

Kashmir Valley To Breathe Easy, Light Rain Expected

No Heatwave For Next 9 Days



Agencies

Srinagar: With no rains in sight, the Kashmir Valley is all set to breathe a sigh of relief as the weatherman here has predicted no heat wave for the next nine days.

The maximum temperature continued to settle above normal across Kashmir on Friday with Srinagar recording 28.0 degree Celsius while Jammu areas continued to witness the intense heat wave conditions.

Amidst the forecast of light rainfall till June 02, almost all the stations across Kashmir recorded above normal temperature today.

As per the local Meteorological department (MeT), Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, has recorded a maximum temperature of 28.0 degree Celsius.

Qazigund, a gate way of Kashmir, was however the hottest in the Valley today at 28.6 degree Celsius while Kokernag recorded a maximum temperature of 28.0 degree Celsius.

In Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination, the

mercury settled at 24.6 degree Celsius while Kupwara and Gulmarg, a famous ski-resort recorded a maximum temperature of 27.4 degree Celsius and 18.0 degree Celsius respectively.

Jammu, the winter capital of the Union Territory has recorded a maximum temperature of 43.7 degree Celsius while Banihal recorded 27.8 degree Celsius.

Batote, Katra and Bhaderwah however, recorded a maximum temperature of 30.9 degree Celsius, 38.9 degree Celsius and 33.2 degree Celsius respectively.

Meanwhile, Director MeT, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the weather would remain partly to generally cloudy for the next two days with possibility of light rain, thunder at isolated places with gusty winds at few places.

He further stated that the weather would remain generally dry on June 03 and June 04, adding that generally cloudy with possibility of intermittent light to moderate rain and thunder is expected at many places with gusty winds at few places from June 05-07 | [More on P6](#)



A farmer meticulously harvests ripe cherries on the outskirts of Srinagar. KO Photo | Abid Bhat

Last Phase Of LS Polls Today, PM Modi In Fray

Press Trust Of India

Chandigarh: Fifty-seven seats across seven states and the Union territory of Chandigarh will go to polls in the seventh and final phase of Lok Sabha elections on Saturday that include Varanasi, from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a third consecutive term.

Polling is scheduled in all 13 seats of Punjab and four of Himachal Pradesh, 13 constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, nine in West Bengal, eight in Bihar, six in Odisha and three seats in Jharkhand besides Chandigarh. Polling for the remaining 42 assembly constituencies of Odisha and bypolls to six assembly seats



in Himachal Pradesh will also take place simultaneously.

Other prominent candidates among the total 904 contestants in fray are Union minister Anurag Thakur, Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee, Lalu Prasad's daughter Misa Bharti and actor Kangana Ranaut. | [More on P6](#)

Exit Polls After 6:30 PM Today

As the Lok Sabha polls are set to conclude today evening, various media organisations will declare the results of exit polls conducted after 6:30 pm on Saturday. The poll body had put an embargo on the publication of exit polls from April 19, 2024 (7 am) till June 1 (6:30 pm).

The election campaign of Lok Sabha polls ended on Thursday with the stage set for the seventh and final phase of polls on Saturday on 57 seats across seven states and a Union Territory. A total of 904 candidates are | [More on P6](#)

OTHER PROMINENT CANDIDATES among the total 904 contestants in fray are Union minister Anurag Thakur, Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee, Lalu Prasad's daughter Misa Bharti and actor Kangana Ranaut.

HOAX BOMB THREAT

Srinagar Airport Ops Halted For An Hour

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Flight operations at the Srinagar International Airport had to be halted for an hour on Friday after a bomb threat as the authorities took preventive measures, officials said.

The Air Traffic Control (ATC)

at the Srinagar Airport received a bomb threat on an Air Vistara flight from New Delhi, prompting a response from the authorities, including the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which is responsible for the security at the airport, the officials said. | [More on P6](#)



SRINAGAR RING ROAD CONSTRUCTION

NGT Notice To NHAI Over 'Flooding' Of Apple Orchards

Auqib Javed

Srinagar: The National Green Tribunal, New Delhi has issued a notice to National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) following a complaint about flooding of apple orchards caused by the construction of the Srinagar Ring Road through Village Wathoor, Tehsil Chadoora, in District Budgam, Jammu & Kashmir.

The complaint has been filed by Bashir Ahmed Bhat, a resident of Budgam through Advocate Saurabh Sharma & Advocate Bijay Kumar. The work on the Srinagar



Ring Road project, part of the Prime Minister's Development Project (PMDP) for Jammu & Kashmir, began in 2018 in both Jammu and Kashmir.

Over 590 acres of agricultural land has been acquired

JAMMU BUS ACCIDENT

6 RTC Officials Suspended

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Six transport department officials in Jammu and Kashmir were suspended for alleged dereliction of duty on Friday, a day after 22 people were killed and 64 injured in a bus accident in Jammu district.

The tragic incident occurred on Thursday, when the bus carrying 86 devotees from Haryana's Kurukshetra and heading towards the Shiv Khori shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district skidded off the Jammu-Poonch highway and plunged into a 150-foot gorge. The driver lost control of the vehicle while negotiating a blind curve at the Tungi morh in the Chowki Chora area.

Transport department Secretary Niraj Kumar ordered the suspensions and a probe after a high-level meeting was chaired by Principal Secretary of the Home department Chandraker Bharti.

"Pending enquiry into the conduct and | [More on P6](#)

People Of Kashmir Not Bad, There Is A Need To Hold Them: PM

Agencies

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in an interview with National Television on Friday, said that People of Kashmir are not bad but there is need to hold them.

Addressing occasional incidents like bomb blasts, he noted that these events receive media attention and do not accurately reflect the overall situation in Kashmir.

"There is a need to hold Kashmiris. A single bomb blast makes news, but people don't know the actual reality," Modi said.

PM Modi expressed happiness over the significant voter turnout in the Kashmir Valley during the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, highlighting the confidence Kashmiris have shown in the Indian constitution. Despite the BJP not fielding any candidates from the Kashmir Valley, the region recorded around 60 percent

voter turnout.

"Kashmiris voted for Kashmir and the country," Modi said.

"I am happy to see people of Kashmir have voted for Kashmir and the country. Such a huge voter turnout in Kashmir reflects that people of the region have pinned confidence in the Indian constitution."

Hailing Kashmiris for their rejoining mainstream, PM Modi said, "Today you can see the tricolor at top in Srinagar's Lal Chowk," he said.

He praised Kashmiris for rejoining the mainstream and said it has been a long journey to make this dream come true. "I used to go to the Kashmir valley in the past when there was uncertainty. Today people overwhelmingly embrace tricolor which reflects their trust on the country, democracy and constitution," PM Modi added.

He also shared an example of a girl who previously participated in | [More on P6](#)

Mirwaiz Urges Dialogue, Leniency On Prisoners

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Friday expressed hope that the government would rethink its policy on the release of political prisoners by adopting a "humane approach" and showing some leniency.

Farooq was allowed to offer Friday congregational prayers at the historic Jamia Masjid here after four weeks.

Speaking to reporters after the prayers, Mirwaiz said he expects the "new government" at the Centre to understand the situation in the valley and take such initiatives which would help in establishing sustained peace.

"The Hurriyat Conference has always said the resolution will come through dialogue, and we have suffered for that also," he said.

He alleged several youths and political prisoners from Jammu and Kashmir were still in jail.

"The process of verification for jobs and passports has also been complicated and I think the government needs to show some leniency on these aspects," he said, adding "we expect the government will change its policy, show some leniency and move forward with a humane and realistic approach".

Mirwaiz said if New Delhi will move one step ahead, he will come forward two steps for peaceful resolution of issues. He was talking to media persons at Jamia Masjid Srinagar after attending Friday congregational prayers.

He said that it is unfortunate that the government keeps him under house arrest without serving any legal notice.

"I don't know why the government keeps me under house arrest without producing any legal note. It is unfortunate. I am hoping this policy should end and I should be allowed to move freely and | [More on P6](#)

32% Men, 1% Women Consume Tobacco In J&K: NHFS-5 Data

Agencies

Srinagar: Approximately 32 percent of men and one percent of women in Jammu and Kashmir consume tobacco, with cigarettes being the predominant product, according to the National Family Health Survey (NHFS-5).

Official data obtained indicates that only 1 percent of women aged 15-49 use some form of tobacco. Among men, the most commonly used tobacco products are cigarettes (27%), bidis (4%), hookah, and cigars or pipes (2% each).

The use of any form of tobacco is slightly higher in rural areas (1.4% for women and 35% for men) than in urban areas (0.7% for women and 24% for men). Over one-third (35%) of men

who smoke cigarettes reported smoking 5 to 9 cigarettes in the past 24 hours.

The data further reveals that around 0.2 percent of women in urban areas and 0.5 percent in rural areas use cigarettes, while 21.1 percent of men in urban areas and 28.7 percent in rural areas smoke cigarettes. It added that 0.1 percent of women and 4 percent of men smoke bidis, 0.1 percent of women and 2.2 percent of men smoke cigars or pipes, and 0.7 percent of women and 2.4 percent of men smoke hookah.

Cigarette consumption patterns show that 27 percent of smokers use 5 or fewer cigarettes per day, 34.7 percent use 5-9 cigarettes, 29.9 percent use 10-14 cigarettes, 6 percent use 15-24 cigarettes, and 0.3 percent use 25

J&K Ranks 6th In India In Tobacco Use

Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory has been identified as having the 6th highest prevalence of tobacco use in the country, with over 20 percent of the population engaging in tobacco consumption, according to officials. Dr Mir Mushtaq, State Nodal Officer (Kashmir Division) for the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), said that

HOSPITAL-BASED DATA FROM KASHMIR reveals a higher incidence of lung cancer among males, directly correlated to the duration and frequency of smoking."

or more cigarettes in 24 hours.

A survey conducted by the Department of Community Medicine at Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar around a year ago revealed that approximately 23 percent of school-going

adolescents in Srinagar are smokers. The survey found that 29 percent of adolescent boys were ever smokers, and 23 percent were current smokers.

More than half (60.8%) of adolescents were exposed to tobacco

smoke in public places. Factors associated with current cigarette smoking among adolescents included parental smoking, peer smoking, exposure to movies with actors smoking, lack of anti-smoking media messages,

- » Rural vs. Urban Divide
- » Cigarette Most Common Tobacco Product
- » School-Going Adolescents at Risk
- » Parental And Peer Smoking
- » Media Exposure
- » Lack Of Anti-smoking Education

and not discussing the dangers of smoking in class.

The survey indicated that 29 percent of adolescents had smoked at least one puff, and 23 percent were current smokers. Among respondents, 15.1

percent usually smoked 2-5 cigarettes on the days they smoked, and the majority (14.8%) bought their cigarettes from shops. Furthermore, 16.1 percent of current smokers spent more than 1,000 rupees on cigarettes in the month preceding the survey.

Overall, 19.6 percent of adolescents believed that boys who smoke cigarettes have more friends, and 31.4 percent thought that boys who smoke are more attractive. Nearly all surveyed adolescents (94.6%) believed that cigarette smoking is harmful to health, but only 18.6 percent discussed the harmful effects with family or friends. The majority (82.8%) believed that once someone starts smoking, it is difficult to quit. Among current



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2

Curious Kids: Why Can Some Plastics Be Recycled But Others Can't?

The Conversation

Q. Why can some plastics be recycled but others can't? Jessica, age ten, Sydney

A. Great question Jessica! We use lots of plastic in Australia and it's frustrating to find out how little is recycled.

I work at a university with a team trying to find new ways for people to use less plastic, recycle more and not waste anything. So this is a question I think about a lot.

Basically, some plastics can be recycled because they are easy to melt down and make into other products. Others can't be, or they contain extra ingredients that make them hard to recycle, such as dyes or chemicals that stop them catching fire.

But even if you could recycle the plastic, then you have a whole new problem: you have to find someone who will buy the recycled material to make new products.

There are many different types of plastic. Have you ever wondered why the plas-

tic used to make soft drink bottles looks and feels so different to the plastic used for other types of containers such as yoghurt tubs, lunch boxes or even plastic bags?

It turns out there's more than one type of plastic. We classify plastic into seven main types. But there are many more when you consider all the mixtures and new or unusual varieties.

The raw material is almost always fossil fuels (oil or gas). Although these days, people can also make plastic from plants such as corn.

Either way, plastic is synthetic, which means it's not natural. Long chains of molecules are stitched together to make polymers (from the Greek poly, meaning many, and mer, meaning parts). Different polymers make different types of plastic.

