

Extra Power Curtailment In Kashmir

Agencies

Srinagar: In the existing 'unscheduled power cuts and power outages' Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDC) Monday said that there will be further increase in power curtailments.

The DISCOM said that the step has been taken in view of limited power availability. Taking to microblogging site X, KPDC said, "Due to limited power availability, there has been an unavoidable increase in power curtailment. These restrictions will be eased once power availability improves. Please bear with us & ensure judicious use of power, especially during peak hours. Avoid exceeding sanctioned load/hooksing." (SIC)

In the meantime, people from across Kashmir have raised concerns about the power schedules. "Adding the extra curtailment to the existing power schedule will be a mockery of the power availability," locals said.

"The power supply is already at the worst level and adding more curtailment will be nothing but a mockery of the power availability and to the people," they said.

The locals from many areas of north and south Kashmir said that they are facing frequent power outages and distress cuts.

Meanwhile, KPDC Chief Engineer (Distribution) Sandeep Seth said that the company was yet to chart out the final schedule.

"We are charting out the final power curtailment schedule and will take a call accordingly," Seth said.

On asking the reason for the extra curtailments, Seth said that the distribution company was bound to | [More on P6](#)

SRINAGAR BOAT TRAGEDY



LG Meets Victims' Families, Takes Stock Of Search Operation

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday met the families of the victims of the boat capsizing tragedy in Jhelum last week that left six persons dead, officials said.

He also met the families of

the three victims who are still missing, they said. The LG visited the families of the deceased and missing victims and expressed sympathy with them, the officials said.

Later, the LG visited the city's Gandbal area where the incident took place and took stock of the

search operations for the three missing persons, they said.

Six persons drowned in the river while three others are still missing after a boat carrying 19 persons capsized last Tuesday. Ten people were rescued.

The Jammu and Kashmir government has | [More on P6](#)

Gandabal Bridge Construction Restarts After Tragedy

Days after the six persons drowned to death in a boat capsizing incident at Gandbal area of Batwara, the authorities in Roads and Building (R&B) department here have started the construction work of the bridge | [More on P6](#)

Wet Weather From April 26: MeT

KO WEB DESK

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir recorded below normal night temperature on Monday even as the meteorological department here predicted generally dry weather till April 25, officials said.

A MeT department official said, from April 21-25, generally dry weather is expected but afternoon thundershower/hail-storm activity at isolated places can't be ruled out.

From April 26-28, he said, there is a possibility of generally cloudy weather with light to moderate rain and light snow (over higher reaches) with thunder at most places.

From April 29-30, generally cloudy weather with light rain with thunder at many places has been predicted.

Srinagar recorded a minimum of 6.7°C against 8.4°C on the previous night and it was 2.2°C below normal for the summer capital of JK for this time of the year.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of 4.8°C against 9.2°C on the previous night and it was 2.7°C below normal for the gateway town of Kashmir, he said. Pahalgam recorded a low of 1.9°C against 2.9°C on the previous night and it was 2.1°C below normal for the famous resort in south Kashmir.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a minimum of 5.4°C against 8.3°C on the previous night and it | [More on P6](#)



Apni Party Extends Support To Sajad Lone



Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The Apni Party on Monday extended its support to People's Conference chief Sajad Lone, who is contesting the Lok Sabha polls from north Kashmir's Baramulla constituency.

Party chief Altaf Bukhari announced the support for Lone during a press conference, days after Lone had sought his help to consolidate the anti-National Conference votes in the constituency.

Lone is contesting against Omar Abdullah, the National Conference vice-president and a former chief minister of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state.

"We have fielded candidates from two constituencies

-- Srinagar and Anantnag-Rajouri. We have not fielded any candidate from north Kashmir and I am happy to announce that we will be extending support to the People's Conference, led by Lone there," Bukhari said.

Lone on Saturday sought support from the Apni Party to consolidate all anti-National Conference votes in north Kashmir, claiming that it benefits from the fragmentation of votes.

"I appeal to Altaf Bukhari, let us stop the division of votes in north Kashmir and let them support us there," Lone had said.

The People's Conference chief had also assured its 100 per cent support to the Apni Party in Srinagar in return. | [More on P6](#)

Jammu Braces For Fierce Electoral Showdown

Security Measures Tighten Ahead of Lok Sabha Polls

Agencies

Jammu: As the electoral fervor grips Jammu, anticipation surges ahead of the upcoming voting for the Jammu Lok Sabha seat scheduled for April 26. With robust security measures in place and heightened vigilance along the border, the stage is set for a crucial electoral showdown.

In anticipation of the elections, a substantial deployment of paramilitary forces has been mobilized across key districts including Jammu, Samba, Reasi, and Rajouri. Police authorities have issued directives mandating the presence of Station House Officers (SHOs) in their respective areas for the next four days.

The security apparatus, comprising approximately 40,000 personnel, are tasked to ensure a smooth and secure voting experience for the electorate. Against the backdrop of heightened tensions

along the border, an alert has been sounded, underscoring the imperative of safeguarding the electoral process from external disruptions.

Meanwhile, political parties have intensified their campaign efforts, leaving no stone unturned to sway the electorate in their favor. Booth-level mobilization and door-to-door canvassing have gained momentum as parties vie for voter support. The contest primarily revolves around prominent national players, namely the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress.

A total of 22 candidates are set to compete for the Jammu

Lok Sabha seat, with expectations running high for a keenly contested electoral battle. Despite the absence of prominent national campaigners due to concurrent election commitments

elsewhere, grassroots campaigning has taken precedence, with candidates focusing on connecting with constituents at the local level.

The electorate, comprising 1,780,738 voters across 18 assembly constituencies, holds the key to determining the outcome of the polls. Notably, a significant proportion of first-time voters, including those in the 18 to 19 age group, are poised to exercise their franchise | [More on P6](#)



22 Candidates

18 Assembly Constituencies

1,780,738 Voters

1,488 Booths

40,000 Personnel

Assembly Polls In J&K Soon: Jitendra Singh

Union minister Jitendra Singh on Monday said that Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir will be held soon and the people of the Union Territory are enthusiastic about participating in the electoral process to support the BJP's development agenda. He asserted that normalcy has been restored in J-K but the opposition parties were involved | [More on P6](#)



LS Poll Results Can Be Strange: Azad

Press Trust Of India

Anantnag: Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) chief Ghulam Nabi Azad Monday said the results of the Parliament elections can be strange as there is a direct fight between the NDA and the regional parties in most states of the country.

The former Congress leader said since the Congress government is in just two-three states, in other states, there are different regional parties. So, the contest is with them, he said.

"So, the results can be strange," he said, adding that he neither favours the NDA nor the INDIA bloc.

Azad was talking to reporters in Anantnag district during a roadshow to canvas for party candidate Mohammad Saleem Parry.

"The contest is not the same everywhere. It is different in every state. At most places, it is a direct fight between the NDA and the regional parties. Where there is a Congress government, the fight is between the Congress and the BJP," he said.

"I know which region or state supports which party. But I do not want to favour any party nor do I want to say anything against any other. We are not with the NDA or the UPA or the INDIA alliance. Our duty is to be | [More on P6](#)

DPAP's Amir Bhat To Contest From Srinagar

Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) on Monday announced its candidate from Srinagar parliamentary constituency. Amir Ahmed Bhat, District President of DPAP has been announced as the party candidate from Srinagar Lok Sabha seat

TERROR CONSPIRACY CASE

NIA Raids 9 Locations In Kashmir

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The National Investigation Agency on Monday carried out raids at nine locations in Kashmir, including Srinagar, in a terror conspiracy case, officials said here.

The case relates to a terror conspiracy involving plans by terrorist organisations and their newly floated offshoots to unleash violence in Jammu and Kashmir by using sticky bombs, improvised explosive devices and small arms, they said.

"In a massive crackdown in the Jammu and Kashmir terror conspiracy case involving Pakistan-backed banned terrorist organisations and their offshoots, the NIA raided nine locations across Kashmir," a spokesman of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said. He said digital devices containing large volumes of



incriminating data and documents were seized during the raids conducted on the premises of hybrid terrorists and Overground Workers (OGWs) linked to the newly formed offshoots and affiliates of proscribed outfits such as the Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Hizbul-Mujahideen, Al-Badr and Al-Qaeda among others.

The premises of sympathisers and cadres of these organisations were also searched extensively, the spokesperson added. The NIA said | [More on P6](#)

Rising Airfares Stir Concerns Ahead Of Peak Tourist Season In Kashmir

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: As Kashmir gears up for the peak tourist season, the issue of rising airfares during the peak tourist season has stirred concern among both tourism stakeholders and locals alike.

According to tourism players, as the summer season approaches, the airfares between Srinagar and other major Indian cities witness a significant surge, casting a shadow over travel plans and financial considerations of tourists.

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, Abbas Kashmiri, a ticket broker, highlighted the annual surge in ticket prices during every summer season.

"Last month, a one-way ticket from Srinagar to Delhi used to cost around Rs 3,500-4,000. Now, those prices have skyrocketed to Rs 7,000, with fares often reaching a staggering Rs 13,000-14,000 during peak tourist season," Abbas said.



The situation isn't any better for flights to other major cities. Mumbai, for example, saw ticket prices jump from Rs 7,000 just a month ago to a hefty Rs 11,000."

Manzoor Ahmad Pakhtoon, chairman of the Kashmir Houseboat Owners' Association, said that tourism players in the Kashmir Valley have repeatedly raised the issue of airfare escalation during peak tourist season with authorities, but no action

has been taken. "Tourists mostly from south India complain of the rising airfares. Travel to outside India is turning out to be cheaper to them than visiting Kashmir. So, the government should increase the number of flights so that ticket prices are kept in check," Pakhtoon said.

Pakhtoon added that the issue of unilateral fare hike of air tickets hurts the locals and tourists alike. | [More on P6](#)

One Day Seminar Against Drug Abuse Held At Institute Of Hotel Management

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A one day seminar on 'Combating the Crisis Empowering Kashmiri youth against Drug Abuse' was held at Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition (IHM) Rajbagh Srinagar on Monday.

