

J&K Trains 296 Nodal Officers on MCC

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a bid to enhance the skills of its election machinery at District and Assembly Constituency level during the Assembly Election 2024, the office of the Chief Electoral Officer J&K conducted a training program for as many as 296 Nodal Officers across the Union Territory, which concluded today.

Conducted under the supervision of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), J&K, Pandurang K Pole, the program trained the Nodal Officers for the effective implementation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), Media Certification and Monitoring (MCM), monitoring of Paid and Fake News and Social Media Apps, and for Election Expenditure Monitoring (EEM) at district and Assembly Constituency (AC) level in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions of J&K Union Territory.

A total of 296 Nodal Officers, including 162 in Jammu Division were trained in the Physical Mode during the program being conducted in the training hall of J&K CEO Office at Nirvachan Bhawan, Rail Head Complex, Jammu. Similarly, 134 Nodal Officers from Kashmir Division were trained during the training program being held in online

J&K ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Congress-NC-CPI(M) Pre-Poll Alliance Finalised

Will Contest All 90 Seats Together: Dr Farooq



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Congress and National Conference's pre-poll alliance was finalised after Rahul Gandhi visited Farooq Abdullah's residence in Srinagar

This is the first time since 1987 when NC and Congress have entered into a pre-poll alliance in Jammu and Kashmir. An alliance with the Congress is final on all 90 assembly seats in Jammu and

Kharge Bats For 'United Front'

Congress president Malik Arjun Kharge said on Thursday that his party leadership is of the opinion to get all parties, including the opposition, on board for a pre-poll alliance ahead of the general assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing a media conference following Congress workers meeting in

Have Blood Relationship With J&K People: Rahul

'Restoring Statehood Is Congress, INDIA Bloc's Priority'

Dabirah Hassan

Srinagar: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Thursday claimed "blood" ties with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and declared restoration of statehood - J&K was bifurcated into two union territories in August 2019, after the centre scrapped Article 370 - a "priority" for both him and his party.

"The principal stance of Congress party and the INDIA Bloc is to restore statehood to J&K as soon as possible and we had expected that this would be done prior to elections, but okay, elections have been declared and it's a step forward, and we are hoping that statehood will be restored as soon



as possible and the democratic rights of the people of J&K will be restored," Rahul said at a press conference after chairing a meeting of party workers in Srinagar. He assured the people that

Forces Trying To Disrupt Polls:CEC

Agencies

New Delhi: Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Thursday claimed that some forces are attempting to disrupt the upcoming Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, but the poll body is fully prepared to conduct free and fair elections. Kumar emphasised that the "ballot is the answer to such forces."

"There are forces determined to disrupt the election process, but we are fully prepared, and the ballot is the answer to such forces," said Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar after briefing election observers for Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana.

Kumar said, "We briefed election observers today. General, Police, and Expenditure Observers from several states attended the briefing. Observers were instructed to be available to political parties and candidates to address any grievances and ensure adherence to election rules."

Kumar emphasized that the Election Commission of India (ECI) is prepared to conduct free and fair elections in J&K and Haryana.

"The world is watching the elections in J&K. Some forces are adamant about disrupting the election

Kashmiri Journalists Made To Wait At Rahul's Presser

Dabirah Hassan

A press conference held by Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi in Srinagar on Thursday began on a contentious note due to the exclusion of local media. Local reporters were initially barred from entering the venue, with access granted only to select national media outlets.

AIP Releases First List Of 9 Candidates

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Awami Itihad Party (AIP) Thursday announced list of nine candidates for south Kashmir for the upcoming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking at a news conference at Jawahar Nagar here, the party's chief spokesperson, Inam-un-Nabi, said the names of the candidates contesting elections on AIP mandate had been forwarded by the electorate of their respective constituencies following thorough deliberations with the party leadership.

"The party supreme issued explicit orders that only those candidates who are chosen by the electorate would be taken into consideration for mandates. After thorough deliberations with civil society, local media fraternity and other

stakeholders, we have shortlisted nine candidates from south Kashmir," said Inam, adding, many former MPs, MLAs and ministers have been approaching the party for mandates.

From Pampore assembly constituency, DDC member Abdul Qayoom Dar is contesting elections on AIP ticket followed Dr Harbaksh Singh from Tral, Sofi Iqbal from Pulwama, Muneeb Fayaz Wagey from Zainapora, Mohammad Arif Dar from Dambhal Hanjipora, Dr Suhail Bhat from Devsar, Hilal Ahmad Malik from Duroo, Aqib Mustaq from Anantnag West and Tauseef Nisar from Anantnag 44.

Regarding the party poll manifesto, he said, a pro-people manifesto will be announced within the next few days. He said the party is not stitching a pre-poll alliance with any party ahead of the elections.

