

'Abki Baar, BJP Sarkar'

End of Dynastic Rule In J&K My Mission: PM Modi

- » "The BJP will fulfil its promise of restoring J&K's statehood"
- » "NC, Cong allowed India's waters to flow across the border"
- » "In the past 35 years, Kashmir remained shut for 3000 days"
- » "3 dynastic families stomp over Jamhoriyat & Kashmiriyat"
- » "People of Kashmir strengthening our democracy"
- » "Youth now have pens and books and laptops, not stones, in their hands"



KO Photo | Abid Bhat

Modi's Vision For 'Naya Jammu and Kashmir'

- ◆ Youth Empowerment & Skill Development
- ◆ Revamping the Education System
- ◆ Infrastructure and Connectivity
- ◆ Economic and Welfare Assistance
- ◆ End of Dynastic Rule & Political Change



'No Power Can Restore Art 370'

Observer News Service

Katra: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Congress and NC alliance following remarks by Pakistan's defence minister regarding Article 370 and accused the coalition of pursuing the neighbouring country's agenda.

Modi claimed that Pakistan's agenda fosters violence and unrest. The prime minister asserted that Article 370 cannot be reinstated in Jammu and Kashmir, emphasising that "no power on Earth can bring back Article 370".

His attack came after Pakistani defence minister Khawaja Asif revealed that his country, the National

Conference (NC) and the Congress are on one page on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and the restoration of statehood.

"You must stay vigilant. You have to be cautious. Every vote for the Congress facilitates the implementation of the manifestos of the National Conference and the PDP. What are they announcing?"

"They will restore Article 370 and bring back the era of violence and bloodshed. Maybe there is no enthusiasm about the alliance of the National Conference and Congress here, but the neighbouring country is very excited. 'Unki balle balle Pakistan mein ho rahi hai' (They are being celebrated in | More on P6

Dabirah Hassan/ Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asked people of Kashmir to cast their votes wisely in the ongoing Assembly polls that he said were linked to the "future of Jammu and Kashmir". He said people of J&K should ensure the political sunset of the Congress, NC and PDP, which he said have

"inflicted wounds" in the region for years together.

Modi said youth of Jammu and Kashmir have found confidence in democracy again and are feeling that their vote can bring change, which is the first step towards their empowerment.

Addressing an election rally in support of BJP candidates at the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium

here, Modi said the BJP will fulfil its promise of restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood.

"The youths of my Jammu and Kashmir are no more helpless. They are becoming empowered under the Modi government. I am happy that the J&K BJP has also made huge announcements for the employment of youth. Be it their skill development or providing jobs

without manipulation, the BJP will do all these," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday asked people to give his party a chance to form the next government in J&K, accusing the Congress, NC and PDP of 'stomping' over 'Jamhoriyat and Kashmiriyat' for their vested political interests.

He said that his ultimate mission is to give UT a | More on P6

World Class Roads In J&K By 2025: Gadkari

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari announced the completion of the detailed project report (DPR) for the Mughal Road, with work set to commence soon.

He also revealed that the Sinthan Pass Tunnel, a key infrastructure project estimated at 5,000 crore, is slated for completion by 2028.

While addressing a public rally in Budhal Assembly constituency in Jammu and Kashmir, Gadkari detailed the government's ongoing efforts to transform Jammu and Kashmir's connectivity, including the construction of 50 tunnels, some of



which are already completed while others are in progress. Gadkari assured the people of Jammu and Kashmir that by 2025, the region will witness world-class | More on P6

6 KASHMIR IS BEAUTIFUL AND GOD has given it a beauty that if we travel to any place in the world, like Switzerland or Austria, we only say one thing: Kashmir is beautiful. But the people here are poor"

Phase II: Top BJP, Cong Leaders Ramp Up Campaigning

Agencies

Srinagar: Ahead of the 2nd and 3rd phase of Assembly Elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh are visiting Jammu region once again on September 21 to garner support for the party candidates. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is also all set to visit Jammu's surankote on September 23.

Home Minister Amit Shah will arrive in Jammu between September 20 and 21 and is scheduled to address a public rally in Surankote.

Also, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will address the rally in Sundarbani, RS Pora and Poonch. Former BJP President and Union Minister J.P. Nadra will hold a road show in Jammu east. On the other hand, Congress



leader and party's star campaigner Rahul Gandhi will arrive in Jammu on September 23 and will address people in Surankote area.

Over 23 lakh voters will decide the fate of 219 candidates, including 90 Independents, who are running for 24 assembly segments in the first phase.

The other two phases are scheduled to be held on September 25 and October

Over 25 Ex-militants, Separatists In Poll Fray

Agencies

Srinagar: Over 25 ex-militants, separatists, and members of the banned Jama'at-e-Islami (JeI) are participating in the ongoing assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, marking a significant shift in the political landscape of the region.

These candidates include former separatist leaders or their kin such as Zaffar Habib Dar, Syed Saleem Geelani, Javid Hubbi, and Aga Muntazir. Additionally, ex-militants like former JKLF commander Farooq Ahmad Dar, along with several JeI members, are also running for various assembly seats.

JeI has strategically fielded candidates in around 15 constituencies. This includes Pulwama, Kulgam, Zainapora, and Devsar in south Kashmir, as well as Beerwah, Langate, Bandipora, Baramulla, Sopore, and Rafiabab in the north.

Among the prominent candidates is Talat Majid, Sayaar Ahmad, and Hafiz Mohammad, who are contesting despite the ban on the organization.

Zaffar Habib Dar is running under the JeI Apni Party banner. He believes that resolving the issues of Jammu and Kashmir lies in active participation in the democratic process. "We can solve problems only through the electoral process. Everyone should participate in the electoral process by casting their vote," Dar said, signaling a notable departure from his previous stance.

Former militant Farooq Ahmad Dar, also known as Saifullah Farooq, is contesting on a Samajwadi Party ticket from the Habba Kadal constituency. Farooq, who joined the insurgency in 1989 and received arms training in Pakistan, now regrets his decision. "That time everyone picked up the gun. We were | More on P6

KASHMIR OBSERVER

EPS # 3

PODCAST

27th year OF PUBLICATION

KASHMIR OBSERVER

FT FILM MAKER

Bashir Budgami

SCAN THIS TO WATCH THE PODCAST

Hidden Craters Reveal Earth May Once Have Had A Ring - Like Saturn

The Conversation

The rings of Saturn are some of the most famous and spectacular objects in the Solar System. Earth may once have had something similar.

In a paper published last week in Earth & Planetary Science Letters, my colleagues and I present evidence that Earth may have had a ring.

The existence of such a ring, forming around 466 million years ago and persisting for a few tens of millions of years, could explain several puzzles in our planet's past.

The case for a ringed Earth Around 466 million years ago, a lot of meteorites started hitting Earth. We know this because many impact craters formed in a geologically brief period.

In the same period we also find deposits of limestone across Europe, Russia and China containing very high levels of debris from a certain type of meteorite. The meteorite debris in these sedimentary rocks show signs that they were exposed to space radiation for much less time than we see in meteorites that fall today.

Many tsunamis also occurred at this time, as can be seen from other unusual jumbled up sedimentary rocks.

We think all these features are likely related to one another. But what links them together? A pattern of craters We know of 21 meteorite impact craters that formed during this high-impact period. We wanted to see if there was a pattern in their locations.

Using models of how Earth's tectonic plates moved in the past, we mapped



out where all these craters were when they first formed. We found all of the craters are on continents that were close to the equator in this period, and none are in places that were closer to the poles.

So all the impacts occurred close to the equator. But is this actually a fair sample of the impacts that occurred? Well, we measured how much of Earth's land surface suitable for preserving a crater was near the equator at that time. Only about 30% of the suitable land was

close to the equator, with 70% at higher latitudes.

Under normal circumstances, asteroids hitting Earth can hit at any latitude, at random, as we see in craters on the Moon, Mars and Mercury.

So it's extremely unlikely that all 21 craters from this period would form close to the equator if they were unrelated to one another. We would expect to see many other craters at higher latitudes as well.

We think the best explanation for all

this evidence is that a large asteroid broke up during a close encounter with Earth. Over several tens of millions of years, the asteroid's debris rained down onto Earth, creating the pattern of craters, sediments and tsunamis we describe above.

How rings form You may know that Saturn isn't the only planet with rings. Jupiter, Neptune and Uranus have less obvious rings, too. Some scientists have even suggested that Phobos and Deimos, the small moons of Mars, may

“In the same period we also find deposits of limestone across Europe, Russia and China containing very high levels of debris from a certain type of meteorite. The meteorite debris in these sedimentary rocks show signs that they were exposed to space radiation for much less time than we see in meteorites that fall today.

larger body. Over time, the material in the ring will fall down to the larger body, where the larger pieces will form impact craters. These craters will be located close to the equator.

So if Earth destroyed and captured a passing asteroid around 466 million years ago, it would explain the anomalous locations of the impact craters, the meteorite debris in sedimentary rocks, craters and tsunamis, and the meteorites' relatively brief exposure to space radiation.

A giant sunshade? Back then, the continents were in different positions due to continental drift. Much of North America, Europe and Australia were close to the equator, whereas Africa and South America were at higher southern latitudes.

The ring would have been around the equator. And since Earth's axis is tilted relative to its orbit around the Sun, the ring would have shaded parts of Earth's surface.

This shading in turn might have caused global cooling, as less sunlight reached the planet's surface.

This brings us to another interesting puzzle. Around 465 million years ago, our planet began cooling dramatically. By 445 million years ago it was in the Hirnantian Ice Age, the coldest period in the past half a billion years.

Was a ring shading Earth responsible for this extreme cooling? The next step in our scientific sleuthing is to make mathematical models of how asteroids break up and disperse, and how the resulting ring evolves over time. This will set the scene for climate modelling that explores how much cooling could be imposed by such a ring.

Triptan Drugs Found To Be More Effective Against Migraines Than Newer Ones

Press Trust Of India

Triptan class of drugs are more effective in treating migraine headaches, compared to newer and more expensive drugs, an analysis of nearly 140 clinical trials, involving about 90,000 participants, has suggested.

The analysis, published in The British Medical Journal, showed that eletriptan, rizatriptan, sumatriptan, and zolmitriptan were better in relieving pain than the relatively recently developed drugs - lasmiditan, rimegepant, and ubrogepant. All these drugs are marketed in India.

Commercially available since the 1990s, triptan drugs work by changing how blood is circulated in brain and by silencing overactive pain nerves, they change how pain is processed.

While numerous antimigraine drugs are available, researchers, including those from Copenhagen University Hospital in Denmark, said that there is clear consensus as to which performs best in treating the neurological condition affecting more than a billion around the world. It is also the leading cause of disability or poor health in girls and women aged 15-49 years.

The researchers said that triptans are widely underused and added that they should be "considered the treatment of choice for migraine episodes, owing to their capacity for inducing rapid and sustained pain freedom."



While some of the triptan class of drugs have been studied to lower menstrual migraines too, which can be more severe and last longer than non-menstrual migraines, women should be cautious and avoid overuse, according to the American Migraine Foundation.

The authors called for an improved access to triptan drugs worldwide by including them into the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines, along with updating international clinical guidelines for diagnosing and managing migraines.

For the study, the researchers identified a total of 137 randomised controlled trials, published up to June 24, 2023, and comprising 89,445 par-

ticipants -- who were aged 40 years on average and 86 per cent of whom were women.

"When the active interventions (drugs) were compared with each other, eletriptan was superior to almost all the other drugs for achieving pain freedom at two hours, followed by rizatriptan, sumatriptan, and zolmitriptan," the authors wrote.

Further, among the triptan drugs, eletriptan was found to be the most effective in bringing about a sustained freedom from pain for up to 24 hours.

The researchers said that the results "offer the best available evidence to guide the choice of acute oral drug interventions for migraine episodes."

