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), both integral members of the PAGD, have begun charting independent courses driven by their own political calculations - more so, the NC which was the first to announce candidates for the three parliamentary seats in the Valley.

The NC's decision to contest the upcoming elections independently, retaining its stronghold in the Kashmir Valley while extending support to Con-



Aabid Bhat for Kashmir Observer

gress in Jammu, reveals a move to safeguard its traditional base. In response, the PDP has opted to vie for seats in the Valley, further fragmenting the opposition vote. Also, smaller parties aligned with or perceived to be close to the BJP, such as the People's Conference, Apni Party, and Democratic Azad Party, have entered the fray, diluting the opposition's strength and inadvertently bolstering the BJP's electoral prospects.

Despite the absence of a visible wave of support for any party, including the BJP, in J&K, the saffron party stands to benefit from the opposition's disarray. The political landscape, stifled since the revocation of Article 370, has left little room for dissent or alternative narratives, playing into the BJP's narrative of unapologetic Hindutva. However, beneath the surface, simmering discontent persists, particularly in Jammu, where concerns over job losses, land rights, and identity loom large.

In Ladakh, the transition to union territory status has exacerbated feelings of alienation, with locals apprehensive about the influx of outsiders and the potential erosion of their cultural and economic autonomy. Figures like climate activist Sonam Wangchuk have emerged as voices of resistance, highlighting the need to safeguard Ladakh's rights. However, whether such grassroots movements will translate into electoral outcomes remains uncertain.

As heavyweight politicians like Dr Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti, and Ghulam Nabi Azad vie for electoral success, the stakes are high not only for their respective parties but also for the broader political landscape of J&K. For Azad, in particular, the election presents an opportunity to resurrect a faltering political career, while for Mehbooba, it is a chance to stem the tide of desertions plaguing her party. Similarly, for the Abdullaha, the election is a test of their political dominance in the face of BJP's ascendancy.

The fragmented opposition, internal discord within alliances, and the BJP's adept political maneuvering have combined to tilt the electoral scales in favor of the saffron party in Jammu and Kashmir. While discontent simmers beneath the surface, the lack of viable alternatives and the BJP's default advantage in Jammu division may prove decisive in shaping the outcome of the upcoming elections. As the political landscape continues to evolve, the only certainty is the uncertainty that pervades the region's electoral politics.

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

New Delhi: The Bharatiya Janata Party is expected to win a third consecutive term - but fall well short of its 'abki baar, 400 paar' target - in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, according to NDTV's poll of opinion polls.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance is expected to win 372 of the 543 contested seats, and the Congress-led INDIA could get 122, with the remaining 49 going to parties not allied with either side.

The predicted final result may not be a surprise, given the NDA - its charge led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a third consecutive time - is already seen by many as the clear winner, but the numbers suggest a narrowing of the gap between the ruling party and the opposition since 2019.

**Health Warning: Opinion polls often get it wrong.**

The 365 seats the NDA is expected to win this year represents a 3.4 per cent increase over its 2019 result; it won 353 seats (the BJP got 303) and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance got 90.

The NDA's 2019 score was five per cent up from the 336 it won in the 2014 election. The BJP's primary rival - the UPA in 2014 and 2019 and INDIA in 2024 - went from 60 in 2014 to 90 in 2019, an increase of 50 per cent. In this election INDIA's expected return of 122 is a 35 per cent jump.

The data from the poll of opinion polls is drawn from nine polls, including three conducted by ABP-C Voter on December 25, March 12, and April 16. In these three, the NDA's expected score jumps from 295-335 to 366 and settles at 373, while INDIA goes from 163 down to 156 and then 155.

The biggest predicted returns for the BJP-led alliance comes from Times-ETG, which gives it between 358 and 398 seats, and gives INDIA 110-130. The non-aligned parties are given 64-68 seats here.

India TV-CNX, Zee News-Matrise, and Times-Matrise all give the NDA

over 350 seats each, and give INDIA less than 100 seats. The exception is Times Matrise, which gives the bloc 104 seats.

The closest prediction is India Today-C Voter; a sample of nearly 36,000 voters polled on February 8 indicates a return of 335 for the NDA, 166 for the INDIA, and 42 for other opposition parties.

