

'I've been fit since January'
 - Hardik confirms he will bowl in IPL 2024

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Ramadan boosts sales for Kashmir's bakeries and pickle vendors

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Lt Governor Addresses The Inaugural Ceremony Of 'Goonj-2024' At Jammu University

In The 21st Century, Ideas Will Be The New Wealth Of The Nations: LG Manoj Sinha

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 19: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today addressed the inaugural ceremony of 'Goonj-2024' a multi-genre mega festival hosted by University of Jammu.

Goonj-2024 has been curated to celebrate vibrant and diverse culture, offers educational institutions to highlight their strengths, promote collaboration and contribute to strengthen the educational landscape in J&K UT.

The Lt Governor congratulated the entire team of University of Jammu for providing a unique platform to the students to express their creativity, showcase their talents and engage in a dynamic learning environment.

He called upon the Universities and



the educational institutions to replicate the important initiatives of University of Jammu, such as Design Your Degree, College on Wheels and Goonj program which have become the medium of lifelong learning, new discovery, and a powerful instrument to ignite creativity within.

"In the 21st Century, ideas will be the new wealth of the nations. The role of a University and College Campus will expand further. They will no longer be seen as an academic institution. They will be known as the base to create young minds, who will change the world," the Lt Governor said.

He said, the University campus should be known for collaboration and inspiring creativity for change

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Lt Governor Chairs A Review Meeting Of Health & Medical Education Department

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 19: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today chaired a review meeting of Health and Medical Education Department with the senior officials and Principals of Government Medical Colleges. Heads of Departments also participated in the meeting.

The Lt Governor called upon officials and all the stakeholders to focus on the goal of 'Health for All' and ensure healthcare services are efficient, effective and equitable.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

NEWS BRIEF

Police Attach Drug Peddler's Property In Kulgam

SRINAGAR, MAR 19: Police attached property of a notorious drug peddler under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in Jammu Kashmir's Kulgam district on Tuesday.

Police said a single storied residential house worth approximately Rs 10.14 lakh and measuring over 976 square feet of a notorious drug peddler was attached under the act.

The drug peddler has been identified as Ghulam Mohammad Mir alias Gull Kasai, a resident of Bugam.

The property was identified as illegally acquired property during the course of investigation/enquiry

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

12-Year-Old Braves Leopard Attack To Save Younger Brother

BUDGAM, MAR 19: In a daring act of bravery, a twelve-year-old boy risked his life to rescue his younger brother from a leopard attack in central Kashmir's Budgam district.

The incident happened as the two brothers were playing cricket in their yard during iftar time on Monday evening.

"We were playing when suddenly I saw something moving suspiciously near our house. Before I knew it, the leopard pounced on my little brother," recounted Aqib Javed, a fourth-grade student, speaking with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

With no time to spare and his hands

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Doda Police Recover Rs 3 Lakh Stolen Through Cyber Fraud

JAMMU, MAR 19: Police in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district recovered over Rs three lakh stolen through cyber frauds.

Police said there were two complainants of cyber fraud which were solved by the investigators.

Giving details Police said that on February 13, a complaint was received by the Cyber Crime Investigation Unit (CCIU) of the District Police Doda, from Ajay Singh a resident of Tondwah Doda that he was duped of Rs, 85,000 through online fraud.

Similarly, another complaint

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Light To Moderate Rain, Snow Over J&K During March 21-22: MeT

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 19: Meteorological Centre Srinagar on Tuesday predicted light to moderate rain and snow at many places over Jammu and



Kashmir during March 21 and 22.

The MeT office said that the weather will remain generally cloudy on March 21 and 22, with the possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at many places with thunder, lightning, and gusty winds over the plains of Kashmir and Jammu division.

The weather will generally remain dry on March 23, while it

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

'SHAKTI' REMARKS: OPPOSITION INDI ALLIANCE ONLY TARGETS HINDUISM, SAYS PM MODI

HT News Network

SALEM (TN), MAR 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday kept up the attack on the INDIA bloc over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Shakti' remark, saying the opposition alliance displayed its "ill-intention" by declaring to destroy it.

The opposition alliance, of which the Congress and



the DMK are key constituents, repeatedly insults Hinduism but never targets any other faith, he said, addressing a BJP rally here.

"INDI alliance people repeatedly deliberately insult Hindu faith; every statement made by them against it is well thought out," he said.

In Hinduism, Shakti

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

PM Modi Crafted Naya Bharat To Make It Vishwa Guru: Rana

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 19: Senior BJP leader Mr. Devender Singh Rana today said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has crafted the idea of Naya Bharat rooted in assertive nationalism, decisive growth and development, global prominence with resolve



to make Viksit Bharat as Vishwa Guru.

"Yashasvi Prime Minister has led the country to a renaissance based on national pride, cultural and civilizational revivalism based on integral humanism and the traditional ethos of Vasudeva Kutamkam",

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

School Education Department Demotes Teachers With Fake Degrees

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 19: The School Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir has demoted two teachers, Anita Sharma and Raman Chanyal, who secured promotions using fraudulent postgraduate degrees, reverting them back to teaching roles.

Reports inform that an investigation

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Tulip Garden To Open For Visitors On Mar 23

Div Com Kashmir Reviews Arrangements

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 19: The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri today convened a meeting to review the arrangements at Asia's largest Tulip Garden for visitors.

The meeting was attended by Director Floriculture, SSP Traffic Srinagar, Joint Commissioner SMC, officers of Tourism department and Srinagar Smart City Limited.



The meeting held threadbare discussion regarding opening of garden for

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

DGP Reviews Security Of Newly Commissioned Railway Line In Ramban

HT News Network

BANIHAL/JAMMU, MAR 19: Director General of Police R R Swain on Tuesday reviewed the security of newly commissioned railway line between Banihal and Sangaldan in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district, officials said.



The 48.1 km long Banihal-Sangaldan stretch along the country's most ambitious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project was dedicated to the people by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Jammu on February 20.

Out of the total 272 km

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

SDG Of BSF Reviews Operational Preparedness Along LoC In Kupwara

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 19: Special Director General (DG) of Border Security Force's Western Command in Chandigarh Y B Khurania visited forward areas along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir and reviewed operational preparedness, officials said on Tuesday.

The visit comes at a time when the vigil along the LoC in J&K has been stepped up with the announcement of the Lok Sabha polls, sources said.

Additionally, the counter infiltration grid

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

'400 Paar' Is Common People's Demand: Dr Jitendra

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 19: "400 Paar" for Modi is common people's demand, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh today said.

At the same time, "Udhampur 4 lakh Paar" is common people's demand in Udhampur-Kathua-Doda Lok Sabha constituency which is all set to beat its own victory margin record, he said.

It is not only the BJP worker appealing for 400 plus mandate, but the common citizen of India who wants a third term for Narendra Modi to lead India on the path to

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



Crime Branch Recovers Rs 1.10 Crore Misappropriated By Employee Of Private Company In Jammu

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 19: The Crime Branch of Jammu and Kashmir Police achieved a major success during multi-city raids with the recovery of a substantial amount of Rs 1.10 crore misappropriated by an employee of a private company in Jammu, officials on Tuesday said.

The accused, Sheraz Mir, who was then working as an accountant of Jamkash Vehicleleads, was arrested after he committed criminal breach of trust and cheating by transferring a substantial amount of Rs 1.32 crore into his own bank accounts from the funds of the company, they said.

The officials said that a case was registered on July 19, 2022, on the written complaint of the Executive Director of Jamkash Vehicleleads and it came to be

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

In The 21st.....

makers. In order to make it work efficiently for the benefit of society, we must focus on relevant subjects, research and innovation to contribute in transformation of villages and towns, he added.

At the inaugural ceremony, the Lt Governor impressed upon the teaching community to reinvent classroom learning and mentor the students to unleash their true potential.

To make educational institutions relevant in the future, teachers should ignite the creativity within the students and make their consciousness pure, simple, easy and independent, the Lt Governor said.

"Education should help the students to develop the consciousness full of courage and it should be future-oriented. The education should inspire the students on adventurous exploration and passion for generating new ideas, new research and innovations," he added.

The Lt Governor further emphasized on implementing National Education Policy 2020 in letter and spirit and to connect the young generation with India's rich culture and ancient knowledge systems.

The Lt Governor visited the photo exhibition of College on Wheels and stalls put up by various educational institutions and departments.

He said the 'College on Wheels' initiative helps students to uncover their unique and unmatched personality and achieve the potential that they can be. He further observed that the initiative provides lifetime opportunity to students to learn through experience, focus on interdisciplinary collaboration and creativity.

Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chairman Higher Education Council J&K, while speaking on the occasion, emphasized that higher education institutions should make sure their activities and initiatives have a positive impact on society.

The Lt Governor also released a souvenir of the Fest and publications related to College on Wheels initiative and project report of the University of Jammu. A documentary about 'College on Wheels' was showcased on the occasion.

Earlier, the Lt Governor took salute at an impressive march past by the contingent of students and also paid tributes to General Zorawar Singh.

Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor Jammu University; Prof. Bechan Lal, Vice Chancellor Cluster University of Jammu; Heads of various Universities and Educational Institutions, faculty members, senior officials and students in large number were present.

Lt Governor.....

He reviewed the utilization of funds under various schemes, progress of new Government Medical Colleges and other key health infrastructure projects in the Union Territory.

The Lt Governor directed the officials to conduct an analysis of the facilities extended to the patients in Hospitals and Health centres and work out a strategy to further improve the functioning of the healthcare facilities.

He said the principals must ensure the optimal utilization of medical equipments in their respective hospitals and 3-Tier faculty structure should be implemented without any delay.

The Lt Governor directed for increasing the utilization of AB-PMJAY - SEHAT cards in government-run hospitals, besides streamlining of procurement of medicines and online appointments in the hospitals.

On the progress of Cancer Institute Jammu, the Chair was informed that the essential equipments have been procured and the facility will be made fully operational in the next few months.

Directions were issued for monitoring of the functioning of J&K Medical Supplies Corporation Limited and Drug de-addiction centres, and taking dedicated measures to control diseases like Tuberculosis (TB) and AIDS.

The Lt Governor also reviewed the human resources in Hospitals, Para Medical & Nursing Colleges. He directed that the vacant posts in SKIMS should be referred to JKSSB and PSC.

The meeting discussed important matters related to healthcare projects including Cancer Institute SKIMS, Srinagar; Bone & Joint Hospital Jammu; extension of Labour Room at SMGS Hospital, Jammu; Construction of 200 Bedded additional block at LD Hospital, Srinagar; Operationalization of Integrated Ayush Hospital at Harwan, and the achievements registered under National Health Mission and Ayushman Bhav campaign.

Sh Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Lt Governor; Sh Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Sh Santosh D Vaidya, Principal Secretary, Finance Department; Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Secretary, Health; Administrative Secretaries; Principals of GMCs, HoDs and senior officials attended the meeting, in person and through virtual mode.

'Shakti' Remarks.....

means "Matru shakti, naari shakti," he said, referring to women power.

"INDI alliance which has the Congress and the DMK says they will destroy this." Shakti refers to the divine and manifests

in the form of various deities in the state like Mariamman, Madurai Meenakshiamman and Kanchi Kamakshiamma, he said.

National poet Subramania Bharathi worshipped mother India as 'Shakti,' he said.

"Tamil Nadu will punish those who talk of destroying Shakti. I am a shakti upasak (worshipper)," Modi said. (Agencies)

Light To.....

will turn generally cloudy with light rain and snow at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir on March 24. It said and added that on March 26, the weather will again remain generally dry while partly cloudy with light rain and snow at a few places during March 27 and 28.

Currently, the weather is pleasant, with a bright sun shining over the Kashmir valley.

The night temperature improved at most of the stations, while the day temperature recorded 5-7 °C above normal in Kashmir Valley on the previous day.

Srinagar recorded a low of 2.2 °C against 3.2 °C recorded during the intervening nights of Monday and Tuesday. It was -2.2 °C below normal for the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir.

Qazigund on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway had a low of 2.2 °C, and the picnic spot of Kokernag in south Kashmir recorded a low of 3.5 °C on Tuesday.

Pahalgam had a low of -0.9 °C against the -1.3 °C recorded a day ago. It was -1.0 °C below normal for the famous tourist hot spot of south Kashmir.

