97 year of publication

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J&K Poll Outcome Hangs In Balance

Stage Set For Counting

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The stage is set for the crucial counting of votes for the 90 Assembly seats in Jammu and Kashmir, scheduled for today. With heightened multi-tier security arrangements, officials are ensuring a safe and transparent vote-counting process. Counting will begin at 25 locations across the UT amid multilayered security cover.

In Srinagar, the counting will take place at the Shere-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) at Centaur, situated on the scenic banks of Dal Lake. The counting will use Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and is expected to be closely monitored by party representatives and officials.

J&K would see its own government after a decade as the last Assembly polls were held in 2014. The elections were also first without Article 370 and without Ladakh as J&K's party. On August 5, 2019, New Delhi sliced the erstwhile State into two halves—J&K and Ladakh UTs. J&K's Chief | More on P6

NC-Congress vs BJP In Tight Race For Power

KO Political Desk

Srinagar: As the counting of votes ends by Tuesday afternoon, it is likely to throw up two potential outcomes:, one, the NC-Congress securing the majority of seats as predicted by the exit polls. And second, the BJP winning the majority of seats in Jammu, positioning it as a strong contender for forming the government with the support of independents. The probability of the first

outcome is more as the NC-Congress could also bank on the support from the smaller parties in Kashmir Valley. It is anticipated that the PDP which is expected to bag several seats in its South Kashmir bastion might join this coalition. There are already some straws in the air suggesting the likelihood of such a possibility. The NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah



has welcomed the prospect of the PDP being part of the government formation. "Why not? How does it

matter? If we all work for the same thing, for improvement in the conditions of the people of the state, removing unemployment, removing all the distresses that have occurred in the last 10 years," Abdullah responded to ques-tions about the PDP joining the coalition government. "We can be rivals in elections, but I have no objections, and I am sure Congress will have no objections.'

However, the BJP has made no secret of its intentions to do everything to form the next government. Hoping to achieve a decent total in Jammu, it hopes to cobble together a majority with the potential support of the smaller

parties and the independents, especially from the Kashmir Valley. has Congress warned of such a possibility, and accused the BJP of trying

to subvert the mandate in the union territory. "There is a clear danger to the people's mandate in J&K. The INC-NC alliance is on the way to a historic victory, but the BJP is not ready to digest

the democratic verdict and is planning to subvert this through any and all means available at its disposal," Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said in a post on X. "We are vigilant to all their dirty tricks and will not let them hijack our democracy. The misuse of institutions and the Centre's powers to alter the mandate will not be tolerated." Although unlike 2014 when

the BJP's poll-plank was '44plus' seats to form the government in the then 83 Assembly house, the saffron party made no such pitch this time. But the party hopes to better its tally than the 25 seats that it garnered in 2014. It could very well do better this time in the now 90 seat Assembly, more so after the delimitation of the last year which is believed to have increased the Hindu majority areas of the Jammu division. If the BJP gets 30 seats or

thereabouts, it could be in a position to not just form a government in coalition with a Kashmir party | More on P6

Party Leaders Exude Confidence

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: On the eve of the counting of votes for the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls, top leaders of the Congress-NC alliance, the BJP and the PDP have expressed confidence in forming the next government in the Union Territory.

While the Congress and the National Conference, who formed a pre-poll alliance, claimed they would cross the magical figure of 46 in the 90-member House on their own, the BJP was relying on independent candidates and the PDP said no secular government was possible in Jammu and Kashmir without its support.

Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Ravinder Raina said his party would emerge as the single largest, securing 35 seats. With the help of independents and likeminded groups, the BJP would cross the majority mark, he said. "We are confident of winning 35 seats in Jammu and Kashmir and with the support of independents and like-minded groups, who will secure around 15 seats, we will | More on P6

Delay Govt Formation Till Statehood Is Restored: Er Rashid

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Engineer Rashid, the head of the Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) and a parliamentarian from north Kashmir, Monday urged all regional parties, including the INIDA Bloc allies, to unite over the restoration of J&Ks statehood rather than rushing to form a government.

The AIP leader's comments

Playing Straight Into **BJP's Hands:** Omar

Sec 144 Around

Agencies

Centres In North

ational Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Monday said Lok Sabha member Sheikh Abdul Rashid's suggestion for delaying government formation till restoration of statehood was playing into the hands of the BJP who wants the Central rule in Jammu and | More on P6

came a day before the much-an-

ticipated results | More on P6

Nomination Of 5 MLAs: When Can LG Exercise The Power?

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Legal experts have divergent views on whether Jammu and Kashmir lieutenant governor can nominate five MLAs at the time of government formation or at a later stage on the aid and advice of the council of ministers.

Jammu and Kashmir has 90 assembly seats for which elections

were held in three phases and poll results are scheduled to be declared on Tuesday.

The five members to be nominated by the LG will take

sembly to 95, where 48 would be the majority mark. The LG's power to nominate these five MLAs assumes sig-

governor as members of the Jammu and

Members Will Be From Party: BJP Leader

alreadv

mid the row over the nomination of five members by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, BJP leader Sofi Mohammad Yousuf on Monday claimed that they will be from his party. "All the nominated members are from the BJP. It is our government at the Centre. Whoever is in the government, the (nominated) | More on P6

On Alliance With PDP **Observer News Service** Srinagar:The National Conference is open to a strategic post-poll alliance with the

'Why Not?' Dr Farooq

People's Democratic Party to keep the Bharatiya Janata Party out of power after the 2024 Jammu and Kashmir Assembly election, National Conference president Farooq Abdullah said Monday afternoon. Abdullah said his party was open to the idea of taking support of Mehbooba Mufti's PDP

to form a government in the Union territory. He also flayed the move to

give powers to the Lieutenant

The fresh application has

Governor for nominating members to the five reserved seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, and said his party would approach the Supreme Court if the BJP-led Centre went ahead with it.

Abdullah, while ruling himself out of the race for chief minister's post, said statehood should be restored to Jammu and Kashmir so that the new government has powers to address the people's problems.

"Statehood should be restored, full statehood, where the government has the power to do things. I will not be the CM. Let this one | More on P6

EMPLOYEE'S PENSION CASE CAT Orders ACS To Appear If



the effective strength of the as-

nificance in wake of the exit polls | More on P6

ive persons to be nominated by the lieutenant Kashmir Assembly may play a crucial role in the formation of the next government | More on P6

Plea In SC Seeks J&K Statehood Within 2 Months

Srinagar: With the counting for 16 north Kashmir assembly segments scheduled for tomorrow, officials on Monday said all arrangements, including a threetier security framework, are in place to ensure a smooth process.

According to officials, the randomisation of polling staff has been completed, with the final round of randomisation and allocation of counting centres set for tomorrow morning.

Counting will begin at 8 am in adherence to all necessary protocols outlined by the Election Commission of India (ECI), they said. An official said a robust security | More on P6

Order Not Implemented

M Ahmad

Srinagar: Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) has ordered Additional Chief Secretary Secretary Government, Forest to Department, to remain present in person before it on November 9 if its order regarding an employee's pension and other benefits was not complied with in its letter and spirit.

A two-member Bench of M. S. Latif (J) and Prasant Kumar (A) passed the order while hearing a contempt plea by one Z A Ahanger,



seeking implementation of the Tribunal's 8 May 2023 judgement whereby authorities were directed to calculate his pension and other pensionary benefits after taking the date of his superannuation as 30 June 2019. "The above exercise was to be

completed by the respondents

(authorities) within a period of three months from the date of receipt of certified copy of the judgement," the Bench observed, adding, "The orders passed in the contempt petition further reveal that the petitioner has not even been paid his provisional pension not to speak of release of his other retiral benefits as ordered in the judgement dated 08-05-2023." On May 8 this year, the Bench

also underlined that the authorities were made conscious that right to pension cannot be taken away by | More on P6

Press Trust Of India

been filed by Zahoor Ahmad New Delhi: A plea was on Bhat, an academician, and Monday filed in the Supreme Khurshaid Ahmad Malik, a Court seeking directions to socio-political activist, in lammu and Kashmir seeking the Centre for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and restoration of statehood. Kashmir within two months.

"It is submitted that the On December 11, 2023, delay in the restoration of the Supreme Court unanistatehood would cause serimously upheld the 2019 reous reduction of democrativocation of Article 370 of the cally elected government in Constitution that gave spe-Jammu and Kashmir causing cial status to the erstwhile a grave violation of the idea state of Jammu and Kashmir of federalism which forms even as it ordered assembly part of the basic structure elections there by September of the Constitution of India," 2024 and the restoration of the application filed through advocate | More on P6 statehood "at the earliest"

M Ahmad

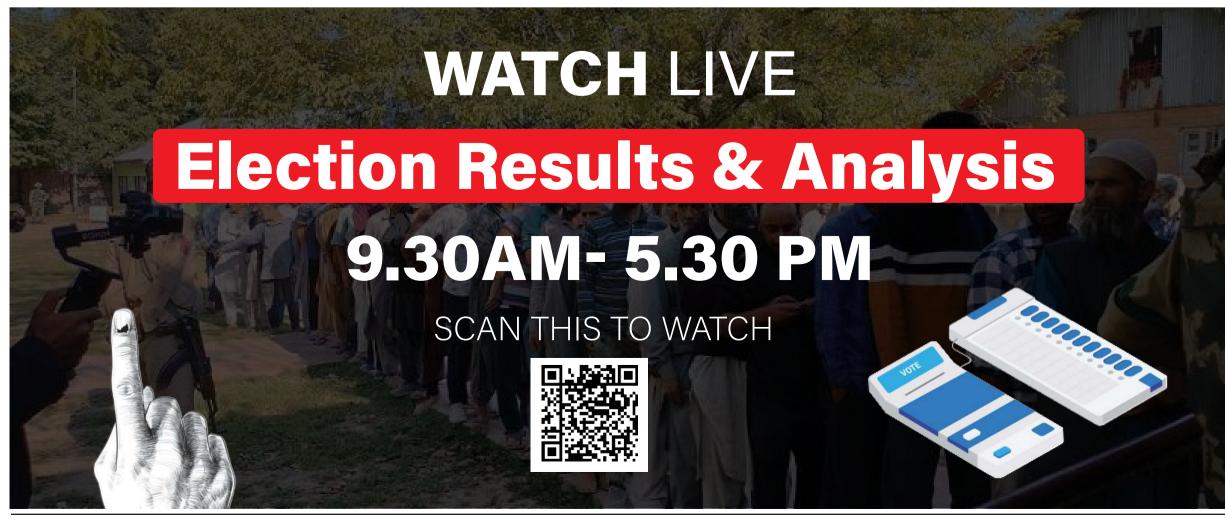
Justice Atul

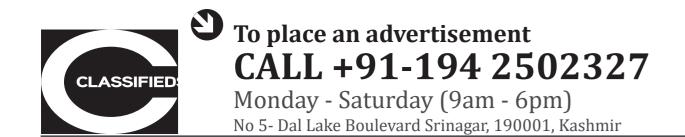
Is Executive

Chairman JKLSA

Srinagar: Justice Atul Sreedharan, Judge of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh, was on Monday nominated as Executive Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority (J&KLSA).