ASSEMBLY POLLS PHASE-I

23.27 Lakh Voters To Participate In 24 Constituencies



Observer News Service

Jammu: More than 23.27 lakh voters including 5.66 lakh youths are eligible to exercise their electoral franchise during the Phase-I of the J&K Assembly Election which is scheduled to be held on 18 September 2024 across the 24 Assembly Constituencies (ACs) in 7 districts of Jammu & Kashmir, Chief Electoral Officer

- » 23.27 lakh eligible voters
- » 5.66 lakh young voters aged 18-29.
- » 1.23 lakh first-time voters aged 18-19.
- » 11.76 lakh male voters
- » 11.51 lakh female voters
- » 60 third-gender electors.
- » 28,310 PwDs
- » 15,774 voters aged 85+.
- » Election Date: September 18, 2024.
- » Nomination Deadline: August 27, 2024.

(CEO) J&K, Pandurang K Pole said on Thursday.

"As per the latest data of electoral rolls available, there are a total of 23,27,543 lakh voters, who are eligible to vote during the Phase 1 of the J&K Assembly. Out of them, there are 11,76,441 male voters and 11,51,042 female voters along with 60 Third Gender Electors," the CEO said in a statement.

Underlining the significance of the role to be played by the youth of Jammu and Kashmir in strengthening the democracy, the CEO said that as many as 5.66 lakh youths are eligible to vote in phase-1 of the Assembly Election.

These 5.66 lakh young electors are between the age 18-29 and include 1,23,922 First Time Voters between the age of 18-19 years,

BJP Finalizes First Panel Of Candidates

Awaiting CEC Approval: BJP Leader

Agencies

Srinagar: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Jammu and Kashmir has finalized its first panel of candidates for the upcoming Assembly elections.

Senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Dr Nirmal Singh revealed that 50 percent of the candidate list has already been forwarded to the party's Central Election Committee (CEC) and the Parliamentary Board for final review and approval.

"The initial panel of candidates has been sent, and we expect the list to be released soon," Dr. Singh said.

The list will be unveiled after the Parliamentary Board convenes its meeting, which, according to party sources,

is scheduled to take place either tomorrow or the day after. This meeting will play a crucial role in shaping the party's election strategy for the region.

Sources close to the party's leadership stated, "Panels for each of the constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir have been forwarded to BJP headquarters. The final decision on candidates will rest with the National Election Committee, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

The BJP's leadership is confident in its preparations and strategy for the elections, aiming to secure a majority in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly. "BJP is fully prepared to contest the upcoming J&K Assembly

7 killed, 20 Injured In Ladakh Bus Accident

Agencies

Leh: At least seven persons died and twenty others were injured after a bus they were travelling in met with an accident and plunged into a 200-metre-deep gorge at Durbuk area of Leh in Ladakh Union Territory.

An official said that the bus, carrying staff members of a school to a wedding function, plunged into a gorge in the Durbuk area.

"Seven passengers died and 20 others were injured when a private bus travelling from Leh to Eastern Ladakh fell into a 200-metre-deep gorge," he said, adding that the injured have been shifted to hospital.

He said three choppers, including those from the Army and Indian Air Force (IAF), were used for the rescue operation.

Meanwhile, an army spokesperson in a statement said, "In a swift



Heavenly Escape: Tourists trot through Doodhpathri's lush meadows. KO Pix Abid Bhat

Shelter Homes For Domestic Violence Victims HC Grants Govt 4 Weeks For Response

M Ahmad

Srinagar: J&K and Ladakh High Court has granted government four weeks time to file affidavit to the response filed by the petitioner to an "inadequate" response filed by authorities in a bench of Chief Justice (acting) Tashi Rabstan and Justice Rajnesh Oswal seeking directions for establishing shelter homes for destitute women across Jammu and Kashmir as mandated under Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

In March this year, the petitioner filed a response to a status report submitted by the authorities in the PIL as the same was considered "inadequate" on various aspects for proper implementation of Domestic Violence Act, 2005 in terms of

infrastructure, manpower etc.

"Learned counsel for the respondents (authorities) seek and are granted four weeks' time to file a detailed affidavit to the response filed by the petitioner in terms of order dated 27.03.2024,"

the bench of Chief Justice (acting) Tashi Rabstan and Justice Rajnesh Oswal said in an order while hearing the PIL filed by an organization namely Mehram Womens Cell Kashmir As per the petitioner,

a "not-for-profit trust", one of the main reasons why women put up with daily abuse and violence is that there is no other place for them to go where they can take shelter.

"The parents of the victim often force them to live with the perpetrator



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Students From High School Maloora Shine At Chinar Book Festival

Agencies
Srinagar: A group of 56 students from Government Boys High School Maloora, Srinagar, participated in the book festival organized by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) and National Book Trust at SKICC here.

The event, which is part of a larger festival running from August 17 to 25, 2024, offered students a unique opportunity to explore a vast array of literature and expand their knowledge.

The students, according to the news agency KNO,

delved into a literary feast at the festival, which featured nearly 200 stalls. The wide array of books on display provided the students with a unique opportunity to broaden their literary horizons and cultivate a deeper appreciation for the written word.