Gulmarg settled at -1.0 °C against -2.3 °C the previous night, and it was 1.3 °C above normal for the famous ski resort of north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Tuesday.

Kupwara recorded a low of 1.5 °C against the 1.3 °C on the previous night. It was 1.6 °C below normal for the frontier Kashmir district on Tuesday, the MeT office said. (UNI)

PM Modi.....

Mr Devender Rana said in his keynote address at the discussion on book 'Modi Consensus: The Rediscovery of Bharat', organized by the Public Relations Society of India, Jammu Chapter at the Press Club here.

Author of the book, Dr. Swadesh Singh dwelt in length on the subject.

Reflecting on the book discussion, Devender Singh Rana said that Prime Minister Modi has indeed shown the path of development to the country.

"Patriotism has always existed among the people of India, but today, people not only talk about patriotism but also take pride in it", he said, adding that after becoming Prime Minister in 2014, Narendra Modi worked on the concept of 'My India is great', and now, every citizen of the country feels proud of 'My Bharat, Our Bharat, Proud Bharat'.

Mr Rana emphasized that he is a Hindu, and he takes pride in being a Hindu while respecting the great diversity of the nation. Everyone should take pride in their respective religions in true consonance of the glorious ethos of this great nation, he added.

More than 50 educators, researchers, journalists, and social workers from Jammu participated in this discussion.

The programme commenced with the lighting of the traditional lamp and inauguration with a welcome speech by the Vice Chairman of PRSI, Jammu Chapter Mr Opinder Sharma.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Swadesh Kumar said that this book is important for understanding current politics.

He highlighted the work done by Prime Minister Modi on issues like politics and policy-making in the past 5-10 years and the changes seen in international politics as a result.

Referring to the current political situation, he emphasized that any political party aiming to stay mainstream must focus on social issues, which is evident under Prime Minister Modi's leadership. He illustrated that when he speaks, it reflects the history of five thousand years. In today's political scenario, politicians have started bringing their personal spaces in the public domain, which is also the demand of the day. Merely slogans like 'eradicate poverty' won't work anymore; rather, actions for the poor and needy are necessary, he added.

On the occasion, Secretary of the Public Relations Society of India, Jammu Chapter, initiated a campaign to raise awareness among voters for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in 2024. The slogan of this campaign is, 'Value your vote, Vote for Values.'

In the book discussion, students from the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Jammu region, Kashish Saxena, Shubhra, and Harshita, presented a book review.

A vote of thanks was presented by senior journalist and Secretary of Jammu Press Club, Dinesh Manhotra.

The program was anchored by Ms. Komal Shangloo and Ms. Yashi Navya.

The discussion was attended by Regional Director, IIMC Jammu Prof. (Dr.) Anil Saumitra, Associate Professor, Center for Media Studies, JNU Dr. Archana Kumari, senior journalist Tejendra Singh Sodhi, senior journalist Sant Kumar Sharma, former director, Doordarshan Sanjeet Khajuria, retired Sq. Ldr. Anil Sehgal, Senior Journalist OP Sharma, Senior Journalist Pradeep Dutta, Senior Journalist Zorawar

Singh, Associate Professor, Jammu Central University, Dr. Umesh Kumar, Assistant Professor Dr. Bachcha Babu, Assistant Professor Manish Prakash, Assistant Professor Dr Ajay Singh, PRSI members Kamal Sharma, Dr. Gopal Parthasarathi, among other participants participated in the book discussion.

School Education.....

revealed that both teachers had obtained postgraduate degrees in Chemistry from Magadh University in 2003, despite the university not offering such a course at the time. As a result, Anita Sharma, currently serving as the Principal of Higher Secondary School in Sarna, Samba, and Raman Chanyal, Principal of Higher Secondary School in Machhedri, Kathua, have been directed to resume their duties as teachers.

The disciplinary action comes after it was discovered that Sharma and Chanyal had advanced in their careers based on falsified academic credentials. Sharma was promoted to the position of in-charge lecturer in 2004, following which she was posted at Government Higher Secondary School in Mansar. However, her failure to provide original qualification documents led to the suspension of her allowances between 2004 and 2006.

Official reports divulged that the School Education Department issued an order on March 5, instructing the Chief Education Officers of Samba and Kathua districts to reassign Sharma and Chanyal to teaching roles. Both teachers have been directed to report to the office of the Chief Education Officer in their respective districts. (KNO)

Tulip Garden.....

visitors, traffic management, parking space, sanitation, cleanliness drive, fixing of potholes, online ticketing and other arrangements.

The Asia's Largest Tulip Garden at the foothills of Zabarwan Hills will bloom with 17 lakh flowers of different varieties this year and will be thrown open for visitors on March 23.

Addressing the officers, Div Com directed concerned officer of Floriculture to facilitate online ticketing and put QR Code scanning facilities at different locations for the convenience of tourists.

He also enjoined the operation of colorful lights to enhance the visual vibrancy of the place.

Moreover, he directed SMC to conduct a sanitation and cleanliness drive at the garden besides ensuring availability of a separate mobile toilet facility for Ladies and Gents at the venue.

Further, he directed the concerned for repairing potholes on the roads leading to the garden.

The meeting was informed that the department has added 4 Kanals of additional parking space at the garden for the convenience of visitors.

DGP Reviews.....

USBRL project, the 161 km was earlier commissioned in phases with the first phase 118-km Qazigund-Baramulla section commissioned in October 2009 followed by 18-km Banihal-Qazigund in June 2013 and 25-km Udhampur-Katra in July 2014.

The work on the remaining railway line between Katra and Sangaldan is likely to be completed by May or June this year, the officials said.

The Director General of Police (DGP) reached Banihal railway station this afternoon and later conducted an inspection of the newly completed railway track before chairing a review meeting with senior railway and police officers at railway station Sangaldan, they said.

"I have come to review the security of this national prestigious project," said the police chief, who was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Additional Director General of Police, Jammu, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Ramban, SSP national highway traffic and railway, and government railway police officer. (Agencies)

SDG Of BSF.....

is also on a high alert as militants from across may try to infiltrate as the snow has started melting along the mountain passes.

Officials said the special DG reviewed the operational preparedness of LoC deployed units in Kupwara and also interacted with troops.

"Y B Khurania IPS, Special Director General, SDG HQ BSF (Western Command), visited forward areas of #Kupwara to review the operational preparedness of #LoC deployed Units. SDG interacted with troops & applauded them for their unwavering performance in challenging situations," BSF Kashmir said in a post on X.

The BSF is deployed along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir and it works under the operational control of the Army. (UNI)

'400 Paar' Is.....

"Viksit Bharat", he said. The Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh was interacting with media on the sidelines of a series of meetings with groups of citizens from all walks of life at his parliamentary office here.

In the last two terms Prime Minister Nar-

endra Modi has emerged as the tallest leader today, his word is heard with respect and awe by Heads of State across the world and because of him India's stature has grown and India's word is being taken seriously at the high table in all international fora, said Dr Jitendra Singh.

PM Modi's out-of-the-box decisions have given a push to different sectors including Space, Railways, Roads, Infrastructure and Electronics-Communication, and which has posted India's economy from 11th rank to 5th largest economy and is now on the verge of occupying 3rd rank, the Union Minister said.

"In 2014, when PM Modi took over, India stood as the world's tenth largest economy. In less than ten years, we jumped to 5th position. Hopefully this year it will emerge as the 4th largest economy and during PM Modi's 3rd term, India will be the world's 3rd largest economy, marching on to become the No.1 economy by 2047," he said.

During Financial Year 2023-24, Indian economy grew at 6 percent plus for the third successive year even as the global economy struggles to grow at around 3 percent. We are the third-largest fintech economy in the world after the USA and the UK, he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, India has the 3rd largest Start-up Ecosystem globally and is home to the fastest-growing unicorns. "From just about 350 StartUps in the year 2014, StartUps in India grew over 300 times in over ten years.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, PM Modi unleashed India's Space research by opening up the hitherto conservative and secluded sector. India has literally reached for the moon and beyond with the twin feats of Chardyaan-3 and Aditya L1 solar mission in the last year alone.

"India of 2024 is ready to take a giant leap, backed by its scientific acumen and technological prowess," he said.

As India entered the Amrit Kaal marking the 75th year of Independence, the Youth is the centre of focus of the Modi Government by empowering the Amrit-Peedhi, he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh further said, a recruitment drive for 10 lakh Central government jobs was fulfilled by the Modi Government under the Rozgar Mela.

Dr Jitendra Singh emphasised the need to effectively convey to the common masses, particularly youth and women, the enormous development that has taken place in Udhampur constituency in the last 10 years under the patronage of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Therefore, the common citizen believes that India can become the world's leading economy under the leadership of PM Modi because of the outreach he commands across the world and the common people also feel confident under the Government headed by Shri Narendra Modi," he said.

Crime Branch.....

known that the accused used the transferred amount for online betting.

The accused, Mir, was arrested and about Rs 22 lakh misappropriated amount was recovered, the officials said, adding a preliminary charge sheet against the accused was filed by the Jammu

Police in the court of law for judicial determination.

Following transfer of the case to the Crime Branch in July 2023, the teams of EOW conducted raids at several premises in Indore and Delhi, and succeeded in recovering the entire remaining misappropriated amount to the tune of Rs 1,10,00,000.00 which is a major breakthrough, they said.

With this huge recovery made by the Crime Branch, the entire misappropriated amount of Jamkash Vehicleleades has been recovered and further investigation is underway, the officials said. (AGENCIES)

Police Attach.....

conducted by police. "The property was prima facie acquired from illicit trafficking in narcotic drug and psychotropic substances by the drug peddler", Police said. (UNI)

12-Year-Old Braves.....

empty, Aqib acted instinctively. "I had to save him, he's my brother," he said. "I grabbed a ball from my pocket and threw it at the leopard, hitting its eye and diverting its attention away from my brother."

The situation remained dire as the leopard prepared to attack again, but Aqib's friend intervened. "My friend threw a brick at the leopard, and we made a lot of noise which attracted people, and together we scared the leopard away," Aqib recounted.

Reflecting on the incident, Aqib expressed relief that his brother's life was spared. "I feared the worst, especially after imagining the leopard attacking a girl last week in this same village in which she lost her life."

However, the family struggled to get help due to the lack of network facilities in their village. "We couldn't reach the driver to take my brother to the hospital," the family said, adding that they face difficulties due to the non-availability of a network facility.

"We're scared to even step outside. We need the government to ensure we have network facilities and traps to catch these leopards," they appealed.

Villagers appreciated Aqib for his courageous act. They called for taking care of the kids and not letting them venture out, especially during the evening.

Doda Police.....

through offline mode was received on March 4, from Sehdev Singh of Doda saying he was duped of Rs. 2,15,220 through online fraud.

During the investigation, the cyber investigation team led by Sub Inspector Ankush Nagra, in charge of CCIU Doda after hectic efforts successfully recovered the stolen Rs, 3,00,220, police said.

After the recovery of the money, Senior Superintendent of Police Doda Javid Iqbal appealed to the general public to be extra cautious remain vigilant not respond to unknown callers, fraudsters and report promptly to the Police to take all necessary measures well in time to track down the online cheaters and fraudsters.

Earlier too in two separate complaints, CCIU Doda had recovered Rs. 1,09,500 that were stolen through online fraud. (UNI)

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Ramadan boosts sales for Kashmir's bakeries and pickle vendors

SRINAGAR, MAR 19: Amid the holy month of Ramadan, streets of Kashmir are abuzz with shoppers flocking to purchase their favourite delicacies from bakeries and pickle vendors.

During the busy atmosphere of fasting and prayer, the aroma of freshly baked products and the tangy taste of pickles entices residents and visitors alike.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), bakery and pickle sellers expressed their delight at the increased demand during this sacred month.

"It's heartening to see the

enthusiasm of customers during Ramadan," remarked Mohamad Ali, owner of a bakery in downtown Srinagar.

He added that from traditional breads to other bakery stuff, shelves of his shop are constantly replenished to meet the high demand.

Similarly, pickle vendors are witnessing a spike in sales as customers seek to enhance their iftar and suhoor meals with the flavourful addition of pickled delights.

"Ramadan is a special time for us as our pickles fly off the shelves," said a pickle seller in



Srinagar's downtown.