"In exercise of the powers conferred under sub-section (2) of section 6 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 (Central Act) read with rule 3 of the Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority Rules, 2020 and in supersession of Notification S.O 617 of 2022 dated 21st November, 2022, the Lieutenant Governor, in consultation | More on P6





KASHMIR OBSERVER[®] Srinagar | Tuesday | 08-10-2024

Researchers Identify New Potential Treatment For Irregular Heart Rhythm

ANI

recent study by researchers at the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Phoenix and the University of California Davis Health discovered a new target for developing a medication to treat atrial fibrillation, the most prevalent kind of irregular heart rhythm. According to the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, atrial fibrillation, also known as AFib or AF, accounts for approximately one in every seven strokes and is associated with a considerable increase in morbidity and death. The American Heart Association predicts that more than 12 million people will have AFib by 2030, and existing treatment approaches are inadequate, according to researchers.

Proteins involved in physiological processes of the heart have been a target of research for AFib for some time. Until recently, most research suggested that treating AFib through inhibition of specific small-conductance calcium-activated potassium channels, or SK channels, could either reduce or worsen arrhythmias under different conditions.

Breakthrough in atrial fibrillation research

"Our study used pioneering experimental and computational approaches to decipher how the human SK2 channel can be dynamically co-regulated. The study is especially timely considering inhibitors of SK channels are currently in clinical trials to treat AFib, making further insight into their regulatory mechanisms paramount," said Nipavan Chiamvimonvat, MD, chair of the Department of Basic Medical Sciences at the U of A College of Medicine - Phoenix.

The paper, "Atomistic Mechanisms of the Regulation of Small Conductance Ca2 -Activated K channel (SK2) by PIP2," was published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The research team examined the role of a lipid - phosphatidylinositol 4,5-bisphosphate, or PIP2 - in regulating the SK2 channel. PIP2 is an integral component of all plant and animal cell membranes and acts as a messenger for a variety of signaling pathways in the body.

"Because PIP2 plays such an essential role in multiple ion channels, regulating cardiac ion channels through PIP2 presents a new mechanism for the lipid regulation of cardiac excitability and function," said computational biologist Ryan Woltz, PhD, the paper's co-first author and an assistant research professor at the College of Medicine -Phoenix. Currently, SK channels are the only known potassium channels that are upregulated in heart failure, and their regulation plays a critical role in cardiac excitability and how disturbances in the heart's rhythm develop.

"Since PIP2 is known to be dysregulated in heart failure, our study provides critical translational insights into possible mechanisms of cardiac arrhythmias in heart failure," said co-first author Yang Zheng,



PhD, a postdoctoral research fellow at the College of Medicine - Phoenix. Using comparative modeling, the research team generated human SK2 channel models in closed, intermediate and open states. They then used molecular dynamics simulations to explore the molecular mechanisms of SK2 channel modulation by PIP2.

"Structural insights from our study will be useful to design novel inhibitors of SK2 channels to treat cardiac arrhythmias," said Vladimir Yarov-Yarovoy, PhD, a professor at UC Davis Health. Co-senior author Igor Vorobyov, PhD, an associate professor at UC Davis Health, said the team is already using similar computational approaches to study other SK channel subtypes.

"I am thrilled to participate in this collaborative multi-university and multidisciplinary research study and looking forward to a continued

collaboration," Vorobyov said. "We are currently working on applying a similar pioneering experimental/ computational approach to modulation of SK channels by drug molecules, which may enhance or inhibit function of these ion channels and can be used as prospective treatment options for AFib and other cardiovascular diseases."

A new study by researchers at the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Phoenix and the University of California Davis Health identified a new target for developing a therapy to treat atrial fibrillation, the most common type of abnormal heart rhythm.

Potential for innovative treatments

Atrial fibrillation, commonly called AFib or AF, causes about 1 in 7 strokes, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and is associated with a significant increase in the risk of morbidity and mortality. More than 12 million people are expected to have AFib by 2030, according to the American Heart Association, and current treatment paradigms remain inadequate, researchers say. Proteins involved in physiological processes of the heart have been a target of research for AFib for some time. Until recently, most research suggested that treating AFib through inhibition of specific small-conductance calcium-activated potassium channels, or SK channels, could either reduce or worsen arrhythmias under different conditions

'Normal Body Weight Prior To Pregnancy Could Help Avoid Half Gestational Diabetes'

Press Trust Of India

bout half the cases of gestational diabetes, a common pregnancy complication, could be avoided if body weight was maintained in the normal range, according to a study that followed almost two million births in Sweden from 2000 to 2020.

Gestational diabetes, in which a pregnant woman develops high blood sugar levels, can increase the risk of type 2 diabetes later in life. Obesity and overweight, indicated by a higher-than-30 body mass index, have been studied to have adverse pregnancy outcomes. In this study, researchers at Linköping Uni-

versity, Sweden, estimated the extent to which pregnancy complications could be averted if women had normal weight before conceiving.

"For example, we concluded that about half of all cases of gestational diabetes could potentially be prevented. This applies to both women born in Sweden and foreign-born women," Maryam Shirvanifar, a PhD student at Linköping University and first author of the study published in The Lancet Public Health journal, said.

The researchers also found that over a quarter of pre-eclampsia cases could be avoided if a healthy weight is maintained prior to pregnancy. The condition involves a high blood pressure and can be accompanied with severe headaches, vision problems such as blurring, and swelling in feet and ankles, among others.

The study looked at both women born in Sweden and those who had moved to the country from regions around the world, including Europe, Latin America and South Asia.

Efforts to promote a healthy weight could be beneficial to all women, regardless of eth-



nicity, according to lead researcher Pontus Henriksson, a senior associate professor at the Department of Health, Medicine and Caring Sciences at Linköping University.

"A healthy weight is good for everyone. The earlier in life the better, because once obesity is established, it is difficult to treat," Henriksson said. Of the nearly two million pregnant women studied, close to 17,000 were born in South Asia.

"The number of cases of gestational diabetes attributable to overweight and obesity was about four times higher for women born in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and North Africa and the Middle East than for Swedish-born women, which is probably due to a higher prevalence of gestational diabetes in the former birth regions," the authors wrote.

Some of the other complications the researchers looked at included infant death in the first year of life, premature births and unusual baby sizes at birth.

They took data from national registers to analyse the relationship between a woman's body mass index prior to pregnancy and complications depending on which region of the world she was born in.

"Promotion of a healthy weight in pregnancy has the potential to reduce the burden of adverse pregnancy outcomes and possibly reduce inequalities in reproductive health," the authors wrote.

Vitamin C Deficiency In Elderly Can Cause Abnormal Bleeding, Fatigue: Study

IANS

lder adults suffering from abnormal bleeding, fatigue, and weakness, must be assessed for scurvy -- a disease caused by vitamin C deficiency, suggests a study on Monday. Detailing a case study of a 65-year-old woman with mobility issues and social isolation, the study published in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal) showed that scurvy, or vitamin C deficiency, is not just an 18th-century seafarers' disease. Researchers from the University of Toronto in Canada implored clinicians to consider scurvy in patients with abnormal bleeding



TANTRAY NEWS

AGENCY

and the University of Toronto.

The researchers noted that vitamin C deficiency is more common than expected in the 21st century. However, its diagnosis is often challenging as symptoms are often nonspecific, such as fatigue, weakness, and shortness of breath.

The patient also smoked, which further contributes to vitamin C deficiency. Her symptoms improved once she started on vitamin C treatment, and a blood test for vitamin C deficiency eventually confirmed the diagnosis, said the doctors.

"Clinicians should be alert to vitamin C deficiency when assessing patients, including children and isolated older adults," the doctors said. The team noted that people who follow restrictive eating patterns (for example, those with autism spectrum disorder or those on a tea and toast diet), who smoke cigarettes, who have a substance use disorder, or who have malabsorption syndrome, can also be at risk of scurvy.

NOWHATTA

BASHIR NEW AGENCY

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written in my PASSPORT Bearing No: L9874993 as Aisha Bano W/o Ghulam Rasool Andrabi wile my correct name is Aishah Banoo W/o Syed Ghulam Rasool Andrabi which needs to be corrected. if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objction in the office of the regional passport office srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained. **Aishah Banoo**

W/o Syed Ghulam Rasool Andrabi R/o Ratnipora Pulwama

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written in my PASSPORT Bearing No: L9814954 as Ghulam Rasool Andrabi S/o Gh Mohd Shah wile my correct name is Syed Ghulam Rasool Andrabi S/o Syed Ghulam Mohammad Andrabi which needs to be corrected. if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objction in the office of the regional passport office srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained. Syed Ghulam Rasool Andrabi S/o Syed Ghulam Mohammad Andrabi

and nonspecific symptoms. The elderly patient visited the emergency department at a downtown Toronto hospital for leg pain and weakness, skin lesions, and discoloration. She also had several chronic health conditions.

Mobility issues restricted her ability to go grocery shopping, cook, and perform other daily activities. She lived largely on canned soup and fish, with no fresh produce. "This case presents a complex example of food insecurity manifesting as an uncommon diagnosis," said Dr. Sarah Engelhart, a general internist at Mount Sinai Hospital

RAJ BAGH

R/o Ratnipora Pulwama

PUBLIC NOTICE

The mother's name of my daughter namely Saniya Zehra has been wrongly written as Nighat Dar while her correct name is Nighat Jaffer which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Doon School Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained. **Mohammad Jaffar Para F/o Saniya Zehra R/O Noori Pora fko**

Office of the Executive Magistrate Ist Class Narbal Budgam Tele Fax 01951-260-276 Pin Code 193401

ele Fax 01951-200-270 Fill Code 19540

Notice For General Public

I tis hereby notified that the applicant namely Saleema Akhter D/o Mohammad Akbar Dar R/o Gottapora tehsil Narbal District Budgam had applied for the issuance of Birth Certificate of herself. The applicant intends to register her DOB asper Medical Certificate as 11-02-2000

In this connection, if anybody having any objection regarding the same he/she may contact office of the undersigned within seven (07) days, after which no objections shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class Narbal

Dated: 07-10-2024

bmg

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KASHMIR OBSERVER[®] Srinagar | Tuesday | 08-10-2024

Political Workers Desperately Await Poll Results

Observer News Service

Srinagar: With much anticipation and hope, Srinagar district is all set to become a centre of attraction for the workers of mainstream parties tomorrow who are desperately waiting for the poll results.

As hope grips the streets of Srinagar, the people for years have been waiting for this moment, and tomorrow, as the day begins, will be the day when the fate of Jammu Kashmir is decided. People including the workers of National Conference, PDP and Congress were seen at the gossip lounges of the city discussing the possible outcome of the recently concluded polls.

Locals from uptown as well as from downtown Srinagar, according to KNO, have been waiting for this moment for a very long time, and tomorrow their chosen leader will be declared as winner.

Sahil, a local from Nowhatta, Srinagar, said they have been without a voice for so long. "I just want to wake up tomorrow and see someone in power who cares and fights for us." he said.

For many other resi-

dents, it isn't about which party wins or loses, but it is about choosing their representative.

"I have seen too much in my life," said Ghulam Ahmad Mir, an elderly man from Sonwar, Srinagar. "This election result is not for me, but for my grandchildren. I just hope I live to see them thrive in Kashmir where we make our own decisions again," he added.

Patiently, the mood in Srinagar is hopeful, while party offices remain quiet, with no early celebrations in sight. The people, however, are preparing for something bigger than a political victory.

We deserve more than just survival, said Umias, a university student, adding we want a future here, in this land we call home.

Meanwhile, a journalist wishing not to be named shared, "We are expecting the government that comes will fulfill their promises as mentioned in manifestos, and end bureaucratic rule here. "They will work for the people, and end their

suffering," he said. He added, "I hope the

coming government also gives freedom to the media and helps us work freely."