In addition to exploring the rich collection of books, the students enjoyed the scenic beauty of Dal Lake, which added a serene backdrop to their enriching day. The event also allowed them to appreciate the tranquil surroundings, contributing to a memorable experience.

The management of the



DEO Inspects Election Strong Rooms, Counting Centers For all 8 ACs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat on Thursday inspected the designated Strong Room and Counting Centers being established at SKICC here for all 08 Assembly constituencies of Srinagar District.

The inspection was undertaken to assess the preparedness regarding facilities and security measures for seamless conduct of upcoming General Election to Legislative Assembly-2024 in the District.

During the visit, the DEO reviews the arrangements and facilities at Strong Room and Counting Centres for all 08 Assembly Constituencies viz 19-Hazratbal, 20-Khanyar, 21-Habbakadal,

Sets Up Single Window Permission System

Srinagar: District Election Office Srinagar has set up a single window permission system as per the guidelines of the Election Commission of India for the upcoming assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

An official told the news agency—KNO, that keeping in view the guidelines of the poll body, district election officer Srinagar has set up a single window permis-

sion system for everyone's ease, including the political parties.

He said that the system has been set up to seek permission for various election related activities, while a nodal officer has also been designated for the same. Under this system, candidates and political parties can submit permission applications for various election related activities under a single window,

advance to facilitate a smooth and efficient election related process.

He also laid emphasis on placing adequate spaces for counters to be placed at Counting Halls in order to avoid any cluttering during management of election related materials.

The DEO also stressed strict adherence to prescribed standards of Election Commission of India to uphold the integrity and fairness of the electoral process.

He stressed on proper handling/management of election material besides ensuring efficient and secure mechanisms for its storage.

Deputy District Election Officer, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Nodal Officers and other officials accompanied the DEO Srinagar during his visit.

Justice Tashi Inspires 'Future Judiciary' At Interaction With Trainee JOs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant event Justice Tashi Rabstan, Chief Justice (A), High Court of J&K and Ladakh Thursday engaged with 69 trainee judicial officers present both physically and virtually in an enlightening and thought-provoking session held at the High Court Conference Room in Jammu.

The interaction provided a unique opportunity for the trainees to gain insights from the highest echelon of the judiciary and to discuss key issues pertaining to their

future roles.

In his address, the Chief Justice (A) emphasized upon the critical importance of judicial independence, impartiality, and adherence to the rule of law. He elaborated on the importance of training offering the trainees a comprehensive understanding of contemporary challenges and expectations in the judiciary.

Trainees actively posed questions on managing conflicts of interest, balancing personal beliefs with professional responsibilities, and navigating ethical dilemmas in the courtroom.

RASME - E-CHAHARUM



With profound grief and sorrow, we announce the sad demise of Ali Mohammad Bhat S/o Late Ghulam Hassan Bhat of Wadi Mohalla Harwan Srinagar, who left for heavenly abode on 20th August 2024 Tuesday. May Almighty Allah accord peace to the departed soul. His congregational Fateh khawami shall be held on (Friday) 23rd of August at 6:10 am at his ancestral graveyard, Wadi Mohalla Harwan Near Harwan Garden. After that a Taziyati Majlis will be held through out the day at our residential house Wadi Mohalla Harwan

Bereaved:
Nasir Hussain and Fida Hussain (son's)

شاہ خاندان گند پورہ کو صدمہ
اطہر مختار دختر مختار احمد شاہ کا سانحہ ارتحال
یہ خبر نہایت ہی دکھ و افسوس کیساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ شاہ خاندان گند پورہ عید گاہ سرینگر کے خواجہ پختا احمد شاہ کی نوجوان دختر نیک اختر اطہر حرکت قلب بند ہوئے سے انتقال کر گئیں۔ اور اس سانحہ عظیم سے نہ صرف شاہ خاندان بلکہ پورا علاقہ سوگوار ہوا۔ مرحومہ انتہائی نیک بیٹی تھی۔
مرحومہ ۵ اگست 2024ء کو صبح انتقال کر گئیں۔
مرحومہ کی نماز جنازہ بزرگ عالم الدین علامہ شوکت حسین کینک نے پڑھائی جس میں بے شمار خلعت نے شرکت کی۔
مرحومہ کی فاتحہ خوانی آبائی مقبرہ واقع زورہ نزد یک مقبرہ عبدالعزیز صاحب بعد نماز جمعہ 2:30 پر انجام دی جائے گی۔
سوگواران
اہل و عیال دوست و احباب inf

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed Travel unit under the name & Style of M/s. Chinar Paradise Tour and Travel" situated at Ranger Complex Karanagar Near National School
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas I Mr./Ms Khushboo Bashir D/o Bashir Ahmad Mir R/o Badwan Pora Dist Bandipora 193503 intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style "M/s. Chinar Paradise Tour and Travel" situated at , Ranger Complex Karanagar Near National School Srinagar under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.
Whereas, I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department), Bank statement (minimum balance 1000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting), Photograph of the unit (indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation.
Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID:- ddtreg123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspaper of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained
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QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

