

Terror Attack On IAF Convoy No Breakthrough, Posters Of Accused Released



Press Trust Of India

Jammu: A breakthrough eluded the security forces in the Poonch terrorist attack on a convoy of Indian Air Force even as a massive search operation in a vast area of the Jammu and Kashmir district entered the third day on Monday, officials said.

The streets in and around Surankote woke up to posters of two people, named as prime accused in the case, and announcement of a cash reward of Rs 20 lakh for giving information.

Though the police and the Army denied putting up these posters, officials in the know of the development said that an "enthusiastic" unit of the security forces had decided to put up the posters initially but took

them down later after a reprimand from their superiors.

More than 20 persons were detained for questioning as the security forces are gathering clues to neutralise the terrorists who fled into nearby dense forests after carrying out the ambush near Shahsitar in Surankote area on Saturday evening.

Five IAF personnel were injured in the attack and one of them later succumbed to injuries at a military hospital.

The officials said a massive joint search operation by army and police is in progress in several areas including Shahsitar, Gursai, Sanai, Lasana and Sheendara top for the third day but there was no trace of the terrorists so far.

The security | More on P6

Srinagar Set For Showdown

Over 17 Lakh Voters, 24 Candidates Vie For LS Seat

- » Highest Candidate Count
- » 2135 Polling Stations
- » 18 Assembly Segments
- » 5 Districts
- » 2 Lakh First-time Voters
- » 8,73,426 Males
- » 8,70,368 Females
- » 51 Transgender Individuals

Agencies

Srinagar: Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency, having the highest number of candidates compared to other segments in Jammu and Kashmir, is all set to witness an interesting showdown on May 13 when more than 17.4 lakh people are going to cast their ballots in five districts of the Valley.

Details reveal that a total of 17,43,845 electorates are going to decide the fate of the 24 candidates in the fray for the Lok Sabha polls in Srinagar seat.

Of total, over 2.0 lakh are the first-time voters, who are in the age group of 18-20 and will be exercising their



franchise for the first time on May 13, 2024.

There are 8,73,426 males, 8,70,368 females and 51 transgender among the electorate.

Officials said that the arrangements have been

almost finalized for 2135 Polling Stations, set up at 1323 locations in 18 Assembly Segments. The

Assembly Segments include 17-Kangan and 18-Ganderbal, 19-Hazratbal, 20-Khanyar,

21-Habbakadal, 22-LalChowk, 23-Chanapora, 24-Zadibal, 25-Eidgah, 26-Central Shalteng, 29-Khansahib, 30-Char-i-Sharif, 31-Chadoora, 32-Pampore, 33-Tral, 34-Pulwama, 35-Rajpora and 37-Shopian.

According to the details, 260 Polling Stations have been set up in two Assembly Segments of Ganderbal, 929 Polling Stations have been set up at 8 Assembly Segments of Srinagar, 345 in 3 Assembly Segments of Budgam, 479 Polling Stations in 4 Assembly Segments of Pulwama and 122 Polling Stations in one Assembly Segment of Shopian.

Pertinently, Srinagar constituency | More on P6

THIS TIME AROUND, THERE IS A GREAT ENTHUSIASM among the voters as laws passed in the parliament will be applicable on J&K as well."

NC's Kargil Unit Resigns Over INDIA Bloc's Ladakh Pick

Says Party Forcing Them To Support Congress Candidate



Auqib Javed

Srinagar: Hours after National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah warned his party colleagues in Kargil to support the INDIA bloc

candidate - T Namgyal in the upcoming Lok Sabha election for the Ladakh seat, the entire Kargil unit of National Conference on Monday announced en mass resignation over the choice of candidate.

While addressing a press conference in Kargil, Additional General Secretary, NC Kargil Unit, Qamar Ali Akhoun stated that the party high command was pressuring them to extend support to the official Congress candidate from Ladakh, which was deemed | More on P6

J&K Bank Records Highest Ever Profit In 85 Years: MD

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: The Managing Director & CEO of Jammu and Kashmir Bank, Prakash Baldev on Monday said that J&K Bank has achieved remarkable financial growth for the fiscal year 2023-2024.

Baldev made these remarks while addressing a press conference held at the J&K Bank Corporate Headquarters on Monday.

He said that the bank has recorded a staggering profit of 1767 crore rupees, marking a significant milestone in its 85-year history.

"I thank the board management and stakeholders for their support in achieving this record-breaking profit. The bank's success is a testament to the dedication and efforts of its staff and stakeholders," he said.

Addressing concerns about asset quality | More on P6

Indo-Pak Confrontation Will Impact J&K: Dr Farooq

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah has said dialogue is the only way to resolve issues between India and Pakistan as any confrontation will have serious consequences for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Reacting to a recent statement

of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on taking back Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), Abdullah said on Sunday that no one was going to stop him.

"Let the defence minister do it. Who is going to stop him? In any case, they won't ask us. But let them remember this also that they (Pakistan) are not wearing | More on P6

PDP Will Pursue Return Of Power Projects: Parra

People's Democratic Party Youth President and parliamentary candidate for Srinagar-Pulwama Constituency, Waheed Ur Rehman Parra, on Monday said that if his party is voted in the coming | More on P6

Release Only 10% Of Jailed Youth: Bukhari Challenges Sitting MPs

First Mainstream Politician In 3 Decades To Pray At Jamia Masjid

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: A day after the National Conference organised a massive rally in the downtown city, Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari Monday became the first mainstream politician in three decades to offer prayers at the historic Jama Masjid, once considered a citadel of separatist | More on P6



'Mirwaiz A Victim, Not Advocate Of Violence'

Majid Nabi

Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari on Monday claimed that Mirwaiz family was the genuine representative of the

people of Kashmir and that Mirwaiz Umar Farooq never encouraged violence in any form. In an effort to rally support for his party ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, Bukhari during his visit | More on P6

Alleged MCC Violation ECI Issues Show Cause Notice To Mehbooba

Agencies

Srinagar: The Election Commission has taken cognizance of purported violations of the Model Code of Conduct during a public rally in Thannamandi Shahdara Sharif, prompting a show cause notice to be issued to Mehbooba Mufti, President of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) who is also PDP candidate from the Rajori-Anantnag parliamentary seat, alongside PDP Assembly Incharge Anjum Mirza.

The notice, served by Model Code of Conduct Nodal Officer and Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of Rajori, Rajiv Kumar | More on P6

Society's Development Anchored In 'Nation-First' Mantra: LG

Observer News Service

Uttar Pradesh: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha addressed a conference on 21st Century and Aatmanirbhar Bharat at Varanasi on Monday.

In his keynote address, the LG highlighted India's transformation and historic growth trajectory. "With unprecedented economic and social transformation, India's development has gained new speed and scale and today our country is one of the fastest growing economies in the world," the LG said.

He said, as a fastest growing nation, we have excelled in



many areas, empowering every citizen, especially the marginalised to enjoy the fruits of


development. "Today only Mantra for the society is 'Nation-First' and

collective pursuit of national goals and equal opportunities for people have ensured all-round development," the LG said.

He said the society today is more conscious to preserve and promote our priceless cultural heritage, traditional wisdom and knowledge.




Education sector is focused on promoting virtues of culture, humanity, spirituality and enhancing quality of life, the LG Governor said.

Our values are the guiding force of inclusive development. We have made commendable progress in the social sector and also made an | More on P6



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8

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Healthy Teeth Are Wondrous And Priceless – A Dentist Explains Why And How Best To Protect Them

The Conversation

At an auction in England in 2011, one of John Lennon's teeth sold for just over USD 31,000.

How much are your teeth worth? Teeth are amazing little miracles. They light up our smiles, we use them to speak and we chew with them more than 600 times at every meal.

Yet, in a society where 1 out of 5 Americans ages 75 and up live without their teeth, many people may not realise that teeth are designed to stay with us for a lifetime.

I'm a dentist and an assistant professor spanning clinical dentistry and craniofacial regeneration research. Researchers like me are still deepening our understanding of tooth development, with the ultimate goal of serving patients with on-demand regrown ones.

In the process, I have developed reverence for natural teeth and for the complex beauty of these biological and mechanical masterpieces.

Designed for lifelong function The secret of teeth longevity lies in their durability as well as in how they are anchored to the jaw – picture a hammer and its hand grip. For each tooth, durability and anchorage are functions of the complex interface between six different tissues; each alone is a biological marvel.

For anchorage, the cementum, ligament and bone grip the tooth at its root portion that is buried under the gum. The ligament, a soft tissue that is about 0.2 millimetres wide (about the diameter of four hairs), attaches the cementum of the root on one end to the bone of the jaw on the other end. It serves to anchor the tooth as well as to cushion its movement during chewing.

For durability, however, the secret lies in the enamel, dentin and pulp – our focus in this discussion.

Enamel – the shield

The enamel is the protective shell that covers the visible part of the tooth above the gum. Thanks to its high mineral content, enamel is the hardest tissue in the body. It needs to be, since it acts as a shield against the constant impact of chewing.

Enamel does not contain cells, blood vessels or nerves, so it is nonliving and nonsensitive. Enamel is also non-regenerating. Once destroyed by decay or broken by misuse such as ice chewing, nail biting or bottle opening – or touched by the dental drill – that part of our priceless enamel is gone for good.

Because it interfaces with a germ-laden world, the enamel is also where decay starts. When acid-generating bacteria accumulate on unbrushed or poorly brushed



teeth, they readily dissolve the minerals in the enamel.

Like hair or fingernails, the non-innervated enamel is not sensitive. The decay advances through the 2.5-millimetre thick (tenths of an inch) layer of enamel painlessly.

When caught at that phase during a dental checkup visit, the dentist can treat the decay with a relatively conservative filling that hardly compromises the tooth's structural integrity.

Because of its high mineral content, enamel is stiff. Its lifelong support is provided by the more resilient infrastructure – the dentin.

Dentin and pulp – body and heart With less mineral content than enamel, dentin is the resilient body of the tooth. It is a living tissue formed of parallel tiny tubes housing fluid and cellular extensions. Both originate from the pulp.

The pulp is the tooth's soft tissue core. Vastly rich in cells, blood vessels and

nerves, it is the life source of the tooth – its heart – and the key to its longevity.

Like smoke detectors communicating with a remote fire station, the cellular extensions within the dentin sense decay as soon as it breaks through the nonsensitive layer of enamel into dentin. Once the extensions communicate the danger signal to the pulp, our tooth sensitivity alarm goes off: The tooth heart is in flames.

The inflamed pulp initiates two protective actions. The first is to secrete an additional layer of dentin to delay the approaching attack. The second is toothache, a call to visit the dentist.

The earlier the visit, the less the drilling and the smaller the filling. If caught in time, most of the tooth's natural tissues will be preserved and the pulp will likely regain its healthy state. If caught too late, the pulp slowly dies out.

Without its heart, a nonliving tooth has no defence against further decay invasion.

Without a hydration source, a dried-out dentin will sooner or later break under the forces of constant chewing. Besides, a tooth that has already lost a significant portion of its natural structure to decay, cavity preparation or root canal instrumentation becomes weak, with limited longevity.

In other words, the tooth is never the same without its heart. Pulpless, the tooth loses its womb-to-tomb endurance and mother nature's lifelong warranty.

'Information, Changing Beliefs Have Little Impact On Behavioural Change Of Individuals'

Press Trust Of India

Social support and tapping into an individual's habits can have a more "sizeable impact" when trying to bring about behavioural changes in people in times of a pandemic or for tackling climate change as strategies like giving accurate information or trying to change beliefs have "negligible effects," a new study has found. Removing practical obstacles to behaviour like providing health insurance to encourage healthy behaviour too can be effective, they said.