A day before the much awaited poll results, Principal Secretary, Estates Department, Alok Kumar, Monday conducted an extensive visit to the Assembly Complex in Srinagar.

Wild Boar Sighting Around Dal Trigger Concerns

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Concerns among the locals in and around Dal Lake have been further heightened by the return of wild boars, the powerful wild equivalents of the pig family. A herd of wild boars that have

been spotted by residents and visitors meandering along the shores of scenic Dal Lake have sparked grave worries, as many fear that the presence of such a robust animal in the city might have detrimental repercussions on the human population.

'While out for an evening stroll, I was startled to come across a herd of wild boars near Dal Lake. Having only ever read and heard about pigs, I found it to be a very unnerving experience," Zubair Ahmad, a local resident told Kashmir Observer.

According to Islamic beliefs, wild boars are forbidden animals, and their presence in herds poses a threat to areas where Muslims predominate, according to Zubair.

"According to what my elders have told me, boars are powerful and crafty animals. Far-reaching consequences would follow if the authorities did not act quickly to confine them in the woods," he added.

Social media users have taken to criticizing the government for neglecting to acknowledge the existence of a prohibited animal in a Muslim majority region, after a video showing wild boars wandering around Dal Lake went viral.

"How could they let the animal roam around a populated area like Dal Lake? This is a serious oversight on the part of the wildlife authorities. We want the government to act immediately to keep boars out of inhabited areas," a social media user wrote.

Meanwhile the Office of the Wildlife Warden, Central Division Srinagar has issued a clarification regarding the video clip showing wild boars roaming on boulevard and foreshore road that has gone viral on various social media platforms.

"It has been given out that people have made various misinterpretations about this Wildlife species. General public is hereby informed that the said species existed in Dachigam National Park and its surrounding Conservation Reserves since Maharajas Time. During the harvesting of

fruits season the species has been found usually roaming outside the peripheries of Dachigam National Park and its surrounding Conservation Reserves in search of their food," the department said in a statement.

The department, according to the statement, dispatched the rescue operation teams along with necessary tools, tranquilizing guns, nets, trapping cages etc all along the Boulevard and foreshore road and on its adjacent areas to drive them back towards the nearby forests.

General Public has been requested not to panic on this account and desist from spreading misinformation, every effort shall be made and it shall be ensured that no confrontation takes place.

"Department of Wildlife Protection has deployed various teams to ensure the safety of the general public and prevention of agricultural crops from damage. General Public is also requested to kindly cooperate with the department and abide by the Do's and Don'ts suggested by the rescue teams who are on the job," statement adds.



	PRAYERS	
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HIJRI	ZUHR	12:19
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1446	ISHA	7: 31

This Day In History

- 1929 Mohammed Nadir Khan occupies Kabul Afghanistan and drives out Habibullah Ghazi
- 1932 The Indian Air Force is established. 1940 - German troops occupies Romania
- 1945 US President Harry Truman announced atomic bomb secret shared with Britain and Canada 1945 - Microwave oven patented
- 1946 Military plane crashes at Christian HBS, 24 die
- 1952 Chinese offensive in Korea
- 1957 Turkish & Syrian border guards exchange fire
- 1963 - Sultan of Zanzibar cedes his mainland possessions to Kenya
- 1967 Guerrilla leader Che Guevara and his men are captured in Bolivia.
- 1970 Soviet author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wins the Nobel Prize for Literature
- 1970 The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) propose that a system of Proportional Representation (PR) should be used in elections in Northern Ireland
- 1973 OPEC meets with oil companies to discuss revision of 1971 Tehran agreement and oil prices; negotiations fail.
- 1993 UN lifts remaining economic sanctions against South Africa
- 1998 US House of Representatives votes to begin impeachment hearings against President Bill Clinton on charges of lying about his affair with Monica Lewinsky
- 1998 José Saramago is the first person from

Alok Kumar Inspects Assembly Complex In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Principal Srinagar: Secretary, Estates Department, Alok Kumar, Monday conducted an extensive visit to the Assembly Complex in Srinagar.

Estates Director Kashmir/Jammu, Tariq Hussain Ganai along with other senior officials from both the Assembly and Estates Departments accompanied the Principal Secretary.

During the visit, Kumar thoroughly inspected various sections of the Assembly Complex and assessed the existing infrastructure and facilities for the upcoming Legislative sessions. He underscored the significance of the Assembly Complex as a vital hub for legislative activities, highlighting the necessity for ongoing maintenance and modernization to cater to changing demands.

Additionally, the Principal Secretary engaged in discussions with the officers of the Assembly and Estates Departments to explore strategies aimed at enhancing both the functionality and aesthetic appeal of the Complex prior

J&K Assembly Sessions.

JDI Kashmir Mourns

Bilal Koul's Demise

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Joint Directorate of Information (JDI) Kashmir today mourned the untimely passing away of its senior official, Mr. Bilal Ahmad Koul who passed away today morning after brief illness.

The official was laid to rest in his ancestral graveyard, where hundreds of his colleagues, well wisher mourners participated in the Namaz-e-Janaza and bade him a tearful send off. Joint Director Informa-

tion Kashmir, Mohammad Aslam along with Deputy Director Information (PR) Kashmir, Dr. Ahsanul Haq Chishti and other officials of the department attended

the Namaz-e-Janaza of Mr. Koul and later visited the residence of the deceased colleague and expressed their deep sympathies with the bereaved family. Bilal Ahmad, through

his dedication, honesty and professionalism, had earned deep respect and admiration among his colleagues as well as officers of the department. The loss of the official will be deeply felt throughout the organization, his colleagues remarked with sobs while attending his last rites.

Meanwhile the Rasm i Chaharum of the deceased shall be held on Thursday, October 10 at 10 AM at his ancestral graveyard at Riyazat Taing Khanyar.

JKCSF Condemns Blasphemous Remarks By Narsinghanand

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Civil Society Forum (JKCSF) on Monday strongly protested against the blasphemous remarks passed in a public speech by Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati.

In a statement issued here JKCSF Chairman Abdul Qayoom Wani stated that remarks are highly inflammatory and have hurt the sentiments of Muslims of India and the people all over the world.

He said that such derogatory remarks are prone to disturb the peace and ignite the communal tension between Muslims and Hindus across the country and in

other parts of the world. "It is a universal truth that Islam is the religion of peace and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is blessing for the universe (Rahmatan Lil Alameen), however, this is unfortunate that ignorant people like Yati Narsinghanand are not courageous to respect the message of Islam.

His remarks about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) made in a public speech are highly derogative and enough to cause unrest in the whole country because Muslims love and respect the Prophet (peace be upon him) above their lives and cannot tolerate blasphemy in any case," Wani said.



Portugal to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature

2003 - Peter Agre and Roderick MacKinnon win the 2003 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for discoveries concerning channels in cell membranes

From KO Archives

With Empty Coffers & Closed Fist Centre Govt Orders Austerity Measures, Bans Purchases

Observer News Service

rinagar- With New Delhi having made it clear that it would be paying only for the day to day expenditure of the state, thus putting a virtual brake on the developmental plans, the state government today ordered austerity measures in departmental expenditures "with immediate effect."

Austerity measures in departmental spendings had be come imperative following re-ported failure of talks between the Centre and the state in New Delhi recently on the release of funds to the state, dependent completely on New Delhi.

The order, which would be applicable to all Public Sec tor Undertakings and Autonomous Bodies, has been taken "in view of the continuing tight resources position of the state. There will be an across the board cut of ten percent on the budget provision under the head maintenance and re-pairs, purchase of material and supplies, machinery and equipment

The order says that the newly installed offices can buy fresh furniture that too subject to the concurrence of Finance Department, while blanket ban has been imposed on purchasing of furniture for the already existing ones. The ban has also been imposed on purchase of new vehicles of all kinds by all departments.

The measures announced by the state government today will virtually put brakes on all the developmental programmes as there is alarming cash crunch in the state. The Centre will be paying the state a sum of rupees 250 crores only, which is not even sufficient for running day today expenditures.

The expenditure on telephone has been ordered to be restricted within the available provisions and no liability on the account would be allowed to be carried over. No additional pro-vision would be made for purchase of office equipment like photo copiers, fax machines etc. No purchase should be placed beyond December 31, 1998 for any item and purchase contracts should be finalized before the said date.

The government have ordered that there shall be no official dinners and no lunches except those hosted by the Chief Minister and the ministers.

The expenditure on maintenance of government buildings, residential quarters should be restricted to most essential items only. Improvements to existing floorings, wall painting etc., to ca ter to personal preferences has been totally prohibited and there should be no additions to the residential quarters. There will be no increase in the current level of grant-in-aid to institutions. (Kashmir Observer, October 08, 1998)

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One year of Mideast war

he world marked one year of the Israel-Gaza war on October 7. It was on this day last year that the current hostilities began when Hamas launched an assault on Israel in response to years of repression under Israeli occupation. In that sense, the war didn't begin on October 7 as the western world tends to believe but has been ongoing since 1948 when Palestinians were driven out of their homeland. There have been several violent manifestations in between of which the current conflict is the most extreme. Israel has killed nearly 42000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in response to 1139 Israelis, also mostly women and children, killed in the Hamas attack.

A year on, Israel has only sought to expand the war rather than agree to a ceasefire. It has recently launched an invasion of Lebanon, and is in the process of replicating the same devastation in an otherwise sovereign country that it did in Gaza. What is more, Israel is also on the brink of an all-out war with Iran. Israel has engaged in a series of reckless actions, apparently geared to drag Iran into the war and, in turn, directly involve the United States. It killed Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh in Iran while he was there to attend new Iran president Masoud Pezeshkian's swearing in ceremony. It subsequently killed Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasarallah while he was reportedly negotiating a ceasefire with Tel Aviv.

As things stand, Israel's script is playing out as intended. An Israel-Iran war with the involvement of the US will be catastrophic for the region. It could lead to a multifront war with not just regional but global implications. Any strike on Iran's oil facilities will throw energy markets in turmoil with massive repercussions for the global economy.

But with so much at stake, the world is doing precious little to halt the Israeli madness. The powerful west led by the US is continuing to fund and arm Israel, while at the same time issuing stock statements about the need for a ceasefire. Rest of the world has also withdrawn from the conflict and taken on the role of a spectator. The great powers such as China and Russia have watched indifferently from a distance at the deteriorating state of affairs. Nor have they confronted the west for encouraging Israel down this dangerous path. This is a tragic abdication of their global responsibility. More so, at a time when the US far from playing a leadership role has become a party to the genocide in the region and, in a sense, is egging Israel on to double down on the killings. This needs the world as a whole to work together to not just enforce the truce but also work towards a just solution to Palestinian issue, the longtanding source of all tragedy in the region with far-reaching

Has Iran joined the Nuclear Club?



Haider Abbas



Iran has now perhaps, crossed the nuclear threshold, and with it, Iran is now in a 'somewhat position', to meet to the joint threat from US and Israel, pot to discount the

as Iran conducted a nuclear test on October 5 ? There is a deafening silence on it, in Iran, Israel and US, but a nuclear Iran is a hundred percent mainstream in Iranian debates. The move has come in the wake of immense hostilities between Israel and Iran, more particularly so, when US CENTCOM Chief General Michael Kurilla had visited Israel to give a green signal

years, but out of having been 'tied with an oral fatwa'. Fatwa is an Islamic ruling.