The event was held by renowned NGO of the valley Help Poor Voluntary Trust with the support of Kashmir American Society for Health-Care, Medical Education and Research (KASHMER). The event brought together the esteemed faculty of IHM under the leadership of Shabir Ahmed Qazi, principal IHM and students of the institute, team members of 'Happy & Healthy Minds', Dr Syed Riyaz Ahmed Project Manager KASHMER, Dr. Mohammad Muzaffar Khan, renowned Clinical psychologist and Drug de-addiction expert in valley, and counselors engaged with the project.

Dr Muzaffar as distinguished speaker of the event apprised the audiences about the diverse health and socio economic crisis associated with the drug abuse among the vulnerable groups of population in our society.

Role of faculty to help in the development of Institutional policy on tackling drug abuse in order to enhance understanding and implementation of regulations to combat the crisis at institutional level was highlighted.

The powerful message to the esteemed audience was strengthening their core belief system and not to shy away from seeking help in the societal and familial interest.

Dr. Syed Riyaz Ahmed briefly apprised the audience about the ongoing projects supported by KASHMER and future initiatives planned for societal benefit in the health-care related sector, especially in the underprivileged areas of the valley in collaboration with the reputable organization of the valley, Help Poor Voluntary Trust. Participants felt quite empowered about issues surrounding drug abuse & importance of mental health, and how to help overcome the challenges to ensure drug free society.

The seminar concluded with a pledge to collectively fight against the menace of drug abuse in our communities to ensure drug free society.



J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday visited the Gandbal-Batwara area of Srinagar to express condolences to the families who lost their kin in a boat capsizing tragedy on April 16. KO photo by Dabirah Hassan

Tulip Garden Resonates With Vibrant Electoral Awareness Program

Observer News Service

Srinagar: To ignite Awareness among voters for vigorous participation in upcoming General Elections to Lok Sabha on May 13, 2024, a Vibrant Voter Awareness program was organized by District Election Authority Srinagar at the Asia's largest and world famous Tulip Garden under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP).

The electoral Awareness program was held with an aim to enhance voter participation, on the directions of the District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, who is also the Returning Officer (RO) for 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency.

On the occasion, Nodal Officer MCMC, Ahsanul Haq Chishti, Special Nodal Officers for SVEEP, Tahir Ahmad Magray & Sarib Ahmad, Principal Amar Singh College, Prof Sheikh Aijaz, Nodal Officer SVEEP/AMF, A.H.Fani, Deputy CEO Srinagar, Anjum Raja other Officers from Chief Education Office Srinagar, School Students, hundreds of Locals and Tourists visiting from across India captured memorable selfies at the SVEEP Selfie Stand set up by the District Election Authority Srinagar.

The upcoming Lok Sabha Elections particularly sensitize the young voters about the value of vote. During the mass Electoral Awareness event participants presented skits, rap and band performances.

Speaking about the event, the District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar said that Objective of such events is to enhance voter awareness and boost public participation.

There were outstanding performances from Delhi Public School Srinagar, Police Public School, Biscoe/Mallinson School, BHSS Khonmoh, MPML Higher Secondary, SP Higher Secondary, besides Amar Singh College and Government College for Women MA Road.

In addition, TulKul Club also presented skits. At the culmination of the event awards and certificates were given to the participants. The top rankers of the event were MPML Higher Secondary School in Rap performance, Government College for Women MA Road in Skit, Biscoe Mallinson School in Band performances and Police Public school in Standing Ovation performance.

The program was conducted by District Election Office Srinagar under the supervision of Nodal Officer SVEEP.

EdRAAK Conducts Unique Sessions On World Heritage Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As the World Celebrated the World Heritage Day on 18th April, across globe institutions organized diverse programs that included awareness campaigns, discussions, seminars, reading sessions and sensitized general masses about our rich culture and heritage.

The Occasion is to celebrate the past and talk about its preservation and how to conserve the historical signs that people are proud of having been passed on to from generations.

Around this Day in Kashmir, the EdRAAK, Educational Revival Through Arts And Aesthetics in Kashmir, founded by S Iliyaz Rizvi, a Consultant and Researcher on Arts and Crafts and Culture and Heritage, conducted various activities. From Heritage and Photo Walks to Creative Workshops with children and young minds,

EdRAAK is having multi-disciplinary verticals and involves participants of different age groups in varied approaches of creativities at multiple levels.

In continuation of such creative activities EdRAAK conducted various Sessions around World Heritage Day 2024. Also, as UNESCO has given the Tag of "Creative Craft Network" to Srinagar City, the occasion is to make people in general and the young generation in particular aware about the cultural richness and its significance and how such International Branding can help us connect our Cultural and Heritage to Global Map.

In this direction, Rizvi conducted a series of awareness sessions at various places, including schools and colleges. From Creative Activity Based Interactive Sessions (CABIS) to Heritage and Photo Walks to Visits to Museums and Monuments.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the number plate of my vehicle bearing regd No: JK01W 5838 while driving from kunzer to Dhoibwan. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file the same in the office of the RTO Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Irfan Ali Sheikh (2nd Owner)
R/O Gokhama Kunzer fko

Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited
Estates Department
Zonal Office Srinagar
Website: www.jkbank.com

PREMISES REQUIRED

The Jammu & Kashmir Bank invites offers from owners of premises for outright purchase/ on lease basis for housing its Offsite ATM at Abi Nowpora, Kohna Khan, Dalgate, Srinagar

Carpet Area of Premises	Location
Upto 120 Sft (Ground Floor)	Abi Nowpora, Kohna Khan, Dalgate, Srinagar

The interested parties/persons owning the premises and having a clear title over the property should submit their offers at Estates Dept Zonal Office Srinagar, M.A Road Srinagar by or before 13-05-2024.

The tender documents and the terms and conditions relating to same can be obtained in person from Zonal Office mentioned above during working hours and also can be downloaded from Bank's website www.jkbank.com from 22-04-2024.

The Bank reserves the right to cancel/reject any/all offer(s) without assigning any reason thereof.

Note: Only those parties having valid commercial permission of the offered premises need to apply.

Ref: jkb/zo sgr/Est/24-08 Sd/-
Dated: 18-04-2024 Zonal Head

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DIPK-NB-89/24 Dated: 22-04-2024

HAPPY AND HEALTHY MINDS
خوشحال اور صحت مند ذہن

ذہنی صحت کی حفاظت کے لئے مفت مشاورت ہمارے کلینک پہ روزانہ میسر ہے۔ اور ساتھ ساتھ ہم آن لائن موز 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 بدخواہی، 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 لیے پیر سے ہفتہ، صبح 10 بجے سے شام 5 بجے تک رابطہ کریں۔

9070806160

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- 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

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SHIEKH 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)

PRAYERS	
FAJR	4:22
ZUHR	12:31
ASR	5:16
Magrib	7:11
ISHA	8:38

HIJRI CALENDAR
14 Shawal 1445

This Day In History

- 1229- Christian king Ferdinand III of Castile conquers the Arab-held town of Cáceres as part of the reconquest of Almohad Spain
- 1344- Order of the Garter founded by English King Edward III, the most senior knighthood in the UK with just 24 living members plus the monarch (or 1348)
- 1348- The Order of Garter founded by English King Edward III, Britain's highest civic or military honor
- 1504- King Maximilian I routes troops to Bavaria
- 1563- Cornerstone laid for El Escorial, new Spanish royal palace commissioned by Philip II, by architect Juan Bautista de Toledo
- 1633- Sweden & Protestant German monarchy form Union of Heilbronn
- 1660- Treaty of Oliva is established between Sweden and Poland
- 1661- English king Charles II crowned in London
- 1662- Connecticut chartered as an English colony
- 1702- Queen Anne is crowned at Westminster Abbey, London
- 1789- President-elect George Washington moves into Franklin House, New York, first official resident of a US President
- 1795- William Hastings acquitted in England of high treason
- 1798- Dutch emperor accepts new Constitution
- 1826- Missolonghi, Greece captured by Turks
- 1827- Irish mathematician and astronomer William Rowan Hamilton presents his Theory of Systems of Rays
- 1849- Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky and members of the Petrashevsky Circle are arrested in St. Petersburg
- 1861- Arkansas troops seize Fort Smith on the Arkansas River
- 1867- Queen Victoria & Napoleon III turn down plans for a channel tunnel
- 1908- Denmark, Germany, Britain, France, Netherlands & Sweden sign North Sea accord
- 1918- Dover Patrol overthrows Germany U-boat in East Sea
- 1918- Raid of Zeebrugge; the British navy attempts to block German vessels from leaving port by sinking obsolete ships - mostly fails
- 1920- Turkish Grand National Assembly 1st meets in Ankara, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk denounces the government of Sultan Mehmed VI and announces a temporary constitution
- 1921- Charles Paddock runs world record 100m (10.4 secs)
- 1923- Inauguration ceremonies take place at Gdynia, Poland to mark its new status as a temporary military port and fishers' shelter
- 1924 British Empire Exhibition opens at Wembley, London
- 1925 - Having badly defeated Spain and driven her out of Spanish Morocco, the native Riffi, led by Abd-el-Krim, turn on the French in French Morocco
- 1941 - Greece Army surrenders to German Nazis RAF brings Greek king George II to Egypt
- 1942 - 4-day allied bombing on Rostock begins
- 1943 - British & US offensive directed at Tunis and Bizerta
- 1949 - Netherlands annexes Elten & Tudderren
- 1965 - Launch of 1st Soviet communications satellite
- becomes 1st in-flight casualty
- 1971 - Soyuz 10 launched; cosmonauts become 1st in Salyut 1 space station
- 1972 - Apollo 16 astronauts explores Moon surface
- 1978 - USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalatinsk USSR
- 1984 - AIDS-virus identified as HTLV-III (acquired immune deficiency syndrome)
- 1992 - McDonald's opens its 1st fast-food restaurant in China
- 1993 - Eritrea votes to secede from Ethiopia
- 1997 - Omaria massacre in Algeria: 42 villagers are killed.
- 2003 - Beijing closes all schools for two weeks because of the SARS virus.