"Interventions targeting knowledge, general attitudes, beliefs, administrative and legal sanctions, and trustworthiness -- these factors researchers and policy makers put so much weight on -- are actually quite ineffective. They have negligible effects," Dolores Albarracín from the University of Pennsylvania, US, said.

The study, reviewing results from multiple studies, is published in the journal Nature Reviews Psychology. Unfortunately, many policies and reports are centred around goals like increasing vaccine confidence (example of an attitude) or curbing misinformation, Albarracín said.

Co-author Javier Granados Samayoa, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pennsylvania, said while targeting knowledge and beliefs to effect behavioural changes seems straightforward, "it's not that easy."

"What the literature suggests is that there are a lot of intervening processes that have to line up for people to actually act on those beliefs, so it's not that easy," he said.

The authors said knowing which behavioural change interventions work at what level – individual or social – will be especially crucial in the face of growing health and environmental challenges.

In their analysis, the researchers found that 'knowledge' measures like educating people about the pros of vaccination and measures targeted at 'general skills' like programmes encouraging people to quit smoking had negligible effects on changing behaviours.

Instead, they found that targeting habits at an individual's level such as extending support to people for starting or stopping a behaviour was effective. Measures targeting attitudes and which involved making people associate certain behaviours as being 'good' or 'bad' also were helpful in causing a change in behaviour, the researchers said.

Empowering people with skills such as learning how to remove obstacles towards achieving a certain desirable behaviour also is an effective measure, they said.

Social strategies like vaccine sanctions and structural measures aimed at improving trust or justice in an organisation or government entity (like providing means for voters to voice their concerns) too were found to be ineffective in changing behaviours.

Instead, the researchers observed that measures improving access like providing flu vaccinations at work could effect more behavioural changes.

They also found that measures encouraging social support – for example, enabling groups of people helping each other meet their physical activity goals – were effective in bringing about changes.

In The Forum Of The Authorized Officer Pirpanjal Forest Division Budgam.

Now, therefore, in view of the facts enumerated above, it is ordered that:

a) The seized illicit forest produce (Timber Kail, 51Nos=170.03Cfts, Axe=01, Small saw=01 & Horses=08Nos branded with tag Nos, 01/OB, 02/OB, 03/OB, 04/OB/2021-22, 18/OB, 19/OB, 20/OB/2023-24 & 21/OB/2023-24 despatched to PC Depot Srinagar) are hereby confiscated under Sub-section 3 of Sec-52 of Indian Forest Act, 1927 in favour of the Government. The Range Officer Soil Range Budgam under whose custody the said timber/other items are lying, shall make necessary entries in Depot records for further disposal of property as per norms. The DFO Urban Forest Division under whose custody, the said horses are lying shall take necessary steps for their disposal as per norms. The concerned officer shall communicate action taken report latest by 05th of June 2024, subject to expiry period of revision.

b) The copy of this order be published in two leading newspapers having wide circulation in the UT/State, as per the provision of Section 52 of Indian Forest Act-1927.

c) The copy of this order be communicated to the Conservator of Forests, Srinagar Circle Srinagar. The file be consigned to records after its due completion.

Sd/-
 (Syed Wasim Gull) JKFS
 Authorized Officer
 - cum -
 Divisional Forest Officer,
 Pir Panjal Forest Division, Budgam.

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, PIR PANJAL FOREST DIVISION, BUDGAM.
 Memo No: DFO/PP/Legal/ Bud/ 83-91, Dated:-_03-05-2024

DIPK-378/24 dated: 06-05-2024

IN THE COURT OF ASSISTANT COLLECTOR 1st CLASS/TEHSILDAR

Mohd. Maqbool Hajam	Versus	Fayaz Ahmad Wani
Applicant		Non-Applciant

Proclamation Of Sale

- Notice is hereby given that under Rule 64 of Order XXI of the Code of Civil Procedure 1977, and order has been passed by the Court of Third Additional Munsiff/JMIC Srinagar for the sale of the attached land mentioned in the annexed schedule under Order 21 CPC.
- In the absence of any order of postponement, the sale will be held on 17/05/2024 at 11:00 AM at tehsil Office Pulwama. In the event, however, of the sum of Rs. 13 Lakh 75 thousand and the costs of the sale being tendered or paid before the knocking down of any lot, the sale will be stopped.
- At the sale, the public generally is invited to bid either personally or by duly authorized agent. Neither any bid on behalf of the petitioner in the case will be accepted nor will any sale to them be valid without the express permission of the Court previously given. The highest bidder shall be declared to be the purchaser of lot provided always that he is legally qualified to bid. The highest bidder shall deposit the execution amount on spot before the Tehsildar Pulwama who shall deposit the said amount at the earliest before the Nazir of this Court.

Given under my hand and seal of the Court, this 3rd day of May 2024.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY

Schedule of property is as under:

Land measuring 03 Marlas, falling under Khewat No. 61 Survey No.' 46, 47 situated at village Wanpora, Tehsil and District Pulwama.

DIPK-385/24 dated: 06-05-2024

Assistant Collector 1st Class
 Tehsildar Pulwama
TEHSILDAR PULWAMA

ASHAI FAMILY BEREAVED.

With profound grief and sorrow, we share the sad news of demise of **Begum Saad Ud Din Ashai**, who left for heavenly abode on **4th May 2024, Saturday**. May Almighty Allah (SWT) grant her Jannat Ul Firdous, **Congregational Fateh Khawani will be held on Wednesday, 8th May 2024 at 9:15AM** at their ancestral graveyard **Ashai Kocha Fateh Kadal, Srinagar** followed by Majlis Dua at her residence **HNO 13, Lane 3 Ibrahim Colony Hyderpora.**

Bereaved:
Ashai, Buchb, Siddiqui and Shab families.

+91-9419000466, +91-9419000716,
 +91-9419015076, +91-8493974198,
 +91-7780930691.

Media Line Advt

Public Notice

Whereas, I Mr/Ms Yasmeen Manzoor S/O D/O W/O Manzoor Ahmad Buhroo R/O Khawaja Bazar Nowhatta Srinagar, Kashmir intends to apply in the Department of Tourism for the Registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style 'M/S KASHMIR E KASHMIR' Situated at Mehjoor Nagar, Srinagar, Kashmir under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, I will submit State Subject/Domicile Certificate, Qualification Certificate (Pan Card, Experience Certificate (Minimum 05 Years), Character Certificate (Police Department), Bank Statement (Minimum Balance 10000), Site Plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested by Sub-Registrar, Printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting Card), Photograph of the Unit (Indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photographs to the Department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/ Adventure tour operator. Now as per JK Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12, before my case is processed for registration by the Competent Authority, the matter is hereby notified for information of general Public/Financial Institutions/Bank/Organization, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director: Tourism Registration (e-mail Id-ddtreg/123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspapers of the valley. No objections beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained.

Media Line

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform all that my daughter Areeba Fayaz is studying at Presenttition Convent higher secondary school Rajbagh in class 8th A. At the time of admission the name of her mother was inadvertently entered in school records as Akeela Fayaz. Now I want to correct her mothers name to Akeelma Tabasum. If anybody has any objections in this regard he can approach the concerned office within seven days.

inf

SAD DEMISE

We inform the sad demise of Mohammad Yaseen Tonga, R/o Iqbal Abad Bemina, who departed on May 5, 2024. His loss is deeply felt by all who knew him. The mourning will be observed only for 3 days. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Bereaved Family
 Phone: 7006085329, +91 88990 66978

The Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education
 Branch Office Sumbal

The Candidate whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost his / her original Marks card of Class 10th issued by the Board of School Education with following particulars:

Name: Ajaz Hussain Malla
 Parentage: Mohammad Yousuf Malla
 Roll No: 113004420
 Class: 10th
 Year: 2021-22
 Session: Annual Private / Bi-annual

Now the candidate has applied for its duplicate. Anybody (if) having objection may file the same before undersigned within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Besides, the original Marks Card is treated as Cancelled.

Sd/=
 Officer-In-Charge
 Branch Office Sumbal

laa

اثر نیا بیت پھیلان

متوان :- درخواست اجرائی لیگل ہیرسٹیک جین دارٹان اتر بیٹو نگی مساتہ بتا بیگم زبیر مرحوم علی محمد رتقر سائن پھیلان

اشہار ہر خاص و عام

معاہدہ درجہ عنوان الصد میں سائل نے ایک درواست بفرض حصول لیگل ہیرسٹیک پیش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے اس بارے میں بنواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ مساتہ بتا بیگم زبیر علی محمد رتقر مرحومہ 03-02-2024 کو فوت ہوئی ہے متوفی مذکورہ پیشتر سٹی متوفی کے وارثان جائز ہیں۔

نظام کی راتقر 52 سال مزدوری ہیرسٹوفی
 سیدو بیگم 62 سال گھر بیگام دختر متوفی
 عابد بیگم 45 سال --
 بیون بیگم 40 سال --

اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی افراد کہہ نہیں ہے۔ ہیرسٹیک زیر بحث اترارہ کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عزیار یا ہتوہ و ہمد مشہور اخبارات دن کے اندر آئے عزیار یا عزیار ہتوہ و ہمد حد کو دفتر ایذاقت کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرنے میں کوئی عزیار یا عزیار قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار
 FKO



Srinagar Smart City Projects Nearing Completion

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Smart City projects in Srinagar are nearing completion, with locals requesting the authorities to speed up the pace of work.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL), Dr Owais Ahmed, during a visit to the Karan Nagar area, said all ongoing projects under SSCL will be completed within the next 45 days.

An official from Srinagar Smart City Limited, said the completion of underground work will be followed by a macadamization process. "All the projects of Smart City are progressing at a good pace and if the weather remains favorable, the entire work will be finished on time," he said.

"The projects, undertaken in double shifts, are nearing their final

stages and are set to bring much-needed relief to motorists and pedestrians alike," he said.

Local residents expressed optimism about the improvements. "The Karan Nagar to Kak Sarai road has been a nightmare for commuters, especially during rainfall," said a resident. "We are hopeful that the completion of these projects will ease our daily travails and alleviate traffic congestion," he added.

Meanwhile, on May 04, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo embarked on a whirlwind tour of Srinagar to personally assess the progress of Smart City initiatives. Accompanied by key officials, Dulloo inspected various project sites, including the development of pedestrian walkways, cycle tracks, and beautification efforts along the iconic Dal Lakefront—(KNO)



Poll Staff Imparted Election Training In All Srinagar ACs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As part of the training schedule to familiarize Polling Staff with necessary skills to carry out Election duties efficiently, the District Election Office Srinagar today organized a training session for the Polling Staff at Amar Singh College, here.

The Training session was held under the supervision of District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, who is also the Returning Officer (RO), 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency.

Addressing the participants, the DEO briefed the Officers thoroughly about the responsibilities during the forthcoming Lok Sabha Elections-2024 and highlighted the importance of election training to the polling staff.

The DEO said that training is pivotal to familiarize

the staff with EVM & VVPAT operations and get acquainted with the necessary knowledge and skills for effectively carrying out their duties during the electoral process.

He said training enables polling officials to understand the election system and learn handling and operation of EVMs to ensure an error-free election process. He also educated participants about their roles and responsibilities in the fair and free conduct of elections.

On the occasion, the DEO also reviewed the welfare measures for the Polling Staff and directed the concerned to ensure all required measures are taken well in advance. During the training, collection of polling material, collection and installation of EVMs, setting up of polling stations and commencement of polls were thoroughly discussed with the trainees.

