# KASHMIR OBSERVER

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#### **Confusion Over Milad Holiday**

**Majid Nabi** 

Srinagar: Confusion and uncertainty prevailed on Monday, as the holiday commemorating Eid Milad-un-Nabi was observed a day before the Prophet's (Pbuh) birthday.

Government employees were left in a state of confusion as the General Administrative Department (GAD) did not issue an order specifying wheth-er or not the Milad holiday was to be observed on Monday.

"Since no formal order was issued, we had to rely on the I&K Bank calendar. To find out if I should attend office or not, I had to call my seniors," Ghulam Jeelani, a government employ-

Every year, people celebrate Milad, which commemorates the prophet's birth anniversary. Nevertheless, there was a sense of confusion across J&K as no formal order specifying whether or not the holiday was to be recognized today.

"We assumed there wouldn't be a holiday today when we couldn't find an order from GAD. And in the morning, I left the home to attend the office, which I discovered was closed," Tariq Ahmad, another employee said.

Schools across the valley faced similar | More on P6



**■id-e-Milad Celebrations Begin:** Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi, the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), is being celebrated with religious fervour across Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday. Muslims across the world use this day to rekindle their faith, seeking ■inspiration from the exemplary character, wisdom, and compassion of the Prophet. A festive look prevailed in Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir as many shrines, mosques and thoroughfares were decorated and

illuminated with florescent lights while religious flags and buntings were hoisted atop many buildings and vehicles. Thousands of people thronged the Kashmir's most revered shrine Hazratbal in Srinagar for the night-long prayers on the occasion of Eid-e-Milad un Nabi. The devotees will also have the glimpse of the holy relic of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) after pre-dawn prayers on Tuesday morning and later for the remaining four prayers of the day. | More on P6

**Er Rashid Wasn't** 

**Saiad Lone** 

**Press Trust Of India** 

In Jail For 2 Months:

Srinagar: People's Conference presi-

dent Sajad Lone on Monday launched

a scathing attack on Lok Sabha mem-

ber Sheikh Abdul Rashid, alleging

that the latter was not in jail for the past two months. Lone said the timing of Rashid's release from the Tihar

This is the worst executed plan

of Delhi since 1947. No plan has been

so badly executed. This plan smells

of BIP." Lone told reporters here. The

People's Conference | More on P6

40% Independents In Fray

**Vote-Splitting Ploy** 

Press Trust Of India

territories. | More on P6

divide votes.

**Rivals Accuse BJP Of** 

Srinagar: More than 40 per cent of the 908 candidates contesting the assembly elections in Jammu and

Kashmir are Independents, leading to claims that a large number of them

have been propped up by the BJP to

These are the first assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir since

the 2019 abrogation of Article 370

and its reorganisation into two Union

jail smacked of a BJP plan.

# PM To Address Rally In

Srinagar On Sep 19

**Majid Nabi** 

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a star campaigner for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BIP), will hit the campaign trail in Kashmir on September 19.

A mega rally is being planned at Sher-e-Kashmir Park (SKICC) by the BJP and the visit will happen a day after Jammu and Kashmir would have voted in the first of the three phase election on September 18.

The rally is going to be a pivotal moment in the party's campaign strategy and would also mark a significant step in bolstering the BJP's presence and deepening its connection with the people of Jammu and Kashmir," said a senior BJP leader who attended the core body meeting in Srinagar on Sunday, adding that around 20,000 to 30,000 party workers are



expected to attend the rally. Sharing details, Chairman of the BJP Campaign Committee, Dr Modi desires to interact directly with the youth of J&K and encourage them to seize this opportunity to usher in a new phase of development in the union territory."

The former deputy chief minister of the BJ-PDP | More on P6

#### Will Bury Terror In J&K: Shah

**Promises Welfare Measures** 

Srinagar: The Congress on Monday released its

manifesto for the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, promising a slew of welfare mea-

The highlight of the manifesto -- Haath

The manifesto was released by AICC chief

"We will provide an additional financial

spokesperson Pawan Khera and PCC president

support of Rs 4,000 for landless, tenant, and

land-owning farming households per year.

We will also arrange 99-year leases to land-

less farmers cultivating state land," Khera said.

up for all district-level irrigation projects to ensure 100 per cent irrigation for farmers in

He said a Rs 2,500-crore fund will be set

For the youth of Jammu and Kashmir, the

party promised an unemployment allowance

of up to ,Rs 3,500 per month for one year to

The party promised to fill one lakh vacant government posts by issuing a job calendar

within 30 days. The manifesto promises to

revive special border recruitment for police,

fire brigade and forest protection force. It also

promised to revive the | More on P6

Tariq Hameed Karra at the party office here.

Badlega Halaat -- is insurance for all crops against natural calamities and a minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 72 per kilogram for apple.

sures for farmers, women and the youth.

For Farmers, Women

**Press Trust Of India** 

Jammu and Kashmir.

qualified youths.

sserting that the BJP-led central government will "bury terrorism" so deep that it can never rise again, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday alleged that the National Conference, PDP and the Congress wanted to release terrorists and stone-pelters to plunge Jammu and Kashmir into a terror inferno again. Addressing three election rallies on the last day of campaigning for the | More on P6

#### **Have Powers Of LG Increased? Congress Unveils 'Haath Badlega Halaat' Manifesto** Manoj Sinha's Take

**KO Web Desk** 

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has questioned the controversy over the alleged increase in the powers of Lieutenant Governor of the union Territory, asking if such a bill has been presented in parliament.

Speaking about the Opposition comments on the issue, he told NDTV in an exclusive interview: "Some things are done to create controversies. If the powers of a Governor or Lieutenant Governor has to be increased, it has to be approved by parliament. Did such

a bill ever come in parliament?" Pointing out that the State Reorganisation Act was challenged in the Supreme Court along with the scrapping of the Article 370, he said it now has the approval of the court.

In July, the Union home ministry had amended the transaction rules in the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019. The law was originally passed as the Article 370 granting J&K special powers was scrapped and the state was bifurcated into two



Union Territories. Under the new law, the

Lieutenant Governor was granted powers on key administrative and legal matters, from police and public order to postings and prosecution sanction. This drew a sharp reaction from the Opposition, which said the step will render the Chief Minister 'powerless" and "disempower" the region's people.

"No one has to get involved in the question of rights," Sinha said. "The assembly elections will be held soon. What will be the goals of the new government, whichever party is it? If it is peace, prosperity, development | More on P6

### **KU Postpones** Exams On Sep 24, 25, 30

Srinagar: In view of upcoming assembly elections, the University of Kashmir (KU) Monday postponed all the examinations scheduled | More on P6

### Phase I: 24 Assembly **Seats Set To Go For Polls Tomorrow**

- 23.27 Lakh Voters To Decide Fate Of 219 Candidates
- 3,276 Polling Stations Set Up Across 7 J&K Districts

**Observer News Service** 

Srinagar: The stage is set for the first assembly showdown in ten years in Jammu and Kashmir, with the first phase of polling scheduled for Wednesday (September 18). In the first phase, twenty-

four assembly segments spread across the Chenab valley districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban, and south Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian will be up for grabs. The campaign in the seats has concluded, with political parties and independent candidates canvassing in every

tract more voters. Total 3276 polling stations are set up

nook and corner to at-

for polling to be held across the 7 districts.

These include 302 Urban Polling Stations and 2974 Rural Polling Stations. Four election staff, including Presiding Officer will be stationed in every polling station. In total, more than 14,000 Polling staff will be deployed on duty for 1st

phase election.
A total of 23,27,580 electors are eligible to vote during the Phase 1 of the J&K Assembly Elections, including 11,76,462 male electors, 11,51,058 female electors and 60 Third Gender Electors. As many as 1.23 lakh youth between the age 18-19 years, along with

28,309 Person with Disabilities (PwDs) and 15,774 elderly | More on P6

#### **Key Candidates Battle In South Kashmir**

s south Kashmir gears up to go into polls in the first phase of Assembly elections on September 18, political analysts say that there is a clear edge for many seats, while there is a neck-to-neck contest between the National Conference (NC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) on other seats. | More on P6

**Multi-tier Security Put Up** In J&K

ulti-tier security arrangements have been put in place to ensure free and fair assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, a senior police official said. "As the first phase of voting will | More on P6



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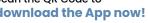
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#### 'Replacing Rice With Other **Crops Could Help Recover** Groundwater Lost Since 2000'

**Press Trust Of India** 

eplacing about 40 per cent of the area sown with rice with other crops could help recover 60-100 cubic kilometres of groundwater lost since 2000 in north India, a study has found.

Current cropping patterns -- dominated by rice, which relies heavily on groundwater for irrigation -- could result in a loss of about 13-43 cubic kilometres of groundwater if warming of the planet continues, a team of researchers, including those from the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar, Gujarat, said.

The researchers proposed shifting from existing cropping habits by cutting down on cultivating rice as a potential solution for sustaining the fast-depleting resource in a warmer world that threatens food and water

"Replacing 37 per cent area of rice with other crops can recover 61 to 108 cubic kilometres groundwater compared to 13 to 43 cubic kilometres with current cropping pattern under the 1.5-3 degrees Celsius global warming levels," the authors wrote in the study accepted for publication in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) Nexus. Compared to current cropping trends, the benefits of switching crops in saving groundwater are more during the prolonged dry periods predicted under global warming, the researchers said According to the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, if current trends con-



tinue, global warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2050 and could reach 3 degrees Celsius by 2100.

Changing crop patterns can be substantially beneficial -particularly for the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh -- for ensuring groundwater sustainability and farmers' profitability, the authors said.

They also found that switching of crops did not substantially impact groundwater levels where recovery rates were low such as in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand.

The findings have policy implications for identifying optimal cropping patterns for sustaining groundwater in the irrigated regions of north India, along with ensuring farmers' profitability and income, they said.

Previous estimates have suggested that about 300 cubic kilometres of groundwater have been lost between 2002 and 2022 as a result of the cropping trends in north India, where 80 per cent of the cultivated area is

Parts of Punjab and the Ganga basin experienced the fastest rates of groundwater depletion in the world, the researchers said, and added that northern and northwestern regions of India are among the global ground-

Studies have shown crop switching to be beneficial for environmental sustair China, the US and India.

In this study, the researchers looked at current cropping patterns in regions that have seen considerable groundwater depletion. The team then used groundwater, well and satellite observations and models to estimate groundwater lost between 2002 and 2022.

## **Chatting With ChatGPT Found To Soften Beliefs Of Conspiracy Theorists**

**Press Trust Of India** 

'conversation' with chatbot lasting under 10 minutes was found to mellow down conspiracy theorists, believing some of the most deeply entrenched conspiracies, such as those involving the Covid-19 pandemic, a new study has found.

A team, including researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, US, designed the Al-model ChatGPT to be highly persuasive and engage partici-pants in tailored dialogues, such that participants' conspiratorial claims were factually rebutted by the chatbot.

For this, the researchers leveraged advancements in GPT-4, the large language model powering ChatGPT, that "has access to vast amounts of information and the ability to generate be-spoke arguments." A form of artificial intelligence, a large language model is trained on massive amounts of textual data and can, therefore, respond to users' requests in the natural language.



The team found that among over 2,000 self-identified conspiracy believers, conversations with the AI-model ChatGPT lowered the average participant's beliefs by about 20 per cent.

Further, about a fourth of the participants, all of whom believed a certain conspiracy previously, "disavowed" it after chatting with the AI-powered bot, the research-

"Large language models can

thereby directly refute particular evidence each individual cites as supporting their conspiratorial beliefs," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Science.

In two separate experiments, the participants were asked to describe a conspiracy theory they believed in and provide supporting evidence, following which they engaged in a conversation with the chatbot.

The conversation lasted 8.4 min on average and comprised three rounds of back-and-forth interaction (not counting the initial elicitation of reasons for belief from the participant), ..." the authors wrote. A control group of participants discussed an unrelated topic with the AI.

"The treatment reduced participants' belief in their chosen conspiracy theory by 20 per cent on average. This effect persist-ed undiminished for at least 2 months..." the authors wrote.

Lead author Thomas Costello,

an assistant professor of psychology at the American University, said, "Many conspiracy believers were indeed willing to update their views when presented with compelling counter evidence." Costello added,
"The AI provided page-long, highly detailed accounts of why the given conspiracy was false in each round of conversation -- and was also adept at being amiable and building rapport with the participants." The researchers explained that until now, delivering persuasive, factual messages to a large sample of conspiracy theorists in a lab experiment has proved challenging.