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

PRAYERS
FAJR 4: 27
ZUHR 12:35
ASR 5: 17
Magrib 7:16
ISHA 8: 41

HIJRI CALENDAR
17 Safar
1446

This Day In History

- 1441 - Holland & Hanzesteden sign cease fire treaty
- 1514 - Battle of Chaldiran ended with a decisive victory for the Sultan Selim I, Ottoman Empire, over the Shah Ismail I, Safavids founder.
- Discovery
- 1789 - French Revolution: The National Assembly proclaims freedom of religious opinions
- 1799 - Napoleon leaves Egypt for France en route to seize power.
- 1866 - Treaty of Prague ends Austro-Prussian war
- 1911 - British Prime Minister H. H. Asquith holds secret meeting about British strategy in case of war with Germany
- 1914 - Japan declares war on Germany in World War I
- 1915 - Tsar Nicolaas II takes control of Russian Army
- 1921 - Austria and the US formally end war; the US does the same with Germany on the 25th, and Hungary on the 29th
- 1924 - Mars' closest approach to Earth since 10th century
- 1933 - Mahatma Gandhi released from Indian jail following another hunger strike
- 1939 - Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union agree the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact and secretly divide Poland between themselves, setting the stage for World War II
- 1942 - World War II: last cavalry charge in history takes place at Isbushenskij, Russia; the Italian Savoia Cavalleria charges Soviet infantry
- 1943 - Red army recaptures Charkov
- 1944 - Allied troops capture Marseille, France
- 1952 - Arab League security pact goes into effect
- 1960 - World's largest frog (3.3 kg) caught (Equatorial Guinea)
- 1961 - US lunar probe Ranger I reaches 190 km from Earth, falls back
- 1974 - Zaheer Abbas scores 240 Pakistan v England at The Cricket Oval
- 1975 - Communists take over Laos
- 1976 - Heavy earthquake strikes China, 1,000s die
- 1978 - Iranian students occupies Iranian embassy at Wassenaar
- 1982- Lebanese falangist leader Bechir Gemayel elected as president
- 1982- USSR performs nuclear test at the Semipalatinsk Test Site in northeast Kazakhstan
- 1985- Paul Hornung awarded \$1,160,000 by a Louisville court against NCAA who barred him as a college football analyst for betting on games
- 1985- Said Aouita of Morocco sets 1.5k record (3:29.46) in Berlin
- 1985- South African attorney/UDF leader "Dulah" Omar arrested
- 1987- Violent rainfall and floods in Bangladesh, kill 100's of people
- 1989- The Baltic Way - two million people form a human chain across Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania in a peaceful pro-independence demonstration against Soviet occupation [1]
- 1990- Armenia declares independence
- 1990- East & West Germany announced that they would unite on Oct 3
- 1990- US begins call up of 46,000 reservists to the Persian Gulf
- 1992- Dennis Eckersley, who previously set record for most consecutive saves (40), is 1st pitcher to record 40 saves in 4 different seasons
- 1992- Wilhelm Verwoerd, grandson of former South African Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, main architect of apartheid, joins the African National Congress
- 1995- Indians' Jose Mesa sets record with his 38th consecutive save
- 1996- Osama bin Laden issues message entitled "A declaration of war against the Americans occupying the land of the two holy places"
- 2000- A Gulf Air Airbus A320 crashes into the Persian Gulf near Manama, Bahrain, killing 143.
- 2000- Nicaragua becomes a member of the Berne Convention copyright treaty. This essentially deprecated the Buenos Aires Convention treaty, because as of this date, all members of the BA Convention were also signatories to Berne.
- 2005- Hurricane Katrina forms over the Bahamas, later becoming a category 5 hurricane

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Friday | 23-08-2024

Fix Dal STPs

Despite decades of government efforts to protect Dal Lake, these measures seem insufficient to bring about a significant improvement in the condition of the waterbody. And as the latest report by Jammu and Kashmir Pollution Control Committee (PCC) has underlined, government itself is responsible for this. The report reveals that water from about 910 houseboats is still being discharged into Dal Lake without treatment. The report was submitted after the National Green Tribunal had asked for a report on the status of monitoring stations and water quality in the lake, along with the state of sewage management in Srinagar, particularly around the lake. The report, as a result, covered the sewage disposal practices of houseboats, the sewage treatment mechanisms in place, and the monitoring of sewage treatment plants (STPs).