Mega Voter Awareness Rally Flagged-Off From Polo Ground

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to enhance public participation and anticipated Voter turnout in the upcoming General Elections to Lok Sabha-2024 in Srinagar Lok Sabha seat, a mega Voter Awareness Rally was organized by District Election Office Srinagar under Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) here on Monday.

The Voter Awareness Rally was flagged-off by the Returning Officer (RO) for 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat from Polo Ground which passed through Polo View, Residency Road, Regal Chowk, Ghanta Ghar and other major roads.

After flagging-off the Rally, the Returning Officer highlighted the importance of voting and said that the Awareness Rally is the part of the efforts of the District Election Authority to engage the community and promote active participation in the electoral process.

He said the Awareness Rally is expected to have a significant im-

The RO appealed to the Electorates particularly the New Voters and Women Voters to participate in upcoming electoral process enthusiastically and exercise democratic rights by pressing the EVM button on May 13"

pressing the EVM button on May 13, 2024, the Poll Day for 02-Parliamentary Constituency.

He further underlined the initiative of the Election Commission of India (ECI) taken for providing Home Voting facility to the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities in the Lok Sabha Elections-2024. He said Voters above 85 years of age and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with 40% benchmark disability can avail the optional home voting facility on May 07, 08 and on May 09, 2024 in Srinagar.

Similarly, the RO also briefed about the Mobile Polling stations, Pink Polling Stations, PwDs Polling Stations, Green Polling Stations and Youth Polling Stations established in the Constituency to facilitate the voters on the Poll day and welcome them to experience a festive-like environment.

Deputy District Election Officer, Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz ul Aziz; Nodal Officer SVEEP, A.H Fani; other Officers from District Election Authority, Information Department, School Education Department and a large number of students were part of the Election Awareness Rally.

impact on improving voter turnout, particularly in the areas that have witnessed low voter engagement.

The RO appealed to the Electorates particularly the New Voters and Women Voters to participate in upcoming electoral process enthusiastically and exercise democratic rights by

'No One Will Ignore Shehr-e-Khaas From Now On': Altaf Bukhari

Observer News Service

Srinagar 06 May (CNS): Apni party President Altaf Bukhari on Monday said that his visit to Jamia Masjid has eliminated an attempt made 70 years ago to reduce the importance of the Shehr-e-Khaas and emphatically stated that "no one can ignore the Shehr-e-Khaas from now on."

Apni Party made these remarks during

his visit to Jamia Masjid and other areas of Shehr-e-Khaas. He was accompanied by party leaders Mohammad Ashraf Mir, Junaid Azim Mattoo and others.

"My visit to the Jamia Masjid is to indicate to the people of Shehr-e-Khaas that the bid, which was made 70 years ago to lessen the importance of Shehr-e-Khaas, has been put to an end today when I entered through the gate

of the grand mosque," Bukhari said.

He also appealed to the people to support his party during the Lok Sabha elections but refused to term his rally, which also saw presence of his party's workers, as a political rally.

The Apni party chief also offered prayers inside the Jamia Masjid, which he said would stand till the existence of the world.

SWEEP Campaign

KU Promotes Voter Education, Participation Through Campus Activities

Observer News Service

Srinagar: To encourage civic engagement by promoting voter literacy and voter participation in the community, the University of Kashmir (KU) is spreading awareness under the SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) program.

The varsity has been organizing interactive sessions, debates, discussions, cultural programs, musicals, nukkad (street) performances, mock voting, etc. across all its campuses during the past several weeks, in which students, scholars, NSS volunteers, teaching and administrative staff from across domains participated in overwhelming numbers.

In this connection, a detailed schedule for the series of events is being followed that will culminate with a grand function this week. More than 10,000 students participated in the awareness campaign across all the campuses so far.

KU Vice Chancellor, Prof Nilofer Khan, reiterated her commitment to ensure that the university remains abuzz with activities whereby students, scholars and staff in their respective capacities, as well as teams, contribute to the education and awareness of the masses about the significance of participation by casting their votes in the elections.

"Our university is deeply committed to encouraging a culture of

democratic engagement and civic responsibility. Through various initiatives, we are trying to educate and empower individuals about the significance of their participation in the democratic process," Prof Khan said.

KU Registrar, Prof Naseer Iqbal emphasized the significance of organizing events and programs for voter education and awareness for the masses in general and for the first time voters in particular.

"Such activities invite attention, educate and empower youth, especially the first time voters, about their right to contribute in building a strong democracy and to actively participate in the electoral festival," Prof Naseer said.

The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd.
IAPM Department,
Zonal Office Budgam,
Industrial Complex Zainakote
Srinagar 190012, Kashmir.
Tel: 0194-2497735, Ext.:218; amid.zoktwo@kbmail.com

J&K Bank

Possession Notice
Notice under Section 13 (4) of the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 read with Rule 8 (1) of the Security (Enforcement) Interest Rules, 2002

Whereas, the Authorized Officer of the Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited under the SARFAESI Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notice dated 31.10.2023 thereby calling upon:

1. Mr Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat S/o Mohammad Afzal Bhat R/o Tilsara Chararishariefas Borrower-cum-Mortgagor.
2. Mr. Gulzar Ahmad Bhat S/o Ghulam Qadir Bhat R/o Tilsara Chararishariefas Guarantor.
3. Mr. Abdul Gani Nengroo S/o Abdul Aziz Nengroo R/o Tilsara Chararisharief as Guarantor.

to repay the amount of Rs.23,12,063.85 (Rupees Twenty Three Lacs Twelve Thousand Sixty Three and paise Eighty Five Only) mentioned in the said Notice being being balance outstanding as on 31.10.2023 in the account of the Borrower, within 60 days from the date of the said notice together with the future interest and other charges thereon.

The said borrower having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the said borrowers in particular and the public in general that the undersigned being Authorized Officer of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank Limited has taken possession of the mortgage property described herein below, in exercise of the powers conferred on me under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules, on this the 04th day of May 2024.

The said borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned against dealing with the said property in any manner whatsoever and any dealings with the said property will be subject to the charge of Jammu and Kashmir Bank Limited for the amount aggregating to Rs.20,82,832.85/- Rupees Twenty Lacs Eighty Two Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty Two and Paise Eighty Five Only) together with future interest thereon from 01.05.2024 and other charges incurred or to be incurred. The borrowers' attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of the time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
Land measuring 06-Kanal 02 Marlas falling under Khasra No 2139 Min, Khata No 478Khwat No. 201 situated at mouza Chrawni Tehsil Chararisharief and District Budgam standing in the name of Borrower cum Mortgagor.

(Authorized Officer)

Dated: 04.05.2024

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

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

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

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
28 Shawal
1445

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 02
ZUHR	12:28
ASR	5: 18
Magrib	7:21
ISHA	8: 53

This Day In History

- 558- In Constantinople, the dome of the Hagia Sophia collapses. Justinian I immediately orders the dome rebuilt.
- 1253- Flemish friar William of Rubruck sets off to convert the Mongols to Christianity, a mission ordered by French king Louis IX - one of the most famous travel accounts in the Medieval world
- 1274- 2nd Council of Lyons (14th ecumenical council) opens, convened by Pope Gregory X
- 1416- Monk Nicolaas Serrurier arrested because of heresy at Tournay
- 1429- English siege of Orleans broken by Joan of Arc and the French army
- 1579- Congress of Cologne forms in Netherlands
- 1638- Cornelis Gooyer establishes the first permanent Dutch settlement on Mauritius, then uninhabited
- 1660 - Isaac B Fubine of Savoy, in The Hague, patents macaroni
- 1664- Louis XIV of France inaugurates The Palace of Versailles
- 1697- Stockholm's medieval royal castle is destroyed by fire, the Codex Gigas (world's largest extant medieval illuminated manuscript) survives by being thrown out a window
- 1700- William Penn begins monthly meetings for blacks advocating emancipation
- 1718- The city of New Orleans is founded by French explorer Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville
- 1748- French troops conquer Maastricht in the War of the Austrian Succession
- 1756- Burmese King Alaungphaya sends his Golden Letter on rolled gold to King George II of Great Britain detailing trade proposals
- 1832- Greece becomes independent, Otto of Bavaria is chosen as king
- 1873- US marines attack Panama
- 1891- Battle in Bunyoro: Capt F Lugard stops Muslim rebellion, 300 killed
- 1895- Russian scientist Alexander Stepanovich Popov demonstrates to the Russian Physical and Chemical Society his invention - the world's first radio receiver in St. Petersburg. Celebrated as Radio Day in Russia.
- 1912- Columbia University approves plans for awarding the Pulitzer Prize in several categories, after established by Joseph Pulitzer
- 1919- A draft of the Versailles Treaty is shown to Germans
- 1920- USSR recognizes Georgia's independence
- 1928 - Pulitzer prize awarded to Thornton Wilder for "Bridge of San Luis Rey"
- 1934- Pulitzer prize awarded to Sidney Kingsley for his play "Men in White"
- 1939- Germany and Italy announce an alliance known as the Rome-Berlin Axis
- 1941- British House of Commons votes for Winston Churchill (477-3)
- 1945 - World War II: British troops enter Utrecht, Netherlands
- 1945 - World War II: Unconditional German surrender to the Allies signed by General Alfred Jodl at Rheims
- 1947 - General MacArthur approves Japanese constitution
- 1947 - Paraguayan government unleashes contra revolt
- 1954 - French surrender to Vietnam after 55-day siege at Dien Bien Phu
- 1954 - US, Great Britain & France reject Russian membership of NATO
- 1955 - USSR signs peace treaty with France & Great Britain
- 1963 - SETC Telstar 2 launched (apogee 6,700 miles (10,800 km))
- 1975 - Small Astronomy Satellite Explorer 53 launched to study X-rays
- 1986 - Iraq bombs a Tehran oil refiner
- 1992 - US space shuttle STS-49 launched (maiden voyage of Endeavour)
- 1993- South Africa agrees to multi-racial elections
- 1998 - Mercedes-Benz buys Chrysler for \$US40 billion and forms DaimlerChrysler in the then largest industrial merger in history

KASHMIR OBSERVERTM

Tuesday | 07-05-2024

Regulating Private School Fees

In a welcome change from the past, the Fee Fixation Committee in Jammu and Kashmir recently reinforced regulations governing private school fees. Chairman Sunil Hali announced stringent measures, emphasizing that private schools are restricted to charging only tuition, annual, and transport fees without prior approval from the committee. He stressed the mandate of the committee, saying that private schools must adhere to fixed fee structures sanctioned by the committee. He clarified that admission fees are strictly prohibited, in accordance with the existing regulations. Highlighting the accountability mechanism, Hali explained that private schools are required to submit detailed files to the committee every three years. These files must include comprehensive information regarding expenditure, revenue, staffing, salaries, school facilities, and audit reports. Based on these submissions, the committee evaluates the necessity for any fee adjustments.

And this is how it should be. The point is that the private schools have become more about business than education. The past two decades have witnessed a phenomenal growth of these schools in the Valley. They have sprouted all over the place, from deep into the countryside to the congested urban areas, even in lanes and by-lanes. And then there are elite schools which flaunt some showy infrastructure, some even swimming pools, but that is that.

From the looks of it, a predominant part of the private school enterprise in the Valley is more about running a business than the delivery of a quality education. And they get away with this easily because a majority of the parents in Kashmir don't hold them to account or aren't sufficiently concerned with the good education. Moreover, in a private school they take the quality of education for granted. But sooner or later, the disruptive nature of the new education technology will force the physical schools to mend their ways. They will have a choice to either measure up or go bust.

It is also the time that the private schools in the Valley should earn their fees rather than arbitrarily charge it without any accountability for their performance. The charges extracted from the students should be in direct proportion to the quality of the services rendered and to the extent facilities of an institution are used by them, not because a student happens to be admitted in a school.