For one, conspiracy theorists are often well-informed about the conspiracy -- sometimes more so than skeptics, they said, and added that conspiracies also vary widely, such that evidence supporting a certain theory can differ from one theorist to another.

"Previous efforts to debunk dubious beliefs have a major limitation: One needs to guess what people's actual beliefs are in order to debunk them -- not a simple task," said co-author Gordon Pennycook, an associate professor of psychology at Cornell University.

"In contrast, the AI can respond directly to people's specific arguments using strong counter evidence. This provides a unique opportunity to test just how responsive people are to counter evidence," Pennycook said.

As society debates the pros and cons of AI, the authors said that the AI's ability to connect across diverse topics within seconds can help tailor counter arguments to specific conspiracies of a believer in ways that aren't possible for a

# Study Targets Cardiac Fibrosis-Controlling Enzyme To Treat Heart Failure

As society ages, the number of patients suffering from heart failure grows significantly. Fibrosis, or excessive growth of fibrotic tissue in the heart, has been linked to the advancement of heart failure. A group from Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine in Japan discovered an enzyme called protein kinase N (PKN) that controls cardiac

The enzyme converts heart fibroblasts to myofibroblasts, putting the heart's integrity at risk. Deleting this enzyme reduced ventricular dysfunction, indicating that anti-PKN therapies are a prospective therapy for protecting patients from heart failure.

The findings were published in Nature Communications. Risk of heart attack

The heart maintains its integrity by the usage of tiny cells known as fibroblasts. which are frequently transformed into myofibroblasts following damage. Myofibroblasts promote wound healing by creating fibrous connective tissues like collagen and elastin. However, in heart failure patients, they frequently cause extra tissue to collect, resulting in hardening of heart tissue and reduced function, a disease known as fibrosis. This process reduces the integrity of



the heart's structure, increasing the risk of a heart attack.

The enzyme PKN has been implicated in a signaling cascade that causes heart fibroblast activation. A group led by Drs. Satoya Yoshida, Mikito Takefuji, and Toyoaki Murohara in the Department of Cardiology at the Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine suspected the involvement of PKN in the changes of fibroblasts to myofibroblasts seen in fibrosis. In collaboration with colleagues at the Max Planck Institute, they investigated its role.

farction and heart failure model. These proteins are essential components responsible for the tissue buildup observed in fibrosis. They also found that mice with suppressed PKN1 and 2 did not show conversion of fibroblasts to In mammal cells, there are three forms myofibroblasts.

of PKN: PKN1, 2, and 3. Using RNA-

sequencing data, they identified PKN1 and 2 in heart fibroblasts. The study

used mice raised without PKN1 and

PKN2. It found that although heart

function remained unaffected, there

was a notable decrease in actin and col-

lagen expression in the myocardial in-

### 'Govts Should Engage AI **Research Institutions To Detect Fake News'**

Press Trust Of India

With the need for regulating dissemination of information becoming extremely crucial, governments shouldengageAlresearchinstitutions andsocialmediacompanies todetect and flag false or misleading content, says a new book. Author Aswin Chandarr says "The Inevitable AI: Art Of Growth With Generative Intelligence" is a "friendly guide" to the world of AI or artificial intelligence, seeking to demystify its essence, strengths and limitations.Governmentshave traditionally been the custodians of public distraditionally been the custodians of public discourse and the architects of nationalnarratives. However, thelandscape has significantly changed with the advent of social media and its unprecedentedreach, the book says.

"Distorted narratives can manipulatepublicopinion, sway elections, and even incite violence. The need for governments to regulate the dissemination of information has never been more crucial," it says. How can this be achieved? "One approachis throughmonitoring and fact-checking. Governments could collaborate with Alresearch institutions and socialmedia companies to develop sophisticated AI systems capable of detecting and flagging false or misleading content," suggests Chandarr. "Additionally, public investments can be directed towards enhancing digital literacy, which would equip citizens with the necessary skills to discern truth from falsehood in the digital arena." he says.

#### IS AVAILABLE IN SRIANGAR AT FOLLOWING PLACES AFTAB MAR-ABDULLAH NEWS AMIRA KADAL **BUDSHAH NEWS AGENCY KET AGENCY** SIKENDER NEWS **AMIRAKADAL** RASHEED GAZALA LAL CHOWK **ANGENCY** GUPKARI NEWS LAL CHOWK RAFIQ NEWS AGENCY **BATMALOO AGENCY** KHAN NEWS AGENCY REGAL CHOWK **DALGATE** MEHRAJ NEWS AGENCY RASHEED NEWS **DALGATE** ASHIQ NEWS AGENCY **GAGRIBAL AGENCY IMRAN NEWS KOHNKHAN SHALIMAR** SAMA NEWS AGENCY **AGENCY** KOHINOOR NEWS **NISHAT HYDERPORA** WANI NEWS AGENCY **AGENCY** SHEIKH NEWS **HYDERPORA** AL NOOR NEWS AGENCY NOWGAM **AGENCY** FAIRDEAL NEWS BAGH E **AIRPORT BISMILLAH NEWS AGENCY MEHTAB AGENCY** AL FALAH NEWS **NATIPORA** RAJ BAGH FIDA NEWS AGENCY **AGENCY** FIRDOUS NEWS **PIRBAGH** HARMINDER NEWS AGENCY **GOGJI BAGH** AGENCY

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R/o Barzulla Karhama Baramulla

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### **Public Notice**

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This is for the information for the general public that in my adhar card my name and dob has wrongly entered as Snowber Hameed D/o Abdul Hameed Bhat and dob 11-05-2012 While my Actual name is ZAIRA HAMID D/O ABDUL HAMID BHAT and correct Dob is 11-05-2011. Now I want it's correction in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact to the concerned department with in a period of 7 days no objection shall be entertained after that. **ZAIRA HAMID** 

D/O ABDUL HAMID BHAT **R/O NASRULLAHPORA BUDGAM** CELL 7006322036

mcb

### DGP Extends Eid Milad-un-Nabi Greetings To people

**Observer News Service** 

Srinagar: On the auspicious occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi, Director General of Police, J&K, R.R. Swain has extended his warm wishes to all citizens, families of martyrs, police personnel, security forces, and their families in Jammu and Kashmir

In his message, the DGP has said,"Eid Milad-un-Nabi is a time for togetherness, sharing happiness and worries with family, friends, and community. Let us express grati-

tude to the Almighty and on this auspicious occasion pray for peace and prosperity in the Union Territory."

The DGP, J&K while remembering those who sacrificed their lives for peace in the region has impressed upon all personnel to work for the families of these martyrs.

Conveying his heartfelt thanks to the brave police and security force personnel for ensuring safety, the DGP has prayed, "May this Eid Miladun-Nabi bring joy to our lives, love to our hearts, and peace to our UT".

### Bukhari Greets People On Eid Milad-un-Nabi

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Monday extended warm greetings to the people, particularly the Muslim community, on the auspicious occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW).

He prayed that this revered occasion brings peace, prosperity, and wellbeing to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who have been grappling with hardships and challenging situations for quite a long time.

In his message on the auspicious occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said, "Eid Milad-un-Nabi, which commemorates the birth of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is

one of the most revered occasions for people around the world. This blessed day brings divine grace to humanity, as Almighty Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a messenger of peace and harmony for all living beings. I extend my heartfelt greetings to everyone, especially to the Muslim community, on this auspicious occasion. I urge all, particularly devotees and worshippers, to pray for peace, tranquility, and the well-being of our land and its people on this sacred

"May this Eid Milad-un-Nabi bring peace and harmony into our lives and may the blessings of this sacred occasion fill our hearts with Allah's mercy, guiding us to the righteous path," he prayed.

# Will Sagar Retain Khanyar seat 5th time in a row?

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Out of the eight assembly constituencies in Srinagar district, there is a stronghold of the National Conference (NC) i.e. Khanyar segment where the party's candidate, Ali Muhammad Sagar has never lost elections against anyone since 1996.

Sagar, who is among the 10 candidates in the electoral fray this time, has won the elections four times in a row. He was first elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) in the 1996 elections.

While the seat is set to go to the polls on September 25, in the second phase of assembly elections, a total of 91226 electorates are scheduled to cast their ballots in favour of their favourite representatives. The electorates include 45407 males and 45816 females, besides three Transgender.

The prominent candidates out of the 10 vying for the seat include Ali Muhammad Sagar and former Deputy Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Sheikh Imran, who is contesting as an independent candidate.

The other candidates in the battlefield include Peoples Democratic Party's Tafazul Mushtaq, Apni Party's Bilal Ahmad Mir, Farooq Ahmad of National Panthers Party (BHIM), five other independent candidates.

A total of six independent candidates are vying for the seat in the phase-II.

However, the question remains whether the four-time MLA, Ali Muhammad Sagar will be defeated in the upcoming assembly elections or will he continue to retain the seat for the fifth time in a row.

Sagar first won the elections in 1996. He later retained the seat in three consecutive assembly polls in 2002, 2008 and 2014.

In the previous 2014 assembly elections, Sagar had managed to secure 6505 votes and defeated his nearest rival by a margin of 1,167 votes.

### Gazanfar Ali Seeks Support For Lal Chowk AC

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Gazanfar Ali, former Commissioner of Srinagar Municipal Corporation, is contesting the upcoming assembly elections from the Lal Chowk constituency on the Engineer Rashid led Awami Itihaad Party (AIP) ticket.

Addressing a gathering of supporters, Ali appealed to voters to give him a chance, promising not to disappoint them.

Gazanfar Ali vowed to transform Srinagar into a beautiful landscape if elected, stating that his doors would always be open to the people. He emphasized his commitment to mitigating the sufferings of the people and fighting

against the drug menace.

The AIP candidate also



highlighted the need to address unemployment among youth, promising to prioritize job creation and engagement opportunities.

Ali faces competition from Engineer Ajaz Hussain of the BJP, Zuhaib Mir of the PDP, Muhammad Ashraf Mir of the Apni Party, and Ahsan Pardesi of the NC.

The Lal Chowk Assembly segment goes to polls on September 25. [KNT]



### **Srinagar Smart City**

# **Roads Marred By Dust Pollution, People Suffer**

**Observer News Service** 

Srinagar: The Srinagar Smart City Project, aimed at transforming the city's infrastructure, has become a continuous source of nuisance for residents due to rampant dust and pollution. The road from Bohrikadal to Khanyar, a key stretch in Srinagar city, has been rendered impassable due to excessive dust, causing hardships for pedestrians and commuters.

Shopkeepers in the area are struggling to keep their businesses afloat as the heavy dust pollution has deterred customers from visiting their shops. The situation has been exacerbated by the use of bajri and other materials by contractors, which has worsened the dust pollution after the filling of drains.

Locals are aghast at the



Our business
has been badly hit
as customers don't
visit our shops
due to pollution.
Authorities are
unmoved, doing
nothing

government's approach to the issue, expressing resentment over the lack of accountability. "We don't want development at the cost of our health," said a local resident to the news agency Kashmir News Trust adding

that the construction material is lying everywhere, and the roads are dilapidated, making it difficult to commute.

The dust pollution has also raised serious health concerns, with residents fearing long-term effects on their well-being. "Look at these flowers and plants and vehicles, all have been disfigured due to heavy dust pollution," said a trader.

"Our business has been badly hit as customers don't visit our shops due to pollution. Authorities are unmoved, doing nothing," he added.