Office of the Naib-Tehsildar Pattan Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth

Public Notice

The registrar Births and deaths (EO Municipal Council Pattan/Block Development Officer Lolpora) has submitted a case file pertaining to Birth of Khairun Nisa D/o Mohd Azhar Ud Din Ganaie R/o Yadipora Pattan District Baramulla with verified date of event (birth) as 26-07-2022 occurred at SDH Pattan

In this connection, if anybody having any objection to the issuance of said registration may contact this office within seven (07) days, after which no objections shall be entertained. Executive Magistrate 1st Class Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

Office of the Naib-Tehsildar Pattan Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth

Public Notice

The registrar Births and deaths (EO Municipal Council Pattan/Block Development Officer Lolpora) has submitted a case file pertaining to Birth of Anjum Zehra D/o Mohammad Shafi Sheikh R/o Goom Ahmadpora District Baramulla with verified date of event (birth) as 24-05-2020 occurred at SDH Pattan

In this connection, if anybody having any objection to the issuance of said registration may contact this office within seven (07) days, after which no objections shall be entertained. Executive Magistrate 1st Class Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to the general public that my name in Pnb Metlife Insurance policy bearing policy no 00874889 is mentioned as Manzoor Ahmed Khandvav/s/o Lt Ali Mohammed Khandvav while as my name as per my Aadhaar and Pan card is Manzoor Ahmad Gujree s/o Ali Mohammad Gujree. I want to update the same in my Pnb Metlife Policy. If anybody has any objection in this regard, they may file his objection at Pnb Metlife office within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Manzoor Ahmad Gujree
S/o Ali Mohammad Gujree
R/o Dar Mohalla Soura Srinagar

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J&K Bank
Serving To Empower
Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd.
Zonal Office Delhi,
Gurugram - 122002 (Haryana)
www.jkbank.com

On-Line Request for Proposal (e-RFP) For Empanelment of Vendor(s) for AMC of UPS Systems installed at various Branches/ATM's/Offices of the Bank under Zonal Office Delhi

Tender Notice along with Complete Tender document outlining the minimum requirements can be downloaded from and BIDs can be submitted on the Banks' e-Tendering Portal <https://jkbank.abcpocprocure.com> w.e.f. September 21, 2024, 16.00 Hrs. Tender Document can also be downloaded from Bank's Official Website www.jkbank.com. Last date for submission of Bids is October 14, 2024, 17.00 Hrs.

e-NIT Ref. No JKB/CHO/E&ED/Empanelment-ZOD/2024-1209
Dated: 18-09-2024

Registered office: Corporate Headquarters, M.A.Road, Srinagar 190001, Kashmir, India
CIN: L65101JK1938SGC000048; T: +91 (0)194 2481 930-35; F: +91 (0)194 248 1928;
E: info@jkbank.com; W: www.jkbank.com

DIPK-NB-1583/24 dated: 19-09-2024

Government Of Jammu And Kashmir Jammu And Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB)

CPO Chowk, Panjtirthi, Jarnmu/Zam/am Complex Ram bag h Srinagar.
www.jkssb.nic.in

NOTIFICATION

Subject: Result/Score-sheet of Written Test for the post of Junior Assistant -regarding.

Whereas, the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) conducted Written Examination for the post of Junior Assistant, Various Departments, advertised vide Advertisement Notification No. 04 of 2021, 05 of 2021, 02 of 2022 and 04 of 2022 under various Item no's on 25,h August, 2024; and

Whereas, the JKSSB, vide Notification No. JKSSB-COE0EXAM(UT)/32/2024-03 (7551754) Dated: 08.08.2024, issued a Notification of Result of Computer Based Type Test (Skill Test) for the Posts of Junior Assistant; and

Whereas, the Revised/Final Answer Key in respect of written examination held for the said post has been notified vide No. JKSSB-COE0EXAM(UT)/32/2024-03 (7551754) Dated: 18.09.2024; and

Whereas, the following criteria has been adopted while compiling the result/score-sheet:

- Type Test: 20 Marks.
Type Test score of a candidate =x/y*20
* = Net speed of candidate.
Y = Maximum Net speed achieved in the instant examination by any candidate i.e. 84 WPM.
- Written Test (OMR): 80 Marks.

Now, therefore, by adopting the above criteria, the result/score-sheet, based on the performance of candidates who appeared in the Type Test (Skill Test) and Written Test for the post of Junior Assistant, advertised vide Advertisement Notification No. 04 of 2021, 05 of 2021, 02 of 2022 and 04 of 2022 under various Item no's conducted on 25.08.2024, is hereby notified as Annexure "A". It is further notified that:

- Mere figuring in the result/score sheet shall not entitle a candidate to be called for document verification or figure in the select list and that he/she has to fulfill other eligibility conditions, as laid down and decision of the Board in this regard shall be final.
- The Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) will call candidates falling in the consideration zone, based on the merit obtained by them as per the notified criteria for Document Verification. The schedule for Document Verification shall be notified separately.

(Ab. Baseer Ahmad) JKAS
Deputy Controller of Examinations
J&K Services Selection Board

No.: JKSSB-COE0EXAM(UT)/32/2024-03 (7551754)
DIPK-5531/24
Dated:19.09.2024

The Jammu and Kashmir State Board Of School Education

New Campus Bemina Srinagar
Notice for General Public

The applicant/ candidate whose photograph is published in this notice and claiming to have lost her DOB certificate/s issued under as per below



Roll No: 363456
Class 10th
Year & Session 1996-1997
Registration: 24142-shp-ir-92
Name : Nasreena Parveen
Father's Name: Mohd Yousof Khan
Mother's Name : --Saleema
Date of Birth:- 04-02-1978
Residenc:- Khore Sheerabad Pattan

According to the candidate concerned has approach to this office for issuance of Duplicate DOB /Marks Certificate/s, so before the same is processed and provided to the candidate, under rules, anybody having any objection in this regard, shall bring into the notice of Assistant Secretary of Certificate as well as Assistant Secretary Examination Unit I & III KD within the period of 7 days respectively, from the date of publication of this notice.

(Besides the above referred "DOB / Marks Certificate/s" bearing No: 682614 be treated as "CANCELLED")
No: F(Cer is-I-DQC)B/KD/24

Assistant Secretary
Certificates, KD.

bmg_r

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار پٹن

عنوان :- درخواست نمائند قید رمضان، عاقب رمضان، روحانی رمضان، رابہ رمضان
اولاد ان محمد رمضان شیر گوری ساکن پٹن تحصیل پٹن بھرا جرائی OBC

اشہار ہر خاص و عام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصد میں سائل نے ایک درخواست نمائند OBC سرٹیفکیٹ مذکورہ شیر گوری پیش کی ہے جو کہ ریکارڈوں میں اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقے سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل واقعی شیر گوری ذات سے تعلق رکھتا ہے اور سائل پٹن میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور کبھی بھی ترک سکونت نہیں کی ہے سائل کا کئی پٹن افراد پر مشتمل ہے

محمد رمضان شیر گوری	مزدوری	55 سال
علیہ بیگم زوجہ محمد رمضان	گھریلو کام	53 سال
قید رمضان دختر محمد رمضان	زیر تعلیم	28 سال
عاقب رمضان ولد۔۔	--	26 سال
راشید رمضان دختر۔۔	--	24 سال
روحانی رمضان۔۔	--	22 سال
رابہ رمضان۔۔	--	20 سال

سائل مذکورہ OBC سرٹیفکیٹ حاصل کرنے کا خواہ ہے اور کئی کی ہوا اور مدنی 7000 روپیہ تک ہے۔ سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی مزایا عوارض ہو تو وہ بعد مشورہ اخبار ساریات دن کے نامہ دارانہ اپنے عذر یا اعتراض و ادوات حذا کو دفتر اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے مجا کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار FKO

Candidates Shift Focus From Rallies To Door-To-Door Campaigns

Agencies

Srinagar: As the three-phase assembly polls in Jammu & Kashmir commenced on September 18, the first phase saw a voter turnout of 59 percent across 24 constituencies. Political campaigning is ramping up in Srinagar, where candidates are increasingly prioritizing door-to-door outreach.

With Srinagar scheduled to vote in the second phase on September 25, candidates from various political parties, including independents, are engaging directly with locals to address pressing ground-level issues.

Tariq Hameed Karra, the National Conference-Congress alliance candidate from Central Shalatang, has not only held rallies but has also been seen connecting directly with constituents at designated meeting points in a constituency that was redrawn during the recent delimitation exercise.

Similarly, Apni Party president Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari is actively meeting locals in Chanapora, a newly established constituency. National Conference (NC) candidate Ahsan Pardesi has also been engaging with residents in Lal Chowk to understand their concerns.

Arif Laigroo of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), contesting from Habba Kadal, is focusing on issues

like high electricity bills, unemployment and inadequate infrastructure during his outreach efforts.

Independent candidates in Srinagar's eight assembly constituencies are also striving to connect with voters on the ground. Zaffar Habib Dar of the Apni Party, a first-time candidate, has found his door-to-door outreach to be enlightening, stating that it has helped him understand the reality of voters who feel abandoned by previous promises.

This election is particularly significant as it marks the first assembly election in Jammu & Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and the state's subsequent reorganization into a Union Territory. It is also the first assembly poll following a controversial delimitation that allocated 47 seats for Kashmir and 43 for Jammu.

Following the first phase, the Election Commission of India (ECI) will conduct the second phase on September 25, with the final phase scheduled for October 1.

Political experts say that for newcomers, especially those contesting for the first time since the changes in 2019, direct voter engagement is essential, especially given the short notice of the polls.

They said it is important to address local grievances and foster personal connections in a region where trust in political institutions has been historically fragile.



PIC: Abid Bhat/KO

Assembly Election-2024

Home Voting Via POSTAL BALLOT Begins In Srinagar

Persons With Disabilities Exercise Franchise

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Home voting via POSTAL BALLOT, for the Assembly election has officially begun today across all eight constituencies of District Srinagar, utilizing postal ballots to facilitate the voting process. This initiative is specifically aimed at enhancing electoral participation among voters aged 85 and older, as well as persons with 40% benchmark disability.

The Home Voting process will continue for three days, until September 21, 2024. Dedicated staff members, including polling personnel, micro-observers, and reserves, are deployed across various clusters in the constituencies. The district administration has identified a substantial number of eligible home voters (AVSC & AVPD). District Election Officer (DEO) Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din reaffirmed the district administration's commitment to inclusivity, free, fair and transparent elections stating, "We aim for 100% voter participation ensuring that every eligible individual exercises their franchise."

This process is conducted under the supervision of election observers from ECI and senior officials, with micro-observers in place to guarantee transparency and integrity. The administration remains steadfast in maintaining high standards of security and electoral integrity throughout this

important initiative.

The Election Commission of India's (ECI's) home voting facility has gained momentum in Srinagar district, with voters aged above 85 years and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) availing the option to exercise their vote. The home voting facility has been utilized by many individuals today.

Among them, Mohammad Aslam Bhat, a Channapora resident in Srinagar's 23rd Assembly Constituency, availed the facility.

Aslam, after casting his ballot, said, "This has made it easier for me to discharge my duty without any hassle. I thank the authorities for making a difference for persons like me who find it tough to reach polling stations."

He expressed his happiness after casting his vote, and commended the step taken by the ECI. He also mentioned that he had cast his vote in a similar manner during the Parliamentary elections, and

was pleased to contribute towards building a new society.

Meanwhile, authorities have extended this facility to voters in Dal Lake-type localities, where election officials went around in Shikaras to bring polling to voters' homes on the water, allowing them to cast ballots without any difficulty.

Home voting also continued today in the 24th Zadibal Assembly Constituency of Srinagar, where elderly women were seen casting their vote. Specially abled individuals, as well as those unable to reach polling stations, were also seen voting.

Moreover, voters aged 85 and above, along with Persons with Disabilities (PwD) in Srinagar, cast their vote by availing ECI's optional home voting facilities.

Photos and videos surfaced on social media platforms, showing elderly people thanking the authorities for giving them a chance to vote.

This has made it easier for me to discharge my duty without any hassle. I thank the authorities for making a difference for persons like me who find it tough to reach polling stations

Promotion Of Hindi Crucial For Cultural Connectivity: VC KU

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Department of Hindi, University of Kashmir (KU), celebrated Hindi Diwas here Thursday, with an engaging inaugural session attended by notable dignitaries and literary enthusiasts.

KU Vice Chancellor (VC), Prof Nilofar Khan, who presided over the ceremony, emphasized the significance of Hindi in both local and global contexts.

In her opening remarks, Prof Khan as per a statement commended the Department of Hindi for its versatile progress and the inclusion of international students.

"The promotion of the Hindi language is crucial and the university administration stands ready to support the department's initiatives. I encourage regular workshops and national and international seminars to enhance language skills among students and researchers," Prof Khan said.

KU Registrar, Prof Naseer Iqbal, shared a personal anecdote

that highlighted the importance of Hindi in daily life.

He said, "Hindi is not just a language; it is the heartbeat of our culture. I assure the department of my full support in all its endeavors."

Dean, School of Arts, Languages and Literatures, Prof Arifa Bushra, who also spoke on the occasion, reflected on her longstanding connection with the department.

Noting the significant advancements in the department since her student days, she said: "As someone who has grown alongside this department, I have witnessed its evolution and the untiring support from our esteemed faculty."

Prominent poet and broadcaster, Dr Satish Vimal, reinforced this sentiment, stating, "Hindi is a language that belongs to every Hindustani. Its versatility allows it to flourish across the globe, connecting people through shared stories and experiences."

LS Polls-2024 Inter-College SVEEP Event Held At GCOE

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Govt. College of Education (GCOE)/IASE M.A Road today organized an Inter-college Mega SVEEP Event at the Auditorium of college here with an aim of increasing voter awareness and encouraging electoral participation among the youth of Srinagar.