Also, forays into commercial activities isn't only thing that is wrong with the private schools: their wilful fee structure and for that matter the quality of their teaching itself is a great cause of concern. What is needed, therefore, is not only the regulation of their commercial activities and the fee structure but a comprehensive look at the whole system of private schooling in the union territory. The objective should not be more regulation of these schools but to ensure that they deliver quality education for which they charge heavily. Kashmir has witnessed an unprecedented growth of private schools and most of these lack infrastructure and adequately qualified staff. And even with schools which have the infrastructure, the quality of education is pits. And this is what needs to be urgently addressed, preferably by the private schools themselves.



Should You Invest in Real Estate in Kashmir?

Irshad Mushtaq

Real Estate in Kashmir has seen a staggering growth from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 3 crore in just 30 years (150X) with an annual compounding rate of 18.18%. Will this boom continue?

From 1994 to 2024, the real estate market in Kashmir has seen a remarkable boom, with the value of land skyrocketing from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 3 crore in just 30 years. This incredible growth represents an annual compounding return of 18.18%, highlighting the power of wise investment decisions and the importance of long-term wealth planning.

While investing Rs 2 lakh per kanal in land in 1994 would have resulted in a staggering 150-fold increase in value today, the question remains - will the real estate boom in Kashmir continue? Is it still possible to achieve such exponential growth by investing in land at today's prices of Rs 3 crore per kanal?

The answer is uncertain. In order to replicate the 150-fold return seen over the past three decades, investors would need to secure an annual return of at least 18.18%. This underscores the need for careful consideration and rational decision-making when it comes to investment opportunities, as well as the importance of seeking out assets with the potential for double-digit returns.

By staying informed, seeking advice from experienced professionals, and focusing on assets with above-average potential for growth, individuals can position themselves for long-term financial success. Wealth growth requires time, patience, and strategic planning, as well as a commitment to making sound investment choices based on careful research and analysis.

In conclusion, the remarkable rise in real estate value in Kashmir serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of making wise investment decisions and understanding the potential for long-term wealth growth. By approaching investment opportunities with a clear mind, seeking guidance from trusted sources, and focusing on assets with the potential for high returns, investors can pave the way towards a financially secure future.

Irshad Mushtaq is an entrepreneur, business partner at Sharekhan, and author. Email irshad@bp.sharekhan.com



Unraveling the Economic Odyssey Of Jammu & Kashmir

Beyond its gorgeous vistas, Jammu and Kashmir has a complex economic landscape characterised by resilience, obstacles, and aspirations. This article goes further into the empirical data to provide a complete study of J&K's economic trend in recent years.

From 2014-15 to 2021-22, J&K had a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.7%, which exceeded the national average of 5.1% and demonstrated a remarkable upward trend. This rise illustrates the region's resiliency in the face of a variety of hurdles, including demonetization, GST, Covid-19, and the repeal of Article 370. Despite these increases, J&K's economic performance remains behind that of some neighbouring states, emphasizing the necessity for focused interventions and long-term initiatives.

The economy of Jammu and Kashmir is agrarian, with agriculture employing more than half of the workforce. The government's efforts to modernise the agricultural sector, as recommended by the Dr. Mangla Rai Committee, to double its contribution to the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), and thereby enhance farmers' incomes, have yet to bear fruit. The emphasis on switching to cash crops and increasing fruit and vegetable output demonstrates the region's commitment to agricultural reforms. However, there are numerous flaws in the form of inadequate infrastructure, poor road connectivity to the rest of the country, and insufficient cold storage facilities, resulting in essentially nothing in the way of crop insurance.

Although tourism does not contribute as much to GSDP as is commonly believed, it will contribute 8% in 2023. Tourism has always been regarded as one of the most appealing aspects of

the Kashmir economy. Despite problems including security concerns and political instability, the government's ambitious ambitions to develop new tourist attractions and improve infrastructure demonstrate its commitment to revitalising tourism. There is evidence of a considerable rise in tourist influx into the state, particularly during the epidemic. The number of tourists who visited Jammu and Kashmir in 2021, 2022 and 2023 was 1.13 crore, 1.85 crore and 2.2 crore respectively. However, consistent efforts are required to address these difficulties and realize the full potential of Jammu and Kashmir's tourism sector.

J&K has maintained excellent fiscal discipline, with revenue surpluses expected to grow significantly, albeit against a backdrop of rising fiscal deficits. Initiatives such as Mission Youth seek to solve unemployment and foster inclusive growth, with a significant increase in livelihood prospects for young people through various self-employment schemes. However, high unemployment rates, particularly among educated youth, remain a persistent issue that necessitates concerted efforts and legislative changes. Currently unemployment rate stands at on a steady rise, stands at 18.3% with national average being 8%.

Economic development has been closely associated with political dynamics. However in J&K last elections were held in 2014, since then no elections took place although numerous political activities happened including the abrogation of article 370, bifurcation of state into two UT's, implementation of GST, demonetization and many more. In recent times the UT is directly being ruled by centre with Lt Governor as the head. The decentralization of powers is not taking place as it used to be earlier.

This can have an impact on the economic motivation of the public. Appropriate steps are suggested to be taken on this front.

Navigating the Path Forward Jammu and Kashmir's economic journey is complex, with resilience, obstacles, and chances. It is great that the economy has remained resilient and performed well despite such substantial hurdles. While the region has made progress in many areas, including agriculture and tourism, there are still considerable challenges to tackle.

On the agricultural front, because J&K is prone to irregular climatic circumstances, the government should step in to provide subsidies on pesticides, insecticides, organic manures, safety nets for apple farmers, and other benefits. J&K can forge a sustainable future by exploiting its natural resources, cultural heritage, and people capital. Infrastructure development should be prioritised, particularly by improving road connectivity to remote and unknown tourism sites. Targeted interventions, coordinated efforts, and a firm commitment to inclusive growth will be critical to realising the region's full economic potential and creating a brighter future for its citizens.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
The authors are Assistant Professor of Economics, Department of Management, University of People, Pasadena, California, United States.
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Dr. Firdous Ahmad Malik and
Aamir Ahmad Teeli

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On the agricultural front, because J&K is prone to irregular climatic circumstances, the government should step in to provide subsidies on pesticides, insecticides, organic manures, safety nets for apple farmers, and other benefits. J&K can forge a sustainable future by exploiting its natural resources, cultural heritage, and people capital



OBSERVER
MAIL

All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name and address, even if a pseudonym is used. Letters are edited as clarity, space and accuracy of expression require. Our publishing a letter does not mean we agree with everything or even anything in it. -EDITOR

MAIL YOUR LETTERS

P.O. Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190 001
email: editpage.ko@gmail.com

Why Summer Cold Drinks Must be Avoided

The onset of the summer season brings about a surge in the sale of unhygienic and substandard cool drinks, fruit juices, and ice creams in most of the cities, posing significant health risks. Wayside vendors, eager to capitalize on the scorching sun, have encroached upon public spaces across busy areas, disregarding hygiene standards.

These vendors, operating without proper oversight, often sell juices made from rotten fruits and serve cool drinks in reused glasses without adequate cleaning. Food safety officers, has to initiate operations to address this issue by shutting down unauthorised juice shops which has found to be operating in unhygienic conditions.

They should warn vendors against selling artificially colored fruits like watermelons, mangoes etc., and emphasize the necessity of obtaining licenses for operating such shops. Most public health activists, underscores the health risks associated with consuming beverages prepared in unhygienic conditions, especially for children who are more susceptible to seasonal diseases dur-

ing summer.

Overall, it's evident that unregulated vendors selling unhygienic beverages pose a significant health hazard to the public, and concerted efforts from both authorities and consumers are essential to address this issue effectively.

Vijay Kumar HK

Reflections on NEET 2024 and the Evolution of Education

Iqbal Ali

As an invigilator at the NEET 2024 examination conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA), my experience transcended mere observation of a standardized test. It offered a profound glimpse into the evolving landscape of education in India, characterized by passion, opportunity, and inclusivity. In this reflective discourse, I delve into the multifaceted dimensions of NEET 2024, encapsulating the aspirations, challenges, and triumphs of the candidates, while contextualizing them within the broader narrative of India's educational journey.

NEET, short for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, stands as a pivotal milestone for aspiring medical professionals across the nation. It serves as the gateway to prestigious medical and dental colleges, shaping the trajectory of countless careers. Beyond its role as a standardized assessment, NEET embodies the aspirations and dreams of millions of students who dare to dream of a future in healthcare.

The examination center buzzed with anticipation as candidates, accompanied by their guardians, thronged the premises. What struck me most was the gender dynamics within the hall – a stark reminder of the shifting tides in India's educational landscape. Contrary to traditional stereotypes, girls outnumbered boys, reflecting a paradigm shift in societal perceptions of education and career aspirations. This demographic shift not only underscores the increasing participation of women in professional domains but also signifies a broader societal evolution towards gender parity and empowerment.

Each candidate bore a unique narrative – a testament to the diverse socio-economic fabric of our nation. Some exuded confidence, having toiled tirelessly in pursuit of academic excellence, while others wore expressions of trepidation, grappling with the enormity of the moment. For many, NEET represented more than just an examination; it symbolized the culmination of years of dedication, sacrifice, and unwavering determination.

Among the candidates, there were poignant reminders of the inherent inequities that persist



Among the candidates, there were poignant reminders of the inherent inequities that persist within our educational system. Some students, hailing from underprivileged backgrounds, lacked access to adequate resources and support systems, amplifying the challenges they faced. Despite these adversities, their resilience and tenacity shone through, serving as a poignant reminder of the transformative power of education in transcending barriers and catalyzing social mobility.

within our educational system. Some students, hailing from underprivileged backgrounds, lacked access to adequate resources and support systems, amplifying the challenges they faced. Despite these adversities, their resilience and tenacity shone through, serving as a poignant reminder of the transformative power of education in transcending barriers and catalyzing social mobility.

As an invigilator, I couldn't help but reflect on the broader

implications of NEET beyond the confines of the examination hall. It epitomizes the government's commitment to fostering a meritocratic society, wherein opportunities are accessible to all, irrespective of socio-economic status or geographical location. The democratization of education lies at the heart of NEET, offering a level playing field for aspiring medical professionals to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

Central to the ethos of NEET is the principle of inclusivity – ensuring that no aspiring student is left behind. Special provisions for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) exemplify this commitment, with tailored accommodations and support mechanisms provided to facilitate their participation in the examination. This inclusive approach not only empowers PWD students to pursue their aspirations but also underscores the imperative of creating a more accessible and equitable

educational ecosystem.

Moreover, NEET serves as a barometer of India's intellectual capital, showcasing the depth and breadth of talent within our nation. The caliber exhibited by the candidates is a testament to India's rich reservoir of human capital, poised to drive innovation, research, and transformative change in the field of healthcare. By nurturing this talent pool, NEET lays the foundation for a robust healthcare infrastructure, capable of addressing the myriad health challenges facing our nation.

Beyond its academic significance, NEET embodies the hopes and aspirations of millions of families across the nation. For many, it represents a beacon of hope – a gateway to a brighter future filled with promise and opportunity. The emotional investment vested in NEET underscores the profound impact of education on individual lives and societal progress, underscoring

its role as a catalyst for social and economic development.

Ultimately NEET 2024 transcends the realm of a mere examination, symbolizing the aspirations, challenges, and triumphs of a nation on the cusp of transformation. It epitomizes the government's commitment to fostering an inclusive and meritocratic society, wherein opportunities abound for all. As an invigilator, my experience at NEET 2024 reaffirmed my belief in the transformative power of education and the boundless potential of India's youth. As we celebrate the achievements of the candidates, let us also rededicate ourselves to the noble pursuit of nurturing India's future – one aspiring doctor, dentist, and medical professional at a time.