Some polymers are easier to recycle because they can be melted down and reshaped into new products. This includes number one on our list of seven main types:

polyethylene terephthalate, found in soft drink bottles.

It also includes type number two, the high-density polyethylene in some milk bottles, and number five, polypropylene, which makes things like yoghurt containers.

Other plastics such as type number three, polyvinyl chloride, found in plumbing pipes, and number six, polystyrene such as Styrofoam, are much harder to recycle. That's mainly because they tend to contain lots of extra ingredients, which makes melting and recycling difficult.

These extra ingredients can include dyes to make the plastic brightly coloured, or chemicals to stop the plastic catching fire. But these extra ingredients can make it harder for the plastic to be recycled.

Did you know almost 300 billion plastic coffee cups have made their way to rubbish dumps around the world? These cups were not recycled, because they were made from a mixture of paper lined with plastic.

It's hard to separate the plastic from the other materials. This makes it difficult to recycle them. But we can choose to use reusable or compostable coffee cups instead.

Plastic can also be too dirty to recycle. That's why you should always rinse plastics before putting them in the recycling bin.

Here's a little tip. Check the label on plastic bottles, containers and packaging for the symbol that looks like a triangle made of arrows, with a number in the middle. Read the table below to see what the numbers mean and whether it's worth putting that plastic in your recycling bin or not.

Just because there's a logo on it doesn't mean it can be recycled. It depends on the recycling services that are available near where you live.

Look up your local council's website to see what facilities they have for plastic recycling. If it's not clear, you could ask your council to explain what they can and can't recycle.

Rapid Digitalisation Of Agriculture Sector Increasing Cybersecurity Risks: Report

IANs

While the adoption of robotics, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT) in the agriculture sector is helping fight labour shortages and climate change, it is also raising the risk of cyberattacks, according to a report on Friday.

The report by GlobalData, a data and analytics company, showed that food suppliers and distributors are facing a greater number of ransomware attacks, causing delays in produce shipments.

The report forecasts that the cybersecurity industry will be worth \$290 billion by 2027, registering a compound annual growth rate of 13 per cent between 2022 and 2027.

"The industry is increasingly adopting technological solutions to support shrinking workforces and improve productivity. However, these technologies come with security risks that are

agriculture sector, the sector's future growth and its workforce will be augmented by technologies. While remotely accessible robots will be key in assisting existing employees, it will pave the way for new data breaches and cyberattacks.



The agricultural supply chain is vast and sprawling, from processing and harvesting to distribution and cybersecurity will be crucial across all stages.

often overlooked," said Holly Anness-Bradshaw, Associate Thematic Intelligence Analyst at GlobalData.

Although cybersecurity is a growing concern in the

in cybersecurity measures across all stages of the agricultural supply chain", as cyberattacks "could lead to food shortages, increased prices, and spoilage".

Government Of Jammu And Kashmir Office Of The General Managaer District Industries Centre Srinagar

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

M/S Unique Fabricators I/E Zainakote Srinagar formally registered with this office under No.01/03/07067/PMT/MSME dated, 28-02-2023 for the activity of "roof Trusses, MS Pumps, Bends, Irrigation Gates, Moulding and Lathe Works, Pin Link/Drop outset, Knives, Switches, Clamps and Isolators" as proprietorship concern of Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ahanger S/O Ghulam Nabi Ahanger R/O Khushipora, HMT, Srinagar. Now the promoter of the unit intends to change of constitution by way of induction of Mr. Umar Farooq Kak S/O Farooq Ahmad Kak R/O Tengpora as partner. Any person having any objection to the above proposed change in favour of the Lnit shall report to General Manager DIC Srinagar within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice.

General Manager
District Industries Centre Srinagar

DIPK-756/24
dated: 31-05-2024

Office Of The State Drugs Controller Drugs And Food Control Organization Jammu & Kashmir

DRUG ALERT STOP USE NOTICE

Following Drug Sample as per below details lifted by the Drugs Control Officer of this U.T under the Provisions of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules, 1945 has been declared to be "Not of Standard Quality" by Government Analyst, Drug Testing Laboratory Srinagar :

S. No.	Name of the Drug	Manufacturer	Sample Lifted By	Batch No. / Mfg. Dt & Exp.Dt	Test Report No. & Date	Reasons
1	Libropep-10 Tablets	Bril Lifesciences Sainwala . Kuala Wala Bhoad Road , Kala Amb , Distt. Sirmour (H.P) -173030	DCO Sopore/ Rafiabab	BLT-231113 M/D: 11/2023 E/D: 10/2025	L/D A/2024- 25/510 Dated: 29.05.2024	The contents of Nortriptyline in the sample are found to be less (viz 0.1028 mg) than the claim made (viz 10 mg) * 1.028% of claim

The public in general and the Stake Holders in particular are informed through the medium of this notice to discontinue usage / stop sale of the above Drug. Further all the stake holders who are in possession of any stock of said Drug shall inform the local Drug Control Authorities along with procurement details to help the Department achieve effective Product Recall.

This Public Notice is issued as an abundant precaution / prudent measure & is without prejudice to the right of the Manufacturer to get the Sample reanalyzed from the Appellate Laboratory in accordance with provisions of Rule 25 (3) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

Sd/
(Lotika Khajuria)
State Drugs Controller Drugs and Food Control Organization
(Srinagar)

No.: DFO/D-T/2050/866-869
DIPK-764/24
Dated:31-05-2024

JKB Financial Services
Investments Beyond Banking

Corporate Office Main Road Jawharnagar Srinagar J&K - 190008
Cell: 9697948849

AUCTION NOTICE

JKB Financial Services invites all interested parties to participate in public auction for sale of below mentioned items:

S.No	Particulars Of Assets	Condition	No.s	Reserved Price	Location
1	Diesel Heating Along with Exhaust	Functional	1	15000.00	University Campus, Hazratbal Srinagar (J&K).

S.No	Asset Type	Condition	Number	Reserved Price	Location
2	Wall Radiator	Functional	7	175000.00	Depository Services 1st Floor, Sana Complex, Near Court Road, Pulwama (J&K).

The above items will be available for inspection from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm on 3rd and 4th June on above mentioned locations.
Please note the items will be sold on "as is "where is" basis with no guarantee/warranty expressed or implied as to the condition of items.Intrested parties shall submit there initial bids on above reserved price in sealed covers at our office address given above upto **6th June 2024 5.00pm**.
Bidders shall be invited to bid opening event to be held on **10th June 2024** at above office address. The winning bidder shall have to deposit the entire bid amount in advance on the date of auction. There shall be no refund of bid amount deposited.
The items shall have to be moved by the winning bidder from the location by **11th June 2024**. JKBFSL reserves the right to accept or reject any bid or cancel the auction event at any stage.

DIPK-NB-266/24
dated: 31-05-2024

Establishment
JKBFSL

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Office Of The Seed Pathologist

Agriculture production & Farmer's Welfare

Department, Lal Mandi Srinagar

Crop Health Advisory for the month of June 2024

S. No.	Crop	Disease Problem	Pathological Advisory
1.	Paddy	Blast, Brown Spot	Before transplantation, dip the seedling roots in any one of the following fungicidal suspension for 10-20 minutes: a. Tricyclazole 75WP @ 60g/100 ltr water. b. Ediphenphos 50 EC @ 100 ml/100 liter of water. c. Hexaconazole 5EC @ of 5ml per 10 litres of water
2.	Maize	Cut worm	For any cut worm damage of the germinated plants Spray the crop with Quinalphos 20 EC @ 1ml/litre of water.
3.	Tomato, Chillies, Brinjal	Wilt/Root Rot	Drench the infected plants with Carbendazim 50WP@1gm/litre of water on the appearance of first & early symptoms.
		Aphid Infestation	Spray the crop with Malathion 50 EC@ 1ml/litre of water.
4.	Potato	a) Early blight	Prune and stake plants properly to improve air circulation. Spray the crop with any of the following fungicides: a) Zineb 75 WP @ 3 gms per litre of water or b) Mancozeb 75 WP @ 3 gms per litre of water or c) Hexaconazole 5EC @ of 5ml per 10 litres of water. Repeat the spray after 10-20 days if need arises.
		b) Late blight	Ensure proper Phytosanitary measures. On the appearance of first symptoms of the disease, spray the crop with Metalaxyl MZ 72 WP @ 2.5 gms per litre of water or Mancozeb 75 WP @ 3 gms per litre of water or Copper oxychloride 50 WP @ 3 gms per litre of water at an interval of 12-15 days.
5.	Cucurbitaceous crops (Bottle gourd, Cucumber, Bitter gourd)	a) Angular leaf spot	Avoid cultivating, harvesting, or otherwise handling plants when they are wet. Limit the use of overhead irrigation and excessive levels of nitrogen fertilization. Spray Streptocycline @ 2-4 gms per 10 litres of water. Repeat spraying after an interval of 7-10 days when need arises.
		b) Alternaria leaf spot	Ensure proper field sanitation. Spray the crop with Mancozeb 75 WP @ 3 gms per litre of water or Hexaconazole 5EC @ 5 ml per 10 litres of water and repeat at an interval of 8-10 days if need arises.
		c) Downy Mildew	Ensure proper field sanitation. Spray the crop post infection with Metalaxyl MZ 75 WP @ 2.5 gms per litre of water or Mancozeb 75 WP @ 3 gms per litre of Water at an interval of 10-15 days if need arises.
		d) Powdery Mildew	Spray the crop with Hexaconazole 5 EC @ 5 ml per 10 litres of water or Flusilazole 40 EC 2 ml per 10 litres of water at an interval of 10-15 days if need arises.
6.	Leguminous Vegetables (French Beans, Garden Pea)	Angular Leaf Spot/ Anthracnose/ Root Rot/Ascochyta Blight/Powdery Mildew/Rust/Leaf Mosaic	I. Remove lower old yellow leaves . II. Fungicide spray with Flusilazole 40 EC (0.02%) or Difenconazole 25 EC 0.03 %.

Sd/=
Seed Pathologist Kashmir,
Department of Agriculture Kashmir

DIPK-760/24 dated: 31-05-2024

THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION, NEW CAMPUS, BEMINA SRINAGAR

ATTENTION PLEASE

The candidate whose photograph is above reports that she has lost her qualification certificate/s have the following description:
Roll No: **860292**, Class: **10th**, Year & Session: **October 1997**, Registration No: **S-96-39827-8108**, Name: **Sheikh Sham Sun Nisa**, Father's Name: **Sheikh Ghulam Hussain**, Mother's Name: **Hal-eema Akther**, Date of Birth: **13-03-1982**, Residence: **Bemina**.

Now the candidate has applied for issuance of Duplicate Qualification Certificate.
Before the case will be processed under rules, if somebody have any kind of objection in this regard he/she shall approach the office of the undersigned with 07 days from the date of publishing of this notice after expiring date no objection shall be entertained.
Besides, the lost "Qualification Certificate", bearing Serial No/s 756751s/are be treated as "Cancelled".