The event was inaugurated by Nodal Principal of Kashmir Division Colleges, Prof. Seema Naz.

Students and faculty members from various city colleges actively participated in this event.

In her inaugural

speech, Prof. Seema Naz stressed on the importance of voting, describing it as the fundamental and basic pillar of democracy. She emphasized that young voters have the power to shape the future of the country through their participation in the electoral process.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr,DEE/G/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders (www.ireps.gov.in) against below titled Tenders. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only.

Tender No	Name of work	App.Cost. (in Rs.)	Earnest Money(In Rs.)
251-Elect-1-38/2024-25	Electrical Work in c/w upgradation/improvement of Kapurthala - Tanda Urmur, Hoshiarpur, Nawana Shehar Doaba, Banga & Jalandhar city Goods Shed under SSEP/JUC.	1,59,28,655.88	2,29,700.00

Completion period: 06 Months | Opening of tender: 08.10.2024 after 15:00 Hrs | Website Particulars: www.ireps.gov.in

251-Elect/T,Notice No. 31-Elect/2024-25 | Dated: 18.09.2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2913/24

Baba Family Bereaved

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of Ubaid Imtiyaz Baba S/O Imtiyaz Ahmad Baba R/o House No. 53 Green Avenue Illahi Bagh Buchpora - Srinagar, who left for heavenly abode on Thursday, 19th September, 2024 after brief illness.

May Almighty Allah grant highest place to departed soul. Mourning shall be observed for 04 days, and Ijtimai Fateh Khwani shall be held at 10:30 am on Sunday (22 September) at our ancestral Graveyard situated at Mirza Kamil Sahab Chowk, Hawal.

Grief stricken
Imtiyaz Ahmad Baba
Adeel Imtiyaz & others
7006275071

inf

Kashmir American Society of Healthcare

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

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

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

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

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

You do not have to fight your battles alone.

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

Happy & Healthy minds Office, HPVT Building (1st Floor), Daresht Kadal Chowk, Srinagar

9070806160

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PRAYERS

FAJR 4: 53

ZUHR 12:24

ASR 4: 48

Magrib 6:35

ISHA 7: 55

HIJRI CALENDAR

15 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1446

This Day In History

- 622 Islamic Prophet Muhammed (SAW)/Abu Bakr (RA) arrives in Jathrib (Medina)
- 1066- Battle of Fulford, Yorkshire: Harald III Hardrada of Norway defeats Northern Saxon Earls Edwin and Morcar
- 1187- Saladin begins the Siege of Jerusalem.
- 1378 - Robert de Geneve, "butcher of Cesena" crowned anti-pope Clemens VII
- 1519 - Spanish expedition led by Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan sets off on the 1st successful circumnavigation of the globe (Magellan killed on route)
- 1530- Luther advises protestant monarch compromise
- 1565- Spaniards capture Fort Caroline Florida & massacre the French
- 1596 - Diego de Montemayor founded the city of Monterrey in New Spain
- 1602- Spanish held city of Grave surrenders to Maurice of Orange during Eighty Years' War
- 1604- Spanish army under Spinola recaptures Ostende
- 1643 - First Battle of Newbury (English civil war): King Charles I's forces beaten by a parliamentary army led by the Earl of Essex and Philip Stapleton
- 1688 - French troops occupy Palts
- 1854 - Battle of the Alma: first major battle of Crimean War. British and French alliance defeat the Russians.
- 1861 - Battle of Lexington, MI-captured by Union
- 1863 - Battle of Sheperdstown VA
- 1863 - Civil War Battle of Chickamauga, near Chattanooga Tenn, ends
- 1909 - The British Parliament passes the South Africa Act; it calls for union of Cape Colony, Natal, Orange River Colony, and Transvaal; and both English and Dutch as official languages.
- 1932 - Gandhi begins hunger strike against treatment of untouchables
- 1939 - British navy captures German U-27 boat
- 1954 - 1st FORTRAN computer program run
- 1954 - 1st National People's Congress adopts Chinese constitution
- 1960 - UN General Assembly admit 13 African countries & Cyprus (96 nations)
- 1963 - JFK proposes a joint US-Soviet voyage to the moon
- 1966 - US Surveyor B launched toward Moon; crashed Sept 23
- 1967 - Benin separates from Nigeria
- 1970 - Soviet spacecraft Luna 16 lands on Moon's Mare Fecunditatis, drills core sample
- 1972 - Libya acquires a 50 percent interest in two ENI oil concessions
- 1972 - The Social Democratic and Labour Party issues a document entitled "Towards a New Ireland", proposing that the British and Irish governments should have joint sovereignty over Northern Ireland
- 1979 - NASA launches HEAO 3
- 1979 Lee Iacocca is elected president of the Chrysler Corporation.
- 1979 - The Punjab wing of the Unity Centre of Communist Revolutionaries of India (Marxist-Leninist) formally splits and constitutes a parallel UCCRI(ML).
- 1982 - Jalaluddin takes a one-day hat-trick Pakistan v Australia
- 1984 - Suicide car bomb attacks US Embassy annex in Beirut, kills 23
- 1992 - Space shuttle STS-47 (Endeavour 2) lands
- 1994 - Space shuttle STS-64 (Discovery 20), lands
- 2010 - The National Bureau of Economic Research state today that the US left the recession in June 2009, with managing director Lakshman Achuthan of the Economic Cycle Research Institute saying GDP recovered to 70% of the pre-recession level
- 2012 - 50 people are killed and dozens injured after a gas station is bombed by the Syrian Army in Ain Issa
- 2013 - 46 soldiers are killed in army-base attacks in Shabwah Governorate, Yemen
- 2014 - New Zealand's National Government wins a 3rd term in the elections despite allegations of corruption and revelations about state surveillance

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Friday | 20-09-2024

PM Promises Statehood

In a statement that would have been well received in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised restoration in his first election rally in Srinagar during the ongoing Assembly election. Addressing the rally, the PM made the commitment on statehood to a rousing applause from the audience. However, the PM again stayed short of specifying any timeline for the return of statehood. He once again lashed out at the alliance between Congress and the NC, saying this would have made Pakistan happy. The PM warned that a vote for the Congress would lead to the reinstatement of Article 370, which he said would pave the way for violence to return to the Valley. He made the statement despite the well-known fact that a predominant majority of people in the erstwhile state are upset over the withdrawal of Article 370 that granted Jammu and Kashmir an autonomous status and removed inherited protections on land and jobs.

Earlier in his election rally in Doda, the PM highlighted the transformation in Jammu and Kashmir over the last decade in terms of the overall improvement in the security situation and the development brought about during this period. He based his appeal for votes for the BJP candidates on this accomplishment. He also peddled the now BJP's go-to election plank about the alleged mess in the union territory created by three dynasties - Abdullahs, Muftis, and Gandhis.

The BJP faces a difficult task of selling a political narrative on Jammu and Kashmir that is contrary to aspirations of a large majority of people. People here want restoration of Article 370 and the attendant rights. They also want an empowered Assembly unlike what is on offer and more importantly the restoration of statehood. But none of these is being offered by the BJP. As for the statehood, the promise is undone by the lack of a timeline.

However, the BJP's core constituency in Jammu and Kashmir is not the Kashmir Valley but the Jammu division. In 2014, the party had by and large swept the division, securing 25 out of the 37 seats. But the electoral scene for the party is not as conducive as it was in 2014 when the Modi wave was at its peak. The ground looks a bit shaky now. However, the saffron party hopes to better its tally than the 25 seats it garnered in 2014, enabling it to form a government with support from a Kashmir-origin party or independents. As for support for the BJP in Kashmir, the PM's rally was impressively attended. But the statehood promise that he made in his speech makes the event relevant to every inhabitant of J&K. One can only hope that the BJP government fulfills the commitment sooner than later.



Did you know?

Stock Market Dynamics in Kashmir

Irshad Mushtaq

The stock market dynamics in Kashmir during 2008 revealed stark challenges for local investors. Many suffered significant losses, leading to brokerage closures. Key takeaways include:

1. Long-term investments are crucial in a volatile market.
2. Limited financial education creates vulnerabilities.
3. The 2008 crisis showed the risks of small-cap stocks and high leverage.
4. Regulatory warnings highlight the dangers of guaranteed income schemes.

Historically, many individuals in Kashmir have suffered financial losses in the stock market, resulting in the closure of numerous local brokerage firms. To decode this issue, it's pivotal to grasp some core stock market principles and specific regional challenges:

1. Stock Market Myths:

Long-term vs Short-term: The stock market is more suited for long-term investments rather than daily profits. Market movements are unpredictable, making consistent daily income virtually impossible. Complexity and Competition: Successful trading demands extensive technical knowledge and competes against professionals globally.

2. Knowledge Gap:

Limited Financial Education: Many residents in Kashmir lack exposure to financial markets, making them vulnerable to poor investment decisions. Cultural Barrier: Historically, there has been little emphasis on financial literacy and market participation in the region.

3. Market Volatility:

Historical Crises: The 2008 financial crisis, initiated by the collapse of Lehman Brothers, is a stark example. Before the crash, the Nifty index surged from around 1,300 in 2004 to 6,000 by 2008. However, it then fell to 2,500, a 60% drop, wiping out substantial investments.

Small-Cap and Mid-Cap Stocks: These stocks faced even more severe declines, amplifying losses for those heavily invested in them.

4. High-Risk Practices:

Leveraged Investments: Investors using borrowed money to trade faced catastrophic losses. A slight market downturn could result in complete loss of their principal due to high leverage.

Aggressive Trading: Some Brokers now fully closed often encouraged frequent trading with the promise of quick returns, leading to substantial capital erosion.

5. Regulatory Challenges:

SEBI Warnings: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has cautioned against assured income schemes in the stock market, emphasizing that such promises are illegal.

Lack of Awareness: Many investors overlooked these warnings, often due to inadequate understanding or incomplete reading of the investment disclosure documents.

Conclusion

The widespread financial losses in Kashmir's stock market are attributed to a complex interplay of unrealistic expectations, a knowledge deficit, inherent market volatility, high-risk investment practices, and regulatory challenges. Addressing these issues requires a combined approach of enhancing financial literacy, better regulatory enforcement, and promoting informed investment strategies.

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

Need for Interest Free NBFCs in J&K

Elections Manifestos of local parties silent on this issue

The election fever is on rise in Jammu & Kashmir. Polling for the first phase has just concluded on September 18th.

Second phase of elections would be held from September 25th onwards. Neither in the election manifesto nor in the election campaigns we have seen political parties raising the issue of interest free banking in J&K. Not even do they speak about Interest Free Non Banking Finance Companies -NBFCs for which no RBI permission is required. Through this article I am trying to reach out to our political parties and policy makers to think seriously on this issue as interest free NBFCs can play a great role in shaping our economy. We must know that after China and the US, India is considered to be the third-largest country in the world where start-ups have been prospering. Just before the outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic, the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) was hopeful of attracting an investment of over 21 billion US dollars that could create around 6 lakh jobs directly and 14 lakh indirect jobs. All this was shattered due to the outbreak of COVID 19, but the work was again taken up and a good number of investments are being made in India through this forum. Infact this year in April the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) appointed former Revenue Secretary and ex-Secretary of Economic Affairs Tarun Bajaj as the head of the US-India Tax Forum. Bajaj joined the USISPF as an advisor to the Board of Directors in January and will now spearhead the US-India Tax Forum. In Jammu & Kashmir several startups especially in hospitality, tourism, handicrafts, horticulture had already suffered major setbacks in 2019 lockdown and then due to outbreak of COVID 19. Many of them had to wind up their operations post abrogation of article 370 last year. But after 2021 the things started to come again on the track but these startups need monetary support which get delayed through banks. This issue can be addressed through interest free Non Banking Finance Companies -NBFCs

Sahulat Microfinance

Some years back I got a chance to visit Sahulat Microfinance Society in Hyderabad. The visit was facilitated by Shri Vijay Mahajan (V M) one of the pioneers of the Microfinance Movement in India and a gold medalist from IIM Ahmedabad. V M is a great supporter of Interest Free Banking (Islamic Banking) in particular Interest Free Micro Financing and has done great work in this direction. Sahulat was awarded the best Islamic Microfinance Entity of the year in 2018 at an event organized by Islamic Finance Forum for South Asia at Colombo. Sahulat Microfinance Society was established in 2010 as a voluntary, non-political, non-profit making social service organization. The company is providing interest free micro finance options for reducing socio-economic disparities and to achieve justice and equity for educationally and financially backward sections of the public at large. Sahulat also facilitates, organizes and develops institutions, more particularly in the co-operative sector. Mohammad Zakuudin Executive Director Sahulat Hyderabad informed me during my visit that the company aims at facilitating, promoting and developing interest-free microfinance institutions (IFMFI). He also said that Sahulat undertakes and promotes need based research and developing different products and financial instruments for IFMFI.