It was in the year 2003, when Iran Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenie had given a fatwa that Iran will not make a nuclear weapon, as that would bring death to the world, now this ruling is what is needed to be reversed, but Iran is not in such a hurry, for the message has now been given Israel. It is also a day light fact that Israel has to the joint threat from US and Israel, not to discount the gnawing fact, that Arab nations have stated to remain neutral, which in any military parlance is a support to Israel. Iranian new President Masood Pezeshkian has also got his early 'betrayal' lessons from US, to not to attack Israel after Ismail Haniyeh was killed in Tehran on July 31, in lieu of a ceasefire, but instead Israel killed Hezbollah Chief Hasan Nasrullah on Sentember



implications for global stability.

India's Economy is Growing

Irshad Mushtaq

ndia's economy is thriving with consistent growth of 5-7% over the past decade! From new roads to urban expansion, infrastructure develo is booming, through equity easiest way to participate in growth . India's economy has been consistently growing at a rate of 5-7% annually over the past decade. This growth is evident in the increasing number of infrastructure developments, such as new roads, bypasses, and urban expansion in various districts. Villages are developing rapidly, leading to urbanization with a surge in housing projects. With these developments, the demand for products like houses, roads, urban living in villages they use more fans, and geysers has risen significantly. This consumption is fueled by reputable companies supplying these necessary goods, indicating growth in sectors like cement, tiles, and appliances. Take Kashmir, for example. Historically, its development was modest, but today, it has undergone substantial urbanization. Improved infrastructure and increased resources especially rural areas, through agriculture , horticulture , jobs have empowered more people to earn higher incomes, lead-ing to greater consumerism. More people can now afford amenities like air conditioners, cars, and bikes , new houses This trend echoes the transformation experienced by China four decades ago and is now seen in India. Given this economic landscape, there are ample opportunities for economic participation. One can start a business directly tapping into these sectors or, alternatively, invest in established companies driving this development. If starting a busi-ness isn't feasible or if one lacks the necessary know-how, investing through mutual funds or equity funds offers a viable path. These options allow you to participate in the growth story without needing extensive expertise. Investing in quality companies and growth sectors is key. While short-term market fluctuations are inevitable, long-term growth prospects remain robust. Embrace practical investment strategies-it's not merely about securing a high-paving job but positioning oneself smartly within the broader economic framework. By doing so, your investments can grow alongside the companies they support, contributing to both personal and economic growth. If you're new to investing or unsure where to begin, consider consulting with financial advisors or utilizing investment platforms that cater to such sectors. Be a part of India's growth narrative, ensuring your financial strategies align with the country's promis ing economic trajectory. Conclusion India's economy has been consistently growing at 5-7% annually over the last decade! From robust infrastructure development to rapid urbanization, the opportunities are abundant. With villages evolving and demand for housing, roads, and appliances surging, there's never been a better time to invest in quality companies and growth sectors. Whether you start a business or invest through mutual funds, the potential is enormous!

Learn from the insights of @Irshad Mushtaq, Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of M I Securities! Connect for valuable financial advice at misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com not to discount the gnawing fact, that Arab nations have stated to remain neutral, which in any military parlance is a support to Israel



quake had occurred very close to the nuclear power plant, so it cannot be said whether the shock was due to an earthquake or a nuclear test . What is baffling for the world experts is that this earthquake came without any early warning system! Iran is never going to acknowledge that it has gone-nuclear, not out of fear of US sanctions, which are under place since 45 position on all forums. China has also entered into a 400 billion USD 'military and market' deal with Iran for the next 25 years. Iran, has now given a clear-cut message to Israel, which is right now engaged with Azerbaijan, to co-ordinate an attack on Iran, to start to think twice.

Iran has now perhaps, crossed the nuclear threshold, and with it, Iran is now in a 'somewhat position', to meet breath, all that is likely to unfold before November 4 and then later to it.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer The writer is a former UP State Information Commissioner and writes on international issues



All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name and address, even if a pseudonym is used. Letters are edited as clarity, spaceand accuracy of expression require. Our publishing a letter does not mean we agree with everything or even anything in it. -EDITOR

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Erosion Of Respect For Parents

n a world where familial bonds should ideally embody unconditional love and respect, a distressing video from Nowgam has cast a long shadow over our perceptions of these relationships. The footage, depicting a son violently beating his parents with a slipper, has shocked viewers and ignited a profound introspection about the state of respect within our homes.

The unsettling imagery from Nowgam, a locality that was once seen as a haven of traditional values, portrays a scenario so disturbing that it challenges the very essence of what we consider acceptable behavior towards our parents. This harrowing incident has prompted a broader conversation about the treatment of parents and the erosion of reverence that has historically characterized familial relationships.

For many, like myself, this dis-

tressing video has had a deeply personal impact. Since witnessing the disturbing scene, an overwhelming heaviness has settled in my heart, and I find it difficult to meet my own father's eyes. The contrast between the gentle hands that once comforted me and the brutality displayed in the video is stark and jarring. The sense of betrayal is palpable, not just towards the parents involved in the Nowgam incident, but to all parents who dedicate their lives to nurturing their children.

This situation serves as a stark reminder of how fragile our relationships can be. It underscores a growing disconnect between the expectations we have of our parents and the respect we often afford them. The silent sacrifices made by parents, their unspoken prayers for our well-being, and their endless expressions of love are too often taken for granted. This tragic event has brought to light how important it is to acknowledge and appreciate the sacrifices made by our parents.

The Nowgam video is not merely an isolated incident; it represents a troubling trend of diminishing respect and empathy towards those who have given us so much. It raises urgent questions about how we, as a society, have arrived at a point where such actions are conceivable, and what can be done to restore the reverence that should be inherent in our relationships with our parents.

In reflecting on my own experiences, I recognize the many moments when I have failed to honor the love and care my father has given me. The video from Nowgam has made me acutely aware of the ways in which I have taken my father's sacrifices for granted, and it has deepened my resolve to change. I owe it to my father and to all parents to express my gratitude and to strive to show the respect that has been so freely given to me.

As we grapple with the implications of this disturbing video, let it serve as a catalyst for a renewed commitment to valuing and respecting our parents. They are the unsung heroes of our lives, and it is incumbent upon us to honor them with the love and respect they so rightly deserve. To my father, and to every parent who has ever felt overlooked or undervalued, I offer my deepest apologies and a heartfelt promise to better acknowledge and appreciate the immeasurable contributions you make to our lives.

The Nowgam incident may be a painful reminder, but it is also an opportunity for all of us to reaffirm our dedication to fostering relationships grounded in respect, gratitude, and love.

Showkat Ali



Embracing Silence A Day Without a Mobile Phone



As you settle into bed, you'll likely find a deeper sense of peace, free from the usual distractions that keep your mind racing. Living a day without a mobile phone may initially feel uncomfortable or challenging, but the rewards can be profound



Zahid Ahmad Lone

n today's hyper-connected world, the idea of living even A single day without a mobile phone can feel daunting. Our devices have become integral to our daily lives, constantly buzzing with notifications and updates, serving as our primary means of communication, entertainment, and information. Yet, the thought of stepping away from it all invites curiosity. What would happen if we unplugged for just one day? This exploration into a device-free day reveals not only the challenges but also the profound joys of reconnecting with ourselves and the world around us. Imagine waking up to the gentle light of dawn streaming through your window, rather than the shrill sound of an alarm or the urge to check messages. Without a mobile phone, you might find yourself savouring the quiet moments of the morning. You can stretch, breathe deeply, and enjoy the simple pleasure of your first cup of coffee without distraction. This ritual of mindfulness sets a calm tone for the day, allowing you to engage with your surroundings in a way that often feels elusive in our digital age. The aroma of coffee fills the air, and you can take a moment to simply be, noticing the sunlight dancing across your table and the comforting sounds of nature outside.

Once you step outside, the world awaits with open arms. Without the distraction of social media, you might find yourself drawn to the beauty of nature. A walk in a nearby park becomes a rich experience rather than a backdrop for a photo. You notice the vibrant hues of the leaves, the intricate patterns on petals, and the way the breeze playfully tousles your hair. Each element invites you to engage with your environment more deeply. As you stroll along a path lined with trees, the absence of your phone allows you to truly listen to the sounds around you-the rustle of leaves, the laughter of children playing, and the distant sound of a dog barking. Each sound is a reminder that life is happening all around you, and you are a part of it. Without the incessant buzzing of notifications, your focus can shift to the people

around you. Meeting a friend for coffee becomes an opportunity for genuine connection. You find yourselves deep in conversation, sharing stories and laughter without the temptation to check your phones. There's something profoundly rewarding about engaging fully with another person, free from digital distractions. These face-to-face interactions can deepen your relationships, fostering a sense of community that often feels lost in the digital haze. You might find that the laughter feels louder, the stories more engaging, and the shared moments more meaningful. With no interruptions from a screen, you're able to give and receive undivided attention, strengthening the bonds that

activities, allowing your creativity to flourish. Engaging in these hobbies can spark a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment that's often overshadowed by digital consumption. You might find yourself lost in the rhythm of painting, the flow of words in a good book, or the aromatic bliss of cooking. This reconnection with your passions can ignite a fire within you, reminding you of the things that truly bring you joy and satisfaction. In the quiet hours without a phone, you might feel compelled to reflect on your life and aspirations. Consider taking out a journal and writing down your thoughts. This can be a therapeutic exercise, helping you clarify your feelings and ex your dreams. Writing allows you to process your experiences and emotions, leading to greater selfawareness. You may discover insights about yourself that had been buried under the noise of daily life. What are your goals? What brings you joy? What changes would you like to make? This introspective practice can help you gain clarity, guiding you toward a more fulfilling life.

As the sun sets, the absence of screen time invites a soothing evening routine. Without the constant glow of your phone, you might find comfort in lighting candles, reading a book, or practicing relaxation techniques. The simple act of winding down becomes a cherished ritual rather than a rushed afterthought. You might choose to meditate, allowing your mind to settle and your thoughts to slow down. This moment of calm can create space for reflection, helping you process the day's experiences. As vou settle into bed, you'll likely find a deeper sense of peace, free from the usual distractions that keep your mind racing. Living a day without a mobile phone may initially feel uncomfortable or challenging, but the rewards can be profound. By embracing the simplicity of a device-free day, you cultivate deeper connections with yourself and those around you. You rediscover the joys of the present moment, experiencing life in a way that often feels rushed and superficial. The day becomes a reminder of the beauty that lies in silence and presence. You gain a fresh

perspective on what truly matters, appreciating the richness of life beyond the screen. This experience can serve as a valuable lesson, prompting you to consider how you engage with technology in your everyday life. In a world increasingly dominated by screens, taking the time to unplug can be a revolutionary act. It encourages you to step back and examine your relationship with technology. After a day of disconnection, you might find yourself craving more moments of stillness, more meaningful conversations, and a deeper appreciation for the world around you. Ultimately, living a day without a mobile phone can serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of balance in our lives. While technology offers incredible benefits, it's essential to carve out time for reflection, connection, and self-discovery. As you return to your device, you may choose to carry this newfound awareness with you, prioritizing the moments that truly enrich your life.

matter most.