He added the tangy flavors of

mango, lemon, and mixed vegetables complement the fasting experience for many.

Moreover for the proprietors, Ramadan brings a surge in sales and a sense of joy as customers clamor for their delectable offerings.

Similarly, Zahoor, a local told KNO that bakery items and pickles are not just food items for them but an essential part of Ramadan.

He added that sharing these delicacies with family and friends adds to the sense of community and togetherness during this blessed month.

Planning Border March To Highlight Ground Reality In Ladakh: Sonam Wangchuk

LEH, MAR 19: On hunger strike for the past two weeks in support of statehood and constitutional safeguards under sixth schedule for the Union Territory of Ladakh, climate activist Sonam Wangchuk on Tuesday said they are planning a border march soon to highlight the "ground reality" to the outside world.

Wangchuk, a renowned education reformist,



has been on 'climate fast' here since March 6, a day after talks between the joint representatives of Leh-based Apex body and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) heading an agitation in support of four-point demands and the Central Government hit a deadlock.

On the beginning of day 14 of his 'climate fast', Wangchuk took to X and said that 250 people slept hungry in minus 12 degrees Celsius to safeguard Ladakh's land, environment and tribal indigenous culture.

"Our nomads are losing prime pasture land to huge Indian industrial plants to the south & Chinese encroachment to the north. To show the ground reality we're planning a Border March of 10,000 Ladakhi shepherds & farmers soon," he announced.

The KDA has called half-day general strike and a rally in Kargil town on March 20 as part of the ongoing agitation. (Agencies)

Watermelon Safety Concerns Spark Online Frenzy in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, MAR 19: Last week when a wave of uncertainty surrounded the safety of watermelon, Kashmiris have turned to the internet in search of answers.

Ahead of Ramadan, controversy brewed in Kashmir when few doctors called for avoiding watermelons this Ramadan.

As per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), following the resentment by the fruit growers and dealers, the Food and Safety department came up with a clarification and declared the watermelons safe for human consumption.

Amidst the controversy, netizens in the valley have been looking for answers from Google about the safety of watermelons during the current season. As per the Google Trends, maximum Google searches from Jammu and Kashmir have been regarding the watermelons last week.

Google Trends showed that the Google searches regarding the fruit began with the commencement of Ramadan.

On March 16 and 17, the searches regarding the fruit reached the 100 mark, the highest on the scale.

The calculation of Google Trends is based on a graph that shows the relative frequency of any search term on a scale of zero to 100. Hundred represents the highest level.

Google searches mostly 'Is watermelon crop harvested in India in February', 'How are watermelons artificially ripened', and "how to identify that a watermelon is artificially ripened" dominated the Google search engine.

As per the Google Trends, the frequency of Google searches have declined especially after Food and Safety department came up with a clarification.

Pertinently, the sales of watermelons had declined by more than 50 percent in the first week of Ramadan following the controversy regarding the fruit.

The fruit dealers said the sales have now gone normal after government cleared the air regarding the controversy. "We are highly thankful to the government which came up with valid test reports and urged people to consume the fruit," said Ali Muhammad Khan, a fruit seller.

Watermelon is the most consumed fruit in Kashmir during the holy month of Ramadan. Every year watermelons worth crores of rupees are being consumed in Kashmir during the holy month of Ramadan.

JK's Political Landscape set to witness Tectonic Shift ahead of Lok Sabha Polls

SRINAGAR, MAR 19: The political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing strategic maneuvers as Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) led by Ghulam Nahi Azad and Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party led by Syed Altaf Bukhari along with other outfits, in a bid to bolster its electoral prospectus, are actively exploring the possibility of forming alliance for the coming LS polls.

Reports inform news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that following an executive meeting held at the party headquarters in Srinagar, Apni Party's general secretary, Rafi Ahmed Mir, announced that the party has resolved to reach out to potential allies.

Authorized by party president Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, discussions are underway to forge alliances in preparation for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

On the other hand, DPAP spokesman Salman Nizami confirmed to KNO that talks are in the initial stage with a few "like minded" parties in Jammu and Kashmir and final decision in this regard will be taken within a week's time. "We are holding confabulations and they are in the initial phase. We will come out with a strategy once we reach the decision," Nizami said.

Meanwhile, sources divulged that during the meeting, the leaders engaged in extensive deliberations,

analyzing feedback from both political and parliamentary spheres. The focus was on assessing the prevailing political scenario in Jammu and Kashmir and devising an effective election strategy.

"In its executive meeting on Monday, it has been decided that the Apni Party will initiate talks with like-minded parties," said Rafi Ahmed Mir.

He emphasized the importance of fostering a conducive environment for dialogue, expressing confidence that alliance formations will materialize swiftly. "We are currently reaching out to various stakeholders, and we aim to finalize the alliances within a week," Mir added.

Doctors warn of health risks from worm infections in children, highlight importance of deworming

Say untreated infections can lead to malnutrition, anaemia, impaired development

SRINAGAR, MAR 19: Children who have worms often feel tired due to malnutrition and anaemia, which can lead to impaired physical and cognitive development, doctors have warned.

In discussions with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), doctors said that while worm infections are relatively easy to control, parents must remain vigilant about their children's health and behaviour. "Untreated worm infections not only hinder healthy growth but also contribute to poor nutrition, reducing a child's ability to concentrate and learn," they said.

"The treatment is simple, safe, effective, and free of charge. A single dose of deworming treatment drastically reduces the

number of worms in each child," they explained.

Dr Junaid, a pediatric specialist, informed KNO that worm infections can result in various health problems such as anaemia, abdominal distention, severe abdominal pain, and diarrhoea. They can lead to loss of appetite, malnourishment, impaired mental and physical development, as well as tissue damage requiring corrective surgery, he said.

Similarly, Dr Shugufra said that deworming improves a child's immunity, protecting them from chronic illnesses caused by worms. "It enhances concentration and attendance in school, increases nutrient uptake, and controls infections like anaemia



and loose bowels. It also improves work potential and livelihood opportunities while reducing worm infection in the community," he said.

Addressing misconceptions, Dr Shugufra clarified that

deworming can be administered in any season at regular intervals. However, she expressed concern that many children are not receiving deworming treatment, which contributes to the prevalence

of anaemia.

According to NFHS-5 data, approximately three-fourths (73%) of children aged 6-59 months are anaemic in India. This includes 25% with mild anaemia, 44% with moderate anaemia, and 4% with severe anaemia. The overall prevalence of anaemia in children has increased from 43% in NFHS-4 to 73% in NFHS-5, affecting both girls and boys equally.

Children born to mothers with anaemia are more likely to be anaemic themselves, regardless of their mothers' educational background. In Jammu & Kashmir, three-fourths (74%) of children are anaemic, even if their mothers have 12 or more years of schooling.

Man clears traffic on busy Sgr road to make way for ambulance, get applause

SRINAGAR, MAR 19: In a heart-warming display of compassion and humanity, a video of a selfless act has gone viral on various social media platform, Facebook.

The video shows an unknown man, dashing ahead of an ambulance stuck in traffic near Qamarwari Chowk, desperately beckoning to drivers to make room for the emergency vehicle.

A video possibly shot by the ambulance driver, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the video records the man's efforts as he runs ahead of the ambulance from Qamarwari to Noor Bagh Chowk, trying to ensure a clear path through the congested road



stretch. He can be seen tirelessly running and clearing the way on the road stretch, allowing the ambulance to move through the jam-packed vehicle road. The person's generous efforts have sparked appreciation from netizens and the general public alike,

with many praising his fast thinking and altruism in a difficult situation.

A Facebook user, while commenting on his action wrote that, "This man is a gem. May Allah bless him with his choicest blessings."

Another FB user wrote, "love and respect. This is the real hero at ground

zero".

The viral video is available on social media and has already garnered over 8 Lac views, with over 9.5K shares and over 570 comments on Facebook.

Shabir Ahmad, a Srinagar resident praised the unknown man's act and said in a time when acts of kindness are often overlooked, this demonstration serves as a reminder of the power of compassion and communal spirit.

He stated that as the video continues to circulate on social media platforms, the act serves as evidence of the influence that individual efforts may have in reducing emergency situations and potentially saving lives.

Sgr-Leh highway to reopen next week as snow clearance work gains pace

GANDERBAL, MAR 19: The 434-km long Srinagar-Leh highway is scheduled to reopen next week, as the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and Project Vijayak have accomplished snow clearance on both sides of the highway, reaching Zero Point Zojila.

Despite heavy snowfall this year, the BRO and Project Vijayak managed to complete the challenging task of snow clearance, which had kept the highway closed since February. Key areas such as Sonamarg, Zojila Pass, Zero Point, Gumri, Matayan, Drass, and Meenmarg experienced significant snow accumulation, posing obstacles to reopening the route. A BRO official while



talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), highlighted the daily challenges faced by the snow clearance team, particularly in the stretch from Zojila to Matayan Drass, known for its heavy avalanche risk. However, through perseverance and

dedication, both entities successfully reached Zero Point, a critical milestone in the reopening process.

Dr. Jaffer, Chief Executive Councillor of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Kargil, personally inspected the progress of snow clearance

at Zojila Pass and commended the efforts of the BRO team and Project Vijayak.

He expressed confidence that the pass would be fully connected within the next two days, signaling relief for travelers and residents alike.

Chunav Ka Parv Desh Ka Garv DEO Kishtwar convenes meeting with representatives of political parties

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 19: District Election Officer Kishtwar, Dr. Devansh Yadav today chaired a meeting with representatives from various political parties to underscore the paramount importance of upholding the highest ethical standards as delineated in the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and other pertinent guidelines set forth by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in anticipation of the forthcoming Lok Sabha Elections, 2024.

The primary objective of the gathering was to sensitize political parties on the imperative nature of



maintaining integrity, fairness, and transparency throughout the electoral process. Deliberations during the session encompassed crucial issues such as adherence to MCC provisions, acquisition of permissions for media advertisements and campaign vehicles, initiation of candidate bank accounts in accordance with stipulated

timelines, and other pertinent aspects vital to ensuring a just and equitable electoral environment.

The discussions reaffirmed the collective commitment of all political stakeholders towards fostering an environment characterized by ethical conduct, accountability, and reverence for democratic principles. Dr.

Devansh Yadav reiterated the pivotal role of political parties in upholding the democratic ethos of the nation and stressed the indispensability of cooperation and adherence to the guidelines delineated in the Model Code of Conduct by the ECI. He urged all parties to demonstrate utmost integrity and responsibility, thereby setting a positive precedent for a free, fair, and peaceful electoral process. Expressing confidence in the cooperation and adherence of all political parties to the outlined guidelines, the DEO anticipated a conducive environment for the smooth conduct of the Lok Sabha Elections.

HT News Network

DODA, MARCH 19: For the smooth conduct of Lok Sabha Election 2024, a training session for Micro Observers was conducted in Doda.

The session was organized by the Deputy District Election Authority (DEA) under the supervision of Deputy District Election Officer Doda, Om Prakash, to equip Micro Observers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively monitor polling stations and uphold the integrity of the electoral process. The training session brought together key election officials, stakeholders and Micro Observ-



ers to discuss strategies and best practices for ensuring transparency and fairness during the upcoming elections. The Dy. DEO underscored the pivotal role of

Micro Observers in safeguarding the democratic process and emphasized the importance of their contribution in maintaining the credibility of elec-

tions.

During the training session, District Level Master Trainer (DLMT), Prof. Dr. Akhtar Hussain focused on enhancing coordination among different departments and agencies involved in the election process to streamline operations and ensure a smooth conduct of the elections in Doda.

The training session not only aimed to enhance the capacity of Micro Observers but also underscored the commitment of election authorities to conduct free and fair elections in Doda. With a strong emphasis on transparency and accountability, the session laid the groundwork for a well-prepared team of Micro

SVEEP Cell Rajouri organizes voter awareness, plantation drive

HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 19: Department of Botany, Government Degree College Rajouri in collaboration with the SVEEP Cell, today organized voter awareness cum plantation drive under the patronage of Principal of the college, Dr. Shameem Azad and Head of the Botany Department, Dr. Tajinder Singh.

The event aimed to promote environmental consciousness among students while emphasizing the importance of civic engagement, particularly casting votes.