Interest Free NBFCs in India

Traditional Microfinance companies across India charge high interest which is as high as 20 to 22%. In India Interest-free microfinance institutions can be run as legal entities under various cooperative legislations or multi-state acts. The members of the cooperative can be in hundreds and they are partners in both gain and loss. There are around 30 such legal entities working as Interest Free Microfinance Institutions (IFMFI) with 63 branches in 12 different states of India. In Jammu & Kashmir I haven't heard of any such institution in spite of the fact that such NBFC could be of great help to small entrepreneurs. I was expecting to see these things included in election manifestos of National Conference, PDP, Congress or AIP and other parties but all of them have missed it. Had they made their draft election manifestos public, these things would have been incorporated in the final draft. But as I said in my previous articles, it is never too late and the party or parties that will come to power & form Government must set up a regime of Interest Free NBFCs across nook and corner of Jammu & Kashmir. The IFMFI is owned by the members which can be hundreds in number. Company is democratically controlled by the members which facilitates credit needs at competitive rates for the members. IFMFI also provides other financial services to its members.



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat



At a time when traditional banking institutions are charging huge interest from the customers, I believe " Shariah Compliant" (Interest Free) Non Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) or Interest Free Microfinance Institutions (IFMFI) could play a major role to support our Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in J&K

UNDP on Islamic Finance

In September 2017 public and private stakeholders, including investors gathered in New York for a high level event titled- 'Realizing Agenda 2030: How Islamic Finance through Impact Investing can help achieve the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). During the event it was thoroughly discussed how Islamic finance can be tapped for global development especially to end poverty and above all to achieve the target goals by 2030. The event was co-organized by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) New York office. The event coincided with the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly. While deliberating on Islamic Finance and its role in global development, Magdy Martínez-Solimán, UN Assistant Secretary General and Director of UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programme Support said :

"Islamic Finance is one of the fastest growing sources of finance in the global financial industry. Global assets in Islamic finance are expected to reach US\$3.5 trillion by 2021. Considering the scale, I would like to underline that Islamic finance could offer a strong, non-traditional source of financing to advance SDG implementation "

Partnership between UNDP & IDB

Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2016 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen the collaboration between the two leading development institutions, to support the effective implementation and achievement of the SDGs. IDB & UNDP are collaborating on priority areas such as crisis response and recovery, peace building, poverty eradication, youth employment, skills, innovation, disaster reduction, climate change, sustainable energy etc. In addition to it the partnership is to focus on scaling up ongoing initiatives, and exploring new opportunities to collaborate for the effective realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The partnership will also work to promote inclusive markets, business models for inclusive development and increased entrepreneurship including advancing the Global Islamic Impact Investing Platform for blending Islamic financing and private sector resources in achieving the SDGs.

Conclusion

At a time when traditional banking institutions are charging huge interest from the customers, I believe " Shariah Compliant" (Interest Free) Non Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) or Interest Free Microfinance Institutions (IFMFI) could play a major role to support our Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in J&K. Our apple growers, cherry growers, vegetable farmers & other small entrepreneurs can get benefitted. The idea of writing this piece during election time is to give a wake up call to our political leaders. This is a call for those youth who want to pursue ethical business. Such people need to come forward, study Interest Free Microfinance Models and take up this to start their business. At the Government level these things can be institutionalized by enacting a law in the state assembly. Pertinently the Reserve Bank of India-RBI are needed for setting up banks and these are not required for establishing Non Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs). Once a new Govt is formed in J & K by mid October, I am hopeful that Interest Free Non Banking Financial Institutions would be set up in every district of J&K that would be beneficial for the entire population whether Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians or those who don't follow any religion.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow. He is Founder / Chairman Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement

Islamic Studies as an Established Academic Discipline

Dr. Ashraf Amin

The field of Islamic studies one must remember is often taken for granted, so misunderstandings are inevitable. First and foremost, non-specialists in Islamic studies (both Muslims and non-Muslims) often fail to distinguish between theology and Islamic studies. Both the parties differ in nature, scope, objectives, and methodologies on approaching the discipline. Islamic Studies emerged as a formal social science discipline in the West at the dawn of the modern era, but a lot has changed since then. Gone are the days when this discipline was dominated by the scholarship of the Orientalists educated in a particular environment. They have primarily written for Western audiences. However, the Muslim communities were not immune to the developments happening in the West. At the same time, the West's nefarious plans in Muslim countries, along with the colonial period, put Muslim communities at odds with the colonizers or Europeans.

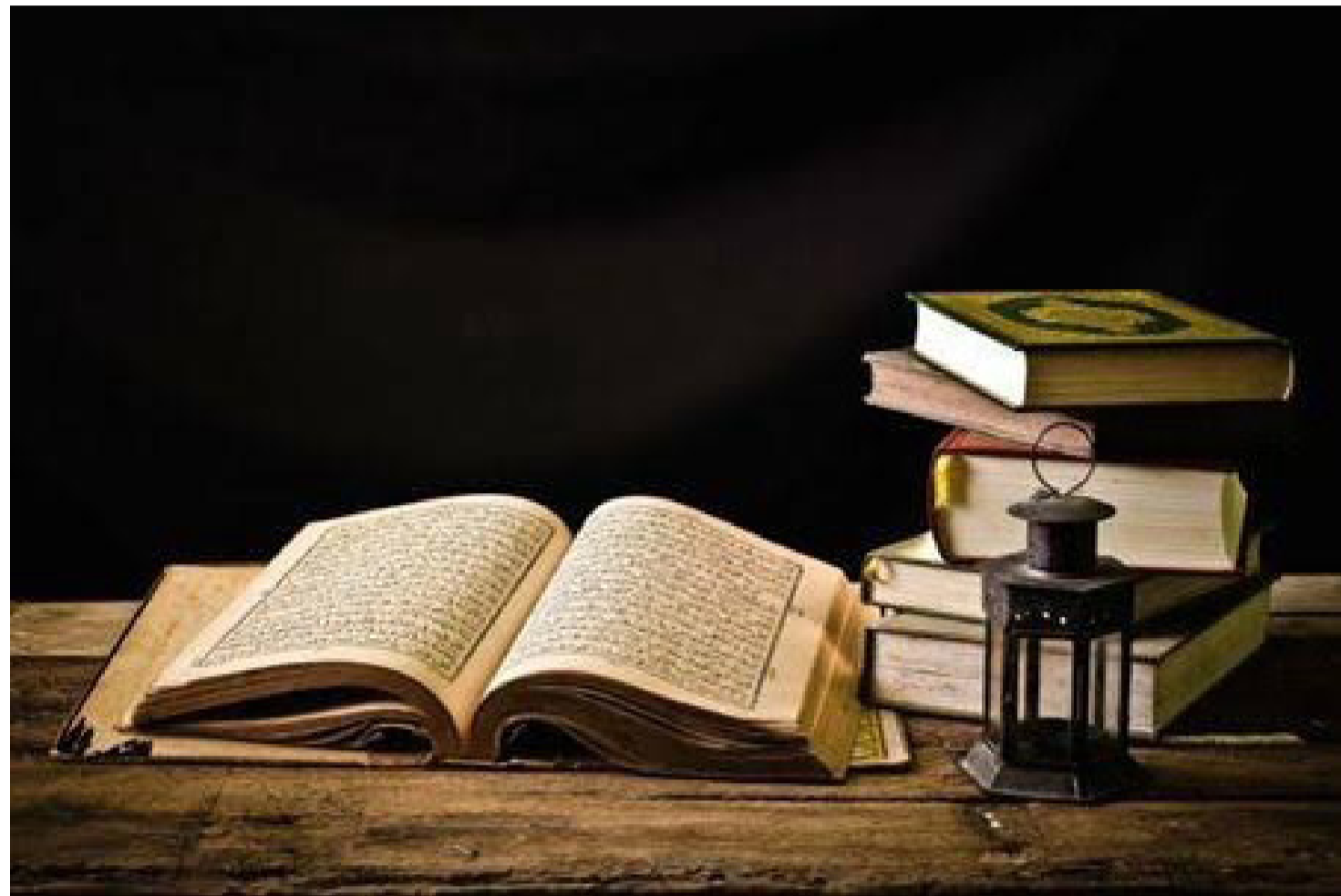
Islamic Studies is an engaging discipline housing many correlative and multidisciplinary subjects, Islamic history and civilization, Islamic jurisprudence, Comparative religions, Islamic philosophy and thought, Islamic economics and finance, Public policy in Islam, Islamic societies, Islamic art, Islamic architecture and urban planning, Islamic ethics and bioethics are taught with fervor throughout the world.

Definitions: Prof. Abdul Rashid Bhat, Former Head, Shah-i-Hamadan Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir defines Islamic Studies as, "An important academic discipline of religious studies, humanities, and social sciences. Its main aim is to study knowledge in an integrated way; primarily focusing on Divine knowledge through basic religious texts (Qur'an and Hadith). It studies legacy of Islamic civilization, theological and philosophical developments, Tasawwuf, social and legal sciences of Islam, inter-faith dialogue and Muslim contribution to physical and natural sciences. It is never exclusively orientalist or traditional madrasa system of education or even area studies but an inter-disciplinary and modern way of studying Islam, its civilization and sciences to develop a broader understanding of Islam and Muslims viz-a-viz inter-religious and inter-civilizational harmony." ("Definition of Islamic Studies by Indian Muslim Scholars" (e-Brochure), Shahid Ali, September 2020, p.7.)

Lisa Bernasek and Gary Bunt define the discipline as: "Islamic Studies is taken to include the study of Islam and Muslim societies in a variety of disciplines and departments, including Islamic Studies programmes as well as Religious Studies, History, languages and literature, Politics, Anthropology and Sociology, and interdisciplinary area studies programmes in Middle East or South Asian Studies." (International Approaches to Islamic Studies, Bristol, GB Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2008, p.92).

Islamic Studies in 21st Century

Public interest in Islam has increased dramatically in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The evidence for this includes a new abundance in colleges and universities of faculty openings and curriculums that deal with the Islamic religious tradition. As a consequence Islamic studies as a field in departments of religion in North America has recently become more apparent than in the past— in the classroom, bookstores, professional societies, and conferences worldwide on Islamic topics. The reasons for this sudden surge of interest in Islam since September 11, 2001 by liberal arts, deans, religious studies departments, and scholars worldwide require little explanation. As recently as the last decades of the twentieth century, however, interest in, and room for, curriculum on Islam and Muslims could be found in barely one-tenth of the approximately 1,200 academic departments of religious studies in North America. With the rapidly increasing demand for Islamic studies in the first decade



of this century, when at least fifty academic positions for specialists in Islam in religious studies have been advertised annually, until the collapse of the economy in 2008 there were not enough qualified candidates trained in religious studies who are also trained in Islamic studies. Yet it was not so long ago that Islam did not even have a primary presence in the major professional society for faculty of religion, the American Academy of Religion (AAR). Indeed as recently as the middle of the twentieth century, Islam was included within the AAR's coverage of world religions at its annual meetings as a subunit of the "History of Christianity" section. Now "The Study of Islam" is a major program unit within the AAR, with many subsections and sections cosponsored with other religious traditions. Was 9/11 the cause of all that? Not entirely, say Ernst and Martin. While Islamic studies as a field has been powerfully affected by political events, debates within the academy have had a longer and more pervasive role in shaping, and sometimes ignoring, this area of inquiry. That trajectory over the past quarter century has encouraged scholars to rethink how to theorize and problematize the textual and social data of Islam and how to adjust their investigations to methodologies that address the urgencies of Islamic studies in the twenty-first century. (C.Ernst, R.C Martin, Toward a Post-Orientalist Approach to Islamic Religious Studies, (pdf) pp.1-2)

A rise in student interest in the subject and attention to the need for better engagement of Muslim communities within each country has led to the development of new courses, research centers, and collaborations. The following general themes have emerged as important developments in Islamic Studies in higher education across most of the countries concerned:

- The development of interdisciplinary and trans-regional centers for the study of Islam and Muslims in the modern world;
- The development of networks of scholars, at national or regional levels, that encourage collaboration in research and teaching between universities;
- The promotion of efforts to incorporate aspects of the training of local Muslim leaders, including imams, into higher education programmes;
- The development of individual modules related to Islamic Studies that can be pursued by students on a variety of degree courses or offered as outreach education courses, in a variety of learning and teaching modes.