As the day unfolds, consider using the time you would typically spend scrolling to rediscover hobbies that once brought you joy. Perhaps you dust off your art supplies, dive into a novel that's been waiting on your shelf, or experiment with a new recipe in the kitchen. Without the constant lure of your phone, you can immerse yourself in these

The author is a Research Scholar University of Kashmir

Spending Too Much Time With AI Could Worsen Social Skills

Marlynn Wei

I social chatbots can help reduce loneliness, especially for people who would otherwise have little access to social support. In one recent survey, three percent of students who used Replika, a social chatbot, reported that Replika helped them stop suicidal thoughts. However, new research suggests that developing too much emotional dependence on AI social chatbots could have a dark side-potentially worsening your social skills with people.

The new study of 496 Replika users found that higher satisfaction and emotional interaction between users and their chatbot was linked to worse real-life interpersonal communication. Many users turned to Replika for entertainment and for social purposes and to have their own emotional needs met. Interacting with AI social chatbots regularly had the most impact on user emotions, with less impact on their cognition and behavior.

Emotional Experiences With Al May Hinder Real-World Engagement

Users of AI chatbots, even social ones, are not expected to grasp how AI entities feel, and the relationship is often one-sided, centered around the needs of the human user. Researchers found that Replika users primarily focused on satisfying their emotional needs, rather than emotional engagement. This design is encouraged by AI companions, which are built to foster connection by addressing the emotional needs of the user.

Despite the tendency to anthropomorphize AI, users are aware that AI lacks sentience or feelings. This lack of reciprocal emotional engagement is significant, as it does not accurately mirror real-life human interactions, which require mutual emotional involvement. Exclusive emotional dependence on AI could harm users' relationships and interactions with humans, as users may not develop the ability to address the complex feelings of the other.



In contrast, negotiating needs, dealing with conflict, and understanding the emotional state of another person, referred to as mentalization, are essential social skills when navigating human relationships. Building relationships in real life requires two-way emotional engagement, including disruption and repair. Becoming emotionally dependent on social AI agents at this point does not accurately mirror building a two-way emotional relationship with another human.

Even if the AI agent was designed to mimic complex human emotional needs and responses, the problem is that most human users are aware that the actions are mimicry and not actually felt by AI. Furthermore, the convenience of engaging with AI, which does not have its own time boundaries or emotional needs, could mean that users will tend to choose time with AI over putting in the effort to schedule and navigate more complex human relationships. If users are getting their emotional needs partially or fully met through AI companions, this may decrease the motivation and incentive to reach out to interact with other humans.

Emotional Dependence on Al Could Change How We Interact With Humans

Human-AI relationships can serve a meaningful purpose, but becoming emotionally dependent on them exclusively would have concerning impacts on human interactions.

Media dependence, a term first defined by researchers Melvin Defler and Sandra Bower-Killoch in their 2004 paper "The Dependence Mode of Mass Communication Media Effect," refers to the codependence of media, audience, and society. The two types of media dependence are habitual dependence and spiritual dependence. An example of habitual media dependence is compulsive smartphone use. Spiritual dependence refers to the anxiety and emptiness people experience without their phones, a phenomenon known as nomophobia or "no phone phobia."

Similarly, our growing reliance on AI chatbots and agents could create emotional dependence with psychological consequences.

The optimal amount of time with AI chatbots and agents remains an open area of research. A key factor is whether people are balancing time with AI with real-life human socialization.

The answer is likely nuanced. While AI-powered chatbots and social agents may reduce loneliness, especially for those with little access to other social outlets, connection with other humans is nonfungible. It is crucial to balance AI interactions with time with people. Spending too much time relying on AI can diminish essential social skills, even though AI can offer valuable support when used in moderation.

The article was originally published by Psychology Today

News

CONTD. FROM **FRONT PAGE**

Stage Set For

Electoral Officer (CEO) P K Pole said that a three-tier security has been put in place at all counting locations across the UT. "There are 25 counting locations in the UT. Three centres have been set up for counting of migrant votes," he said.

He said the counting will start at 7:30 am with postal ballots first and then Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). "All arrangements are in place. Candidates have also been given information about their counting agents. EVMs are very much protected in a multilayer security of police, CRPF and other officials," Pole said, adding that all steps have been taken to ensure smooth counting across all centres.

The CEO outlined that on the counting day, strong rooms will be opened in presence of candidates, their authorized representatives, Returning Officers (ROs)/ Assistant Returning Officers (AROs), and ECI observers and the entire process will be videographed. He added that mobile phones will not be allowed inside the counting centres.

The Polls in J&K were held in three phases from September 18 to October 1. Of the 90 seats in the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region, 24 voted in the first phase, 26 in the second and 40 in the third.

There were 873 candidates in the fray for 90 seats, the fate of whom has been sealed. In all three phases, J&K recorded 63.88 per cent, less than the 65.52 percent recorded in the 2014 assembly elections. Out of the 25 counting centers, SKICC in Srinagar would be the centre of focus where counting of eight crucial seats of Srinagar district will be held.

There were many political stalwarts in the fray that include National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah contested from Budgam and Ganderbal assembly segments, Sajad Gani Lone of People's Conference from Handwara and Kupwara seats, Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hamid Karra from Shalteng and BJP J&K president Ravindra Raina from Nowshera seat.

The other prominent faces in the fray were Congress general secretary Ghulam Ahmad Mir from Dooru, PDP leaders Waheed Para from Pulwama), Iltija Mufti from Bijbehara, Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari from Chanapora, CPI(M) veteran Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami from Kulgam and former deputy chief ministers Muzaffar Hussain Baig, Ali Muhammad Sagar, Abdur Rahim Rather and Tara Chand.

Interestingly, exit polls on Saturday suggested NC was on the front seat in Kashmir and BJP in Jammu. BJP has claimed that it will win a full majority. There is a need of 48 seats for forming the government. However, five nominated MLAs will be the king-makers vis-à-vis government formation in J&K even as parties like NC and Congress have opposed the move on the pretext that only elected government can nominate the five MLAs that has to be later approved by the Lieutenant Governor.

Workers of many political parties were seen buying sweets and garlands late night Monday to celebrate the victory of their favourite candidates. However, no activity was seen at the offices of major political parties like NC, PDP and Congress regarding celebrations. (KNO) will never be a BJP government in the region," she asserted. Heavy security arrangements have been

put in place at all 20 counting centres and district headquarters across Jammu and Kashmir for Tuesday's vote count. This was the first Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

Delay Govt Formation

of the recently concluded elections to the J&K legislative assembly.

Every regional party, Rashid claimed, is aware of the fact that the J&K legislative assembly will have limited powers as long as it is under federal government's control.

The north Kashmir MP encouraged all regional parties, including the INDIA Bloc allies, to at least come together on the restoration of J&K's statehood before the formation of the next government.

"Since the election results will be known tomorrow, I urge the winning party or the alliance to delay forming the government and to put pressure on the centre to restore statehood to J&K. My humble request to INDIA Bloc allies, which include the PDP, NC, and other parties like the PC and Apni Party to at least come together for the common good," Rashid said addressing a press conference here.

The India Alliance, he claimed, has its own compulsions and that's what made the Congress party to remain tightlipped over the issue of Article 370.

Er Rashid did not hold back in criticizing the Gupkar Alliance and what he called 'socalled regional parties' for their perceived lack of efforts to advance statehood to J&K. Out on interim bail till October 12, Rashid served five and a half years of incarceration in Delhi's Tihar jail in connection with the alleged terror funding case.

"As far as the issue of statehood is concerned, AIP cutting across party lines and ideology is ready to extend support. While I do not intend to inflame feelings, I would like to advise the parties to delay forming a government until J&K's statehood is restored, regardless of whichever party gains the majority or emerges as the single-largest," he added.

Rashid said that it is the duty of Omar Abdullah and every other leader to advocate for the restoration of J&K's statehood, citing the NC vice president's pre-election statement that the J&K assembly will be a weaker body than a municipality and the CM must get the LG's approval before making any decision.

In reaction to the center's decision to discontinue the Darbar Move ritual, which he claimed was strengthening cultural and emotional bonds among residents of Jammu and Kashmir, Rashid questioned which region would serve as the state's capital when the government is formed.

"There is confusion everywhere in J&K; people find it difficult to get their work done on an official level. Thus, it is equally important to revive Darbar in order to strengthen the emotional and cultural ties that bind the people of the two regions together," he said, adding, I fail to understand which region would serve as J&Ks capital.

Demanding arrest of the controversial Hindu priest Yati Narsighananad under UAPA, Rashid said although his derogatory remarks against prophet Muhammad (SAW) does not make any difference, his arrest under UAPA is necessary to maintain communal harmony in the country. Rashid also urged the Election Commission of India (ECI) to register his Awami Itihad Party, which he claimed performed well in the Lok-Sabha elections. "Why don't you (ECI) register my party? We ran for office in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections under the name of AIP, and we also won the North Kashmir seat handily in the recently held Lok Sabha elections and also contested the just concluded assembly elections under the same banner. Why is my party being singled out for discrimination while the DPAP, Apni Party, and other smaller parties are allowed to register?" Rashid guestioned and hoped that the poll body would respond and address the issue on priority.

Justice Dhingra told PTI.

On the issue, senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan said the Centre should not be interfering in the political process in the UT as such actions bury the functioning of the elected governments.

Supreme Court advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey referred to the 2018 judgement of the apex court which had upheld the Centre's decision to nominate three members to Puducherry Assembly by the then LG Kiran Bedi.

He, however, said the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019, which was amended in 2023, was "unclear" over the issue whether the nominated MLAs will have a role in the government formation.

In response to a question whether the power of Jammu and Kashmir's LG to nominate five MLAs has to be guided by the aid and advice of the council of ministers, senior advocate Sankaranarayanan said this was answered by the top court in the context of Puducherry being a UT and property of the Union.

"As far as Kashmir is concerned, once the Supreme Court has decided to accept the solicitor general's statement that it will be reverted to full statehood, this question cannot apply. It was conceded that the conversion of a state to a Union Territory is impermissible, and so Kashmir cannot be likened to Puducherry," he said.

"In any event, it is about time that this kind of political interference by the Centre with the functioning of elected governments is given a proper burial. We have seen how administration in Delhi and Puducherry has come to a standstill, seriously affecting the rights of citizens," the senior lawyer said.

Referring to the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act and Article 239A of the Constitution, Supreme Court advocate Dubey said the Act provides for nomination of five members -- two women, two from migrant community and one from POJK refugees - to state assembly.

"But it is 'unclear/silent' on the issue of nominated members' voting rights during 'government formation or vote of no confidence'," he said, adding, the provision came when there was no assembly existing in the UT.

Referring to the 2018 verdict in the Puducherry case, he said it was held that the Union government is not required to consult the state for nominating members to the assembly and the nominated members have the same right to vote as the elected members.

The Congress, the National Conference and the PDP have opposed the nomination of the five members before government formation in J&K.

In August 2019, Article 370 -- which gave J&K special status -- was revoked and the state was divided into two UTs.

The J&K Assembly is modelled on the Puducherry Assembly where three nominated members function at par with elected MLAs and have voting rights.

Opposition Eyes

in the union territory, sources said on Monday.

The Congress, National Conference and the PDP have opposed the nomination of the five members before government formation, and threatened to move the the LG. That is the normal procedure.

"What they want to do, I do not know. However, if they do it, we will go to the Supreme Court. What is the point in making the government, if the Lord Sahib remains here? We have to fight against all this," Abdullah said in Srinagar on Monday.

PDP leader Iltija Mufti termed the Centre's move a "brazen pre-result rigging" of the polls.

"All of the five MLAs nominated by LG are BJP members or associated with the party. Brazen pre result rigging & shameful manipulation (sic)," she posted on X.