Sd/=
Assistant Secretary,
Certificates, KD

inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost RC of my Scooty bearing Registration No. JK01V 5360. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same. In this regard if any body is having any objection may convey to RTO Kashmir within a period of seven days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Ghulam Nabi Wani
S/o Ghulam Qadir Wani
R/o Ikhrajorapora
A/p: Natipora Pamposh colony.

abbas

The Jammu & Kashmir Board Of School Education New Campus Bemina Srinagar

ATTENTION PLEASE

The Candidates whose photograph is Published in this notice is claiming to have lost her 10 th Class Qualification /Diploma Certificate of Secondary School Examination issued by BOSE with the following particulars

Name :-Nazir Ahmad Dar
Parentage:-Ab Ganie Dar
Mothers Name:-
Residence:- Tulwarie .Langate .Distt. KUPWARA
Roll No 10 th Class:-560375.
Session:- April.May 1991.
Certificate Serial No :- 152086
D O B:- 02.03.1967 Result Qualified Class 10th
Marks :- 375/ 800.
Now the candidate has applied for issuance of duplicate Qualification /Diploma Certificate before the same is processed and issued in the candidate anybody having any objection in this regard may file the same before the Asstant Secretary, BOSE or undersigned within 07 days from the date of issue of this notice. Besides, the above referred Qualification / Diploma certificate bearing serial no :-152086 .are be treated as cancelled,
No:-F(Certs-I-D0C)B/KD/24

SD/=
Asstant Secretary
Certificates. KD

fko

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written in my school records as Bisma Majeed D/O Abdul Majeed Shkikh while my correct name is Bisma Majeed D/o Abdul Majeed Shkikh Gojar which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Headmaster Govt Boys Middle School Nowgam within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Bisma Majeed
D/o Abdul Majeed Shkikh
R/o Nowgam Khag

bmg

اڙتيايت ٻڌايان

عنوان :- درخواست خجانب
اڙتيايت OBC سرٿيڪيٽ جيڪن طارن جي احمد تيلي ولد محمد يوسف تيلي و ماڻه يوسف دست محمد يوسف تيلي ساڪند موجب سلطان پوره خصيل ٻڌايان

اشتهار برخصا وعام

معامله مندرجہ عنوان الصدد میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بغرض OBC سرٿيڪيٽ بزمہ تيلي پٽن کي ہے جو کڙ ڪراواڻي ہے اس بارے میں پٽواري حلقه سے رپورٽ طلب ڪي گئي ہے جس سے عياني ہے کڙ ساڪن واقعي تيلي ذات سے تعلق رکھتا ہے اور ساڪن سلطان پوره خصيل ٻڌايان میں رهائش پذير ہے اور کيچي جي ترڪ ڪوٽ نبي کي ہے ساڪن کان بڌيل انفرادي پر مشتمل ہے محمد يوسف تيلي سربزه 64 سال عمر سیده جانت بگم زوجه 62 سال -- طارن احمد تيلي پسر 37 سال سرڪاري ملازم مارف يوسف دختر 22 سال ذريعي غلظت جان پٽي 01 سال شيرخوار

سائل مذکور OBC سرٿيڪيٽ حاصل ڪرڻ ڪا خواہ ہے اور کي کڙ ميوارہ آمدني 6800 روپيه بگ ہے سرٿيڪيٽ ذريعي اجزاء ڪرڻ ۽ نبي اگر ڪار کي شخص کي کوئي عزريا عيوض ٻيو وجهه مشتمل اخبار سارسات دن ڪڙ اندر اندر آسپه عذرياض و دالست حد اڪو فني اوقات ڪڙ دوران پٽن ڪريں بعد گڙي ميوارو کي عذرياض قابل قبول نبيں بگا

نائب خصيلدار
FKO_r



Sacked Official Caught Impersonating Labor Officer

Dept Initiates Legal Action Against Conman

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Sacked from services for his corrupt practices, a former Labor Department official was caught tricking the gullible shopkeepers once more by posing as a labor officer to seek illegal gratifications from them.

The sacked official, identified by the Labor Department authorities as Shameem Ahmad Bazaz, was caught on CCTV posing as a labor officer in order to seek monetary benefits from naive shopkeepers.

Officials said Bazaz was sacked from services for his corrupt practices earlier and that the department has again initiated legal action against him for duping shopkeepers.

The Labor Department has issued an alert to all businesses warning them about his illicit activities and advising them

not to fall for his ruse.

"We implore every business entity in Kashmir to avoid being duped and to resist falling for his imitation," the department said, adding the department offers all services online, and anybody requesting payment for any service should report them immediately to the ACB, CBI, or Crime Branch.

An official told Kashmir Observer that the accused person was involved in corrupt practices, prompting the government to sack him from services right away.

"The department will look into the accused's activities after reviewing the CCTV evidence, making sure the appropriate legal actions are taken against him as at the earliest. In the meantime, we appeal to the people to refrain from falling for con artists posing as officers in order to save their hard-earned money," he added.

Educationists' Role Essential To Achieve Tobacco Free Society: Justice Tashi

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Commemorating the World No Tobacco Day, the J&K Legal Services Authority in collaboration with Crescent Public School, Naseem Bagh, Srinagar, Bilaliya



Educational Institute, Srinagar, Nageen Lake Conservation organization, Kashmir Concern, Agri Industries Vikas Chamber and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, organized an awareness programme on "World No Tobacco Day".

The event, held at the main Auditorium of Crescent Public School, Naseem Bagh, Srinagar, witnessed participation of various dignitaries, educators, students and volunteers.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, Senior most Judge High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, was the chief guest on the occasion. He underscored the importance of today's event held collectively by the legal and educational bodies, who joined hands in intensifying the fight against growing menace of tobacco use particularly among the young generation.

Amit Kumar Gupta, Member Secretary J&K Legal Services Authority, also played a key role in organizing this event who joined virtually displaying his resolve in raising voice against this menace.

In his inaugural address, Justice Tashi highlighted the need for raising awareness among the younger generation about the ill effects of tobacco and tobacco products. He emphasized the role of parents and teachers in this endeavor, noting that "tobacco is the first step towards substance abuse" and stressed the importance of keeping students away from such harmful practices. He further stated that in order to achieve tobacco free society concerted efforts by educationists is the need of the hour.

Adding to the day's activities, a painting

was flagged off by Justice Tashi, resonating through the area, amplifying their collective voice against tobacco consumption.

The event featured presentations by Dr. Tawseef Ahmad, Chairman Kashmir Concern, Manzoor Ahmad Wango, Chairman, Bilaliya Educational Institute and Advocate Syed Mujtaba, Child Rights Activist, who shed light on the severe health consequences and societal impact of tobacco consumption, reinforcing the message that preventive education is critical.

The event also featured dynamic performances by students from Crescent Public School and Bilaliya Educational Institute, who creatively showcased the ill effects of smoking and tobacco use through engaging skit and presentations. These performances were not only educational but also left a lasting impression on their peers and the wider community.

The program witnessed active participation of Jahangir Ahmad Bakshi, Secretary DLSA, Srinagar, Yasmeen Jan, Secretary to Justice Tashi Rabstan, Muzamil Hayat Kabli, Under Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, Shakeel Ahmad Dar, Chairman Crescent Public School, Manoj Gupta, Chairman of Agri Industries Vikas Chamber, Advocate Syed Mujtaba, Child Rights Activists and Dr Tariq Ahmad Dean Academics Crescent Public School, Srinagar. The faculty members, staff, para-legal volunteers of DLSA, Srinagar, volunteers of Kashmir Concern, and students from Crescent Public School and Bilaliya Educational Institute were also present, reflecting a broad-based community commitment towards the cause.



Police Armored Vehicle Runs Over Elderly Man In Hawal

People Hit Streets, Case Registered

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: A 75 year-old man lost his life after allegedly being run over by a police armored vehicle in Hawal area of the city here this afternoon.

The incident sparked protests in the area, with demonstrators demanding legal action against the driver they accused of negligent driving."

The deceased, whom they identified as Abdul Salam, a native of Hawal, was crossing the road, when an armored vehicle of Jammu and Kashmir police struck him near Firdous Cinema, leaving him critically injured.

No sooner had the incident taken place; the injured was removed to Sheri Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) by the police, where doctors declared

him as brought dead.

The video showing an elderly man lying in a pool of blood on the road went viral on social media sites, evoking condemnation from netizens.

The agitated locals blocked the main road for about an hour that severely affected the traffic movement in the area. The protestors alleged the elderly man was struck twice by the vehicle, causing fatal injuries

"This was the result of the driver's careless driving; the tragedy could have been avoided had he noticed the elderly man moving to the other side of the road," police officers, who had arrived on the scene following the incident, were informed by the protestors.

The officers, however, assured the protestors that the driver will

be taken to task in case he was found to be involved in reckless driving, which allegedly claimed the life of an elderly man.

"We promise to take legal action against the driver if it is found that he was operating the vehicle negligently. We will review the CCTV footage to confirm this," the officers assured.

A formal case FIR No 11 of 2024 under relevant sections Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered at Zadibal police station in this regard and the police team tasked to investigate the case was directed to check the CCTV footage in the area and record statements of the witnesses present at the time of incident.

Following assurances by the police, the protestors later dispersed off peacefully and the traffic movement was restored in the area

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

I did wash my hand ... but....
did I clean it enough?
?Wash it again?
Is it clean now?

It's not just
RECURRENT HANDWASHING AND CHECKING
BUT
UNSEEN PAIN
myths and stigma
distress
associated with OCD

KASHMER (Kashmir American Society of Healthcare,
Medical Education & Research
in collaboration with
HPVT (Help Poor Voluntary Trust)
is initiating a free 8 weeks Group therapy for the individuals
suffering with OCD by
a team of counselling clinical psychologists led by leading
consultant clinical psychologist of J&K,

If you or some one you know is experiencing symptoms of OCD, seeking professional help is crucial.

You do not have to fight your battles alone.

There is no need for referral , simply call us for registration.

Happy & Healthy minds Office, HPVT
Building (First Floor), Daresh Kadal
Chowk, Srinagar

9070806160

- 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
SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

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

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

 HIJRI CALENDAR 23 Zil-Qadah 1445	PRAYERS	
	FAJR	3 : 39
	ZUHR	12:28
	ASR	5: 27
	Magrib	7:40
	ISHA	9: 19

This Day In History

- 1922- Over 50,000 Fascists gather for a meeting in Bologna where Mussolini warns that he will lead a full-scale revolt against a government favoring 'anti-Fascist reaction'
- 1927- Peace Bridge between US & Canada opens
- 1941- British troops occupy Bagdad, Iraq
- 1943- Germany shoots down a civilian flight from Lisbon to London, all die
- 1947- Photosensitive glass developed
- 1948- Israel & Arabs agree to a cease fire
- 1949- 1st magazine on microfilm offered to subscribers (Newsweek)
- 1949- Microfilm copies of "Newsweek" magazine 1st offered
- 1970- Soyuz 9 launched into Earth orbit for 18 days
- 1972 - Iraq nationalizes Iraq Petroleum Company's (IPC) concession owned by British Petroleum,
- 1974 - Arab oil ministers decide to end most restrictions on exports of oil to the United States but continue embargo against the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, and Rhodesia
- 1976 - Great Britain and Iceland end the "cod war"
- 1978 - The first international applications under the Patent Cooperation Treaty are filed
- 1993 Connie Chung joins Dan Rather as anchors of CBS Evening News
- 1993 - Guatemala president Jorge Serrano overthrown by army

From KO Archives

All Project Info To Go Public From Today

Observer News Service

Srinagar- To bring transparency in the execution of development, schemes, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has made it mandatory for all the departments to display information about works conspicuously from Friday.

The departments have been asked to display at prominent places at district, tehsil and block levels soon on painted walls or erected boards the detailed information indicating the name of the scheme, executing agency, estimated cost and date of commencement and completion of schemes for information of the general public.

Speaking to the district, tehsil and block level officers of Ladakh at two separate meetings at Leh and Kargil Thursday, Chief Minister said that while the monitoring of physical and financial progress of works by the officers is essential, the public based mechanism is also vital to make the monitoring fool-proof.

Azad said that government functionaries hold the key to progress, as such, ought to render service to the best of their capacity. "Not only public representatives but government functionaries are equally answerable to people", he said and called for coordinated approach in mitigating the difficulties of Public.

Azad said that the liberal funding from the centre has enabled us to expand the orbit of progress and development in the state. "Presently, massive infrastructure development in education, health, drinking water supply, irrigation, power, road communication and other sectors is in full swing. History has provided us golden opportunity to develop. We have to take best advantage and march towards the goal of prosperity", he added.

Over Rs. 15000 crore worth of development projects especially in power development, road connectivity, public health engineering, education and other sectors have been formulated with the central funding targeted to be completed in next three years, Chief Minister said, adding that administration should be fully pre-pared to shoulder this responsibility.

In order to sensitize the administration and gear it up to be able to spend huge amounts judiciously and complete projects in fixed timeframe, fast track personal interactive meetings with the officers at various levels in the districts have been held, Azad said.

(Kashmir Observer, 01 June, 2007)

On World No-Tobacco Day Taxing Tobacco

Haris Rashid

J&K currently ranks 6th among Indian states and UTs in percentage of tobacco smokers. Despite almost everyone being aware of the harms and illness caused by tobacco consumption, a large portion of the population uses tobacco products. According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS-2) 2016-17, 39.7 % of men, 6.2% of women and 23.7% of all adults in Jammu and Kashmir use tobacco (19.4% are smokers only, 2.9% use smokeless only tobacco and 1.4% use both). GATS is conducted as a household survey of persons aged 15 years and above. The survey further reports that 91.5% of adults in J&K believe smoking causes serious illness. It also notes that 68.3% of adults came across ads about the dangers of smoking on television or radio. Further, 56.1% of smokers were planning or thinking about quitting. Also, among the daily tobacco users, 12.1% had initiated tobacco use when they were below the age of 15 while 35.6% had initiated at the age of 15-17. Regarding second hand smoke in J&K, 73.3% of adults were exposed to tobacco smoke at home, 57.5% were exposed at the workplace, 23.7% were exposed in public transportation, 11.3% were exposed at government buildings and 35.3% at any public place. J&K has the highest exposure to tobacco at the workplace among all the Indian states and UTs.