The locals said that the situation has persisted for over a year, with no respite in sight. They have demanded immediate action from the authorities to mitigate the dust pollution and ensure that development projects do not come at the cost of their health and wellbeing. [KNT]



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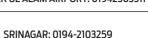
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PAMPORE: 01933-294132
PATTAN: 01954-293507

#### **HIGHWAY STATUS**



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

QAZIGUND: 01951-296153



PRAYERS

FAJR 4: 50

ZUHR 12:36

ASR 4: 53

Magrib 6:42

ISHA 8: 02

#### This Day In History

- 642 Arab forces under Amr ibn al-'As conquer Alexandria
- 1462 The Battle of wiecino (or Battle of arnowiec) is fought during Thirteen Years' War.
- 1598 Dutch sailors discover island of Mauritius
- 1644 French troops occupy Mainz
- 1678 France & Spain sign Treaties of Nijmegen
   1778 1st treaty between the US & Indian tribes signed (Fort Pitt)
- 1809 Peace between Sweden and Russia in the Finnish War. The territory to become Finland is ceded to Russia by the Treaty of Fredrikshamn.
- 1862 Battle of Mumfordville, Kentucky, US Col J Wilder surrenders city
- 1862 American Civil War: The Allegheny Arsenal explosion results in the single largest civilian disaster during the war; 78 workers killed.
- Africa
  1916 WWI flying ace The Red Baron of the German

1899 - 1st British troops leave Bombay for South

- Luftstreitkräfte, wins his first aerial combat near Cambrai, France
- 1924 Italy signs treaty of Rapallo
- 1934 USSR joins League of Nations (Netherland, Switzerland & Portugal vote no)
   1939 - German U-29 sinks British aircraft carrier
- Courageous, 519 die
- 1939 Soviet Union invades Eastern Poland allowing Germans to advance West, taking 217,000 Poles prisoner, without a formal declaration of war
- 1940 Adolf Hitler indefinitely postpones Operation Sealion, the planned German invasion of Great Britain
- 1941 World War II: A decree issued by the Soviet State Committee of Defense, restoring Vsevobuch "Universal compulsory military training of the citizens of the USSR" in the face of the "Great Patriotic War"
- 1943 World War II: Soviet city of Bryansk is liberated from Nazis.
- 1944 Dutch begin railroad strike against German occupiers
- 1959 Transit 1A, 1st navigational satellite launched: failed to orbit
- 1959 Typhoon kills 2,000 in Japan & Korea
- 1962 US space officials announce selection of 9 new astronauts
- 1968 Zond 5 completes circumnavigation of Moon
   1970 Jordan launches offensive against guerrilla army

### From KO Archives

### CM Strips Ministers Of Security

Observer News Service

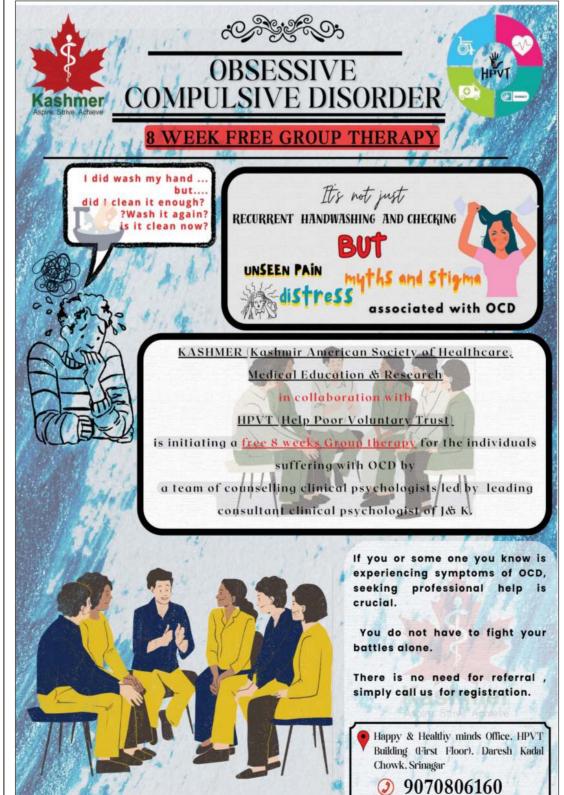
rinagar-: The State Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah has ordered his ministers and senior officers of the administration not to use pilot jeeps, except when they are on tour outside Jammu and Srinagar cities.

The Chief Minister also ordered the measures to economise manpower and to reduce inconvenience to general public. The CM's order states there shall be only one escort jeep for ministers and chief secretary while other senior officers shall be given only a PSO and a gunman for their security.

"Sirens on official vehicle would not be used henceforth," an official press release said here this evening. The ministers and senior officers have been asked not to use flags within Jammu and Srinagar cities.

Only the vehicles of ministers and chief secretary would use red lights. The CM has also directed to ensure smooth flow of traffic in the interest of general public with due regard to security aspect.

(Kashmir Observer, September 17, 1998)



### KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Tuesday | 17-09-2024

### Vote Sensibly

ith every passing day, the electoral scene is getting more interesting. As against the earlier domination of the two political entities like the National Conference and the PDP, the scene has become suddenly overcrowded, with more political parties and the independent candidates throwing their hats in the ring. This has created confusion in the public mind with by and large, similar manifestos, identical rhetoric, and same slogans doing the rounds. The general opinion is that Jammu and Kashmir will have a hung assembly with no party being in a position to form the government on its own. That is, apart from the BJP which sees a consolidation in its favour in a less politically crowded Jammu division. That is, if a rejuvenated Congress under Rahul Gandhi is unable to make deeper inroads to upset its calculations. Should the Congress fare well in Jammu, it could splinter the mandate across the union territory, with the new government composed of multiple parties. And it would be a lame duck government from the word go, with none of them in a position to run a stable government. But the entire effort of the BJP is to prevent such a turn of events and ensure a decent number of seats for it in Jammu and then form a government with support of smaller parties or independents from the Valley. This could also fulfill the party's dream of having the first BJP chief minister in J&K. As things stand, this appears an eminently realizable goal.

The entry of just-released Engineer Rashid has both livened up the electoral scene and also made the outcome further predictable. He is drawing good crowds all across the Valley, although still short of expectations. In South Kashmir, which is not his constituency, the crowds rooted for him wherever he went. It is still not certain whether he will win seats across the Valley, but he is certain to create a major disruption. His presence has already strained the grip of the established parties like the NC, PDP and the Congress, as well as the smaller parties like the People's Conference. The alliance between Rashid and the Jamaat-e Islami is expected to further queer the pitch for the NC and the PDP. The situation is expected to take more turns going forward. The anticipated division and sub-division of votes will profoundly impact the Valley's representation in the Assembly. Whether to its advantage or detriment, only time will tell. This is why it is incumbent on people to exercise their franchise very sensibly this time.

#### OTHER OPINON

Did You Know?

### Why SIPs in Mutual Funds are the Best Option for Regular Investment

'nvesting in the stock market can be volatile and unpredictable, making it difficult to time investments correctly. No one can perfectly predict market highs or lows, even for high-quality companies that generally offer returns over the long term. This is where Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) in mutual funds come into play as

#### The Benefits of SIPs

1. Regular Investment: SIPs allow you to invest a fixed amount regularly, ensuring that your investment is spread across different

2. Cost Averaging: By investing regularly, you average out the cost of your investments, buying more units when prices are low and fewer

3. Simplicity: SIPs are easy to set up and automate, making the investment process seamless for the average investor.

#### Choosing the Right Mutual Fund

Not all mutual funds are created equal. It's crucial to select a mutual fund scheme that aligns with your financial goals and risk appetite. Professional advice can be invaluable here, ensuring that your chosen fund offers better returns compared to selecting a fund on your own.

#### **Trusted Advisory Services**

A reputable advisor plays a significant role in maximizing your returns. Their expertise and experience in fund selection can leverage your investments to create significant wealth over time. An advisor can also help you plan a Systematic Withdrawal Plan (SWP), allowing you to withdraw regular amounts post-retirement or after a set period.

#### Invest Early and Consistently

Starting a SIP at an early age can significantly impact your corpus over time. The power of compounding works wonders, and the disci-plined approach helps in building a substantial savings pool. An SWP later in life can provide you with a steady income stream, complementing other retirement savings

#### Flexibility and Liquidity

One major advantage of mutual funds is liquidity. You can withdraw your investments anytime, making it a flexible option compared to other long-term investments.

In summary, SIPs in mutual funds are an effective way for an average person to earn returns from the stock market. With professional advice, you can make the most out of your investments, building a substantial corpus while mitigating risks associated with market volatility.

> Learn from the insights of @Irshad Mushtaq, Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of M I Securities! Connect for valuable financial advice at misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com

### MICROPLASTICS

# **Emerging Threat to the Pristine Himalayas**



Shahid Ahmad Dar



#### **The discovery** of

microplastics in the Himalayas underscores the urgent need for better waste management practices, particularly in high-altitude regions. Local governments, NGOs, and the tourism industry must work together to reduce plastic waste, promote sustainable tourism, and raise awareness about the impact of plastic pollution

he majestic Himalayas, often revered as the "Third Pole," are under a new threat—microplastics. These tiny plastic particles, less than 5 mm in size, are infiltrating one of the most remote and pristine ecosystems on Earth, raising concerns about the health of the environment and the communities that depend on it.

#### The Spread of Microplastics in the High Altitudes Recent studies have revealed

alarming levels of microplastics in high-altitude regions of the Himalayas, including in snow, soil, and alpine lakes. These findings are startling because the Himalavas are far from major urban centers and industrial activities, traditionally thought to be the primary sources of plastic pollution. The presence of microplastics in such remote areas suggests that these pollutants are not just a local problem but a global one, carried by wind, water, and human activity.

#### Sources and Transport Mechanisms

Microplastics in the Himalayas likely originate from various sources, including tourist activities, local settlements, and even

atmospheric deposition from distant regions. The region has seen a surge in tourism over the past few decades, bringing an increase in plastic waste. However, due to inadequate waste management infrastructure, much of this plastic waste is improperly disposed of, eventually breaking down into microplastics. Additionally, atmospheric transport mechanisms play a crucial role in distributing microplastics to high-altitude areas.

#### Impact on Ecosystems and Human

The presence of microplastics in the Himalayas is not just tential threat to human health. These particles can be ingested by aquatic organisms, entering the food chain and eventually reaching humans. The full extent of their impact on the delicate ecosystems of the Himalayas is still being studied, but the potential for harm is significant. Microplastics can also affect water quality, which is crucial for the millions of people who rely on Himalayan rivers for drinking water, agriculture, and other essential needs. The pollution of these waters with

microplastics could exacerbate existing environmental stresses, such as climate change and glacial melting, further threatening the region's sustainability.

#### Urgent Need for Action

The discovery of microplastics in the Himalayas underscores the urgent need for better waste management practices, particularly in high-altitude regions. Local governments, NGOs, and the tourism industry must work together to reduce plastic waste, promote sustainable tourism, and raise awareness about the impact of plastic pollution. The Himalayas, with their breathtaking beauty and vital ecosystems, are a symbol of the planet's natural heritage. Protecting them from the scourge of microplastics is not just a regional responsibility but a global one. As the world becomes increasingly aware of the pervasive nature of plastic pollution, it is imperative that we take action to preserve these mountains and the life they sustain.

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### **Confidence and Willpower**

the keys to personal improvement and accomplishment. A person needs confidence and willpower to succeed in any sphere of life. Confidence means belief in yourself and determination in support. Willpower is the strong desire to achieve one's goals through any adversity. Neither of these qualities are innate, but can be developed with hard work and consistent practice.

To build self-confidence, you first need to recognize your abilities and limitations. Only when you understand yourself well will you develop confidence in your abilities. Building confidence in your strengths and interests can help you move forward

with confidence in any situation. It is best to set small goals at the beginning to build confidence. When you accomplish these small goals, the feeling of accomplishment bolsters your confidence. This approach helps to move towards a bigger goal.

One of the most important ways to build self-confidence is to learn from failure. Failure is not a big deal. Failure happens at some point. Learn new lessons from failure. Not being afraid of mistakes, correcting them and moving forward increases self-confidence many times over.

Thorough preparation and investment of time in any task boosts confidence. When you are well prepared for any task, the results lead to success and this boosts your confidence.

Helping and encouraging others increases your self-confidence. When you play a distinct role in the lives of others, your confidence grows

The first step in building willpower is setting goals. When you know where you want to go, you will develop the will to move in that direction. When the goal is not clear, the willpower is weakened.

Continuity is very important for building willpower. Like making a habit of doing anything regularly. The practice of moving forward little by little every day strengthens one's willpower and increases the scope of work.

Morals should be developed to increase willpower. When you face difficult situations, you can change them by developing morale.

An important part of increas-

ing willpower is self-control and patience. Willpower is strengthened by exercising self-control and persevering in the right direction even when circumstances are not favorable.

Good physical and mental health is a factor in increasing willpower. Proper diet, adequate sleep, and physical exercise also strengthen the willpower.

Self-confidence and willpower are two very important assets in a person's life. Developing both of these qualities requires patience, perseverance, and regular practice. When you set goals with confidence and move consistently towards them with willpower, you will surely succeed.