This is a sad state of affairs for the lake, a mascot of Kashmir's timeless beauty and a magnet for the tourists to the state from all over the world. The has been the focus of an intense recovery effort over the past three decades. The local and the central governments have followed twin strategies of conservation and rehabilitation to rejuvenate the lake's ecosystem and to rid it of the encroachment respectively. Though conservation effort has somehow pulled along, it has largely made a symptomatic difference to the condition of the lake. And the rehabilitation plan which includes removing encroachment and resettling the people living inside the Dal hasn't made much of a headway, even though the plan dates back to 1987. Around 50,000 people live on some islands within the lake and around 750 houseboats are moored in its waters.

As the PCC makes it clear, the two and a half decades of the cleanup plan hasn't made a fundamental difference. The factors that menace the ecosystem of the lake haven't gone away. The lake's once large green belt has suffered an inexorable encroachment in parts. New residential colonies have come up on the lake's west and the existing colonies have become more congested including the hamlets inside Dal, together with the massive tourism related infrastructure along its 15.5 kilometre long Boulevard. And a significant part of the sewage and the agricultural effluents from a predominant part of these settlements empty into the lake.

Last year, the discovery of the Alligator Gar fish in the Lake by the Jammu and Kashmir Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA) further highlighted the existing polluted nature of the waterbody. This was the first time that this rare species of fish, which is native to North America, was found in Kashmir. The PCC report should serve as a wake-up call for the government to get its act together. The STP system needs urgent fixing and the other loopholes in the Dal conservation plan immediate plugging. Restoring Dal lake to its old glory is a tough pursuit, but it is nevertheless a pursuit we can't afford to give up.



Did You Know? Are Mutual Funds Risky?

Irshad Mushtaq

Just invest in mutual funds and feel secure knowing they are regulated by SEBI and the Government of India. Don't fall for the "Hera Pheri" misconception - mutual funds are a safe and profitable investment with long term thinking. Many people assume that mutual funds are risky and won't provide good returns, fearing scenarios similar to the film "Hera Pheri," where money is stolen or mismanaged. However, this is far from the truth. Mutual funds in India are strictly regulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), ensuring they are safe and well-managed.

Government involvement in mutual funds is significant and highly regulated. These funds are overseen by asset management companies (AMCs), which are also under governmental scrutiny. When you invest in mutual funds, your Demat account holds your investments, and the data is controlled by the Government of India, ensuring security.

The key concern should be selecting quality mutual funds that can provide good returns, ideally outperforming the Nifty over a long period. Here is where an experienced financial advisor plays an essential role. Investing in mutual funds isn't something just anyone can do haphazardly; it requires a systematic approach.

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In India, mutual funds have assets under management totaling approximately 44 lakh crores INR, with numerous investors trusting this investment vehicle. There are around 44 asset management companies handling these funds, showcasing their wide-spread acceptance and reliability.

Investing in mutual funds, with the proper guidance and understanding of the processes, can be a secure and profitable way to grow your wealth. The government's regulatory measures ensure that your investments are safe and managed appropriately.

Mutual funds in India are well-regulated by SEBI, ensuring safety and security for investors. With the right guidance, investing in mutual funds can be a profitable endeavor.

Learn from the insights of @IrshadMushtaq, writer, investor, entrepreneur & Founder of MI Securities! Connect for valuable financial advice at misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com

A Case For Honest Criticism



Rouhin Deb,



If the election results were correlated with issues in GDP measurement, one has to ask – were these issues not relevant to voters in 2019, or during the five state assembly elections in November 2023? At that time, the alleged uneven GDP growth did not seem to matter

The mandate in the national elections this year put forth an opportunity to decipher what could be the underlying causes that might have led to the fairly unexpected result. But the search for quick answers has often led to preconceived notions and pet theories rather than empirical data and sound economic principles.

One such article correlates the 2024 election results with issues in GDP measurement, arguing that the economic growth has not been as robust as has been officially estimated. Leaving aside the technical problems with such claims, such analyses fail to account for the "marginal" (that is what changed at the margin) or incremental explanation. That is, what changed between the election phenomena in 2024 and 2019 or the state elections in November 2023?

If the election results were correlated with issues in GDP measurement, one has to ask – were these issues not relevant to voters in 2019, or during the five state assembly elections in November 2023? At that time, the alleged uneven GDP growth did not seem to matter. If anything, elections in 2019, which were fresh from the effects of demonetisation and goods and services tax, saw voters giving a better mandate to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). In December 2023, the NDA swept to power in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh.

Let us assume finding jobs and food prices were the issues that voters were unhappy about in the recent elections. According to the Lokniti-CSDS pre-poll survey in April, around 52% respondents were unhappy with the government, listing unemployment and inflation as their biggest concerns. If we accept that these were the issues, why did they not matter in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand?

While voter concerns about

unemployment and inflation may be significant, these issues did not uniformly influence voting patterns across India. Explaining a national election result on this basis appears to be more of an unverified hypothesis than rigorous analysis. While criticism on specific policies of the government should always be encouraged, it should be backed by data and sound rationale.