From the above-cited data, four things can be interpreted: (I) Almost everyone is aware of the dangers of tobacco use and there is a high penetration of anti-smoking ads through mass media. (II) More than half of smokers want to quit. (III) A substantial number of people start tobacco use in their childhood. (IV) There is nothing preventing people from smoking in public places, including public transport and government buildings.

Based on these four points and keeping in view the current government policies on tobacco control, this article argues that in order to control tobacco consumption, the government and other organizations working towards tobacco use control must focus on interventions to prevent people from initiating tobacco use, disincentivize tobacco consumption by current users by making the products less affordable while also making assistance accessible to those consumers who want to quit. This can be done by (1) increasing tax on tobacco products every year until they become a luxury (2) strictly enforcing laws that prohibit smoking in public places (3) having exclusive shops/kiosks for the sale of tobacco products with mandatory licensing from the government.

India currently has a law in the form of Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA) that regulates trade and commerce in and production, supply and distribution of tobacco products in India. The Act is complemented by the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) that seeks to create awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption and to ensure effective implementation of the provisions under COTPA, 2003. COTPA-2003 includes; Section 4: Prohibition of smoking in public places; Section 5: Prohibition of advertisement of cigarettes and other tobacco products; Section 6a: Prohibition of sale of cigarettes or other tobacco products to anyone below the age of 18 years; Section 6b: Prohibition of sale of tobacco

products near educational institutions and Section 7: Ban on sale of tobacco product without pack warnings. Also, in 2015, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, in partnership with World Health Organization and the International Telecommunications Union, started the mCessation Programme- an initiative for utilizing mobile technology for tobacco cessation by supporting tobacco users towards successful quitting through constant text messaging on mobile phones.

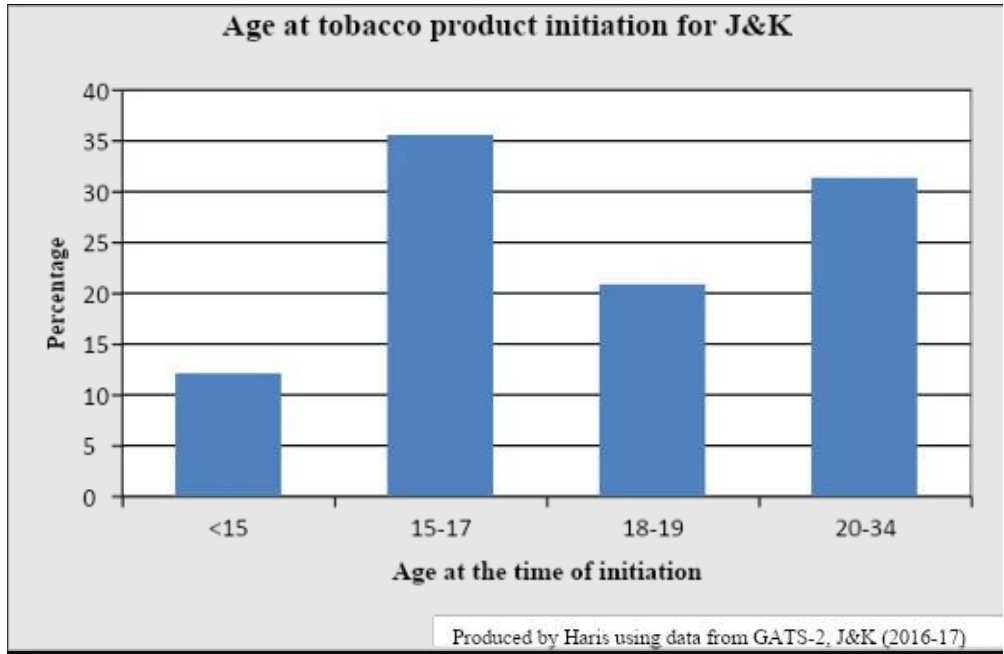
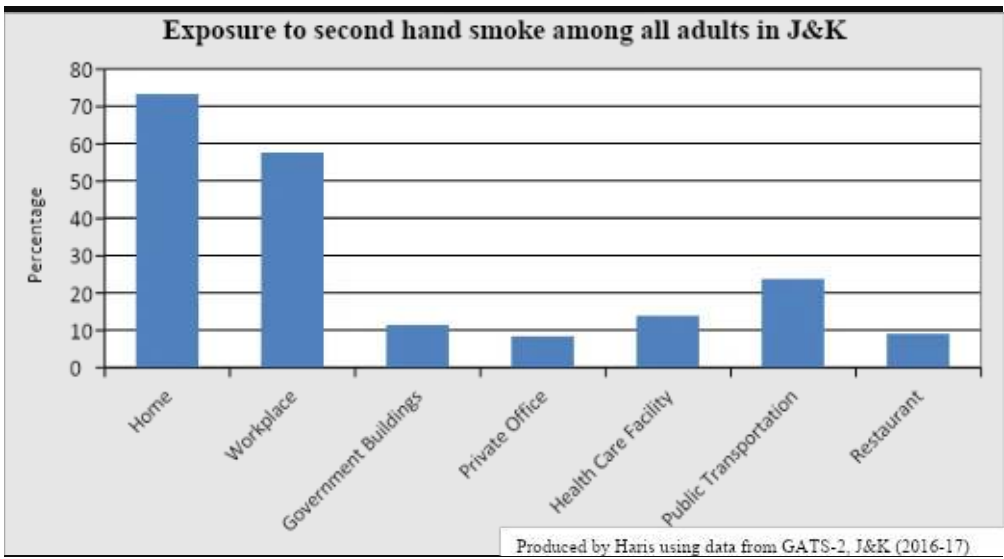
An increase in taxes is considered as the best intervention to control tobacco use. It directly affects current consumers and prevents others from starting tobacco use. Before GST, the J&K government would charge 40% sales tax on tobacco products and according to an IndiaSpend report, among all other things including automobiles and electronic devices, tobacco products would fetch the state sales tax department its highest revenue. However, currently, India has a low taxation rate on tobacco products- 28 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the additional cess charged by the centre. According to the Tobacconomics Cigarette Tax Scorecard, India scored 1.88 out of 5 in terms of the tobacco tax

burden as against the global average of 2.07. There is a need to commit to a minimum annual increase in taxes on tobacco products. New Zealand has been increasing the tobacco excise by CPI+10% annually (CPI is Consumer Price Index) since 2010. Data available shows that there has been a significant drop in smoking and other tobacco product use in the country after the tax increase started.

Even though smoking in public places is prohibited and is a punishable offence, authorized persons responsible for taking action as per COTPA do not seem to care as is evident from the above data regarding exposure to passive smoking. The huge number of people getting exposed to second hand smoking at hospitals and government buildings is a cause of concern. In order to protect non-smokers from second hand smoking, the government must ensure that authorized persons, including Sarpanchs and health officials, take action under their jurisdiction. Further, rules that prohibit the sale of tobacco products to minors and the rules that prohibit the sale of tobacco products around educational institutions must be enforced strictly by the authorized persons.



Even though smoking in public places is prohibited and is a punishable offence, authorized persons responsible for taking action as per COTPA do not seem to care as is evident from the above data regarding exposure to passive smoking. The huge number of people getting exposed to second hand smoking at hospitals and government buildings is a cause of concern



There is also a need to have exclusive shops/kiosks for the sale of tobacco products and making licensing from municipalities and Panchayats mandatory for them. In a recent report, titled "Framework for Implementation of Tobacco Vendor Licensing in India", submitted by the National Law School of India University to the Union Health Ministry early this year, it has been recommended that licensing system be adopted for the sale of tobacco products and these licensed vendors must sell tobacco products exclusively. The licensing system will make effective control of tobacco products possible by reducing the number of shops and making tobacco products inaccessible to minors.

Tobacco use is one of the major causes of preventable diseases and deaths in India and across the world. Every day, 3700 deaths (approximately) occur in India due to tobacco use. Government must take proactive steps and enforce the laws strictly to prevent our children and youth from starting tobacco use.

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

My Tryst With The Mulberry Trees



CURRENTLY, AS I TRAVERSE THE THOROUGHFARE, IT IS DISHEARTENING TO SEE THAT THE ELECTRIC CABLE is being attached to the luscious mulberry tree and unfortunately the mulberries languish upon the pavement, their vibrant hues staining the path, bereft of the merry laughter of children or the whimsical chirping of birds



Peer Mohammad Amir Qureshi

As I lay in repose, besieged by the ailment that had plagued me for days, my ruminations were abruptly interrupted by the plaintive creak of the door. It was my jubilant younger sister, exuberantly proclaiming, "Behold, dear brother, the bounteous harvest of nature's jewels!" She presented before me a cornucopia of luscious mulberries, plucked fresh from the tree that adorned our abode. With eager anticipation, she implored me to indulge in their succulence.

As I partook of the vibrant red and black berries, a flood of nostalgia swept over me, transporting me to the halcyon days of my youth. I regaled my sister with tales of yore, recounting our fervent pursuit of ripe mulberries during our school days.

Along the path to our scholastic endeavors stood three majestic mulberry trees, one of colossal proportions, too daunting to ascend, while the other two provided ample bounty.

Accompanied by my younger brother and two cousins, Sahil and Aabiroo, we would entrust our burdensome school bags to Aabiroo, stationed below, while Sahil, my brother Aqib, and I ascended the branches in search of nature's treasure. Amidst laughter and camaraderie, we would pluck the juiciest mulberries, teasing Aabiroo with promises of a share, only to relent and shower her with the fruits of our labor, as she gleefully savored their succulence, standing guard over our belongings below.

Balanced precariously on the branches, it became clear, as it often does in the human experience, that the richness of ripe

berries was unevenly distributed. In our search for the juiciest mulberries, we found ourselves darting from branch to branch, seeking nature's tastiest presents. Despite our ardent rummaging, a lingering fear gnawed at our minds: the looming punishment for our late return home. We developed stratagems to avoid detection, planning to quickly change clothes and dump our belongings before our mothers noticed our protracted absence. However, upon our return, our well-intentioned plans were welcomed with a bombardment of inquiry. As our tongues were coated with the dark color of those mulberries, our malicious deeds were caught red handed. Our mothers' voices rising in a chorus of concern and curiosity, demanding explanations for our extended absences. In the past, parental fear loomed

large, as the danger of falling from great arboreal heights shadowed our every step. Thus, with stealth and guile, we set out on expeditions to find delicious mulberries hidden in nature's bosom, safe from parental monitoring.

We used to make the trek to the mulberry trees on idyllic Sundays in the past, searching for the berries' illusive sweetness. Fortunately, what greeted us on our hunt was doves of nightingales and sparrows adorned those branches in plenty. But unfortunately there presence is ebbed to naught as we now are saddened by the disappearing chorus of these bird minstrels, which ornithologists and academics attributed to the intrusion of network towers and other contemporary hazards. Once taken for granted, their absence now leaves a last-

ing impression on our souls and serves as a sobering reminder of the frailty of nature's symphony. As the season of mulberry was called off, the ethereal, creamy-hued mulberries would tenderly mature a fortnight following the sowing of paddy seedlings. Dubbed the "Doodi Tuil," by us as we don't have enough knowledge about this very tree (Moras Alba) this arboreal marvel signaled the closure of mulberry season. Enthusiastically, we flocked to its boughs, often encountering novices from neighboring domains amidst the gathering.

Currently, as I traverse the thoroughfare, it is disheartening to see that the electric cable is being attached to the luscious mulberry tree and unfortunately the mulberries languish upon the pavement, their vibrant hues staining the

path, bereft of the merry laughter of children or the whimsical chirping of birds. Save for the scarce mynas, resilient enough to withstand the deleterious emissions of the ubiquitous network towers. The progeny, ensconced in the digital allure, eschew the tangible joys of foraging for nature's bounty, preferring instead the ephemeral delights of virtual realms, thus forsaking the enchantment of authentic engagement with the world around them. May the progeny of today revel in the abundant wonders of nature, just as we once savored its earthly delights.

The writer is Ganderbal based columnist who hold master's degree in zoology. He's on @peermohdamin

The Biggest Lie We Tell People

Asha Iyer Kumar

Among the first lessons in pleasantries that we all learn as children is to answer the question, "How are you?", which we are taught to respond in all politeness with "I am fine, thank you." Perhaps, in the days of yore when courtesies were being coined, and when people were kinder and more humane towards each other than in this robotic age, the purpose of the question was to show genuine interest in the other person's well-being and express support if things were going south.