**NDA Clean Sweep In 8 States, UTs**

The NDA is predicted to ride to victory on the back of clean sweeps in eight states and union territories, including national capital Delhi, Mr Modi's home state of Gujarat, and Arunachal Pradesh in the northeast, where the BJP has flexed its nationalist muscles in the wake of Chinese aggression.

The NDA is also tipped to sweep Rajasthan - building on last year's Assembly election win - Chandigarh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu.

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Together, these states and UTs send 72 MPs to the Lok Sabha. Winning these, if that is what happens, will give the BJP a significant edge in the final tally, particularly since the opinion polls suggest, as is widely expected, the saffron party will once again fail to impress in South India.

In the 2019 election the BJP swept Delhi (seven seats), Gujarat (26), Arunachal Pradesh (two), Chandigarh (one), Uttarakhand (five), Himachal Pradesh (four), and Daman and Diu (one).

The party also claimed 24 of Rajasthan's 25 seats; the 25th went to an ally.

## Will NDA Achieve '400 Paar'? What Poll Of Opinion Polls Shows

NDTV News Desk

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**BJP To Dominate Hindi Heartland**

As expected, the BJP and allies will likely thump rivals in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh. Of the 149 seats in play here, the NDA could win a massive 137. That return, if true, will almost match its 2019 score; it won 39 of Bihar's 40 seats, 74 of UP's 80 and 28 of Madhya Pradesh's 29.

In Bihar, where the opposition suffered a huge setback this year after Chief Minister Nitish Kumar - one of the bloc's founders - returned his Janata Dal (United) to the NDA, INDIA may win only five.

In UP - where the 80 Lok Sabha seats are by far the highest of any state - INDIA must prepare for a rout, the opinion polls indicate. And in Madhya Pradesh the Congress will win just one seat.

**Bengal, Maharashtra Face-Offs**

The battle between the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance and the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance in Maharashtra, and the BJP's high-tension clash with the Trinamool in Bengal, will likely end with an advantage for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party. The Mahayuti could dominate Maharashtra - winning 30 of its 48 seats - and, in Bengal, maintain, if not gain, ground gained five years ago.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's party will likely be the majority winner in Bengal, with 22 of its 42 seats expected. The BJP won 18 in the last poll and is predicted to win 19 this time. The Congress-led INDIA bloc, which counts

Ms Banerjee as an on-paper ally, might struggle and get only one seat.

**BJP's 'Mission South'**

The saffron party has historically fared poorly in the southern states - particularly Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In 2019 it failed to win a seat in either, with vote shares of 3.6 per cent and 2.3 per cent.

That could change this year, with two seats expected in the former, to which the Prime Minister has made a staggering 10 visits in the past eight weeks. The BJP here is contesting without its ally - the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), one of two main Dravidian parties in the state.

The big winner in Tamil Nadu is expected to be the INDIA bloc - led in the state by the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) - with 33 seats. The AIADMK could get only four seats.

Elsewhere in the south, the BJP may gain a measure of revenge over the Congress in Karnataka, after it lost the last Assembly election there. The NDA is pegged for 23 of Karnataka's 28 seats.

In Andhra Pradesh the ruling YSR Congress Party will likely retain its sway with 16 of the state's 25 seats. This result could be an indicator of how the YSRCP will do in the simultaneous Assembly poll.

Finally, over in Telangana, a tight three-way battle between the BJP, the Congress, and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) of former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao could end with the Congress winning nine, the BJP four, and the BRS three. The 17th seat might go to Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM.

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

INTERVIEW

# Romp to Victory

## 25 years Old Kupwara Boy Makes It Big by qualifying UPSC In First Attempt

Ummar Jamal

Meet Mohammad Haris Mir from District Kupwara whose journey in UPSC is nothing short of inspiring. Having received his initial education in Srinagar, he completed his BA.LL.B in 2022 from Jamia Millia Islamia.

With his eyes set on the horizon of possibilities, Haris embraced the challenge of UPSC preparation with unwavering determination, making his name to the list in his first attempt by securing AIR 345. His story is testament to the power of dreams and the relentless pursuit of aspirations.

In an exclusive interview with Kashmir Observer, Haris reflected on his journey and shared insights into his approach to success.

**Congratulations on qualifying the UPSC exam on your first attempt! Tell me about your background?**

My name is Mohammad Haris Mir. I am originally a native of Handwara, District Kupwara. However, I have done my schooling from Srinagar. Subsequently, I completed my BA.LL.B from Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi in 2022 after which I started preparing for UPSC with this being my first attempt.

