

J&K ASSEMBLY POLLS

EC Revises Phase I Voting To 61.38%

Men Outnumber Women By 4.79%



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The first phase of the Jammu and Kashmir polls saw men outnumbering women in casting votes by over 4.79 percentage points, the Election Commission said on Friday while issuing revised figures with voter

turnout rising to 61.38 per cent from 61.11 per cent earlier. The first phase of polling was held in 24 assembly constituencies spread across Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian in south Kashmir and Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts in the Chenab | [More on P6](#)

Kishtwar: **80.20%** (Highest District Turnout)
Pulwama: **46.99%** (Lowest District Turnout)
Inderwal: **82.16%** (Highest Assembly Turnout)
Tral: **43.56%** (Lowest Assembly Turnout)

5 Employees Suspended For Skipping Poll Duty

Five employees have been suspended for failing to report for election duty. An inquiry has been ordered to address the matter. The officials were deployed for Home voting on September 17, and failed to report in their respective place of posting. District Election Officer Reasi, Vishesh Mahajan has | [More on P6](#)

Phase II: 49 Candidates Declare Criminal Cases

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) compiled a report stating that 49 candidates out of 238 contesting in the second phase of Jammu and Kashmir elections have declared criminal cases against themselves. 37 candidates have declared serious criminal cases against themselves. According to a report by Financial Express, the Jammu & Kashmir Election Watch and ADR have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 238 out of 239 candidates, who are contesting in the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly Elections Phase II. Due to unavailability of a complete affidavit, Sarjan Ahmad Wagay, an independent candidate contesting

from Beerwah constituency has not been analysed. The second phase of the election is scheduled on September 25. In this phase, voting will be conducted in 26 constituencies in Central Kashmir. The crimes declared by the candidates include attempt to murder, crimes against women and rape among other crimes. Financial Express quoted the ADR report "Among the major parties, four (15 per cent) out of 26 candidates analysed from JKPDP, four (24 per cent) out of 17 candidates analysed from BJP, two (33 per cent) out of six candidates analysed from Congress and one (5 per cent) out of 20 candidates analysed from JKNC have declared | [More on P6](#)



Thousands converged at Hazratbal shrine for congregational prayers on Friday following Eid-E-Milad. KO Photo | Abid Bhat

4 BSF Jawans Killed In Budgam Mishap

Agencies

Srinagar: At least four Border Security Force (BSF) personnel died while several others were injured after a bus they were travelling in for poll duty skidded off road and fell into a gorge in the Brell Waterhail area of central Kashmir's Budgam district on Friday, officials said. An official said that the bus with 36 BSF troopers skidded off road in Brell village and fell into a deep gorge. He said that in the incident four BSF troopers died while more than two dozen were injured. The official said that the injured have shifted to Srinagar hospital. Police have taken cognisance of the incident. Meanwhile, the Director General of Police (DGP) R.R. Swain has expressed deep sorrow over the tragic road accident of a vehicle in which three BSF personnel lost their lives while several were injured. In a statement | [More on P6](#)

BJP-led Govt Anti-Muslim: Omar 'First One Since Independence Without A Muslim Minister'

Observer News Service

Jammu: National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Friday criticised the BJP-led government at the Centre dubbing it anti-Muslim, and said this is the first government since Independence that does not have a Muslim minister, despite Muslims constituting 14 per cent of India's population. Omar countered the BJP's accusations of the NC being "soft separatists" and questioned why 4,000 to 4,500 workers, office bearers, MLAs and MLCs from his



party were killed over the past 35 years. "This is the first government since Independence without a Muslim minister, even though Muslims make up 14 per cent of India's population. The home minister, who will | [More on P6](#)

Apni Party Leader Backs Omar In Budgam

Jammu & Kashmir Apni Party chief spokesperson Muntazir Mohi-ud-Din Friday stated that Omar Abdullah is a credible and effective voice of J&K in present circumstances. He said he withdrew his nomination papers after the former chief minister filed his nomination papers from the Budgam Assembly segment. "Omar Abdullah is a credible and effective voice in current | [More on P6](#)

BJP Goes All Out To Win Voters In Pir Panchal

6 Rallies By Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh In 2 days

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: The BJP is trying to make inroads into the Congress-NC alliance and PDP bastion of the Pir Panchal region with its star campaigners set to address several mega rallies in the second phase of the polls on September 25. For the past six decades, the Pir Panchal region has remained a stronghold of the Congress-National Conference (NC) alliance, which has bagged five seats over five to eight times. The region, comprising the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch along the Line of



Control and sharing borders with south Kashmir, had largely favoured the PDP, Congress and NC in the 2014 state elections, with these parties securing five out of seven assembly seats. The BJP had | [More on P6](#)

J&K Wins Top Award In Renewable Energy Capacity

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Union Ministry for New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), has recognized Jammu and Kashmir with highest achiever award in Hydro Power Capacity and overall Renewable Energy Capacity besides the third highest achiever certificate in Solar Power Capacity among the UTs in its contribution towards India achieving the milestone of 200 GW of Non-Fossil Power Capacity. The award was conferred by the MNRE, during the three day 4th Global | [More on P6](#)

I Will Be King Not Kingmaker: Er Rashid

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) Chairman and Member of Parliament from North Kashmir, Engineer Rashid has claimed that he will be the king and not kingmaker in the ongoing assembly elections in J&K. Er Rashid, who has been in jail since 2019 for a terror funding case, was granted interim bail till October 2 to campaign for the upcoming Jammu and



Kashmir Assembly elections. Known for his fiery rhetoric, Rashid has since taken center stage in the political discourse, targeting | [More on P6](#)



AIP Faces Backlash Amid Sectarian Slogans

Syed Mohammad Burhan

A video purportedly from the campaign trail of the Awami Ittehad Party (AIP)

in Beerwah, Budgam, has ignited a storm on social media, drawing criticism for allegedly promoting sectarian discord. While the authenticity of the | [More on P6](#)

RG To Meet J&K Professionals

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is set to meet with professionals from various sectors here on September 25 that will provide a platform for open dialogue on challenges faced by them in Jammu and Kashmir and allow their voices to be heard at the national level. Head of the Jammu and Kashmir unit of the All India Professionals' Congress (AIPC) Sanjay Sapru said the meet titled 'Dogri Dham' will take place during the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha's campaign trail in the union territory. Gandhi will also hold professional meets in | [More on P6](#)

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'Stroke Cases Increasing Globally, Air Pollution, High Temperatures Driving Numbers'

Press Trust Of India

Incidence of stroke and related deaths are rising substantially around the world, with air pollution, high temperatures and metabolic risk factors such as high blood pressure and physical inactivity, driving these increases, according to estimates published in The Lancet Neurology journal. Researchers found that the contribution of high temperatures to poor health and early death due to stroke has increased 72% since 1990 and is likely to continue increasing in the future, thereby highlighting how environmental factors can impact growing stroke burden. Further, for the first time, particulate matter or PM air pollution was found to have the same contribution as smoking towards causing a fatal form of brain bleed, according to the researchers forming the Global Burden of Disease, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) group. The GBD study, the "largest and most comprehensive effort to quantify health loss across places and over time", is coordinated by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), University of Washington, US. Globally, the number of people experiencing a stroke for the first time rose to 119 lakh in 2021 -- up by 70% since 1990 -- while deaths related to stroke rose to 73 lakh, which was up by 44% since 1990, making the neurological condition the third leading cause of death after ischaemic heart disease



(short supply of blood to heart) and COVID-19. They added that over three-fourth of those affected by strokes live in low- and middle-income countries. According to lead author Valery L. Feigin from Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand, the rapid growth in the number of people affected by stroke strongly suggested that stroke prevention strategies currently used are not sufficiently effective. "New, proven effective population-wide and motivational individual prevention strategies that could be applied to all people at risk of having a stroke, regardless

of the level of risk, as recommended in the recent Lancet Neurology Commission on Stroke should be implemented across the globe urgently," said Feigin. The researchers also estimated that stroke-related liabilities attributable to 23 modifiable risk factors, including air pollution, excess body weight, high blood pressure, smoking and physical inactivity, increased from 100 million years of healthy life lost in 1990 to 135 million in 2021. These risk factors are present in huge numbers in Eastern Europe, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, they said. The authors also acknowledged

substantial progress made in reducing the global stroke burden from risk factors linked to poor diet, air pollution and smoking. Poor health resulting from diets high in processed meat and low in vegetables declined by 40% and 30%, respectively, while that due to PM air pollution and smoking fell by 20% and 13%, respectively, they found. The results suggested that strategies for reducing exposure to these risk factors over the past three decades such as clean air zones and public smoking bans have been successful, the authors said. They called for implementing and

“New, proven effective population-wide and motivational individual prevention strategies that could be applied to all people at risk of having a stroke, regardless of the level of risk, as recommended in the recent Lancet Neurology Commission on Stroke should be implemented across the globe urgently

monitoring the evidence-based recommendations set out in the 2023 World Stroke Organization-Lancet Neurology Commission on stroke for drastically reducing the global burden of stroke in the years to come and improving brain health and overall well-being of millions of people around the world. The recommendations include stroke surveillance programmes that monitor indicators of stroke such as incidence, recurrence, death rates and risk factors in a country, and care and rehabilitation services for people affected by stroke.

'Dizziness In Elderly People Could Increase Risk Of Fall By 60%'

Press Trust Of India

Older adults who experience dizziness or light-headedness are 60 per cent more likely to have a fall, which is one of the leading causes of death and injury for the age group, according to a study. Researchers reviewed 29 published studies, involving over one lakh participants, and found a "conclusive link between older adults experiencing spells of dizziness and a dramatically elevated risk of falling." Dizziness is not just a normal part of ageing and has been confirmed as an independent predicting factor for falls, the researchers from Imperial College London, UK, said. Common among older adults, aged 65 years and above, dizziness is used to describe sensations such as vertigo, imbalance and dis-

orientation. In a smaller group of seven studies, the researchers found that elderly people experiencing dizziness were at double the likelihood of falling more than once in the future. The findings are published in the journal Age and Ageing. "Our study conclusively shows that older people with dizziness are at high risk of experiencing falls," senior author Toby Ellmers, from the Department of Brain Sciences at Imperial College London, said. Further, the researchers said that even though dizziness is common, it is caused in distinct ways, such as a fall in blood pressure due to standing -- referred to as orthostatic hypotension. There are specific treatments and cures, they added. The authors stressed that dizziness should not be viewed as a 'normal' part of ageing.

'Loneliness Not Cause Of Disease; Social Factors, Unhealthy Behaviour Its Risk Factors'

Press Trust Of India

Loneliness may not be a direct cause of disease, according to a study that explored cause-and-effect links between having a genetic tendency for loneliness and 20 diseases, including diabetes, and heart- and brain-related ones. Researchers found that factors, such as socioeconomic aspects, unhealthy behaviour and depressive symptoms, largely explained the links between loneliness and diseases. While loneliness, which is one's perception of how disconnected they feel from society, is now widely regarded as a risk factor for ill-health, the researchers, including those from Tulane University, US,

type 2 diabetes mellitus, obesity, chronic liver diseases, chronic kidney disease, most neurological diseases and the other common diseases," the authors wrote. This indicated that loneliness is a "surrogate marker" -- meaning that it may predict these diseases in patients, rather than being a direct cause of them, the authors suggested. They found that the diseases most strongly associated with loneliness were posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Further, "socioeconomic factors, health behaviours, baseline depressive symptoms and comorbidities largely explained the associations between loneliness



said that whether or not it plays a role in causing diseases largely remain unexplored. For the study, published in the journal Nature Human Behaviour, the authors looked at genetic, behavioural and hospitalisation data of over 4.75 lakh people, taken from the UK Biobank. The participants were followed-up for a typical period of 12 years. "... non-causal associations were identified between genetic liability to loneliness and 20 out of the 26 specific diseases, including cardiovascular diseases,

and diseases," the authors wrote. They said that managing these risk factors of loneliness could still improve long-term health outcomes. The findings highlighted the importance of addressing risk factors of loneliness, such as unhealthy behaviours and comorbidities, to improve health outcomes, the authors said. They added that future research is needed to explore processes that link loneliness to disease, and should include more diverse participants.