The author is a teacher and Resource Person for various digital initiatives in SED

Exam Stress: What Is It And How Can I Manage It?

Teena J Clouston

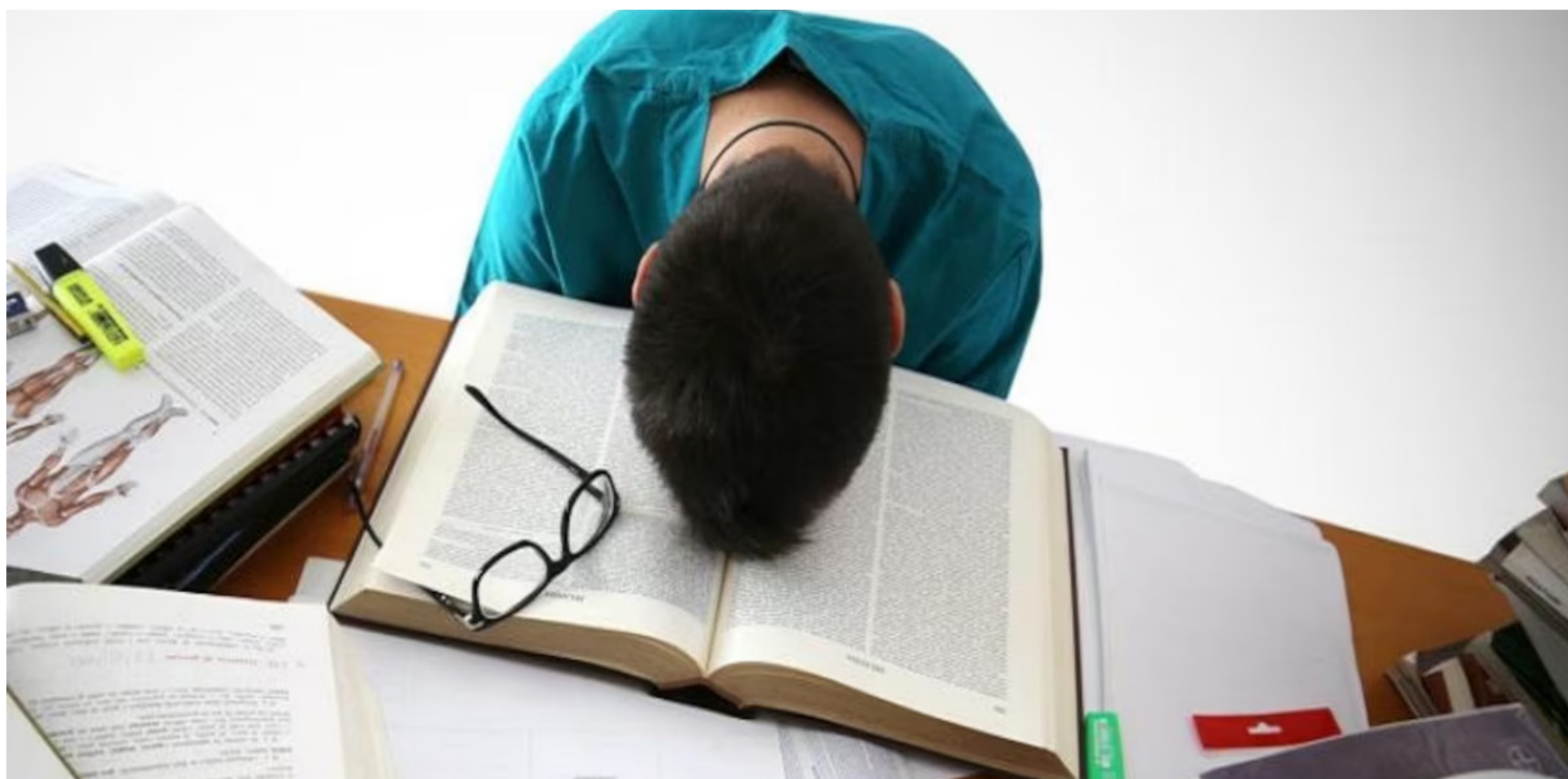
A little stress around exam time can be a good thing, as it motivates you to put in the work. But sometimes stress levels can get out of hand, particularly at the end of an academic year.

When you become stressed, the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system gets switched on. Initially this is a good thing, because it is the activation of this system that releases the neurochemical adrenaline – and this stimulates you to get going and focus on your work. But the problem starts when periods of stress become prolonged.

When this happens, the sympathetic branch stays permanently on, pouring adrenaline into the body and keeping you on high alert. This causes you to worry more, experience anxiety and depression, lose sleep, become forgetful, irritable, overwhelmed, exhausted and feel out of control. This can really impact on your ability to prepare for your assignments and exams, as well as negatively affect your levels of performance and sense of well-being.

What can you do?

A simple and very practical step is to develop a plan of action by preparing well and organising your time and workloads. This will help address that "out-of-control feeling". A second step is to begin to understand the physiological re-



sponses going on in your body and try to adjust them.

As its name suggests, the autonomic nervous system is not under your direct control. But you can learn techniques to help you manage how you are feeling and to relax or calm down. If you can do this, then the second branch of the autonomic nervous system, the parasympathetic branch, can switch on.

This branch works in opposition to the sympathetic branch and releases neurochemicals into the body that can support and maintain a sense of calm – facilitating a relaxed and focused state. Practising mindfulness, meditation, yoga, thought stopping and breathing techniques can all help to keep this system healthy and switched on.

Breathing techniques offer

a quick and effective method. They are easy to learn and can be practised any time, any place, anywhere – because your breath is always with you. The trick is to learn to breathe deeply by drawing your breath down into the abdomen. This stops shallow breathing which is linked to stress and panicking.

You can try simple breathing techniques and practice them when you feel you are beginning

to feel stressed out. You might be surprised about how quickly you start to feel more in control of your stress and anxiety.

What about mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a more advanced technique, focused on being fully present in the moment and experiencing what is going in and on around you as that moment unfolds. When you learn how to do this, you

find you are able to focus your attention on the task at hand – in this case your assignments or exams. Mindfulness also helps you to practise feeling calm in the mind and the body by releasing those neurochemicals that switch on the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system.

Studies have shown this can actually enhance your performance and sense of well-being.

Try simple mindfulness meditation and practice it at least once a day to give yourself the opportunity to see if it makes a difference. Pay attention to how you feel before the practice and after you practice. This will help you to decide whether it's an effective tool for you.

What else can I do?

A real positive of all these techniques is that they teach you to become aware of what you are actually thinking at any one time. Thoughts are frequently negative harbingers of failure and fear. Once you are aware of this, you can learn to adjust negative thinking into a more positive stance or to let them flow over you rather than control you.

Balancing how you spend your time is also important. Eating well, engaging in physical exercise, taking breaks from study and getting enough sleep all ensure that your stress levels are kept under control.

You also need to try and balance your drive for performance in your exams and assignments with doing things that are personally meaningful to you in your life. This is important, as research has shown that this is essential to your health and well-being. And it will also help you to feel more balanced and calm during those exams and in the run up to results day.

By arrangements with The Conversation

Nature conservation works, and we're getting better at it

Agences

To work in nature conservation is to battle a headwind of bad news. When the overwhelming picture indicates the natural world is in decline, is there any room for optimism? Well, our new global study has some good news: we provide the strongest evidence to date that nature conservation efforts are not only effective, but that when they do

work, they often really work.

Trends in nature conservation tend to be measured in terms of biodiversity that is, the variety among living organisms from genes to ecosystems. We treasure biodiversity not only for how it enriches society and culture, but also its underpinning of resilient, functioning ecosystems that are a foundation of the global economy.

However, it is well known

that global biodiversity is decreasing, and has been for some time. Is anything we are doing to reverse this trend effective?

As part of a team of researchers, we conducted the most comprehensive analysis yet of what happened when conservationists intervened in ecosystems. These were interventions of all types, all over the world. We found that conservation

action is typically much better than doing nothing at all.

The challenge now is to fund conservation on the scale needed to halt and reverse declines in biodiversity and give these proven methods the best chance of success.

First, the less good news

Globally, biodiversity is being depleted by human activities like habitat clearance, over-harvesting, the introduction

of invasive species and climate change.

To arrest its decline, people in various places have taken measures including creating protected areas, removing invasive species or restoring habitats, such as forests and wetlands. These efforts are interdependent with traditional stewardship of the world's richest biodiversity by indigenous people and local

communities. And in 2022, governments adopted new global targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

Our team, led by the conservation organisation Re:wild, the universities of Oxford and Kent, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, analysed the findings of 186 studies covering 665 trials of different conservation interventions globally over the course of

a century.

We wanted to understand whether the outcomes of these conservation actions improved on what would have happened without any intervention. Lots of studies have tried to compare the effects of conservation projects this way, but this is the first time such research has been combined in a single analysis to determine if conservation is working overall.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

No Breakthrough, Posters

agencies are collecting clues which will ultimately help flush out the terrorists, they said.

The officials said all schools in the area opened as per routine this morning after a day-long break on account of Sunday.

Meanwhile, the security forces also launched a cordon and search operation at village Kathu in Dalhori area of adjoining Rajouri district following information about the presence of three suspected terrorists.

Multiple checkpoints have been set up on main roads and vehicle checking has been intensified in both Poonch and Rajouri districts which are part of Anantnag parliamentary constituency going to polls on May 25.

The twin districts have witnessed some of the major terrorist attacks over the past two years, signalling return of terror activities to the region, which was once cleared of terrorism and remained peaceful between 2003 and 2021.

Over 17 Lakh

has been the bastion of the National Conference (NC) as the candidates from the party have secured the seat 12 times so far out of 15 parliamentary elections since 1947.

The party has faced a defeat once only so far in 2014 when Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate Tariq Hameed Karra defeated his rival Dr Farooq Abdullah.

However, the party didn't field its candidates in 1996 Lok Sabha elections and also supported an Independent candidate, S A Shamim in 1971. He was supported by "Mahaz Raishumari Front" headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

The constituency is expected to witness a tough competition in the upcoming polls while the prominent candidates including National Conference's Aga Syed Ruhulla Mehdi, PDP's Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra and Apni Party's Muhammad Ashraf Mir are vying for the seat.

Returning Officer (RO), Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency, Dr Bilal Mohi-uddin said that the arrangements are being finalized, saying that the web casting and micro observers will be kept at all the polling stations.

He further stated that the voter awareness under the SVEEP campaign is in full swing and they are expecting a massive voter turnout in this election. "This time around, there is great enthusiasm among the voters as laws passed in the parliament will be applicable on J&K as well," he said. (KNO)

Remove Fake Content

representatives while using social media for election campaigning, the Commission today has issued directions to political parties for responsible and ethical use of social media in election campaigning to ensure level playing field among all stakeholders," a EC statement said.

"The parties have been directed to promptly remove any such content within three hours of bringing it to their notice, warn the person responsible in their party reporting unlawful information," it said

NC's Kargil Unit

unacceptable by the Kargil leadership.

He said in response to that, the NC unit in Kargil had submitted a mass resignation letter to the party.

On Monday, the NC President warned his colleagues that "failure to follow this directive will be seen as a serious breach of party discipline".

The letter that was sent to the NC president states that the party's Kargil unit has taken this decision "in the interest of the Ladakh."

"The Ladakh Democratic Alliance

has unitedly decided to project a Joint Candidate namely Mohammad Haneefa Jan as Independent Candidate for the forthcoming Lok Sabha Election from 1- Ladakh Parliamentary Constituency supported by all the Political and Religious Institutions unanimously coming across the party/religious affiliations," reads the letter.