**What motivated you to pursue a career in civil services?**

I was drawn to the services from a very young age being motivated by several successful candidates from Jammu and Kashmir and over time I came to appreciate the significance of the role and impact that civil servants perform in society and this helped me in keeping true to this goal.

**Were you expecting that you would crack UPSC in your first attempt?**

Belief in cracking the exam is always the first requisite without which an aspirant cannot be dedicated. That being said, there is always an element of fear and self-doubt. However, I was able to manage it.

**Could you share your journey of preparation for the UPSC exam, including any challenges you faced and how you overcame them?**

Having this goal in mind for a long time, I started preparing intensively only after my graduation was complete around mid 2022. I decided not to join any coaching since the coaching programmes for 2023 had already commenced 4-5 months prior and it would not have been possible for me to cover

the entire syllabus by following their timeline.

I started preparing for my optional paper (Law) and some GS subjects which I had lost touch with during my graduation. After the commencement of the year 2023, I devoted my preparation exclusively to the prelims exam which was held in May 2023 covering remaining areas of study.

Regarding challenges, I have been fortunate and privileged enough to not have any financial challenges. However, certain mental challenges such as prolonged isolation, continuous self doubt and maintaining discipline were there and everyday I tried only to be better than the previous day instead of focusing on absolutely overcoming the challenges. Adding some exercise into my routine also helped.

**What was your strategy for effectively managing time during the preparation phase, considering the vast syllabus of the UPSC exam?**

I had no strategy in mind at the outset. However, I tried to complete my Law optional paper before January 2023 but was able to achieve only half of my target. Then I immediately dropped the preparation for the optional and focused entirely on Prelims. Here I would like to emphasize on what is known as "smart work". I merged the overlapping areas between my Optional paper and General studies into one reading (ex. Constitutional law and GS-2). Due to paucity of time I had to skip some subjects such as international relations altogether. However, daily newspaper reading and MCQs solving and attempting mock tests helped me fill that void.

**How did you prioritize your preparation among the different components of the UPSC exam, such as prelims, mains, and the interview?**

I tried to complete my Optional before embarking on my prelims preparation. I had set the deadline to 1st of January to finish it. After that I focused entirely on Prelims till April. I dedicated all of May to solving the previous 10 years papers apart from mock tests.

After clearing prelims, I immediately prioritized mains specific papers like Ethics (GS4) and Essay besides covering the rest of my law optional syllabus. At this stage, answer writing practice for mains/essay and mock tests is the most important step. This stage also requires collecting some data, facts and figures. All this I tried to complete in 2 months leaving the last month solely



for revision/mock tests before appearing for mains in mid September.

For the interview, I was fortunate enough to have almost 5 months after mains. And I started preparing for it without waiting for my mains result.

**Can you share some tips or techniques you used to stay motivated and focused throughout your UPSC journey?**

Not compromising on physical health, staying away from friends who are not aspirants, avoiding seemingly benign discussions on syllabus and current affairs which actually are just a waste of time, and simply trying to be a little bit better with a little more focus, a little more discipline every new day instead of trying to completely revolutionize one's life are the keys to have a more consistent and sustainable preparation journey.

**How did you approach current affairs preparation, considering its significance in the UPSC exam?**

I relied on daily newspaper reading only before prelims besides using mock test papers (available for cheap at local markets) as a source of current affairs. After Mains, I only used the compilation magazines offered for free on different coaching websites (ex. Vision 365,onlyias prahar)

**What role did mock tests and previous years' question papers play in your preparation strategy?**

As previously mentioned, mock tests and previous year papers are the most important sources of preparation and not just supplemental sources. They helped me refine and consolidate my knowledge.

**Could you describe your experience of**

**appearing for the UPSC interview and how you prepared for it?**

I started preparing for the interview immediately after the mains exam without waiting for the result and the interview process commenced just 20-25 days after the result (in December). My interview was held in the last phase in March. I prepared for the interview by thoroughly researching all possible aspects of my Detailed Application Form. Generally, the interview revolves around the words that one has mentioned in this form (ex. Hometown, graduation subject, hobbies, opinion on current affairs related to these).