But of late, the question, "How are you?", has begun to sound more customary that is responded in a standard manner – either "I am good" or "all well". And then the conversation swiftly pivots to the business on hand. Most people move on as soon as the initial pleasantries is exchanged, with a few people daring to express a wee more – "could be better" or some even responding with a wry "surviving". And there is an answer that has always kept me guessing – "I am OK."

What does 'OK' in reality mean? Good? Not good? Or is it an ambiguous reply that one can interpret any which way, based on the context and the questioner's disposition? Posed with a question on our well-being, seldom do we give an honest reply. How many times have we heard someone say, "Life sucks", "Going through hell" or "not good"?



At worst, people say, "going on". But then why do we shy away from telling people the truth of our lives, if not at length at least the fact that not all is well? Why do we hasten to make people believe the lie of being well, alive and kicking? Because we all have been given to believe that whiners are not winners. We have all been conditioned to pretend to be at our best even when we are suffering because the world and people around us don't like sad stories.

In a world that doesn't think

twice before inflicting harm on others but would like to stay out of harm's way, the natural inclination is to court happiness, which in itself is a paradox. If we don't dispense happiness, how is it fair or possible to defy the law of the Universe to remain unscathed by our devious acts? What goes around comes around.

The rise and success of social media itself hinges on this need to seem happy to the world even when one's life is at stake. Our external demeanour is governed by

how we will be perceived by others, and for this, we never tell the truth. We never reveal the reality behind the mask of 'I am OK', carefully sugar-coating our travails with fake smiles and laughter. Our excessive need to be liked; to be appreciated; to make others happy often robs us of our freedom to cry or even sigh loudly. "Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone." And we fear being alone like we fear death.

The reason for our practised lie of telling people we are

fine might also stem from the fact that we don't want people close to us or those who genuinely care about us to get worked up in our thoughts. We conceal many unsavoury truths not with a wily intention, but because we are convinced that making family and friends privy to our troubles might cause them pain. Yet again, we don't want to cause undue stress and distress with our sob stories; we want people to be happy with us so that they may love us. Hence we lie over and over again – "I am

good", "I am fine."

But of late, I have strived to be a little more honest than I have been before. The idea of being judged as wimpy or sulen for telling the truth doesn't haunt me because it is what it is. By no stretch of imagination do I expect anyone to resolve my personal woes, but I am increasingly becoming aware of the adverse effects of feigning to be fine. I have divorced the notion that we must fake it till we make it.

I am becoming increasingly aware of the fact that pain and

suffering is endemic to human existence and there is no reason why we must either glorify it or negate it. There is a simmer in every heart and an uneasy tremor in every body. The acceptance of reality is the first step towards alleviating the bitterness and pain that come along with material life and tenuous relationships. If I am unwell, I might as well spell it out so the other person may know. Not in the expectation that compassion will flow instantly, but it keeps me from turning my life into a travesty.

Saying it aloud will elicit varied responses. From story topping to offering left-handed solutions, people will be very forthcoming in their views. They may be affected by my plight or be ridiculously impervious to my pain. They may probe further out of genuine concern or with the intention of feeding their gossipy nature. What they do with my answer is their look out. They can stew new stories or leave it by the wayside. They can offer me a shoulder or share in my happiness.

No matter what they choose to do, in my own defence I have only this much to say: Ask me "How are you?" and be prepared to hear it like it is. Of being ill, well or neither. The third option because sometimes it is hard to decipher how I am. Life is often a grey, obscure haze.

The article was originally published by Khaleej Times

Eminent researcher from TIFR Mumbai delivers Physics Colloquium at NIT Srinagar

Srinagar, May 31: The Department of Physics at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar organized a Physics Colloquium on 30th May in which Prof. Pratap Raychaudhuri from Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) Mumbai delivered his special address. Prof. Raychaudhuri, a senior professor and prestigious Bhatnagar awardee from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) Mumbai, delivered a presentation on his recent research exploring superconductivity in -Tungsten. The TIFR, a premier research institute in the country, is ranked 10th in the research institute category by NIRF. Earlier Prof. Raychaudhuri was welcomed by Dr. Harkirat Singh, an assistant professor in the Department of Physics at NIT Srinagar. In his welcome speech, Dr. Singh shared his experience of working under such an eminent academician at TIFR Mumbai and expressed his honor and gratitude in hosting the speaker. Prof. M. Ikram, Head of the



Physics Department, also welcomed the speaker and congratulated the department for organizing the event. He expressed hope for future endeavors and fruitful cooperation with TIFR Mumbai. The presentation was attended

by PhD and MSc students, as well as faculty members of the department. Following the presentation, a lively question and answer session took place, where Prof. Raychaudhuri appreciated the enthusiasm of the audience

and addressed their questions with gratitude.

The event concluded with a felicitation ceremony. Senior faculty members, Prof. M. A. Shah and Prof. Seemin Rubab felicitated the speaker. Prof. Ikram

felicitated Prof. Raychaudhuri with a memento, and Dr. Harkirat Singh, along with his students, also honored the speaker.

Dr. Harkirat Singh is actively working on the simulation of superconducting and magnetic

materials and has established a condensed matter simulation lab in the department, funded by DST-SERB. Dr. Singh expressed his immense gratitude to DST-SERB, Govt. of India, for their generous financial support.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir Valley

Ahmad also informed that as per the present forecast, partly to generally cloudy weather is expected on June 08 and June 09.

Moreover, in its advisory, the MeT has stated that generally hot & dry weather with heat-wave over plains of Jammu during June 02-04 is expected.

No heat wave over Kashmir during next 9 days, the advisory reads.

6 RTC Officials

dereliction of duties, officials posted in the Regional Transport Office in Kathua (Lakhanpur) are placed under suspension with immediate effect and are attached in the office of Transport Commissioner, Jammu," Kumar said in an order.

The suspended officials are Ranjeev Bhasin (motor vehicle inspector), Sumit Magotra (junior assistant) and multi-tasking staff (MTS) members Ashwani Kumar, Aman Kumar, Keshav Singh and Rakesh Kumar.

An inquiry into the conduct and performance of the suspended officials will be led by Additional Secretary (Technical) Paramvir Singh, who will submit a report with recommendations within a week, Kumar said.

The officials have been attached to the transport commissioner's office in Jammu, pending the outcome of the enquiry.

The Jammu district magistrate has already initiated a magisterial inquiry into the incident and the report is expected within seven days.

The district administration is closely monitoring the treatment of those injured in the accident, besides communicating with authorities in the passengers' home regions of Hathras and Aligarh and in Uttar Pradesh.

Deputy Commissioner of Jammu Sachin Kumar said the treatment of the injured is going on at the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital.

The Jammu administration announced on Thursday that it has set up a 24-hour helpline to provide information and assistance to the relatives of the victims.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs 5 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 each to those injured.

According to some injured passengers, the accident occurred when the driver was negotiating a blind curve and a speeding car was approaching from the opposite direction. However, some passengers have blamed the driver for overloading the vehicle.

The accident is the deadliest in the region since a similar one on November 15, 2023 in Doda district, where a bus skidded off the road and fell into a 300-foot gorge, killing 39 people and injuring 19.

Last Phase

Over 10.06 crore citizens, including nearly 5.24 crore men, 4.82 crore women and 3,574 third gender electors are eligible to vote in this phase.

Saturday's voting will mark the end to the marathon polling process that began on April 19 and has already covered 486 Lok Sabha seats in 28 states and Union territories. The assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim also went to polls. Counting of votes will be taken up on June 4. In Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, the counting for the assembly polls will be held on June 2.

According to Election Commission guidelines, television channels and news outlets will be able to run exit poll data and its results on June 1 after 6.30 pm.

The EC said polling parties have been dispatched along with machines and poll materials to their respective polling stations. At the 1.09 lakh polling stations, basic facilities including ample shade, drinking water, ramps, and toilets are being provided to ensure that polling takes place in a comfortable and secure environment, it said. The poll panel has also directed CEOs and state machineries to take adequate measures to manage the adverse impact of hot weather or rainfall wherever predicted.

The commission called upon voters to turn out in greater numbers and vote with responsibility and pride. The turnout in the first six phases was 66.14 per cent, 66.71, 65.68, 69.16, 62.2 and 63.36 per cent respectively.

The campaigning for the last phase which ended Thursday evening saw BJP leaders led by Modi accusing the Congress and the INDIA alliance of being corrupt, anti-Hindu and engaging in loot, appeasement and dynastic politics.

The Opposition parties have been claiming that the BJP is anti-farmer, anti-youth and will change and scrap the Constitution if they win the elections.

On Thursday evening, Modi headed to Kanyakumari where he is meditating till June 1 at the site associated with Swami Vivekananda. Modi had 206 public outreach programmes, including rallies and roadshows, since the Election Commission announced the Lok Sabha election schedule on March 16. The parliamentary seats where polling will take place in Uttar Pradesh are Maharajan,

Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Deoria, Banskagan (SC), Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Mirzapur and Robertsganj (SC), spread across 11 districts.

Uttar Pradesh is seeing a direct contest between the BJP-led NDA and the coalition of INDIA bloc members Samajwadi Party and Congress.

From Chandauli, Maharajan and Mirzapur, Union ministers Mahendra Nath Pandey, Pankaj Chaudhary and Anupriya Patel respectively are contesting. Late Mukhtar Ansari's brother Afzal Ansari is in the fray from Ghazipur and former prime minister Chandrashekhar's son Neeraj Shekhar is contesting from Ballia.

In Varanasi, those contesting against Modi are Ajay Rai (Congress), Ather Jamal Lari (BSP), Kolisetty Shiva Kumar (Yuga Thulasi Party), Gagan Prakash Yadav, (Apna Dal, Kameravadi), and independents Dinesh Kumar Yadav and Sanjay Kumar Tiwari.

The polls in South Bengal, a traditional TMC stronghold, will test the party's dominance amid an 'old versus new' power struggle, with the national spotlight on Sandeshkhali in Basirhat due to allegations of atrocities on women and land grabs.

The seventh phase will cover Dum Dum, Barasat, Basirhat, Jayanagar, Mathurapur, Diamond Harbour, Jadavpur, Kolkata Dakshin, and Kolkata Uttar, where the TMC secured victories in the 2019 elections.

TMC heavyweight Abhishek Banerjee, considered the party's de facto number two, is contesting from Diamond Harbour. Banerjee's performance in this seat, which the TMC touts as a 'model constituency', will be closely watched as the opposition attempts to paint it as a 'laboratory of violence'. The two-time MP faces CPI (M)'s Pratikur Rahaman and BJP's Abhijit Das in a three-way contest.

The minority-dominated Basirhat Lok Sabha seat, and specifically the Sandeshkhali segment, is a microcosm of the broader electoral battle as it garnered national attention due to allegations of atrocities on women and land grabs by local TMC leaders.

The BJP has capitalised on these issues by nominating Rekha Patra, a prominent local protestor, against TMC veteran Haji Nurul Islam. The CPI (M) has fielded former MLA Nirapada Sardar, making this a three-cornered contest.

In Punjab, prominent candidates in the fray are four-time MP Preeten Kaur, former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi, three-time MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal and Ravneet Singh Bittu.

The BJP and Shiromani Akali Dal are contesting the polls on their own for the first time since 1996 while two INDIA bloc parties - the Congress and AAP - have fielded their own candidates.

The prestige of Ranaut and Himachal Pradesh minister Vikramaditya Singh Singh, the heir of the erstwhile Rampur royal family and son of six-time former chief minister Virbhadra Singh, is at stake in Mandi.

Stakes are also high for Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Thakur, who is seeking a fifth term from Hamirpur, and former Union minister Anand Sharma, who is the Congress candidate from the Kangra Lok Sabha constituency, while for Sukhu, the six assembly bypolls are for survival and stability of his 17-month-old government.

In Bihar, Union minister RK Singh is aiming at a hat-trick from Arrah, where his principal challenger is Sudama Prasad, a sitting MLA of the CPI (ML) Liberation.

In Patna Sahib, veteran BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad is aiming at a second consecutive Lok Sabha term. His principal challenger is Congress spokesman Anshul Avijit, son of former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar and grandson of Jagjivan Ram.

In Pataliputra, Misa Bharti is trying her luck

for the third time. BJP MP Ram Kripal Yadav is aiming at a hat-trick.

Karakat is witnessing a multi-cornered fight which is being most talked about because of Bhojpuri superstar Pawan Singh, who is contesting as an Independent. Singh entered the fray after having earlier turned down a BJP ticket from Asansol in West Bengal. The move has led to his expulsion from the party.