It further says "The party high command is pressurizing us (both telephonically as well on social media) to support the official candidate of INC from Ladakh which is unacceptable to us including J&K NC and INC

Unit Kargil," adding, "In this connection, as the party insists us to act against interest of the people of Ladakh, so we are compelled to resign in masses from all party functionalities including the undersigned from the party post.

Earlier, local Congress and National Conference leaders put forward the name of Haji Hanifa Jan, the district president of NC, as the candidate for the Ladakh Parliament seat under the INDIA bloc. However, this proposal contradicted the decision of the Congress High Command, which nominated T Namgyal, the opposition leader in the Leh Hill Development Council (LADHC), as the party's official nominee.

The cold desert will go to polls in the fifth phase of elections on May 20. Two candidates Tashi Gyalsong of BJP and Congress' Tsering Namgyal are from Leh, while Haji Haneefa Jan who filed the nomination independently is from muslim-majority Kargil.

Notably, Sajjad Hussain Kargili, a social activist from Kargil on Sunday announced that he will not contest the upcoming Parliament elections and support the joint candidate Haji Hanifa Jan from Kargil.

Pertinent to mention, people of Ladakh have been demanding for two separate seats in Parliament for Leh and Kargil and this is part of the four-point agenda put forth by representatives from the region to the High Powered Committee constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

J&K Bank Records

of the bank, Baldev highlighted substantial improvements made in this area. He acknowledged past challenges, stating that the maximum Non-Performing Assets (NPA) had reached 9.67% in previous years. However, through concerted efforts, borrowers have repaid their debts, resulting in a reduction to 4.08% gross NPA and a net NPA of 0.79%, and aligning the bank with industry benchmarks.

The board has also proposed a generous dividend of 2 rupees and 15 paise per share, reflecting the bank's commitment to rewarding its stakeholders.

Furthermore, Baldev said the J&K Bank has demonstrated robust growth in deposits and advances.

"The deposits have reached an impressive amount of 13,47,75 crore rupees, registering a substantial year-on-year growth of 10.4%. Meanwhile, advances have surpassed the one lakh crore rupee mark for the first time, totaling 1,00,17,78 crore rupees and representing a notable 14% year-on-year growth."

Highlighting the bank's regional focus, Baldev revealed that 70% of credit is deployed in the union territories of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh, with the remaining 30% allocated to the rest of India.

"It gives me immense pleasure to inform you that the bank has made significant strides in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) endeavors over the past year. We have allocated approximately Rs 19 crore towards CSR initiatives, benefiting various segments of society."

In addition, the performance of the bank in key financial parameters is commendable.

"Our net interest margin (NIM) stands at 3.92%, which ranks among the best in the industry. Our return on assets (ROA) is at 1.22%, and return on net worth stands at 18%. We have witnessed consistent improvement in these metrics over the past few quarters," he said.

He also stated that the bank has made notable progress in reducing our cost-to-income ratio, and that the J&K Bank stood at 76% two years ago and decreased to 66% last year. It currently stands at 62%.

"Although this figure remains relatively high, we are committed to further reducing it in the coming years," he assured.

Baldev said the success that the J&K Bank has achieved is attributed to the dedication of stakeholders, employees and the effective governance of our board.

"I extend my sincere gratitude to all those involved for their contributions to the bank's achievements," he added.

Indo-Pak Confrontation

bangles, they also have an atom bomb. The unfortunate part is that the atom bomb will fall on us," the former chief minister said here.

In an exclusive interview to PTI, Singh said India will never give up its claim on PoK but it won't have to capture it with force because its people, on their own, would want to be part of India after seeing the development in Kashmir.

Abdullah questioned the Centre's policy of holding talks with China but not with Pakistan.

"The only alternative, other than a war, is... dialogue. They (Centre) can talk to China 19 times. China is occupying thousands of kanals of our land and China is not budging. Instead, it is advancing. Why can't they talk to them (Pakistan) so that this blood-letting stops and we can live in peace?" he asked.

On the Poonch attack, Abdullah said Union Home Minister Amit Shah should answer for it. "I think it is a very sad incident. Our soldier has been martyred. They have been repeatedly saying that Article 370 is responsible. Now Article 370 is also not there but you should ask the home minister whether terrorism is still there or not.

"Our soldiers get martyred every day and they are silent. Then they blame us. They should refrain from it," he added.

One soldier was killed and four were injured as terrorists ambushed an Indian Air Force (IAF) convoy in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Saturday, three weeks ahead of polling in Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency.

The terror attack took place around 6:15 pm when the troops were returning to the air force station from Jaranwali.

PDP Will Pursue

Lok Sabha elections, they will rigorously pursue the return of power projects from NHPC

Parra made these remarks while addressing a public meeting in Rajpora area of Pulwama. "PDP will leave no stone unturned to press the government in the Parliament to return our power projects if voted in the coming elections," Parra said.

"We will fight to reclaim our resources and will leave no stone unturned to ensure that they are returned to us. Under the leadership of PDP President Mehbooba Mufti Sahiba, the youth of Jammu and Kashmir are determined to fight for their rights and the betterment of their homeland," Parra added.

He mentioned that over the years, numerous electricity projects, vital for the development and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir, have been handed over to NHPC by previous governments other than PDP. This transfer has not only deprived the state of its rightful resources but has also hindered the progress of our region.

"PDP has from the very beginning been against

such a surrender of state resources and rejected the proposal of handing over Ratle when it was in power. PDP made the people of Jammu and Kashmir aware of their rights which had been given away by previous governments, since they were working only as power brokers and commission agents," he said.

Parra asserted that it was after 2002 that these issues were being debated in Jammu and Kashmir, whether it is J&K Bank, extension of central laws, or the sell-out of power projects.

"The electricity projects in question are an essential asset for the development of Jammu and Kashmir. They hold the potential to provide ample electricity to every household, industry, and institution. However, their transfer to NHPC has created obstacles in the path towards achieving this goal," Parra said, adding that the rightful ownership of these projects lies with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Parra demanded that the Centre should return power projects to Jammu and Kashmir without wasting any further time so that hundreds of crores of rupees spent on import of electricity are saved. Exploitation of water resources of the Jammu and Kashmir by NHPC appears not to be for the benefit of people of the state, he added.

Release Only 10%

politics in Jammu and Kashmir.

Bukhari, who formed his party after the abrogation of special status of Jammu and Kashmir, held a roadshow, which started from the revered shrine of Dastgeer Saheb this morning, and later went to the mosque.

Accompanied by Mohammad Ashraf Mir, the Apni Party candidate for the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat, Bukhari and his entourage offered prayers at the 14th century mosque in the Nowhatta area of the city from where Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq used to deliver the Friday sermons.

There was a minor incident of stone-pelting on one of the cars travelling with Bukhari in Nowhatta area but the party sought to downplay it.

Asked about his visit to Kashmir's grand old mosque, Bukhari said he had come to offer voluntary prayers at the mosque.

The former minister hit out at the three sitting Lok Sabha members from Kashmir -- National Conference leaders Farooq Abdullah, Hasnain Masoodi and Mohammad Akbar Lone -- for their performance in the Parliament over the past five years.

"What have these three MPs done? According to reports, there are 1,400 persons behind bars and these sitting MPs still have one month left in their tenure. If they manage to get only 10 per cent of the jailed youth released, I will ask my candidate to sit down and people can vote for them (National Conference)," he said.

"The credit for peace goes to people. No doubt the administration of the day also makes efforts but in the end, it is the people who do it," he added.

Bukhari, who was campaigning for Mir in downtown Srinagar, said that it was wrong to depict the Jamia Masjid as the place for mobilization of election boycott in Kashmir.

"It was not a boycott mobilisation. Somewhere the pride or esteem of the people was hurt which led to such things in the past. Vote is a sacred right and people should give their votes to the candidate they feel will represent them better in Parliament," Bukhari told reporters.

Once a hunting ground for terrorists, the downtown Srinagar is witnessing a vibrant political revival.

The visit of Apni Party leaders comes a day after the National Conference vice president and former chief minister Omar Abdullah held

a massive rally in the neighbouring Hawal locality of the downtown.

The Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency goes to polls on May 13. Mir, National Conference leader Aga Ruhullah and PDP youth president Waheed Para are locked in a triangular contest for the prestigious seat.

Jamia Masjid has been seen as the epicentre of separatist politics in Kashmir since 1990. Stone-pelting on the security forces after Friday congregational prayers was a regular feature in the area for almost three decades.

However, after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, the mosque was locked down for a long period and the Hurriyat Conference chairman was not allowed to offer prayers there for more than four years.

Although the Mirwaiz was released from house arrest in September last year, the authorities sometimes disallow Friday prayers due to apprehensions of law and order problems.

'Mirwaiz A Victim

to Nowhatta, once a hotbed of militancy in Srinagar, claimed that the Mirwaiz family had been badly impacted by violence in one way or another since 1947.

"The Mirwaiz family demonstrated that violence may also have political overtones and not just about wielding a bamboo stick," he said.

Accompanied by the party's Srinagar Lok Sabha candidate Mohammad Ashraf Mir, the former minister said those preaching from the pulpit of historic Jamia Masjid could never propagate violence in any way.

Referring to late Mirwaiz Molvi Mohammad Yusuf Shah, the grandfather of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who went into exile in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir also referred to as 'Azad Kashmir', Bukhari said the late preacher was the glaring example of the violence inflicted upon the Mirwaiz family of Kashmir.

"Instead of encouraging violence, Mirwaiz Sahab has always enlightened people about Islamic principles. How on earth could a preacher from the pulpit of a grand mosque endorse violence," he added.

Bukhari also said those speaking truth have always been labeled as agents and traitors.

"I am here (in Nowhatta) because my party and I stood up for the truth, and anyone who speaks the truth is always branded as an agent or a traitor, just as I have been for the past four years," he added.

ECI Issues Show

Khajuria, cites a viral video from the May 1, this year rally wherein Mehbooba is purportedly seen involving a minor girl in her political campaign, soliciting votes for the PDP. The footage further allegedly captures PDP President encouraging the said minor post the conclusion of the public rally.

Khajuria, in the notice, has highlighted the Election Commission's guidelines explicitly prohibiting the utilization of minors in political campaigning by any political entity. Failure to provide a satisfactory response to the allegations could potentially lead to the initiation of legal proceedings, including the filing of an FIR against Mehbooba. Moreover, there is a looming prospect of imposing a ban on her campaigning activities in the ensuing days should she fail to adequately address the concerns raised by the Election Commission.

Both Mehbooba Mufti and the PDP have yet to issue a formal response to the allegations leveled against them by the Election Commission.(KNO)

Society's Development

impressive stride towards achieving the goal of equitable growth, he further added.

27th year OF PUBLICATION

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OR SCAN

CEO Urges Intensified SVEEP Activities For Maximum Voter Turnout

KO NEWS SERVICE

BUDGAM: Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), J&K, Pandurang K Pole, on Monday exhorted upon the officers for intensifying activities under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign encouraging enhanced electorate participation to achieve highest voter turnout in the district.

The CEO, while chairing a meeting held to review election arrangements being put in place during his extensive visit to Budgam, asked for ensuring high mobilization of people through ground level functionaries ensuring maximum participation of people in the Lok Sabha Polls.