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INF

Mirwaiz Says Barred From Offering Friday Prayers At Jamia

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Defying the union territory administration's claims of normalcy, Hurriyat Conference Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Friday denounced his continued house detention, which keeps him from carrying out his religious duties as a head priest.

In a statement, Mirwaiz said, authorities barred him from going to Jama Masjid in the Nowhatta area of old city Srinagar for the third consecutive Friday, where he delivers the sermon and offers prayers.

Mirwaiz said that it was strange that the head of the government (Lieutenant Governor) claims in the media that he (Mirwaiz) was a 'free man', "but reality is that I am detained."

"(And) no reason is given for this infringement of my fundamental right to freedom and liberty. Instead, it is enforced in private and denied in public. No visitors, especially the media, are al-

lowed to meet me," he said and termed the normalcy claims and peace in Jammu and Kashmir as "hollow."

"One wonders why I am being detained at home and not allowed to move, and then the fact vehemently denied. Repeated detentions are badly affecting my obligations as the Mirwaiz and my socio educational initiatives. Being a public person it also prevents me from engaging with people socially and participating in their lives in grief and happiness," he claimed.

Mirwaiz stated that he will be filing a rejoinder before the High Court concerning his ongoing lawsuit seeking permanent release from house arrest.

He also condoled the death of Mohammad Shafi Pandith, the first Muslim IAS officer of Kashmir, who passed away on Thursday. Mirwaiz regretted that he could not attend the funeral prayers of the deceased or condole the family personally due to his "house arrest."



Two little girls watching PDP president Mehbooba Mufti (not in picture) speaking at an election rally on Friday in the old city's Nawakadal area from behind iron bars. KO photo, Abid Bhat

Friday Following Eid-Milad-Un-Nabi (SAW)

Thousands Throng Hazratbal To Offer Congregational Prayers

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Thousands of devotees thronged Dargah Hazratbal shrine here to offer congregational prayers and to have a glimpse of the holy relic of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) on Friday following Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW).

The biggest congregation was held at Dargah Hazratbal shrine on the banks of famous Dal Lake in Srinagar where devotees in thousands from length and breadth of the valley thronged to have glimpse of the holy relic or Moi-e-Muqaddas, which is widely believed to be the hair strand of the prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), marking the birthday of prophet Muhammad (SAW), is observed on the 12th day of Rabi' al-awwal every year.

While the Eid-e-Milad was observed on Monday, the devotees in the Valley today observed Friday following Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) with religious fervor and zeal.



The biggest congregation was held at Dargah Hazratbal shrine on the banks of famous Dal Lake in Srinagar where devotees in thousands from length and breadth of the valley thronged to have glimpse of the holy relic or Moi-e-Muqaddas, which is widely believed to be the hair strand of the prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Devotees with moist eyes amid recitation of Quranic verses sought blessings for them and that of their loved ones from Allah on the occasion.

Similar congregations were held at other major shrines and mosques in the valley including Asar Sharif Shah-e-Kalash Pora, Asar Sharif Jenab Sahab Soura,

Lal Bazar, Syed Yaqoob Sahab Sonwar and Makhama Beerwah in central Budgam district.

A huge gathering of devotees was also witnessed in other districts of the valley, including Pinjora Shopian, Khiram Sirhama in Anantnag, Seer Hamadan, Kaba Marg Qaimoh, Khanqahi Faiz Panah Tral, and Aham Sharief Bandipora in North Kashmir.

Devotees including men, women and children offered Fajr and Friday prayers at Dargah Hazratbal while a holy relic of the Prophet (SAW) was displayed as soon as the congregational prayers concluded.

Religious clerics delivered Friday sermons on the occasion and threw light on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Elaborate arrangements were put in place by the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board for smooth gathering of devotees at Dargah Hazratbal while the Traffic police department had issued a route plan for the smooth traffic movement.

Mian Altaf Addresses Public Meeting In Harwan

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference leader and Member of Parliament from Anantnag Rajouri, Mian Altaf Ahmad Larvi on Friday said the development and dignity go hand in hand.

He said the National Conference is committed to progress without compromising on the values that uphold J&K's dignity.

Mian Altaf emphasized that there is no need to choose between development and dignity. "The National Conference is commit-

ted to addressing both aspects simultaneously, demonstrating that our people can indeed lead better lives," he said.

He made these remarks while speaking at a series of public meetings in Fakir Gajri in the Hazratbal assembly segment, while campaigning for the party's candidate for Hazratbal, Salman Ali Sagar.

Mian pointed out the stark contrast between the BJP's rhetoric and their actions. "They talk a lot about tribal rights, but why have they failed to implement the forest rights of the Gujjars? What is holding them back? It is clear that they

are not sincere in their words. If they were, Fakir Gajri would not have been neglected by the government in terms of development. This area has seen no progress since 2014," Mian Altaf said while highlighting the importance of prioritizing both development and dignity, and called out the lack of action by the BJP in fulfilling their promises to the people.

He confidently stated that Salman is the ideal candidate for the people of Hazratbal constituency. He assured that he will spare no effort in serving the diverse needs of the community.

SAD DEMISE

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the demise of the wife of Late Abdul Ahad Bhat, resident of Naseem Bagh, Habbak, Srinagar, who left for the heavenly abode on 16th of September 2024. We request everyone to pray for the departed soul.

BEREAVED

Gowhar Ahad Bhat (Son)

TB

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr.DEN/HQ/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date- 07.10.2024 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on www.ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft Banker Cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information logon to www.ireps.gov.in

Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System
Open	Works	Single Bid System
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time
14.09.2024	23.09.2024	07.10.2024 / 15:00 Hrs.

S.No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of offer	Period of completion
1.	188-2024-25-SrDEN-HQ-FZR	Taking longitudinal section & gradients verification by using Lidar Survey technology etc on KKP-FKA, FZP-FKA, ABS-FKA, JUC-FZR & LDH-FZR section under ADEN-I/FZR & ADEN-II/FZR under jurisdiction of Sr.DENHQ/FZR.	29,99,994.63/-	60,000/-	60 Days	04 Months
Similar Nature of work: "NIL".						
2.	193-2024-25-ADEN-I-FZR	Replacement of 04 nos old type-IV quarters along with 04 nos type-III quarters against replacement of old DILAPIDATED quarters at Firozpur under Sr.DEN-HQ/FZR.	1,60,41,181.03/-	2,30,200/-	60 Days	10 Months
Similar Nature of work: "Construction of building/quarter."						
3.	194-2024-25-ADEN-2-FZR	Replacement of steel girders of Br. No. 94 (2x2.66+1x4.27 mtr), Br. No. 101 (1x2.20 mtr) & Br. No. 102 (2x2.20m) on FZP-HSW section, Br. No. 109-A (1x2.20m) on LDH-FZR section, Br. No. 107 (2x3.86m) on JUC-FZR section, Br. No. 158 (11x1.83m) on PHR-LNK section under ADEN-2/FZR (Total Span 20 Nos.).	1,87,12,785.96/-	2,43,600/-	60 Days	08 Months
Similar Nature of work: "Construction of any Bridge work."						
4.	195-2024-25-ADEN-2-FZR	TRR (P) (8.00Km) at KM 45.00 to 47.00 on JUC-FZR section & KM 383.00 to 389.00 on BT-FZR section by Manual with 60 Kg 90 UTS rails (LWR) under ADEN-2/FZR.	1,56,36,334.88/-	2,28,200/-	60 Days	10 Months
Similar Nature of work: "CTR/TRR/TFR/TTR including raising of Track, screening, destressing of track, pre & post work for track maintenance machine like Tamping Machines/Ballast Screening/Regulating Machines and TTR by T28".						
5.	196-2024-25-SrDEN-HQ-FZR	Providing 5 Nos new SMC over head tank of 100 KL capacity and provision of boring each at BXB, LNK, MQS, GHS & JBD Stations as staff amenities.	3,32,37,228.96/-	3,16,200/-	60 Days	06 Months
Similar Nature of work: "Construction/repair of SMC panel tank or fabrication/repair of welded steel structures".						
6.	199-2024-25-SrDEN-HQ-FZR	Replacement of existing 817 nos. steel channel sleepers with H-beam sleepers Br. no. 68 (35 nos.), Br. no. 226 (33 nos) on JUC-FZR section and Br. no. 56A (80 nos.), Br. no. 68 (52 nos.), Br. no. 75 (52 nos.) & Br. no. 93 (85 nos) on LDH-FZR section and Br. no. 19 (135 nos.) & Br. no. 57A (51 nos.) on BT-FZR & Br. no. 16 (23 nos), Br. no. 19 (92 nos), Br. no. 20 (46 nos.) & Br. no. 36 (133 nos.) on KKP-FKA section under ADEN-I/FZR & ADEN-II/FZR in the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN-HQ/FZR in c/w Through Bridge Sleeper Renewal (TBSR) with H beam-5676 nos over Firozpur division.	2,94,66,368.48/-	2,97,300/-	60 Days	10 Months
Similar Nature of work: "Fabrication & laying of channel sleepers in running track".						
7.	203-2024-25-SrDEN-HQ-FZR	Improvement and maintenance of protection force station & out post/assault post of protection force at Firozpur, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Pathankot, Jalandhar & Faridkot over Firozpur Division	1,86,03,125.35/-	2,43,000/-	60 Days	06 Months
Similar Nature of work: "Any civil work other than track work".						

Note : 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender. No. 188, 196, 199 & 203-2024-25-Sr-DEN-HQ-FZR & 193-2024-25-ADEN-I-FZR & 194 & 195-2024-25-ADEN-2-FZR Date: 18.09.2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2923/2/24

Office Of The Executive Officer Municipal Committee Beerwah

Subject: - Conduct of General Elections to Legislative Assembly 2024-Providing of refreshment-
Reference: - DEO/Bud./2024/ 7869-70 dated. 19/09/2024

DASTI QUOTATION

In view of the General Elections to Legislative Assembly 2024 on 24/09/2024 & 25/09/2024. The arrangements for refreshment in form of Biryani, water bottles, Orange and Apple for the polling parties of 29 Beerwah Assembly Constituency. Therefore the dasti quotations are invited from interested suppliers / agencies for supply of following items.

S. No	Name of items	Quantity
01	Biryani	700 No's
02	Water	700 Bottles
03	Fruit Orange	3416 No's
04	Kashmiri Apple	3416 No's

The sealed quotations reflecting the rates/charges of the above mentioned items from the interested agency /dealer should reach to this office by or before 22/09/2024 at 2:00 PM. The quotation will be opened at 2:30 PM on the same day. The supply order will be placed in favour of the supplier, who is found to be offering lowest market rate (LMR).

No:- MC/Bru/Actt/2024-25/1094-1100
DIPK-NB-1580/24
Dated:- 20-09-2025

Executive Officer
Municipal Committee Beerwah

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- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
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- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

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SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI CALENDAR

16 Rabi-ul-Awwal
1446

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 54
ZUHR	12:24
ASR	4: 47
Magrib	6:34
ISHA	7: 54

This Day In History

- 1913 - Turkey and Bulgaria sign peace treaty in Constantinople
- 1922 - US President Warren G. Harding signs a joint resolution of approval to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine
- 1938 - Winston Churchill condemns Hitler's annexation of Czechoslovakia
- 1943 --Soviet 13th/61st Army reconquer Chyernigov
- 1955 - Last allied occupying troops leave Austria
- 1964 - Malta becomes independent from the United Kingdom.
- 1970 - Soviet space probe Luna 16 leaves the Moon
- 1979 - Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Lewontin publish influential paper (cited more than 4,000 times) "The Spandrels of San Marco and the panglossian paradigm", introducing idea of "spandrels" into evolutionary biology
- 1982 - STS-5 vehicle moves to launch pad
- 1983 - US performs nuclear test at Nevada Test Site
- 1984 - NASA launches Galaxy-C
- 1990 - Reports that US refinery problems will lead to a loss in capacity and aggressive remarks by Saddam Hussein send crude prices to new highs
- 1991 - Armenia votes on whether to remain in Soviet Union
- 2003 - Galileo mission terminated by sending the probe into Jupiter's atmosphere, where it is crushed by the pressure at the lower altitudes
- 2004 - The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's War and the Maoist Communist Centre of India merge to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist).
- 2004 - Construction of the Burj Dubai starts
- 2008 - President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa resigns from office, effective September 25

From KO Archives

Examiner Faces Threat To Life, Returns Answer Papers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: One of the examiners feeling threat to his life after conducting the viva voice of the students of private colleges has returned the answer papers to the Director Technical Education without marking them.