KASHMIR OBSERVER[™]

Tuesday | 23-04-2024

Polls Apart

The ongoing general elections, touted as the largest democratic exercise in the world, have gotten underway with the first phase held on April 19, witnessing millions of enthusiastic voters exercising their franchise. With Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking a third term and a combined opposition trying hard to unseat him, the atmosphere has become charged with the competitive rhetoric and election promises.

The seven-phase election process, covering 102 constituencies across 21 states and territories, began with remarkable enthusiasm. The sheer scale of the exercise is staggering. With approximately 969 million registered voters, including 18 million first-time voters and 197 million individuals in their 20s, the magnitude of participation eclipses even the combined population of the 27 European Union member states.

The diversity of issues at play reflects the vibrancy of India's democratic process. While Prime Minister Modi's BJP emphasizes growth, welfare, and Hindu nationalism, the opposition alliance stresses affirmative action, welfare measures, and the preservation of democratic institutions. Besides, concerns ranging from unemployment and inflation to rural distress and minority rights are finding resonance. The choice before the voters is not just about personalities or parties; it's about the vision they hold for their nation.

The significance of these elections reverberates far beyond India's borders. As the world's largest democracy, India's choices will have repercussions globally. As the electoral process unfolds over the coming weeks, it is imperative that all stakeholders ensure the integrity and transparency of the process. Every vote cast represents not just an individual choice, but a collective commitment to the democratic ideals that India cherishes.

So far all the opinion polls have guaranteed a third-term for the PM Modi. In public opinion too he is seen as the favourite to win the polls. Needless to say, the PM remains wildly popular in major parts of the country. Confident of his win, the PM Modi has already urged government officials not to consider the election period as a vacation, emphasizing the importance of continuing work on government projects and schemes. The belief in a successful electoral outcome is palpable, as the government prepares for the upcoming polls with an ambitious roadmap for the development of the country.

Could there be an upset? There may well be. In 2002, the BJP government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee lost the election despite appearing favourite to win it. However, the chances of the BJP somehow losing the poll look very slim. That said, the exercise is a testament to India's enduring democracy and that is what matters in the end, no matter who wins.

Lessons from Taiwan for Kashmir

Are we far behind securing life from earthquake hazards?

Afroz Shah

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The government must adopt a resolution to carefully monitor the competence of engineering design and construction patterns to allow systematic replacement procedures for the greater good



A major earthquake of magnitude 7.4 struck the eastern parts of Taiwan on April 2nd and caused less than 100 casualties. In contrast, the magnitude 7.6 earthquakes of 2005 in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan, caused more than 80,000 deaths, indicating that Taiwan was well prepared and Pakistan was not. Since the devastating earthquake of 2005, urbanization and population growth have increased, particularly near vulnerable zones such as unstable mountainous slopes, riverbeds, and other water bodies.

Taiwan offers many lessons and opportunities for Kashmir. It has a similar tectonic setting, with a prominently developed mountainous region pierced by several active faults. It has narrow valleys, which are different from the broad valleys of Kashmir. Geologically, Kashmir is a more dangerous earthquake hazard setting than the narrow valleys of Taiwan because of the huge population density, potential for liquefaction-related hazards, and so on. More importantly, the critical ingredients for building earthquake-resistant built environments to secure life and assets from earthquake hazards are missing. It is the major difference that differentiates well-prepared Taiwan from unprepared Kashmir. Imagine a similar magnitude of quake as was recorded in Taiwan hitting Kashmir; the expected casualties would be more than 50,000.

What are we waiting for? Kashmir's tectonic structure indicates that major earthquakes in the region can occur anytime. The exact timing is impossible because available knowledge and technological advancement do not allow that. It is a global concern where earthquake prediction remains impossible, even for the most technologically sophisticated earthquake-vulnerable nations such as Japan, the USA, New Zea-

land, etc. All these nations started a campaign long ago to secure life from earthquakes and related hazards by following strict building codes, which have minimised losses and damages during major earthquakes, which we have observed over the decades of their scientific and engineering progress. That campaign has yet to start in Kashmir. Delaying tactics are extremely dangerous and paint a grim picture of the region during an impending quake of magnitude seven and above.

I have been writing articles on earthquake hazards for more than a decade now, as many other scientists and researchers do, and most of it is published by Kashmir Observer, which has taken a leading role in disseminating scientific information vital for the security and safety of our societies from hazards, in particular, earthquakes and floods. Yet, whenever I visit India, I fail to understand why our buildings do not follow the standard earthquake safety building procedures and practices that will save lives during earthquakes. I have been posing this question to myself and discussing it with several scientists, students, and people in Kashmir, which made me conclude that the changes are difficult to make but are not impossible. The mindset is not ready to leap towards a new building practice where some previous social norms may have to be abandoned for good. For example, including well-trained architects and engineers from some of the best institutes in the world to replace the existing ones, who are locally trained, and most of them are not even formally trained at universities, etc. For example, most of the residential buildings I have witnessed in Anantnag, where I come from, are designed and constructed by local architects and other engineers, who have often not been trained in a formal engineering institution. It

is a huge problem, and the current norm ought to be replaced by professional engineering design and construction.

The government must adopt a resolution to carefully monitor the competence of engineering design and construction patterns to allow systematic replacement procedures for the greater good. The recently concluded 6th World Congress on Disaster Management (WCMD) in Dehradun also recognized the need to change the existing practices for good. The world's scientific community and people from diverse backgrounds emphasized the need to reevaluate the existing norms in preparation for a better future to effectively combat the risks posed by earthquakes, floods and other hazards.

Our regions are prone to various hazards, and earthquakes are the most dangerous because of their unpredictable nature, which gives us sleepless nights. Therefore, it is good for our societies to work towards preparedness and making our surroundings an abode of peace. We can do it; it costs what is easily affordable to many and possible for others with the help of government and private agencies. We must start to navigate the route of hazard preparedness and disaster resilience in the built environment for the better of our regions, and to accomplish this enormous task; the government must play a critical role by monitoring, facilitating, and rebuilding the infrastructure in the entire country, especially, the most vulnerable regions such as Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh etc.

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

The author is a Sr. Assistant Professor, Structural Geology

Your Back To Basics FINANCIAL Did You Know?

Irshad Mushtaq

Back to basics concepts of shares, mutual funds, and the role of SEBI in India's securities market.

Shares, also known as stocks, represent ownership in a company or a financial asset. When you own a share, you own a small portion of the company. Companies issue shares to raise capital for their operations, expansion, or projects. Shareholders are entitled to a share of the company's profits, which are often distributed as dividends. Additionally, shareholders have voting rights in company decisions, based on the number of shares they own. Mutual funds, on the other hand, are collective investment vehicles that pool money from many investors to invest in various securities such as stocks, bonds, and money market instruments. These funds are managed by professional money managers who aim to generate capital gains or income for investors. Mutual funds provide individual investors access to diversified portfolios managed by experts. Investors in mutual funds share in the gains or losses of the fund based on their investment amount. SEBI, the Securities and Exchange Board of India, is the regulatory body overseeing the securities and commodity market in India. Established in 1988 and given statutory powers in 1992, SEBI's primary objectives include protecting investor interests, promoting market development, and ensuring market regulation. SEBI regulates stock exchanges, securities businesses, and other entities associated with the securities market. It also oversees the issuance of securities, ensuring investor protection and market integrity. In conclusion, shares represent ownership in a company, mutual funds offer diversified investment options, and SEBI plays a crucial role in regulating India's securities market. These concepts are essential for investors and companies operating in the financial markets, contributing to market transparency and investor protection.

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Promoting Knowledge & Education Through More Public Libraries in Kashmir

I am writing to bring attention to the pressing need for an increased number of public libraries in the beautiful region of Kashmir. Public libraries serve as invaluable institutions that foster knowledge, literacy, and community development. However, the scarcity of such facilities in Kashmir hinders the region's progress and deprives its residents of the myriad benefits that public libraries offer.

Kashmir, known for its rich cultural heritage and intellectual traditions, deserves to have robust public

libraries that cater to the diverse educational needs of its populace. These libraries would serve as intellectual hubs, facilitating the exchange of ideas, promoting literacy, and nurturing a love for learning among individuals of all ages. They would provide a sanctuary for students, researchers, and the general public to access a wide range of books, periodicals, and digital resources.

A well-established network of public libraries in Kashmir would address several critical issues facing the region. Firstly, it would bridge the edu-

cational divide by providing access to resources for students who may not have access to a personal collection or digital devices. This would help level the playing field and enhance educational opportunities for all, promoting a more inclusive society.

Secondly, public libraries would foster a culture of reading and lifelong learning. They would encourage intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and imagination among the residents of Kashmir. Reading is not only a means of personal growth but also an essential tool for societal progress.

Libraries would enable individuals to explore diverse perspectives, promote cultural understanding, and contribute to the overall intellectual development of the region.

Furthermore, public libraries would become vibrant community spaces, hosting various educational and cultural events. They could serve as venues for author talks, book clubs, workshops, and exhibitions, bringing people together.

Basit Hussain

Eggceptional Generosity

Who Knew an Egg Could Do This?

Ikkz Ikbal

In a heartwarming demonstration of community spirit and charity, residents of Malmapanpora hamlet of North Kashmir's Sopore, banded together to raise funds for the construction of a Mosque in the locality through a unique initiative. The local Masjid Committee, despite facing the difficulties in gathering resources, embarked on a journey that would unite the village in a remarkable way.