The sources said that for the first time in Jammu and Kashmir, five nominated members of the assembly may have a significant role in forming the new government.

The LG is expected to nominate these members based on the advice of the Union Home Ministry, the sources said.

If the five members are nominated before the formation of the government, the J&K assembly's strength will be 95, increasing the majority threshold to 48 seats to form a government.

The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly is modelled on the Puducherry Assembly where three nominated members function at par with elected MLAs and have voting rights.

Former Puducherry LG Kiran Bedi's decision to nominate three members to the UT assembly without consulting the then Congress-led government was challenged in the Madras High Court, and later in the Supreme Court in 2017-2018.

The Puducherry government argued that the LG ought to have consulted the chief minister before nominating the MLAs, but the top court found no illegality in the LG nominating the member.

Members Will

candidates will also be theirs," Yousuf said here.

He said the five nominated members include BJP leaders Ashok Kaul, Rajni Sethi, Fareeda Khan, Sunil Sethi and the BJP's J-K Mahila Morcha president.

Asked if the names have been approved, Yousuf said "It has been stamped already. We are already winning five seats."

The remark came as several parties said they would oppose any move to nominate the five members during the government formation process.

'Why Not?' Dr Farooq

thing be clear. I have done my chief minister's job. My problem will be how we make a strong government and how we fulfil the agenda that we have put before the people," he added.

Asked if the National Conference-Congress alliance will take support from the PDP if need be, Abdullah said "why not?"

"How does it matter? If we all work for the same thing, for improvement in the conditions of the people of the state, removing unemployment, removing all the distresses that have occurred in the last 10 years. First thing we should do is restore the freedom of the press. We should have the right to say what is true and what is not true. We can be rivals in elections but I have no objections and I am sure Congress will

have no objections," he said. The NC president said he was not aver

Sec 144 Around

system has been established to protect the counting process, and the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) will be transported to counting centres following ECI guidelines.

"To maintain law and order, Section 144 will be enforced outside the counting centres. Candidates will also have access to live streaming to monitor activities within the centres, ensuring transparency," he added.

Police officials have assured a secure and conducive environment for the counting process, reaffirming the commitment of both the police and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) to uphold democratic principles.

Meanwhile, the Traffic Police of Rural Kashmir have issued a traffic advisory for Baramulla on Vote Counting Day, advising motorists to avoid unnecessary travel toward GDC Baramulla.

Traffic Diversions

From Srinagar to Baramulla & Uri: Vehicles will be diverted at Sangrama via Fruit Mandi Sopore, Ladoora and Azad Gunj, leading to Main Town Baramulla and Uri.

From Uri to Baramulla & Srinagar: Traffic from Uri will be redirected at Khanpora Bridge via Azad Gunj, Ladoora, Fruit Mandi Sopore and Sangrama to the Srinagar-Baramulla highway.

Akbar Chowk and FCI Kralhar will serve as cutoff points for vehicles heading toward GDC Baramulla.

The authorities regret any inconvenience this may cause and have assured that smooth traffic management will be in place during the counting process. (KNO)

CAT Orders ACS

mere executive fait or administrative instructions "since pension and gratuity are not mere bounties or the same are not given out of generosity of the employer but an employee earns it from his/her long service rendered in the department."

To the contention by the authorities that it has come to the surface that Ahanger's DOB in some documents issued by the J&K BOSE is shown as 11-06-1959 and in one of the documents it has been recorded as 1967, the Bench said, "This Court is confining itself to the implementation of the judgement passed by the DB of this court on 08-05-2023, which judgement, as on date, has neither been reversed nor assailed by the respondents before any higher forum, as such, the same has attained finality...."

"....the respondents (authorities) have taken this plea after a lapse of more than 27 years and that too after the retirement of the petitioner (Ahanger). Moreover, during the entire service period of the petitioner, the respondents never raised any objection with regard to the issuance of that order, as such, it is not open to them to raise the issue now," the Bench said, underscoring, in light of the judgement by Apex Court, that when during the entire service period of an employee, no objections with regard to his/her appointment, was ever raised, then it is not open for the authorities to raise the issue after his/her retirement/death.

Plea In SC Seeks

Soayib Qureshi said. The application said that the legislative

J&K Poll Outcome

or a group of independent but could very well have a chief minister of its own, in all probability J&K's first Hindu chief minister. But if it falls under 20, and the Congress does well, then the BJP will have no option but to settle for a position of an opposition party.

So which way things are probably headed? It is still uncertain. There was no visible wave in favour of any party in the union territory, including the BJP. This creates the possibility of an outcome which could even go contrary to exit polls. For now, we can only keep fingers crossed and wait for things to clear up by Tuesday evening.

Party Leaders

surpass the majority mark," Raina told reporters.

"The people have voted for us, endorsing our vision for development and peace," he added.

Raina emphasised the "strong public support" for the BJP, citing the "large crowds" at the rallies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

He predicted a "crushing" defeat for the Congress.

However, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief Tariq Hameed Karra said the party's alliance with the NC had the edge.

"People have voted for the NC-Congress alliance as we expected. We are confident of forming the government in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

"From day one, we anticipated forming the government and this is also the expectation of the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

The NC echoed the same sentiment. Its provincial president for the Jammu region Rattan Lal Gupta said the NC-Congress alliance will form the next government, regardless of exit poll predictions.

"Most exit polls have given a clear mandate to the NC-Congress alliance with over 53 seats. The alliance is expected to win 20 to 24 seats in the Jammu region," Gupta said.

Meanwhile, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti has asserted that the next government in Jammu and Kashmir will be secular and not without her party's support.

"The government will be secular... without the PDP's support, no government will be formed in Jammu and Kashmir. There

Playing Straight

Kashmir to be extended.

"The man goes to Delhi for 24 hours and comes back to play straight into the hands of the BJP. The BJP would like nothing more than to extend central rule in J-K if they aren't in a position to form a government," Abdullah posted on X.

He was reacting to Rashid's appeal to all non-BJP parties to delay government formation as a tactic to put pressure on the Centre for restoration of statehood.

On National Conference president Farooq Abdullah's statement that NC will take PDP support if needed, Omar Abdullah said it was all premature speculation.

"They haven't extended support, they haven't offered support and we don't know what the voters have decided yet, so I really wish we could put a lid on all this premature speculation for the next 24 hours," the NC vice president said in another post on X.

Nomination Of 5

predicting a hung assembly in the Union territory and a vexatious question arises whether nominated MLAs will have a role in deciding the majority in the House.

On being asked about the LG's power to nominate five members and whether it can be exercised without the aid and advice of the council of ministers, former judge of Delhi High Court Justice (retd) S N Dhingra said one has to wait for the actual results of the election and the issue at this stage is premature.

"We can wait for the actual results as this question is dependent on the outcome,"

Supreme Court.

In August 2019, Article 370 -- which gave Jammu and Kashmir special status -- was revoked and the state was divided into two union territories.

According to section 15 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, "Notwithstanding anything in sub-section (3) of section 14, the Lieutenant Governor of the successor Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir may nominate two members to the Legislative Assembly to give representation to women, if in his opinion, women are not adequately represented in the Legislative Assembly".

The Act was amended in 2023

The amendment says: "After section 15 of the principal Act, the following sections shall be inserted, namely: 15A. Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (3) of section 14, the Lieutenant Governor of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir may nominate not more than two members, one of whom shall be a woman, from the community of Kashmiri Migrants, to the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly".

It also says, "15B. Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (3) of section 14, the Lieutenant Governor of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir may nominate one member from displaced persons from Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir to the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly."

These five nominated members will have the same powers and voting rights as other MLAs.

The Congress has already expressed it strong opposition to the nomination of five MLAs before the government formation in Jammu and Kashmir, dubbing any such move as an assault on democracy and the fundamental principles of the Constitution.

"We oppose the nomination of five MLAs by the LG before the government formation in Jammu and Kashmir. Any such move is an assault on democracy, the people's mandate, and the fundamental principles of the Constitution," Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) senior vice president and chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said on Friday.

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah said his party might go to the Supreme Court against any such move.

"The LG should first of all stay way from this process as a government is being formed. It is for the government to nominate people and send it (nominations) to to taking support of the independents as well but he would not go begging for it.

"I will not go to beg before them. If they feel they can strengthen the state, most welcome. It should be their initiative. They should want to do good for the people," he added.

The former chief minister also flayed the power given to the LG to nominate members.

"The LG should first of all stay away from this process as a government is being formed. It is for the government to nominate people and send it (nominations) to the LG. That is the normal procedure. What they want to do, I do not know. However, if they do it (give powers to LG), we will go to the Supreme Court. What is the point in making the government, if the Lord Sahib remains here? We have to fight against all this," Abdullah told reporters here.

The five reserved seats are for two women, two Kashmiri migrants and one for refugees from Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The former chief minister said while he does not have a magic wand to know whether the BJP will go ahead with it, they will not succeed in their designs.

"I wish I had a magic wand to know whether they will do it or not. I know what their intentions are but they will not succeed, try as much as they want," he said.

On the exit polls, Abdullah said he is not thrilled by these exercises.

"The exit polls can be wrong, they can be right also. What will really show the truth is when the boxes are opened and votes are counted. We are hopeful that the alliance will form a stable government. That is what we are looking for," he added.

On the expectations of people with the new government, he said the expectations are so high "that only God knows whether the new CM will be able even to sleep".

Abdullah also hit out at the BJP-led Centre for ignoring Jammu.

"I have just come back from Jammu, I have seen the abysmal condition of Jammu. I have seen the bad roads there, they don't have street lights and then they (BJP) think that Jammu is in its pocket. People of Jammu should understand where they have been taken. They used to abuse us that the NC government had discriminated against Jammu. Today, it is their people sitting in Delhi. How did they forget Jammu?" he asked. (PTI) assembly elections as well as Lok Sabha polls were conducted in J-K peacefully without any incident of violence, disturbance or any security concerns being reported.

"Therefore, there is no impediment of security concerns, violence or any other disturbances which would hinder or prevent the grant/restoration of the status of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir as had been assured by the Union of India in the present proceedings," the plea said. It said, "The non-restoration of the sta-

It said, "The non-restoration of the status of statehood of Jammu & Kashmir will result in Jammu & Kashmir being given a lesser form of elected democratic government, especially in light of the legislative assembly results being declared on October 8, 2024".

It submitted that despite the apex court's directions for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir "at the earliest and as soon as possible", no steps have been taken by the Centre to provide any timeline for the implementation of such directions.

"It is submitted that Jammu and Kashmir is being operated as a Union Territory for a period of almost five years now which has caused many impediments and grave losses to the development of Jammu and Kashmir and has affected the democratic rights of its citizens," it contended.

The application said that Jammu and Kashmir being an individual state having gone through many struggles and hardships requires a strong federal structure to help in developing the area and also celebrating its unique culture.

In its verdict in December last year, the apex court had held that Article 370, which was incorporated in the Indian Constitution in 1949 to grant special status to J-K, was a temporary provision and the President of India was empowered to revoke the measure in the absence of the Constituent Assembly of the erstwhile state whose term expired in 1957.

Justice Atul

with the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, hereby nominate Hon'ble Mr. Justice Atul Sreedharan, Judge of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh as Executive Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority," reads a notification issued by the Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (Legislation Section)

STATE

SSP Gbl Chairs Interaction Meeting At DPL



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With an aim to enquire about wellbeing and redress the grievances confronting the jawans, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ganderbal Wasim Qadri accom-panied by Addl. SP Ganderbal Malik Aijaz alongwith DySP DAR DPL Ganderbal chairs an interaction meeting with police personnel at DPL Ganderbal.