The examiner, Shujia Hussain, who conducted examination of students of some of the private polytechnic colleges in Government Women's Polytechnic Bernina last month could not be lured by the administration of the concerned college for the favours to their students. Hussain in a letter to the Director Technical Education on August 30, has expressed his apprehensions that the authorities of the college are trying to "harass" him by one way or other.

In order to avoid the harassment and the mental agony he has returned the whole lot of answer papers which he was urged to evaluate - to the Director Technical Education with a note that the performance of the most of the students was dismal and could not be promoted.

His observation during the examination was that the students lacked the basic concept of the subject. "Performance of the students in the exams was very poor. The students could not answer most of the questions during the viva voice. The students gave wrong answers to most of the questions saying that same had been taught to them by their teachers."

His further observations were that some of the students of the KITE Polytechnic had reportedly worked hard on their internal portfolio but unfortunately the schemes were not as per the norms, while as the evaluating authority had misled them by giving them good remarks.

Hussain did not promote them as he felt that promoting such students could spoil their future and was against the norms of the examination. It has been observed that there is mushroom growth of the private colleges and performance of most of them is dismal. Most of these lack the requisite infrastructure and the teachers are not qualified to the satisfaction of the students.

It has been reliably learnt that most of them are using the illegal means to maintain the reputation of their colleges. Sources said that most of these private colleges are buying the question papers from the authorities of the Technical education and the University to supply them to the students in advance for better results. Even the examiners are paid hefty sums for the favours they render to the students of these colleges, alleged the sources.

People in general feel that these colleges who have been recognised by the Government should be made accountable so that they could not deceive the students.

(Kashmir Observer, September 21, 1998)

Given their past, neither NC nor PDP have the moral authority to label independents or new political forces as BJP proxies. This argument simply does not hold up. Both parties have themselves engaged in alliances with the BJP and are now accusing others of being proxies

Ummar Jamal

After a hiatus of nearly ten years, elections are finally being held in Jammu and Kashmir. With campaigns in full swing, every political party is throwing its weight behind these elections, aiming to secure a foothold in the political landscape. This electoral contest is significant for several reasons, not least of which is Jamaat-e-Islami's decision to re-enter the political process after a ground-breaking 37-year absence. Secondly, the emergence of the Awami Itehaad Party (AIP) as a new political force is reshaping the dynamics of the region's politics.

The central themes of this election in Kashmir revolve around two key issues: preventing a split in the vote and keeping the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) out of power. This narrative, primarily driven by the two main political parties—National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)—has dominated the discourse. However, their tactic of labelling any independent or third-party candidate as a BJP proxy or agent raises questions about its validity and fairness.

The Unity Card: Sincerity or Strategy?

One of the primary narratives pushed by the NC and PDP is the "unity card," which emphasizes



Assembly Elections J&K Political Proxy Blame Game

es the need for Kashmiri political forces to remain united. To gauge the sincerity of this call for unity, one only needs to examine the breakdown of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD). Both NC and PDP were central to this alliance, which was supposed to be a collective front for reclaiming Kashmir's special status. Yet, despite their claims of prioritizing unity, these two parties chose to contest both the parliamentary and now assembly elections separately. If they were genuinely concerned about unity, would they not have stayed united for the elections, particularly when facing a common political adversary?

The INDIA Alliance: Can It Restore Kashmir's Special Status?

The INDIA alliance, a coalition of opposition parties including the Indian National Congress, is being portrayed as a saviour for the people of Kashmir, with promises of restoring the region's special status. However, this narrative does not hold up to scrutiny. The Congress, one of the key parties in the alliance, has been largely silent on the issue of restoring the pre-August 5, 2019, status of Jammu and Kashmir. When asked directly about the restoration of Article 370 and 35A, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge dodged the question. It is almost inconceivable that Congress would undo what the BJP did on August 5, 2019.

After all, Congress has been responsible for the gradual erosion of Article 370 for decades, and many believe that their ultimate goal was also to eventually revoke it.

Furthermore, several constituents of the INDIA bloc, including Arvind Kejriwal, the Chief Minister of Delhi, celebrated the revocation of Article 370. Congress leaders who do speak on the matter criticize the manner in which the decision was carried out, not the decision itself. Hence, any belief that the INDIA alliance will reinstate Article 370 is naive at best.

The Hypocrisy of Labelling Candidates BJP Proxies

One of the most striking aspects of this election is the tendency of NC and PDP to label nearly every independent candidate or emerging political force as a BJP proxy. For instance, Engineer Rashid, the leader of AIP, has been explicitly called a BJP agent. Yet, this narrative does not resonate with the average Kashmiri, who vividly remembers the past alliances between the NC, PDP, and BJP. PDP, in particular, sought votes in 2014 on the promise of keeping the BJP out of power. However, after winning the elections, they formed an alliance with the BJP, much to the dismay of the electorate. PDP President Mehbooba Mufti has since justified this alliance by

claiming that her father, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, believed Narendra Modi would follow in the footsteps of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and work towards resolving the Kashmir issue. But can it be justified to seek votes on one platform and do the complete opposite once in power? The PDP is now paying the price for this miscalculation, fighting for its political survival.

Given their past, neither NC nor PDP have the moral authority to label independents or new political forces as BJP proxies. This argument simply does not hold up. Both parties have themselves engaged in alliances with the BJP and are now accusing others of being proxies. The people of Kashmir are not buying this narrative.

The Emergence of Engineer Rashid and the AIP

Engineer Rashid's AIP is one of the most prominent new political forces in this election. Rashid's party secured a significant victory in the Baramulla Parliamentary elections, defeating former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and People's Conference leader Sajad Lone. Rashid's win, with over 200,000 votes, cannot be dismissed as a fluke or a sentimental vote, as his detractors claim. Rashid has served two terms as an MLA from Langate and garnered over 100,000 votes in the 2019 parliamentary elections. These are not insignificant numbers and reflect a genuine mandate from the people.

Dismissing Rashid's political influence as a mere sentiment disregards the complexity of politics in Kashmir, where sentiment and politics are inextricably linked. If Rashid's political strategy is based on sentiment, then what are NC and PDP doing when Omar Abdullah campaigns by removing his skull cap, urging them to vote to "save his dignity"? In Kashmir sentiment is a valid political tool and everyone political party has used it in their own ways, and Rashid's rise is a pointer towards his ability to connect with the electorate on both emotional and political levels.

Conclusion

In a democracy, everyone has the right to participate in elections. Just because established parties feel threatened by emerging political forces does not entitle them to label their rivals as proxies or agents. It is essential to compete in elections with grace and respect for one's opponents, rather than resorting to name-calling and fear-mongering.

Kashmir's political landscape is changing, and new forces are emerging. Rather than dismissing them, the established parties must recognize that political competition is healthy for democracy. It is time to move away from power-driven politics and towards value-driven leadership. Elections should not be about personal gain but about serving the people and advancing the greater good for the region.

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

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US-India: It's A Chicken And Egg Situation

M. K. BHADRAKUMAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third term in office is a legacy term marked by his 'coming of age' — taking bold decisions in foreign policies. Hardly has the dust settled down on Modi's controversial decision to visit Kiev as peacemaker even as the Ukraine war is only accelerating, Modi took the decision in the solitude of his mind apparently to call on Donald Trump during his brief 3-day visit to the US starting Saturday.

That, at least, is the signal from the silence of the lambs in the US State Department and our Mission in DC. Actually, the 'breaking news' came from the great man himself. The US media promptly flashed it.

Now that the cat is out of the bag, spin masters in Delhi are playing up PM's meeting with Trump. The ANI took an interview with the prominent New York-based entrepreneur and Trump's close aide Al Mason (who figures in Trump's inner circle) and Doordarshan promptly carried the news agency's entire 760-word report on its website, titled PM Modi, Trump Are Strong Leaders Who Respect Each Other, Says Former US President's Close Aide.

Despite the orchestrated campaign against Trump by mainstream US media, Delhi apparently keeps an open mind. Modi is on the same page as Hungarian PM Viktor Orban and Polish President Andrzej Duda, the flag carriers of right-wing conservative-nationalist ideology in European politics, who reject the neoconservative-globalist outlook that President Biden represents.

In the US political culture, it is not

unusual that foreign dignitaries call on opposition politicians. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accompanied by wife Sara, capped a weeklong US visit in late July by visiting Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

Orban met Trump more than once during the past year. But then, Orban is highly critical of Biden and the Ukraine war and openly voices support for Trump's candidacy. Orban flew to Moscow and Kiev before meeting Trump in July.

Modi will be likewise meeting Trump. Ukraine crisis will almost certainly figure in their conversation.

Last week, at a meeting with the visiting Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval in Moscow, Putin proposed yet another 'bilateral' with Modi when he visits Russia soon after his return from the US on the sidelines of the BRICS summit (October 22-24) in Kazan.

The last time Modi visited Russia in July and met with Putin, their first such meeting since the Ukraine war started in February 2022, US officials went ballistic. The US National Security adviser Jake Sullivan cautioned that strong ties with Russia were a "bad bet" for India.

State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said the US was concerned about India's relations with Russia. And Eric Garcetti, the US ambassador to India, publicly rebuked the Modi government that it could not take Washington's friendship with Delhi "for granted". Garcetti questioned the raison d'être of India's strategic autonomy.

Against such a complex backdrop, can it be a coincidence that the controversial Khalistani activist settled in the US, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun has filed a civil lawsuit in the US Federal



District Court in New York against the Government of India, Doval and senior Research & Analysis Wing officials and the 'Indian businessman' Nikhil Gupta (who was extradited to the US from Prague earlier this year) for their "unprecedented attempt to assassinate a US citizen on the US soil"?

Importantly, the lawsuit also says: "Mr. Pannun at this time has not named Narendra Modi as a defendant due to the immunity he now enjoys under US and international law as head of a foreign sovereign government. However, Mr. Pannun reserves his right to amend the complaint to include Narendra Modi as a defendant should his status as head of state change during the course of these proceedings."

The development has serious implications insofar as "it brings matters almost to the doorsteps of the Prime Minister whose work with the NSA [Doval] is intertwined and inextricable," to quote V Sudarshan, senior journalist

who writes on national security affairs.

Pannun's lawsuit is carefully timed to coincide with Modi's visit. The US spy agencies and FBI actively keep in touch with Pannun and in all probability green-lighted his lawsuit. The US diplomacy has a history of blackmailing countries that pursue independent foreign policies.

By Monday, Modi will be back in India and the UN General Assembly's Summit of the Future, which occasioned his US trip, will start fading away as a distant memory. An international consensus on "how we deliver a better present and safeguard the future" will remain elusive in our Age of Geopolitics.

The remains of the day will be largely the fallouts from Pannun's lawsuit. This could be Doval's last visit to the US as he may soon become a fugitive from American law. That puts External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in a dual role in the high-level exchange-

es with Washington — doubling up also as India's security czar. The Americans won't mind it.

However, the transactional relationship as such acquires a new dynamic. Delhi's appeasement strategy may now translate as more mega arms deals with the US, generating substantial business and job creation in the American economy. It's a chicken-and-egg situation. Make no mistake, Americans will use it to pressure India.

The BRICS summit at Kazan becomes a trial run. At a press conference in Moscow on Monday, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that "alternative payment platforms are being developed within BRICS which allow countries to trade, invest, and conduct other economic transactions without being dependent on those who have decided to weaponise the US dollar and the euro." Lavrov added that the new payment system will not only be used to settle cross-border transactions, but will act as a complete financial set-up.

'De-dollarisation' is becoming a campaign issue in battleground states in the US elections. Trump said at a campaign rally in Wisconsin, "I hate when countries go off the dollar.... I'll say, 'You leave the dollar, you're not doing business with the United States, because we're going to put 100% tariff on your goods' (here). Washington will expect India to slow down the 'de-dollarisation' process on the BRICS platform.