Upendra Kushwaha, a former Union minister who heads the Rashtriya Lok Morcha, had won the seat in 2014 but lost it five years later upon quitting NDA. He is hopeful of wresting the seat back following return to the BJP-led coalition. The CPI (ML), which has a strong presence in the area, has fielded Raja Ram Kushwaha, a former MLA and farmer leader. The pitch has been queered further with the AIMIM fielding Priyanka Chaudhary, a Zila Parishad member.

Exit Polls After

in the fray for the voting to be held on June 1. Exit polls forecast the outcome of the elections. It gives an indication on how the voter has exercised its franchise. Polling will be held on Saturday on 13 seats each in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, nine seats in West Bengal, eight in Bihar, six in Odisha, all four seats in Himachal Pradesh, three seats in Jharkhand and one seat in

Chandigarh. As the seven-phased Lok Sabha elections are nearing an end, the Congress party has announced that it will not participate in the debates on Exit Polls, which will take place from June 1 onwards. Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera made the announcement on Friday, saying the party doesn't see any reason to indulge in "speculation and slugfest for TRP".

"The Indian National Congress will not participate in the debates on #ExitPolls," he added. Khera further said that the party will participate in the debates after June 4, when the election results are out.

Meanwhile, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday appealed to the party workers, office bearers and candidates to remain vigilant and "not get misled by BJP's exit polls. In a post on X, the SP chief said, "Just as you have been cautious throughout the elections, similarly you have to stay outside the strong room and be alert till you get the certificate on the day of counting."

Akhilesh Yadav alleged that as soon as the elections are over, the BJP's 'media mandali' will start showing false figures of the elections. "They will tell you that BJP is winning around 300 seats, which is completely false. They do this to demoralise you so that you become disappointed, but you should not fall for their words and on the day of counting, you have to protect the strong room and be vigilant so that no kind of rigging can take place," Akhilesh Yadav said in the post. The SP chief further urged to not get "misled" by BJP's exit polls and remain "completely alert."

"I am making this special appeal so that you people do not get misled by the BJP exit polls and remain completely alert, keeping your confidence and remembering your basic mantra of victory, voting and being cautious, celebrate the victory of the Constitution, democracy and the people of the country only after taking the certificate of victory," he said.

"Our statement on the reason for not participating in #ExitPolls Voters have cast their votes and their verdict has been secured. The results will be out on 4th June. Prior to that, we do not see any reason to indulge in speculation and slugfest for TRP. The Indian National Congress will not participate in the debates on #ExitPolls. The purpose of any debate should be to inform the people. We will happily partake in debates from 4th June onwards," Pawan Khera posted on X. Lok Sabha elections 2024 are being held in seven phases, in a six-week marathon running from April 19

to June 1. The first six phases of polling were held on April 19, April 26, May 7, May 13, May 20 and May 25. Assembly polls have also been held in Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. Odisha is seeing simultaneous polls to Lok Sabha and assembly in the last four phases. The counting of votes will be held on June 4.

People Of Kashmir

stone-pelting but has now become a professional sports player representing India, symbolizing the positive transformation in the region. (KNS)

Mirwaiz Urges

put forth my view in public," Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said.

He said if the government thinks that I will leave my ethical stand on issues, then they are wrong. "I hope the government will realize the situation and take amicable steps accordingly."

He expressed deep concern over the detention of youth and said, "a big chunk of youth are lodged in jails while the government has made the verification process very complicated. Hope the government will rethink over it and the process will be eased out".

"If government will move one step ahead, we are ready to move two," he said, adding, "The Hurriyat Conference will not come under the pressure of iron fist policy adopted by New Delhi and J&K administration."

Mirwaiz said, "We don't want violence and bloodshed. We don't want jails and graves to be filled by our youngsters. I think time has come to move ahead. Government should shun its muscle-power policy and embrace a realistic approach for resolution of issues."

The Hurriyat leader who was allowed to offer Friday prayers at Jama Masjid after four weeks said, "The saddest part for me is being away from the pulpit of Jamia Masjid. Policy of harassment also continues to be pursued. I am targeted and even my family members."

Regarding an FIR filed by the anti-graft body of Jammu and Kashmir against Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and six others in connection with a land allotment case, he said, "After the series of propaganda attacks in 2018 alleging me of ownership of properties belonging to Anjuman Nusratul Islam, Auqaf Jamia, Darul Khair and more, all proving false and unfounded, now an FIR is lodged against me and my close relative, in which they claim that land and house in which I live can be confiscated and I evicted."

"Shaheed Millat bought that land in 1973 with official legal documents and He built a house on it and the same year is also the year of my birth and the four walls of this house are the same. "My brother in law, a dedicated, honest and respected senior civil servant, is also being harassed because of the relationship," he added."

NGT Notice

and NHIA failed to address the issue for far.

"The water channel has been blocked in the process of construction of the road, resultantly, the waterlogging has taken place and flooding has damaged approximately three acres of the orchard land of the applicant," Bhat informed court.

In support of his plea, Bhat submitted photographs as a proof to the court.

The applicant also stated that the construction activity is causing dust pollution, which is adversely affecting their orchards spread over approximately 50-60 acres. They said a number of villages of Khandra Suthsoo, Ganj Bagh, Gowherpora, Wathora Bugam, Lalgam, Lal Gund, Gudsathoo, Wulnu, Ichgam and Dharmnadue are affected in this process and the damage is caused to the crops of oats and mustard.

The applicant further informed the court that during the construction process, reckless excavation of clay from Karewas, a unique

geological formation in Kashmir has impacted the ecology.

Taking notice of the application, the NGT issued notice to the respondents for filing their response at least one week before the next date of hearing. The next date of hearing has been listed on 11 September 2024.

32% Men, 1%

smokers, 85.1 percent had parents who were smokers, and nearly all had smoker friends.

According to the survey, 84.6 percent of adolescents believed that smoke from others is harmful, and 95.7 percent indicated that smoking should be banned in public places. Among current smokers, 62.3 percent wanted to stop smoking at the time of the survey, but only 20.2 percent had tried to quit in the past year. Half of the current smokers believed they could quit if they wanted to, and around 40 percent had quit smoking in the past year, citing various reasons for quitting.

An official said it is crucial to address tobacco use among adolescents and enhance awareness of its dangers, given the increasing prevalence and widespread exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

J&K Ranks 6th

the prevalence of smoking tobacco in the region stands at 20.8%, ranking it sixth in the country, following Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Mizoram.

"The prevalence of smokeless tobacco in J&K is the lowest in the country at 4.3%, just after Himachal Pradesh," he said.

According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2 data, 35.2% of men, 5.1% of women, and 20.8% of all adults in J&K smoke tobacco. It adds that 6.8% of men, 1.5% of women, and 4.3% of all adults currently use smokeless tobacco. Overall, 39.7% of men, 6.2% of women, and 23.7% of all adults either smoke tobacco or use smokeless tobacco.

Dr Mushtaq said the government has implemented numerous measures to reduce tobacco consumption. "Over the past four years, thousands of challans have been issued and substantial fines collected from violators for smoking in public places in the Kashmir division. These efforts have resulted in hundreds of people quitting smoking, with thousands receiving counselling and pharmacotherapy sessions," he said.

"Awareness programs are being conducted to inform people about the ill effects of tobacco. If we can make people conscious of the dangers, enforcement will not be as necessary," the Nodal Officer said, adding, "Various awareness initiatives have already been launched to educate the public about the hazards of tobacco use, and officials have been instructed to carry out regular enforcement drives for the implementation of COTPA-2003."

According to officials, smokers and tobacco users are 2.5 times more likely to develop tuberculosis (TB). "Tobacco use raises the risk of TB, increases recurrence, and impairs treatment," they said while urging people to quit tobacco for a healthier future.

The government of Jammu and Kashmir has imposed a complete ban on the sale of loose cigarettes, loose bidis, and loose tobacco. All educational institutions and tourist destinations have been declared tobacco-free zones.

Tobacco is recognised as the leading cause of preventable deaths worldwide, killing over seven million people globally and more than one million in India annually. Lung cancer has emerged as the second most common cancer, and in recent decades, Kashmir has seen a rise in cases of lung and breast cancers.

Hospital-based data from the Kashmir Valley reveals a higher incidence of lung cancer among males, directly correlated to the duration and frequency of smoking. While quitting smoking reduces the risk of developing cancer, the risk does not disappear entirely, the officials said.

27th year OF PUBLICATION

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OR SCAN

'WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY'

Public Must Decide to Quit Smoking: Director NHM

Agencies

SRINAGAR: "While the government can facilitate efforts to reduce smoking, it is ultimately up to the public to make the decision to quit," Director of the National Health Mission (NHM) Nazim Zia Khan said on Friday while speaking at an event to observe World No Tobacco Day.

As per the news agency, Khan in his address, highlighted the ongoing initiatives by the health department to educate the public about the dangers of tobacco use.

"The health department has been consistently informing the public about the harmful effects of smoking and tobacco," Khan stated. "Every effort is being made to help smokers quit and to keep the younger generation away from starting."

He said World No Tobacco Day serves as a critical opportunity to educate people about the severe health risks associated with tobacco use and to promote collective efforts to reduce smoking rates. "Tobacco remains a major risk factor for deadly diseases like cancer, and addressing this issue requires a joint effort," he stressed.

Director NHM said that while the government plays a facilitating role, in a democracy, people have the freedom to choose whether to continue smoking.

"The government can highlight the dangers, but individuals must decide for themselves. We are making every effort to intervene and educate, hoping that even convincing one person to quit is a significant achievement," he said.

When asked about the pos-



sibility of shutting down the tobacco industry, Nazim acknowledged that the industry provides jobs to many people. "We are not the final authority; it is the citizens who ultimately decide. Our role is to continually raise awareness," he said. He also mentioned that the implementation of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) has resulted in significant fines and enforcement actions.

Director of Health Services Kashmir, Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Rather, speaking at the event, said that smoking often leads to drug

abuse. "Nearly all drug abusers start with smoking, which makes them more susceptible to trying drugs," he said. He also highlighted the dangers of secondhand and thirdhand smoke, saying that it affects 50% of families.

"Secondhand smoke comes from burning tobacco prod-

ucts and exhaled smoke, while

thirdhand smoke involves residual nicotine and chemicals left on indoor surfaces. These chemicals can be harmful when touched or inhaled," he explained. "Cigarettes contain around 4,000 chemicals, with 200 being hazardous and about 60 known to cause cancer."

Director Health said parents and teachers play a crucial role in keeping children away from smoking. He warned about the dangers of e-cigarettes and the unregulated sale of imported cigarettes that lack proper la-

beling and hazard warnings.

"A multi-pronged strategy is required to reduce cigarette consumption and mitigate its harmful effects," he said.

Meanwhile, the Tobacco Control Cell under the Directorate of Health Services of Jammu and Kashmir organised a walkathon in Srinagar to raise awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use and promote a smoke-free lifestyle. Participants, mainly youth, carried banners and signs to spread the message about the dangers of tobacco.

The School Education Department in Kashmir observed May 31, 2024, as 'No Bag Day' to mark World No Tobacco Day, to raise awareness among the general public through roadshows, rallies, essay competitions, painting competitions, seminars and more.

The Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) highlighted the theme for this year's World No Tobacco Day, 'Protecting children from tobacco industry interference', which underscores the importance of shielding youth from the influences of the tobacco industry.

Numerous events and seminars were organised across Jammu and Kashmir to educate people about the ill effects of smoking and tobacco use and to encourage cessation efforts—(KNO)

Jammu Sizzles, Fire Engulfs Several Forest, Urban Areas

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Fire engulfed several forest and urban areas in the Jammu region, devastating vast tracts of land, officials on Friday said.

The fire, which spread to Rajouri, Samba, Reasi and Udhampur districts, and urban parts of Jammu city, destroyed large areas of plantation and other forest wealth, they said.

In Samba, the fire broke out in Chiladanga, Nund and Purandara areas, where both forest officials and local residents were working tirelessly to extinguish the flames, the officials said.

Udhampur has also been severely affected, with fire reported in the forest regions of Rakh, Nehra Nall, and Krimchi. Efforts to control the blaze are ongoing, they said. Reasi district is grappling with multiple wildfires, intensifying concerns about forest fires throughout the region, the officials said.

The Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) has issued an extreme forest fire risk warning for the coming week as temperatures soar and the dry conditions persist.

Authorities are mobilizing resources, including drones, to combat the fires. However, the challenging terrain, coupled with high temperatures and dry conditions is making firefighting efforts particularly difficult, they said.