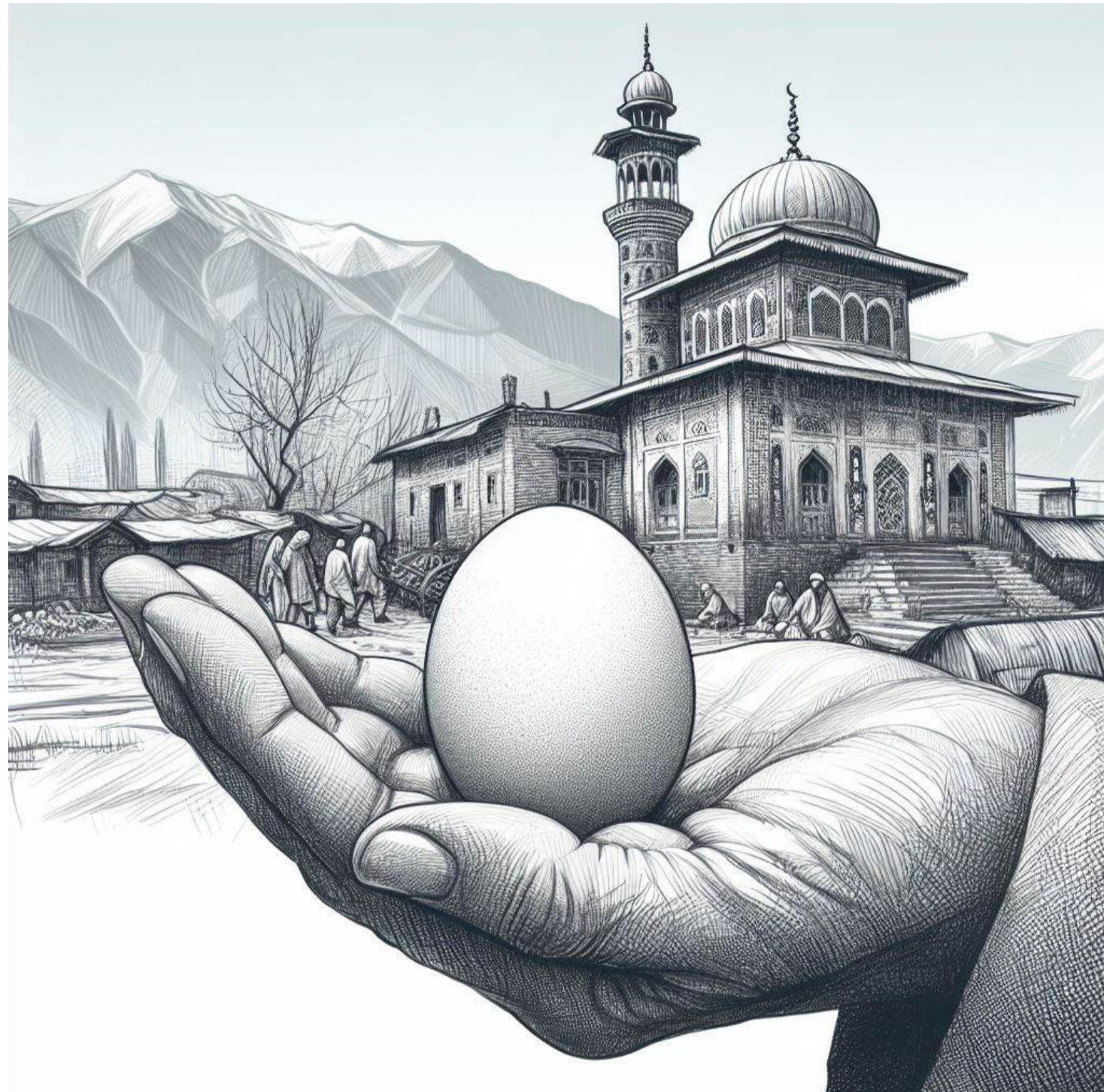
The concept was straightforward but innovative: collect donations, both in cash and in-kind contributions to fund for the construction of the mosque. Among the contributions was the freshly laid hen egg, which symbolized the sincerity and modest offerings of the villagers.

The old woman who donated



A HUMBLE EGG SET OFF A CHAIN REACTION OF KINDNESS THAT TRANSCENDED MONETARY VALUE, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of all who participated. The success of the egg auction in Malmapanpora hamlet provides a compelling example of the transformative impact of community-led initiatives

the egg chose to remain anonymous, which highlights the selfless nature of the act and adds to the beauty of the gesture. As the donations were put up for auction, the egg swiftly became the most sought-after object, capturing the attention and imagination of the community.



This is an AI generated image

The locals enthusiastically engaged in spirited bidding for three days, with each round igniting their desire, determination and energy. After each successful bid, the winning bidder not only paid the bid amount but

also returned the egg to the community, further fuelling the cycle of generosity.

On the final day of the auction, the focus of attention was a young businessman from the nearby Warpora area. His win-

ning bid of Rs 70, 000 not only demonstrated his dedication to the cause but also reflected the strong emotional connection he shared with the sacred place like Masjid, the House of Allah SWT. The remarks he made at the

bidding stage resonated with the spirit of unity and the sense of purpose that permeated the auction. His passion and devotion to the construction of Masjid drove him to contribute generously, even with limited resources, in-

spired others to follow the suit. The culmination of the auction was nothing short of extraordinary. With each bid, the cumulative funds raised from a single egg soared to an impressive Rs 2,26,350, a testament to the collective power and solidarity of the community.

As construction progresses on the Mosque, the echoes of the egg auction will reverberate, reminding us of the potential that arises when people unite around for a common cause.

In Malmapanpora village of Sopore, a humble egg set off a chain reaction of kindness that transcended monetary value, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of all who participated.

The success of the egg auction in Malmapanpora hamlet provides a compelling example of the transformative impact of community-led initiatives. Beyond raising funds for the construction of Masjid, it fostered a feeling of unity, compassion and shared purpose among the villagers.

The spirit of collaboration and giving atmosphere of this illustrious egg auction will serve as an inspiration for the future such initiatives led by the communities. It serves as a reminder that even smallest contributions, like dropping a single egg, can have a profound impact and unite the communities together for a greater cause.

From the standpoint of challenges, confusions and uncertainties gripping the world, this tale of the egg auction serves as a ray of optimism, serving as a reminder of infinite possibilities for a positive change that arise when people join hands for a common goal. The Malmapanpora village will be remembered for this unique but special initiative of kindness and teamwork that is essential for creating a better future for everybody.

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Are Tomorrow's Engineers Ready To Face AI's Ethical Challenges?

Elana Goldenkoff
Erin A. Cech

A chatbot turns hostile. A test version of a Roomba vacuum collects images of users in private situations. A Black woman is falsely identified as a suspect on the basis of facial recognition software, which tends to be less accurate at identifying women and people of color.

These incidents are not just glitches, but examples of more fundamental problems. As artificial intelligence and machine learning tools become more integrated into daily life, ethical considerations are growing, from privacy issues and race and gender biases in coding to the spread of misinformation.

The general public depends on software engineers and computer scientists to ensure these technologies are created in a safe and ethical manner. As a sociologist and doctoral candidate interested in science, technology, engineering and math education, we are currently researching how engineers in many different fields learn and understand their responsibilities to the public.

Yet our recent research, as well as that of other scholars, points to a troubling reality: The next generation of engineers often seem unprepared to grapple with the social implications of their work. What's more, some appear apathetic about the moral dilemmas their careers may bring – just as advances in AI intensify such dilemmas.

Aware, but unprepared

As part of our ongoing research, we interviewed more than 60 electrical engineering and computer science masters students at a top engineering program in the United States. We asked students about their experiences with ethical challenges in engineering, their knowledge of ethical dilemmas in the field and how they would respond to scenarios in the future.

First, the good news: Most students recognized potential dangers of AI and expressed concern about personal privacy and the potential to cause harm – like how race and gender biases can be written into algorithms, intentionally or unintentionally.

One student, for example, expressed dismay at the environmental impact of AI, saying AI companies are using "more and more greenhouse power, [for] minimal benefits." Others discussed concerns about where and how AIs are being applied, including for military technology and to generate falsified information and images.

When asked, however, "Do you feel equipped to respond in concerning or unethical situations?" students often said no.

"Flat out no. ... It is kind of scary," one student replied. "Do YOU know who I'm supposed to go to?"

Another was troubled by the lack of training: "I [would be] dealing with that with no experience. ... Who knows how I'll react."

Other researchers have similarly found that many engineering students do not feel



satisfied with the ethics training they do receive. Common training usually emphasizes professional codes of conduct, rather than the complex socio-technical factors underlying ethical decision-making. Research suggests that even when presented with particular scenarios or case studies, engineering students often struggle to recognize ethical dilemmas.

'A box to check off'

Accredited engineering programs are required to "include topics related to professional and ethical responsibilities" in some capacity.

Yet ethics training is rarely emphasized in the formal curricula. A study assessing undergraduate STEM curricula in

the U.S. found that coverage of ethical issues varied greatly in terms of content, amount and how seriously it is presented. Additionally, an analysis of academic literature about engineering education found that ethics is often considered nonessential training.

Many engineering faculty express dissatisfaction with students' understanding, but report feeling pressure from engineering colleagues and students themselves to prioritize technical skills in their limited class time.

Researchers in one 2018 study interviewed over 50 engineering faculty and documented hesitancy – and sometimes even outright resistance – toward incorporating public welfare issues into their engi-

neering classes. More than a quarter of professors they interviewed saw ethics and societal impacts as outside "real" engineering work.

About a third of students we interviewed in our ongoing research project share this seeming apathy toward ethics training, referring to ethics classes as "just a box to check off."

"If I'm paying money to attend ethics class as an engineer, I'm going to be furious," one said.

These attitudes sometimes extend to how students view engineers' role in society. One interviewee in our current study, for example, said that an engineer's "responsibility is just to create that thing, design that thing and ... tell peo-

ple how to use it. [Misuse] issues are not their concern."

One of us, Erin Cech, followed a cohort of 326 engineering students from four U.S. colleges. This research, published in 2014, suggested that engineers actually became less concerned over the course of their degree about their ethical responsibilities and understanding the public consequences of technology. Following them after they left college, we found that their concerns regarding ethics did not rebound once these new graduates entered the workforce.