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

The article was published by India Punchline

How Premarital Counseling Can Save Your Marriage

Wasim Kakroo

Marriage, often seen as a foundational stone of society, is a lifelong commitment. It requires love, understanding, and dedication for it to survive and thrive. A marriage based on trust, respect and love can be a source of growth for both the people involved. However, a lot of married people today struggle to deal with different issues related to marriage. These issues when left unaddressed might lead to miscommunication, arguments, and in many cases, divorce. Though love is a crucial component of marriage, it is not the only thing to think about while trying to make marriage a healthy, happy and rewarding experience. One of the most effective ways of preventing marriages from breaking down and of reducing the chances of marriage to end in divorces is through premarital counselling. In this type of counselling, couples under the guidance of professional and trained marriage counsellor, explore and evaluate their personalities, values, expectations, and preparedness for a marriage-related responsibilities. This type of counselling also allows the couples to identify the problems in compatibility if any. By understanding and resolving potential problems before marriage, couples can make well informed decisions about their future together.

Marriages, both traditional as well as choice marriages, in almost all societies, can experience challenges, which might eventually lead to disappointment and divorce. We are witnessing a worldwide increase in the divorce rates at an unprecedented level. So it is important than ever for us all to understand and address the main causes behind the failure of marriages. In this regard, premarital counselling can act as a preventive approach as it might help the to-be-married couples to create a solid understanding between them before they get married. In this article, we will discuss the issues with modern marriages and why and how premarital counselling can be advantageous for better stability of marriages. We will also discuss how premarital counselling can help in strengthening marriages, particularly in areas like compatibility, emotional preparedness, and shared responsibilities and also how can it help in reducing possibilities of divorce.

The Reality of Modern Marriages

Marriage is an individual journey that asks for combined focus on love, employment, individual ambitions, and mutual objectives. Efforts in all these areas can make marriage a source of transformation and growth. However,

due to lack of understanding of individual ambitions and confusion in mutual objectives, marriages turn stale. Divorce rates have been rising as per global data, with some studies suggesting the rates as high as 50% in certain parts of the world. The rate of divorces is rising even in societies that would historically value long lasting marriages.

There might be multiple reasons for a marriage to turn stale, however, one important reason among such reasons is the lack of mental preparation among couples for such a responsibility. When a couple enters into a marriage with romanticised expectations, they might underestimate the amount of effort and compromise that is required to make a marriage work successfully. Quality of marital life might get affected by a myriad of issues, the most significant ones being problems in communication, mismanagement of finances, intimacy issues, difficulties in resolving conflicts and problems in identifying the common goals. When these problems remain unresolved, they often lead to resentment, distance, and eventually divorce. Premarital counselling can have a significant role in helping couples manage such problems by encouraging them to engage in open discussions about such issues so that they reflect upon their own roles and responsibilities and hence this type of counselling might help them to gain an understanding of their relationship so that they make proactive decisions.

Promoting Compatibility

Compatibility between the couples is one of the most critical aspects of any marriage. Though love between the two partners is

Various underlying emotional issues such as unresolved trauma, attachment insecurities, or mental health concerns can also be uncovered during premarital counselling that might otherwise affect the quality of marriage later on. Counsellor can help the couples to work through such issues so that they don't develop into more significant problems

what brings them close to each other, it is compatibility between them that helps them sustain their relationship. Through premarital counselling, the couples might get an opportunity to assess whether they are emotionally, psychologically and practically compatible with each other or not. For couples to be compatible with each other, it is not necessary that they should have the common interests or same personalities, however for them to be compatible they should be able to complement and support

each other in ways that enhance and strengthen their relationship.

Couples with the help of counsellors can explore some basic questions such as:

- What core values do the partners have?
- How does each one of them handle stress and conflict?
- How does each one of them communicate their needs and emotions?
- What are their expectations regarding family, children, and career?

Once these and similar questions are addressed, it can help couples in identifying areas that might make their personalities clash or align with each other. E.g., seeking financial security might be important for one partner while the other partner may feel adventure and travel as important things to consider. Understanding such differences in priorities early before marriage may allow the couple to discuss the areas in which they might need to compromise so that they set realistic expectations for their future together.

Premarital counselling not only helps the couple to explore shared values, it also helps them to identify possible red flags that need to be understood and discussed before they go ahead with their plan to marry each other. Such red flags might include having significant differences of opinion in matters such as finances, ineffective emotional support or very deviant or unrealistic expectations about what marriage are all about. By identifying and acknowledging such red flags before marriage during premarital counselling, couples might collaborate with

each other to resolve them and if they find that they can't come on the same plane on such matters, they might as well reconsider their compatibility.

Emotional Readiness for Marriage

One more important component to consider before marriage is to evaluate the emotional readiness. For a person to have a successful marriage, they need to have a particular level of emotional maturity/readiness that not every person may possess, especially in the beginning of engagement. It is understood that the couples get emotionally attracted to each other and after sometime might also think of marrying each other, however, one needs to have emotional readiness to make their marriages work. Emotional readiness entails being aware of oneself, being emotionally resilient and being able to deal with conflict in a healthy and constructive manner.

In the presence of a well trained counsellor during premarital counselling, couples may get a chance to identify and work upon the emotional challenges that may arise post their marriage. The discussion during premarital counselling in this regard might include the questions such as:

- How does each of the partners deal with disagreements and emotional triggers?
- What approach each of the partners employ to resolve conflicts?
- How does each of the partners maintain intimacy and emotional connection?

Once such and similar questions are addressed during premarital counselling, it can help the couples to build effective communication and conflict-res-

olution skills, which are essential for maintaining a healthy marital relationship.

Trained counsellors during premarital counselling might involve the couples in role-playing exercises that mimic challenges they might face post marriage. Such exercises might help them to learn how to communicate more effectively and deal with difficult situations effectively. Discussion about emotional vulnerability is also included in such exercises that might help the partners to feel safe in expressing their feelings without fear of judgment or rejection.

In addition, various underlying emotional issues such as unresolved trauma, attachment insecurities, or mental health concerns can also be uncovered during premarital counselling that might otherwise affect the quality of marriage later on. Counsellor can help the couples to work through such issues so that they don't develop into more significant problems. Issues such as parenting styles and the distribution of roles within the household can also be discussed during such sessions so that expectations are set realistically and so that it makes the couples equipped with the tools to navigate the difficulties in parenting as well as cooperation in household affairs.

Role of premarital counselling in reducing the possibility of divorce

If various issues that might arise in marriage are identified and worked upon in premarital counselling, it can help in reducing the possibility of divorces. Reducing such possibilities is essential as divorce not only drains couples emotionally, it can also have long-lasting consequences on the lives of children who may unnecessarily get involved in the conflict. It has been seen that children of divorced parents have a higher likelihood of experiencing emotional and behavioural problems, perform poorly in school, and have difficulty forming healthy relationships in the future. Divorce also has financial and social consequences, as it often leads to economic hardship and a sense of isolation.

By promoting premarital counselling, couples can reduce the likelihood of divorce and its traumatic impact. This preventive approach not only benefits the couple but also their families and future generations.

The author is a licensed clinical psychologist (alumni of Govt. Medical College Srinagar) and works as a Child, Adolescent and Family therapist at Centre for Mental Health Services (CMHS) at Rambagh Srinagar. He can be reached at 8825067196

The Loss of a Grandparent

Corinne Masur

While it is the normal order of things for a grandparent to die during the life of a child, such an event can be a salient moment: The loss of a grandparent may be your child's first experience with death. And it will bring up all sorts of feelings, questions, worries, and concerns.

But please, don't be afraid to talk about any and all of your child's questions and worries. You don't need any special training or advice to do this. Just try to talk with your child simply and honestly.

If your child and their grandparent were close, it is, of course, an extremely sad and painful experience when the grandparent dies. A grandparent can be a unique source of love, comfort, and support for a child. Usually, grandparents do not discipline as much as parents; they may indulge the child's wants and needs, and as a result, your child may feel particularly sad when she loses her grandparent.

For this reason, as much love, comfort and reassurance as you can provide will be welcomed by your child. But at the same time, your child may have con-

cerns that they are not easily reassured about. This is OK. Death is scary for all of us -- but it is also part of life.

When a grandparent dies, your child can have new fears about death, and it may occur to them that you could die or even that they themselves could die.

This can raise existential issues for the child: What is death? What does it mean to die? What happens after you die?

These questions are difficult, and you may struggle to answer them.

But after the death of a grandparent, you can not only explain about death and what it is, if necessary, but you can also talk about what it means to lead a long and productive life. It can be comforting for the child to know that the grandparent was older and got to have many years of life.

However, the death of a grandparent is complicated because it often involves a double loss. Not only does your child feel her own feelings of sadness and loss, but she must also deal with the grief you and/or your partner feel. It may be a new and troubling experience for your child to see you cry or

be sad for an extended period of time—and you may be less available for a while, both emotionally and in terms of doing all the things you usually do for your child.

Your child may need more from you than you feel you can provide for a little while. For this reason, it is important for you, as the parent, to get all the help you need with your own grief process. You may need some time to yourself, you may need to reach out to friends to talk or you may even seek some psychotherapy to process your loss.

Because your child will have feelings and thoughts that will eventually require your attention.

For example, Kyra was 6 when her grandmother died. She and her grandma had not had a particularly close relationship as her grandmother had lived in another city and also because her grandmother was rather aloof as a person. But still, Kyra had questions. She asked her mother what happens after death. When her mother answered, "Nothing," Kyra became preoccupied by the idea of "nothing." What could it be like to be dead and be "nothing"? Where was her grandmother and what was it

like for her? And what would happen when Kyra herself became "nothing"? Kyra didn't speak to anyone about her worries, but she found herself thinking about being "nothing" every night while trying to fall asleep.

Or, for another example, Jacob was 12 when his grandfather died. Jacob loved his grandfather dearly and had seen him often during his first 11 years of life. He did all he could to help in the last months of his grandfather's life, visiting often, cleaning up his grandfather's yard, and bringing him his favorite treats.

Jacob was alarmed as his grandfather's appearance began to change. His grandfather had married and had children late in life and he was quite old, even for a grandfather. After his 89th birthday, he started to become weaker. He became pale, and he did not feel much like eating. He was thinner each time Jacob saw him. After visits with his grandfather, Jacob would go to his room and take a nap. Clearly, being with his grandfather was something he wanted, but it was also disturbing and depleting for him. Rather than facing his disturbing feelings,

he preferred to sleep.

Jacob's parents were worried about him and asked a friend who was a therapist whether or not Jacob should continue to visit his grandfather as frequently. The friend suggested that Jacob come to see him, and he took the time to sit down with Jacob to talk with him about his grandfather. Knowing that Jacob was interested in science, the friend thought that it might help to explain what was happening inside his grandfather's body. They talked about aging and why certain organs begin to break down. Jacob's grandfather was very old and he had lived a long, productive life. They talked about this and it also talked about how hard it is to watch as someone you love get closer to dying.

Jacob left the friend's house in a lighter mood. Because he was a boy who used his intellect to help him understand and process things, he had benefited from learning more about why his grandfather was losing weight and what the future might look like.

Jacob continued to visit his grandfather often, and while very sad after each visit, he seemed more able to manage his sadness than he had been

previously. He got a lot of satisfaction out of helping his grandfather, bringing him his favorite ice cream, and doing chores around his grandfather's house and yard. Eventually, Jacob also brought his homework over to his grandfather's house and sat in the living room doing his work while his grandfather rested on the couch.

When his grandfather died at age 90, Jacob was very sad. But he wanted to go to the funeral and the graveside service and he wanted to help out at the reception afterwards. He wanted to make his grandfather's last party nice and he worked hard to help his parents to prepare for all the visitors ahead of time.

Continuing Connections

Continuing connections to those we've lost are important. There are so many ways that a child can feel a continued connection to a grandparent. Often they cherish memories of things they did together. Or they replay advice their grandparent gave them. Some love to hear funny or interesting stories about their grandparent, and some will want to have something that belonged to their grandparent. Some will benefit from making an album

of photos they can keep or a video they can look at whenever they feel the desire.

But of course, not all grandparents and grandchildren are close and not all grandparents are kind. Depending on the type of relationship your child had with her grandparent, the amount of grief she feels and her desire for connection will vary.

Some children may want to go to the funeral, some may want to visit the cemetery where their grandparent is buried; some may want to bring flowers or a stone to put at the grave. Some may want to attend yearly religious remembrances, and some may want to do none of these things.