A police spokesman said in a statement SSP Ganderbal in his address asked the jawans to focus on their duties, so that the nefarious designs of anti-social & anti-national elements could be well checked in before.

He stressed upon all the officers and officials to gain public confidence and always be compassionate & helpful to the needy people. With regard to the wel-

fare measures of the officials, SSP Ganderbal assured that due care will be taken in this aspect too. Furthermore, SSP Ganderbal took inspection of different Sections viz. PCR, MT, Clothing, Equipment, Quarter Guard, KOT, Stores, Mess, Canteen cum Recreation Hall, MI Room, Crime Section, Barracks, MHC. He also paid rich floral tributes

to J&K Police Martyrs at Mar-

tyr's Gallery DPL Ganderbal. He stressed upon the supervisory officers and technical staff to work with more dedication in providing necessary services to the police personnel and the department. He also directed the officers to further improve the efficiency and monitor the work personally & impressed upon the officers to solve the problems and genuine grievances of their subordinates.

Warm, Dry Spell Hits Fruit Quality In Kashmir; **Growers Concerned**

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The ongoing warm and dry spell in Kashmir is severely impacting fruit quality. This has further lowered demand and added to the challenges faced by local growers. Fruit producers said the current weather conditions have stunted growth and led to quality deterioration, with sunburns causing considerable damage to the fruit.

Mohammad Yousuf, a fruit grower from Shopian, said that autumn temperatures this year are at least eight degrees higher than usual, which has adversely affected the quality of unharvested fruit. "Since June, there has been a lack of adequate rainfall, which has contributed to the decline in fruit quality," he said, adding that prolonged dry conditions have resulted in increased fruit fall.

another Abbas Ahmad, grower from Anantnag, expressed concern about the sunburns affecting their produce, which according to him has reduced market demand as consumers favour visually appealing fruit. "Orchards without irrigation facilities



are particularly affected, with most lacking adequate water-ing options," he said.

Without sufficient rain, our fruit trees are stressed. This has impacted the quality and flavour of the fruits," another grower lamented.

Growers said this year's fruit is softer due to the prolonged dry spell, which affects its shelf life, making long-term storage unfeasible. In addition to the dry weath-

er, growers said that hailstorms and strong winds have further damaged the fruit this season, which has compounded the impact on their vields. They said the combination of these factors is leading to a decrease in overall demand for the affected produce.

While quality fruits still command good prices, growers said the overall quantity of quality produce is down this year. They have called on the government to implement crop insurance schemes, saying this sector faces various challenges annually–(KNO)

2 Notorious Drug Peddlers Arrested In Sopore

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Acting tough against the drug peddlers, smugglers and to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Jammu and Kashmir police on Monday said to have arrested two notorious drug peddlers in Sopore and recovered Contraband substances from their possession.

A police party headed by SHO Police Station Tarzoo under the supervision of SDPO Sopore Sarfaraz Bashir at a checkpoint established at Sofi Akbar Road Chankhan intercepted and apprehended two persons identified as Muzafar Ahmad Marazi @Muzz Marazi (notorious drug peddler) son of Mohammad Akbar Marazi resident of Sofi Hamam Sopore and Ishfaq Ahmad Lone son of Abdul Majeed Lone resident of Wangam Bandipora, a police spokesman said in a statement.

During the search, five grams of contraband Heroin like substance was recovered from their possession. They have been arrested and shifted to



Police Station Tarzoo they remain in custody. Accordingly, police said that

a case under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Tarzoo and investigation has been initiated. It's pertinent to mention here that Muzafar Ahmad Marazi is involved in many cases of NDPS Act at different police stations.

"We urge the common masses that if you witness drug peddling or any other crime anywhere near you, feel free to contact the nearest police establishment or dial 112. People are requested to cooperate with police in curbing the menace of drugs from the society. We reassure the community members that police will act tough against the criminals as per law," police said.

CS Shows Concern Over Unfilled Seats In Certain Professional Courses



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Monday chaired a meeting of Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (BOPEE) during which he emphasised on optimal utilization of available slots of admissions in various professional courses including Engineering and B.Ed being offered by the colleges in the UT.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, GAD; Commissioner Secretary, IT; Secretary H&ME; Secretary, SDD; Secretary, ARI & Trainings; Chairperson, BOPEE and other concerned officers.

While taking note of the admission process by the professional board, the Chief Secretary impressed upon the concerned to look into the causes that results in less uptake of certain courses being offered by the professional colleges here. He called for carrying out a detailed analysis of the reasons behind this phenomenon and addressing the same at an earliest. He also suggested to list out the courses and colleges facing this situation and look into the position of faculty, infrastructure and other ancillary facilities available for imparting training in these specific trades. Dulloo urged the higher education department to make more efforts to create awareness among the students so that no seat remains vacant in these colleges. He said that the

it is time to introspect and take corrective measures wherever necessary

The Chief Secretary also reviewed development of online counselling portal for the Board, which is expected to be made ready by the end of this month by the NIC. He directed for launching it at an earliest so that from next session the admissions are exclusively made

through this portal only. Regarding the admission process the Chairperson, JK-BOPEE, Minu Mahajan, apprised the meeting that the timeline for filling of remaining seats as per the directions were issued and extended upto 31st of this month.

Giving details, it was added that out of the 1107 MBBS seats under UT quota 100% admissions had been made. Similarly, in the courses of BDS, MDS, BAMS, BUMS, BPT, B.Sc Nursing almost all seats had been

IGNOU Extends Last Date For Admission To October 15

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Keeping in view of the requests from the students across the country, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has further extended the last date for admission to its various programmes for the ongoing academic session to October 15, 2024 in order to accommodate potential learners who were unable to complete their admission formalities within the initially announced timeline. Prospective students who wish to enroll for the ongoing academic session are encouraged to take advantage of this extended deadline. This additional time offers an opportunity for those who may have faced challenges or delays in completing their applica-

tions earlier. The University offers approximately 300 Under Graduate and Master Degree Programs under ODL mode of education and 50 online programs. E-prospectus is available on IGNOU website for more information. Regional Director, Dr. A.H. Rizvi emphasized the university's commitment to providing accessible and flexible education opportunities to learners

across the Kashmir Division including the UT of Ladakh. Dr. Rizvi, said that this is the last opportunity for July 2024 admissions as the admission to all the academic programmes offered in Open Distance Learning or Online Learning mode for the July 2024 admission has been extended further till 15th October 2024 except for Semester based and Certificate programmes. For further inquiries or any

assistance, prospective students are advised to contact the regional center Srinagar or visit the official website i.e. ignou. ac.in or rcsrinagar.ignou.ac.in.

Rising Hajj Costs Push Kashmiris Towards Umrah

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Hajj remains one of the most cherished dreams for Muslims worldwide. But with the rising costs in recent years, this sacred journey is increasingly becoming inaccessible for many in the Kashmir region.

As over 35,000 Hajj applications were received in 2017 by Hajj authorities in Jammu and Kashmir, the current year has seen a drastic decline. Despite multiple extensions from Haj authorities for submitting applications, just over 3,500 applications were received for Hajj 2025.

At the same time, Umrah journey is witnessing a notable rise in popularity and demand in Kashmir region for being more flexible and less expensive. İlmrah ha

to perform Umrah, a pilgrimage that offers similar spiritual fulfillment but at a fraction of the cost.

"We performed Umrah last year, and it gave us immense peace," says Bashir. "The costs are manageable, and there is no time restriction. We could go when it was convenient for us.

Umrah's Growing Appeal

As Hajj costs rise, more opt for Umrah. The local travel agencies of Srinagar have seen the Umrah bookings increase steadily for the past few years. While the Hajj applications, on the other hand, have broken down dramatically.

Mohammad Younis, senior president Jammu and Kashmir association of Hajj and Umrah Companies told KNO that during the past few years they are witnessing a noticeable spike in Umrah, especially for those

the same trend. "Hajj costs have shot extremely high and people are opting for Umrah since it is more affordable. The packages for Umrah can go as low as Rs 1 lakh whereas Hajj packages are now over Rs 4 lakh. That's a huge difference

for families.". Majeed explains that the flexibility of Umrah also plays a role in its appeal. "Umrah can be performed at any time of the year, so people are not bound by specific dates. This makes it easier for those who want to go on pilgrimage but can't afford the rising costs of Hajj."

Future Outlook

in Haj applications.

A steep drop in Hajj applications from Kashmir has caused ripples of concern within the Jammu and Kashmir Hajj Committee. Officials concede that an increase in costs is a major factor behind any slump

"We are aware of the decline

in applications, and we are do-

ing everything we can to make

Hajj more accessible," says an official from the Hajj Com-

mittee. "But the reality is that

costs have gone up globally,

not just Kashmir and that has

With more and more Kash-

miris opting for Umrah in

preference to the Haj, this

trend underlines a broader

shift in the religious travel

pattern in the region. For

many Kashmiris, the dream of

Haj continues to remain alive,

but untill costs would be more

affordable, Umrah seems the

For now, the streets of Mec-

ca and Medina will have fewer

Kashmiri Hajjis, but the spirit

of devotion remains strong.

Umrah provides a meaningful

alternative for those seeking a

Hajj," Bashir Ahmad concludes.

"One day, Insha'Allah, we will

make it. But till then, we are

grateful for the opportunity to

perform Umrah and feel close

We haven't lost hope on

connection with faith.

to the Almighty–(KNO)

preferred path.

impacted pilgrimage.'

Kashmir's Wedding Season: A Plastic Plague?

Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: As the wedding season is in full swing in Kashmir, concerns are rising about the widespread use of plastic, particularly in the form of bottled water, soft drinks and plastic coffee mugs at cafes. Speaking to Kashmir Observer, senior medics and researchers warned about the potential health hazards caused by microplastic contamination, which is increasingly found in plastic packaging and containers.

Dr. Idrees Ahmed Wani, Assistant Professor of Food Technology at the University of Kashmir, highlighted the alarming levels of microplastics in everyday plastic containers.

"When we consume food or drinks from plastic containers, we ingest not only microplastics but also chemicals used in the production of plastics," he said.

Research has shown that a single litre of water from a plastic bottle can contain up to two to three lakh microplastic particles, which can pose significant health risks. "The exact impact of these particles on human health is still being researched, but early indications suggest serious concerns," Wani said.

Dr Wani further cited troubling findings from cardiology, where doctors studying heart blocks discovered that, in addition to fat, the blocked arteries were composed of various plastic materials, including polyethylene terephthalate (PET), a common plastic used in bottles. "Around fifty percent of the heart blocks were found to contain plastics," Dr. Idrees stated, pointing to the potential link between the rise in heart problems and increased plastic consumption,



which can vary depending on individual habits.

He also warned against the use of evaporated salt, which is prepared by solar dehydration of ocean or seawater. "Ocean water often contains microplastics, and during evaporation, these microplastics remain in the salt. Therefore, evaporated salt is more likely to contain microplastics than rock salt. We must avoid allowing plastics to enter our food chain," he stressed.

Supporting these concerns, prominent Kashmiri endocrinologist Dr. Shariq Masoodi recently took to social media to speak about the dangers of bottled and mineral water. He referenced a study conducted in Austria, which revealed that individuals consuming more mineral water had higher pressure, potentially blood linked to plastic contamination in bottled water.