Joining the work world

When engineers do receive ethics training as part of their degree, it seems to work.

Along with engineering professor Cynthia Finelli, we conducted a survey of over 500 employed engineers. Engineers who received formal ethics and public welfare training in school are more likely to understand their responsibility to the public in their professional roles, and recognize the need for collective problem solving. Compared to engineers who did not receive training, they were 30% more likely to have noticed an ethical issue in their workplace and 52% more likely to have taken action.

Over a quarter of these practicing engineers reported encountering a concerning ethical situation at work. Yet approximately one-third said they have never received training in public welfare – not during their education, and not during their career.

This gap in ethics education raises serious questions about how well-prepared the next generation of engineers will be to navigate the complex ethical landscape of their field, especially when it comes to AI.

To be sure, the burden of watching out for public welfare is not shouldered by engineers, designers and programmers alone. Companies and legislators share the responsibility.

But the people who are designing, testing and fine-tuning this technology are the public's first line of defense. We believe educational programs owe it to them – and the rest of us – to take this training seriously.

By arrangements with The Conversation

Ratan Tata Receives Prestigious KISS Humanitarian Award

KO WEB DESK

Mumbai: Renowned industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata, Chairman Emeritus of the Tata Group, was honored with the prestigious KISS Humanitarian Award 2021 on Monday. The award ceremony was held at his residence in Mumbai, marking a significant recognition of his commitment to social development and exemplary corporate leadership.

The ceremony was attended by Tata Group Chairman N. Chandrasekaran and three-time Grammy Award winner Ricky Kej, among others. The award was presented by the Founder of KIIT and KISS Achyuta Samanta. Due to health reasons, Tata has been avoiding public appearances, leading to the private arrangement of the ceremony at



his home. Ratan Tata, usually reticent about accepting accolades, agreed to accept this award

following a personal request from Achyuta Samanta, recognizing the importance of the KISS humanitarian honour. The award was announced in 2021, but Tata was unable to receive the award then because of the COVID pandemic.

In his acceptance, Tata expressed his gratitude towards KISS and its founder. "I am extremely happy to receive this honour. This is the most significant moment of my life," he remarked.

"Ratan Tata is a revered name in India, and he is truly a good person. Being able to honour him today with this award is a privilege for us," said Samanta.

"Ratan Tata's social work and leadership have been influencing me since my childhood. I have respected and liked him from a young age. My father was

an employee of Tata Company. Since then, I have respected and liked Ratan Tata," he stated. When I was just four years old, my father died in a train accident.

Initiated in 2008 by Achyuta Samanta, the KISS Humanitarian Award is the highest honour of KIIT and KISS dedicated to recognizing individuals and organizations that embody the spirit of humanitarian work worldwide. Previous recipients of this prestigious award include a diverse group of global leaders, Nobel laureates, and notable figures from various sectors, showcasing the award's broad international appeal and respect. On the occasion, around 40,000 students of KISS wished Ratan Tata a healthy, long, and disease-free life.

Indian Railways Carried 41.16 Cr Passengers During 1st-21st April

KO WEB DESK

New Delhi: Indian Railways carried 41.16 crore passengers during 1st April - 21st April, 2024, an official said on Monday.

The official said that the Railways carried 3.38 crore passengers in last two days (20 & 21st April) and 13.69 crores passengers travelled in last 7 days (15th-21st April).

He further said that the Zonal Railways have been instructed to ensure the availability of drinking water at Railway stations.

"Record number of additional trains are being operated by Railways this year (9111 trips during summer season). Elaborate crowd control arrangements are made at all major and important railway stations. Senior officers are stationed at these stations to

monitor all the activities to regulate the crowd in a systematic manner," the official added.

"RPF personnel have been deployed at originating stations to ensure Queue system for entry in General Class coaches. Skilled RPF staff are deployed in CCTV Control Room to keep a close watch on the crowded areas and render real-time assistance to passengers. Government Railway Police (GRP) & Railway Protection Force (RPF) staff are deployed at foot-over bridges to regulate crowds smoothly to avoid stampede-like situations during the heavy rush period," he said.

Additional help desks and counters are set up to help passengers with their inquiries, the officials said, adding that Railways is continuously making arrangements as per the demand.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Extra Power

distribute the only power which they get from the government.

"I don't know the reason for the extra curtailment. However, we will continue to distribute the amount of power we have available," he said.

The top official of the Power Development Department (PDD) said that the power generation is the same.

"As of now, the power generation from local resources remains the same," the official said. (KNO)

LG Meets Victims

provided an ex-gratia relief of Rs 5 lakh each to the next of kin of the victims of the boat capsized tragedy.

Gandabal Bridge

in the locality. Poignantly, on April 16, a pall of gloom descended throughout Kashmir after a boat ferrying 15 people capsized in the River Jhelum at Gandabal, leaving six persons dead while three persons, including a father-son duo and another minor boy, remained missing on the 6th day.

An official from Roads and Building (R&B) said that work was already ongoing on the Batwara-Gandabal bridge. It took a break after the boat capsized incident but resumed two days after the incident, this time at full pace, he said.

He added that some technical issues have led to the delay in the construction work. Besides, the delay in getting the funds released also played a spoilsport, he added.

Moreover, Sajad Ahmad Nazeem, Chief Engineer R&B department, said that the work was already going on even before the incident and has been resumed two days after the unfortunate incident took place.

"The construction of the Gandabal-Batwara bridge started in the year 2017 with an estimated cost of Rs 3.67 crores, and later some technical issues led to the delay in the construction work," Nazeem said.

Also, locals from Batwara and Gandabal areas requested the administration to speed up the work on Gandabal Bridge

Wet Weather

was 2.2°C below normal, the official said.

Kupwara town recorded a low of

6.5°C, same as on the previous night and it was 1.1°C below normal there, the official said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 0.2°C against 0.0°C on the previous night and it was below normal by 3.1°C for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Jammu, he said, recorded a minimum of 18.8°C against 17.1°C on the previous night and it was below normal by 2.2°C for the winter capital of J&K.

Banihal recorded a low of 8.2°C, Batote 4.1°C and Bhaderrwah 7.6°C, he said.

This Election

longstanding grievances of the region.

Bijbehara, described as her "home", witnessed overwhelming support from the masses, prompting Mehbooba to highlight the urgent need for collective democratic resistance against injustice. She condemned the prevailing climate of fear and the erosion of civil liberties, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding the rights of the people.

Expressing concern over youth unemployment, substance abuse, and land encroachments, Mehbooba underscored the need for inclusive development policies to uplift the marginalized sections of society. She criticized the exorbitant power tariffs imposed on the region despite being a significant electricity producer.

Asserting that the ongoing election transcends mere political maneuvers, Mehbooba emphasized its symbolic significance as a platform to voice the grievances of the Kashmiri people. She called upon the electorate to recognize the power of their vote in shaping the future of the region, promising to champion their cause and stand against injustice. (KNO)

Mehbooba In Power

gathering in DK Pora, Zainapora constituency of Shopian district, Omar said, "When assembly elections were announced in 2015, the People's Democratic Party started talking with the Bharatiya Janata Party over government formation. However, the NC warned Mufti Mohammad Sayeed not to make the mistake of joining hands with the BJP and that it will unconditionally support you."

"We asked them that we don't need any ministry, MLC or anything else for a full six years but they used to laugh at us by saying that NC just wants to stay in power," Omar claimed.

The former chief minister said that in 2018 when the BJP backed out from the alliance, NC again offered unconditional support to the PDP and "we requested the then Governor not to allow horse trading here."

"In 2018, Mehbooba sent Altaf Bukhari to us and he was their CM candidate at that very time. We again offered them unconditional support. Our intentions were genuine and selfless," he added.

The NC leader added, "When there was destruction in Kashmir what were you doing; when there was an opportunity for you to take care of the emotions of people of J&K what were you doing? At that very time, you just used to praise Modi by saying that if anyone will solve the Kashmir issue in the world, that is Narendra Modi. Has he really solved our issues?"

Our land and our identity, which were given protection by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah under Article 370, are at stake, Omar said.

The former CM also said that the National Conference didn't join the INDIA bloc for seats. "Some people were part of the alliance just for seat sharing and they parted away just by saying NC is selfish. If NC was selfless, then Congress would have gone with PDP," he said.

Touching on broader issues of minority rights, Abdullah rejected the notion that Muslims pose a threat to the Hindu majority, saying Muslims must assert their rights peacefully.

"In the rest of the country, slogans are being raised that 80 percent Hindus are under threat because of 14 percent Muslims. How is it possible?" he asked. "Muslims have never demanded what they deserve and there isn't anything wrong in demanding their own rights."

Omar also expressed concern over the lack of Muslim representation in Parliament, saying it is a significant issue that needs to be addressed. (KNO)

Apni Party Extends

Baramulla goes to the polls in the fifth phase on May 20 while Srinagar will vote in the fourth phase on May 13.

Jammu Braces

for the first time.

This election marks a significant milestone as it is the first parliamentary poll conducted in the state since its transition to a Union Territory and the abrogation of Article 370. The inclusion of new constituencies, such as Gulabgarh, Reasi, and the newly formed Shri Mata Vaishno Devi assembly constituencies, underscores the evolving dynamics of electoral representation in the region.

With the completion of the commissioning of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), preparations are in full swing to ensure seamless conduct of polling across 1,488 booths in the Jammu district. Each polling booth will be equipped with multiple EVMs, facilitating the participation of voters from diverse political affiliations

Assembly Polls

in a "wrong" portrayal of the ground situation after the 2019 abrogation of Article 370 which gave a special status to the erstwhile state.

"Opposition parties are engaged in a wrong portrayal of the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Normalcy has been restored in Jammu and Kashmir after scrapping Article 370. Elections in Jammu and Kashmir will happen soon, as stated by Prime Minister Modi in a recent rally in Udhampur. It has to happen and it will happen soon," the BJP leader said.