Interdisciplinary and trans-regional centres for the study of Islam and Muslims in the modern world have been identified as key locations for the development of new approaches to

Islamic Studies across the countries investigated. Such centers may be located in one institution or may represent collaboration between a number of institutions. They are often funded primarily by the national education ministry, with additional funding from the universities involved or from outside sources. They may also be funded by philanthropic donations from the Muslim world. Examples of such centers include: the Institute for the Study of Islam and Societies of the Muslim World (IISMM) in France; the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) in the Netherlands; the Centre for Modern Oriental Studies in Germany; the Prince Alwaleed Bin

imam training programmes, have only recently been developed, and further research would be required to assess their impact. This report provides a number of examples that, with further research and assessment, may provide appropriate models for developments in Islamic Studies in the United Kingdom. (International Approaches to Islamic Studies in Higher Education A report to HEFCE Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, June 2008, pdf, pp.3-4)

The Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS) was founded as one of the first privately held, independent institutions in the United States dedicated in its entirety to teaching and research in Islamic Studies. It has focused on the American experience of Islam and Islamic studies in the United States and the West. The school has developed its work around an "ijtihad orientation" that is a creative but disciplined intellectual effort to derive legal rulings from the Islamic sources while taking into consideration the variables imposed by the changing circumstances of the Muslim society. The vision behind the school was Dr. Taha Jabir al-Alwani, an outstanding scholar and man of deep faith, who passed away in 2015.

Currently the GSISS is in transition from offering accredited academic courses to offering student and public seminars and other learning opportunities. It has worked closely with Virginia International University and other institutions to continue its role in Islamic education. It offers consortium students and faculty members, access to an outstanding library in Islamic Studies through the Taha Jabir al-Alwani Library housed at IIIT. (www.washtheocon.org)

Today, academic Islamic Studies is usually taught and studied alongside or after an extensive study of the Arabic language, with named undergraduate and graduate degrees in Arabic and Islamic Studies existing at universities such as Georgetown University, the University of Exeter, University of Oxford, University of Leeds, SOAS at the University of London, Yale University and several universities in Holland and Germany, notably Leiden University and Tübingen University. (wikiislamicstudies.org)

Besides, writing on Islam and things Islamic— be it on Islamic sources or Islamic history, thought or philosophy, thinkers or personalities, trends or movements, contemporary discourses or issues/ challenges— has seen tremendous surge over the recent decades, especially in the 21st century. Unsurprisingly, one finds a remarkable rise in the production of literature pertaining to 'Islam' and things Islamic vis-a-vis contemporary world from publishing houses based in the West, Muslim world, and/or rest of the world. In the West es-

pecially, such has been the rise in the production of books/volumes related to Islam that 'with every passing day, one finds a new book on Islam, its history, or any other aspect— classical or contemporary— published'. Some of the reputed Western Publishing Houses, with branches in different parts of the world are publishing vigorously on Islam. Some of them are Ashgate, Bloomsbury, Brill, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Fortress, Hurst, I.B. Tauris, Lynne Rienner, Macmillan, Oneworld, Oxford, Palgrave, Polity, Princeton, Routledge, Sage, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, Yale, Zed Books, etc. (Tauseef Ahmad Parrey, "21st Century Western Scholarship on Islamic History: An Evaluation of Some Selected Recent Works", thefreelancer.co.in)

There are a considerable number of national and international journals of fame that publish quality research on Islam and Islamic Studies. Some of the notable ones are Hamdard Islamicus, Islamic Studies, Intellectual Discourse, Brill, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization, American Journal of Islam and Society, Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies, Al-Masaq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean, al-Qantara, Arabic Sciences and Philosophy: A Historical Journal, Asian Affairs, British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Central Asian Survey, Critical Muslim, Contemporary Arab Affairs, Contemporary Levant, Contemporary Review of the Middle East, History of Religions, Intellectual History of the Islamicate World, International Journal of Islamic Architecture, International Journal of Middle East Studies, Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Islamic Africa, Islamic Law and Society, Israel Affairs, Jerusalem Quarterly, Journal of Africana Studies, Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Journal of Arabic Literature, Journal of Asian and African Studies, Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, Journal of Humanity and Society, Journal of Islamic Manuscripts, Journal of Islamic Studies, Journal of the Middle East and Africa, Journal of Middle East Women's Studies, Journal of Muslim Mental Health, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, Journal of Muslims in Europe, Journal of North African Studies, Journal of Palestine Studies, Journal of Qur'anic Studies, Journal of Religion in Africa, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Journal of Sufi Studies, Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East and North African Migration Studies, Medieval Encounters, Middle East Critique, The Middle East Journal, Middle East Law and Governance: An Interdisciplinary Journal, Middle Eastern Literatures, Middle Eastern Studies, The Muslim World, Philosophy and Social Criticism, Politics and Religion, Politics, Religion & Ideology, Secularism and Non-religion, Turkish Studies, etc. (Journal Round up, themaydan.com, Dec, 2022).

Conclusion

The article may be summed up in the words of a renowned Muslim author, Akbar S. Ahmed, "The twenty-first century will be the century of Islam. Muslim civilization will be central to understanding where we will be moving into the future." And the fact that there are over 1.5 billion Muslims in the world with "about 25 million living permanently in the West and many of them making an impact on social, political, and economic life..." understanding Islam is "imperative to anyone wanting to make sense of living in the twenty-first century". Reminding statements like the one call people to let their fears go and instead open their mind to a better understanding of Islam, and the world for that matter, because Islam is a part of the world we live in today. (Akbar, S. Ahmed, Discovering Islam: Making Sense of Islamic History and Society, Routledge, 2002, p.1)

The author is a Nodal Officer, Department of Religious Studies, Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Central University of Kashmir

The impact of these initiatives varies across the countries concerned, and in many cases the developments are too recent to be accurately assessed for long-term effectiveness

Talal Center for Christian-Muslim Understanding in the United States; and the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies in Australia.

Scholarly networks to develop research and teaching related to Islamic Studies have also played an important role in the development of the discipline in the past ten years. These networks may be formal collaborations between a small number of institutions to develop joint research projects or degree courses. They may also be national networks developed to share resources and best practice. Such networks may receive state funding, or may rely on the resources of individual universities or outside funding bodies. In some countries, discussion of new approaches to Islamic Studies takes place within existing subject associations related to the study of Islam and the Muslim world. Examples of recently developed networks and collaborations include: the National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education Al-Mushāraka (the collaborative) Initiative in the United States, and Islamic Studies collaborations between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke Univer-

Nasrallah: Israel's Pager Attacks 'Declaration Of War'

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said Thursday that pager and walkie-talkie explosions by Israel on Tuesday and Wednesday which killed 37 people and wounded nearly 3,000 in Lebanon are a "major aggression" against his people and declaration of war.

In a highly anticipated speech, Nasrallah said this week's attacks were a genocide and a war crime against Lebanon in addition to a declaration of war. "Israel would face tough retribution and just punishment, where it expects it and where it does not," Hezbollah chief declared.

During Nasrallah's speech, in which he called the blasts an "unprecedented blow" and a "test" for Hezbollah, Israeli warplanes broke the sound barriers over Beirut which shook buildings.

Hezbollah's leader accused Israel of carrying out "genocide" with pager and walkie-talkie explosions, saying Israel's willful intent was to kill 4,000 Lebanese people within minutes but many of the pagers were out of service, turned off or stored away.

Explosions "happened in hospitals, in pharmacies, in

markets, in shops, in houses, in cars...in streets where many civilians were along with women and children".

"The enemy has crossed all red lines and all laws in this attack. This is a massive terrorist attack, genocide, a massacre," Nasrallah said.

Israel has not publicly commented on the pager and handheld radio explosions, which killed more than 30 people and wounded thousands of others Tuesday and Wednesday in Lebanon, but it's widely believed Israel was behind the attacks.

Hezbollah, which has been using low-tech devices like pagers to avoid Israeli surveillance and tracking, suffered one of its most serious security blows in the round of explosions that burned up homes, cars and buildings across Lebanon. It pointed to the Israeli penetration of a supply chain for the devices, which appeared to be laced with explosives and activated remotely.

Nasrallah said Thursday that Hezbollah "received a heavy blow" from the targeted attacks this week but blamed it on superior technology and intelligence from Israel because it has the backing of the U.S. and the Western security alliance NATO.

"There is no doubt that we



were subject to a big strike security-wise and human-wise, and unprecedented in the history of the resistance in Lebanon," he said. "It might also be unprecedented in the world."

"I can tell you with utmost certainty that this attack did not break us and will not break us. On the contrary, it will only

increase our resolve and determination to continue on in this battle," he said.

Nasrallah said the aim of the attack is to dissuade the Lebanese resistance from continuing its operations against Israel in solidarity with the Palestinians.

He vowed to keep up

stop until the aggression on Gaza stops," despite "all this blood spilt," he said.

Nasrallah addressed Israeli officials' promises to return thousands of Israelis displaced by exchanges of fire across the border with Lebanon to their homes.

"You will not be able to return the people of the north to the north," he said, warning that "no military escalation, no killings, no assassinations and no all-out war can return residents to the border."

He added that he hoped Israel invades southern Lebanon, as it will create a "historic opportunity" for Hezbollah.

Israel and Hezbollah have been exchanging cross-border fire for nearly a year in a conflict tied to the ongoing war in Gaza. But the fighting in Israel's north and Lebanon's south has evolved into a diplomatic crisis of its own, with Israeli officials pledging to potentially directly fight Hezbollah to return some 80,000 displaced residents if a solution is not reached soon.

Hezbollah has vowed not to stop its attacks while Israel's war against Palestinian militant group Hamas rages in Gaza, even as the Lebanese militant group has suffered

from multiple deadly attacks from Israel, losing hundreds of fighters and top officials, including its top commander, Fuad Shukur, in July.

Nasrallah said Thursday that "the resistance in Lebanon will not stop supporting and standing with the people of Gaza and the West Bank" even after the pager and radio explosions.

"The aim behind this attack, the framework within which this attack took place, and the aim behind it on Tuesday and Wednesday, was to separate between the two fronts," he said, but "Lebanon's front will not stop before an end to the aggression on Gaza."

Israel set a war objective this week to return its residents to the north, spurring fears that a potential invasion of Lebanon is imminent.

Nasrallah vowed that Israel "won't be able to return the inhabitants" and said if they come into Lebanon that troops will meet an "abyss and hell" from Hezbollah fighters.

"The only way is to put an end to your aggression," he said. "Otherwise nothing, neither military escalation nor killing, nor assassinations nor a full scale war, can return the inhabitants to the border."

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

End of Dynastic

complete freedom from the political fiefdom of three families—Abdullahs, Muftis and Gandhis.

Modi welcomed the audience to his maiden election rally following the abrogation of Article 370 by declaring his opening address in Kashmiri language.

"Mianain sarnee Kaeshrain bayan te banian chu mion saitha, saitha Namaskar; kyah haal chal chu" (My hand folded Namaskar to all my brothers and sisters of Kashmir; how are you all). Welcome, PM, my brothers and sisters from Kashmir say, and I also want to thank them from the bottom of my heart," Modi said, while greeting a mammoth gathering at SK Stadium Sonwar here.

Jammu and Kashmir, according to the Prime Minister Modi, is currently celebrating democracy, as the assembly elections for the first time in the region are conducted without the shadow of terrorism.

"Polling for the first phase was conducted in seven districts of the UT with Kishtwar recorded over 80% voting, Doda over 71%, Ramban over 70%, Kulgam over 62%. On many seats, however, all previous voting records were broken, creating a new chapter in the history of J&K," added PM Modi.

The world, Modi claimed, is watching how people of Jammu and Kashmir are strengthening the democratic setup of India.

Three families—the Congress, the NC, and the PDP, according to Modi, ruined Jammu and Kashmir, who believe they might not be held responsible for their deeds. "These three families have always sought to consolidate their authority and exploit the legitimate rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, believing that pillaging people's rights is their birthright"

Modi reiterated his government's pledge on the floor of the Parliament that J&K will have its statehood restored and that only BJP is capable of doing this.

"Jammu and Kashmir will no longer be invaded by three families that have consistently stomped on Jamhooriyat and Kashmiriyat. Denying the legal rights of the people in this region is their political agenda. Their only contribution to J&K has been fear and nothing else," PM Modi added.

"Do you remember what they did in the 1980s? They treated Jammu and Kashmir's politics as their own fiefdom. They did not want anyone except their families to come forward? Otherwise, why did they stop the Panchayat, DDC and BDC elections?"

"They knew it would bring new faces who would challenge their family rule. What was the damage as a result of their selfishness? The youth kept losing faith in democracy. They felt whether they vote or not, only these three families will come to power," he said.

Dynastic rule in Jammu and Kashmir, Modi claimed, resulted in the burning of colleges and schools while offering stones to youngsters deprived them of their right to education.

Of the total 35 years, he said, Kashmir remained shut for eight long years (3000 days) while not an eight hour shutdown was witnessed for the last five years.

Compared to other youngsters in the nation, he said, hundreds of youngsters between the ages of 25 and 30 took longer to even get to the matriculation, 12th, or college level "These three families—the Congress, NC, and PDP—failed, not our kids. To further their political agenda, they peddled weapons of hatred in Kashmir"

"These dynastic parties want to push J&K to the period of destruction. Kashmir was closed for 3,000 days in a 35-year period. This indicates that eight years out of 35 years saw shutdowns, while the previous five years did not see an eight-hour shutdown in J&K," claimed the PM.