Principal, Dr. Shameem Azad and Prof. Iqbal Raina, Nodal Officer SVEEP Cell led the initiative by planting a diverse array of significant medicinal plants. The event witnessed active participation including Dr. Khalid Rayaz, Dr. Ajaz Nazir, Dr. Nelofer Nabi, Dr. Saleem Jahangir, and Dr. Tahir Mehmood. Their enthusiastic involvement, along with the support of both teaching and non-teaching staff and Students

The Principal expressed heartfelt appreciation to all participants for their unwavering commitment and encouraged the continuation of such eco-friendly endeavors. The event not only facilitated the planting of medicinal plants but also served as a platform to raise awareness about the imperative role of voting in shaping our collective future. The event reached its culmination with a vote of thanks from Dr. Tajinder Singh. The Principal expressed heartfelt appreciation to all participants for their unwavering commitment and encouraged the continuation of such eco-friendly endeavors.

Battle for Ladakh: Can Congress-NC Challenge BJP's Dominance in Lok Sabha Elections?

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 19 (KNO): As the Lok Sabha elections approach, all eyes are on the Ladakh parliamentary seat, which has been under the BJP's control since 2014. The question arises: will the Congress-National Conference (NC) alliance be able to break the BJP's stronghold in this region?

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the 2014 elections marked a significant turning point when the BJP secured victory in Ladakh for the first time. Historically, the Congress has dominated this constituency, winning six times, while the NC has clinched victory twice, and independent candidates have triumphed thrice.

The political landscape in Ladakh has witnessed seismic shifts, particularly



following the abrogation of Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir. With Ladakh emerging as a separate union territory without its own legislative assembly, the stakes are higher than ever before. The BJP faces the challenge of securing a hat-trick victory in this crucial constituency amidst growing demands for a separate statehood movement in the region.

Protests have erupted in

both Leh and Kargil, underscoring the discontent among the local populace. The momentum of the Ladakhi movement could pose a significant challenge to the BJP's electoral prospects. Traditionally, Ladakh has been a bastion of the Congress, with the NC also enjoying considerable support. Talks are underway between the two parties regarding seat sharing, with the NC reportedly willing to concede the

Ladakh seat to the Congress. However, neither party has officially announced their candidates yet.

Reflecting on the electoral history of Ladakh, it's evident that independent candidates have played a pivotal role, interrupting the dominance of major political parties. In 1989, independent candidate Mohd. Hassan Commander halted the Congress's winning streak, while independents emerged victorious in 2004 and 2009. Thuptasan Chiwang's victory as an independent candidate in 2004 paved the way for the BJP's triumph in 2014.

The upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Ladakh, scheduled for the fifth phase on May 20, will witness a keenly contested battle spread across Kargil and Leh districts—(KNO)

Re-orientation programme on Yoga and Herbal Plants concludes at Ramban

HT News Network



RAMBAN, MARCH 19: Two-day Re-Orientation Program on Yoga for Medical Officers and Paramedical Staff organised by the Department of AYUSH concluded with great success. The program encompassed comprehensive training sessions, including a full day dedicated to understanding the significance of herbal plants.

District Yoga Coordinator and Nodal Officer for Herbal Plants in District Ramban, Dr. Masood Iqbal Zarger, delivered a lecture highlighting the importance of herbal plants. His expertise and insights provided invaluable knowledge to all participants.

The program aimed to enhance the understanding of yoga practices among medical professionals and paramedical staff, emphasizing its role in promoting holistic health and well-being. Furthermore, the session on herbal plants underscored their medicinal properties and the vital role they play in traditional healthcare practices.

DEO Jammu meets bankers ahead of Lok Sabha Elections

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 19: District Election Officer, Sachin Kumar Vaishya held a meeting with various bankers in view of the Lok Sabha Elections.

The DEO discussed the electoral process and the bankers' important role in it. Bankers were instructed to monitor unusual transactions closely and report any suspicious activity.

Sachin Kumar emphasised the importance of adhering to banking norms and maintaining customer privacy. He also enlightened all about the cVIGIL app, which allows the public to report any violations of the Model Code of Conduct or irregularities in the electoral process.

The meeting was also attended by ADDC Sher Singh, ADC Shishir Gupta and LDM Romesh Chander.

District Administration Samba organizes specialized training workshop for Election Staff

HT News Network

SAMBA, MARCH 19: The District Administration Samba conducted a comprehensive training workshop aimed at equipping election staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively carry out their duties during the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections.

The workshop focused on elucidating the roles and responsibilities of various teams tasked with monitoring the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

Led by District Election Officer, Abhishek Sharma, the training session featured demonstrations by master trainers on the proper sealing, installation, and functioning of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). This hands-on approach aimed to familiarize participants with the intricate processes involved in conducting free and fair elections. The DEO emphasized that multiple rounds of training will be conducted to ensure the proficient handling and installation of both EVMs and VVPAT machines. Among others district-level master trainers and polling staff were present in the workshop. The DEO emphasized that multiple rounds of training will be conducted to ensure the proficient handling and installation of both EVMs and VVPAT machines.

School Education Department Demotes Teachers with Fake Degrees

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 19: The School Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir has demoted two teachers, Anita Sharma and Raman Chanyal, who secured promotions using fraudulent postgraduate degrees, reverting them back to teaching roles.

Reports inform news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that an investigation revealed

that both teachers had obtained postgraduate degrees in Chemistry from Magadh University in 2003, despite the university not offering such a course at the time. As a result, Anita Sharma, currently serving as the Principal of Higher Secondary School in Samba, and Raman Chanyal, Principal of Higher Secondary School in Machhedi, Kathua, have been directed to resume their duties as teachers.

The disciplinary action comes after it was discovered that Sharma and Chanyal had advanced in their careers based on falsified academic credentials. Sharma was promoted to the position of in-charge lecturer in 2004, following which she was posted at Government Higher Secondary School in Mansar. However, her failure to provide original qualification documents led to the suspen-

sion of her allowances between 2004 and 2006. Official reports divulged that the School Education Department issued an order on March 5, instructing the Chief Education Officers of Samba and Kathua districts to reassign Sharma and Chanyal to teaching roles. Both teachers have been directed to report to the office of the Chief Education Officer in their respective districts.

Budgam, Mar 19 Panic has gripped the entire Samsan village in Central Kashmir's Budgam district after two recent leopard attack incidents have occurred in the vicinity within a week. The locals however, while talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) urged the administration to capture the leopard and ensure their safety. The first attack occurred last Monday in which a minor girl was killed while a minor boy was injured in the second attack that took place just a week later in the same village. BO wildlife department Budgam

said that the department has been active in the village since the first incident, intensifying search operations and increasing manpower to catch the leopard.

"The efforts are on to catch the leopard. The dense bushes and Karewas in the area provide hiding spots for the leopard, but we are vigilant," he said.

Officials have advised residents to stay indoors, especially during morning and evening hours, to avoid further attacks until the leopard is captured.

The rise in human-animal conflicts has heightened fear among the villagers, prompting urgent appeals for action from the administration.

INDIA Bloc set to win all LS seats in Jammu & Kashmir: Rattan Lal Gupta NC already on saddle for restoring fundamental, democratic rights to people

HT News Network

JAMMU March 19th: Rattan Lal Gupta, National Conference Provincial President Jammu on Tuesday asserted that BJP is bound to face a big shock in Jammu Province as India Bloc is all set to decimate the Saffron Brigade in all Lok Sabha seats in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued to media persons, the senior leader of NC party said his party is already on saddle and leading the fight to restore all the fundamental and democratic rights of the people snatched away by the 'draconian' central dispensation in one way or the other.

Forecasting a major setback for the BJP in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the senior NC leader said that his party is at central stage to ensure once again the



restoration of democratic rights and the basic amenities to the people of the Jammu region as the party in power in the centre has created dismal condition in its ten years misrule depriving one and all from

living a life with dignity and pride. He said that the situation is so critical that people had to knock the doors of the Apex court for restoring democracy in J&K by holding free and fair elections for the Assembly. Mr Gupta accused the J&K Government of sabotaging the process of conducting Lok Sabha and Assembly elections simultaneously in spite of facts that almost all the political parties of the Jammu and Kashmir categorically demanded the assembly election of J&K simultaneously with Lok Sabha elections when they met CEC at Srinagar on 12 March, 2024. He said that NC is committed to protect the land and jobs rights of J&K the people and in this pursuit the party will go to any extent as its ideology is against any kind of compromise when it comes to the rights of the people. He said contrary to BJP leadership's attempts to set wrong narratives alleging

fissures in India Bloc constituents in J&K, the Lok Sabha contest shall be India Bloc versus BJP, and the crushing defeat for the Saffron party is its fate this time.

Mr Gupta however, asked the NC cadre to act proactively at the grassroots level because it is the crucial phase ahead of LS Polls and their hard work on ground will help the India Bloc to achieve gigantic margins in the victory showing the opponents their right place. Forecasting a major setback for the BJP in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the senior NC leader said that his party is at central stage to ensure once again the restoration of democratic rights and the basic amenities to the people of the Jammu region as the party in power in the centre has created dismal condition in its ten years misrule depriving one and all from living a life with dignity and pride.

EDITORIAL

Women's Safety on Wheels: Where are Specialized Buses?

In recent times, the conspicuous absence of women-only buses from Srinagar streets has become a cause for concern. Once a staple in many urban landscapes, these specialized vehicles provided a safe haven for women navigating the often perilous world of public transportation. However, their disappearance has left a glaring void in the realm of women's safety, leading to increased travel nuisance and compromising the security of countless women.

The impact of this absence cannot be overstated. For many women, especially those who rely on public transportation for their daily commute, the lack of women-only buses has become a significant source of anxiety. With the rising instances of harassment and assault on mixed-gender buses, women are forced to contend with a heightened sense of vulnerability every time they step onto public transit.

Moreover, the absence of these specialized buses has resulted in overcrowding and discomfort on regular buses, further exacerbating the travel nuisance for women. Without a designated space where they can feel safe and secure, women are left to navigate crowded buses, often enduring unwanted attention and harassment along the way.

The repercussions extend beyond mere inconvenience; they strike at the very core of women's freedom of mobility. Without safe and reliable transportation options, women are effectively denied the opportunity to fully participate in society, whether it be for work, education, or leisure. This not only hampers their personal autonomy but also perpetuates gender inequality in our communities.

It is imperative that authorities address this issue with the urgency it demands. Reintroducing women-only buses, or implementing alternative measures to enhance women's safety on public transit, must be prioritized. Investing in comprehensive training for bus drivers and staff on handling instances of harassment and improving surveillance systems can contribute to creating a safer environment for all passengers.

In a society that champions equality and inclusivity, ensuring the safety and well-being of women should be non-negotiable. The reintroduction of women-only buses is not just a matter of convenience; it is a fundamental step towards upholding the rights and dignity of women in our communities. It's time to bring back the wheels of safety for women.



By Mool Raj

In mid-eighties, one had the opportunity of flying in a helicopter with a European ski expert over the snow areas of entire Kashmir valley. He had remarked that Kashmir has unlimited "White Gold". The oil reserves of the Arabs are termed as "Black Gold". Similarly, the huge easily accessible skiable snow areas of Kashmir can be termed as the "White Gold". We have the possibility to set up over a dozen world class ski resorts in our mountain areas. The terrain, snow conditions, and the climate are ideal and in some respects better than the Alps. Gulmarg is probably the nearest resort of its type and size to a jet airport which is now an International Airport in every respect except for the missing international flights. No other resort in this part of the world is so easily accessible to the International tourist traffic.

Even in the last century Gulmarg was considered by the British an important ski resort this side of Suez. In fact, the Ski Club of India was established by Major Metcarr and Major Headow, two British Army Officers, in 1927 at Gulmarg. Mr. B.N. Pestonji was its first Secretary. Skiing had been introduced as a sport in Gulmarg area almost at the same time as it had started in Alps. Those days all ski competitions were held at Khilanmarg and the pony track was kept open throughout the winter. There were two major events, the Christmas and Easter Competitions. The famous British Sports Equipment Firm, the "Lilywhites" had introduced some trophies for various ski competitions. In fact one of the ski slopes above Khilanmarg is still called the "Lilywhite Slope". The attendance in the open competition held at Christmas in 1938 was over 500. Gulmarg had two 100 room hotels and hundreds of chalets. There was a Cinema and a Golf Club House with two eighteen hole courses. One could get everything aristocratic and fashionable in the "Bazaar" of Gulmarg directly



imported from all parts of Europe. Families of some of the British Army Officers would come to Gulmarg simply to buy these goodies. Marion Doughty in her travelogue, "Afoot through Kashmir Valley" makes a special mention of the "Gulmarg Tea Dance" and the preparations she had to undergo at the British Residency in Srinagar for participating in the event. Gulmarg was discovered by Yusuf Shah Chak, the last Kashmiri ruler who used to camp here for days with his poetess Queen Habba Khatoon.