There is no elected government in Jammu and Kashmir since the BJP withdrew from its coalition with the PDP in 2018. It has been under the Centre's rule, which also saw the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and J-K being divided into two Union territories.

The Supreme Court had in December last upheld the government's decision to abrogate Article 370 and said steps should be taken to conduct the election to the Union territory's Assembly by September 30, 2024.

On the ongoing Lok Sabha polls, Singh said the people are upbeat in Jammu and Kashmir about the development carried out in the region and are supporting the BJP.

"There is special enthusiasm among people. A common person in J&K is very enthusiastic to vote for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pro-people

policies. They are especially motivated to help Modi win over 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls."

"Nari Shakti" or women are participating in large numbers and they are exceptionally motivated to vote for the BJP due to Modi's welfare schemes meant for them," said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

Singh is the BJP candidate from J-K's Udhampur constituency, where polling was held on April 19. He is a two-term sitting Lok Sabha member from the constituency.

"The main agenda of this Lok Sabha polls and in Jammu and Kashmir especially is development. The Centre is always committed to further development of the Union territory and ensuring jobs for youths," he said.

Singh said Prime Minister Modi ended the politics of discrimination in Jammu and Kashmir.

LS Poll Results

neutral," he said. Asked if the election results can be unexpected, he said the results are always unexpected.

Meanwhile, the DPAP has announced to field its district president for Srinagar, Amir Bhatt, from the Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency.

Bhatt's candidature was announced after a meeting which was chaired by Aaad.

NIA Raids

its teams cracked down on these properties and conducted elaborate searches as part of its investigation in the case registered by the anti-terror agency suo motu on June 21, 2022.

Backed by their Pakistan-based masters and mentors, these terror outfits have been conspiring to carry out terror acts aimed at disturbing the peace and communal harmony in J-K by radicalising local youths and mobilising overground workers, the spokesperson said.

The outfits include The Resistance Front (TRF), United Liberation Front Jammu & Kashmir (ULFJ&K), Mujahideen Gazwat-ul-Hind (MGH), Jammu & Kashmir Freedom Fighters (JKFF), Kashmir Tigers, PAAF and others, he added.

All of them are affiliated with the banned terrorist organisations and were floated as frontal outfits to carry out the nefarious agenda of the

main militant groups, the spokesman added.

The digital devices and other data recovered during the searches are being scrutinised to expose and dismantle the conspiracy, the NIA said.

Rising Airfares

"It is not only tourists who are troubled by the rising airfares. The students studying Kashmir valley and those going out of Kashmir valley for medical emergencies also suffer because of the rising airfares."

Rauf Trambo, President of the Travel Agents Association of Kashmir (TAAK) voiced similar views saying the issue of rising airfares is a burning issue which affects the Kashmir tourism industry and expensive family packages can discourage tourists from travelling to Kashmir.

"Unlike foreign tourists who mostly travel as couples, Indian tourists travel with all of their families and most of them cannot afford expensive packages to Kashmir which can hold them back from visiting Kashmir," Trambo said.

"We have been raising the issue from the last many years and till now all our pleas have been falling on deaf ears. I hope authorities look into the matter," he added.

He further said that compared to Dubai, Hong Kong, and Singapore, Kashmir has become a costly choice for Indian tourists. It is time for the government to step in and to regulate airfares akin to major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, and Chennai. "Implementing a mechanism to cap prices during peak demand is essential for Kashmir's tourism sustainability."

Notably, in March 2023, a parliamentary panel urged the civil aviation ministry to establish price limits for airfares, preventing airlines from using predatory pricing strategies under the guise of a free-market economy.

The panel emphasized the need to strike a balance between the commercial interests of private airlines and the welfare of passengers. They highlighted the importance of enabling the growth of private airlines while ensuring passengers are not exploited in the name of commercialization.

However, the government made it clear that they aren't in favor of interfering in a free-market economy by putting caps on airfares.

27th year OF PUBLICATION

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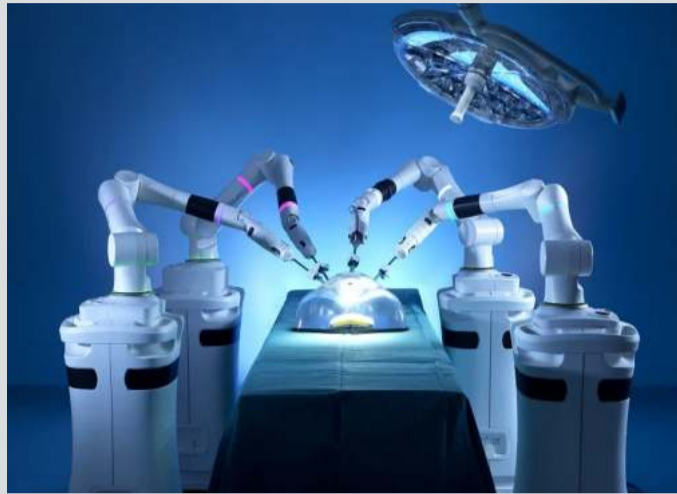
GMC Jammu and Srinagar Gears Up for Robotic Surgery

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a significant stride towards modernizing medical facilities, Government Medical Colleges (GMC) in Jammu and Srinagar are gearing up to introduce robotic surgery. This initiative promises a gamut of benefits for patients, ranging from enhanced precision in complex surgeries to reduced postoperative discomfort.

According to the news agency, robotic surgery, a cutting-edge technique, involves the use of robotic devices under the guidance of trained surgeons to conduct intricate procedures within the human body. In a recent development, the administration of GMC Jammu has forwarded a proposal to the Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supply Corporation to finalize rate contracts and other necessary formalities for acquiring robotic equipment.

The groundwork for this transition, as per the reports received by KNO, was laid out in the previous budget, with the Union Fi-



nance Minister allocating funds for the installation of robotic surgery units in both GMCs. With an earmarked sum of fifty lakh rupees for civil works, the stage is set for the integration of robotic-assisted procedures into the medical landscape of Jammu and Srinagar.

Currently, the surgical departments at GMC Jammu witness a steady flow of 16 to 20 minor

and major operations daily, all performed manually by surgeon doctors and their teams. The introduction of robotic surgery promises to revolutionize this landscape, offering improved precision and efficiency in procedures ranging from gastrointestinal surgeries to orthopedic interventions.

"Robotic surgery boasts several advantages over traditional

methods, including enhanced dexterity in suturing and reduced trauma to surrounding tissues. Unlike conventional surgery, where placing sutures in deep anatomical regions poses challenges, robotic devices excel in maneuvering through intricate spaces with unparalleled accuracy," a senior medic from Srinagar, Junaid Javaid told KNO.

Dr. Ashutosh Gupta, Principal of GMC Jammu, expressed optimism regarding the impending introduction of robotic surgery equipment. He emphasized the potential of this technology to elevate patient care standards, ushering in a new era of modern medical interventions.

In parallel efforts, GMC Srinagar is also strategizing to establish a centralized robotic surgery center, facilitating various departments to incorporate robotic-assisted procedures into their repertoire. This comprehensive approach aims to democratize access to cutting-edge medical interventions across specialties—(KNO)

CS Reviews Progress On Youth Employment & Skilling Portal



Agencies

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo Monday reviewed progress on creation of J&K Employment & Skilling portal being developed by Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N) in association with the NIC and IT Department here.

The meeting was attended by all the stakeholders including ACS, Forests, Principal Secretary, Finance, Vice-Chancellors of University of Kashmir/Jammu, Central University of Jammu/Kashmir; VC SKUAST Kashmir/Jammu, VC, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, VC, Baba Gulam Shah Badshah University, VC, Cluster University, Srinagar/Jammu, Commissioner Secretary, I&C, Secretary, SDD, SIO,

NIC besides HoDs and other concerned officials.

While assessing the work done, so far, on this youth portal, the Chief Secretary enquired about different components and services to be on boarded over it. He maintained that this portal should be developed in a way to act as a single window for assessing different career related avenues by the youth.

Dulloo also asked for making this portal comprehensive for youth by including all the relevant features related to their search for employment, gaining skills and receiving training, credit linkage and availing entrepreneurship opportunities.

He told them to make the success stories of each field available too for inspiration and guidance of other aspirants. The Chief Secretary called for taking on-board

the concerned government departments, skilling institutions, universities, financial institutions and other private organizations having a role to play in this direction.

He also asked for integrating all the schemes to this portal after necessary standardization of the same to make them presentable and plausible for the aspiring youth.

He delineated that the gradual developments to be made in future should be area-wise mapping of human resources, holding surveys, use of AI-based tools for decision support system for aiding policy makers.

Directorate Of Industries Brainstorms With District Centers For New Scheme

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In an effort to streamline the processing of Good and Services Tax Linked Incentive (GSTLI) claims, a crucial brainstorming session was organized by Directorate of Industries & Commerce, Kashmir on the directions of the Commissioner/ Secretary to the Government, Industries & Commerce Department, on April 22, 2024 in the Conference Hall of Sanat Ghar, Bemina.

The engagement witnessed participation of the Officers/officials from District Industries Centres from across the Kashmir Division and the Functional Managers and IPOS of Industries and Commerce, marking it a well-represented event.

Waseem Raja, JKAS, General Manager of the District Industries Centre (DIC) Budgam, in a view of him having served in the State Taxes Department and gained expertise in GST related matters, was invited as an expert who provided invaluable insights into the policy framework governing GSTLI claims and offered clarifications on various concerns that were impeding the seamless processing of these incentive claims in the DICs.

Emphasis was laid on the mythology to be adjusted for pro-

cessing the claims of the Service Sector, as the department envisaged targeting Hotels, Diagnostic Centre, and Controlled Atmosphere Stores which have by and large not been covered till date.

Through this session, the participants got an opportunity to engage in detailed discussions, exchange perspectives, and lay down actionable strategies for efficient claim processing. The session is expected to significantly enhance the understanding and execution of GSTLI related procedures among concerned DIC officials.