In all cases, even if the relationship with the grandparent was not entirely positive, it is important for the adults in the family to bring the grandparent up in conversation from time to time so that the child knows that when someone has died, they are not forgotten and that we can continue to think about our them and to process what they meant to us throughout our lives.

The article was originally published by Psychology Today

Israel kills top Hezbollah figure in Beirut strike

Agenceis

BEIRUT/JERUSALEM, Sept 20 (Reuters) - Israel killed a top Hezbollah commander and other senior figures in the Lebanese movement in an airstrike on Beirut on Friday, vowing to press on with a new military campaign until it is able to secure the area around the Lebanese border.

The Israeli military and a security source in Lebanon said Ibrahim Aqil had been killed along with other senior members of an elite Hezbollah unit in the airstrike, sharply escalating the year-long conflict between Israel and the Iran-backed group.

In a brief statement carried by Israeli media, Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu said Israel's goals were clear and its actions spoke for themselves.

Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, who has said this week that Israel is launching a new phase of war on the northern border, posted on X: "The sequence of actions in the new phase will continue until our goal is achieved: the safe return of the residents of the north to their homes."

Tens of thousands of people have been evacuated from homes on both sides of the Israel-Lebanon border since Hezbollah began rocketing Israel in what it says is sympathy with the Palestinians in parallel to the war in Gaza.

Israel, which last fought an all-out war against Hezbollah 18 years ago, has said it will use force if necessary to ensure its citizens can return.



The Israeli military described Aqil as the acting commander of the Radwan special forces unit, and said it had killed him along with around 10 other senior commanders as they held a meeting.

Aqil sat on Hezbollah's top military council, sources in Lebanon told Reuters.

The strike inflicted another blow on Hezbollah after two days of attacks on the group in which pagers and

walkie-talkies used by its members exploded, killing 37 people and wounding thousands. Those attacks were widely believed to have been carried out by Israel, which has neither confirmed or denied its involvement. Lebanon's health ministry said Friday's strike killed 12 people and wounded 66 others, nine of whom were in critical condition. Rescue teams were searching for people under the rubble of two buildings, the country's civil defence service said.

Local broadcasters showed groups of people gathered near the site, and reported they were searching for at least 10 people who had been in the vicinity and were still missing, most of them children. Drones were still flying over Beirut's southern suburb hours

after the strike.

"We are not afraid, but we want a solution. We cannot continue with the country like this," said Alain Feghali, a resident of Beirut who spoke to Reuters. "War? I don't know if it started or not, but nothing is reassuring. It is clear that the two sides will not stop."

Hezbollah did not make any official statements on the strike, and did not immediately confirm that Aqil was targeted or killed.

The U.N. Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Jeanine-Hennis Plasschaert, said Friday's strike in a densely populated area of Beirut's southern suburbs was part of "an extremely dangerous cycle of violence with devastating consequences. This must stop now."

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

EC Revises

valley area of the Jammu region on September 18.

According to Election Commission data, more male voters cast their votes in 18 seats while women voters outnumbered men in the rest of the six assembly segments.

A total of 23,27,543 lakh people were eligible to vote in the first phase. Of them, 11,76,441 men, 11,51,042 women and 60 transgenders exercised their franchise.

Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir are taking place for the first time after the abrogation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories - Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh -- in August 2019.

The second phase of polling covering 26 assembly seats will be held on September 25 followed by the third and final phase in the rest of the 40 seats on October 1. The election results will be declared on October 8.

The last assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir was held in 2014, leading to the formation of a PDP-BJP coalition government in January 2015. However, the government collapsed when the BJP pulled out of the alliance in June 2018.

A voter turnout of 61.38 per cent was recorded in the first phase of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections, the election commissioner said in a press note, adding the male turnout was 63.75 per cent, female turnout was 58.96 per cent and third gender turnout stood at 40 per cent.

"The voter turnout is at the polling stations and final votes polled will be available post-counting with counting of postal ballots. The postal ballots include postal ballots given to service voters, absentee voters (85+, PwD, Essential Services etc.) and voters on election duty," the release said.

Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Electoral Officer P K Pole has confirmed that all polling parties have returned safely and a copy of Form 17C (related to turnout at the end of polling) was provided to the candidates through their polling agents.

Kishtwar district recorded the highest 80.20 per cent polling followed by Doda district (71.32 per cent), Ramban (70.57 per cent), Kulgam (63.14 per cent), Anantnag (57.90 per cent), Shopian (57.01 per cent) and Pulwama district (46.99 per cent).

In the 2014 assembly elections, the district-wise poll percentage was -- Pulwama 44 per cent, Shopian 48 per cent, Kulgam 59 per cent, Anantnag 60 per cent, Ramban 70 per cent, Doda 73 per cent and Kishtwar 76 per cent.

The Inderwal assembly segment recorded the highest 82.16 per cent polling this time, followed by Padder-Nagseni (80.67 per cent), Kishtwar (78.24 per cent), Doda West (75.98 per cent), Doda (72.49 per cent), Bhaderwah (67.12 per cent), Banihal (71.28 per cent) and Ramban (69.67 per cent).

In Kashmir, Pahalgam topped the turnout chart with 71.26 per cent voting followed by D H Pora 68.88 per cent, Kulgam 63.44 per cent, Kokernag (62.25 per cent), Dooru (61.62 per cent), Srigufwara-Bijbehara (60.43 per cent) and Devsar 57.76 per cent.

Shopian recorded 58.51 per cent polling, Shangus-Anantnag 56.72 per cent, Zainapora 55.62 per cent, Pulwama 50.78 per cent, Anantnag West (48.73 per cent), Rajpora (48.44 per cent), Anantnag 45.62 per cent, Pampore 45.01 per cent and Tral 43.56 per cent.

Women voters edged past their male counterparts by thin margins in Inderwal, Kishtwar, Bhaderwah, Doda, Doda West and Kokernag (ST) segments, while the rest of the constituencies saw male voters in the lead.

5 Employees Suspended

suspended the employees while Kulbushan Khajuria, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Reasi shall conduct inquiry in the matter and submit a report within ten days.

"Under the Rule 31 (1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Classification Control and Appeal) Rules 1956, these officials are placed under suspension with immediate effect. During suspension, these officials shall remain attached to the office of the Chief Education Officer, Reasi," reads the order.

The suspended employees include Mohammad Ashraf, Gian Chand, Gulam Ahmed, Mohammad Nazir and Mohammad Iqbal. All of them are teachers.

Phase II: 49 Candidates

criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.

It further mentions, "Among the major parties, one (4 per cent) out of 26 candidates analysed from JKPDP, three (18 per cent) out of 17 candidates analysed from BJP, two (33 per cent) out of six candidates analysed from Congress and one (5 per cent) out of 20 candidates analysed from JKNC have declared serious criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.

Eight (31 per cent) out of 26 constituencies are red alert constituencies. Red alert constituencies are those where three or more

contesting candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves.

The report further stated, "This data clearly shows that political parties have no interest in reforming the electoral system and our democracy will continue to suffer at the hands of lawbreakers who become lawmakers."

4 BSF Jawans

issued, DGP has expressed profound sadness over the tragic loss of three Border Security Force (BSF) personnel and injuries to several others in a tragic road accident in Brel Waterhail area of Budgam district.

On behalf of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, DGP J&K has extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, colleagues, and loved ones of the deceased personnel. "We mourn the loss of these dedicated soldiers who tirelessly served the nation. We pray for the speedy recovery of the injured and assured all necessary support and assistance by the J&K Police," he added.

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Zone, alongside the IG BSF Kashmir Frontier, visited the injured BSF soldiers at the SMHS Hospital today.

"They were joined by the Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir, SSP Srinagar, SSP Budgam, DC Budgam, and other senior officers. This visit comes in the wake of a tragic bus accident in Waterhail area of Budgam district, which resulted in the death of four (four) BSF soldiers and injuries to many others," a statement issued here said, adding that "During his visit, the IGP Kashmir expressed deep concern for the well-being of the injured soldiers. He interacted with the medical staff to ensure they were receiving the best possible care. Additionally, the IGP offered words of encouragement to the injured and assured them of full support during their recovery."

BJP-led Govt

come here and will ask for the votes of Muslims, should be questioned as to why we don't have a representative in the central government," Abdullah said during a public rally while campaigning for his party candidate Javed Rana in Mendhar of Jammu and Kashmir.

Criticising the party further, he said "The Sikh community, with a 2 per cent population, has a representative in the government, yet Muslims, with 14 per cent of the population, are not afforded the same right."

"You could not find a Muslim face to represent us. Will we vote for this BJP that is locking our mosques, schools and madrasas, bulldozing Muslim-owned shops in UP and telling our girls to remove their veils before attending school?"

"Will the BJP seek votes for this? What have they done for us?" he asked.

The former J&K chief minister also responded to the BJP labelling the NC as "soft separatists".

"If they want to call us soft separatists, it's fine. But why were 4,000 to 4,500 of our workers, office bearers, MLAs and MLCs killed over the last 35 years? If we were following a Pakistani or militant agenda and weakening the country, who is responsible for the deaths of these 4,500 individuals?" he said.

Addressing accusations that his party runs the agenda of terrorists and Pakistan, Abdullah pointed out the difference between the BJP's claims and the ground reality.

Lambasting the BJP for its "lack" of development efforts, Abdullah said he wanted to ask the home minister about the BJP "boasting" of a double-engine government.

"They claim that when both the prime minister in Delhi and the chief minister in J&K are from their party, there will be large-scale development. But tell me, what has benefited the people of Mendhar? There is nothing new seen on the ground during past decade?" he said.

The NC vice president said despite the party wanting development in Jammu and Kashmir, there has been a double engine government in J&K for 10 years - first with Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, then Mehbooba Mufti and now under the governor and lieutenant governor - but no progress has been visible in Mendhar.

Abdullah also criticised the PDP, saying "like the BJP, the PDP also tells lies".

"In 2014, the PDP used the slogan that defeating the BJP required electing the PDP. People gave them 28 seats and Mufti Sayeed handed those 28 MLAs to the BJP. How can you trust them not to do the same again in 2024?" he said.

What the PDP did in 2014 can be repeated in 2024, he said, "warning" the voters that the danger has not passed.

"They will try to divide us because they fear that a united alliance will deliver even worse results for them. Please don't divide votes and allow them to succeed," he urged the people.

Abdullah said the first phase of elections is complete and claimed that reports suggest that the NC and Congress candidates are registering victories.

Expressing confidence in the restoration of special status and statehood of J&K, he said, "There has been significant change over the

past 10 years. We were a state. We had our own flag and constitution.

"Ladakh has been taken from us. Today, we have nothing. But anything can change. What happened on August 5, 2019 is not the will of God but it was a conspiracy by Delhi. One day, we will get it back," he said.

He also responded to remarks by BJP leader Devender Rana, a former NC member, saying, "This is someone who did not speak the truth for 25 years while in the National Conference. What do you expect from him now? He deceived the people of Jammu for 25 years. He deceived me too. Don't expect him to speak the truth now."

Responding to Rana's claim that the NC vice president sought a government bargain with the home minister in 2014, Abdullah retorted, "Has this suddenly come to his mind now that he has joined BJP? The man who deceived me for 25 years - how can I expect the truth from him? He is not a trustworthy person, and I won't waste my time on him."

Apni Party Leader

circumstances when everything has been snatched from the people of J&K. I consulted my party leadership and workers on the matter and it was decided to pave a way for the former CM so that he will raise people's issues effectively," Muntazir Mohi-ud-Din told reporters.

He said with the filing of nomination papers by the former CM, the Budgam Assembly segment became a high-profile constituency. "We are hoping the issues pertaining to Budgam people lingering for years will be resolved if Omar Abdullah is elected to power from there," he said.

He further said the decision was taken with a motive to stop the division of votes in the constituency.

Notably, Budgam Assembly segment will go for polls under phase-2 on September 25.

BJP Goes All

only won two Hindu-dominated constituencies -- Nowshera and Kalakote.

Several top BJP leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, will address mega rallies to boost the party's prospects in the region.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also expected to join canvassing on the last day of the campaigning in the twin border districts.