The recent economic growth has been labelled by some critics as "jobless growth", who then advocate a larger role of the Centre in creating a job-intensive atmosphere. Such criticisms often ignore the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in our federal structure, especially other players such as the private sector, state and local governments, and entrepreneurs in creating a job-intensive atmosphere. Critics which expect the Centre to be able to unilaterally engineer a shift toward a labour-intensive economy – akin to a manufacturing giant like China – while refusing to address the role of regulatory burdens imposed by sub-national governments or the potential of individuals and state governments to foster greater entrepreneurial ambition, are unrealistic.

Moreover, such blind criticisms ignore the improvements that have taken place, usually favouring unreliable private analysis of publicly available and much-scrutinised official data. In a rebuttal of the recent Citi Group report on employment in India, the ministry of labour and employment points out that across indicators, "official data reveals a more optimistic picture of the Indian job market". The annual Periodic Labour Force Survey reports, for example, depict continually improving trends in labour market indicators since 2017-18. The worker population ratio (i.e. employment) has increased from 46.8% in 2017-18 to 56% in 2022-23, while the unemployment rate has declined from 6% to 3.2%. Simultaneously, formal employment has risen sharply, as more than 6.2 crore net subscribers

have joined Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (between September 2017 and March 2024), while more than 7.75 lakh new subscribers have joined the National Pension System under the central and state governments during 2023-24 alone.

Some experts have even criticised the government's increased focus on manufacturing and initiatives like the performance-linked incentive scheme, saying the world cannot accept another China-sized economy exporting manufactured goods and that the focus should be on services! At a time when India's trade imbalance with China is to the tune of \$87 billion and the world is looking for alternatives to China, this criticism lacks merit.

Critiques seeking to influence national economic policies through unreliable indicators, discredited hypotheses, and outdated data do a disservice to the discourse. The relentless pace of reforms over the last decade, coupled with fiscal and economic prudence, have made India the world's fifth-largest economy and the fastest-growing major economy, even as the top four struggle with stagnating growth and recession fears, and global growth stutters.

The last 10 years has seen several hard economic decisions by the government, which is reflecting in the robust fundamentals of the Indian economy. However, there is much that still need to be done to achieve the ambitious targets of becoming the third largest economy and a developed country. Achieving this needs honest criticism and balanced and rigorous analysis. Failing to do so undermines not only the discourse, but also the lives and aspirations of a billion-plus people.

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



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The Power Of Consistency

In a fast-paced and ever-changing world, the path to personal growth and success in one's life lies not in momentary bursts of motivation or in some occasional achievements, but importantly in the daily habits and routines that we cultivate. The seemingly small actions done everyday with precision and meticulousness have the power

to shape our behaviour, mindset, and ultimately our lives. Improving our daily habits is a continuous process, requiring patience, consistency and self-reflection. It is not just about striving for perfection, but for progress as well. Small steps taken consistently over time can lead to significant transformations. Needless to say that incorporating positive daily

habits into our lives is a powerful way to create a positive change. Additionally, it can be beneficial to seek inspiration and guidance from others who have achieved success through their daily habits. It is universally acknowledged that the establishment of daily routines is a cornerstone to prosperity and success. The subtle art of weaving discipline into the

fabric of everyday life does not come without its challenges. However, the rewards are manifold and long-lasting. It is through the meticulous crafting of these daily rituals that one can begin to see the transformative power of consistency.

Ranganathan Sivakumar

Mindful Fridays

Is It Okay to Ambush “Shabby” Looking Men and Groom Them?

Addressing Psychosis with Dignity. A Critical Look at Community Interventions, Harm, and Exploitation in the Name of Help

Wasim Kakroo

People who experience psychosis are in a mental state where they struggle to distinguish between what is real and what is imaginary; this can manifest as delusions (unshakable belief in something that is not true or possible) or hallucinations (seeing or hearing something that is not really there) and lead to confusion in their thoughts. Such people may often be seen on streets poorly dressed with unkempt beard and dirty clothes, talking to themselves and laughing for no apparent reason. Such people often face marginalisation and misunderstanding within our society (the irony is that some people might take them for some godly figures, unfortunately). When trying to help such people, it's important not only to take action but also to do it in the right way.

This article discusses an approach that has been used by a team of youth for the past few weeks and is being praised through various social media platforms but needs to be debated. It involves such teams helping people who have mental health issues (especially the people with psychotic disorders and found dressed in shabby clothes and ill-groomed body and hair) by cutting their hair and shaving their beards, giving them a bath, and putting them in clean clothes. Although these actions might appear helpful, they can sometimes be unkind and not right, particularly when videos of these actions are posted online. The article also offers suggestions for more caring and ethical ways to deal with these situations.

The Practice: A Superficial Solution

In many places, especially where mental health services are scarce such as ours, a team of people with good intentions might take it as a responsibility upon themselves to help those people who seem to be mentally unwell wandering on the roads all day along poorly groomed. They might do this by catching the person with psychosis, shaving their hair and beard, giving them a bath, and putting them in clean clothes. By doing so people from the team and their associates might think that making someone clean and well-dressed will help the affected person feel better about themselves and maybe



even improve their mental state.