Underscores the commitment for the Government for the economic advancement of the region and in future also similar sessions shall be held till the Officers/ Officials are well equipped to provide necessary handholding to the unit holders and facilitate timely disbursement of the incentives under the revolutionary NCSS, 2021.

The discussion concluded on a high note, with participants expressing optimism about applying the knowledge gained to overcome GSTLI claim processing challenges and aiding in the growth of local businesses through timely and effective implementation of the New Central Sector Scheme-2021.

First Phase Of Polling Brings Misery To Two Families In Doda

One clerk in ICDS department dies, teacher suffers injuries

Agencies

DODA: As the polling for the first phase of General Election on Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency was held successfully and peacefully, it brought misery to two families in Doda district as one official died and another suffered injuries.

A clerk in Project Office (PO) ICDS in Bhagwah Tehsil of district Doda Ghulam Qadir died after a cardiac arrest whereas another Teacher in school education department Firdous Ahmed Gattu suffered two fractures on his ankle.

According to the news agency, Ghulam Qadir died on Saturday morning after he got exemption from deputy commissioner Doda from election duty a day prior to polling whereas Gattu slipped from a hilltop while returning from a polling station in Gundoh area of the district.

An official of district electoral office (DEO) Doda told KNO that Qadir was deputed to election duty to 51 Assembly segment (Bhaderwah) and reached to the town on April 17. "Ghulam Qadir was kept in reserve list of the polling staff and was being



sent to polling station number 36 Bajja in 51 Assembly segment. After spending April 17 night with a friend in Bhaderwah, he felt some pain in the leg and was not able to walk properly," the official said.

"Meanwhile District Electoral Officer (DEO) Doda Harvinder Singh visited Bhaderwah and Qadir asked for exemption on the basis of his health condition. The DEO immediately exempted him from the duty and appointed some other person on his place," the official informed.

Qadir reached home at Bhagwah on April 18 evening and on April 19 evening his pain increased and was shifted to the associated hospital of Government Medical College (GMC) Doda where he suffered a massive cardiac arrest on April 20 morning and breathed his last.

On the other hand, Firdous Ahmed Gattu, a resident of Doda town, was part of a polling party deputed to Khatasoo polling station (89) on a hilltop in Gundoh area of 51 Assembly segment. "It was raining heavily throughout the day and in the evening when the polling party was returning. The polling party had to walk several kilometers to reach the nearest road and board the vehicles to return to Bhaderwah. While returning, Gattu slipped and fell down resulting in two fractures near his ankle and he was helped by security forces and other members of the polling party towards the vehicle and from where he was shifted to associated hospital GMC Doda in an ambulance," a relative of Gattu told KNO.

He has been now taken to Amritsar in neighbouring state of Punjab for the treatment where he has to be operated by the doctors.

The district administration has taken the cognizance of Gattu's injury but there was no clarity about Ghulam Qadir and nobody is aware about his case that his pain started while he was deputed to election duty in Bhaderwah—(KNO)

Admin Orders Release Of Withheld Salaries Of Employees

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The administration of Jammu & Kashmir has ordered release of withheld salaries of the employees, who couldn't register themselves on the JKHRMS due to non-availability of initial appointment order.

An order, a copy of which lies with the news agency reads that the salaries should be released in favour of these employees after verification by the concerned Head of Departments in every single case.

An order issued by Sanjeev Verma, Commissioner Secretary to the Government, reads that "With a view to streamline the Human Resource Management System across various departments of Jammu and Kashmir, detailed instructions regarding updation of service details on JKHRMS by the employees and their subsequent verification by concerned DDOs were 35-JK(GAD) of 2022 dated 12.10.2022 read with Circular No. 40 dated 28.10.2022. Pursuant to these instructions respect of those employees, who did not register themselves on the JKHRMS system due to non-availability of initial appointment order."

The matter regarding non-disbursement of salaries in respect of those employees in whose case the initial appointment order was not traceable/missing, has been thoroughly

examined in the General Administration Department. After consideration of the matter, it is enjoined upon all the Administrative Departments to release the salary of the officials, for the present, in whose cases the first initial appointment orders are not available, after verification by the concerned HoD in every single case, it reads.

reads.

However, it shall be incumbent upon the concerned HoD to place on record within a period of next 03 months. The Select list issued by the J&K Service Selection Board or J&K Public Service Commission which contains the name of the official as having been duly selected, it further reads.

The copy of the advertise-



The Service Book has been properly maintained with attestation of the Competent Attesting Authority and the service has been duly verified. The entry of the first appointment has been made in the service book under the attestation of the Competent Attesting Authority, it adds.

"All the entries regarding transfers and promotions have been duly entered in the service book and are tallied with the promotion orders and transfer orders. Certified copy of initial pay and drawl from pay Government of Jammu and Kashmir General Administration Department Civil Secretariat, Jammu," the order

issued by the concerned recruitment agency against which recruitment process was carried out and notification/recommendation of J&K Service Selection Board/J&K Public Service Commission recommending the appointment of the concerned, the order reads.

Such record shall be duly uploaded by the concerned DDO on the HRM portal within a period of 3 months from the date of issuance of this circular. The Administrative Departments shall submit the consolidated information to the General Administration Department for further course of action, the order reads—(KNO)

President Honours Renowned Kashmiri Wood Carver With Padma Shri Award



Agencies

NEW DELHI: In a prestigious ceremony held in New Delhi today, the President of India bestowed the Padma Shri award upon Ghulam Nabi Dar for his outstanding contributions to the field of Art from Jammu & Kashmir.

Ghulam Nabi Dar, a septuagenarian wood carving artisan, has dedicated his life to his craft, beginning his journey at the age of 10. Over the years, his passion for working with wood has evolved into a remarkable talent, earning him both state and national recognition.

Born on April 3, 1957, Dar's artistic journey has been marked by his ability to capture the essence of Kashmir's natural beauty in his intricate wood carvings. His unique designs, inspired by the landscapes of Kashmir, have garnered widespread acclaim for their attention to detail and aesthetic appeal.

Dar's talent was first acknowledged with a State award in 1984, followed by international recognition with exhibitions in Indonesia, Thailand, Baghdad, and Lichtenstein, Germany. However, it was in 1995-96 that he reached a new pinnacle in his career, receiving the prestigious National award for his exceptional craftsmanship.

Beyond his awards, Dar remains committed to nurturing future generations of wood carvers, actively mentoring aspiring artisans and participating in community initiatives aimed at preserving traditional crafts in Kashmir.

Today, Dar's wood carvings adorn homes, galleries, and museums both nationally and internationally, enriching the cultural heritage of Kashmir and beyond. His legacy as a master wood carving artisan continues to inspire and captivate audiences worldwide.

Prof Anunya Chaubey Interacts With Students In Shopian



Stresses On Addressing Climate Change Through Design Thinking

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: The Provost and Vice Chancellor of Anant National University Ahmedabad had an interaction with students of National Innovation Public School -NIPS at Zainapora Shopian on eve of World Earth Day.

Prof Chaubey who over the past ten years, has taught courses on art appreciation connecting art with science, economics, entrepreneurship, environment, media and journalism at Salzburg Media Academy urged upon the students to work for addressing climate change through design thinking and innovation.

During the programme students discussed the negative impact of fossil, pesticides on environment and human health. Prof Chaubey asked the students to work on developing pesti-

cides which are less harmful or not harmful at all. He said " We cannot only complain but give and develop solutions as well"

Dr Naga Chaitanya Assistant Professor at School for Climate Change Anant National University also had detailed brainstorming on fossil fuel and its impact on climate.

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat, activist and writer who was also present on the occasion urged upon students to start debates and discussions on climate change at community level as these issues are not being taken seriously by people at large. He appreciated NIPS Chairman Mr Arshad and Principal Mr Lateef for hosting the event.

VC and Provost Anant National University appreciated the acumen of the students at NIPS and invited them to Ahmedabad so that they could learn more about Design Thinking and Climate Action. He said that their University has started a programme wherein they reach out to school students and handhold them through different activities.

Chairman DDC Budgam Addresses Workers' Convention

Observer News Service

BEERWAH: Chairman District Development Council (DDC) Budgam, Nazir Ahmad Khan, addressed a massive one-day workers' convention at Warihama Beerwah.

The convention saw in-depth discussions on the strategy to be pursued in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. Notably, the constituencies of Budgam main and Beerwah are now parts of the Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency.

During his address to the gathering, Nazir Ahmad Khan

emphasized the significance of supporting a candidate who guarantees comprehensive development in Budgam and Beerwah constituencies. He reiterated his commitment to advocating for the welfare and progress of the region.

Nazir Ahmad Khan stated, "I pledge my support to the candidate who assures all-round development in Budgam and Beerwah constituency. Our focus remains on advancing the interests and aspirations of the people, and I stand dedicated to championing their cause."

Police Attaches Property Of Drug Peddlers In Awantipora

Observer News Service

AWANTIPORA: Continuing its Operation against drug peddlers Awantipora Police today attached Three (03) Double storied concrete residential Houses valuing approximately RS 71,58,010 (Seventy One Lakhs fifty eight Thousand and Ten rupees) belonging to three notorious drug peddlers

These residential houses were identified as illegally acquired properties during the

course of enquiry conducted by SHO Police Station Awantipora, Insp. Zahoor Ahmad under the supervision of Mumtaz Ali Bhatti (SP) SDPO Awantipora which have accrued from illicit trafficking in Narcotic drug and Psychotropic Substances by these drug peddlers.

According to the statement, all these three notorious drug peddlers are currently detained under PIT-NDPS Act and are lodged at Central Jail Kot Balwal Jammu.

PCB Chief Prioritizes Champions Trophy Hosting Over Bilateral Series With India

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Mohsin Naqvi has said that the PCB would be open to the idea of playing with India in bilateral series if they send their team to Pakistan for the ICC Champions Trophy next year.