Jammu and Kashmir BJP media centre in-charge Arun Gupta said the party plans to hold six mega rallies in the next two days, led by Shah and Singh, along with other top leaders.

"We are going all out to win voters in Rajouri and Poonch. Our star campaigners, Amit Shah Ji and Rajnath Singh Ji, will be holding eight rallies on Saturday and Sunday," Gupta said.

Shah will fly to Rajouri early on Saturday and address rallies in Mendhar, Surankote (Poonch district), Rajouri and Thanamandi (Rajouri district), along with one in Akhnora (Jammu district). He is also expected to hold a rally in Nowshera constituency to support the party's state president Ravinder Raina on Sunday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will address three rallies on Sunday in Poonch, Surankote and Jammu.

Union Health Minister and BJP president J P Nadda will be attending a programme of intellectuals in Jammu on Sunday and is likely to address a rally in Rajouri.

The BJP is working overtime to engage voters in Pir Panchal, heavily relying on what the party terms as the "Modi magic".

Over the past three days, the region has witnessed brisk campaigning and rallies by Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari in Budhal (Rajouri), Uttararkhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami in Rajouri and Union ministers G Kishen Reddy and Dr Jitendra Singh, who have covered most of the border districts.

This time, the BJP is focused on maximising its seats from the twin border districts, especially after granting Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to four new communities, including Paharis, thus expanding Jammu and Kashmir's ST list, which already includes the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities.

The region has significantly benefited from the reservation granted in February this year.

"The new inclusions in the ST list are the Pahari, Paddari, Gaddi Brahmin and Koli communities. Although Paharis include Muslims and Sikhs, the largest chunk is Hindus, which will likely benefit the BJP," said political expert Vikas Kumar.

Out of the eight seats, five are reserved for STs in the Pir Panchal region. The BJP has fielded five Gujjar candidates in Thanamandi, Budhal, Poonch, Surankote and Mendhar assembly segments where Gujjars hold a significant voting bloc, Kumar added.

"The BJP views the Rajouri-Poonch belt as a key area for increasing its seat tally beyond the two seats it won in the 2014 elections. This is why the party is pulling out all the stops, deploying its top star campaigners to attract voters," Kumar said.

The BJP's candidates include two-time MLA

and former minister Zulfkar Choudhary from the Budhal seat, Iqbal Malik from the newly carved out Thanamandi, Choudhary Abdul Gani from Poonch, former MLC Murtaza Khan from Mendhar and former two Minister Syed Mustaq Bukhari from Surankote.

J&K BJP chief and former MLA Ravinder Raina is contesting from Nowshera, party general secretary Vibodh Kumar from Rajouri and Randhir Singh from Kalakote.

"We are confident of a strong response from voters. There's a wave in our favour and our star campaigners will further boost our prospects. We will win most of the seats in this belt," said Ravinder Raina.

Home Minister Shah, who has been credited with leading the BJP's campaign in J&K this time too, visited the region on September 6 and 7 to release the party's manifesto and hold a Pracharak rally in Jammu. He also addressed rallies in Paddar and Kishtwar during the first phase of the elections on September 16.

Prime Minister Modi has also campaigned in the first and second phases of the elections, holding rallies in Doda on September 14 and in Srinagar and Katra on September 19.

The BJP leaders have emphasised the threat posed by the restoration of Article 370 by the NC and PDP and supported by Congress, which they claim would revoke the reservations for Gujjars, Bakerwals, Paharis and Scheduled Castes.

However, the Congress is seeking to revive its electoral fortunes in the upcoming assembly polls. Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi is scheduled to address a mega rally in Surankote on September 23.

The Congress and its alliance partners have maintained a relatively low profile in the twin districts.

NC vice president and former chief minister Omar Abdullah addressed rallies in Mendhar and Rajouri on Friday, while PDP chief and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti held rallies in Rajouri and Poonch on Thursday. The PDP won three seats in the region in the 2014 elections.

J&K Wins Top Award

Renewable Energy Investment Meet and Expo (RE-INVEST) organized at Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, Gujjarat.

Commissioner Secretary Science & Technology Department J&K, Saurabh Bhagat, Chief Executive Officer, Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA), Dr. P. R. Dhar along with other officers from JAKEDA attended the expo on behalf of J&K, which had been selected as one of the stakeholders to be recognized during the RE-INVEST.

I Will Be King

traditional political heavyweights like the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party. Here are some selected excerpts from his interview to Kashmir Observer TV.

"The BJP does not exist in Kashmir. It is the PDP and the NC who are orchestrating propaganda against me to cover up their own failures. Does that mean I should stay at home and stop doing politics?" Rashid said in response to a question about being labeled a proxy for the BJP in Kashmir.

"I have exposed their politics. This is the first time that issue-based politics focused on Kashmir is being done. There is accountability, and the concerns of ordinary people are being brought to the forefront. I was in jail for over five years while they were enjoying themselves," he added.

Er Rashid expressed confidence in his electoral victory, and said, "We will win 40 out of the 40 seats we are contesting. Jammu & Kashmir does not belong to the Muftis and Abdullahs by inheritance, they should know that Jammu & Kashmir is not something they got in inheritance."

According to Rashid, there is a political vacuum in Kashmir that only he is filling. "No one except Er Rashid is talking about the real issues of the people, he said."

He also criticized the lack of concrete action taken by NC and PDP post the abrogation of Article 370. "It's been more than five years since the abrogation of Article 370. Tell me one practical step that NC or PDP initiated to bring it back,"

Rashid that those associated with the AIP are ideologically driven.

"People associated with my party are ideologically driven by me. Many leaders from other parties are after me for tickets, but I stand firm on my principles."

"Basharat Bukhari has changed parties ten times, and Abdul Rahim Rather's son joined the People's Conference out of fear of Modi," he added.

Reiterating that his primary focus is on resolving the Kashmir issue, he said, "My priority will be to take steps for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. I need political power to talk about political issues."

'Naya Kashmir' Is A Hoax
Rashid firmly denounced the BJP's 'Naya Kashmir' slogan, calling it a "hoax," and

stated that the abrogation of Article 370 was a "mistake."

Responding to a question about potential coalitions. "The question of me joining a BJP-led coalition is irrelevant. I am a victim of the BJP. I was booked by the BJP. I am Er Rashid, and I don't need anyone's certificate"

My focus on accountability, the Kashmir issue and addressing the political vacuum, Rashid said.

AIP Faces Backlash

video remains unverified, critics of AIP accuse the party of attempting to divide the people of Kashmir.

According to locals, the incident happened when Er Rashid's son, Abrar Rashid, was leading a campaign march for Nazir Ahmad Khan, an independent candidate contesting from Beerwah and supported by the AIP.

In the viral clip, AIP supporters are seen raising derogatory slogans against a specific community in Kashmir, sparking widespread outrage. The community in question has expressed deep resentment over the incident, which they view as a direct affront to their identity.

Member of Parliament Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi also took to X formerly Twitter to condemn the incident and accused AIP of dividing people.

"Dear members of Awami Ittehad Party, I was told that your party is out there to divide the people of Kashmir. I didn't want to put a tag on you. But this level of division on a sectarian basis is the lowest you could fall to. You should be ashamed of this," Ruhullah tweeted.

Amid growing tensions, AIP supreme and Baramulla MP Er Rashid responded to the accusations, stating that any supporters who raised such slogans would face consequences.

"I urge the Police to look into the matter, if AIP supporters have raised such slogans then action must be initiated against them. However, if the video were found to be doctored, those responsible for tampering with the footage should also be held accountable," he said.

Rashid's statement has done little to quell the outrage.

Meanwhile, AIP supporters have pointed fingers at the National Conference (NC), alleging that the video is part of a smear campaign orchestrated by the party to undermine their electoral prospects. According to them, NC has a history of using such tactics to malign political opponents during election periods.

The incident has cast a shadow over the Beerwah constituency's electoral race, as the constituency holds significant votes from the community whose sentiments have been hurt.

RG To Meet

Srinagar to better understand the issues confronting these communities.

"We are organising an exclusive meeting of professionals from Jammu and Kashmir with LOP Rahul Gandhi on September 25 in Jammu," Sapru.

He emphasised that the event is a pivotal opportunity for professionals to engage in an open dialogue about significant challenges in the region, offering a platform for their concerns to be raised at the national level.

"For the first time, a political platform like AIPC is offering professionals the chance to directly share their concerns, aspirations, and ideas," Sapru added.

Gandhi's involvement underscores the growing recognition of the professional community's importance in shaping Jammu and Kashmir's future, Sapru said.

He said professionals will have the opportunity to discuss issues related to economic development, employment opportunities, industry-specific challenges, and innovation, while collaborating on potential solutions.

"We have invited professionals to join this critical conversation and contribute to shaping the future of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Following the Jammu event, a similar gathering will be organized in Kashmir, Sapru said adding the date is being finalised.

Gandhi is also scheduled to campaign for Congress candidates in Srinagar and Jammu, addressing public rallies in the twin cities over the next few days.

On September 23, Gandhi will address a public rally in support of J-K Congress unit president and former minister Tariq Hamid Karra in Shalteng constituency in Srinagar, and another in the Surankote constituency in Poonch district during the second phase of the Jammu and Kashmir elections, a party leader said.

He is also expected to address a public rally in Jammu on September 25.

Earlier this month, Gandhi kick-started the Congress party's campaign for the Jammu and Kashmir assembly polls with two public rallies on September 4 in Ramban district's Gool area and Anantnag district's Dooru area.

These rallies were held in support of former J-K Congress chief Vikar Rasool Wani and AICC General Secretary and former Minister G A Mir.

The assembly elections in the union territory are being held after a gap of 10 years.

Kashmir Witnessing Rise In Prostate Cancers, Says Leading Oncologist

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi on Friday showcased advancements in plastic surgery and oncology to bring "cutting-edge medical treatments" to the Kashmir region.

Addressing a press conference here, prominent Surgical Oncologist Dr Sameer Kaul, who has conducted clinical visits to Kashmir over the years, said, "There is a concerning rise in gastrointestinal cancers, including esophageal and stomach cancers, as well as an increase in lung cancer."

Over the past few decades, there has been a spike in prostate cancers among men in Kashmir, he added.

Dr Kaul said significant progress has been made in cancer treatment through innovations such as robotic surgery, targeted therapies and immunotherapy, which have enhanced patient outcomes.

Joining Dr Kaul was Dr Shahin Nooreyzeedan, Senior Consultant in Cosmetic, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Apollo Hospital. He discussed

the increasing demand for reconstructive and aesthetic procedures and reaffirmed the hospital's commitment to high ethical standards, safety and the latest techniques in plastic surgery.

The hospital's spokesperson said the conference featured both experts discussing how integrating advanced surgical techniques with innovative oncology practices is significantly improving patient care.

Dr Nooreyzeedan said, "We strive not only to achieve the most aesthetically pleasing results but also to enhance our patients' overall well-being. By employing the latest technologies and surgical techniques, we ensure our patients receive the highest standard of care with minimal recovery time."

Dr Sameer Kaul added, "Cancer is no longer a death sentence. While it still claims lives, the numbers are much lower now. Prevention, screening, early diagnosis, molecular and personalized treatments, robotic surgery, precise radiation, and immunotherapy have fundamentally changed the landscape of cancer care."—(KNO)

FCIK Pays Tributes To Mohammad Shafi Pandit

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) has expressed deepest condolences on the passing of Mohammad Shafi-Pandit, a distinguished administrator, social activist, and reformer who breathed his last on Thursday. A large number of FCIK members including President ShahidKamil, Sha-keel Qalander, Mohammad Ashraf Mir and others participated in the funeral prayers of the deceased.

FCIK has termed the departure of Mohammad Shafi-Pandit as a great loss to the society in general and industrial fraternity in particular.

While paying tributes to the deceased, the members of FCIK termed his contributions to the industrial development and governance of J&K region as remarkable and impactful.

They said that Mohammad Shafi-Pandit played a pivotal role in fostering industrial growth in J&K, advocating for policies that encouraged investment and entrepreneur-

ship besides that his vision helped create an environment conducive to the establishment of industries, which not only boosted the local economy but also provided employment opportunities for countless individuals. Besides this his efforts in facilitating infrastructure development and supporting small and medium enterprises have left a lasting legacy that will benefit future generations.