The interview itself was one of the best experiences of my life. The interview board was very cordial and made me feel very comfortable. I was asked a lot of questions related to my Law background, developmental issues of my home state and the honorable members listened patiently. The interview went for around 40 minutes.

**You didn't join any coaching, but you still came with flying colours. Many think coaching is essential for cracking UPSC, what is your take?**

I think every aspirant has a unique set of circumstances in terms of their prior educational background or the level of general awareness. I was able to appear comfortably without coaching as I had aligned my previous studies in accordance with this exam (ex. Having humanities in class 11-12 and subsequently studying law). So for aspirants who are able to understand and grasp the study material, coaching is not required. Even for candidates who are absolute freshers to the syllabus, there is a treasure of simplified information on Youtube, Telegram and other platforms. Hence, coaching is not necessary and may be availed only if one feels the need for it.

**Does social milieu impact your preparation? How does preparing in Delhi help an aspirant in cracking UPSC?**

The socio-economic circumstances of an aspirant indeed have a role to play. However, only to a limited extent. This exam requires a full-time preparation of at least 1 year and 1 more year to go through all the stages. Thus, candidates who may not be able to manage time due to employment or any other responsibilities will face additional challenges. Apart from this, there is no other cost as almost all of the material is available for free on the internet and the mock test papers are

available for cheap in the market.

Being in Delhi for UPSC preparation has both its advantages and disadvantages. For me, the advantage was being able to study in isolation and temporarily staying away from demanding social responsibilities besides having easy access to cheap materials eg. Test series papers

On the flip side, being alone in Delhi also presents the challenge of arranging each and everything for one's sustenance such as food, laundry, and occasionally Healthcare. Another challenge is being distracted by the sea of pessimism that prevails in coaching hubs as a lot of aspirants do not succeed in this exam.

**When should a student start his UPSC preparation?**

An aspirant should start preparing as early as possible however never at the cost of one's schooling or graduation subjects. If not possible during graduation, 1 year of intensive study after graduation is sufficient to appear for the exam.

**What inspired you to choose Law as your optional subject for the UPSC exam?**

I found law to be quite relevant both to the preparation as well as the service. During the course of law, a deeper understanding of subjects like constitution, CRPC, IPC, apart from diverse minor laws, helps in all mains papers especially GS2.

**Can you share some strategies you used to effectively prepare for the law optional paper?**

Previous year papers are the most important resource as a lot of questions every year are repeated. Another important advice would be to strictly stick to the syllabus (eg. Contemporary legal developments do not include all of the legal developments but only those specified in the syllabus). Besides merging the study of GS paper 2 and law paper 1 can save a lot of time.

**Now that you've successfully cleared the UPSC exam, what advice would you give to aspirants who are preparing for it, especially those attempting it for the first time?**

I would advise them to believe in themselves, stick to syllabus, give a lot of mocks, limit your materials to only one resource per subject and revise it instead of reading multiple sources and appear for the prelims regardless of the level of preparation.

## How Can I Make Studying A Daily Habit?

Deborah Reed

Studying – you know you need to do it, but you just can't seem to make it a habit. Maybe you forget, become distracted or just don't want to do it.

Understanding what a habit is, and how it forms, can help you figure out how to study on a daily basis.

### The habit loop

A habit is a behavior you do regularly or routinely. As a professor who studies how to help students become better readers and writers, I can tell you that research shows habits have a loop: cue, routine, reward.

Let's say you have a habit of eating a snack after school. When school is about to end, you start to feel hungry. Dismissal is the cue to get your snack.

Eating the snack is the routine. The reward is that it tastes good and your hunger goes away, which reinforces the habit – and makes you want to repeat the loop again the next day.

Here are the things you need to make a studying loop:

1. A set time to study every day.
2. A cue to start studying.
3. An environment that helps you stick to your studying routine.

4. A reward for studying.

### Setting a time

When you do things at the same time every day, it is easier to remember to do them.

To determine how much time you should set aside each day to study, multiply your grade level by 10 minutes.

That means if you're in third grade, you would plan to spend about 30 minutes per day studying. This can include the time you spend practicing your reading. If you're in eighth grade, you would spend 80 minutes per day – that is, one hour and 20 minutes – studying.

Research suggests that two hours is the maximum amount of daily studying time that is beneficial. Spending more time than that on a regular basis can cause stress, anxiety and possibly disturb healthy sleep habits.