Europe has millions of skiers who are now looking for newer and less crowded places with equal facilities. In the recent years we have had regular Australian groups as it is summer in Australia when we have winter here. Also sizeable numbers of Russians have been coming to Gulmarg. Recently, the Chinese Ski Association had approached for training their teams in Gulmarg. Kashmir could be the ultimate winter destination for them if the potential is intelligently exploited. To tap this potential the first essential is international accessibility to this area. That

can be achieved only after Srinagar's so called international airport gets international air connectivity enabling direct international flights to touch down here. In the alternative, like Goa it could get charter flights from a number of potential markets including Malaysia. At the moment it may seem a utopian dream but in the long run it may be one of the most important economic activities.

Interestingly, the Adventure Tourism of which the Winter Tourism like Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, and Ski Mountaineering are part has maximum potential in Kashmir. In fact, it is the unique type of Tourism suitable for present times. Most of the adventure activities are outside the populated areas. The state should have been encouraging this type of tourism which in overall context is high end tourism especially when it is organised in group form. In mid-nineties skiing at Gulmarg and Heli-Skiing in Sonamarg area continued without any problems. In fact, Gulmarg is presently underutilised when one considers the potential of

winter tourism. It has become a resort to see snow, have a gondola ride or so. The real adventure tourism involving various winter sports such as international level ski competitions, training of various ski teams and general skiing for pleasure seeking people has not grown much. The gondola which was installed to give access to skiers to higher slopes has remained an attraction for a joy ride for thousands of day tourists. The ski slopes which are some of the best in the world have not been got homologated by the International Ski Federation which is a must for holding international events. Apart from various ski events, Gulmarg can easily hold the fastest kilometre race like the French. There is an urgent need for reviewing not only winter sports in Gulmarg but the entire field of adventure tourism. Let us hope someone gets serious and the potential of all adventure tourism including the winter tourism in Gulmarg gets fully revived!

The author is a columnist and freelance writer

What makes Sheetal Devi's achievements all the more astonishing is that she is the only active female international archer to shoot without arms

MS Nazki

The motto, 'Where there's a will, there's a way' is the superstition of modern man. But for this girl it was not a superstition! She wanted to do it and she did it at the world stage!

A small incident I will start this story with a youth/man! Yes in order to sustain his creed, contemporary girl/man pays the price in a remarkable lack of introspection. He is blind to the fact that, with all his rationality and efficiency, he is possessed by 'powers' that are beyond his control. His god and demons have not disappeared at all; they have merely got new names. They keep him on the run with restlessness, vague apprehensions, psychological complications, an insatiable need for pills, alcohol, tobacco, food—and, above all, a large array of neuroses!'

But this is a story of a woman's power and what she is capable of doing! Sheetal Devi knows this fallacy to the hilt!

She always wanted to be at the top of the world! I could have written this story a long back ut I waited and the wait was good enough!

Sheetal Devi (born 10 January 2007) is an Indian Para-archer. Devi was born with a rare medical condition called phocomelia, which makes her the first and the only international para-archery champion without upper limbs. She received the Arjuna Award 2023 from the President of India on 9

January 2024.

In the women's compound bow at the 2022 Asian Para Games, Devi received two gold medals in mixed doubles and women's individual after winning a silver medal in women's double compound!

She was born in Loidhar village, Kishtwar district in Jammu and Kashmir. In 2019, Sheetal attended a youth event in Kishtwar where she was noticed by the Indian Army's Rashtriya Rifles unit resulting in the Army supporting her education and providing medical assistance.

In the youth event organized by the Indian army, the army coaches Abhilasha Chaudhary and Kuldeep Wadhwan noticed her confidence and decided to train her. As she was born with Phocomelia, she had no arms. So firstly the coaches decided to help her with prosthetics. But the medics said that prosthetics were not possible in her case. Here, she said that she was fond of and has expertise in climbing trees using her legs. This was a very pleasant surprise for the coaches.

Now coaches had one more challenge to face, they had never trained a person for archery who has no arms. But coaches did some research about whether it was possible to train her, and eventually they came to know about Matt Stutzman, who was armless and used his legs for archery. This made coaches very confident and within 11 months of training, Sheetal Devi participated in Asian Para Games and won two gold medals



for India.

The world of sports is no stranger to athletes overcoming odds to achieve big on the world stage. Yet, among all these odds-defying narratives, the story of the teenaged Indian para-archer Sheetal Devi stands out.

Fast forward to 2023 and Sheetal Devi's achievements in archery are already in the headlines after just one season. Sheetal Devi claimed a silver medal in the open women's compound archery event at the World Archery Para Championships 2023 in the Czech

Republic in July. She was the first female armless archer to win a medal at the Para World Championships. The medal also helped Sheetal obtain a quota for India for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

Sheetal Devi's stellar debut season continued at the Asian Para Games 2023 in October. She bagged gold medals in the individual compound and mixed team events apart from winning the silver medal in the women's doubles competition.

What makes Sheetal Devi's achievements all the more aston-

ishing is that she is the only active female international archer to shoot without arms.

As a kid, Sheetal possessed a strong will and enjoyed climbing trees as a pastime. The activity helped her build a strong upper body which proved to be a turning point later in her life. The Indian Army played a pivotal role in propelling Sheetal Devi's career in para archery. It was at a youth event orchestrated by the Indian Army in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir in 2021 that Sheetal's innate athleticism and confidence were discovered by army coaches. However, the initial attempts from the coaches to make Sheetal Devi a force in para archery hit a stumbling block. The coaches initially planned to help her with prosthetics but it did not work out.

Sheetal soon joined former archer and coach Kuldeep Vedwan's academy. Despite competing among the abled archers at the national competitions, Sheetal Devi's talent was for all to see. Using her legs and feet akin to para archery legend Stutzman, Sheetal Devi embraced the unconventional shooting technique and competed at the Para Archery National Championship in Haryana in March-April 2022. Vedwan said the tournament was crucial as it helped Sheetal Devi get formal recognition as an Indian para archer.

Now the latest is: ECI Name Para-archer and Arjuna Awardee Sheetal Devi as PwD National Icon. The Arjuna Awardee and para-

archer, Sheetal Devi has been named as the PwD national icon by the Election Commission of India.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) in association with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) organised an Exhibition Cricket Match between the Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA) Team and the Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) team to foster voter education and inclusivity. The match was held on March 16, 2024, at Karnail Singh Stadium in New Delhi. On the occasion, Ms. Sheetal Devi, a distinguished Para-archer, and Arjuna Awardee, was announced as the National Icon in the PwD category.

The event was graced by Chief Election Commissioner Shri Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Shri Gyanesh Kumar and Shri Sukhbir Singh Sandhu who felicitated the winning team. Renowned former Indian Cricketer, Nikhil Chopra, was also invited as the special guest alongside officials from DDCA and IDCA.

For the event, the Commission launched a dedicated Voter's Guide for PwDs and Senior Citizen Electors. The comprehensive booklet outlines essential provisions available to PwDs and senior citizens, including infrastructural, informative, and procedural details at polling stations, as well as the applicability and procedure for Postal Ballots, facilitating a smooth and pleasurable voting experience. Again it was the Indian Army who started it all!

Rekindling Ties With Nature

When I had started to live permanently in my village named Moutorh (District Purulia, West Bengal, India) I became interested in how nature can provide practical lessons and answers to challenges I was facing in my own life.

■ Debapriya Mukherjee

When I had started to live permanently in my village named Moutorh (District Purulia, West Bengal, India) I became interested in how nature can provide practical lessons and answers to challenges I was facing in my own life. During my tenure in the Central Pollution Control Board as scientist I visited many hill stations, forests, rivers, lakes, ground water sources, wetlands, cities, industries, and many more places to assess the level of pollution and its adverse impact on environment and human living as well as possible measures to minimize the level of pollution.

But what I observed was the suffering of poor people mainly due to contamination of water particularly ground water (arsenic, fluoride and many other pollutants) as well as air pollution. In the backdrop of my sincere effort to prevent pollution, I can strongly advocate that I did nothing because at that time I did not consider myself as one of the 800 million citizens of the country and could not overcome a luxurious lifestyle. After reading many inspiring books, attending many seminars and discussing with Dr Samar Bagchi, who was a real fighter to protect the nature and put in sincere efforts to educate students with his "No cost, low cost" science experiments till his death, I could possibly find the way to spend my life (though it is late at age 67) teaching the students in my village to be in contact with nature and natural farming on a small scale.

After spending two years in my village, I discovered that nature had a huge impact not only on my own life but also on the lifestyles of my wife and students. Now I realize that nature is filled with amazing things to teach us how to think more clearly and

scientifically, not only related to plants, birds and animals but also how to tune into our physical surroundings in all areas of life. Most people in the modern world have lost their innate naturalist intelligence, but human beings are animals at heart.

We must be surrounded by plants, birds and fresh air for amazing beneficial effects for the mind and body. But the way we are destroying our natural world has led to dreadful outcomes. One example can clearly focus on the loss of biodiversity and its adverse impacts on human beings. In the early 1990s, vultures across India started dying and declined to the brink of extinction. India's three most common vulture species declined by more than 97 per cent between 1992 and 2007. The vultures fed on the carcasses of cows contaminated with diclofenac, an anti-inflammatory drug routinely given to cattle in south Asia at the time and were thus poisoned.

That was the beginning of a far-reaching chain reaction. As vulture populations crashed, cow carcasses started to pile up, and the numbers of rats and wild dogs surged. Dogs became the main scavengers at dumps previously used by vultures. Data suggests that from 1992 to 2003, dogs increased by 7 million. The number of dog bites soared and rabies infections shot up, causing tens of thousands of people to die each year. In 2006, diclofenac was banned, and vulture populations have slowly started to recover. Many such examples exist. Sparrow slaughter in China sparked insect plagues and deadly frog fungus caused malaria spikes.

Many more examples can be cited to establish the dreadful outcomes of the destruction of the natural system. Wildlife populations



are in free-fall around the world, driven by human overconsumption, population growth and intensive agriculture. On average, global populations of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles plunged by 68 per cent between 1970 and 2016. Despite knowing nature is declining at an unprecedented speed, we are spending decades talking about the declines but find ourselves unable to do anything to manage it. It really frustrates me.

Though personal responsibility is the crucial area, when I speak to my close friends, they say that their individual action does not make any difference. That is absolutely wrong. When I got worried about the disorder of the natural world that was affecting my life and making me unhappy, I started to involve myself in positive change such as a simple way of living and proper education to the students. Education of students through learning from nature is

gradually motivating them to be informed and updated with what is happening in the world.

Now the students feel nature is their mother and they try to find ways to protect it. Fighting for a cleaner planet and a better world has never been as urgent as it is today. I believe that only students can make a difference. Now they have realised that the solution is not a difficult one. They have started to reduce what they are consuming, reuse what they are throwing away and recycle what they have to throw away.

To make them aware, composting of house waste, minimum use of plastic, separation of plastics to use it for producing fuel (though not 100 per cent successful), production of indigenous paddy through natural farming without using any fertilizer and without cow manure to minimize greenhouse gases, reuse of domestic water for gardening, use of water hyacinth to produce handicrafts

and other such activities are going on in my village on a small scale. In addition, I encourage them to walk or cycle or take public transport.

They carry their food in a reusable container and wash it later to save the planet from having to decompose plastic wrapping of food. They avoid buying a bottle of water at school and instead carry filtered water from home. They use pencils instead of pens as it is made out of wood that is recyclable and also use notebooks made out of recycled paper. They are not as shiny as the other ones but they keep them conscious. Though it is difficult to control the rest of the world, it is easier to control what I do in my own life.

Saving mother earth is important for students as it will make them aware of how to use natural resources and how a healthy balance can be maintained between nature and human life. Young people can fight strongly to save nature.