Apart from his bureaucratic achievements, his dedication to public service, mentorship, and social causes has influenced countless lives. His commitment to inspiring youth to pursue careers in civil services reflects his belief in the power of education and public service. His legacy as the head of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JK-PSC) and his role in initiating welfare schemes for poor and orphans are testaments to his visionary leadership.

While extending heartfelt sympathies to the family, friends, and admirers of the deceased, FCIK has prayed for his eternal peace.

LANGATE SEGMENT

Er. Rashid's Brother Faces Tough Challenge From PC

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) president Er. Rashid surprised everyone in the recent Lok Sabha polls by winning the prestigious Baramulla Lok Sabha seat. Three months down the line, AIP is facing a tough challenge on Rashid's home turf due to fast changing electoral dynamics here.

Riding on a sympathy wave, Rashid, who was then lodged in a Tihar jail, won the 2024 Lok Sabha polls from Baramulla parliamentary segment. In his native segment of Langate, Rashid took a massive lead over his nearest political rival, Peoples Conference.

With AIP being accused of promoting dynasticism by fielding Rashid's brother, winning Langate wouldn't be an easy task for it.

Rashid's brother, Khurshid Ahmed Sheikh is locked in a contest with Irfan Panditpuri of Peoples Conference, who won 2020 district development council (DDC) polls by defeat-

ing AIP. The last-minute entry of Jamaat-e-Islamia's Kalimullah and independent candidate, Junaid Mir has added spice to the direct contest between Rashid's brother and Irfan Panditpuri.

Both Kalimullah and Junaid Mir are also gaining traction in the segment which has more than 1.20 lakh votes.

The INDIA bloc has fielded Irshad Ahmad Ganie in the segment after the seat was allotted to Congress.

While Congress has less presence in Langate, National Conference is strong in few pockets of the constituency.

According to political observers, National Conference would play a crucial role in deciding outcome of the seat.

"It would be interesting to watch whether NC cadres would vote for the INDIA bloc candidate or shift their votes to PC or AIP," they said, adding that Langate wouldn't be a cakewalk for anyone given voting patterns in the past assembly elections—(KNO)

Encounter Breaks Out In Reasi

Observer News Service

JAMMU: An encounter broke out between terrorists and security forces in Reasi area on Friday evening.

A senior police officer said that a team of police and security forces launched a Cordon and Search Operation in Reasi on a specific input.

The official further added

that as the joint team approached towards the suspected area, the hiding terrorists fired upon them, leading to an encounter.

Meanwhile, District Police Reasi in a post on X wrote, "On the receipt of specific intel, an operation was launched around 1300 hrs today. Contact has been established at the Shikari area of PS Chassana, Reasi."

J&K Was Dubbed As 'Disputed' Because Of NC: Reddy



Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Union minister G. Kishan Reddy blamed the National Conference on Friday for the imposition of Article 370 of the Constitution in Jammu and Kashmir earlier and alleged that the region was labelled as "disputed" because of the regional party.

He also accused the NC of playing a key role in the widespread corruption and rise of cross-border terrorism that India is combatting currently. "Because of the NC, Jammu and Kashmir was termed disputed. It was the NC that brought Article 370 into existence and enforced it here," Reddy told reporters while campaigning for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidates fielded from the Reasi district in the ongoing Assembly polls

in the Union Territory.

Describing Article 370 as the root cause of various issues in Jammu and Kashmir, the Union minister said, "Article 370 deprived people of their rights and perpetuated a dynastic rule in the region."

On August 5, 2019, the BJP-led Centre abrogated the provisions of Article 370, which had bestowed special rights on Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcated the erstwhile state into Union territories.

Taking a dig at the NC, Reddy said, "Had a party like the National Conference not been in power, Jammu and Kashmir would have progressed at par with other states in India."

He also accused the NC of promoting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Reddy claimed that since the abrogation of Article 370, peace

has returned to Jammu and Kashmir, with significant development initiatives underway.

He appealed to people to vote for the BJP in the ongoing polls to continue the journey towards peace, progress and prosperity in the region.

Reddy said prior to the abrogation of Article 370, terror activities were rampant in the region. "But today, most of those activities have been eradicated," he added.

Stressing the importance of the first Assembly polls in the Union Territory after the abrogation of Article 370, he said, "This is a critical election. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have a significant responsibility. I believe they will make the right decision after considering all aspects. No one in Jammu and Kashmir wants Article 370 to return."

Dengue Cases Rise In J&K; 934 Cases Confirmed

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir is witnessing an increase in dengue cases this year, with 934 cases confirmed so far, officials said. They added that the union territory recorded a steady rise in cases over the past week, with daily counts ranging from 19 to 83.

State Malariologist Dr D J Raina said while the number of cases is increasing, the situation remains under control. He said that out of the 934 cases, 592 are from Jammu, followed by 103 from Samba, 87 from Kathua, 44 from Udhampur, 21 from Reasi, 20 from Rajouri, 23 from Poonch, 20 from Doda, six from Ramban, one from Kishtwar, nine from Kashmir, and eight from other states.

A total of 10,644 tests have been conducted this year, with 934 returning positive results, he said. Comparatively, last year saw 1,300 positive cases out of 10,935 tests conducted. Of the 934 confirmed cases this year, 167 required hospitalization, with 99 patients discharged and 62 still undergoing treatment.

Dr Raina called for preventive measures, given the lack of a dengue vaccine. "Eliminating mosquito breeding



sites, such as stagnant water, and avoiding mosquito bites are crucial steps to prevent the spread of dengue," he said. Assuring the public that effective measures are being implemented to minimise the spread of the disease, he urged people to remain vigilant without panicking.

Medical professionals have advised the public to use mosquito repellents and wear long-sleeved shirts to protect themselves from mosquito bites, as these mosquitoes primarily breed in stagnant water, especially during the monsoon season. They also recommended using mosquito nets during daytime sleep and spraying them with insect repellents.

Common symptoms of dengue include fever, headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle, joint or bone pain, rash, nausea and vomiting. The advisory further warns that anyone experiencing severe symptoms such as stomach pain, vomiting, bleeding, or extreme fatigue should seek immediate medical attention.

Last year, Jammu & Kashmir reported around 6,403 dengue cases, while 2022 saw a record high of 8,269 cases with 18 fatalities. The authorities have urged the public to take proactive steps to curb the spread of this vector-borne disease and protect themselves and their communities from the ongoing dengue threat—(KNO)

Ind. Candidates Will Rejoin Apni Party After Winning Elections: Ashraf Mir

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The former legislator and Apni Party's candidate for Lal Chowk seat, Muhammad Ashraf Mir Friday said the independent candidates, who left the party for the mandate earlier, will be joining them back once the results are declared. He also stated that the constituency has been developed for tourists only while the major portion of it has been craving for the development.

Mir, who defeated the former chief minister of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir, Omar Abdullah in 2014 assembly elections from previous Sonwar AC, said there are people who left the Apni Party after they didn't get the mandate. "Most of them are now fighting as independent candidates, but you can consider them with us as they will be joining the party once they get the mandate from the people," Mir said.

The former legislator and the cabinet minister in the PDP-BJP coalition government said that in every political party, the people remain aspirants about the mandate. "If the individuals are dedicated and committed then they won't leave after not getting a mandate but if they are in the

party only for the power then they will switch to other parties," he said, adding that it happens in every political party but "I think those who left in anger have gone only for the mandate and nothing else."

He also reacted to the query about their rejoining, Mir said, "most of them are fighting as independent candidates and they will return once they win the elections."

Asked about the role of AP in forming the next government, the former MLA said that it is up to the people to give mandate to the representatives and nothing can be said as of now. "Once the results are out, the things will be cleared to all. We are expecting that the people will throw a good mandate in our favour so that the party will form the government with majority," he added.

Asked whether the party will join hands with PDP to form the next dispensation, Mir said, "The party has not entered into pre-poll alliance with anyone, nor has it decided about the future alliance, but if there will be a fractured mandate, we will join hands with the like-minded parties to form the next government."

Moreover, he said that everything is possible in politics and democracy while the doors of political parties remain open as well as closed at times. "But this time, the election is only for the people, who will elect their representatives," he added.

Asked about the door-to-door campaigning during this election, Muhammad Ashraf Mir said the Apni Party is the only party, who connected with the people after the abrogation of the Article 370 in August 2019. "However, as the elections are held, the party has decided to meet the people one by one to get feedback from them about the political failures and other related things. It has helped us to get connected with the people without any interference and also know about their aspirations and demands," he said, adding that the process was started by party Chief Syed Altaf Bukhari first and later was followed by the other candidates as well.

"The people have been deceived as the political representatives have failed to come up to their expectations and thus we are getting connected with them to see their mood," Mir said.—(KNO)

J&K Secures 3rd Rank In Food Safety Index

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has attained third rank among the States/UTs in Food Safety Index 2023-24, being conferred by FSSAI to the states / UTs every year.

The award was presented by Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, J P Nadda, in presence of Pralhad Joshi, Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Minister for New and Renewable Energy at Bharat Mandapam and CEO FSSAI, G. Kamala Vardhana Rao on the eve of second edition of Global Food Regulators Summit 2024 hosted by FSSAI alongside the World Food India, today in New Delhi.

The Food Safety Index is a dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model that

provides an objective framework for evaluating food safety across all States/UTs. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) began the State Food Safety Index evaluation process for 2023-2024 by undertaking correspondence with Food Safety Commissioners of all UTs/States to furnish the data for statistical evaluation.

The UT of J&K has been awarded 3rd position for performance in implementation of FSS Act, 2006 in the financial year 2023-24.

Commissioner FDA, J&K, has attributed the award to the selfless and committed efforts put in by the functionaries of the department who are empowered to perform statutory duties under FSS Act, 2006 Rules and Regulations 2011, in the UT.

DGP Expresses Sorrow Over Road Accident Of BSF Personnel

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Director General of Police, J&K, Shri R.R. Swain has expressed deep sorrow over the tragic road accident of a vehicle in which three BSF personnel lost their lives while several were injured.

DGP has expressed profound sadness over the tragic loss of three Border Security Force (BSF) personnel and injuries to several others in a tragic road accident in Brel Waterhail area of Budgam district.

On behalf of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, DGP J&K has

extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, colleagues, and loved ones of the deceased personnel.

We mourn the loss of these dedicated soldiers who tirelessly served the nation. We pray for the speedy recovery of the injured and assured all necessary support and assistance by the J&K Police, he added.

Pertinent to mention that today a bus carrying 36 BSF troopers skidded off the road and fell into a gorge, claiming precious lives and leaving many injured in Budgam district.

Budgam's Chadoora To Witness Electoral Battle Between NC, PDP

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Chadoora Assembly Constituency in Central Kashmir's Budgam district is set to witness a direct contest between National Conference's (NC) Ali Mohammad Dar and Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP) Mohammad Yaseen Bhat.

Apart from Dar and Bhat, four other candidates are in the fray including Syed Fahed Andrabi of Apni Party, Mohammad Abbas Kant of National Loktantrik Party, Faisal Fayaz and Nilofar Sajad Gandru—both independents.

Aafiq Ali of Rashtriya Samaj Dal (R) has withdrawn her nomination for the seat. Political analysts believe that the seat has a neck to neck contest between NC's Ali Mohammad Dar and PDP's Mohammad Yaseen Bhat.

They said that NC has one benefit that they haven't changed their candidate since 1996 as Ali Mohammad Dar has won the seat in 1996, however, he faced three consecutive defeats at the hands of PDP's Javid Mustafa Mir in 2002, 2008 and 2014 but his vote share has increased with each passing year.

The political pundits believe that PDP has a different candidate this time and he is expected to give tough competition to Ali Mohammad Dar as PDP has a good vote share in the constituency.

They further added that newly added areas to the constituency along with new voters of the constituency are expected to play a vital role and can decide the fate of the constituency.

In 2014, Peoples Democratic Party candidate Javid Mustafa Mir won from this seat by securing 25770 votes while National Conference candidate Ali Mohammad Dar stood second and lost by a margin of 1693 votes.

In 2008, Peoples Democratic Party candidate Javid Mustafa Mir won from this seat by securing 16278 votes while National Conference candidate Ali Mohammad Dar stood second and lost by a margin of 2940 votes.