So choose a single block of time during the afternoon or evening when you will have the right amount of time to study every day.

There may be days when your assignments do not fill the full block of time that you have set. On those days, you should spend time reviewing material that you've already studied; regularly going back over information helps you remember it and think about how to integrate it with the



new things you're learning.

You also can spend those extra minutes reading a book. Studies show a daily habit of reading for 20 minutes will improve your vocabulary, language skills and overall knowledge.

### The cue

Studying at the same time every day is one cue, but you may need something more concrete when first forming your habit.

This can be a calendar reminder you set on your phone or laptop, or something as simple as a card with the word "study" printed on the front. You can leave the card where you hang up your coat or put down your bag when you get home from school – or on your television or computer screen.

On the back of the card, write the word "studying." Then keep this side facing up and posted to the back of your computer, on your door, or above your

desk while you work.

This will signal to others that they should not disturb you during this time. When you finish studying, return the card to its starting spot so that it's ready to remind you to study the next day.

### Your study environment

To help yourself study, you need a place set up for work and not for doing other things. Do not study on your bed – that's for sleeping – or in front

of the television, or anywhere it's difficult to hold and use the materials you need. Best option: a table or desk with good lighting.

Your study place should limit distractions. That includes other people's conversations and all media: TV, video games, social media, texts or music. Research repeatedly has shown the human brain cannot multitask well; people make more mistakes if they try to do two things at the same time, especially when one of those things requires concentration. Bouncing back and forth between two things also means it takes longer to complete the task.

Although you should put away electronic devices when studying, that may not be an option if you need them for homework. If that's the case, set the "do not disturb" notification on your phone, silence incoming notifications and close all social media and gaming apps.

Gaming, social media and video apps are programmed to make you want to keep checking or playing them. That means you have to replace the bad habit of constantly using them with the good habit of studying for a designated block of time.

### The reward

That said, after you finish

studying, you can give yourself a little gaming or social media time as your reward.

With time, the studying itself will become its own reward. Improving your knowledge and skills will give you a sense of achievement and make you more confident and happier at school. But while forming your study habit, a really fun reward will help you stick with it.

This is especially true if the subject you're studying is difficult for you. No one likes to do something they think they're not very good at. However, it's impossible to get better if you do not practice, and studying is just like practicing a sport, instrument or hobby.

How long it takes to make studying a daily habit can be anywhere from 21 days to a few months, depending upon the person.

To help you stay with it, find a study buddy to form the habit along with you. Ask your family not to interrupt you during study time. And consider using apps to set goals and track your study time so you can watch your habit form and celebrate your progress. The good news: Daily studying gets easier the more you do it.

By arrangements with The Conversation





## It Was My Dream To Play Sweep Shot Against Bumrah, Says Ashutosh Sharma

Press Trust of India

**MULLANPUR:** Punjab Kings' batting sensation Ashutosh Sharma said he lived a "dream" when he swept "world's best fast bowler" Jasprit Bumrah during his team's IPL clash against Mumbai Indians here.

The 25-year-old Ashutosh put the Bumrah-led Mumbai Indians' bowling to sword here on Thursday when he hammered seven sixes and two fours to make 61 off a mere 28 balls, a knock which brought PBKS back from the brink after an early collapse.

PBKS were 17/4 inside the powerplay but courtesy the stunning fightback from Ashutosh and Shashank Singh (41), they were able to get close to MI's 193-run target before losing by nine runs.

It was in the 13th over of Punjab's chase when Ashutosh got down low on his front to convert an attempted yorker from Bumrah into a full toss



and smack it for a six over backward square leg.

"It was my dream to hit a sweep shot against Bumrah. I

was practising for that shot but it came against the best bowler

in the world, it is a part of the game," Ashutosh told the media here after the match.

Ashutosh said he was confident of taking Punjab over the line.

"I had belief in myself that I would be able to win the game for the team," he said. Ashutosh credited former India player and coach Sanjay Bangar, head of cricket development at PBKS, for his improvement this season.

"Sanjay sir told me that I am not a slogger and that I can play proper cricket shots. It was a small statement but carried a huge meaning for me.

"I am only following it. I am not a hard-hitter, I am playing proper cricketing shots and that is what has changed my game," Ashutosh said.