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Starting to believe in something is the first step to making it real. So let's start believing in ourselves.

The writer is former Senior Scientist, Central Pollution Control Board

All you need to know about stomach cancer treatment



■ Prof. (Dr.) Atul Sharma

How common is gastric (stomach) cancer?

Worldwide about 1 million people are diagnosed with gastric cancer. It is ranked as the 5th most common cancer. In India it accounts for about 60,000 new cancer cases (6th most common) and about 53,000 deaths.

How is this diagnosed?

This is diagnosed after endoscopic biopsy.

What is the treatment for stomach cancer?

Stomach cancer treatment depends upon the stage of the disease. For early or locally advanced disease this is surgery, chemotherapy with or without radiotherapy. For stage 4 disease this is chemotherapy with or without targeted therapy. Sometimes immunotherapy is also used with or without chemotherapy. This is based on various factors.

How is the choice of treatment determined for stomach cancer patients?

Treatment decisions are based on factors like the cancer stage, tumor location, patient's overall health, and the presence of specific genetic mutations.

Is surgery the primary treatment for stomach cancer?

Surgery is often the main treatment for stomach cancer, with the goal of removing the tumor and nearby lymph nodes. This is possible in the early stage or what we call locally advanced disease.

What types of surgeries are performed for stomach cancer?

Common surgeries include gastrectomy (removal of part or all of the stomach) with lymphadenectomy (removal of lymph nodes), and palliative surgery for symptom relief.

Can stomach cancer be treated with chemotherapy?

Yes, chemotherapy is often used to shrink tumors before surgery, kill cancer cells, or manage advanced cases of stomach cancer.

Is radiation therapy effective for stomach cancer treatment?

Radiation therapy can be used to target and destroy cancer cells, either alone (to prevent bleeding) or in combination with surgery and chemotherapy.

What is targeted therapy in stomach cancer treatment?

Targeted therapy drugs specifically target cancer cells' abnormalities, such as overactive proteins, to inhibit their growth.

Are immunotherapy options available for stomach cancer patients?

Immunotherapy drugs like checkpoint inhibitors can stimulate the immune system to recognize and attack cancer cells.

Can stomach cancer be treated with alternative or complementary therapies?

While some patients explore alternative therapies, they are not considered primary treatments and should be discussed with a healthcare provider and at this time lack credible scientific evidence.

Is precision medicine used in stomach cancer treatment?



Precision medicine analyzes a patient's genetic profile to identify targeted treatment options, which can be beneficial in advanced cases of stomach cancer.

What is neoadjuvant therapy in stomach cancer treatment?

Neoadjuvant therapy refers to treatment administered before surgery to shrink tumors or improve surgical outcomes.

Can stomach cancer spread to other organs, and how is metastatic cancer treated?

Stomach cancer can metastasize to other organs. Treatment for metastatic stomach cancer may involve chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy.

What is adjuvant therapy in stomach cancer treatment?

Adjuvant therapy is given after surgery to kill any remaining cancer cells and reduce the risk of recurrence.

Is stomach cancer treatment different for early-stage and advanced-stage cases?

Yes, treatment approaches vary based on the stage of the cancer. Early-stage cases may require surgery alone, while advanced stages often involve multimodal therapies.

What is the role of palliative care in stomach cancer treatment?

Palliative care focuses on relieving symptoms, improving quality of life, and providing emotional support, especially in advanced cases.

Can nutritional support be part of stomach cancer treatment?

Yes, nutritional support, including dietary changes and supplements, can be important for managing malnutrition and side effects of treatment.

What are the potential side effects of chemotherapy used for stomach cancer treatment?

Side effects may include nausea, vomiting, fatigue, hair loss, changes in appetite, and gastrointestinal issues, depending on the treatment used.

Are there long-term effects or complications of stomach cancer treatment?

Some treatments may lead to long-term complications, such as digestive problems, nutritional deficiencies, and potential effects on quality of life.

Is follow-up care necessary after completing stomach cancer treatment?

Yes, regular follow-up appointments are essential to monitor for cancer recurrence and manage any lasting side effects.

What is the success rate of stomach cancer treatment?

The success rate varies depending on the stage, type of treatment, and individual factors. Early detection and treatment offer better outcomes and possibilities of cure in many patients.

Is stomach cancer treatment influenced by a patient's age or overall health?

Age and overall health play a role in treatment decisions, and older adults may have tailored treatment plans to manage comorbidities.

Are there patient support groups for stomach cancer survivors and those undergoing treatment?

Yes, support groups can provide valuable emotional support, information sharing, and coping strategies for stomach cancer patients and their families.

Prof. (Dr.) Atul Sharma is Vice Chairman, Medical Oncology, Cancer Care / Oncology at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Saket

"Sheer Insult To Hindus": PM Modi Again Targets Rahul Gandhi On 'Shakti' Remark

HT News Network

Salem: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday accused the INDIA bloc leaders of "deliberately insulting" Hindu dharma and said that their every statement against the religion is very "well thought out".

Addressing the rally in Salem, the Prime Minister said that Tamil Nadu has decided that every single vote on April 19 will be given to the BJP-NDA.

"The INDI Alliance people repeatedly and deliberately insult Hinduism. Notably, every statement they make against the Hindu religion is very well thought out! The INDI Alliance of DMK and Congress does not insult any other religion. It does not utter a single word against any other religion. However, when it comes to the Hindu religion, they don't leave any chance to abuse and insult it," PM Modi said.

Prime Minister Modi again slammed Rahul Gandhi over his 'Shakti' remark and said that the election campaign has just started, and the plans of the INDI Alliance have been revealed in their first rally itself.



"During their first rally in Mumbai, they made statements about destroying 'Shakti', about fighting against 'Shakti'. Their statement has been a sheer insult to the Hindu religion, Hindu faith," he added. "Mariamman yahan ki Shakti hai. In Tamil Nadu Kanchi Kamakshi is 'Shakti', Madurai Meenakshi is 'Shakti'... Congress, DMK and the INDI alliance says they will destroy this (Shakti). Hamare shastra sakshi hai ki vinash unka hota hai jo Shakti ko khatam karne ka vichar rakhte hai. In Hindu Dharma, 'Shakti' means Matra Shakti, Naari Shakti," the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister said that everyone witnessed the kind of behaviour the INDI alliance does with women.

"You all are witness to the kind of behaviour INDI alliance does with women. When former state CM J Jayalitha was alive you all know how DMK leaders behaved with her. This is DMK's real face," he added.

He further asserted that the DMK and Congress are two sides of the same coin.

"DMK and Congress are two sides of the same coin. DMK and Congress means - Big corruption

and one family rule. When the country got rid of Congress, the country reached 5G technology. But in Tamil Nadu DMK is running its own 5G - one family's fifth generation to have control over Tamil Nadu," he added.

He further stated that one of the defence corridors being established in India is in Tamil Nadu.

"The BJP government is establishing 7 Mega Textile Parks across the country. Notably, one among those exists in Tamil Nadu. Our government is leaving no stone unturned to ensure the development and prosperity of Tamil Nadu. From free medical treatment to providing tap water connections in homes, from free ration facilities to benefiting women of Tamil Nadu through MUDRA Yojana, we have ensured to give the best, to serve the best," he added.

PM Modi said that the people are enthusiastic about the BJP, and this has been troubling the INDI Alliance.

"Tamil Nadu has decided that on April 19, every vote will go to BJP, to NDA. Tamil Nadu has decided that 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar'. For a developed India, we need '400 Paar'. For a developed Tamil Nadu, we need '400 Paar'.

No Stay On CAA, Top Court Asks Centre To Respond To Petitions In 3 Weeks

HT News Network

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday afternoon refused to stay implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act, or CAA. The court also gave the government three weeks - till April 8 - to respond to 237 petitions challenging the law that was notified last week, days before the Lok Sabha election.

In addition, the petitioners were given leave to approach if citizenship is granted to any individual before that date; senior lawyers Kapil Sibal and Indira Jaising both made that request, as Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta (appearing for the government) said, "I am not making any statement". Mr Mehta had originally sought four weeks' time to respond to the petitions. "We will have to file a detailed affidavit, on merits, to 237 petitions. 20 interim applications are already filed and many are in the pipeline. Realistically, we need four weeks," he told the court.

The matter was heard by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, Justice JB Pardiwala, and Justice Manoj Misra. The petitioners included the Indian Union Muslim League (a Kerala-based political party) and also opposition leaders Jairam Ramesh of the Congress and Mahua Moitra of the Trinamool. The petitioners - who did not oppose the request for more time - have sought a pause on implementation of the "discriminatory" CAA, which they have said is against the Muslim community.



The petitioners told the court they would not oppose the government's request for more time to study the challenges, but urged the Chief Justice-led bench to order a stay on implementation.

In 2019, after the citizenship bill was cleared by Parliament, multiple challenges were filed.

The court did not, however, pause implementation as the rules had not been notified. Last week, arguing in this matter, Mr Sibal said that situation did not apply now, since the rules are notified.

"The problem is... notification was issued after four years. Under the law, rules have to be notified within six months. Now the problem is - if somebody gets citizenship, it will be impossible to reverse," he said when asked by the court to respond to the government's request for more time.

"They said (in 2019) they were not notifying rules, so no stay was granted. There is no question of 'rejection of stay' (in the earlier instance)... then there were no rules, so there was no stay.

India Can Sustain 8% Growth, Even Higher, Says RBI Bulletin

HT News Network

Mumbai: India can sustain 8 per cent annual GDP growth and the conducive macroeconomic configuration may become a launching pad for a step-up in the country's growth trajectory, said an article on the 'State of Economy' in the central bank's March Bulletin published on Tuesday.

Over the period 2021-24, gross domestic product (GDP) growth has averaged above 8 per cent.

The global economy is losing steam, with growth slowing in some of the most resilient economies and high frequency indicators, pointing to further levelling in the period ahead, said the article authored by a team led by RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra.

In India, real GDP growth was at six-quarter high in the October-December period of 2023-24, powered by strong momentum, robust indirect taxes, and lower subsidies.

The high visibility of structural demand and healthier corporate and bank balance sheets will likely be the galvanising



forces for growth going forward.

"The world is confronted with large shifts in structure and sentiments, which are either underway or impending," it said.

The article noted that the outlook is shrouded with layers of uncertainty, exacerbated by geopolitical and extreme weather risks as well as fragmenting forces.

By contrast, it said the Indian economy is experiencing a conducive macroeconomic configuration that can be its launching pad for a step-up in its growth trajectory.

"Over the period 2021-24, growth has averaged above 8 per cent; and the underlying fundamentals indicate that this can be

sustained and even built upon," the authors said.

The current account deficit is modest, external buffers are resilient and fiscal consolidation is into its third consecutive year even as corporations are deleveraging and improving their debt servicing capacity.

According to the article, balance sheets in the financial sector are sound and healthy, providing the wherewithal for intermediating the productive credit needs of a resurgent economy. "Financial markets are reflecting these favourable formations. Capital inflows have resumed strongly as investor interest floods back into India," it said.

To Counter Uddhav Thackeray Factor, BJP's Pick Is His Estranged Cousin Raj

HT News Network

Mumbai: The BJP's push to maximise its Lok Sabha seats tally in Maharashtra is likely to resurrect Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) from political oblivion. Determined to blunt the challenge by the Uddhav Thackeray-led party, the BJP has reached out to his estranged cousin.

Raj Thackeray reached Delhi last night and met Union Home Minister Amit Shah today, apparently to discuss his party's possible entry into the NDA. "I was told to come to Delhi. So I came. Let's see," the MNS chief said on arriving in the national capital. He did not speak to the media after the meeting.

MNS leader Sandeep Deshpande has said they will share details of the meeting soon. "Whatever decision will be taken will be for the greater good and in the interest of Marathis, Hindutva and the party," he said. The MNS, it is



learnt, wants three seats - South Mumbai, Shirdi and Nashik. The answer to why the BJP is reaching out to MNS lies in how Maharashtra's political landscape has transformed since the 2019

Lok Sabha polls. In the last general election, the BJP and the Shiv Sena contested the polls together. The alliance decimated rivals and won 41 out of the state's 48 seats. Months later, it clinched another victory in the state polls. But differences over sharing power led to the Sena parting ways with the NDA. The Shiv Sena, then led by Uddhav Thackeray, teamed up with NCP and the Congress to form the government. But more drama was to follow. In 2022, Sena leader Eknath Shinde led a mutiny that toppled the Uddhav Thackeray government. Mr Shinde then joined ranks with BJP to take over. In the legal battle that followed, Uddhav Thackeray lost his party's name and symbol and his camp was named Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray).