In 2002, Peoples Democratic Party candidate Javid Mustafa Mir won from this seat by securing 15923 votes while National Conference candidate Ali Mohammad Dar stood second and lost by a margin of 8047 votes.—(KNO)

CONSTITUENCY PROFILE SURANKOTE- 88 AC

Cong-NC Alliance Candidate Shahnawaz Choudhary The Main Contender

Agencies

JAMMU: Since the Pahari people have been given the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status by the BJP led-NDA government at the centre, which paved way for them to contest on ST reserved seats, Surankote Assembly constituency is brewing up for a major fight between Congress party's Gujjar candidate and BJP's Pahari candidate.

All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary and co-incharge of Odisha Shahnawaz Choudhary is the joint candidate of Congress and National Conference (NC) whereas one of the biggest advocates of ST status for Pahari people Mushtaq Bukhari is the BJP's candidate.

There are 113342 total electorates including 58405 male and 54937 female electorates eligible to vote during the second phase of Assembly elections on September 25 on Surankote seat.

A total of eight candidates are in the fray which include Congress party's Shahnawaz Choudhary, who is also a District Development Councillor (DDC) from Surankote, BJP's Mushtaq Bukhari, Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP) Javid Iqbal, former MLA from Surankote Choudhary Muhammad Akram,

who is contesting as independent and four others.

The contest is mainly between Congress-NC alliance candidates and BJP whereas PDP and Choudhary Akram also have strong base in the area. Around 55 to 60 percent population belongs to Pahari community whereas 35 percent population is of Gujjar community. A marginal Kashmiri speaking population is also part of this constituency.

Even though the BJP government has given ST status to Pahari people, diverting the Muslim Pahari vote towards BJP will be the biggest task for Bukhari and the acceptance of BJP in Surankote is still hard, which may go against him.

On the other hand, Shahnawaz Choudhary has emerged as a strong candidate after he defeated Choudhary Akram during DDC elections despite contesting as an independent candidate and when Akram was the candidate of Congress party. The Congress-NC alliance candidate is also getting help from Member Parliament (MP) Mian Altaf Ahmed, who belongs to NC and is a spiritual leader of Gujjar community, and public response to Shahnawaz Choudhary is also increasing on a daily basis.

1st Test: India Extend Lead To 308 After Bowling Out Bangladesh For 149

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Jasprit Bumrah's artistry seemed incomprehensible for an out of sorts Bangladesh batting line-up as India took complete control of the opening Test with an overall lead of 308 runs at end of second day's play.

Bumrah (4/50) once again worked his magic in company of Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep (2/19) and Ravindra Jadeja as Bangladesh were all-out for a paltry 149 in their first innings in reply to India's 376.

With a lead of 227 runs, India ended second at 81 for 3 with Shubman Gill (33 batting) and Rishabh Pant (12 batting) at the crease.

The rest of the six Bangladesh wickets were equally shared by rookie Akash Deep (2/19), seasoned Ravindra Jadeja (2/19) and Mohammed Siraj (2/30).

However, the beginning of India's second innings was not really bright as they lost skipper Rohit Sharma (5) and Yashasvi



Jaiswal (10) with 28 on board.

But the 28 for two was not really alarming considering the substantial first innings lead India had amassed by then.

However, they needed immediate consolidation to further

tighten the grip.

Gill provided that in the company of Virat Kohli (17, 37 balls) for the third wicket while adding 39 runs.

However, on a day when a total of 17 wickets fell, Bum-

rah, as usual, was the lead performer.

Centurion Ravichandran Ashwin endured a rare wicketless innings but others stepped in for him, and Bangladesh too contributed with their timo-

rous approach.

It was reflected in the dismissals of Litton Das (22, 42 balls) and the vastly experienced Shakib Al-Hasan (32, 64 balls).

Before they collapsed in a heap, Bangladesh had a few moments of delight as they managed to price out the last four Indian wickets, including Ashwin (113) and Jadeja (86), to put a quick end to the hosts' first dig.

Hasan Mahmud added a fifth wicket to his kitty in the form of Bumrah to bring curtains to the Indian innings. It was Mahmud's second successive fiver after bagging one against Pakistan at Rawalpindi earlier this month.

Brief Scores:

India: 376 and 81/3 in 23 overs (Shubman Gill batting 33, Rishabh Pant batting 12) vs Bangladesh 149 in 47.1 overs (Shakib Al Hasan 32; Jasprit Bumrah 4/50, Akash Deep 2/19, Ravindra Jadeja 2/19, Mohammed Siraj 2/30).

Pakistan Cricket Board Revises Schedule For England Test Series

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Multan and Rawalpindi will be the venues for three-Test series between Pakistan and England, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced on Friday.

While Multan will host the first two Tests of the series with the opening game scheduled from October 7-11, followed by second one from October 15-19, the final encounter will be held in Rawalpindi from October 24-28.

The PCB's international cricket department confirmed that Karachi would



not be able to host a Test due to construction work at the Stadium.

The PCB said the test in Karachi has been shifted to Multan as the Stadium is undergoing major facelift for next year's ICC Champi-

ons Trophy 2025. The England men's cricket team will arrive in Multan on October 2.

Revised schedule: Oct 7-11: 1st Test, Multan Oct 15-19: 2nd Test, Multan Oct 24-28: 3rd Test, Rawalpindi.

Sri Lanka Seizes Control Of Galle Test Against New Zealand



Agencies

GALLE: After a tense battle to open the first test between Sri Lanka and New Zealand, the hosts are feeling in control as they finished day three at 237-4 to lead by 202 runs with six wickets in hand.

Half-centuries from former captains Dimuth Karunaratne (83) and Dinesh Chandimal (61) steadied the Sri Lankan innings after Pathum Nissanka fell cheaply in the third over. The two seasoned players navigated challenging moments on a pitch that is increasingly difficult to bat on, with the ball spinning and bouncing as it typically does in Galle.

The second-wicket partnership between Chandimal and Karunaratne was worth 147 runs and could prove crucial to the match. While Sri Lanka's batters handled spin well, they struggled against pace. They had already succumbed to a five-wicket haul from right-arm quick William O'Rourke in the first innings, and he was again in the thick of it, finishing with three wickets in the second innings.

Ajaz Patel made the breakthrough by cleaning up Karunaratne. O'Rourke then had Chandimal caught at leg slip in the next over and followed it up by dismiss-

ing first innings centurion Kamindu Mendis, who, like Nissanka, was caught at slip, both batters troubled by the extra bounce generated by O'Rourke.

Captain Dhananjaya de Silva and Angelo Mathews were involved in an unfinished 59-run stand for the fifth wicket, surviving some tense moments. New Zealand bowled to attacking fields but shifted to a more defensive approach once the lead exceeded 150, keen to protect boundaries.

Play began 15 minutes early on Friday to make up for lost time due to rain, with Daryl Mitchell posting a half-century alongside Tom Latham and Kane Williamson. Mitchell batted well for his 57, but his run-out shifted momentum away from New Zealand.

Glen Phillips played aggressively, smashing 49 off 48 balls with two fours and five sixes, missing out on a well-deserved half-century as Ramesh Mendis cleaned up last man O'Rourke.

Prabath Jayasuriya was the standout bowler, finishing with four wickets, while Ramesh Mendis and Dhananjaya de Silva shared five wickets between them.

Saturday will be a rest day as Sri Lanka prepares for the Presidential polls. The test match will resume on Sunday. (AP)

Head Smashes 154* As Australia Beat England In 1st ODI

Agencies

NOTTINGHAM: Travis Head was at his belligerent best in smashing a career-best 154 not out to underpin Australia's chase of 316 to win the first one-day international against England on Thursday and gain a 13th straight victory in the 50-over format.

It was the left-handed opener's sixth ODI century — and his first since a similarly brutal knock of 137 in Australia's victory over India in the World Cup final 10 months ago.

The tourists needed a big innings from someone after Ben Duckett hit 95



in England's 315 all out at Trent Bridge, a ground known for being a batter's paradise with short boundaries.

England would have hoped for more after being 211-2 after 32 overs, only

for Australia's spinners to slow down the run rate and take nine wickets in total, many at crucial times. England's final seven wickets fell for 83 runs, with Head even getting involved with two of the wickets.

Guardiola Says Players Have The Power After Talk Of Strike Action Over Fixture Schedule

Agencies

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola has told elite soccer players that they are the only ones who can force change in the face of a growing dispute over the number of games they are being asked to play.

Manchester City midfielder Rodri says players are close to going on strike because of an increasingly congested fixture schedule that will be added to with next year's expanded Club World Cup in the United States.

Guardiola said Friday that the game's stars might have to "take a voice and do something" if they want to make a stand.

"If something is going to change, always (it) must come from the players," the City manager said. "That business (soccer) can be without managers, can be without sporting directors, can be without media, can be without owners, but without the players (it) cannot be played."

"So the only (ones) that have the power to do it is them."

for the first time next year, up from seven. It is slated for the offseason for many major leagues in June-July.

World players' union FIFPRO has raised concerns about the increasing physical and mental demands on players, but the competition has been welcomed by the European Club Association, which represents the continent's top clubs, including City.

Unions in England and France filed a claim against FIFA at the Brussels Court of Commerce in June and challenged FIFA's "decisions to unilaterally set the international match calendar."

The Champions League has also been expanded this season with two more games in the new-look group stage.

Spain international Rodri played in 10 different competitions in 2022-23 when the campaign was further congested by a mid-season World Cup. He followed by last year by playing 64 times for club and country, including a run to the final of the European Championship, which Spain won.

This season will end with the Club World Cup, which could include seven more games if



City reaches the final. Rodri, who has been nominated for the Ballon d'Or

award, said strike action may have to happen. "If it keeps this way, it will

be a moment when we have no other option, I really think," he said. "It's something that wor-

ries us because we are the guys who suffer." Bayern Munich coach Vin-

Short TAKES

Ricky Ponting Takes Reins At PBKS

Ricky Ponting, the former Australian cricket captain, is the new head coach of Punjab Kings in the Indian Premier League. Ponting's appointment comes after his departure from the Delhi Capitals, where he cited availability issues as a critical factor. Ponting will commence his new role starting IPL 2025.

Ponting becomes PBKS's third head coach in four seasons. The team finished ninth in the 2024 IPL season and has not reached the playoffs since being runners-up in 2014.

Vikram Rathour Joins Rajasthan Royals As Batting Coach

Former India coach Vikram Rathour has been named the batting coach for the Rajasthan Royals, reuniting with Rahul Dravid in the IPL. The franchise announced the appointment on Friday. Rathour and Dravid have a history of successful collaborations, having led the Indian team to significant achievements, including an ODI World Cup final appearance and a T20 World Cup win.

This marks Rathour's return to the IPL, where he previously served as a coach for the Punjab Kings.

India Edges Out Bangladesh With Late Goal In SAFF U17 C'ship

Defending champions India marked a triumphant start to their SAFF U17 Championship campaign by edging out Bangladesh with a solitary goal in their Group A clash at the Changlimithang Stadium on Friday.

The breakthrough came when defender Sumit Sharma's deft header in added time found the net, following a precise cross from substitute Manbhakpar Malngiang, who had been brought in by head coach Ishfaq Ahmed in the 78th minute.

Liverpool Goalkeeper Alisson Becker In Doubt For Saturday's Game

Liverpool's star goalkeeper Alisson Becker is nursing a nagging hamstring injury, potentially sidelining him for Saturday's crucial match against Bournemouth at Anfield.

Concerns over congested schedules were amplified by Alisson prior to Liverpool's 3-1 Champions League victory over AC Milan, a game in which he played through discomfort.

Liverpool manager Arne Slot confirmed on Friday that the injury predates the Milan match but worsened after it. Slot described the condition as 'a slight issue with one of his muscles.'

F1 Champ Verstappen Sanctioned For Swearing At Press Conference



Formula 1 champion Max Verstappen faced disciplinary action on Friday for swearing during a news conference. The sport's governing body, the FIA, mandated that Verstappen should undertake some public interest work, although specifics are yet to be decided.

In the lead-up to Singapore's Grand Prix, Verstappen used an expletive while discussing his performance at Azerbaijan's recent qualifying session. He defended his choice of words by noting their common usage in his learning process of English.