At first, this might seem like a good idea. Obviously helping someone who looks like they're struggling is a praiseworthy thing to do. However, the way it is done may not be the ethical way of doing it. It can be very disrespectful and utterly dehumanising to force someone to change their appearance without asking them for it. It takes away their control over their own body and makes it seem like people with mental health issues in general and with psychosis in particular are not as good as other so-called “normal” people and need to be “fixed” by others.

The Role of Social Media: Exploiting Vulnerability

Among many other issues that need to be discussed in this regard, is how these actions are frequently recorded and shared on social media platforms. People post videos and pictures of individuals with psychosis being shaved, bathed, and dressed. Many times these videos when posted get messages that praise the helpers for their “good deeds.” These posts can become very popular online, receiving likes, shares, and comments that make the situation seem more dramatic.

Although the goal behind post-

ing such videos might be to encourage others to help, the truth is that these videos often take advantage of such people's vulnerability. They portray people with severe mental health issues such as schizophrenia as mere objects of pity, stripping them of dignity and turning their struggles into a form of entertainment. In addition, portrayal of their condition publicly can lead to more stigma and discrimination about mental health, making it harder for them to fit back into society.

The Ethical Dilemma: Consent and Dignity

The main problem with the approach of such community based teams is that people's rights and dignity are ignored. When such people try to help individuals with mental health issues in general and with psychosis in particular, they should always respect the person's choices and consent. Actions such as cutting a person's hair without asking or recording them without their consent are not only wrong but also make it harder to help them.

Helping individuals with mental health issues such as psychosis requires “no harm” policy. Even though the kind of help such teams deliver might be meant to



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make people's lives easy, however, they can cause serious emotional damage. The person might feel very upset and embarrassed if they are forced to clean up and then shown on social media, which can make their mental health worse and develop trust issues in them.

A Better Approach: Compassionate and Ethical Care

To effectively help people with psychosis, communities need to use approaches that show compassion, follow ethical guidelines, and are supported by research. Here are some strategies for dealing with these situations more scientifically and effectively:

Build Trust and Connection: Before you try to help people with psychosis you need to build a trusting relationship with them. This means being friendly, listening to their concerns and respecting their choices. Building trust will reduce their anxiety and resistance and they will be more willing to accept help.

Get Mental Health Professionals onboard: It's best to involve mental health professionals like psychiatrists, psychologists or social workers when helping someone with psychosis. They know how to assess the person's

needs and provide the right kind of help whether it's through counselling, medication or other forms of support.

Offer Help on Their Terms: Instead of making changes to someone's appearance without their consent, offer to help them in a way they choose. Before you cut their hair, shave their beard or dress them in new clothes, ask if they want help with getting a haircut, taking a shower, or getting clean clothes, and if they say no, respect their choice. Giving them options makes them feel more in control.

Create Protected Areas: It's important to have places where people with psychosis can get help and feel safe. These places should be free of judgement, where they can get things they need like food, a place to stay, and places to clean up, without worrying about being hurt or taken advantage of.

Teach the Community: Teaching people about mental health and reducing the negative views around it is very important. By helping the community understand what psychosis is and the difficulties people with it face, we can create a more supportive and kind environment. This can also lower the chances of people doing things that could be harmful.

Maintain Privacy and Respect: When helping someone, it's important to do so in a way that keeps their privacy and respects them. It is important not to take pictures or videos of them without their permission, and not to share their story with others unless they say it's okay. Keeping someone's privacy is very important and helps build trust and respect.

Promote Changes in the System: Communities should work to make changes in how mental health services are provided. This means pushing for easier access to care, more money for mental health programs, and rules that protect the rights of people with mental illnesses. To really help people with psychosis, we need to make changes in how things are done at the local, national, and international levels.

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Eating, Blood Sugar and Mental Health

Mary Scourboutakos

The proverbial “sugar high” that follows the ingestion of a sweet treat is a familiar example of the potentially positive effects of food on mood.

On the flip side, feeling “hangry” – the phenomenon where hunger manifests in the form of anger or irritability – illustrates how what we eat, or don't eat, can also provoke negative emotions.

The latest research suggests that blood sugar fluctuations are partly responsible for the connection between what we eat and how we feel. Through its effects on our hormones and our nervous system, blood sugar levels can be fuel for anxiety and depression.

Mental health is complex. There are countless social, psychological and biological factors that ultimately determine any one person's experience. However, numerous randomized controlled trials have demonstrated that diet is one biological factor that can significantly influence risk for symptoms of depression and anxiety, especially in women.

As a family medicine resident with a Ph.D. in nutrition,

I have witnessed the fact that antidepressant medications work for some patients but not others. Thus, in my view, mental health treatment strategies should target every risk factor, including nutrition.