Satyabrat Bora

# 21st Century Western Scholarship On The Prophetic Seerah

### Some Positive Glimpses

Dr Tauseef Ahmad Parray

The Western scholarship on Islam in general, and on the primary sources of Islam in particular—the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): the Last Divine Message and the Last Messenger—have continued from centuries, and, indeed, has seen an impressive growth from the last few decades, especially in the 21st century. A plethora of literature has been produced on the life of the Last Prophet (PBUH), which is generally denoted by the Arabic term Seerah/ Sirah—one of the most prominent genres in the Islamic literary tradition. A large number of biographies of the Prophet (PBUH) exist in all Islamic languages as well as in the European languages (especially English) in prose, poetry, and more recently even through films/ documentaries. In the West, interest has increased about the popular as well as scholarly Seerah works; however, most of this scholarship, throughout history, has remained 'biased', 'bigoted', 'negative', and 'offensive'

Nevertheless, in the recent Western scholarship on this theme, one observes a positive perception in these biographies. These "recent works on Sirah in English", as Professor Abdur Raheem Kidwai puts it in his Images of the Prophet Muhammad in English Literature (2018), "reflect a sea-change in the representation of Prophet Muhammad" (PBUH), indicating "the welcome trend of acknowledging the Prophet's greatness and glory." He labels this recent positive representation of the Prophet as "Towards Fairness and Truth" in contrast to the negative portrayal of medieval times, which he terms as "The Distorting Mirror". He has summarized the whole discourse in these words: "Notwithstanding the highly regrettable and detestable portrayal of the Prophet down the centuries, ... which makes a sad, depressing reading, it is gratifying that since early twentieth century there has been some fairness in the West's treatment of the Prophet... acknowledging the gross injustice and hostility in the West's representation. Equally welcome is the appearance of several biographies



of the Prophet by Western scholars, which do justice, to a large extent, to the Prophet's genius and his life-ennobling message."

It is in this backdrop that views of some of the Western non-Muslims scholars/ writers are presented (on the eve of 12<sup>th</sup> *Rabi-ul-Awal*) in this write-up to show the developments as well as perception of the Prophet (PBUH) in the 'West' (from 2000 converted)

Professor Carl W. Ernst (Professor at North Carolina Chappell Hill, USA), in his Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World (2003) writes: "While the Qur'an as divine revelation may be the most important resource of the Islamic tradition, we would not have it in its present form without the Prophet Muhammad [PBUH]... . He [PBUH] has served as an ongoing model for ethics, law, family life, politics, and spirituality in ways that were not anticipated 1,400 years ago. There are few people in history who have had a greater impact on humanity, and it is through the historical elaboration



These few examples clearly reveal that the Western scholarship has seen a 'sea-change' in the representation of the Prophet's biography in recent years and is, thus, indicative of a 'welcome trend of acknowledging the Prophet's greatness and glory'.

of tradition that we must seek to understand that impact".

Professor Gerhard Bowering (Yale University, USA) in an article entitled "Muhammad (570-632)". in his Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought (2013) is of this opinion when he presents the Prophet (PBUH) as a 'political leader': "That one man could achieve so much in such a short time is astounding. ... [He (PBUH)] made a global impact over more than a millennium and whose cause continues to exert a worldwide attraction today. His message has stood the test of time for more than a thousand years, and his community has grown steadily

over the centuries".

Professor Tamara Sonn
(Professor in the History of Islam
at Georgetown University, USA) in
her 'Islam: A Brief History' (2010),
admits that Prophet's [PBUH] role
"extends beyond the task of delivering revelation", for his life is "a
model for humanity of how to live
every moment, and make every
choice, in accordance with God's
will. The way he lived his life is

described by the Quran as the best example of Islam" (Q. 33: 21); and together with the Quran, his example (Sunnah) "comprise the guidance [and direction] Muslims need in their collective responsibility to establish justice".

Professor John L. Esposi-

to (professor of Religion & International Affairs and of Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, USA) in his 'What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam' (2002 & 2011) writes: "In contrast to the often spiritualized Christian view of Jesus [Prophet 'Isa (AS)], Muslims look upon Muhammad [(PBUH)] as both a prophet and a very human figure, one who had great political as well as spiritual insights. Thus Muslims look to Muhammad's [(PBUH)] example for guidance in all aspects of life: how to treat friends as well as enemies, what to eat and drink, how to mourn and celebrate. [Prophet] Muhammad's [(PBUH)] life translated the guidance revealed in the Quran into action; he lived the revelation, giving concrete form to the laws that God revealed for the various conditions of ordinary human life. For Islam, no aspect of life is outside the realm of religion" In his The Future of Islam (2010), Esposito writes as: "Muhammad [PBUH] is one of the great figures of world history. Few have had more of a global religious and political impact; yet no prophet has been more vilified throughout history. ... In his lifetime, throughout Muslim history, and today, the Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] is seen as the 'living Quran', the embodiment of God's will in his behavior and words". Esposito repeats almost similar views in the 5th (updated) edition of his Islam—The Straight Path (2016), wherein he devotes a full chapter to the "Muhammad and the Quran-The Messenger and Message". Highlighting his role as a reformer, Esposito writes: "Muhammad [PBUH] was not the founder of Islam; he did not start a new religion. Like his prophetic predecessors, he came as a religious reformer. ... The Prophet brought a revolution in Arabian life, a reformation that sought to purify and redefine its way of life.

William E. Shepard (Retired Associate Professor of Religious

Studies, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand), in his Introducing Islam (2014) devotes a full chapter to the Prophet's biography, entitled "The Prophet Muhammad [PBUH]: 'the best of all creatures". He begins his chapter with these words: "If the Qur'an is the Book of God, Muhammad [PBUH] is the person through whom that book came to humanity and his words and deeds are the first and most important commentary on it. In his lifetime, he was prophet, arbitrator, political leader and moral exemplar". Furthermore, he presents the views (both positive and negative) of some modern Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, regarding the various facets of the Prophet's (PBUH) blessed life. As a reformer, Shepard sums up as: "Muhammad [PBUH] is also presented as a reformer who considerably raised the social and ethical level of the Arabs of his time... He called for equality and mutual responsibility among his followers, and for the abolition of class privilege and extremes of wealth. He is described as calling for social justice and

sometimes even for socialism". These few examples clearly reveal that the Western scholarship has seen a 'sea-change' in the representation of the Prophet's biography in recent years and is, thus, indicative of a 'welcome trend of acknowledging the Prophet's greatness and glory'. It is apt to conclude with this passage from the Preface of Professor Kidwai's Images of the Prophet in English Literature: "In today's globalized world with numerous opportunities for interaction and much faster and varied channels of communication we can and should ensure a better representation of the Prophet and of ourselves. Our real, meaningful tribute to the Prophet consists in facilitating a better understanding of Islam and the Prophet by dint of our character and conduct patterned after the Prophet's role model which is characterized by sympathy, sincerity and love for all fellow human beings."

The author is Assistant Professor, Islamic Studies, GDC Sogam (Lolab), Kupwara. Feedback at tauseef.parray21@ gmail.com

# Many Attributes Of The Prophet

Dua Zahra

ever has so much been written by so many on the life of one human being, of any time, than on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Eminent people from other faiths, too, have showered him with praise.

Thomas Carlyle was not the only one to pay him tribute in his lecture on 'Hero as a Prophet', choosing him over all those mentioned in the Old Testament, from Adam through Abraham, to Moses and Jesus.

Napoleon Bonaparte in Bonaparte et Islam is quoted as saying: "Moses revealed the existence of God to his nation. Jesus to the Roman world, Muhammad [PBUH] to the old continent.... Arabia was idolatrous when, six centuries after Jesus, Muhammad [PBUH] introduced the worship of the God of Abraham, Ishmael, Moses and Jesus.

"The Aryans ... had disturbed the tranquillity of the East by agitating the question of the nature of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Muhammad [PBUH] declared that there was none but one God who had no father, no son.... I hope the time is not far when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of the Ouran which alone are true and which alone can lead

men to happiness."
And this from George Ber-

had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe, within the next hundred years, it could be Islam. I have always held the religion of Muhammad [PBUH] in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him, the wonderful man, and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity.

"I believe that if a man like him were to assume the [leadership] of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the muchneeded peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad [PBUH] that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."

Muslims everywhere, too, shall pay the Prophet special tribute in this month of Rabi-ul-Awwal to celebrate his birthday. Many will rejoice, as there will be illuminations, particularly in the mosques. Religious scholars will recount anecdotes from his life, highlighting his character and achievements, and recalling his sayings on different aspects of human life before gatherings of devotees. Naat recitations and milads (sessions singing praise to the





**RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS WILL RECOUNT ANECDOTES FROM HIS LIFE,** highlighting his character and achievements, and recalling his sayings on different aspects of human life before gatherings of devotees

Prophet) will be held everywhere.

Scholars will dwell upon his attribute of Rahmatalil Aalemeen ('Mercy for all the worlds' —including those of the birds and beasts, of insects and worms, etc.), because a Muslim is adjoined to not hurt any living being except in the way of God. Scholars will explain what the Prophet said to his followers about how to treat women, how to interact with people of other faiths and how to carry oneself in one's everyday life.

Yet, unfortunately, many will forget the profound and inspired discourses as they leave their respective congregations. A few of those who may be swaying in ecstasy at the mention of the Holy Prophet's name would go back to indulge in sectarian hate and killing.

and killing.

As Rahmatalil Aalemeen, the Prophet gave protection to Christians through a covenant signed in 628 CE, when a delegation from St Catherine's Monastery visited him seeking his protection. (The monastery, located at the foot of Mount Sinai, is the world's oldest, and a treasure house of rare manuscripts, icons and Christian history.) The covenant's words are as

"This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them.

follows:

"Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers de-

fend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them.

"No compulsion is to be on them ... Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries.

"No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to Muslims' houses.

"Should anyone take any of

these [belongings], he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter....

"No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. Muslims are to fight for them.

"If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray.

"Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor [barred] the sacredness of their covenants."No one of the nation is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (of Judgment),"

It is important to remember that this covenant was made binding on all Muslims for all times, past, present and future, till the Day of Judgment. How this covenant has come to be violated in some Muslim countries should shame anyone who claims to love or follow the Prophet of Islam.

20th Annual Convocation Of KIIT

### Youth Leading Nation's Transformation: Odisha Governor

**Observer News Service** 

Bhubaneswar: "The country is going through both a challenging and exciting phase. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set the vision of transforming the country into 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. It is estimated that Bharat will become the 3rd largest economy of the world by 2030," said Raghubar Das, Governor of Odisha, while addressing the Batch of 2024 at the 20th Annual Convocation of KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, on 14th September 2024.

Students of KIIT have excelled not only academically but also in sports, he noted, highlighting that many students from the institute have participated in the Olympics, making the country proud. "Dr. Achyuta Samanta has done unparalleled work in establishing such an institute of professional and higher education. He has effectively used education as a tool for empowerment, helping underprivileged people integrate into the mainstream of society", Das stated.

Addressing the graduating students, the Governor said, "Today youth are leading the change in the country. They are playing a leading role in innovation and start-ups. India is among the top three countries of the world in the startup ecosystem. They are making unicorns and providing opportunities to lakhs of people. Our youth are not only shaping their career; they are also shaping the country's future. Instead of job seekers, they are becoming job givers".

In her convocation address, delivered virtually, Ms. Oleksandra Matviichuk, Nobel Peace Laureate (2022), Ukraine said that KIIT has become one of the most prominent institutions in India and globally in a short time. "Achyuta Samanta's example in building institutions and his efforts in reducing inequalities remind me of one simple truth – ordinary people have much more impact than they can even imagine. Ordinary people can do extraordinary things", she stated.

On the occasion, KIIT-DU conferred Honoris Causa D.Sc. and D.Litt.



Degrees upon four eminent persons from different walks of life. Dr. D. Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman, Asian Institute of Gastroenterology & AIG Hospitals, was conferred Honoris Causa D.Sc. Degree, while Dr. Chandra Bhanu Satpathy, Eminent Writer, Spiritual Thinker, and Humanitarian; Mr. Kishor Patil, Co-Founder, MD & CEO, KPIT Technologies Ltd.; and Ashirbad Behera, Hony. Secretary, Odisha Athletics Association &

Football Association of Odisha were honoured with Honoris Causa D.Litt. Degrees. They were honoured for their pioneering contributions in the fields of health, spiritualism, business, and sports respectively.