In the Nowshera Sub-division of Rajouri district, forest fires continue to cause significant damage. The dry weather and scorching temperatures are contributing to the severity of

19 Fire Incidents Reported In May In Udhampur

Agencies

JAMMU: As many as nineteen fire incidents have been reported in the month of May in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district, officials said on Friday.

Earlier in the day, a forest fire broke out in the Krimchi area of the city, engulfing the region's vital ecological resources.

On the preparedness of the forest division to tackle forest fires, Divisional Forest Officer, Udhampur, Navneet Singh, told ANI, "The forest department is committed to controlling the fire. In March, we set up forest fire control rooms. In Udhampur, there are 10 forest control rooms... These forest control rooms are fully equipped... Awareness activities are carried out by staff to not set fire in the forests... In schools, through painting and other competitions, a message is sent to not set fire to forests..."

"In Udhampur, 19 fire incidents have been reported this month

that were brought under control. Most of the firing incidents were minor"...," he added.

To combat forest fires, locals here in Udhampur are resorting to converting pine needles (prone to fire) into different products.

Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission and women of Self Help Groups from Chenani in Udhampur district have come up with an innovative method to combat forest fires.

Saloni Rai, Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur said earlier in the month, "Forest fire is a prevalent problem this season and pine needles are a greater risk to forest fire. Keeping this in mind, with the collaboration of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), a training program has been organized where 30 women are given the training to make different products from pine needles. They are making different products and so this initiative is helping them to be self-employed and their empowerment..." (ANI)

the fires, the officials said.

A forest officer highlighted the critical role of prevention, with five fire watchers deployed in each of the division's 11 blocks.

She emphasized the human factor in the ignition of these fires and urged the public to steer clear of forest areas, especially avoiding the use of cigarettes and other potential fire sources. In Jammu city, a minor inci-

dent occurred at the Government Medical College Hospital, where an old truck caught fire. The flames were quickly extinguished by fire service department tankers, the officials said.

Efforts to contain and extinguish the fire across the Jammu region continue, with the officials and locals working together to mitigate the damage, they said.

Tarigami Urges Faster Screening for Migrants' Registration

Agencies

SRINAGAR: CPI(M) leader and former MLA, Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami, on Friday said that the screening committee reconstituted by J&K Government for "provisionally registered Kashmiri Migrants" should initiate the process for their registration on a regular basis without any further delay.

As per the news agency CNS, Tarigami in a statement said, "these families whose number is stated to be 1400 have been facing severe hardships for almost a year since their relief and ration has been stopped."

He said that a delegation of these migrants recently met him and narrated the "pathetic" condition they have undergone during this period and are even unable to feed their families in

absence of payment of relief.

"Even violence hit and victim families included under provisionally registered migrants have also been denied the payment of relief and ration assistance, which is highly deplorable. Worthwhile to mention

here that these migrants stand registered provisionally for more than two and half decades and authorities should have conducted screening of these cases a long time ago to save them from suffering adversely," Tarigami said.

He further added that the members of the Screening Committee must immediately do the needful so that these families are registered regularly. "Also ensure that their pending relief and ration is released at the earliest to mitigate their sufferings," CPI(M) leader said.



BJP Confident of Victory in Jammu and Udhampur

Agencies

JAMMU: The BJP held a parliamentary election management committee meeting here on Friday to review its election activities during the recent Lok Sabha polls.

The final phase of Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir concluded with the polling of the Anantnag-Rajouri seat on May 25.

The Udhampur constituency went to polls in the first phase, followed by Jammu, Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag.

The BJP contested two Lok Sabha seats Jammu and Udhampur, but it did not field candidates for the remaining

three seats.

Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Ravinder Raina, who chaired the meeting along party general secretary (organisation) Ashok Koul, discussed and sought detailed reports on the elections from the state incharges of various departments under the BJP state election management committees.

BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh, the party's election-in-charge for Jammu and Kashmir, also addressed the meeting virtually. Chugh praised the party cadre's dedicated work throughout the elections and said "the incharges and

committee members should document their experiences to prepare for the upcoming Assembly and local body elections in Jammu and Kashmir".

Raina commended the party cadre for their dedication and professionalism, expressing confidence in a massive win for the party in both contested Parliament seats.

"The cadre should be encouraged to further enhance their skills and work with increased vigor in future elections," Raina said.

Koul interacted with all the incharges, encouraging them to share their experiences and identify areas needing further effort.

Banks In J&K Need To Deepen Rural Presence: CS

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Banks operating in the UT of J&K need to deepen their presence further in the rural spaces and sharpen their focus on lending to critical sectors of the economy especially agriculture, housing and education.

Chief Secretary, J&K Atal Dulloo said this while chairing the 13th meeting of UTLCB of J&K here to review the performance of banks and financial institution in dispensation of credit and other banking services during the financial year 2023-24.

The meeting was attended by the Principal Secretary (Finance) Santosh D. Vaidya, Commissioner Secretary (Industries & Commerce Department) Vikramjit Singh, Regional Director (RBI) Chandrashekhar Azad, MD & CEO J&K Bank- Convenor J&K UTLCB- Baldev Prakash, commissioner Secretaries to Government, and other senior functionaries of the Government, RBI, NABARD, Banks, Departmental Heads of J&K Government, insurance companies and Lead District Managers.

Directing the banks to push credit flow into agriculture through schemes like HADP and Investment Credit Schemes in agriculture, Atal Dulloo said, "You need to pump more funds into agriculture and its allied activities because J&K's economy is largely dependent upon it."

"Also the Banks must prioritise to extend credit line to vital sectors like 'housing' and 'education' being more of a long term investment in the local as well as national economy", he added.



As part of strengthening their presence across all the rural pockets of the UT, Chief Secretary urged the banks to consider on-boarding of already available Common Service Centres (CSCs) and VLEs as their Business Correspondents (BC) to expand their outreach in the underserved areas for providing better banking opportunities to the people living in these neglected pockets of the UT. Citing states like Orissa and Jharkhand as examples, banks need to have either a branch or BC in every panchayat to serve the common people especially in rural areas", he said.

Chief Secretary also emphasized upon the need to ease out the formalities in sponsored schemes for the general public to make these schemes hassle free.

Speaking about the lack of sufficient financial penetration in J&K, Principal Secretary (Finance) Santosh D. Vaidya stressed upon the need to increase lending in J&K so as to achieve the equitable 'financialization'.

Earlier, in his welcome address MD & CEO, J&K Bank Baldev Prakash expressed optimism saying, "With the kind of support from UT Gov-

ernment, RBI and NABARD we have all the reasons to be optimistic that the banking credit scenario in UT of J&K shall experience new beginning and be a facilitator for inclusive development of the UT of J&K."

He assured J&K Government that banks operating in J&K UT will continue to extend all possible support for implementing the programmes and schemes aimed at entrepreneurial development, employment generation and poverty alleviation in the UT.

Earlier General Manager, J&K Bank, Syed Rais Maqbool while making presentation on the financial achievements of various banks during Financial year 2023-24 informed that banks in J&K have disbursed Rs.66,052 Crore to 18.15 Lac beneficiaries registering an achievement of 128% in financial terms and 110% in physical terms of Annual Credit Plan 2023-24.

It was also informed that banks have sanctioned loans to the tune of Rs 2234 Crore to 50,418 beneficiaries under major employment generation schemes during the period.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the chair presented by General Manager, J&K UTLCB.

Doctor Drives Ambulance To Save Child's Life In Budgam

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a remarkable display of selflessness and quick thinking, Dr. Sameer Maqbool, a dental surgeon at the Primary Health Centre (PHC) Pohru, saved a child's life by stepping into an unexpected role, leaving his stethoscope aside and trying his hand on the wheels.

The incident happened when the regular ambulance driver at the health facility reportedly fell ill, after which Dr. Maqbool did not hesitate to take the wheel himself, ensuring the critically ill child received timely medical attention.

The incident, as per the news agency unfolded early Tuesday morning this week when a distressed family arrived at PHC Pohru seeking urgent care for their child, experiencing distress.

The child's condition, as per Dr. Maqbool, was rapidly deteriorating, necessitating immediate transfer to a specialized medical facility.

However, an unexpected hurdle arose—the regular ambulance driver was unable to perform his duties due to sudden illness. With no time to waste, Dr. Maqbool swiftly decided to drive the ambulance himself. Despite his primary role as a dental surgeon, he demonstrated exceptional courage and resourcefulness in the face of the emergency.

"I was in my chamber when I heard cries in the corridor and upon confirmation, I came to know a child with a fall history and vomiting needed immediate referral. The regular driver was unwell and was on IV line and without wasting any time, I drove the ambulance to a nearby specialised hospital", he said.

He said that while navigating through challenging traffic conditions, he maintained his composure and focus, ensuring a safe and swift journey to the nearest advanced medical center.

He said upon their arrival to the specialised hospital, the paediatrician available started the treatment and thankfully, with the timely intervention, the child was stabilized and received the necessary treatment.

Speaking about the incident, Dr. Maqbool humbly remarked that had it been any other doctor, he too would have done the same thing, as the first priority is always to save the life." In moments like these, every second counts. I did what any healthcare professional would

DR. MAQBOOL HUMBLY REMARKED THAT HAD IT BEEN ANY OTHER DOCTOR, HE TOO WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME THING, as the first priority is always to save the life." In moments like these, every second counts.

do — prioritize the patient's life above all else. I am just grateful that the child is now safe and recovering."

Lauding the selfless act of Dr. Maqbool, Directorate of Health Services Kashmir, (DHHS) on its official twitter handle, wrote, "Dr. Sameer Maqbool, Dental Surgeon at PHC Pohru, went above and beyond the call of duty when a child needed urgent care. With the ambulance driver ill, he drove the ambulance himself to save a life".

Dr. Mir Mushtaq, of DHS-K, in a post on X wrote, Dr. Sameer Maqbool, Dental Surgeon at PHC Pohru, went beyond the call of duty by driving an ambulance to save a child's life when the regular driver was ill. His quick thinking and selflessness ensured the child received timely".

In response to the tweet, secretary health and medical education J&K Syed Abid Rasheed Shah wrote, "Commendable job Dr Sameer".

Meanwhile, the local community has lauded Dr. Maqbool's extraordinary act of bravery and dedication. "Dr. Maqbool's actions exemplify the true spirit of healthcare professionals who go beyond their call of duty to save lives. His heroism is an inspiration to us all," said Ejaz Ahmad.

While Dr. Maqbool's selfless act has also sparked a wave of appreciation and gratitude across social media, with many hailing him as a local hero, it has also raised the questions over the functioning of the system, questioning why there was no backup—(KNO)

Indian Economy Grows At 8.2% In FY24, Fastest Globally

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India's economy grew by 8.2 per cent in the fiscal year that ended in March, cementing the country's position as the fastest-growing major economy in the world, boosting credentials of Prime Minister Narendra Modi government ahead of ending of mammoth, weeks-long general elections.

Gross domestic product (GDP) growth was 7 per cent in the previous 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023) fiscal, according to Statistics Ministry data.

The Reserve Bank of India has forecast that the economy will expand by 7 per cent in the current fiscal year, outpacing global growth that's forecast to reach 3 per cent in 2024.

Prime Minister termed the FY24 growth rate as just a trailer of things to come. "The Q4 GDP growth data for 2023-24 shows robust momentum in our economy which is poised to further accelerate. Thanks to the hardworking people of our country, 8.2% growth for the year 2023-24 exemplifies that India continues to be the fastest growing major economy globally."

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the "remarkable" growth rate will continue in the third term of Modi.

The growth is mainly driven by good showing by the manufacturing sector, though the farm sector recorded deceleration during the fiscal as well



as fourth quarter (January-March 2024).

According to the data, India's economy recorded 7.8 per cent in the January-March period, the slowest in the four quarters of FY24. It was 8.6 per cent in October-December 2023, 8.1 per cent in July-September 2023 and 8.2 per cent in April-June 2023.

The GDP grew 6.2 per cent in the January-March quarter of 2022-23.

The growth propelled the Indian economy to USD 3.5 trillion and set the stage for achieving the USD 5-trillion target in the next few years.

China has registered an economic growth of 5.3 per cent in the first three months of 2024.

According to the NSO data, real GDP, or GDP at constant prices, is estimated to attain a level of Rs 173.82 lakh crore in 2023-24, against the first revised estimates (FRE) of GDP for 2022-23 of Rs 160.71 lakh crore.

"The growth rate in real

GDP during 2023-24 is estimated at 8.2 per cent as compared to 7.0 per cent in 2022-23," it stated.