Not a single new school, PM claimed, was built in Kashmir during the rule of the three families, and that classes were not held at the colleges and schools that were spared from being set on fire.

Pm Modi expressed his desire for children to pursue education and develop their talents

in order to take advantage of new prospects in this place alone.

"Many schools in Kashmir were burned down, but new schools, colleges, AIIMS, medical colleges and ITs are being built. What was the fault of the 50,000 children who dropped out of school? I guaranteed their readmission to schools; in 15,000 schools, pre-primary classes were initiated, and currently, over 1.5 lakh kids attend these schools," he claimed.

250 schools, Modi claimed, are being upgraded into PM Sree Schools while several degree colleges, engineering colleges and polytechnic colleges have come up in the region.

"AIIMS was being built in Awantipora. 1100 more seats have been added to medical education in the last five years. My new generation in J&K is no longer compelled, but under the Modi administration, they are growing stronger. In 1500 nursing and paramedical colleges, more than 1600 additional seats were added," Modi added.

The prime minister made a slew of announcements for the welfare of Jammu and Kashmir if the BJP was voted to power. These included the restoration of statehood, Rs 10,000 annual assistance to farmers, Rs 18,000 annual assistance to the woman head of every family, and enhancing the health insurance from the existing Rs 5 lakh to Rs 7 lakh.

In previous years, he claimed, poor families got homes and the central government is now working to provide free of cost electricity to J&K under PM Surya Ghar Yojna.

"To install solar panels on rooftops requires nearly 80,000 rupees and the central government will provide this facility to every family. Every family could save upto rupees 25,000 per on electricity bills. The valley was connected to rail and the initiative will help farmers and boost the tourism sector and pave for construction of industries," he added.

Referring to the ongoing assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Modi said it was a festival of democracy in which people have broken records in the first phase of voting that was held on Wednesday.

"Yesterday, seven districts went to polls in the first phase. For the first time, voting took place without the shadow of terror. It is a matter of pride and happiness that people came out to vote in such large numbers," he said.

Urging voters to cast their ballots in record numbers on September 25, Modi claimed that the BJP's claims are completely implemented on the ground.

"Give the BJP a chance and ensure that its candidates win; they are here to work with you to bring back regional peace and democracy. Do you want the past to return, for carnage to become the norm and for shutdowns to be observed in Kashmir once more, or for our daughters from the weakest segments of society to have their rights snatched once more? He asked.

Cinemas and theaters, he claimed, were closed in Kashmir, and that it was almost a life-threatening job to hoist tricolor at city centre Lal Chowk "However, after more than thirty years, the Muharram procession was taken out, and Srinagar's marketplaces are now just as busy during Eid and Diwali. Tourists from across the world visit Kashmir and Lal Chowk is a hive of activity," added the PM.

"Kishtwar recorded more than 80 per cent (voting), Doda more than 70, Ramban 70, Kulgam more than 60. Many seats saw previous records broken. A new history has been written by you, the people of J-K," he said.

He also blamed the three parties for "injustices" done to the minorities, including Kashmiri Pandits and Sikhs, in the valley.

"Kashmiri Pandits have played a great role in communal harmony and Kashmiriyat. But, three families have ruined them, and injustices have been done to Sikhs. They have been partners in all the excesses committed on them," he said.

'POLITICAL SUNSET FOR CONG, NC'

Meanwhile addressing a poll rally in Katra, the base camp for the pilgrims visiting the

Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district, Modi also accused the Congress leadership of insulting Hindu gods and goddesses under a "well-thought-out conspiracy" and due to a "Naxal mindset", and asked people "should they not be punished for this?"

This was the second election rally addressed by the prime minister in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday and third in a week. He addressed another rally in Srinagar earlier in the day. On September 14, Modi addressed a rally in Doda district.

"This election is for choosing the future of Jammu and Kashmir. This election is meant to take the 'new Jammu and Kashmir' to new heights," the prime minister said while urging the voters to ensure the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) victory in the polls.

"The three families of the Congress, NC and PDP inflicted wounds on the people here for years together. We have to ensure the political sunset of these parties by pressing the button next to the lotus, the symbol of the BJP. It is the BJP that prioritised your interests and ended the decades-old discrimination with the region," he said, giving the slogan "Abki baar, BJP sarkar".

Modi's rallies in Srinagar and Katra came a day after the first phase of polling in the Assembly election, covering 24 constituencies in seven south Kashmir districts and the Chenab valley region, and registering more than 61 per cent voting.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi slammed the Congress and the National Conference (NC) on Thursday for "allowing" India's waters to flow across the border for seven decades and showing no nerve to construct dams for the utilisation of the resource that would have benefitted Jammu and Kashmir's farmers.

Modi said his government is continuously improving road connectivity in the region to tap the full tourism potential of the area.

"The governments run by the NC and Congress allowed our waters to flow across the border. They never dared to construct a big dam here. The Shahpur Kandi dam project remained untouched for years and as a result, thousands of hectares of land in Jammu became lifeless," he said.

He said if a BJP government was not formed at the Centre, the distressed farmers of Kathua and Samba districts would not have got a new lease of life with the Shahpur Kandi dam.

"Work on four hydro-power projects -- Pakal Dul, Kiru, Ratle and Kwar -- is going on at a rapid pace. This will not only benefit the region by improving power availability but also provide employment to youngsters," the prime minister said.

Accusing the NC and the Congress of meddling into stepmotherly treatment to Reasi and Udhampur districts, he said a railway bridge over the Chenab river was proposed by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led government but the two parties kept the file buried.

"You handed over the work to Modi and the BJP and we not only completed it but made it an attraction for people," Modi said, referring to the 1.3-km Chenab rail bridge located 359 metres above the riverbed (35 metres higher than the Eiffel Tower in Paris) that forms a crucial link in the 111-km stretch from Katra to Banihal, part of the ongoing prestigious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link (USBRL) project.

"This bridge, higher than the Eiffel Tower, brought the region in global focus," he said, adding that the government sanctioned a Vande Bharat train to Katra immediately after the project was rolled out.

"Today, two such trains are running between Delhi and Katra. The condition of the Katra and Reasi railway stations was poor but both have been modernised with new facilities," Modi said.

Road and rail connectivity has been improved to give an impetus to tourism, he said while pointing out that two crore tourists visited Jammu and Kashmir last year, besides the 95 lakh pilgrims who paid obeisance at the Vaishno Devi shrine.

"The arrival of the tourists and pilgrims

benefitted small businessmen, fruit vendors and farmers. We will further boost tourism in the region with the completion of various projects like the Devika and Tawi riverfronts," Modi said.

He also mentioned the youngest Indian Paralympic medalists -- Sheetal and Rakesh -- and said Katra played a big role in their success story.

"They made the country proud after training here with the blessings of Mata Vaishno Devi. Plenty of opportunities are available here and it is Modi's promise that those will be utilised to the fullest," the prime minister said.

He also talked about the Delhi-Katra expressway and under-construction roads and railway tunnels, and said once these projects are completed, connectivity will be improved further, benefitting all sections of the society, especially farmers and horticulturists.

Seeking support of the people for his party, the prime minister said Jammu and Kashmir will be taken to new heights of development.

'No Power Can

Pakistan)," Modi declared at a massive rally in Katra, the base camp for Mata Vaishnodevi cave shrine.

The prime minister pointed out Pakistan's open support for Congress and NC, and said, "Nobody talks about them here, but they are in currency there. Pakistan is happy with their manifesto. Pakistan's defence minister has openly supported the Congress and the National Conference."

"He said the agenda of the National Conference and the Congress on Article 370 and 35-A is the same as that of Pakistan. This is what their ministers are saying," he said.

Modi said Pakistan itself has exposed the NC and the Congress, showing that the two parties want to implement the bordering country's agenda here.

"The agenda of Pakistan, which has destroyed generations and bled us in Jammu and Kashmir, is being implemented by these people here. The Congress and the NC have worked in a direction for decades that suited Pakistan," he said.

Addressing his second rally of the day in support of BJP candidates in the newly formed Shri Vaishnodevi constituency in Reasi district, Modi said, "They (Congress-NC alliance) aim to revive Pakistan's old agenda. Today, they want to implement the same old agenda of Pakistan."

Sending a clear message to Pakistan, he said, "Modi wants to convey to them in stern language that we will not allow Pakistan's agenda to be implemented in Jammu and Kashmir. No power on Earth can bring back Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir."

The prime minister addressed a rally early in the day in Srinagar. It was after 10 long years that Modi addressed a rally in Katra, where he had flagged off train service in July 2014.

Modi emphasised the BJP's commitment to national development, urging voters to support a government dedicated to this cause.

"For the BJP, there is nothing as big as the country. Our priority is the development of the country. You have to vote for a government here that is committed to its promises," he added.

Pakistani defence minister Khawaja Asif sparked a political controversy by claiming that the Pak government and the Congress-National Conference alliance were on the same page regarding the restoration of statehood and special status in Jammu and Kashmir.

Asif's remarks came amid the ongoing assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, the first since the abrogation of the state's special status by the Narendra Modi-led government in 2019.

"Pakistan and the National Conference-Congress alliance are aligned on restoring special status and statehood in Jammu and Kashmir," Asif said during an interview with a private Pakistani TV channel, adding that there was a high chance the alliance could win the assembly polls and come to power.

Over 25 Ex-militants

misguided by Pakistan agents in Kashmir," he told a local news agency.

After a year of militancy, he surrendered to the police and spent nearly five years in jail. Farooq, who previously contested municipal elections on a BJP ticket in 2019, now appeals to voters for support, emphasizing his opposition to Pakistan's interference in Kashmir.

Sayar Ahmad, a member of the banned Jel, explained that their absence from the electoral process since the 1987 elections was due to alleged rigging. "We never called for a poll boycott. We stayed away from elections as there was rigging in the 1987 assembly elections in which Jama'at-e-Islami candidates were also contesting," Sayar said, stressing that participating in elections is now viewed as the only way to resolve the region's long-standing issues. (KINS)

Phase II: Top BJP,

development and end to dynastic politics. (KNO)

World Class Roads

road infrastructure, with highways comparable to those in America.

These developments are expected to significantly boost tourism and economic growth in the region.

Emphasizing the natural beauty of Kashmir, Gadkari described it as a place of unmatched beauty, surpassing even the famous destinations of Switzerland and Austria.

However, he highlighted the stark reality of poverty faced by the people in the region.

"Kashmir is beautiful and God has given it a beauty that if we travel to any place in the world, like Switzerland or Austria, we only say one thing; Kashmir is beautiful," Gadkari remarked. "But the people here are poor, and to end this poverty, we need a good government. I can say with authority that the BJP is the party that is working for the benefit of the people."

Gadkari announced a series of development projects aimed at boosting tourism and employment in Jammu and Kashmir.

Encouraging the people to take advantage of these opportunities, he stressed the importance of education, innovation, and entrepreneurship as key drivers for the region's growth.

"We want the development of Jammu and Kashmir," he stated. "Despite all that we have done, a lot more needs to be accomplished. From 1947 to 2014, work was done, but in the last ten years, more than that has been achieved, and we will continue this in the future."

Gadkari highlighted the extensive infrastructure projects underway, including the construction of 50 tunnels, with some already completed and others in progress.

He specifically mentioned the Mughal Road's detailed Project report (DPR) completion, with work set to begin soon.

Additionally, he spoke about the Zojila Tunnel, initially estimated to cost 12,000 crore but being built for 5,000 crore, thereby saving funds for the country.

The Sinthan Pass Tunnel, estimated at 5,000 crore, is slated for completion by 2028, he added.

Assuring the people of Jammu and Kashmir of world-class road infrastructure by 2025, Gadkari compared the upcoming highways to those in America, predicting a boom in tourism that would further generate employment opportunities for the youth. "Tourism here in JK is a bonus for the people of Kashmir," he said.

In a plea for unity and progress, Gadkari contrasted the situation in India with the condition in neighboring Pakistan. "Today, you see the condition of Pakistan; poverty is at an all-time high," he said, reiterating the BJP's commitment to the welfare of every citizen in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We will build JK like heaven, like the other world-class countries. If you vote for us, we will work for you; if not, we will also work for you. The people of Jammu and Kashmir are our own, and this country is for everyone," Gadkari concluded, stressing the government's dedication to honesty and public welfare.

Ex-IAS Officer Shafi Pandit Laid To Rest

PM, LG Condole Demise

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Mohammad Shafi Pandit, the first Muslim IAS officer from Jammu and Kashmir, passed away on Thursday. He was 80.

Pandit was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Delhi after he was detected with cancer about a month ago, his family said.