Expressing gratitude for the honour, Dr. Reddy, in his acceptance remarks, said that KIIT serves as an exemplary model of giving back to society. Dr. Samanta has instilled a sense of hope in marginalized communities who

once never dared to dream, stated Dr. Satpathy. Patil remarked that India has the potential to become a global hub for core technology and research. Behera dedicated the honor to the sports fraternity.

sports fraternity.

As many as 7283 students received degrees at the convocation ceremony. These include 5455 Bachelors, 1597 Masters, and 186 Ph.D. degrees. Congratulating the batch of 2024 for their outstanding performance, Dr. Achyuta Samanta, Founder, KIIT & KISS exhorted students to take risks, fail, learn, and rise. "Always keep in mind the 3 I's: Idea, Innovation, and Impact. These three will shape your future and the world around you, " he told students in his message.

told students in his message.

In his presidential address, Ashok Kumar Parija, Chancellor, KIIT-DU said, "KIIT's journey from its humble beginnings to being recognized among the country's leading institutions is a story of vision, hard work, and unwavering dedication. This transformation would not have been possible without the relentless efforts of Dr. Samanta, and the

tireless efforts of our faculty and staff. Their dedication to providing holistic education and nurturing the potential of each student is commendable".

KIIT-DU has cemented its position as a hub for some of the brightest minds in academia and research, stated Prof. Saranjit Singh, Vice Chancellor in his report. "The University continues to shine on the global stage, with Stanford University's latest database of the 'World's Top 2% Scientist' featuring 20 distinguished individuals from KIIT and its constituent units", he said. Prof. (Dr.) S. K. Acharya, Pro-Chancellor also addressed the students.

Medals were awarded to 59 students for their outstanding academic performances. Three students were awarded Founder's Gold Medals for their outstanding all-round and academic performances, while 26 students were awarded Chancellor's Gold Medals, and 27 got Vice Chancellor's Silver Medals. Nanibala Memorial Gold Medal, P. K. Bal Memorial Gold Medal, and PPL Gold Medal were also given away on the occasion. Prof. J. R. Mohanty, Registrar proposed the word of thanks.

#### CONTD. FROM **FRONT PAGE**

#### **Confusion Over**

dilemmas, with many struggling to determine whether to stay open or closed in the absence of clear guidance.

"Non-serious administration declared the holiday today, while Eid-e-Milad is tomorrow. What an apathy," a social media user posted.

However, the University of Kashmir issued a notice announcing that the university will remain open on Monday.

#### Eid-e-Milad

Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi reinforces the message of peace, love, and empathy, promoting harmony within the Muslim community and fostering a better understanding of Islam's core values among people of different beliefs. On this day, religious leaders hold congregations and deliver sermons on the life and teachings of the Prophet. Shia Muslims observe the Milad on 17th of Rabiul Awal and late Ayatullah Ruhullah Khomeini had declared the week beginning 12th Rabiul Awal till 17th as Muslim Week of Unity.

Thousands of devotees were seen heading towards Hazratbal shrine for the night-long prayers. Similar prayers will be held in major shrines of Masjids and shrines across Kashmir.

Hazratbal shrine will witness congregational afternoon prayers on Tuesday after which the holy relic will be displayed to people. Those who will be part of night-long prayers at the shrine will also have a glimpse of the holy relic after pre-dawn prayers (Fajr prayers) Tuesday.

Thousands of men, women, and children devotees reached the shrine Monday evening, Hazratbal administration stated. On Tuesday, the head cleric will display the holy relic for the devotees after every prayer.

The Waqf Board said that all the arrangements were put in place for the convenience of the devotees at Hazratbal shrine. All the departments including the Public Health Engineering (PHE), Health Department, and Power Development Department (PDD) have been put in service for the devotees. 'Hazratbal Special' buses of Road Transport Corporation (RTC) would be plying from Lal Chowk to Hazratbal throughout the day. Elaborate security arrangements have been put in place in and around the Hazratbal shrine. Police were keeping a close eye on the traffic and parking management

#### Phase I: 24 Assembly

voters above the age of 85 are also eligible to exercise their franchise in phase one.

The voting will take place from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm and before that there will be a mock poll in the polling stations in presence of the polling agents. Also, the voting will continue even after 6.00 pm, if the voter's queue is still there in the Polling Station premises to exercise their right to vote.

Every polling station will be provided with Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF's) like drinking water, electricity, toilet, ramp, furniture, verandah/ shed besides wheelchairs will also be provided to the needy. The ballot unit will also have a list of contesting candidates in braille script. Where ever required, there will be separate queues for senior citizens and specially-abled persons facilitating them with early polling. Additionally, there will be a voter help desk, manned by the concerned Booth Level Officer (BLO), to extend necessary help whenever required.

There will be 24 polling booths managed by women, known as Pink Polling Stations, 24 polling stations manned by specially abled persons and 24 polling stations manned by youths. Also, there will be 24 green polling stations in order to spread messages about environmental concern and 17 Unique Polling stations. The purpose behind these special polling stations is to spread awareness among sections of society like women, specially abled, first time young voters to come forward and exercise their right to vote.

#### **Key Candidates**

Independents can also give a tough competition to party candidates, they added.

In Pulwama district, there is a direct contest between NC's Mohammad Khalil Bhand and PDP's Waheed ur Rehman Para on the Pulwama seat. In Pampore, there is a direct contest between NC's Hasnain Masoodi and PDP's Zahoor Ahmad Mir.

In Tral, PDP has an edge as the NC candidate is fighting as an independent candidate, while Congress candidate is fighting on the NC-Congress alliance ticket, which may divide the NC votes.

In Rajpora, NC has an edge as PDP's candidate recently rejoined the party. However, Democratic Progressive Azad Party's candidate Ghulam Nabi Niloora, whose father and brother were MLAs of NC, can divide the NC votes and give PDP a chance, analysts believe

In Shopian district, division of NC votes can benefit PDP. However, Shabir Ahmad Kullay, who recently resigned from NC, is emerging as the main contender for the seat. Kullay had secured around 12,000 votes in 2014 when he was fighting as an independent candidate.

In Zainapora, division of PDP votes can benefit NC as former MLA Aijaz Ahmad Mir resigned from PDP and is fighting as an independent candidate. However, support from Jamaat-e-Islami and some DDC members to Mir is boosting his chances of giving tough competition for the seat.

In Kulgam district, NC has a clear edge on the DH Pora seat as PDP's vote has been divided between old and new candidates. Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Mohamad Yousuf Tarigami, who is a joint candidate of the NC-Congress alliance, has a clear edge over PDP's Mohammad Amin and PC's Nazir Ahmad Laway.

In Devsar, there is a neck-to-neck competition between NC's Feroz Ahmad Shah and PDP's Sartaj Madni. Congress candidate Amanullah and DPAP candidate Mohammad Amin Bhat can also get a good share.

In Anantnag district, there is a neck-to-neck contest between NC's Ab Majeed Bhat Larmi and PDP's Ab Gaffar Sofi in the Anantnag West seat. In the Anantnag East seat, NC's Reyaz Ahmad Khan and PDP's Ab Reham Veeri are competing neck-to-neck. In the Bijbehara seat, NC's Bashir Ahmad Veeri and PDP's Iltija Mufti are also competing neck-to-neck.

On the ST reserved Larnoo seat, there is a clear edge to NC-Congress alliance candidates Ghulam Ahmad Mir and Altaf Ahmad Kaloo over PDP's Ashraf Malik and Dr Shabir Siddiqui.

#### **Multi-tier Security**

take place on September 18, Jammu and Kashmir police have made elaborate security arrangements for the assembly polls so that maximum number of people can exercise their right to vote," Inspector General of Police Kashmir Zone V K Birdi said.

Birdi said Central Armed Paramilitary Forces (CAPF), Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police and JK Police will be deployed as part of the multi-tier security for the elections in the union territory, which will be first since abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

"The CAPF units, JKAP and JKP are part of the security plan. A multi-tiered security plan is there, be it for strong rooms, polling stations or polling booths." he said.

The IGP said, "Jammu and Kashmir police have made proper arrangements to ensure that the elections are free, fair and held in an atmosphere free of fear. The thing to appreciate is that a maximum number of people should be able to exercise their voting right and take part in the democratic process. It will be our endeavor always to provide a secure environment so that people come to vote in large numbers."

#### **PM To Address**

coalition called on the youth to turn out in force for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally at SK Stadium in Srinagar on Thursday.

Bhartiya Janata Party is confident of forming the 'double engine' government in Jammu and Kashmir, as no political party could fulfill its political commitments without the 'backing' of the BJP-central government in the union territory, he said.

"Although the involvement of regional political parties in the democratic process is commendable, their outdated agenda, which resulted in the deaths of 50k innocent people in J&K, is untenable. No political party could carry out its political commitment in the UT without the backing of the centre, and we are confident that BJP will form the next double engine government in J&K," Singh said at a news conference.

"BJP will pull a surprise in the elections. The sheer number of people who turned out to support the BJP's candidates in south Kashmir during their campaign rallies took me by surprise," Singh added.

PM Modi, Singh claimed, was committed to bring about positive changes in the lives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir via youth and women welfare schemes, employment packages and development of the region and that the BJP manifesto will act as a magic wand in this direction.

"In order to ensure that talented youth in J&K are hired on the basis of their ability and hard work, the recruitment process in the region would be made more transparent. No one, including the children of ministers, lawmakers, or bureaucrats, will be allowed to circumvent the process," assured the BJP leader.

Previous regimes including that of the PDP, NC and Congress, he alleged, had been exploiting the innocent people of J&K by pursuing an outdated agenda that led to about forty years of violence in the region and the deaths of fifty thousand innocent people

"Yet regrettably, they were unable to take use of the area's natural riches. During the previous 76 years, only 3600 megawatts of power could be produced in our state, despite its capacity to generate

20,000 megawatts. Even though Kashmir has a lot of tourism attractions, none of them have been used to force economic shifts," Singh added.

When questioned whether the BJP was 'unsure' about its victory in Kashmir given the party only fielded 20 candidates for the polls, he said, ask the same question to other parties which have fielded even less or no candidates in Jammu belt.

#### **Will Bury Terror**

first phase of assembly elections on September 18, the BJP leader said no talks or cross-LoC trade with Pakistan which was suspended in April 2019 will take place unless terrorism is completely eliminated.

Shah urged voters to "defeat the dynasties" of the Abdullahs, Gandhis and the Muftis, alleging that terrorism thrived under their rule.

"For once, defeat these three families, and I promise you terrorism will be buried so deep, it won't return for seven generations," he said.

Shah tested the National Conference-Congress

bonhomie in J&K by challenging Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to read out the 'white paper" on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah once tabled by the NC in the Assembly. "I challenge Rahul baba to read out the white pa-

read out the white paper on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah once tabled by the NC in the then J&K Assembly. Let Rahul read the paper once before the people of the nation," Shah threw an open challenge to Rahul.

He said the NC that is showing bonhomie with the Congress at present labelled Sheikh Abdullah as a traitor and anti-national. "Who put Sheikh Abdullah in jail for 22 long years and who labelled him as a traitor and anti-national," Shah said.

Shah said the Narendra Modi-led government would provide jobs to youths holding laptops and tricolour in their hands and would not allow these parties to revive terrorism.

Jails are ready for those holding guns, said the minister, who addressed rallies in Padder-Nagseni, Kishtwar and Ramban in support of BJP candidates.

He launched a scathing attack on National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah, saying he had stooped so low in his desperation that he had made unfounded allegations of the Indian Army having links with terrorists.

Referring to former home minister Sushil Shinde's recent remarks at the launch of his memoir that he was scared while visiting Lal Chowk, the nerve centre of Srinagar, during his ministerial stint, Shah invited the Congress leader to visit the valley along with his family.

"You might have heard a tall Congress leader Shinde from Maharashtra who said that he was afraid of visiting Lal Chowk, I want to tell him that he should come with his children and grandchildren now.

"'Koi tumhara baal bhi baka nahi kar sakta' (no one can harm you) because we have secured Kashmir by burying terrorism," the home minister said addressing an election rally in Ramban district.

Referring to former Congress president and leader of the opposition Rahul Gandhi's frequent visits to Kashmir in the recent past, he said, "Rahul Baba is roaming on bike, having ice-cream and throwing snowballs on his sister (Priyanka Gandhi) and at the same time abusing (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi.

"You are abusing Modi but it was not possible during your government. We have buried terrorism so you reached there with your (Bharat Jodo) Yatra. It was possible because the BJP-led government is in power at the Centre," Shah said.