"Playing BJP's Game": Shashi Tharoor Accuses Left Of Dividing Votes

HT News Network

Thiruvananthapuram: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Tuesday alleged that the "only effect" of the CPI's campaign against him in Thiruvananthapuram is to "divide the anti-BJP vote".

In a post on X, the senior Congress leader said, "It's ironic that the same @cpofindia that complains about @RahulGandhi's candidature in Wayanad is playing the BJP's game in Thiruvananthapuram".

His post added: "The only effect of the CPI's campaign against me in Thiruvananthapuram is to divide the anti-BJP vote. And they preach alliance dharma in Wayanad!" Reacting to this, CPI General Secretary D Raja said it is left that is "fighting the communal and fascist forces". "It is an absurd statement. An educated man like Shashi Tharoor must understand the history of Kerala properly. It is the Left that is fighting the communal and fascist forces... so many Congress leaders are leaving and joining BJP," he said.

Hitting back, the CPI leader questioned why is the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi contesting from Wayanad in Kerala.

"Rahul Gandhi claims that he is spearheading the fight against BJP, then why is he contesting from Wayanad and fighting against LDF? Congress must explain, what message they want to convey to people. Who are their main political enemies..." Mr Raja told the news agency ANI on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Mr Tharoor believes that his work over the last 15 years in the constituency will speak for itself.

"I've served the people of Thiruvananthapuram for 15 years. They know me



and have seen my service. It's not as if I've got anything to be ashamed of in my track record. I've been consistently available and attended to all the major issues," he said.

"It's always been a three-cornered fight here because I took the seat from the LDF. They had won it two times before me and then in the last two times, the BJP came second. So we have to take both candidates seriously. I'm very confident that I would prevail," Mr Tharoor said on Monday.

BJP has fielded Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar against Congress MP Tharoor.

Pannyan Raveendran, the Left Democratic Front's Lok Sabha candidate from the Thiruvananthapuram constituency, said that the main fight in the constituency is between the LDF and the Congress-led UDF. "The main contest is between LDF and UDF. BJP is irrelevant in Thiruvananthapuram," Mr Raveendran who won the constituency in 2005 told ANI on Tuesday. Kerala will hold elections in a single phase on April 26.

Former Indian Ambassador To US Taranjit Singh Sandhu Joins BJP

HT News Network

New Delhi: Ahead of the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, former Indian envoy to US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Delhi today.

Taranjit Singh Sandhu, who is from Punjab's Amritsar, joined the BJP in the presence of BJP National Secretary, Manjinder Singh Sirsa and Tarun Chugh.

In the joining ceremony, Mr Sandhu said that Prime Minister Modi is a development-focused leader and that this development should reach his native place, Amritsar. "In the last 10 years, I have worked closely with PM Modi's leadership, especially in the relationship with the Unit-



ed States and Sri Lanka. PM Modi is development-focused. Development is very much needed today and this development should reach Amritsar too. So, I thank the party president, the Prime Minister, Home Minister who encouraged me for the new path of service to the nation that I am entering," he said.

While speaking to ANI, Mr Sandhu said that Amritsar should not miss the opportunities the country

is getting, and his nomination for the Lok Sabha candidate will be decided by the party itself. "There has been a transformation in India-US relations in the past 4 years. It has transformed from a relationship to a partnership. India has received investments in many areas. Opportunities are created for the youth. I am concerned that Amritsar should not miss the opportunities the country is getting... The party will decide if I will contest the elections or not. My hometown, Amritsar, has a lot of potential and I am very affectionate towards it," he said. On February 1, Taranjit Singh Sandhu was relieved of his duties after he retired as the Indian envoy to the US.

PM Modi Breaks Down While Remembering "Salem's Ramesh" At Poll Rally

HT News Network

Salem: Prime Minister Narendra Modi turned emotional on Tuesday while remembering BJP state general secretary 'auditor' V Ramesh, who was allegedly hacked to death in Tamil Nadu's Salem in 2013.

Addressing a public rally in Salem, the Prime Minister said that V Ramesh worked day and night for the party. "Today I am in Salem, I remember Auditor Ramesh... Aaj Salem ka mera vo Ramesh nahi hai. Ramesh worked day and night for the party. He was a dedicated leader of our party. He was a great orator and a very hardworking man. I pay homage to him," PM Modi said.

BJP state general secretary 'auditor' V Ramesh, 54, was hacked to death by an unknown gang inside the compound of his house in Maravaneri area in Salem town in 2013.

The Prime Minister also remembered former Tamil Nadu BJP president KN Lakshmanan and said that his role in the anti-emergency movement was unforgettable.

"Lakshmanan ji role in the anti-emergency movement and participation in socio-cultural activities will always be remembered. His contribution to the expansion of the BJP in the state is unforgettable. He also started many schools in the state, he added.

K N Lakshmanan passed away due to age related problems at his residence in Sevvaipetta in Salem in June 2020. The Prime Minister also said that his government had worked hard to ensure development in Tamil Nadu.

"Our government is leaving no stone unturned to ensure the development and prosperity of Tamil Nadu. From free medical treatment to providing tap water connections in homes, from free ration facilities to benefiting women of Tamil Nadu through MUDRA Yojana, we have ensured to give the best, to serve the best" PM Modi said. PM Modi was also confident the Tamil Nadu would repose its faith in the BJP in the Lok Sabha polls.

"Now Tamil Nadu has decided that on April 19, every vote will go to BJP and NDA. Now Tamil Nadu has decided - this time it will cross 400" the Prime Minister said.

PM Modi was also felicitated during his public meeting in Salem, Tamil Nadu.

"Planet On The Brink": UN As 2014-2023 Recorded Hottest Decade Ever

HT News Network

Geneva: Global heat records were "smashed" last year, the UN confirmed Tuesday, with 2023 rounding out the hottest decade on record, as heatwaves stalked oceans and glaciers suffered record ice loss.

The United Nations' World Meteorological Organization issued its annual State of the Climate report, confirming preliminary data indicating that 2023 was by far the hottest year ever recorded.

And it came at the end of "the warmest 10-year period on record", the WMO report said.

UN chief Antonio Guterres said the report showed "a planet on the brink".

"Earth's issuing a distress call," he said, pointing out that "fossil fuel pollution is sending climate chaos off the charts", and warning that "changes are speeding up".

The WMO said the average near-surface temperature was 1.45 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels last year -- dangerously close to the critical 1.5-degree threshold that countries agreed to avoid passing in the 2015 Paris climate accords.

"Never have we been so close... to the 1.5C lower limit of the Paris Agreement," WMO chief Andrea Celeste



Saulo warned in a statement.

- 'Red alert' -

The report, she said, should be seen as a "red alert to the world".

Going through the data, the organisation found that "records were once again broken, and in some cases smashed", warning that the numbers "gave ominous new significance to the phrase 'off the charts'." Saulo stressed that climate change was about much more than

temperatures.

"What we witnessed in 2023, especially with the unprecedented ocean warmth, glacier retreat and Antarctic sea ice loss, is cause for particular concern."

One especially worrying finding was that marine heatwaves gripped nearly a third of the global ocean on an average day last year.

And by the end of 2023, more than 90 percent of the ocean had experienced heatwave conditions at some point during the year, the WMO said.

More frequent and intense marine heatwaves will have "profound negative repercussions for marine ecosystems and coral reefs", it warned.

At the same time, it warned that key glaciers worldwide suffered the largest loss of ice ever since records began in 1950, "driven by extreme melt in both western North America and Europe".

In Switzerland, where the WMO is headquartered, Alpine glaciers had for instance lost 10 percent of their remaining volume in the past two years alone, it said.

The Antarctic sea ice extent was also "by far the lowest on record", WMO said.

In fact, it pointed out, its maximum extent at the end of the southern winter was around one million square kilometres below the previous record year -- equivalent to the size of France and Germany combined.

Amini's death in custody 'unlawful': UN mission

HT News Network

GENEVA: A fact-finding mission mandated by the United Nations said on Monday the death of Mahsa Amini in the custody of Iran's morality police was unlawful and caused by violence and that Iranian women still suffer systematic discrimination.

The death of 22-year-old Amini, a Kurdish Iranian woman, in September 2022 while in custody for allegedly flouting Iran's Islamic dress code unleashed months of protests and the biggest challenge to the Islamic Republic's clerical leaders in decades.

"Our investigation established that her death was unlawful and caused by physical violence in the custody of state authorities," Sara Hossain, chairperson of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran, told the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The fact-finding mission found the protests that followed were marked by extra-judicial executions, arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment, as well as rape and sexual violence.

"These acts were conducted in the context of a widespread and systematic attack against women and girls, and other persons expressing support for human rights," Hossain said.

"Some of these serious violations of human rights thus rose to the level of crimes against humanity."

In response, Kazem Gharib Abadi, secretary general of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, accused the fact-finding mission of a "glaring lack of independence and impartiality".

In separate comments to the Human Rights Council, Javid Rehman, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran, said jailed human rights defender Narges Mohammadi "suffers from severe health issues, including serious heart and lung conditions, placing her health at great risk".

"She was denied medical access because she did not have the mandatory hijab," Hossain said about Mohammadi, who won the Nobel Peace Prize last year.

Hossain said that since the protests began in 2022, women and girls in Iran were confronted daily by discrimination "affecting virtually all aspects of their private and public lives".

She said it was "hard to fathom" that women's access to schools, universities, hospitals and courts as well as employment opportunities "should be subjected to a wholly arbitrary requirement of wearing the mandatory hijab".

In New Zealand, Chinese minister calls for working with 'friends'

HT News Network

WELLINGTON: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a rare visit to New Zealand on Monday, stressing the need to work with "friends" in the face of the "tumultuous international situation".

The trip marks the start of a diplomatic blitz through New Zealand and Australia, Wang's first visit to either country since 2017.

The whistle-stop tour is expected to focus heavily on trade as Beijing looks to lessen the pain from slowing economic growth at home.

Speaking in the capital Wellington before a meeting with his New Zealand counterpart, Wang said the trip was also a chance to shore up diplomatic ties that have come under strain as Beijing adopts an increasingly aggressive stance on issues such as Taiwan and the South China Sea.

"In the face of the current tumultuous international situation, we are willing to strengthen strategic communication with our friends in New Zealand on international and regional issues of common concern," Wang said.

"And we will work together to maintain peace and stability in the region and the world," he added before his closed-door meeting with New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters.

New Zealand is part of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance alongside the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.

But Wellington has been criticised for taking a softer line on China -- putting its trading relationship ahead of its allies' security concerns.

In a statement on Monday, Peters said the talks touched on "trade, business, and people-to-people links", but also acknowledged "areas of difference such as human rights".

"We also highlighted New Zealand and China's shared interest in a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region and raised concerns over increased tensions in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait," he added.

China is New Zealand's largest trading partner, and Chinese consumers have long had an appetite for the country's meat, wine, milk and wool.

Wang said he believed that "China-New Zealand relations will continue to be at the forefront of China's relations with developed countries".

"The relationship between us has developed smoothly and well," he said.

Later this week, Wang will meet Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong in Canberra.

China and Australia have recently resolved a series of simmering trade disputes that saw Beijing impose tariffs and trade barriers on key exports in 2020, retaliating after Canberra barred Huawei from 5G contracts and called for a probe into the origins of Covid-19.

But the two nations continue to spar over human rights and Beijing's growing clout in the Pacific region. China and Australia have recently resolved a series of simmering trade disputes that saw Beijing impose tariffs and trade barriers on key exports in 2020, retaliating after Canberra barred Huawei from 5G contracts and called for a probe into the origins of Covid-19.

Israel Using Starvation As "Method Of War" Which Is A War Crime: UN

HT News Network

Geneva: The United Nations warned Tuesday that Israel's severe restrictions on aid into war-ravaged Gaza coupled with its ongoing attacks could be seen as using starvation as a "weapon of war".