Pandit was the first Muslim from Jammu and Kashmir to qualify the civil services examinations in 1969. His final assignment with the government was as the head of the autonomous Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission.

In bureaucratic circles, Pandit was widely viewed as a chief secretary that Jammu and Kashmir never had.

The soft-spoken Pandit was part of many civil society and philanthropic initiatives in Kashmir. He also played a key role in rolling out the Mandal Commission report as he was the joint secretary in the Government of India in 1992.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday paid tribute to Mohammad Shafi Pandit and said, "I have come to know Kashmir's pride and first (Muslim) IAS officer Mohammad Shafi Pandit has passed away. He was working for the benefit of society even after retirement. In this hour of grief, we are with his family."

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday expressed grief over the demise of former IAS officer, Mohammad Shafi Pandit.

In a message LG said, "Saddened by the demise of Shri Mohammad Shafi Pandit ji. He had an illustrious career as a bureaucrat and served with distinction. He will be remembered for his significant contributions to public service and civil society. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and admirers in this hour of grief".

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo also condoled his demise.

In his condolence message,



Dulloo remembered Pandit as a very passionate officer who has been there to extend his advice and guidance whenever he was accessed for the same. He termed him a problem solver who had optimum solution for every problem at hand.

He called him a very compassionate officer who was precursor in starting government sponsored coaching classes for civil service aspirants. He made out that he chiselled the career of many youngsters by encouraging them to join the civil services and would be remembered by them for his mentorship for all times to come.

Dulloo further remembered that he met him a couple of times and raised different issues of public importance. He called him a philanthropist par excellence who had changed the lives of many for better.

Later the gathering observed 2 minutes of silence and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

MS Pandit, an IAS officer of 1969 batch was among the pioneers of erstwhile J&K Cadre. He was a veteran bureaucrat who held various important positions in the State as well as Centre including the Additional Chief Secretary, Finance and later the Chairman J&K Public Service Commission (JKPSC) towards the end of his career.

All senior officers participated in this condolence meeting and prayed for the peace of the departed soul. They also showed their sympathy for the family and also prayed for their patience to bear this irreparable loss.

Tihar No More A Jail, But Training Centre To Divide People: G A Mir

Agencies

SRINAGAR: All India Congress Committee (AICC) General Secretary and former Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) Chief, Ghulam Ahmad Mir termed the Tihar Jail as a training centre, alleging it is no longer just a jail but a place where people are trained to divide others on the ground.

He also said that Jamaat-e-Islami's decision to participate in the elections is not self-motivated.

Mir, who is the joint candidate of the National Conference and Congress from the Dooru assembly segment, added that the decisions made against the aspirations of the people over the last ten years, especially in the last five years, have created silence all around, while the government has been calling it normalcy. "The large number of people turning up at the polling booths is anger against the government decisions. It is a beautiful way of showing anger, which otherwise would have been expressed through guns and stones," he said.

Asked about Jamaat-e-Islami's decision to participate in the elections, the AICC General Secretary said if it were their own decision, they would not have stayed away from the polls for three decades. "But,



since it has been exposed that the government has been experimenting with different parties like A, B, C, D, and now E and F as well, it seems that the decision of Jel is not self-motivated, but rather there seems to be either support or pressure from the government or a compulsion. Jel's participation in the polls doesn't look natural," he said.

Asked about the NC's decision to pass a resolution in the assembly after forming the government, he said it has already been decided. "We are already aiming for a respectable mandate. Our priority will be to discuss the decision taken on August 5, 2019, as the decisions were made in the absence of the assembly. It will be discussed in the assembly, where we can raise the voice that the decisions were taken undemocratically and unconstitutionally. This

is the point from where the process for the restoration of statehood will start. All of the Congress party's top leaders have made it clear that statehood would be restored at the earliest. If PM Modi does not do it, then Congress's first action will be the restoration of statehood after forming the government," he said.

AICC General Secretary, while responding to a query about the possibilities of joining hands with the PDP to form the government, said that they do not expect a fractured mandate this time, but if the need arises, the decision will be taken accordingly. "We were planning to fight against the BJP together with like-minded parties, but some people could not make it happen and are now fighting independently," he said.

He said the staunch workers of the National Conference (NC) have followed the directions of the party's high command by favouring and supporting joint candidates from the Congress party, while those who are not actual supporters are not paying heed to the party's directions.

"The people, in general, are in favour of this alliance," Mir said, adding that the drums are ready to bang on the day of election results in Jammu & Kashmir—(KNO)

Apple Storage Rates Reduced Amid Decline In Production



Agencies

PULWAMA: Cold storage unit holders across Kashmir have reduced their storage fees for apples due to various factors impacting the apple industry this season.

Officials from multiple cold storage facilities reported that last year's apple sales were very low, which discouraged many growers from utilising storage services. They said this year's apple production has seen a decline, while the number of cold storage units continues to increase, which has led to lower storage charges.

Aabid Ahmad, an employee at a local cold storage unit, explained that reduced apple production and heightened competition among storage operators compelled them to decrease rates. He said losses incurred by growers who stored apples last year have diminished the demand for storage space and pushed operators to offer more attractive prices.

"Typically, cold storage units charged around Rs 2 per kilogram per month, but rates have now been lowered to Rs 1 or Rs 1.20 per kilogram to attract more clients," Ahmad said. "This is beneficial for apple traders and will help alleviate costs during a challenging pro-

duction year."

Cold storage facilities are essential for maintaining apple quality during the off-season as it allows growers and traders to store their produce until market conditions improve. With the reduced rates, growers can now store their apples without incurring heavy expenses. This provides some relief amid declining production.

The unit holders said that during previous years growers typically booked storage space in advance; however, this year has seen a shift, which prompted them to lower rates to entice clients.

"Despite the reduced prices, there is a need for growers to focus on quality improvements and adopt modern practices to ensure better yields and profitability in the future," the unit holders said.

Currently, around 300,000 metric tons of apples are stored in various Controlled Atmosphere (CA) storages across Kashmir. The region usually produces over 2 million metric tons of apples annually, with figures sometimes reaching 2.5 million metric tons.

According to the 2017 economic survey of J&K, approximately half of Kashmir's population relies directly or indirectly on the apple industry, which spans over 350,000 hectares of cultivated land—(KNO)

POLLUTION OF WETLANDS

Provide Details Of Action Taken: NGT To J&K PCC

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The National Green Tribunal has directed the Jammu and Kashmir Pollution Control Board to provide details regarding the action it has taken against those polluting and destroying the wetlands and waterbodies in the union territory.

The tribunal also sought several details from the UT's forest, ecology and environment department, including the total number of wetlands and lakes and their geocoordinates.

The green body was hearing a matter regarding alleged deterioration in the condition of wetlands in the union territory, especially in Kashmir.

In a recent order, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava noted that the J&K PCC had said in its report dated September 7 that there were 12 wetlands in the UT out of which some had low dissolved oxygen, high coliform levels, higher Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), and the water quality across them ranged from medium to good.

The report said one of the water bodies—Freshkooari wetland in Pulwama—was heavily polluted, noted the bench, also comprising judicial member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert member A Senthil Vel.



"A report has also been filed by the department of forest ecology and environment. The report merely indicates the status of the wetland or lakes and does not provide any details about conservation and protection measures laid down in the Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules and Environment (Protection) Act," the tribunal said.

It directed the department to provide various details, including the total number of wetlands or lakes, their geocoordinates, their area as per revenue records, the drains or inlets carrying effluents or sewage to the water bodies, list of polluting units, townships or commercial bodies discharging untreated efflu-

ents in the wetlands, their water quality, their conservation or management plan and the nodal officer responsible for implementing the plan.

The tribunal also noted that according to the statement of the J&K PCC member secretary, no action was taken against the authorities concerned for the violation of environmental laws but the committee would identify the violations, take action, and submit a report.

It directed the J&K PCC to submit within 3 months "details of the action taken on violations identified that are responsible for polluting/destroying above wetland/water bodies."

The matter has been posted for December 23 for further proceedings.

Mental Health Awareness Programme Held At SKUAST Ganderbal



Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: Faculty of Fisheries in collaboration with KASHMER (Kashmir American Society of Healthcare, Medical Education & Research)/KPVT (Kashmir Poor Voluntary Trust) conducted an awareness programme with the theme "Building Resilience: A Community United Against Mental Health struggles and Drug Abuse on Thursday.

The programme was presided by Dean Faculty of Fisheries, Prof (Dr) Farooz Ahmad Bhat.

In his inaugural address he gave an insight into the importance of mental health awareness for overall development of students which is in line with the mission of the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) "Quality of Life".

Dr. Syed Riyaz, Project Head, KASHMER gave an overview of the programme and the objectives of KASHMER as an organi-

zation. He also highlighted the contributions made by KASHMER and educational institutions like SKUAST- Kashmir in developing the society as a whole. He invited & encouraged the audience to take an active part in social work to ensure success of their vision through collective efforts. Different sessions on awareness of mental health were conducted by Dr. Mohd. Muzaffar Khan, Miss Aarifat Rashid and Mr. Adil Rashid who interacted with the students of the faculty.

The programme was attended by all Heads of the Divisions, faculty members, students and NSS volunteers from the Faculty of Fisheries. The programme was concluded with a pledge by all the participants to apply the knowledge from the awareness programme in their day-to-day activities. The programme was coordinated by Dr Mudasar M Kirmani, SWO, FoFy and ended with vote-of-thanks to experts, participants and employees of SKUAST-K by Dr Shabir A Dar.

BJP Targeting 3 Families To Hide Its Failures: Omar Abdullah

Agencies

SRINAGAR: National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Thursday said that BJP has been targeting three families including Abdullaha in a bid to hide its failures.

Speaking with reporters in Budgam, Omar Abdullah said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Srinagar might have targeted the three families as

there is nothing with them to show to the people.

"We cannot expect anything else from BJP. The party has wasted the last six years here. Jammu has witnessed revival of militancy, but BJP is busy in targeting three families," Omar said.

Replying to a query, he said PM Modi has never answered to any question after assuming power, but "We don't hide anywhere."—(KNO)



Constituency Profile Jammu North-79 AC

Sham Lal Sharma To Lock Horns With Ajay Sadhotra

Agencies

JAMMU: As the first phase of Assembly elections is over and the focus has shifted to two other phases, one of the most high profile seats of Jammu district, Jammu North, is going to witness clash between two leaders who have to shift to this seat because their original seats have become reserve for Schedule Caste (ST) community.

The two Brahmins, Sham Lal Sharma, representing Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) and Ajay Sadhotra, the old guard of National Conference (NC), will be head to head.

Jammu North Assembly Constituency has 111228 votes including 56952 male, 54274 female and two transgender voters eligible to vote in the third phase of Assembly elections on October 1.

After the final date of withdrawal of nomination papers, a total of 17 candidates are in the fray

the stronger candidate. One more thing which gives Sharma advantage is that he lives in the same constituency and is available to people all the time at his residence at Purkhoo-Mishriwala.

Sham Lal Sharma is also the one who coined the term Hindu Chief Minister for Jammu and Kashmir while he was in Congress party which gave people of Jammu a hope that this thing will happen here someday.

Despite being loyal to his party National Conference, this will be a new experience for Sadhotra to contest from Jammu North, from where he has never contested any election. He has his base in Marh area but as he can't contest from there, the party gave him the mandate from Jammu North. The only advantage Sadhotra is having is that he is the NC-Congress alliance candidate from this seat and Congress party is fully supporting him for this time.

In Karnah Segment, Traditional Arch-Rivals Brace Up For Thrilling Fight

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Karnah assembly segment in Kupwara district is set to witness a direct contest between Peoples Conference and National Conference, the traditional arch-rivals in this district.

With over 57000 voter population, the segment would witness a direct fight between Dr. Naseer Awan (PC) and Javid Ahmad Mirchal (NC). The seat will go to the polls in the third phase of J&K elections on October 01.

While PC is banking on its traditional vote bank and goodwill of its candidate Dr. Naseer Awan, National Conference is relying on the support base of Mirchal.

NC's decision to field Mirchal has not gone with the party cadre in the segment, with three-time MLA and veteran politician Kafeel-ul-Rehman rebelling against the move.

In an advantage to PC, Kafeel-ul-Rehman has thrown his weight behind Dr. Naseer Awan, a renowned surgeon and former professor of Government Medical College Srinagar.

Mirchal, who was a MLC in the PDP-BJP government, quit the PDP after abrogation of Ar-



ticle 370 and joined Apni Party launched by Altaf Bukhari in March 2020.

Days after the announcement of assembly polls by the Election Commission of India, Mirchal joined the National Conference.

The other candidates in the fray include Firdous Ahmad Mir (PDP), Raja Manzoor Khan (PDP), Fayaz Ahmad (Independent), Sajid Ahmad Mir (Independent), Sajawal Shah (Samajwadi Party) and Muhammad Idrees (BJP).