Referring to the 'Ekta Yatra' led by the then BJP president Murli Manohar Joshi in December 1991, Shah said he along with Modi were part of the yatra which was supposed to unfurl the tricolour at Lal Chowk but was stopped at Ramban.

"We spent two days in Ramban and later a helicopter was made available for us to unfurl the tricolour in Lal Chowk. The situation has changed and now Ganesh Chaturthi, Janmashtami is observed and Tazia (procession by shia community) taken out and there is no riot," he said

#### **Er Rashid Wasn't**

chief, who lost to Rashid, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, from Baramulla in the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year, said while he does not believe in branding anyone as agent or proxy, the Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) supremo should tell people where he was for the past two months.

"He was not in jail for the past two months... He should tell people where he was," he said.

Lone said whenever the Centre wants to hold talks with someone who is in jail, that person is taken ill and hospitalised.

"I have seen this happen since 1991. This is not something new but the previous governments had a way of executing it. This has been badly executed, as ugly as their (BJP) ideology," he said.

Lone said there "undoubtedly" is interference from the Centre and the local administration to influence the outcome of elections.

"I appeal to them to desist from it

"I appeal to them to desist from it. Please remember 1987 (assembly polls)... There won't be a safe passage for anyone in Kupwara," he said.

#### **Rivals Accuse BJP**

The number of assembly seats has also risen from the earlier 87 to 90 -- 47 in the Kashmir Valley and 43 in Jammu -- following a delimitation exercise in 2022.

The high number of Independent candidates in the fray have led to the National Conference, Congress and the People's Democratic Party to allege that they were being supported by "Delhi".

A total 365 candidates have filed their nominations as Independent candidates to contest the three-phase polls.

This is the second highest number of Independents to contest the polls in Jammu and Kashmir. In the 2008 assembly elections, held in the immediate aftermath of the Amarnath land row agitation that left dozens dead and hundreds injured, 468 candidates had contested as Independents.

The total number of candidates this time is also the second highest ever. In 2008, a whopping 1,353 candidates had contested the elections.

In 2014, the last time assembly elections were held in the erstwhile state, 831 candidates had contested the elections. Of the total, 274 had contested as Independents.

This time, there are 367 candidates for the 43 seats going to the polls in the Jammu division, where the BJP has a strong base, while 541 are slugging it out for 47 seats in the Valley.

On an average, there are five Independent can-

didates for each of the 47 assembly segments in Kashmir. This number drops to 2.93 per constituency in the Jammu division.

The Sopore assembly segment -- once a hotbed for militancy and the epicentre of election boycott

campaigns in Kashmir -- has the highest number of Independent and total candidates.
There are 22 aspirants in the fray, 14 of whom are

Among the Independent candidates in Sopore are Ajaz Guru, the brother of Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru.

The Sonawari segment in Bandipora district has 20 candidates in the fray, including 11 Independents. The area has a strong presence of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami.

Amid this glut, there are four constituencies where there are zero Independent candidates. These are Budhal, Kangan, Ramangar and Srigufwara-Bijbehara.

The Srigufwara-Bijbehara seat in Anantnag district has three candidates in the fray, one of them being People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti's daughter Iltija Mufti.

Doda West, Nowshera and Ramgarh each have one Independent candidate. The BJP's Jammu and Kashmir president Ravindra Raina, a frontrunner for the post of chief minister if the saffron party wins the elections, is the candidate from Nowshera. On the high number of Independent candidates in the fray, Mehbooba said they had been fielded "by Delhi to divide votes".

"We have to be together so that the large number of Independents fielded by Delhi does not succeed in dividing the votes," she added.

National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah, who is contesting the polls from the Ganderbal and the Budgam segments, has said Delhi was fielding a large number of Independents against him to muzzle his voice.

"Delhi is not trying to silence any politician in Jammu and Kashmir, especially in Kashmir, as much as they are trying to do with Omar Abdullah," the former chief minister said.

There are 15 candidates in the fray in the

Ganderbal segment. Seven of these candidates -- including jailed separatist leader Sarjan Ahmad Wagay alias Barkati who hails from south Kashmir's Shopian district -- are Independents.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also raked up the issue of an "unusually high number" of Independent candidates in the fray.

"The Congress and the National Conference are contesting the elections together, which has made the BJP nervous. Now they are trying to break the alliance," he said.

"They are even fielding private players and sup-

"They are even fielding private players and supporting them indirectly as Independents in an attempt to defeat our candidates. Otherwise, where do they (Independents) get the money from? Who is behind them?" he asked during his visit to Kashmir last week.

The three-phase elections to the 90-member Jammu and Kashmir Assembly will be held on September 18, September 25 and October 1. The results will be declared on October 8.

#### **KU Postpones**

to be held on September 24, 25 and 30.

The Assistant Controller of Examination at KU said that it will notify fresh dates of exams separately.

"It is notified for the information of all concerned candidates that all University examinations scheduled to be held on 24-09-2024, 25-09-2024 and 30-09-2024 have been postponed. Fresh dates shall be issued separately," the order reads.

Earlier on Thursday, KU postponed all the examinations scheduled to be held on September 17 and

Pertinently, the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir are scheduled to be held in three phases—commencing from September-18.

#### **Congress Unveils 'Haath**

scheme for allotment of 30 per cent construction work-related contracts to unemployed engineers'

groups.

"We will simplify the verification process for all government jobs, passports and other purposes by making them time-bound and simplified to check

undue harassment," the manifesto reads. Khera said Jammu and Kashmir's "heart has been wounded" over the past 10 years and time has come to heal these wounds.

"The long night has ended and a new dawn is upon us. Haath badlega Jammu aur Kashmir ke haalaat. The Congress will heal the wounds," he said.

Khera repeated the poll promises made by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge during his visit to the Union Territory last week.
"During the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', the women of

Jammu and Kashmir put forth their concerns to Rahul Gandhi and other leaders. We have promised Mahila Samman programme under which we will give Rs 3000 monthly assistance to the woman head of the family. An interest-free loan of rupees five lakh will be given to women self-help groups," the Congress leader said.

He said health insurance of Rs 25 lakh will be provided to each family.

The Congress spokesman said a minority commission will be formed in Jammu and Kashmir within 100 days of coming to power. He said the promise made by former prime minister Manmohan Singh with regard to the rehabilitation of Kashmiri

Pandits will also be fulfilled. Khera alleged the Union Territory has been turned into a "graveyard of dreams" in the past 10

Khera said the manifesto was compiled by 20 district committees constituted for the purpose of knowing the issues of the people on the ground.

"We have given guarantees and these are the right of the people. This is our promise and we will fulfil it," he said referring to the manifesto.

Asked about Congress' stand on restoration of Article 370 --" the main election plank of its ally National Conference -- Khera said a committee will

gramme for the INDIA bloc government in Jammu and Kashmir.

"As far as Article 370 is concerned, our stand is clear and reflected in the CWC resolution on the is-

be formed for drafting a common minimum pro-

### sue," he said. **Have Powers**

transparency, employment generation, I want to assure political parties through your channel -- if these are the goals, they will have the full support of the Lieutenant Governor and his office. Where is the question of clash then?"

Asked if the coming election will be the stepping stone for the return of statehood for Jammu and Kashmir, Sinha said things are "working according to the blueprint given by Union home Minister Amit Shah".

Shah, he recalled, had said, "delimitation first, assembly election second and statehood at an appropriate time, third".

The Lieutenant Governor also said he was hopeful that the voting percentage in the assembly election will be more than Jammu and Kashmir witnessed during the parliamentary election. Back then, the Jammu region had seen an average of 58.4 per cent turnout, the Kashmir Valley --- 50.6 per cent, more than it had seen in more than the last three decades.

This, he said, only proves that the roots of democracy are "very strong" in Jammu and Kashmir. "People trust democracy and democratic values. It is natural in view of the peace and prosperity of the last five years," he added. Asked about the participation of Jamaat-e-Islami - the Islamic outfit which, along with Hurriyat, gave the election boycott calls in the Valley -- in this election, Sinha said he was not sure if anyone can be stopped from contesting elections in this country. "We need to understand that the country runs with the help of laws and constitution," he said.

"If we want to stop elements like this, we should debate the matter in parliament, take various opinions and the Election Commission can make a rule," he added

### **Tight Contest Between** Former Parliamentarian & **Ex-legislator In Pampore**

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Pampore Assembly Constituency in South Kashmir's Pulwama district is set to witness a direct contest between the National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party candidates.

The seat is set to witness a close contest between NC's Justice Hasnain Masoodi and PDP's Zahoor Ahmad Mir.

The other contesting candidates include Mohammad Altaf Mir of Apni Constituency, Mashooq Ahmad Mir of Jammu and Kashmir Nationalist People's Front, Mohammad Asif Ganaie and Mohammad Maqbool Shah-both independents, Arshid Ahmad of Jammu & Kashmir Awami National Conference, Parvaiz Hajam of Jammu & Kashmir National Panthers Party (Bhim), Syed Showkat Gayoor Andrabi of Bharatiya Janata Party, Bilal Ahmad Bhat an independent, Ab Qayoom Mir of Awami Ittehad Party, Aadil Rashid Bhat independent, Shakeel Ahmad Dar independent and Mohammad Akbar Lone an independent.

Political analysts believe that the main contest on the seat is between NC and PDP, who are the former parliamentarian and ex-minister and ex-MLA respectively.

Both the candidates are having a good vote share on the ground but performance of both Hasnain Masoodi and Zahoor Mir wasn't up to the mark and that can divide the votes towards the independent candidate Mohammad Maqbool Shah, who is a resident of Pampore town, they said.

They said that other than Maqbool Shah, the other candidates who are expected to get a good share of votes include AIP's Ab Qayoom Mir and Apni party's Altaf Mir.

In 2014, Pampore legislative assembly constituency had a total 78176 electors. Total number of valid votes was 36592. Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party candidate Zahoor Ahmad Mir won and became MLA from this seat. He secured a total 16239 votes Yawar Ali Abass Masoodi stood second with a total of 12741 votes. He lost by 3498 votes.

In 2008, Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party candidate Zahoor Ahmad won the seat by securing 11,117 votes while Indian National Congress candidate Mohd Anwar Bhat stood second and lost by a margin of 5148 votes.

In 2002, Peoples Democratic Party candidate Ab Aziz Mir won and secured 3811 votes while Indian National Congress candidate Mohd Anwar Bhat stood second and lost by 705 votes.

In 1996, Jammu & Kashmir National Conference candidate Mushtaq Ahmad won the seat by securing 18112 votes while Indian National Congress candidate Mohd Anwar stood second and lost by a margin of 11950 votes.

In 1987, Jammu & Kashmir National Conference candidate Ghulam Mohi Ud Din won by securing 22186 votes while independent candidate Ali Mohd Lone lost by a margin of 6803 votes.

In 1983, Jammu & Kashmir National Conference candidate Mohd Sultan won ths eat by securing secured 21672 votes while Indian National Congress candidate Peerzada Gh Jeelani stood second and lost by a margin of 16536 votes.

In 1977, Jammu & Kashmir National Conference candidate Malik Mohi Ud Din won this seat as he secured 22877 votes. Janata Party candidate Peer Ghulam Hassan Masoodi however, stood second and lost by a margin of 20468 votes.

In 1972, Indian National Congress candidate Gulam Hassan Mansooda won the seat. He secured 9269 votes while independent candidate Pirzada Ghulam Jeelani stood second and lost by a margin of 3401 votes.

As the constituency is set to go to the polls in the first phase of elections, the segment has a total of 1,00,383 registered voters including 49,697 males, 50,680 females, and 6 transgender.

To accommodate these voters, 120 polling stations have been allocated within this constituency, underscoring its importance in the district's elec-

#### while Jammu & Kashmir National Conference candidate toral framework—(KNO) **Kashmir's Automotive Landscape Gets Boost: Kia**



**Observer News Service** 

**SRINAGAR:** Kia showroom started operations on Monday at newly built state of art showroom at Pantha Chowk, Srinagar. Launching with an extensive range of models and unparalleled after-sales support, Kia is set to ignite Kash-

mir's automotive growth. On the occasion, Gravity Edi-

tion of all three models SEL-TOS, SONET & CARENS were

unveiled. The chief guest for the occasion was Raja Zaffar Khan DGM Zonal Head Srinagar JK Bank, COO Mushtag Wani Pal Jay Automobiles Pvt Ltd. in presence of officials of I&K Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Chola Mandalam and all staff members and large gathering of customers.