Dr. Masoodi suggested that while certain plastics like HDPE (recycle code #2), LDPE (#4), and PP (#5) are considered safer and less likely to release microplastics into water, no plastic is entirely risk-free. "Even BPA-free bottles can release microplastic particles over time. To minimAAeusable bottles made of stainless steel or glass, which do not have the same issues as plastic," he advised.

attractive alternative holy journey for many Kashmiri Muslims in comparison to Hajj, a holy journey which must be performed at a specific time of year and carries a heavier price tag.

RISING COSTS OF HAJJ

The most salient factor behind falling Hajj applications is rising cost. All of which add up to airfare and other logistical costs, makes Hajj unaffordable for a large section of the population.

We have always dreamed of going for Hajj", says Ghulam Rasool Bhat, a retired government employee from Srinagar. Adding he says that the costs have doubled in the last few years and that what used to be around Rs2 lakh has now crossed Rs 4 lakh. "For a middle-class family

like mine, it's almost impossible now", says Bhat.

Bhat said that he and his wife had been saving their earnings for years now to fulfill their Hajj dream, but that the sharp price hike forced them to reconsider their plans. Instead, they decided who cannot afford the Hajj pilgrimage due to the rising costs.

"Hajj has it's own Islamic values, but due to the rising costs the holy pilgrimage is becoming beyond the reach of a common person. To experience this spiritual journey, people are opting Umrah now", he said.

Younis added that during the last three years, over sixty thousand people have gone for the Umrah pilgrimage and that every year around 15,000 to 20,000 go for the holy journey.

"There is a starting slab of around 1.25 lac for a 20-21 day Umrah journey. However, this was not a norm earlier as people would hardly go for such a holy journey. Our registered and associated operators have contributed a lot for framing the Umrah packages", he added.

According to the Jammu and Kashmir Haj Committee, this year's applications for Hajj came down to a low of more than 55% as compared to the previous year.

Abdul Majeed, a travel agent that has been organizing Hajj and Umrah tours also credits

No Changes In Sarpanch Eligibility Criteria: RDD&PR

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Rural Development Department and Pancĥayati Raj, Jammu & Kashmir, has strongly refuted claims circulating on social media regarding new qualifications for Sarpanch candidates in the Union Territory. A viral social media post

alleged that the J&K government had issued a notification under "J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 under Section 6, 2022," introducing new eligibil-

ity criteria for those aspiring to become Sarpanches. The post claimed that candidates would need to be permanent residents of J&K, be at least 25 years old, and have a minimum educational qualification of 12th pass, among other

requirements. However, the Department has categorically denied these claims, terming the news entirely false and fabricated.

In response, the Department has emphasized that no new notification has been issued and that the current eligibility criteria remain as they have been under the J&K Panchayati Raj Act of 1989.

The RDD has also clarified that any changes or amendments to this Act would be announced through official channels, not through unverified social media posts.

The RDD has cautioned social media platform users against spreading fake news stories related to changes in local governance structures or election processes.

filled by the Board through counselling process. Besides, the courses like B.E/B.Tech having around 600 seats in government colleges and B.Ed having 330 seats in government run institutions had got 410 and 229 seats filled till date.

It was further revealed that certain relaxations had been given in admission process besides extending the cut off date for easement of the students. It was added that vigorous information campaigns had also been launched so that the capacity of these institutions is utilized optimally and no seat remains vacant there.

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

candidates are moving outside

UT for seeking admission in

professional courses, therefore

GOs Finalize Arrangements For Vote Counting Process In B'la



Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: In preparation for the vote counting for the General Legislative Assembly Elections scheduled for tomorrow, October 8, 2024, General Observers along with the District Election Officer (DEO) visited the Indoor Sports Stadium in Khawjabagh, Baramulla, to inspect the final arrangements. The DEO informed that seven counting halls have been estab-

lished at the venue, with counting staff deployed through a randomization process in line with the Election Commission of India (ECI) guidelines. All staff members have undergone necessary training to ensure the vote counting proceeds efficiently.

As part of the security and

transparency measures, the entire process will be monitored through a robust CCTV surveillance system installed across the venue.

A fully functional Media Centre has also been established to ensure real-time updates and communication with the public. Furthermore, mobile deposit counters have been set up to facilitate the smooth handling of deposits for safe keeping

Additional facilities, including a communication room, public communication room, official communication room, and an Observers room, have been established to ensure seamless coordination and communication throughout the event.

SPORTS

Legends League Cricket Playoffs 2024 To Begin Wednesday At Bakshi Stadium

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With more and more former international cricketers arriving at the Srinagar Airport, the Legends League Cricket 2024 is all set to begin its final leg at Bakshi Stadium from October 9. Many are calling the league matchups the biggest event in Kashmir's cricketing history in the last 40 years.

The newly renovated Bakshi Stadium is set to host fans for seven T20 games till October 16 featuring several legends of the game like Chris Gayle, Hashim Amla, Irfan Pathan, Yusuf Pathan, Shikhar Dhawan, Dinesh Karthik, Mohammad Kaif, Harbhajan Singh, Suresh Raina, Upul Tharanga, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Ross Taylor, Ian Bell and many others.

Thus far, Southern Super Stars led by Martin Guptill and Karthik topped the league tables with five wins and one loss in six games. And it will be the league leaders who will



- October 14: (Semifinal) Loser Qualifier vs Winner Of Eliminator - 7:00 PM
- October 16: (Final) Winner Qualifier vs Winner Semi -7:00 PM

TICKETS & PRICES

The organisers have released the ticket price of the playoff matches. Baskhi Stadium has been categorized in seven blocks, with Black A, B, C, D, E, F and Block G. Here's the amenities certain seats will have and their corresponding prices:

Central Pavilion Left - Starting from Rs. 2,499. This comes with 'Seating in VIP area Next to Player Tunnel. Food Box Included."

Premium Seating South/North Pavilion - Starting from Rs. 999. This category has seating next to VIP Area near dugout.

Stand Seating - Starting from Rs. 399. This seating arrangement has Open Clear View, per the organisers.

The games can livestreamed on FanCode.

UT Level Wushu Championship For Girls Concludes In Budgam



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSSO) Budgam concluded the Inter-Division UT Level Wushu Championship for girls in the Under-17 and Under-19 age categories at the Sports Stadium. Chrari-Sharief, on Monday. The event saw enthusiastic participation from talent-

ed young various divisions, show-

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honor

The championship was The closing ceremony

a testament to the dedication and hard work of both the athletes and the organizing team. It provided a platform for

their prowess u, furthering the competition and fitness among

standing performances.

1eir out-

Kashmir Marathon: Div Com Reviews Overall Progress

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri on Monday held a meeting to review the progress regarding preparations for the successful conduct of Kashmir Marathon 2024.

The event, set to being on October 20, will have two categories: the seven-hour long Full Marathon and the Half Marathon which is three-hour long. Over two thousand registrations have been made from across the country and various other nations.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner SMC, Dr Owais Ahmad; Director Tourism, VC LCMA, ADC Srinagar, SSP Traffic, Commandant SDRF, Srinagar, Director Health Services Kashmir, officers KPDCL, R&B, Youth Services & Sports, and other concerned departments.

On the occasion, Div Com reviewed ar-



rangements at the venue with respect to electricity, sanitation, Aid Centres, toilet facilities and seating arrangements. The meeting deliberated over the selection of different patches of route and establishment of Aid Stations after every 250 meters.

The meeting also discussed the traffic plan to ensure smooth conduct of historic event in Srinagar.

Div Com also reviewed the readiness of water ambulances in the Dal Lake and evacuation plan during any medical exigency.

UT Level Tournaments Conclude At GHSS Girls Kishtwar



Hot TAKES

'India Will Come To Pakistan For Champions Trophy'



Dakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi is confident that the Indian team will travel to Pakistan for next year's ICC Champions Trophy.

'Indian team mujhe puri umeed hai. Abhi tak koi aisi cheej nahi hai jiski wajeh se vo postpone karey ya cancel karey. Toh sari teams aayengi (I am confident that the Indian team will come to Pakistan. Till now there has been no incident which might force the postponement or cancellation of the Champions Trophy, so all the teams will definitely come),' Naqvi said during a media interaction in Lahore. The BCCI has not yet confirmed India's participation

in the Champions Trophy, which is slated to be held in Pakistan in February-March.

BCCI Vice-President Rajeev Shukla said last week India's participation in the Champions Trophy will depend on government approval.

Mbappe Slammed For Skipping France Duty

France captain Kylian Mbappe is facing criticism in his home country for skipping Les Bleus' Nations League games against Israel and Belgium while being available to play for Real Madrid. The forward picked up a muscle injury



last month but made his return to the pitch in the Champions League last Wednesday.

France coach Didier Deschamps left Mbappe out of the squad he announced on Thursday, saying the 25-year-old lacked preparation, having played too few matches.

Mbappe started Real's La Liga game against Villarreal on Saturday.

"Either you're injured, and you don't play with your club and you're not called up in the national team," former France international Maxime Bossis told French sports daily L'Equipe on Monday.

"But when you come off the bench in the Champions League and you start a league game, it makes things fuzzy."

Ten Hag Not Stressed As United Off To Worst EPL Start

N *M* anchester United manager Erik ten Hag said he

casing their skills and sportsmanship. was graced by Shakeel ur Rehman, a member of the Activity Section DYS-SO Budgam, and Bashir

young athletes to demnners

ANANTNAG: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Anantnag organized the Fit India Freedom Run in Zone Shangus on Mondya. This initiative, held under the larger banner of the Fit India program, witnessed participation from at least 150 students boys and girls, YSS Staff and sport analysts.

Observer News Service

The run was flagged off from Datinag and finished at Buchan.

Event reflected the core



objectives of the Fit Inawareness through active participation in sports and dia initiative, promoting physical well-being and cleanliness drives.



Observer News Service

KISHTWAR: The Inter-Division UT Level Tournaments, organised by the Department of Youth Services & Sports, Kishtwar, concluded on Monday at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Girls Kishtwar.

The tournament brought

from across Jammu & Kashmir to compete in thrilling matches of Kho-Kho (U-17 and U-19 Boys) and Volleyball (U-14 Girls). The event was super-

vised by District Youth Services and Sports Officer Kishtwar Jaffer Haider Sheikh. The Chief Guest at the

closing ceremony was Chief Education Officer together young athletes

Kishtwar Javaid Ahmed In Kho-Kho, U-17 Kashmir Division triumphed over Jammu, whereas in Kho-Kho U-19 Boys, the Jammu Division secured victory against Kashmir. In the Volleyball U-14

Girls Finale, Jammu dominated the volleyball finals, winning against Kashmir with a commanding 9-point advantage.

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tion about Ten Hag's

with two win

and Sunday

as the club's senior eam's worst start in g a 0-0 draw at Aston

place on eight points in all competitions l by media specula-

"We are all on board together, on one page, we know what we are working through it's a long-term process," Ten Hag said.

"We have come through two very tough away games (including Thursday's 3-3 Europa League draw at Porto)

"This is a team, we showed the belief and faith we have.'



In our latest podcast, we present Irshad Mushtag, founder of MI Securities. In addition, he is a financial expert who has helped countless individuals and businesses navigate complex financial landscapes. In this episode, we discussed different investment strategies, personal finance tips, and wealth building. The full video will be released soon on our YouTube channel. Subscribe Kashmir Observer channel for the latest updates.