The main issues dominating the electoral discourse in this Pahari-majority segment are grant of ST status to Paharis by the Union Government and demand for construction of a tunnel to ensure round-the-year connectivity to the region—(KNO)

Ashwin-Jadeja Tango Saves India After Hasan Mahmud's Early Strikes

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin sparked on home turf with his sixth Test hundred as he combined with Ravindra Jadeja to steer India out of trouble and post a formidable 339 for six on day one of the first Test against Bangladesh here on Thursday.

Ashwin (102 batting) and Jadeja (86 batting) added 195 runs (174 minutes, 225 balls) for a riveting unbroken seventh wicket stand after young pacer Hasan Mahmud (4/58) reduced India to 144 for six, despite Yasir Hasvi Jaiswal making a solid 56.

The ebb and flow of the day's proceedings was quite remarkable and mostly revolved around Ashwin, Jadeja and Mahmud, who made his Test debut in March this year and was just three games old in the format before this match.

In a stunning first spell of 5-2-6-3, the 24-year-old Mahmud accounted for the



cream of Indian top-order -- Rohit Sharma (6), Shubman Gill (0) and Virat Kohli (6) -- before snapping Rishabh Pant's return to Test cricket (39 off 52 balls) in the initial moments of the

second session. KL Rahul, another Indian batter who is re-entering the Indian Test establishment, fell for 16 to off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz as fortune's pendulum stayed

firmly in Bangladesh's quarter. But then came the two gladiators who know Chepauk like the back of their hand -- Ashwin by birth and Jadeja through his long association with the Chen-

nai Super Kings.

One more wicket at that stage would have extended the dominance of Bangladesh, but such thoughts hardly disturbed Ashwin and Jadeja.

At times, he scored at a strike rate in excess of 100 and was not hesitant to travel the more uncultured way. A slog sweep that went for six over mid-wicket off left-arm spinner Shakib Al-Hasan testified that.

Jadeja was a tad different in his approach. Sensing that Ashwin was in good touch, the left-hander had the simple job of keeping his end going and he did that with minimum fuss.

A past master in operating from behind the giant shadows of superstars, Jadeja looked extremely comfortable doing that once more, providing the assurance Ashwin needed.

But there were moments, the showman in Jadeja came forth and Shakib was the aggrieved party, getting hammered for three fours.

DYSSO Anantnag Holds Inter School Netball Competitions



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The District Youth Services and Sports officer Anantnag conducted Netball competition for Under-14, Under-17 and Under-19 age group boys on Thursday at Govt Boys Model HSS Barakpora, Anantnag.

The event featured the boys stu-

dents of different zones and Higher Secondary Schools of District Anantnag. A large number of students participated in the Netball competitions. The event successfully raised awareness about benefits of sports activities and served as a platform to promote its adoption for a healthier and more balanced lifestyle," the department said in a statement.

Kiwi Rookie O'Rourke Takes 5, Sri Lanka All Out For 305

Agencies

GALLE: Rookie New Zealand fast bowler William O'Rourke took 5-55 to help dismiss Sri Lanka for 305 on the second morning of the first Test on Thursday in Galle.

Sri Lanka belatedly resumed their first innings from 302-7 overnight after a rain delay but lost all three remaining wickets for just three runs.

O'Rourke managed consistent speeds above 145 kilometres (90 miles) per hour to carve through the Sri Lankan top order on day one before sending back the final two batsmen, Ramesh Mendis and Asitha Fernando.

It was his second five-wicket haul in just three matches after his 9-93



against South Africa at home in February, the best match figures for a debutant Kiwi bowler.

A groin injury ruled the 23-year-old O'Rourke out of the following series against Australia and his selection ahead of the more experienced Matt Henry had been a surprise.

On A Pitch Like This, Go Hard Like Pant: Ashwin

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Home hero Ravichandran Ashwin on Thursday said he made a conscious effort to bat aggressively on the red soil pitch laid out for the first Test against Bangladesh.

The play worked brilliantly as Ashwin got India out of a hole with a sublime hundred in front of his home crowd.

"It's an old Chennai surface with a bit of bounce and carry. The red soil pitch allows you to play a few shots if you are willing to just get in line and give it a bit of a tonk when there's width," Ashwin told the host broadcasters after the opening day's proceedings.

"Of course, I have always been waiting my bat around outside off-stump. Worked on a few things and on a surface like this with a bit of spice, if you're going after the ball, might as well go after it really hard like Rishabh does."

Rishabh Pant too batted well for his 39 off 52 balls before falling to a loose stroke.

On a day India lost their top-four for 96, Ashwin showed remarkable control and dominated the Bangladesh bowling in his brilliant 102 not out from 112 balls in a gritty rearguard effort, while forging an unbroken partnership with Ravindra Jadeja (86").

Ashwin attributed his strong performance to his recent stint in the Tamil Nadu Premier League, where he worked on his batting. "It



helps that I've come back after a T20 tournament (TNPL). I worked quite a bit on my batting," he said.

"It's always a special feeling to play in front of the home crowd. This is a ground I completely love to play cricket in. It's given me a lot of wonderful memories," Ashwin, who slammed his second hundred at this venue, said.

JADEJA AMONG BEST BATTERS

Ashwin also acknowledged the support of his teammate Jadeja during a challenging phase of the innings.

"He (Jadeja) was of real help. There was a point in time where I was sweating and getting a bit tired. Jaddu noticed it quickly and guided me through that phase," Ashwin said, praising Jadeja's ability to offer crucial advice at the right moment.

"Jaddu has been one of our

best batters for the team in the last few years. His presence was solid, and his advice that we didn't have to convert twos into threes was really helpful for me."

The duo's 195-run alliance for the seventh wicket took India from a wobbly 144/6 to a commanding 339/6 at stumps on day one.

Looking ahead to the next day, Ashwin said: "It's a typical, old-fashioned Chennai pitch where overspin will fetch a bit of bounce."

"The wicket will start doing its tricks much later in the game. There's enough in it for the quicks—good carry, good bounce if we present the seam nice and hard."

"The new ball will do a bit, and we'll have to start afresh tomorrow. It's still damp underneath, so hopefully as it dries out, it quickens up," he added.

Short TAKES

Legendary Umpires To Bring Flair To Legends League Cricket S3



Veteran umpires Billy Bowden, Ranmore Martinesz, and Jerry Matibiri are poised to bring their expertise and flair to the third season of the Legends League Cricket, which kicks off this Friday.

The trio will officiate a total of 25 matches across four cities including Srinagar.

"The Legends are legends for a reason, and it's fantastic to be here for this opportunity," said Bowden. "Everyone's in great form, and we are looking forward to a competitive season."

Indian Lifter Valluri Ajaya Babu Strikes Gold In Commonwealth C'ships

Indian weightlifter Valluri Ajaya Babu produced a record-breaking performance to clinch the gold medal in the men's 81kg junior and senior categories at the Commonwealth Championships here on Thursday.

The 19-year-old Babu heaved a total of 326kg (147kg + 179kg) to finish on top of the podium.

With his performance, Babu set a Commonwealth record clean and jerk in the 81kg junior category.

He also smashed the junior national marks in snatch, clean and jerk and total weight sections.

Australia Bans Former Sri Lanka Test Cricketer For 20 Years

Former Sri Lankan Test cricketer Dulip Samaraweera was banned Thursday from holding any position within Australian cricket for 20 years over "inappropriate behaviour".

The 52-year-old, who played seven Tests and five ODIs in the 1990s, was appointed head coach of the Victoria state women's team in May.

But his tenure was short-lived after alleged inappropriate behaviour towards a woman player.

Cricket Australia's Conduct Commission banned him "from holding any position within CA or a state or territory association".

Playing Nadal Is 'Kind Of A Nightmare', Says Alcaraz

Carlos Alcaraz has admitted to being starstruck when he first faced Rafael Nadal, saying that facing the 22-time Grand Slam champion was "kind of a nightmare".

Speaking in Berlin on Thursday ahead of the Laver Cup, the 21-year-old Alcaraz reflected on his on-court battles with fellow Spaniard Nadal.

"It was a huge thing when I played him for the first time," said the world number three. "The other times for me were kind of a nightmare."

Man City's Kevin de Bruyne Could Miss Arsenal Clash

Manchester City faces a new injury concern for Kevin de Bruyne ahead of a showdown with Premier League title rival Arsenal after the playmaker was substituted at halftime of Champions League match against Inter Milan.

The Belgium international looked in discomfort after making a run late in the first half. After receiving treatment, De Bruyne didn't return for the second half and was replaced by Ilkay Gundogan. The game ended 0-0. City hosts title rival Arsenal at Etihad Stadium on Sunday.

Influence Of Social Media On Golf's Popularity In Post-Pandemic World

Jordan Fuller

COVID-19 may have done some damage, but it did some good, too! Once the pandemic was over, golf suddenly got a huge boost in popularity, and it's still on the up and up. Why? Well, during the pandemic, a whole lot of non-golfers discovered it as a safe, socially-distanced outdoor activity... And we golfers know, the more you play, the more you fall in love with the game.

Can you believe that during lockdown in 2020, more than half a million new golfers emerged in the US? Worldwide, the number of golfers increased by 15% between 2020 and 2023, so it looks like people are seeing golf as a long-term hobby, not just a pandemic boredom buster!

During the pandemic, it was pretty easy to experience the benefits of golf both physically and mentally. Getting on the course was an escape, a place where it became easy to clear your mind, manage your stress, get a bit of much-needed social interaction, and improve your mental well-being.

Golfers are also getting younger and younger, thanks to tech-heavy experiences like

Topgolf. Thanks to COVID-19, golf has become so much more accessible to a huge range of people who never really thought about it before.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN TRANSFORMING GOLF

One of the biggest reasons golf is booming since the pandemic is social media. When you can get golf-related info on your phone, in your pocket, at any hour of the day... It becomes so much more engaging!

Plus, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and X have made the sport more available and interesting to younger audiences. Golfing content is being made, liked, and shared a LOT more than it ever used to be.

Even famous golfers are using social media to interact with fans, promote tournaments, and share behind-the-scenes stuff, which creates a much stronger personal connection. It's becoming an accessible, relatable sport thanks to social media—especially since golf has always been seen as a "rich person's game" or for the very upper class.

Thanks to social media, golf has become an exciting, vibrant sport that appeals to a wide bunch of people—youth, older,



male, female, fit, unfit, outgoing, introverted... It's for everyone, and social media helps make that happen.

HOW ONLINE PLATFORMS ARE CHANGING THE GOLF GAME

Like all content, golf content changes the way people view and enjoy the sport. Here's how these online platforms are bringing golf into the spotlight!

ENGAGING CONTENT STRATEGIES

Dynamic content really draws people in. Think about it this way—seeing a picture of Tiger Woods teeing off leaves a lot to your imagination. But watching a video... Then, you can see his concentration as he squares up, watch his perfect swing in motion, and hear the club strike the ball.

Videos, stories, and reels make golf so much more real to viewers. They also bring the smaller, fun bits of the game to

the watchers—things like trick shots, interactions between golfers, and little bits of personality that come out on the course. The things you don't usually see unless you're there! Interactive content, like polls, Q&A sessions, and challenges, allows your audience to participate actively, which can really help build a strong relationship with golf.

LEVERAGING USER-GENERATED

CONTENT

You can really get in on the action by interacting with golf brands. Many brands, players, and golf-related accounts encourage their followers to share their own content and tag the brand in their posts.

This is fun and a good way to widen your golfing circles online. But it's also an excellent way to get more and more people doing golf things! It's great to be encouraged by big brands golfers, or even other entry-level golfers.

It also builds a nice sense of community, and it's a great way to feel included in the general golf sphere. In these cases, it doesn't usually matter how good you are—people will celebrate and enjoy your game, which can be a huge boost!

TARGETED ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS

Social media is also the perfect place for golf courses, clubs, and brands to advertise. Targeting strategies have become more and more refined, so they can really pinpoint those people who are interested in their products and services, which means a higher chance of making a sale.

On the other end of the spec-

trum, people who aren't super interested are much less likely to get these kinds of ads. In the end, this means a higher ROI on ads and less annoyed social media users!

It's also done wonders for golf tourism, especially in lesser-known areas like Kashmir and others. People are coming from far and wide to enjoy golf courses in countries they're visiting, which helps boost local economies.

EASY ACCESSIBILITY WORLDWIDE

Gone are the days of having no other choice but the golf pro at your local golf club. If you want to learn to golf, you CAN—no matter where in the world you are. Online lessons, YouTube videos, tips, and tricks are available on every social media platform. You don't even have to pay to learn the basics!

In countries with limited golf infrastructure, social media brings the game right to the people. You don't have to travel to faraway places to get golf coaching or work on your swing—you can get world-class drivers and putters delivered to your door and a virtual coach in your pocket 24/7.

READ THE FULL TEXT ON kashmirobserver.net.