## AIP, Jel Forge Alliance 2 Days Before Elections

Strings Connected Somewhere Else: Omar

**Observer News Service** 

SRINAGAR: In a notable political development, the Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) have forged a strategic alliance ahead of the upcoming elections in Jammu & Kashmir. The two parties have reached an agreement to support each other's candidates in various constituencies.

Engineer Rashid-led AIP and Ghulam Qadir Wani-led JeI have mutually decided on seat-sharing arrangements.

AIP chief spokesperson Inam un Nabi said that the party will support Jamaat candidates in Kulgam and Pulwama districts of south Kashmir, while JeI will back Awami Ittehad Party candidates across Kashmir.

The spokesperson added that in constituencies where both parties have fielded candidates, such as Langate, Devsar and Zainapora, the alliance will hold a "friendly contest".

Shameem Ahmed of Jamaat-e-Islami confirmed this approach, saying that JeI will not withdraw its candidates from these areas.

Both parties said the alliance aims to address the Kashmir issue, foster political empowerment and advocate for lasting peace in the region. They urged their supporters to work together to secure a strong electoral outcome.

National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah on Monday said the strings of alliance between Lok Sabha member Sheikh Abdul Rashid's Awami Ittehad Party



and Jamaat-e-Islami were being remotely pulled to take on his party.

"Their strings are connected somewhere else, they get their orders from them and they dance to their tunes." Abdullah told reporters in the Pampore Assembly constituency in the Pulwama district.

The former chief minister was reacting to the AIP entering an alliance with former members of banned Jamaate-Islami who are contesting the polls as independent can-

"They have been fielded to take on the National Conference. We have no issues, we will fight them," Abdullah

Asked about the BJP claims that 30,000 people were expected at the election rally in Srinagar to be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the NC vice president said people can be gathered for rallies but that does not necessarily translate into

"How difficult is it to gather

30,000 people by using money? The PM has addressed a rally earlier as well by gathering government employees. Don't show me the rallies, show me the votes. I do not think it will translate into votes. Let the BJP win one seat from the Kashmir valley, then we can talk," he said.

Asked about the BJP's charge of dynastic rule, Abdullah said the ruling party has nothing to show for its six-year direct rule in Jammu and Kashmir.

"They do not have anything else to sell to the people. If they had done something for the people, they would have presented their report card. When a 'fail' is written in the report card, they have to say something else," he said.

Abdullah said the NC had a good campaign for the first phase of polls.

"Our campaign has been good... people's participation in NC events was high and we are hopeful that a good part of the votes will go to NC candidates and they will win," he

SRINAGAR'S KHANYAR SEAT

### Will NC's Ali Muhammad Sagar **Secure A Fifth Consecutive Win?**

**Agencies** 

SRINAGAR: Out of the eight assembly constituencies in Srinagar district, there is a stronghold of National Conference (NC) i.e. Khanyar segment where the party's candidate. Ali Muhammad Sagar has never lost elections gainst anyone since 1996

Sagar, who is among the 10 candidates in the electoral fray this time, has won the elections four times in a row. He was first elected as the Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) in 1996 elections.

While the seat is set to go to the polls on September 25, in the second phase of assembly elections, a total of 91226 electorates are scheduled to cast their ballots in favour of their favourite representatives. The electorates include 45407 males and 45816 females, besides three Transgender.

The prominent candidates out of the 10 vying for the seat include Ali Muhammad Sagar and former Deputy Mayor Sri-

nagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Sheikh Imran, who is contesting as an independent candidate.

The other candidates in the battlefield include Peoples Democratic Party's Tafazul Mushtaq, Apni Party's Bilal Ahmad Mir, Farooq Ahmad



of National Panthers Party (BHIM), five other independent candidates.

candidates are vying for the seat in the phase-II.

However, the question remains whether the four-time MLA, Ali Muhammad Sagar will be defeated in the upcoming assembly elections or will he continue to retain the seat for the fifth time in a row.

Sagar first won the elections n 1996. He later retained the seat in three consecutive assembly polls in 2002, 2008 and 2014.

In the previous 2014 assembly elections, Sagar had managed to secure 6505 votes and defeated his nearest rival by a margin of 1,167 votes.

Political analysts believe that it would be difficult for the candidates in the fray to defeat the four-time MLA from the constituency since has worked for his people and also gained a huge faith amongst the people within the constituency.

"There seems to be no strong contender against him this time. It seems a cakewalk for the NC candidate to retain the seat," the political analysts

#### A total of six independent believe. (KNO) Jammu North Seat Set For Tough Fight Between BJP, NC

**Press Trust Of India** 

JAMMU: The Jammu North assembly seat is set to witness a tough electoral battle between the BJP and the National Conference (NC), with BJP candidate and former minister Sham Lal Sharma making last-ditch efforts to sway voters in a bid to secure a hat-trick for his party.

Undeterred by two consecutive poll losses in the Marh assembly segment, former minister and NC candidate Ajay Sadhotra is trying his luck from Jammu North, formerly Raipur Domana, in the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections.

Both candidates have shifted from their traditional constituencies — Sadhotra from Marh and Sharma from Akhnoor after these two segments were reserved for Scheduled Castes.

The other candidates who are in the fray include Darshan Kumar Magotra of PDP, Sunita Turki of National Democratic Party, Mohit of the National Awami Unity Party, and Ma-



heshwar Singh of DPAP. Besides, BJP rebel and former

MLA Shiv Dev Singh is also contesting from Jammu North as an independent. There are nine candidates in the fray, including a woman. "It is a direct contest be-

tween two former ministers -- Sharma and Sadhotra, who is also the coalition candidate of NC-Congress," Vikas Kumar, a political expert, told PTI.

"It will be tough for both. Sharma is facing a rebel candidate, while Sadhotra has to work hard to win over voters in a constituency where his party has never won," Kumar added.



BJP's Sharma, busy with door-to-door campaigns and rallies, is banking on his pro-Jammu image.

"We will secure a victory with the full backing of the people. Our aim is to form a BIP government in Jammu and Kashmir so that Jammu gets its full rights, and development and progress reach everyone," Sharma said.

Reiterating his commitment to following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for peace and progress in J&K, Sharma added, "No one can stop the BJP from continuing its development journey in J&K. People

should vote for the BJP to ensure the region's development." However, BJP's decision to field Sharma, a former Congress MLA from Akhnoor who joined the BJP in 2019, has sparked internal strife within the party.

The NC hopes to capitalize on this internal discord. Sharma is the younger broth-

er of two-time Congress MP Madan Lal Sharma, who won the Jammu-Poonch Lok Sabha seat in 2004 and 2009 and is considered a strong voice for the Jammu region. He served as a Congress MLA from Akhnoor and as a cabinet minister in the NC-Congress coalition government in 2008.

He lost to BJP's Rajeev Sharma in 2014 from Akhnoor when BJP secured a historic 25 seats from Jammu in the assembly elections.

The 64-year-old politician, a resident of Purkhoo Domana, has no criminal cases against him, as per the affidavit. His immovable assets include agricultural land in Pallanwala, Purkhoo, and Palwan; commer-

cial buildings in Patta Paloura; and a residential building in Platan.

On the other hand, NC's Ajay Sadhotra, a senior politician, lost in 2008 and 2014 to the BJP. He was elected as an MLA in 1996 and 2002, representing Marh, and has held key ministerial portfolios.

Former MLA Shiv Dev Singh, who resigned from the BJP, is contesting as an independent, claiming public support pushed him to fight the election. He criticized the BIP for discriminating against him and said, "People feel they haven't had a local MLA. It's time to raise the people's voice.'

Singh dismissed his rivals. calling the NC-Congress alliance a "tactic" to confuse voters, adding, "We are fighters, and no one

can stand against us.' The Jammu North, with 75 percent of its area urban, has a total of 1,11,228 voters, including 54,274 women. The constituency with 117 polling stations will vote in the third phase of the J&K elections on October 1.

### **Death Of Young Woman In Pulwama Sparks Outrage**

Family Accuses Nursing Institute of Medical Negligence

Syed Mohammad Burhan

**SRINAGAR:** The recent death of Saboora Arshid from Pulwama, who was undergoing a Septoplasty at Mohammadia Nursing Institute in Gangoo, has ignited allegations of medical negligence from her

The family alleges that Saboora died as a result of the negligence on the part of the hospital staff that led to the untimely death of the young woman. Speaking to reporters, Saboora's father Arshid recounted the events leading up to the tragedy.

"Saboora was taken to the operation theatre at02:50 p.m. for a Septoplasty. However, after hours of uncertainty, at 05:50 p.m., the doctors informed us that Saboora was experiencing severe palpitations and needed to be transferred to a hospital in Srinagar for further treatment," he said.

"By the time we arrived in Srinagar, she had already passed away."

Saboora's brother, Zaid, echoed similar concerns, saying, "My sister was undergoing a simple nose surgery, and she was a medical student herself. She should not have died. We are demanding justice from the government."

The family alleged that Saboora's condition worsened due to inadequate medical care and delays in treatment. This accusation has sparked significant outrage among family members and locals, who are calling for accountability.

A senior official from Mohammadia Nursing Institute, speaking anonymously, called the incident "unfortunate" and characterized it as an unusual case. The official defended the decision to transfer Saboora to SMHS Hospital without the family's prior consent, stating it was an attempt to save time. "We took her without consent in an effort to save her life, but unfortunately, we lost her," the official explained.

In response to the allegations, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, has announced an official inquiry into the incident. "An inquiry team has been formed under the chairmanship of the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Pulwama," Dr. Qayoom said. He assured that the investigation will be conducted transparently, with all proceedings documented to ensure fairness.

'The investigation will be thorough, and all findings will be carefully reviewed," Dr. Qayoom added, emphasizing the administration's commitment to delivering justice for the family.

#### 'Sealing Theatre Cruel': Association

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Private Hospitals and Dialysis Centres Association has condoled the death of patient at a private hospital in Pulwama and extended support for the investigation. It has however opposed move by authorities to seal

the theatre. Condemning the unfortunate death at a private hospital in district Pulwama, Mir Faizan the president of the association said, members were disturbed and saddened by the unfortunate news of the death of a patient adding that, "None of the doctors, anaesthetists or hospital administration would like a casualty to occur in his/her hospital but even in the best of institutions it can happen but at the same time administration can't take a knee jerk reaction by sealing the theatre".

"We have seen in the past that these unfortunate incidents have also occurred in Govt institutions but those were never sealed", said Dr.Masood Hassan general secretary of the association. "Private setup is in its infancy in J&K UT and they are showing tremendous growth in the past few years. In a place like ours where the unemployment rate is second highest in the country i. e.,28.2 per cent we are generating thousands of employments in addition to providing excellent services but this type of approach by the administration in sealing a hospital discourages and saddens the private sector".

### **3-Way Contest Shaping** Up In Eidgah

**Observer News Service** 

SRINAGAR: The Eidgah constituency is all set to witness a competitive election battle, with the National Conference's Mubarak Gul, a five-time legislator, facing a stiff challenge from Peoples Democratic Party's senior leader Mohammad Khurshid Alam.

Gul won the seat in 2014 by a narrow margin of 608 votes, defeating PDP's Ali Mohammad Wani. However, this time around, the political dynamics in the constituency have shifted, with isolated resentment against Gul.

The NC-Congress alliance has also not gone smoothly, with Imtiyaz Ahmad Khan, the Congress district president and former 2014 assembly election contestant, resigning and filing his nomination as an independent candidate.

Tensions have surfaced among NC supporters in the constituency, with many expressing dissatisfaction with Gul's candidacy. The race is expected to be even more intense this year, with 13 candidates in the fray.

The Jammu & Kashmir assembly elections will be held in three phases across 90 constituencies, one of which is Eidgah. The major contenders include the NC-Congress alliance, PDP, People's Conference, Bharatiya Janata Party, Apni Party, Samajwadi Party, Democratic Progressive Azad Party and six independent candidates.

Constituency demography profile

Eidgah is a part of Srinagar, falling under the general seat and is among the 90 constituencies. In 2014, 58,822 electors were registered, with a voter turnout of 27.8%. The competition involved eight candidates, including PDP's Ali Mohammad Wani, who was runner-up to Mubarak Gul. 2024 candidates & polling trends

Political experts say that Gul may face a stiff challenge from Alam, a former trade leader and member of the legislative council (MLC), who rejoined PDP in July after a brief stint with the People's Conference. Khan, a former Congress district president, is also expected to play a pivotal role as an independent candidate, potentially dividing the vote and affecting Gul's chances.