Nominal GDP or GDP at current prices is estimated to attain a level of Rs 295.36 lakh crore in 2023-24, against Rs 269.50 lakh crore in 2022-23, showing a growth rate of 9.6 per cent, it added.

The real GDP in the March quarter of 2023-24 is estimated at Rs 47.24 lakh crore, against Rs 43.84 lakh crore a year earlier, showing a growth rate of 7.8 per cent.

Nominal GDP, or GDP at current prices in the March quarter of 2023-24, is estimated at Rs 78.28 lakh crore, against Rs 71.23 lakh crore in the year-ago period, showing a growth rate of 9.9 per cent.

The real GVA (gross value added) is estimated at Rs 158.74 lakh crore in 2023-24, against the FRE for 2022-23 of Rs 148.05 lakh crore, registering a growth rate of 7.2 per cent as compared to 6.7 per cent in 2022-23.

The GVA growth in the manufacturing sector accelerated to 8.9 per cent in the March quarter against 0.9 per cent a year ago.

GVA growth in mining was 4.3 per cent in the fourth quarter compared to 2.9 per cent in the same quarter of the previous fiscal.

"As predicted, GDP growth rate for 2023-24 crossed the 8% mark and lands at a comfortable 8.2%. Great news for India!," Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission Arvind Panagariya said in a social media post.

Construction grew 8.7 per cent in the quarter, up from 7.4 per cent in the corresponding period of 2022-23. The agriculture sector growth decelerated to 0.6 per cent from 7.6 per cent.

The electricity, gas, water supply, and other utility services segment grew 7.7 per cent during the fourth quarter from 7.3 per cent in the year-ago period.

GVA growth in the services sector -- trade, hotel, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting -- was 5.1 per cent in the fourth quarter against a growth of 7 per cent a year ago.

The country's leading economists, including Former NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar, hailed the GDP growth rate of 8.2 per cent in FY24, terming it "above all estimates and forecasts".

Kumar said this is the third year in which India has grown at over 7 per cent, outpacing

all other large economies.

Rumki Majumdar, Economist, Deloitte India said the GDP surprised to the upside, thanks to strong growth in manufacturing and robust buoyancy in the services sector.

"The fourth quarter of FY 2024 saw a prominent increase in exports of engineering goods, electronics items, drugs and pharmaceuticals, and organic and inorganic chemicals--the highest-ever exports recorded in history. That is good news as India is gradually moving up the global value chain," Majumdar added.

Commenting on the data, Ranen Banerjee, Partner and Leader Economic Advisory, PwC India opined that the 8.2 per cent growth estimate for 2023-24 is significant as it is above the psychological mark of 8% that should boost business sentiments.

"The GDP numbers have been buoyed by a strong print in manufacturing supported by a low base given the negative growth printed in the previous year. Mining and Quarrying has also helped the higher print," he said.

As per the NSO data, financial, real estate and professional services grew 7.6 per cent in the March 2023 quarter compared to 9.2 per cent in the year-ago period.

Public administration, defence and other services posted 7.8 per cent growth in the quarter against 4.7 per cent expansion in the same quarter a year ago.

Fiscal Deficit In FY24 Improves To 5.6 Pc On Better Tax Mop-Up



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The central government's fiscal deficit during 2023-24 at 5.6 per cent of the GDP was better than previous estimates of 5.8 per cent on account of higher revenue realisation and lower expenditure, according to official data released on Friday.

In actual terms, the fiscal deficit -- or gap between expenditure and revenue -- was Rs 16.53 lakh crore, or 5.63 per cent of the GDP, which grew 8.2 per cent in 2023-24.

In the revised estimate for 2023-24, the government had in the interim Budget presented in Parliament on February 1 projected the fiscal deficit of Rs 17.34 lakh crore, or 5.8 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

According to the data released by the Controller General of India (CGA), the government's revenue collection was 101.2 per cent of the revised estimates (RE) presented in the Budget.

Net tax collection was Rs 23.26 lakh crore in the financial year ending March 2024.

The expenditure worked out to be Rs 44.42 lakh crore. The expenditure during the last fiscal was 98.9 per cent of the RE.

CGA data also showed that revenue deficit during FY24 was 2.6 per cent of the GDP and effective revenue deficit was 1.6 per cent of the GDP.

Commenting on the data, ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the government's fiscal deficit was contained below the RE for FY24, benefiting from higher-than-anticipated receipts and lower than estimated revenue spending, with only a marginal miss in capital expenditure.

Vivek Jalan, Partner at Tax Connect Advisory Services LLP, a multi-disciplinary consulting firm, said lower fiscal deficit is majorly due to the uptick in tax revenues.

"The encouraging fiscal deficit numbers can be dedicated to the taxpayers of the country. The efficiency of the CBDT and CBIC and especially the ground covered in implementation of Artificial intelligence in un-

earthing fake transactions have also to be appreciated by honest taxpayers," he said.

For the current financial year (2024-25), the government estimates the fiscal deficit at 5.1 per cent of the GDP, or Rs 16.85,494 crore.

As per the Fiscal Responsibility & Budget Management (FRBM) Act, the government plans to achieve a fiscal deficit of 4.5 per cent in 2025-26.

During 2023-24, the government received Rs 27,88,872 crore (101.2 per cent of corresponding RE of total receipts) comprising Rs 23,26,524 crore tax revenue (net to Centre), Rs 4,01,888 crore of non-tax revenue and Rs 60,460 crore of non-debt capital receipts.

According to CGA data, Rs 11,29,494 crore was transferred to state governments as devolution of share of taxes by the Government of India, an increase of Rs 1,81,088 crore year-on-year.

Total expenditure incurred by the central government was Rs 44,42,542 crore (98.9 per cent of corresponding RE of 2023-24), of which Rs 34,94,036 crore was on revenue account and Rs 9,48,506 crore on capital account.

Of the total revenue expenditure, Rs 10,63,871 crore was towards interest payments and Rs 4,13,542 crore on account of major subsidies.

Meanwhile, according to another CGA data, the fiscal deficit in April was 12.5 per cent of the Budget Estimate (BE) for 2024-25, or Rs 2.1 lakh crore. It was 7.5 per cent of BE 2023-24 in April 2023.

Nayar said while the fiscal deficit for April 2024 has spiked on account of an unexpected surge in revenue spending, in spite of healthy tax revenues, the higher-than-budgeted dividend from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to dampen the fiscal deficit in the rest of this quarter.

Overall, the fiscal dynamics appear favourable for FY25, amid continued resilience in GST collections and an unexpectedly large dividend payout by the RBI, she added.

Former Players Not Hopeful Of Pakistan's Success At 2024 T20 World Cup



Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's former players are not expecting the team to do well in the T20 World Cup starting in the Americas from Saturday. Pakistan lost a T20I in Ireland and then suffered a 0-2 defeat in England this week, not the ideal result before a global event. Before that, they drew 2-2 at home with a New Zealand side that was missing many of its World Cup squad members. "They are not getting their combination right, which is their biggest problem," former captain Rashid Latif said.

He feels Pakistan need to not only shuffle their batting but make more use of their spinners. "Not only shuffle, but players need to be prepared to play at floating roles now in T20 cricket as per the match situation," he added. The legendary Javed Miandad is banking on the unpredictability factor.

"They are unpredictable and always seem to do well in these T20 World Cups. But yes, they need to

definitely improve in some areas quickly because, with a 20-team event, you can't afford to relax even in one game," he said.

Pakistan's white-ball captain Babar Azam said in his post-match conference at the Oval that although it was disappointing to lose the series to England, the World Cup will be a different challenge.

"We have capable (and) talented players, and we will come good in the World Cup," he said.

Many cricket fans are not happy with the selection or performance of Azam Khan, who was dismissed cheaply at the Oval and dropped two catches.

Azam, who has followed in the footsteps of his father, Moin Khan, as a wicketkeeper-batter, has been trolled mercilessly on social media since Thursday.

But it is not just Azam who has been a disappointment. All-rounder Shadab Khan has also been struggling for runs, as has Iftikhar Ahmed, who has failed to make any impact while batting down the order.

Kohli Hopes T20 World Cup In Americas Will Set Off Domino Effect In Spreading The Game



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Star India batter Virat Kohli on Friday said that he had never thought of playing cricket in the United States and the T20 World Cup happening there shows the growing impact of the sport in the world.

The USA and the West Indies are hosting the T20 World Cup starting on June 2.

Kohli landed in New York on Friday evening (Indian time) and will get busy with the preparations for the tournament.

"Honestly I never thought we would be playing cricket in any form in the states (USA), but now it's a reality," Kohli said in a video shared by US Consulate Mumbai on X (formerly Twitter).

"That tells you about the growing impact of the sport in the world and the United States is more than willing to accept the change and be probably the first ones on a global scale to accept it, in a way, with the World Cup," he said, before his departure from India to link up with his national teammates in New York.

Terming it as a 'great start', Kohli hoped that the T20 World Cup in the Americas will set off a domino effect as the game's governing body ICC aims to promote and expand cricket in other parts of the world.

"It's a great start. It's the ideal way to begin and it's going to have a huge impact. In starting off, a kind of a domino ef-

fect and I hope it carries on for a long period of time," he said.

Kohli also said that people from South Asian region residing in the Americas are capable enough to take forward the momentum.

"We have enough people from our regions to keep the game up and alive in the States and make the others more aware about what it feels like to play and watch cricket," he said.

"It's got great potential, with the MLC (Major League Cricket) as well. There is already franchise cricket happening there. It's moving in the right direction," said Kohli, referring to the T20 league which recently got List A status from the ICC ahead of its second season.

Growth Momentum To Continue In Modi 3.0: Sitharaman

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday termed 8.2 per cent GDP growth in 2023-24 as 'remarkable' and said the growth momentum will continue in the "third term of the Modi Government".

Today's GDP data showcases robust economic growth with a growth rate of 8.2 per cent for FY 2023-24 and 7.8 per cent for the fourth or March quarter of FY 2023-24.

"This remarkable GDP growth rate is the highest among the major economies of the world," Sitharaman said

in a post on X.

She said the manufacturing sector witnessed a significant growth of 9.9 per cent in 2023-24, highlighting the success of the Modi government's efforts for the sector.

Many high-frequency indicators indicate that the Indian economy continues to remain resilient and buoyant despite global challenges, she added.

"India's growth momentum will continue in the third term of PM Shri @narendramodi-led government," she said.

The last phase of Lok Sabha elections will be held on Saturday while the results will be announced on June 4.

French Open: Balaji Gets First French Open Win, Yuki Bows Out

Press Trust of India

PARIS: N Sriram Balaji made a strong case for his inclusion in the Indian men's doubles team for the Paris Olympics along with Rohan Bopanna by logging his maiden win at the French Open but Yuki Bhambri, the other contender for the berth, made a first round exit here on Friday.

Despite the defeat, Yuki reminded what he brings on the table with his all-round game, hitting ability from the baseline and a decent serve.

Yuki and Olivetti lost 3-6 6-7(5) to Australia's John Peers and Russia's Roman Safiullin in the opening round.

Balaji, who is most likely to be Bopanna's choice for Paris Games, combined well

with Mexico's Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela Martinez for a 6-3 6-4 win over American Reese Stalder and Dutch player Sem Verbeek.

Balaji has made tremendous progress as a doubles players gradually.

Bopanna was watching Yuki's match from the stands, making his calculations as to who will be a better partner for him.

In the opening set, Yuki and his French partner struggled a bit. Too many times they had left the court open to allow their rivals to blast easy winners.

Yuki dropped his serve in game four with his feeble backhand crashing on the net. From there, it was all too easy for Peers and Safiullin. The Indian



was again down 0-30 when he returned to serve but managed to hold.

Yuki's overhead volley winner earned a break chance when Safiullin served in game four of the second set but the Indian returned just long.

However, Peers did not miss the chance when Olivetti was down 15-40 as the Australian found a crushing service return winner to draw the first blood.

At 30-all on Safiullin's serve in game eight, the Indo-French pair had a chance to put pressure and get the break back but Peers' overhead smash winner averted the danger.

An exciting duel followed between Yuki and Safiullin on the next point which went into a deuce but some solid serve

and returns ensured a hold for the Australian-Russian pair.

Olivetti came out to serve to stay in the match and hit a forehand long after two deuce points to be down by a match point. Yuki saved that with a volley winner at the net.

Serving to win the match, Peers was broken as Yuki returned extremely well to earn those chances. The match got stretched to a tie-breaker but Yuki's backhand crashed to the net on second match point.

On Saturday, India's top players Bopanna and Sumit Nagal will be up against each other in the men's doubles first round. Nagal entered the draw with Austria's Sebastian Ofner as alternate pair.