"Back home, I was working with my coach Amay Khurasiya who had told me that the longer you stay on the pitch, the more your team has a chance of winning," he added.

## IPL 2024: Delhi Capitals Take On Formidable Sunrisers Hyderabad



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** He walked on crutches in one of his first public appearances at Feroz Shah Kotla last year, but when an emotional Rishabh Pant walks out as captain of Delhi Capitals, he will need to put on his 'out of box' thinking cap to stop a marauding Sunrisers Hyderabad in an IPL match here on Saturday.

Capitals have had a mixed season so far, but a couple of impressive wins against Lucknow Super Giants and Gujarat Titans have put them back in the mix with three wins and four defeats in seven outings so far. Placed fourth in the IPL points table, Sunrisers Hyderabad have set a different template altogether with two of the highest-ever totals of 277/3 and 287/3, which will require lot of heart and skill to counter.

Travis Head (235 runs) — IPL's foreign flavour of the season — will be keen to build on his 39-ball century and his partner Abhishek Sharma (211 runs) is no pushover either, with his penchant for taking aerial route during the powerplay.

Head and Abhishek's intimidating strike rates of 199 and 197 respectively will pose a serious challenge for pace trio of Ishant Sharma, Khaleel Ahmed and Mukesh Kumar.

Adding to the threat is Heinrich Klaasen also striking at 199, who is

one of the best finishers in international cricket with propensity to hit balls out of the stadium, which gives SRH's batting a scary look. But Kuldeep Yadav's (economy of 6.06) left-arm wrist spin could well prove to be a game changer and in Tristan Stubbs, Pant has got an ideal third spin option alongside Axar Patel (6.75).

Pant, who is himself getting back to the top of his game, wouldn't mind if he can win the toss and opt to bat.

But David Warner's knuckle injury is a cause for concern for Pant and head coach Ricky Ponting although Jake Fraser-McGurk has impressed one and all in his first two matches.

While SRH's batting has been top-notch on belt, their bowlers have suffered a lot on those tracks with only skipper Pat Cummins (7.87) having an economy rate of less than 8 runs per over, which is considered good in today's day and age of T20.

However seasoned duo of Jaydev Unadkat (11.35) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (10.45), have both been average while spinners — wrist spinner Mayank Markande (11.23) and left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed (ER 12.44) — have been sent on a leather hunt.

Time: 7:30PM IST.

## J&K Shines In IRSF Rope Skipping National Championship

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** J&K Rope Skipping Team won two medals, including a gold, at the IRSF National Rope Skipping Championship 2024, held at Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi from April 15 to 16. The championship was organized by Indian Rope Skipping Federation (IRSF).

The J&K team played under the banner of Rope Skipping Association of Jammu & Kashmir (RSAJK), which is affiliated to the Indian Rope Skipping Federation (IRSF).

J&K's Bisma Bashir won a gold medal in the above -17 Female Speed Sprint event, whereas Mehnaz Hilal clinched Silver medal in the same event.



Both the medalists are students of GHSS Khanyar and were sponsored by the staff.

RSAJK Secretary Ahmad Rauf congratulated medal winners and requested the

federation to conduct a coaching camp in Srinagar in the month of May, where national and international level coaches will train students and teachers.

## Injuries Don't Define You: Mohammed Shami Shares Rehab Update

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Veteran Indian pacer Mohammed Shami on Friday shared the progress of his rehabilitation process post a surgery on his Achilles tendon, stressing his strong desire to return to the field at the earliest.

Shami played through last year's ODI World Cup braving the pain, finishing the tournament as the highest wicket-taker with 24 scalps. But since the final against Australia, the 33-year-old has been completely sidelined with the injury.

Eventually, he underwent the surgery in February.



"Injuries don't define you, your comeback will. Can't wait to be back out there with my team!" Shami posted on his

Instagram handle and it accompanied by a video which showed him in the midst of a procedure. Since the World Cup, Shami has missed out playing against Australia in a T20I series, the tour to South Africa and home assignments against Afghanistan (T20I) and England (Test).

The surgery on his ankle meant that Shami also could not feature in the IPL 2024 for Gujarat Titans for whom he has captured 48 wickets from 33 matches across 2022 and 2023.

With him missing the entire IPL, it's highly unlikely that Shami will feature in India's squad for the T20 World Cup in June.