Talking to reporters in Lahore during a function, Naqvi was asked about the recent interview of Indian captain Rohit Sharma, in which he praised the Pakistan cricket team and said it would be "awesome" to play the neighbours from across the border in a Test series overseas.

"Look, if any options in this regard come we will consider it, but our target right now is to host the Champions Trophy and first let India come for the tournament," he said.

"Right now till the CT there is no slot available as our team has a packed itinerary." "Once they come here first then we



can look at any proposal whenever it comes before us," he added.

The two teams last played a bilateral limited overs series in 2012-13, when Pakistan visited

India. But India has refused to play any Tests against Pakistan since 2007, when the two countries engaged in a rubber on Indian soil.

Last year India refused to

send its team for the Asia Cup matches in Pakistan and eventually the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) had to adopt a hybrid model for the event which was split with a vast majority of the

matches being organised in Sri Lanka.

Naqvi met with BCCI secretary Jay Shah during an ICC meeting in Dubai in February.

PCB FORMS COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE HANDLING OF EHSANULLAH'S INJURY

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has formed a medical probe panel to look into allegations that young fast bowler Ehsanullah's elbow injury was mismanaged by its medical panel.

Ehsanullah has struggled to recover from an elbow injury that he sustained last year after making his white ball debuts for the national team.

A PCB insider said that Naqvi had formed the medical board after he was told that a specialist in London, who checked Ehsanullah last week, confirmed he might require another surgery as his first surgery in a Lahore hospital had been botched up.

Short TAKES

Virat Kohli Fined 50% Of Match Fees For IPL CoC Breach



Star batter Virat Kohli was on Monday fined half of his match fees for showing dissent towards umpire's decision during Royal Challengers Bengaluru's IPL match against Kolkata Knight Riders.

Kohli was given out after he was caught off a waist-height full-toss delivery Harshit Rana during RCB's one-run loss to KKR at Eden Gardens on Sunday.

The star batter, who made 18 off seven balls, was standing just outside the crease at that moment, leading to controversy.

Du Plessis, Curran Penalized For IPL Conduct Violations

Royal Challengers Bengaluru skipper Faf Du Plessis has copped a Rs 12 lakh fine, while Punjab Kings captain has been penalised 50 per cent of his match fees for their respective offences, the IPL announced on Monday.

Du Plessis was fined for maintaining a slow over rate during RCB's thrilling one-run loss, their seventh of the ongoing season. Curran, on the other hand, was fined half of his match fees for showing dissent at an umpire's decision.

YSS Organises Intramural Sports Competitions In Kathua

The Department of Youth Services & Sports is holding intramural sports competitions across various schools in all 12 sports zones of Kathua district. These competitions are designed to prepare students for the upcoming zone-level competitions, fostering their athletic abilities and promoting sportsmanship.

Under the meticulous guidance and supervision of Department of Youth Services and Sports Director Subash Chander Chhibber, the intramural competitions encompass a wide range of sporting disciplines including kabaddi, kho-kho, volleyball, chess, and cricket.

Team India Secures 10 Medals At Inaugural USA Pickleball Nationals

Stavya Bhasin, Dhiren Patel and Hemal Jain won a gold each in their respective categories as India returned with 10 medals from the US Open Pickleball Championship.

Overall, India won three gold, three silver and four bronze medals in the tournament held in Florida from April 14-20. Bhasin won the gold in junior singles, Patel finished first in the men's singles 5.0 and Jain grabbed the top prize in the men's singles 3.5 category.

Rafael Nadal Set to Make Laver Cup Farewell Appearance In Berlin

Rafael Nadal said Monday he will play at the Laver Cup in Berlin in September in what may be one of the 22-time Grand Slam champion's last tournaments.

Nadal has signaled 2024 may be his last year on tour and said last week that his second-round loss to Alex de Minaur at the Barcelona Open, which he has won 12 times, was "probably my last match here."

Revenge On CSK's Mind As LSG Eye A Heist In Dhoni's Bastion



Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Revenge will be on defending champions Chennai Super Kings' minds when they host an unpredictable Lucknow Super Giants here in their reverse IPL fixture on Tuesday with both the teams desperate to break out of the mid-table logjam.

The last time the two teams faced off in Lucknow last week, KL Rahul and Quinton de Kock put up a record opening partnership which proved to be the difference as LSG joined CSK at eight points in the IPL standing.

The Super Kings have been a force to be reckoned with at home and they will look to set the record straight this time. Following the away loss, CSK will be eager to redeem themselves in the three consecutive home ties to march towards the playoffs.

For CSK, skipper Rituraj Gaikwad and Shivam Dube have done bulk of the scoring and their failure against LSG meant they didn't get a flying start and also struggled in the middle overs.

While opener Rachin Ravindra's form is a concern, CSK also promoted Ajinkya Rahane as the opener and as a result, Gaikwad pushed himself a spot down to three.

CSK's bowling unit was at their

wits end against the rampaging duo of Rahul and Quinton the other day.

Young Matheesha Pathirana was their best bowler but the onus will be on pacers Deepak Chahar, Tushar Deshpande and Mustafizur Rahman to produce a better show when they face the same opposition again.

Left-arm spinner Jadeja too struggled and will need to step up on their home turf, having done so in the past.

For LSG, batting has been an issue but they have shown how devastating they can be if their top-order fires.

Rahul and Quinton were on a roll and they will once again have to do the heavy lifting at Chepauk. Also Nicholas Pooran has hit top gear when needed and LSG will bank on him a lot.

In bowling, LSG will hope for the return of young pace sensation Mayank Yadav, who had to sit out of two games after suffering lower abdominal strain.

Pacer Mohsin Khan and Yash Thakur did well to restrict CSK initially but found themselves in the firing line of Dhoni.

The visitors would be fancying their chances but LSG would need consistency to pull off another win at CSK's fortress.

Match start time: 7.30 PM (IST).

YSS Anantnag Hosts Sports Events To Raise Voter Awareness

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The Department of Youth Services & Sports Anantnag organised two cricket tournaments on Monday as part of the SVEEP-2024 campaign to raise awareness about the benefits of voting and the importance of each voter's voice. The events were designed to engage the youth and promote their active participation in the democratic process.

The first cricket tournament was held at Government Boys Degree College Anantnag and inaugurated jointly by the college principal and the District Youth Services & Sports Officer Anantnag. During the opening ceremony, the speakers emphasized the benefits of SVEEP and the critical role of voting in strengthening democracy. Additionally, a pledge was taken to combat drug abuse.

Meanwhile, another cricket



tournament took place at the Sports Stadium Wampora in Qazigund, where the headmaster of High School Panzath opened the event. He spoke about the significance of voting and motivated young people to participate in the electoral process.

In a separate event, Zone Achabal commenced its calendar year of activities with Under-14 boys and girls chess and carrom competitions at Fisheries Park Achabal. ZPEO Achabal, Mohammad Abbas Dar, inaugurated the competi-

tion and encouraged students to engage in sports to stay away from drugs.

Sports Zone Beerwah Holds Sports Competition For Boys

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam started the sports activities at the zonal level with inter school cross-country in relation to their annual calendar. Under their supervision of District Sports Officer Balbir Singh Sodhi, Zone Beerwah organized a children's race for boys on Monday. The race started from Beerwah at 8:00 AM in the morning and passed through Chewdara vil-



lage and ended on the back. In the Under-14 category,

Mohd Amir Waza got the first position, Aamir Maglu and Shanik Mohiuddin got the second and third positions, respectively. In the Under-17 category, Fazil Sheikh, Faizan Bhat and Junaid Hassan got the first, second and third positions respectively.

SHO Beerwah Syed Ashiq Hussain and in-charge activity YSS Shakeel ur Rehman inaugurated the race. The chief guests distributed prizes and certificates to the successful children.

Players Voice Concerns Over 'Impact Player' Rule, While Coaches Offer Differing Perspectives

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Axar Patel believes that his batting position has been affected by 'Impact Player' rule while Mukesh Kumar wants it abolished if there isn't some meaningful alternate help for the bowlers but Sourav Ganguly thinks that in a 12-a-side game, only the best all-rounders will survive.

With Rohit Sharma making it clear that he is not a big fan of 'Impact Player' which is a glorified 12-a-side contests which hampers the growth of Indian all-rounders, more and more top national team players are expressing their displeasure.

The 'Impact Player' rule, introduced in 2023, allows all IPL teams to substitute a player -- batter or bowler -- during their respective innings as per the demands of the match, but it has raised eyebrows in the ongoing season.

Axar, who sees himself as an all-rounder admitted that because of the rule, his batting position has been affected.



"Whosoever is making the rules, they are thinking that everything will work as per batter's convenience. Obviously, it has been difficult (for the bowlers). According to me, it's difficult but obviously you will have the opportunity as well that you can perform well in that situation, if you have the skills then how you can use them," Axar told PTI during a select media interaction.

"Because of the Impact sub rule, everyone gets one more batsman so they think that they will use the batsman in case, the batting unit doesn't go well. And whosoever comes to play, they don't take much time and starts from the first ball because they know that they have a player in seventh or eighth place," he said.

"That is why I am not a big fan of impact player rule, because as an all-rounder I know that they will either take a proper batsman or a bowler, not an all-rounder."

Axar said he had already aired his views with DC skipper

Rishabh Pant on the rule.

"We (Rishabh), Dada (Sourav Ganguly) and Ricky (Ponting) have talked about it. I can play early, but if you want to give the chance to young player, then you have to give them their position, but because of that (Impact Sub rule) I have to come down the order."

Australia great David Warner feels the 'Impact Sub' rule has diminished the role of an all-rounder to some extent from T20 cricket.

"Well, the game is evolving, right. So I think people are just trying different things. If you got 15-16 people on the bench, you know you want to maximise as much as you can. Is the game going to change a lot in the next 10 years? It probably will."

"I feel like it's taken the all round option out now. We are adapting as cricketers, so we're enjoying that and it's also tactically when you're sitting on the bench, you know, if you're not scoring runs, then you can put that batsman in," Warner said.