The CEO chaired a review meeting to take stock of all election related preparations being made for smooth and successful conduct of general elections in the Srinagar and Baramulla



Parliamentary Constituencies to be held on May 13 and May 20 respectively. While reviewing overall arrangements he took stock of the status of creation of PwD, pink, green, youth and unique polling station facilities in different assembly constituencies of the district. He had a detailed assessment of arrangements being put in place for the polling staff and designated deployment, home voting and expenditure monitoring. While reviewing the

status of commissioning of EVMs and training of designated staff, the CEO emphasized comprehensive hands-on training aimed at familiarizing the poll staff with the operation and maintenance of EVMs. He also asked the AROs to ensure proper uploading of data on EMS.

The CEO directed for wide publicity of election related activities including SVEEP awareness activities for encouragement of the general public to vote and register highest voter

turnout in the district.

District Election Officer (DEO), Budgam, Akshay Labroo, through a Power-Point Presentation, presented the district profile and overall arrangements in place for free, fair and smooth conduct of elections in the district. He said that all ECI guidelines are being implemented in letter and spirit in the district and efforts are being made to ensure maximum participation of voters in the festival of democracy.

The DEO also briefed about the functioning of MCMC, deployment of SST, FST, VVT and teams, arrangements for senior citizens and PwDs voters in the district.

SSP Budgam, briefed about overall security arrangements being put in place for smooth conduct of elections in the district.

All AROs, Nodal Officers and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Admin aims to set up of 50 PLCs in J&K this year

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The J&K administration has targeted to establish 50 Panchayat Learning Centers (PLCs) in Jammu and Kashmir by the end of the current year.

As per news agency, last year, the government announced the setting up of Public Libraries and extending Library facilities to the Gram Panchayat level across the country.

To implement the project, the Government of India earmarked a whopping Rs 5000 crores for the year 2023-24 for upgrading infrastructure.

As per the officials, so far the work is going on 12 PLCs in Jammu and Kashmir and the government has targeted to establish 40 new PLCs this year.

"Secretary Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary last month reviewed the progress in the implementation of the project. While the work is going on at 12 Panchayat Learning centres in Jammu and

Kashmir so far, it was decided in the meeting to establish 40 more PLCs by the end of the year," an official said.

Officials said the government will simultaneously ensure the infrastructure in these PLCs to

enhance access to books and create spaces for community learning and engagement," they said.

Officials said facilities including digital learning infrastructure, study rooms and book banks will be established in these



ensure their functioning as soon as possible.

"The government is considering starting the PLC operation soon after the completion of the project. These are going to be the state-of-the-art libraries where books related to different subjects will be available. This move aims

to make them stop learning centres in rural Kashmir.

"The department endeavours to establish digital learning infrastructure, study rooms, book banks and resources targeting all the sections of rural population including students, aspirants of competitive

examinations, women and elderly people in the villages," they said.

Pertinently, during the recent meeting Secretary RDD outlined a comprehensive strategy to ensure that all selected PLCs are equipped with necessary facilities, leveraging funds allocated for E-Enablement and collaborating with the Information Technology (IT) department for CSCs (Common Service Centers) where necessary.

He encouraged innovation at the district level, empowering Additional Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) and Block Development Officer (BDO) officials to explore innovative solutions tailored to local needs.

The project is likely going to benefit the student community who face immense difficulties in absence of adequate libraries.

Currently, the majority of the schools in Jammu and Kashmir are without libraries. Of the 18,723 schools across Jammu and Kashmir, around 9925 schools are without library facilities—(KNO)

IG Reviews Poll Preparedness, Security Situation In South Kashmir



Agencies

SRINAGAR: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir V K Birdi visited South Kashmir covering districts of Shopian, Pulwama & PD Awantipora.

Accompanied by DIG SKR & other senior Police officers, IGP Kashmir interacted with the district police chiefs & reviewed poll preparedness taking a comprehensive stock of the security situation of the range, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency.

The discussions revolved around a range of wide issues like deployment of CAPFs, electoral arrangements at Polling booths, security of contesting candidates & Polling Day de-

ployment plans.

A series of meetings were held at Shopian, Pulwama and Awantipora which were attended by district police & CAPF officers. District SsPs briefed IGP Kashmir regarding the overall deployment plan including the arrangements made for CAPF coys.

IGP Kashmir emphasized the need for close coordination with all the security agencies and proactive measures to prevent any attempts of anti-national elements to ensure the safety and security of all stakeholders.

The visit concluded with a comprehensive review of the strategies and action plans devised to ensure peaceful conduct of elections—(KNO)

VDG's Killing: Security Forces Intensify Search Ops In Bhandarwah



Agencies

JAMMU: More forces have been rushed to the upper reaches of Marmat and Bhandarwah area of Doda district as the search operation to trace out a group of terrorists is continuing.

As per news agency, the operation is simultaneously going on in the upper reaches of Udhampur, Doda and Kathua districts as security forces are not letting any chance to let go of these terrorists.

Sources said that there are chances that a group of 6 to 9 terrorists, who had killed a Village Defence Guard (VDG) member in Basantgarh forests, might have entered the district Doda territory and they may try to cross to the other side of river Chenab before heading to-

wards Kashmir valley.

Talking to KNO, SSP Doda Javed Iqbal said that the search operation is going on in Udhampur district, the operation will continue in the upper reaches of Marmat and Bhandarwah as well.

"Sending force to the area is part of the operation and it will continue. It is a vast area and operation is ongoing," the SSP said.

When asked whether the terrorists have entered the territory of Doda district, he said, "It hasn't been corroborated."

Meanwhile, sources said that in Gorsi village Chirala area of Bhandarwah, a woman had seen a suspect moving in the village after which the police were informed. "It was also not corroborated," the SSP added—(KNO)

Amid AFSPA Rollback Reports, Omar Says Terrorism Still Present

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Amid the reports of the Union Government contemplating the revocation of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from Jammu and Kashmir, National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah cautioned on Monday that attacks continue to plague even the most tranquil regions of the erstwhile state. Omar's remarks come against the backdrop of recent incidents striking areas known for their relative peace in Pir Panchal region.

As per the news agency, addressing an election rally in north Kashmir, NC Vice President and party's LS candidate from Baramulla highlighted that over the past four years, terrorist strikes have not ceased, with incidents cropping up notably in Srinagar, Rajouri, and Poonch. The resurgence of violence in these traditionally serene locales according to Omar highlight the persistent challenge posed by



terrorism in the region.

Speaking on the prospect of diplomatic engagements between India and Pakistan, Omar voiced optimism, evoking the sentiment espoused by former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who famously remarked that while friends might change, neighbors remain constant. With a new government set to take the reins, Omar expressed hope that dialogue would pave the way for improved relations between the two nations.

In a broader reflection on the

socio-political climate in India, NC Vice President decried the rising tide of animosity and targeted persecution, particularly against the Muslim community. He cautioned against the pernicious effects of spreading hatred, emphasizing that such divisive rhetoric threatens the unity and progress of the nation. Omar further highlighted the significance of inclusivity and mutual respect in fostering a cohesive society, highlighting the pivotal role that India's diverse populace plays in its collective advancement—(KNO)

Cab Drivers Involved In Charging Exorbitant Rates To Be Booked: Govt

KO EWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Taking serious note of complaints by tourists regarding menace of overcharging by Taxi & Maxi Cab drivers, the Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri Monday admonished those vehicle owners involved in illegal and unethical practice of fleecing tourists by charging exorbitant rates.

While advising them to charge tourists as per the notified rates only, he stressed on adopting tourist friendly behaviour to promote tourism

which provides livelihood to lakhs of people.

Chairing a meeting in this regard, the Div Com directed authorities and police to de-register those vehicles whose drivers are found indulging in unethical practice and penalize them.

He said tourists are our guests, and service providers have a responsibility to foster hospitality.

He also directed concerned departments to take action against those who force tourists to switch vehicles while enroute to destinations causing inconvenience to them.

Div Com reiterated that all vehicles have been given access permission to Srinagar Airport so they can directly ferry tourists to tourist spots.

He directed the Tourism Department to publish notified rates on their website and install hoardings at all the prime locations.

The meeting was attended by DC Anantnag; DC Ganderbal; ADC, Baramulla; CEOs of Gulmarg, Sonmarg and Pahalgam Development Authorities, RTO Kashmir, besides SSPs of all three districts, SSP Traffic Rural and Officers of Tourism Department—(KNO)

J&K Bank mPay Delight Gets State -Of-The-Art Features

KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: In its commitment to enhance customer experience through digital transformation, J&K Bank today rolled out new value-added features to its flagship mobile banking app - mPay Delight+. The enhancements include mPay Lite, UPI Scan & Pay, Credit Card Management and Customer Survey to provide additional functionalities to customers, ensuring a more seamless and secure banking experience.

The Bank's MD & CEO Baldev Prakash formally launched the new features on Saturday at the Bank's corporate headquarters. Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, General Managers, DGMs, and other senior officers were present at the event, along with Divisional Heads and Zonal

Heads who joined via video conferencing from their respective locations.

Speaking on the occasion, MD & CEO highlighted the importance of innovation in customer service, stating, "It is another important milestone in our digital journey for which our teams deserve applause. Our goal is to innovate continually and improve our services to meet the evolving needs of our customers. The impactful feature like Scan & Pay is finally here and integrated seamlessly with the UPI platform. With these new features, we have made mobile banking even more accessible, convenient, and secure."

"Now, we need to popularize these features across our areas of operations so that more and more people become beneficiaries of our state-of-the-art digital



offerings", he added.

Stressing upon the significance of customer feedback, Baldev Prakash said, "Feedback is vital

in our pursuit of excellence. The customer survey feature allows us to understand our users' preferences and modify our services to align with their tastes accordingly. It's a win-win for both the Bank and our valued customers."

Earlier, General Manager Imtiaz Ahmad Bhat highlighted how the new features enhance customer convenience. He said, "The new features in the mPay Delight+ app underscore the Bank's commitment to customer-centric digital transformation, paving the way for more secure, efficient, and user-friendly mobile banking services. The latest updates to the mPay Delight+ app are designed to bring ease and efficiency in the functioning of our app for customers."

Making a brief presentation on the occasion, DGM Mohammad Muzaffar Wani gave an

overview of the newly added features. He said, "We are excited to provide these value-added services, reinforcing our commitment to customer satisfaction. The newly introduced mPay Lite is a simplified version of mPay Delight+ that offers a basic menu with key functions such as funds transfer, mini-statements, PIN changes, and deposit/loan account inquiries. Customers can also manage beneficiaries through this version."

"Notably, the UPI Scan & Pay feature allows users to scan and pay using any type of QR code. It also provides a hassle-free method for linking accounts with UPI, with no requirement for debit cards or Aadhaar OTP. Additionally, customers can send money to any virtual payment address (VPA) and review the status of

Fire Department Rebutts Claims Of Fire Tender Shortage

KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Directorate of Fire & Emergency Services, today countered the news item published in an Urdu daily about the deficiency of 100 fire tenders in Jammu and Kashmir.

A rebuttal issued here today by the department stated that the figures have wrongly been projected while carrying out the news item.

In this regard, the department has clarified that during last 6 years 486 deaths have not caused exclusively due to fire incidents. Out of these, only 82 deaths have been reported in fire incidents while the remaining 404 deaths have been reported in anti-terrorist operations/ encounters, vehicular and other accidents besides suicidal deaths in which Fire & Emergency Services attended

for search and rescue operations, added the department.

The document added that the department of Fire & Emergency Services is presently spread over 180 Fire & Emergency Stations where Fire Tenders and other fire fighting appliances and equipment are deployed/ commissioned as per the requirements/ norms laid down by SFAC, Union Ministry of Home Affairs, which promptly and efficiently responds to each and every fire call.

It is because of such effective, prompt, efficient response and continuous fire safety awareness programmes being conducted regularly since August, 2022 that the number of fire incidents decreased by 23% in 2023 as against the fire incidents in the corresponding year 2022 besides saving precious lives and public property worth crores, added the rebuttal.