## Short TAKES

### MI Skipper Pandya Fined Rs 12 Lakh For Breaching IPL CoC



**M**umbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya has been fined Rs 12 lakh for maintaining a slow over rate during their clash against Punjab Kings in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium, Mullanpur.

IPL released an official statement on Friday to announce that Pandya was fined for breaching IPL's Code of Conduct, which relates to minimum over rate offences.

### FC Goa To Play Chennaiyin FC In Crucial Knockout Match

**W**ith a direct qualification to the semifinals hanging in the balance, FC Goa host Chennaiyin FC in a high-stakes knockout battle of the Indian Super League here on Saturday.

On recent form, FC Goa enters the fixture on the back of an impressive run (45 points from their 22 matches), having secured victories in four out of their last five matches. Contrastingly, Chennaiyin FC have wins in three of their last five matches.

### China Revokes Win After Investigation Into Half Marathon

**T**he winner of Beijing's half marathon He Jie and three African runners have had their results cancelled after an investigation found that the three slowed down near the line allowing the Chinese athlete to finish first, organisers said on Friday.

He had won the race held last Sunday in China's capital in a time of 1:03:44, a second ahead of Ethiopian Dejene Hailu Bikila, and Kenyans Robert Keter and Willy Mnangat, who tied for second place.

### Germany Manager Nagelsmann Extends Contract Until 2026

**G**ermany manager Julian Nagelsmann has extended his contract until the conclusion of the next World Cup in 2026, the German Football Association (DFB) said on Friday. Nagelsmann replaced Hansi Flick as Germany coach last September and had initially signed a contract to the end of Euro 2024, which Germany will host in June.

The 36-year-old has enjoyed a mixed start to his reign, but recently won back-to-back friendlies against France and Netherlands.

### Norris Takes China Sprint Race Pole From Hamilton

**M**claren's Lando Norris had his fastest lap deleted and reinstated as he seized pole position for the Chinese Grand Prix sprint race at the end of a wet and chaotic qualifying on Friday. Mercedes' seven-times Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton made it an all-British front row, with Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso securing the third slot for Saturday's 100km race.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen will start fourth, with Ferrari's Carlos Sainz fifth and Red Bull's Sergio Perez sixth.

## Haaland A Doubt For FA Cup Semi Due To Injury: Guardiola

Agencies

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola is uncertain whether Erling Haaland will feature in Saturday's FA Cup semi-final against Chelsea after his prolific striker asked to leave Wednesday's Champions League quarter-final with a muscle injury.

Guardiola subbed both Haaland and Kevin De Bruyne off ahead of extra time in a surprise move in City's penalty shootout loss to Real Madrid that extinguished their hopes of capturing the treble for a second successive season.

"Erling felt something, a muscular issue," Guardiola told reporters on Friday.

"We will see. Kevin felt exhausted, so tired, after five months out injured (at the start of the season), so that's normal."

It is not surprising, Guardiola added, that his



players are feeling the effects of a gruelling schedule, which is a byproduct of the team's success. "It's normal, with the amount of games we've played this season and in the previ-

ous seasons," the Spaniard said.

"There's not much time for recovery, we played extra time and the intensity we play. We are not machines, the fatigue is

there."

City are still on course for the double, having taken a two-point lead atop the league standings last weekend with six games remaining.

## Man Utd Facing Huge Challenge In FA Cup Semi: Ten Hag

Agencies

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester United are one win away from a second successive FA Cup final appearance, which could go a long way in salvaging a disappointing season for Erik ten Hag's side, though the manager said Sunday's semi-final would be a huge challenge.

United meet Championship (second tier) side Coventry City at Wembley after beating Liverpool in a thrilling FA Cup quarter-final match last month that went to extra time.

That memorable game at Old Trafford, however, was one of United's few positive results amid numerous poor ones that have left the squad seventh in the Premier League standings.

"Obviously, we want to win every game," Ten Hag told reporters on Friday. "So when we don't win we



are disappointed, are frustrated, sure, but we know also we can beat the best teams.

"When we play to our levels, we can achieve really high highs."

A victory on Sunday would set up a final against the winner of Saturday's clash between Manchester City and Chelsea. City edged United 2-1 in last year's final.

"Last season was last season. We want to achieve every season, we want to win trophies, we have a big opportunity because we are in a semi-final but it's a huge challenge," said Ten Hag.