In the forthcoming assembly elections for the Eidgah constituency, which is going to polls in the second phase of the three-phase election schedule, a total of 15 nominations have been filed, of which only 13 are contesting.

Polling for the Eidgah constituency will take place on September 25. Results for all 90 constituencies will be declared on October 8.

**Voter dynamics & polling** 

In the 2014 assembly polls, the constituency saw a relatively low voter turnout of 27.80%, with the deposit of 6 out of 8 candidates being forfeited due to their poor performance. The 2024 assembly election in Eidgah is set to be competitive between NC-Cong alliance candidate Mubarak Gul and PDP's

Mohammad Khurshid Alam. Political experts are forecasting a fiercely contested battle between Mubarak Gul and PDP's Alam in the upcoming elections, with Khan emerging as a potential vote cutter. The dynamics in the constituency are shaping up to create a close race between the key contenders.

# **Rohit & Co Sweat It Out In Third Training Session In Chennai**

**Press Trust of India** 

**CHENNAI:** Rohit Sharma and Co had another extensive training session in the build up to the first Test against Bangladesh with all 16 squad members turning for practice at the Chepauk here on Monday.

After a day off, the India squad members took part in their third training session since their arrival here last week. The first Test begins on Thursday.

As it is often the case, Virat Kohli was among the first set of batters to hit the nets. In the adjacent net was southpaw Yashasvi Jaiswal as both he and Kohli faced Jasprit Bumrah and home hero R Ashwin.

The next set of batters included skipper Rohit, Shubman Gill and Sarfaraz Khan, the last named player arriving here af-



ter taking part in the second round Duleep Trophy match in Anantapur. The captain focussed on playing spinners, keeping Bangladesh's slow

bowling attack in mind. Ravindra Jadeja, Rishabh Pant and pacer Mohammed Siraj too faced local bowlers and a significant amount of throwdowns.

The practice pitch at the main square offered a decent amount of bounce.

India will have two more practice sessions scheduled be-

sweep in Pakistan.

eleven select themselves. The Chennai surface usually favour the spinners and there is likelihood of India going into the game with three spinners and two pacers. The spinners expected to

fore the series opener against Bangladesh, who are riding on

the confidence of their series

Most players in the playing

feature are Ashwin, Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav while Bumrah and Siraj will share workload in the pace department. Axar Patel, despite his impressive allround returns across formats, may have to sit out.

On the batting front, Pant is expected to make his Test return after a gap of almost two years. Dhruv Jurel, who impressed in his debut series against England, will be benched in that case.

### **DYSS Budgam Kicks Off Inter-Zonal District Level Yoga Event**



**Observer News Service** 

**BUDGAM:** The Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSSO) Budgam organised an Inter-Zonal District Level Yoga event for boys and girls of all age groups at Indoor Sports Stadium on Monday. The event was inaugurated by Gh Hassan Khanday, activity in charge DYSSO Budgam.

The event saw a good turnout of students who participated in the competitions. The sessions were designed to promote physical wellness and mental tranquility, highlighting the importance of yoga in daily life.

### **Two-Day Budgam Fencing Championship Concludes**



**Observer News Service** 

BUDGAM: The second District Budgam Fencing Championship 2024 concluded at Sacred Heart Public School, Nusraullah Pora, Budgam, on Monday. The event was organised by District Budgam Fencing Association in collaboration with the school and witnessed participation of 250 boys and girls from various schools and clubs.

Sacred Heart Public School secured the first position, while Soibugh Martial Art Club and A.S.A Safvi Memorial Education School. Mirgund, Budgam, bagged the second and third positions, respectively. Aatif Ayoub, Media Incharge, while

briefing media persons, praised the participants for their outstanding display of skills and sportsman spir throughout the championship.

The selected participants will now represent Budgam in the State Championship, competing against top fencers from other districts of J&K.

The District Budgam Fencing Association also congratulated two students from Govt Girls Higher Secondary School, Wadwan, Saba Nasir and Toyba Yousuf, who have been selected for the 68th National Schools Games to be held in Patna, Bihar. Coach Zain-Ul-Abideen from J&K Fencing Association was present to congratulate the selected students.

### Sri Lankan Secures Historic Double In ICC Players Of The Month Awards



**Agencies** 

**DUBAI:** Sri Lanka's Dunith Wellalage and Harshitha Samarawickrama were named as the ICC Players of the Month for August 2024 by the International Cricket Council on Monday.

The rare double for Sri Lanka comes after Wellalage excelled in a home ODI series against India and Samarawickrama hit a purple patch on a tour of Ireland.

The only previous instance of players from the same country winning the awards the same month was when Jasprit Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana were named the Players of the Month in June this year.

Wellalage won the coveted monthly award ahead of South Africa spinner Keshav Maharaj and West Indies fast bowler Jayden Seales, who were the others shortlisted.

Wellalage won the award after a Player of the Series performance that helped his side to a 2-0 ODI series win over India. The 31-year-old left-hander had scores of 67 not out, 39 and two, while also picking up seven wickets in the series including a haul of five for 27 in the third

This is the fifth time that a Sri Lanka player has won the men's award, the previous winners being Angelo Mathews (May 2022), Prabath Jayasuriya (July 2022), Wanindu Hasaranga (June 2023) and Kamindu Mendis (March 2024).

Wellalage was elated at winning the award and said that the award comes as a

"This is great news for me and brings immense satisfaction, as this recognition gives me further strength to continue doing the good work I do as a player and contribute to my team to reach excellence in the field," the spin all-rounder said.

Samarawickerama, who edged out the Ireland duo of Orla Prendergast and Gaby Lewis, had a fine run on a tour of Ireland that saw her become only the third woman cricketer from Sri Lanka to notch a century in ODIs.

The 26-year-old left-hander aggregated 151 runs in the two T20Is played in Dublin at a strike rate of 169.66, which included a match-winning 86 not out off 45 balls in the first match. She scored 172 in three ODIs in Belfast at a strike rate of 82.69 including a knock of 105 in the second match.

Samarawickrama is only the second Sri Lanka player to win the ICC Women's Player of the Month award. Captain Chamari Athapaththu has won the award three times - in September 2024, May 2024 and July 2024.

Samarawickrama said this recognition was very important since it came less than three weeks before the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024.

"I am extremely happy with this recognition, which I consider a new high in my career. It certainly gives me a lot of confidence ahead of the big competition, the Women's T20 World Cup,' she said.

### **Short TAKES**

#### **Bangladesh Prepare For 1st India Test With Intense Session**



oung pacer Nahid Rana was in focus as Bangladesh started their preparations for the two-Test series against India from September 19 with an intense practice session, here at the MA Chidambaram

Buoyed by their historic 2-0 win in away series over Pakistan, the Tigers are high on confidence but world No 2 India, perched at the top of the table in World Test Championship, will pose the sternest test for Najmul Hossain Shanto's side.

#### **Asian Hockey Championship: India Set Up China Final**

Ckipper Harmanpreet Singh's sublime form result-Ded in twin strikes as defending champions India entered the final of the Asian Champions Trophy with a clinical 4-1 win against South Korea in the semifinal in Hulunbuir, China, on Monday.

India scored through Uttam Singh (13th minute), skipper Harmanpreet Singh (19th, 45th) and Jarmanpreet Singh (32nd), while Korea's lone goal came from through Yang Jihun (33rd)'s penalty corner conversion.

India will take on hosts China, who defeated Pakistan in the first semi-final, in Tuesday's final.

#### **CWG 2024 Finds New Host After Australia's Withdrawal**

The Scottish capital of Glasgow is set to be an-I nounced as the host city of a "scaled down" Commonwealth Games in 2026, a year after Australian state Victoria pulled out due to ballooning costs, according to reports.

The 2026 Commonwealth Games were to be held in multiple cities across Victoria but the Australian state made a shock announcement in July 2023 that it has pulled out of the multi-sport event citing a steep rise in projected expenditure.

#### **Barcelona Forward Dani Olmo Sidelined For Up To Five Weeks**

Barcelona forward Dani Olmo has been sidelined for up to five weeks after injuring his right hamstring, the LaLiga club confirmed on Monday. The 26-year-old appeared to suffer muscle discomfort following his goal in Sunday's 4-1 league victory over Girona, leading to his substitution in the 61st minute.

Olmo's injury poses a significant challenge for manager Hansi Flick's side as they gear up for their European Champions League campaign, set to begin on Wednesday.

#### **Cristiano Ronaldo Misses AFC CL Due To Viral Infection**

ristiano Ronaldo, the star forward for Al-Nassr. was sidelined from his team's AFC Champions League Elite debut match against Al-Shorta in Iraq due to a viral infection.

Al-Nassr, Ronaldo's Saudi Arabian club, indicated that the Portuguese forward "wasn't feeling well" and a team physician confirmed he needs to rest.

Ronaldo recently increased his men's-record tally of international goals to 132, scoring for Portugal against Croatia and Scotland in the Nations League.

### No Room For Error Against Liverpool In Champions League, Says Milan Boss Fonseca

**Agencies** 

MILAN: AC Milan will have to be perfect defensively when they host Premier League side Liverpool in their Champions League opener at San Siro, manager Paulo Fonseca said on Monday. The seven-times Eu-

ropean champions Milan are ninth in the Serie A standings, having won one of their four matches and welcome Liverpool on Tuesday. Liverpool, who convinc-

ingly won their first three Premier League games under new coach Arne Slot without conceding, were stunned 1-0 by Nottingham Forest at Anfield on Saturday to sit fourth in the English top-flight.

"I think Liverpool is one of the strongest teams in Europe. They have a good game and strong individuals. We have to be perfect defensively, you cannot make mistakes," Fonseca told reporters.

"I see it as an opportunity to show our progress. It



things... but also to prove our worth.

"I am sure it will, the support of our fans is always important for us. Tomorrow it will be like that, we want to feel their love."

Milan play rivals Inter Milan in Serie A on Sunday, and the Portuguese remained tight-lipped about any potential changes in

the squad. Milan have already suf-

fered a blow with defensive midfielder Ismael Bennacer undergoing surgery on his right calf. The 26-year-old Algeria international's recovery period is estimated to be four months.

"We have many games and I have to think about all of them. Tomorrow is definitely the most important because it's the next one, but I can't forget that on Sunday there's the derby," Fonseca said.

Milan's new signing, Alvaro Morata, expected a stiff test against Liverpool.

The 31-year-old Spanish striker has scored once in two appearances for Milan since joining from LaLiga club Atletico Madrid on a four-year contract in July.

"It will be a great challenge, we have so many different players and we have to fix so many mechanisms, only time will tell," Morata

### **Real Madrid Boss Ancelotti Gets Injury Boost Ahead Of Champions League Opener**

MADRID: Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti expects to have several players back from injury ahead of their Champions League opener against German side VfB Stuttgart on

Midfielders Jude Bellingham, Aurelien Tchouameni and defender Eder Militao are set to be available for the match at the Santiago Bernabeu despite Militao missing training as he required an extra day to recover fully. Though Real would be

without midfielder Eduardo Camavinga, and former mainstays Nacho, Joselu, and now-retired midfielder Toni Kroos, Ancelotti said he was excited to start their title defence with 'the best player in the world,' Kylian Mbappe.

"Yes, we lost Nacho and Kroos, two of our most important players. And Joselu. In exchange, one of the best players in the world is coming. Do we have a better squad than last year? I



think so," Ancelotti told reporters on Monday.

"Jude's return is fantastic news for us. We know what he contributes with and without the ball," defender Dani Carvajal said. We demand much more from ourselves and tomorrow is a new opportunity to continue growing.'

All three European club competitions have been expanded to 36 teams this season and Ancelotti's side

in the expanded men's 32-team Club World Cup, starting next June in the United States.

will also be taking part

Forward Brahim Diaz was the latest player to be sidelined in a slew of injuries and Ancelotti said their gruelling schedule was to blame. "The calendar is too demanding. A new competition is coming and we don't know how it will turn out," he added.

"It may or may not be more entertaining. The fact is that we have two more games in this competition."

The Italian, who has won the Champions League five times as a manager and twice as a player, said the competition holds a place above all else in his heart.

Madrid triumphed over German side Borussia Dortmund in last season's final at Wembley, securing their sixth trophy in 11 years.