The role of the glycemic index

Many of the randomized controlled trials that have proven the link between diet and mental health have tested the Mediterranean diet or a slightly modified version of it. The Mediterranean diet is typically characterized by lots of vegetables – especially dark green, leafy vegetables – fruit, olive oil, whole grains, legumes and nuts, with small amounts of fish, meat and dairy products. One of the many attributes of the Mediterranean diet that may be responsible for its effect on mood is its low glycemic index.

The glycemic index is a system that ranks foods and diets according to their potential to raise blood sugar. Thus, in keeping with the observation that blood sugar fluctuations affect mood, high glycemic index diets that produce drastic spikes in blood sugar have been associated with

increased risk for depression and to some extent anxiety.

High glycemic index carbohydrates include white rice, white bread, crackers and baked goods. Therefore, diets high in these foods may increase risk for depression and anxiety. Meanwhile, low glycemic index carbs, such as parboiled rice and al dente pasta, that are more slowly absorbed and produce a smaller blood sugar spike are associated with decreased risk.

How diet affects mood

Many scientific mechanisms have been proposed to explain the connection between diet and mental health. One plausible explanation that links blood sugar fluctuations with mood is its effect on our hormones.

Every time we eat sugar or carbohydrates such as bread, rice, pasta, potatoes and crackers, the resulting rise in blood sugar triggers a cascade of hormones and signaling molecules. One example, dopamine – our brain's pleasure signal – is the reason we can experience a “sugar high” following the consumption of dessert or baked goods. Dopamine is the body's way of rewarding us for procuring the calories, or energy, that

are necessary for survival.

Insulin is another hormone triggered by carbohydrates and sugar. Insulin's job is to lower blood sugar levels by escorting the ingested sugar into our cells and tissues so that it can be used for energy. However, when we eat too much sugar, too many carbs, or high glycemic index carbs, the rapid increase in blood sugar prompts a drastic rise in insulin. This can result in blood sugar levels that dip below where they started.

This dip in blood sugar sparks the release of adrenaline and its cousin noradrenaline. Both of these hormones appropriately send glucose into the bloodstream to restore blood sugar to the appropriate level.

However, adrenaline influences more than just blood sugar levels. It also affects how we feel, and its release can manifest as anxiety, fear or aggression. Hence, diet affects mood through its effect on blood sugar levels, which trigger the hormones that dictate how we feel.

Interestingly, the rise in adrenaline that follows sugar and carbohydrate consumption doesn't happen until four to five hours after eating. Thus, when eating sugar and carbs,

dopamine makes us feel good in the short term; but in the long term, adrenaline can make us feel bad.

However, not everyone is equally affected. Identical meals can produce widely varying blood sugar responses in different people, depending on one's sex, as well as genetics, sedentaryness and the gut microbiome.

And it's important to keep in mind that, as previously mentioned, mental health is complicated. So in certain circumstances, no amount of dietary optimization will overcome the social and psychological factors that may underpin one's experience.

Nevertheless, a poor diet could certainly make a person's experience worse and is thus relevant for anyone, especially women, hoping to optimize mental health. Research has shown that women, in particular, are more sensitive to the effects of the glycemic index and diet overall.

Unfortunately, simple solutions, such as swapping sugar for artificial sweeteners, are not an option. Research has shown that among all processed foods, artificial sweeteners and artificially sweetened beverages are

most strongly associated with depression.

Optimizing mood with food

The most obvious way to stabilize blood sugar levels is to decrease sugar and carbohydrate intake. However, this is not the only way. Research has proven that simple changes can drastically mitigate volatile blood sugar fluctuations. Some strategies to stabilize blood sugar and optimize mood include:

- ▶ Make low glycemic index carbohydrates such as parboiled rice, whole grain bread and al dente pasta dietary staples and be mindful of how many high glycemic index carbohydrates you consume. I give my patients this guide to increase their awareness of the glycemic index of various carbohydrates.
- ▶ Eat carbohydrates earlier in the day such as breakfast or lunchtime, as opposed to later in the day, like dinner or, worse yet, as a nighttime snack. Our hormones follow a circadian rhythm, and carbs eaten earlier in the day produce a smaller blood sugar spike compared with carbs eaten later in

the day.

- ▶ Avoid eating carbohydrates on their own, such as snacking on a box of crackers or downing a bowl of rice. Always strive to combine carbohydrates with proteins such as beans, nuts, meat and fish, or with healthy fats such as olive oil and avocado. The combination of nutrients slows down the digestion of carbohydrates and thereby produces a smaller blood sugar spike.
- ▶ Eat carbohydrates at the end of the meal, after eating vegetables and protein first. Just changing the order in which foods are eaten can drastically lower the blood sugar spike that comes after.
- ▶ Eat a salad dressed with olive oil and vinegar prior to eating carbohydrates. The combination of vegetables, acid from the vinegar and fat from the olive oil, all work together to slow carbohydrate absorption and minimize the resultant blood sugar spike.

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