Water Bodies Turning Into Dumping Sites In Tral

Agencies

PULWAMA: Almost all the water bodies in Tral Sub division of South Kashmir's Pulwama district have turned into the dumping sites while the authorities are unmoved, thereby leaving the locals especially the farmers to lurch at large.

Locals from the different areas of Tral informed the news agency that the water bodies have been dying due to uncivilized behaviour of the public and inaction of the authorities.

They said that these water bodies have been encroached since long besides that all dirt is being thrown into these water bodies putting their existence in dark.

Basharat Ahmad, a social activist from Tral said that water canals passing through the villages have turned into dump-

ing sites as heaps of polythene, plastic bottles and other dirt can be seen piled up.

He said that no measures are being taken in this regard to preserve the water bodies.

Junaid Ahmad, another local resident said non priority works are being taken up by the government while water bodies on which we are fully dependent are being neglected.

He said that these water bodies are shrinking with each passing day and there is immediate need of a restoration of these water bodies.

Locals claimed that they had informed concerned authorities several times but they failed to do anything substantial in this regard.

The heaps of garbage and stagnant water pose a threat of communicable disease, said Javid Ahmad, another resident.

T20 World Cup Under Security Shadow Amid Terror Threat

Press Trust of India

PORT OF SPAIN: The T20 World Cup, to be co-hosted by the USA and West Indies, has received a terror threat, Trinidad's Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley has revealed but asserted that "extra effort in national security preparations and response readiness" will be put in to neutralise the danger.

The tournament -- featuring 20 teams, including India -- is due to start on June 1. As of now, the threat, according to media reports, is specific to the West Indies, which aside from some preliminary matches, will be hosting the entire Super 8 stage along with the semi-finals and the final on June 29.

"Unfortunately, the threat of terrorism in its many and varied expressions is an ever-present danger in the world of the 21st century," Rowley was quoted as saying by 'Trinidad Daily Express' here. Rowley did not specifically name any organisation but reports here stated that the Islamic State



made the threat through its propaganda channel.

"It is against this backdrop that all nations, like our region, when hosting large or vulnerable gatherings, make

an extra effort in national security preparations and response readiness to take seriously, all threats, expressed or implied," he added.

Rowley said the event, which

is scattered across nine venues, six of them in the West Indies, will be closely monitored throughout its duration to ensure there is no security breach.

"Given the fact that bad actors can choose to misbehave in any way possible, it makes it virtually impossible to completely seal off all opportunities," he said.

"However, in order to ameliorate these dangers, we at the local and regional levels have remained alert to many threats and singularly or together have our intelligence and other security agencies working to protect the population in countries and at venues throughout the tournament," he added.

The World Cup matches in the West Indies will be held in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadine, Trinidad and Tobago. The US leg will feature games in Florida, New York and Texas.

New York will host the marquee India-Pakistan clash on June 9. Reacting to the development, Cricket West Indies said everything is being done to ensure foolproof security at the mega-event.

Inter-Departmental Cricket Tourney Begins At NIT Srinagar



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Director National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath inaugurated the Inter-Departmental Cricket Tournament (students) 2024. The event features 12 teams from different departments of the institute.

The inaugural function was presided over by Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, while Institute's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rahman was a Guest of Honour on the occasion.

Dr. Srinibash Mishra, SAS Coordinator, was also present at the inaugural ceremony. The tournament is being organised by the Department of Physical Education NIT Srinagar.

The opening match on Saturday was between the Staff & Faculty Team and IT Department. After a thrilling match, the Staff & Faculty Team won by 75 runs.

In his key speech, Director Nath commended the Physical Education Department for their consistent ef-

forts in organizing sporting events throughout the year. He pledged his complete support for future endeavors in this regard.

In his message, Institute's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rahman said that NIT Srinagar has developed state-of-the-art sports facilities on campus over the past several years and will continue to expand them.

There are 12 teams in the tournament, and it will be played in a mix of league matches and knockout rounds. Teams include CED, CSE, Chemical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, MME, ECE, IT, Mechanical Engineering, PhD "A", PhD "B", PG "A", PG "B".

The first match in Pool A was played between MME & Mechanical Engineering. That was won by 36 runs by MED. The second match in Pool "B" was played between Civil Engineering & CSE Department and it was won by CE by 63 runs.

On Tuesday, Electrical Engineering play PhD-B at the institute's main ground.

Inter-School Zonal Level Sports Activities Held In Ganderbal

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: Department of Youth Services and Sports Ganderbal, in line with its annual sports calendar, hosted Inter-School Zonal Level competitions across the district on Monday.

The main event was organised at MM Stadium Ganderbal, where Zone Ganderbal saw a spirited showdown in the discipline of football among boys under 14 years of age.

The event witnessed a remarkable turnout of enthusiastic students, as Vijay Memorial Educational Institute emerged triumphant.



Meanwhile, in Zone Hariganiwan, at BHSS Hariganiwan ground, another intense football competition unfolded among U-14 boys, as 81 students from various schools participated.

In addition to football, MS Batwina and MS Sehpora of Zone Tullamulla played host to a captivating display of athleticism, featuring jump rope and rope skipping and badminton events.

India's First 'Hybrid Pitch' Unveiled In Dharamsala

Press Trust of India

DHARAMSALA: India's first-ever 'hybrid pitch' was unveiled at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) stadium in a grand ceremony here on Monday.

The event was attended by IPL Chairman Arun Dhumal and cricket dignitaries including Paul Taylor, a former England cricketer and SIS's international cricket director.

"The introduction of hybrid pitches is set to revolutionize cricket in India, following their success in iconic venues like Lord's and The Oval in England," said Dhumal, who hails from Himachal Pradesh.

The hybrid pitch, which com-

bines natural turf with synthetic fibres, promises enhanced durability and consistent playability, reducing the strain on ground staff and maintaining quality playing conditions.

With only 5% synthetic fibres, the pitch ensures that the natural characteristics essential for cricket are preserved. Taylor expressed gratitude towards the HPCA for their collaboration on this pioneering project.

"With the ICC's approval, we're excited to see the positive impact these pitches will have on the sport, starting with installations in Mumbai and Ahmedabad next," he said.

The 'Universal Machine', a critical component in installing

the hybrid surface, was developed by SISGrass in 2017 and has been instrumental in the rollout of similar pitches across England's county cricket grounds.

This innovation aligns with the ICC's recent sanctioning of hybrid pitches for T20 and one-day international matches, with plans to expand their use in four-day county championships starting this year.

The integration of technologies like SISAir, a root aeration system, further underscores the commitment to enhancing cricket infrastructure in India.

This system improves the pitch's health and resilience, benefiting players with better and safer playing conditions.

Short TAKES

India Women Crush Bangladesh By 56 Runs, Clinch Series 4-0



India continued their dominant run against Bangladesh with a 56-run win via Duckworth-Lewis method in the rain curtailed fourth women's T20 here on Monday.

A late start and then over an hour-long delay due to persistent rain and hail meant that the contest had to be shortened. Harmanpreet Kaur (38) and Richa Ghosh (24) shared a 44-run stand to help India post 122 for 6 against Bangladesh after persistent rain reduced the contest to 14 overs a side.

ICC Shortlists Afridi, Erasmus, Waseem For POTM Nominees

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday announced that they have shortlisted three outstanding players Pakistan's star pacer Shaheen Afridi, Namibia skipper Gerhard Erasmus and UAE batter Muhammad Waseem for Men's Player of the Month nominees for April 2024.

"A trio of stars from Namibia, UAE and Pakistan have been nominated for the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for April 2024," ICC stated in an official statement.

Amir's Visa Delay Raises Doubts Over Ireland T20 Series Participation

Pakistan pacer Muhammad Amir may not be able to leave with the national squad on Tuesday morning for the three-match T20 series in Ireland due to visa issues.

While a source in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said the visa delay in Amir's case was due to his involvement in the 2010 spot-fixing scandal, another source insisted it was purely due to technical reasons.

Pakistan's first T20 international against Ireland is on May 10.

155 Police Officers Injured By Tear Gas At German Football Match

Some 155 police officers were injured in fighting involving Dynamo Berlin and Energie Cottbus fans over the weekend -- most of them from the use of tear gas.

Berlin police said 116 officers suffered injuries from tear-gas use, 28 from assaults and 11 after being hit by pyrotechnics fired by supporters after the fourth-division match at Dynamo's ground. Both clubs are known for having a far-right element among their fans.

"I absolutely condemn it," Berlin's senator for sport, Iris Spranger, said Monday.

Premier League Referee To Wear Camera For First Time

Referee Jarrod Gillett will wear a camera for the first time in Premier League history during Monday's fixture between Crystal Palace and Manchester United as part of filming for a one-off programme promoting match officials, the league said on Monday.

Last year, the Football Association announced it will trial body cameras on referees in grassroots leagues in England in a bid to ascertain whether the technology could help "improve participant behaviour and respect towards referees".

Arsenal Needs A Favor From Tottenham In The 2023-24 PL Title Race

Associated Press

LONDON: Four straight losses. The team's worst run of results for 20 years. Two clean sheets since the end of October.

Those looking at Tottenham to provide a late twist in the Premier League title race are, given the current evidence, going to be disappointed.

Manchester City's May 14 trip to the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, for its next-to-last game of the season, appeared to many the last possible stumbling block for the champions in their bid to reel in Arsenal and secure an unprecedented fourth straight title.

After all, not only have Spurs plenty to play for -- they're still just about fighting for Champions League qualification -- but they haven't lost, or even conceded a goal, against City in their four league meetings at Tottenham's new stadium since it opened in 2019.

Arsenal, though, is surely losing hope of a favor from its north London neighbor.

Similarly, Tottenham fans might be starting to lose hope that Ange Postecoglou is the



man to bring a winning culture to the club without a trophy since 2008.

It all started so well for the first-ever Australian to coach in the Premier League.

Tottenham was top of the league in early November, unbeaten and playing the

kind of attacking football its supporters always crave. No manager had ever taken

26 points from his first 10 games in the Premier League before Postecoglou came along with a high defensive line and an aggressive, front-foot style.

Postecoglou, it seemed, was the perfect antidote to Jose Mourinho and Antonio Conte, pragmatic and defense-first coaches whose spells in charge of Tottenham promised so much but ended so sourly.

Fast-forward six months and it feels like the season cannot end soon enough for Spurs, who are limping to the finish line, and Postecoglou, who is beginning to understand the size of the task he took on almost a year ago.

"We need change. Change has to happen," Postecoglou said ahead of Tottenham's 4-2 loss at Liverpool on Sunday. It was a fourth defeat in a row, something that hasn't happened since those grim final days of Jacques Santini at Spurs in late 2004.

Over the past month there has been a 4-0 loss at Newcastle, a 3-2 home loss to Arsenal when Tottenham was three goals behind at halftime, a 2-0

loss at Chelsea and then the defeat at Anfield that saw a lethargic-looking Spurs fall 4-0 down after 59 minutes.

And this is the team Arsenal hopes can halt the City juggernaut next week?

Tottenham should still seal fifth place, and qualification for the Europa League, because either side of the visit of City are matches against Burnley and already-relegated Sheffield United -- the bottom two teams in the league.

Spurs are seven points behind fourth-place Aston Villa and four ahead of sixth-place Newcastle.

It raises the question of whether the first season under Postecoglou has been a success.

Whether Postecoglou will bring more balance to his managerial philosophy next year remains to be seen. For the moment, Arsenal will just be praying that Tottenham -- the team it wants to see lose any normal week of the season -- can pull off an improbable victory over City to change the course of the title race ahead of the final round on May 19.