UN human rights chief Volker Turk decried the rampant hunger and looming famine in Gaza.

"The situation of hunger, starvation and famine is a result of Israel's extensive restrictions on the entry and distribution of humanitarian aid and commercial goods, displacement of most of the population, as well as the destruction of crucial civilian infrastructure," he said in a statement. "The extent of Israel's continued restrictions on the entry of aid into Gaza, together with the manner in which it continues to conduct hostilities, may amount to the use of starvation as a method of war, which is a war crime."

His spokesman, Jeremy Laurence, told reporters in Geneva that the final determination of whether "starvation is being used as a weapon of war" would be determined by a court of law. "The suffering of the people of Gaza is unconscionable," he



said. The comments came after a UN-backed assessment determined that the war-torn Palestinian territory is facing imminent famine. The devastating war since Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel has left roughly half of Gazans -- around 1.1 million people -- experiencing "catastrophic" hunger, a UN-backed food security assessment warned. Without a surge of aid, famine would hit the 300,000 people in Gaza's war-battered north by May, it said Monday.

Jens Laerke, spokesman for the UN humanitarian agency OCHA, told reporters in Geneva his agency feared that without action, "you're looking at more than 200 people dying from starvation per day".

Turk also stressed that "the clock is ticking".

UN chief invokes film, warns of nuclear disaster

HT News Network

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres invoked Oscar-winning film Oppenheimer on Monday as he warned that the world faced the highest risk of nuclear war in decades.

At a Security Council session called by Japan, Guterres said that the biopic about the morally conflicted father of the atomic bomb "brought the harsh reality of nuclear doomsday to vivid life for millions around the world." "Humanity cannot survive a sequel to Oppenheimer," Guterres said. "We meet at a time when geopolitical tensions and mistrust have escalated the risk of nuclear warfare to its highest point in decades," he said. Russian President Vladimir Putin has made thinly veiled threats to use nuclear weapons as he warns the West against its support for Ukraine, which Moscow invaded more than two years ago. Without naming Putin, Guterres said, "Nuclear saber-rattling must stop." "Threats to use nuclear weapons in any capacity are unacceptable," he said. Guterres says threats to use nuclear weapons in any capacity are unacceptable elsewhere in the world, tensions surrounding



nuclear-armed North Korea have continued to rise and Iran has been enriching uranium closer to the level needed if it decides to build an atom bomb. Israel, the Middle East's only nuclear-armed power albeit an undeclared one, has been at war since Oct 7. Guterres called on the United States and Russia to resume negotiations, at a standstill since the Ukraine war, on a successor to the New START nuclear arms reduction treaty which expires in early 2026. He also called for progress on other initiatives including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force in 2021 but has little practical effect as no nuclear-weapons states are party to it.

West decries Putin's landslide election victory

HT News Network

LONDON: Western governments lined up on Monday to condemn Vladimir Putin's landslide election victory as unfair and undemocratic, but China, India and North Korea and some other countries congratulated the veteran Russian leader on extending his rule by a further six years.

The contrasting reactions underscored the geopolitical fault lines that have gaped wider since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago, triggering the deepest crisis in relations with the West since the end of the Cold War.

Arriving in Brussels on Monday, EU foreign ministers roundly dismissed the election result as a sham ahead of agreeing sanctions on individuals linked to the mistreatment and death of Kremlin critic Alexei



Navalny. "Russia's election was an election without choice," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said at the start of the meeting.

China, North Korea, India vow closer ties with Russia

Playing on Moscow's reference to its war in Ukraine as a "special military operation", French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne said Paris had taken note of the "special

election operation".

"The conditions for a free, pluralistic and democratic election were not met," his ministry said.

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron said the election outcome highlighted the "depth of repression" in Russia.

"Putin removes his political opponents, controls the media, and then crowns himself the winner. This is not democracy," Cameron said.

France, Britain and others condemned the fact that Russia had also held its election in occupied regions of Ukraine that it claims to have annexed during the war.

The Kremlin dismissed such criticism, saying the 87 per cent of the vote won by Putin during the three-day election showed that the Russian people were consolidating around him. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia's election had no legitimacy.

Bangladesh, Pakistan and India bottom in air quality rankings in 2023, data shows

HT News Network

Pakistan remained one of the world's three smoggiest countries in 2023, as Bangladesh and India replaced Chad and Iran, with particulate matter about 15 times the level recommended by the World Health Organisation, data published on Tuesday showed.

Average concentrations of PM2.5 -- small airborne particles that damage the lungs -- reached 79.9 micrograms per cubic metre in Bangladesh in 2023, and 73.7 micrograms in Pakistan. The WHO recommends no more than 5 micrograms. "Because of the climate conditions and the geography (in South Asia), you get this streak of PM2.5 concentrations that just skyrocket because the pollution has nowhere to go," said Christi Chester Schroeder, air quality science manager at IQAir, a Swiss air monitoring organisation.

"On top of that are factors such as agricultural practices, industry and population density," she added. "Unfortunately, it really does look like it will get worse before it gets better." In 2022, Bangladesh was ranked as having the fifth-worst air quality, and India was eighth.

US urges Taliban to prevent attacks from Afghan soil

HT News Network

WASHINGTON: The US State Department called on Kabul's Taliban rulers on Monday to prevent terrorist activities originating from Afghan soil, while also urging both Afghanistan and Pakistan to prioritise the protection of civilian lives during security operations.

"We have seen reports that Pakistan carried out airstrikes in Afghanistan in response to the attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, on Saturday at a military post," said the department's Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel when asked at a news briefing to comment on these developments.

"We deeply regret the loss of life and injuries sustained during the attack in Pakistan and the loss of civilian lives during the strike in Afghanistan."

The US official, however, also sent a clear message to Afghanistan's Taliban rulers. "We urge the Taliban to



ensure that terrorist attacks are not launched from Afghan soil." And then he urged Pakistan "to exercise restraint and ensure civilians are not harmed in their counterter-

rorism efforts". The State Department official also urged "both sides to address their differences" while underlining the need for Afghanistan to curb terrorism.

"We remain committed to ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists who wish to harm the United States or our partners or allies," he said. When a journalist interpreted his statement as suggesting that the United States did not support Pakistan's stance on this issue, Patel said: "Any loss of civilian life is troubling and heartbreaking to us, so we want to make sure that when some of these operations are being conducted, every step possible is taken to ensure it is the perpetrators that are being held to account and not civilians who are being impacted."

Emphasising Pakistan's position as a close US ally, he said that Washington maintains "regular communication" with Pakistani leaders to "discuss Afghanistan in detail including through our counterterrorism dialogue and other bilateral consultations".

PC gains momentum as Sajad Lone leads significant block meeting in Handwara Constituency Emphasizes grassroots engagement; Urges comprehensive preparation ahead of LS polls

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 19: J&K Peoples Conference President Sajad Lone, on the second day of his visit to Handwara, chaired yet another significant gathering today, including members from Manzgam, Tarpura A, Tarpura B, and Villgam B blocks.

The primary objective of the meeting was to encourage party workers to bolster grassroots structures, facilitate enhanced public outreach and strategic planning with regard to the upcoming Parliamentary Elections.

The prominent members present in this meeting included Abdul Ahad Kashmiri, Ashiq Hussain Sheikh, Wasem Raja, Block Presidents G.M Bhat,

Abdul Rashid Peer, Zahoor Lilam and Sonauallah Khan.

In his address, PC President emphasized the crucial importance of engaging with the people at grassroots level, understanding their concerns and aligning with their aspirations.

"With the profound trust vested in the Peoples Conference comes the weighty responsibility incumbent upon party members to uphold the aspirations of the people and address their concerns with diligence, sincerity, and affinity," he said.

He also hailed the huge surge in joining of new members into the party fold, terming it a resounding endorsement of the party's commitment to public welfare and its vision of catalyzing progress and development.



"Our mission transcends conventional political paradigms; it represents a sincere effort to commence a new era in Jammu and Kashmir, marked by inclusivity, empathy, and the pivotal restoration of dignity to our people," he affirmed.

Party President also highlighted the party's unwavering dedication to championing the cause of the marginalized and amplifying their voices in the corridors of power.

"I call upon our party members to forge robust connections with constituents at the grassroots level, effectively propagating our party's agenda and eliciting a tangible response from the public," he said.

Furthermore, scores of prominent political activists joined the Peoples Conference in presence of the Party

President, enhancing the party's strength and amplifying its outreach. In his address, PC President emphasized the crucial importance of engaging with the people at grassroots level, understanding their concerns and aligning with their aspirations.

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HDFC Bank inaugurates 60 Banking Outlets pan-India

HT News Network



Srinagar, Mar 19 : HDFC Bank announced the inauguration of 60 Business Correspondent (BC) Banking Outlets across RBI notified unbanked rural centers (URCs) pan-India. These new outlets now increase HDFC Bank's URC network presence to 5,020 outlets. Notably, 34% of the Bank's BC Agent network now caters to providing formal financial products and services across 10,602 villages.

Customers will benefit from a comprehensive suite of Bank's financial solutions including, convenient cash deposit & withdrawal through AEPS-enabled transactions, neighborhood locations for EMI collection of loans, government-backed social security schemes to create an insurance safety net, opening bank accounts for directly receiving government scheme transfer benefits, fixed and recurring deposit options for financial planning and access to credit through loans like SLI and Kisan Gold Card to fulfill household aspirations.

Ms. Smita Bhagat, Group Head, Retail Branch Banking-North, East & Central, ABCP & Retail FX, HDFC Bank said, "HDFC Bank is deeply committed to financial inclusion even in the remotest corner of the country. We are happy that a significant portion, nearly 34% of our BC network, operates within RBI notified unbanked rural centers (URCs). We aim to empower these communities and contribute to the government's financial inclusion agenda by providing crucial financial solutions like AePS transactions, deposit services, government-backed insurance, and access to credit facilities."

Sanjay Rakesh, MD of CSC, emphasized the importance of digital innovation by suggesting that the bank should consider introducing a diverse range of digital products and services at BC centers. This strategic move aims to provide comprehensive banking services directly to customers within the catchment area. Additionally, Mr. Rakesh advised VLEs operating as BCs at URC locations to maximize their revenue potential through the HDFC Bank and CSC partnership by offering relevant financial products and services to the local customer base." (KNT)

Lok Sabha Elections-2024: Training for MCC teams held at Bandipora

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 19: In view of the forthcoming General Elections to Lok Sabha 2024, a daylong training programme for the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) Teams including Accounting Teams, Flying Squad Teams, Static Surveillance Teams and Video Viewing Teams was today held at town Hall Bandipora.

The training was imparted by District Level Master Trainer Mohammad Iqbal Samoon and was attended by MCC team members.

ADDC Bandipora Mohammad Ashraf; Nodal



Officer MCC/ADC, Umar Shafi Pandit; Nodal Officer Expenditure Monitoring/ DTO, Sheikh Abid Manzoor; Coordinator Manpower and Trainings Irfan Maqbool and other concerned were also present on the

occasion.

The training programme was held with focus to equip MCC team members with the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure fair and ethical conduct during elections.

The training covered various aspects of the Model Code of Conduct, including its significance, key provisions, and practical implementation strategies.

During the training programme, the participants were made aware about the principles of neutrality, impartiality, and professionalism and their role in upholding these principles throughout the electoral process.

The Participants also received a detailed overview of the Model Code of Conduct, its legal framework, and the significance of its provisions in maintaining the integrity of elections.

Prominent political and social activists from Srinagar and Kulgam Join Apni Party

Altaf Bukhari gives a warm welcome to the new entrants into the party fold

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 19 (KNS): Several prominent political and social leaders from Srinagar and Kulgam districts joined Apni Party during special events held at the party headquarters in Srinagar on Tuesday.

On these occasions, the party president, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, gave a warm welcome to the new entrants and assured them that the entire party leadership would stand by them when they go out to serve the people in their respective areas.

The new entrants from Srinagar included prominent social activist from

Srinagar's Nowgam area Ms Sheraz Malik, Irfan Ahmad from Sonawar, Shabir Ahmad from Lasjan, Burhan from Zewan, Danish from Bemina, Shabir Ahmad from Sonwar, Ashraf Wani from Lasjan, and their associates.

The party leaders who were present on the occasion to greet these new entrants included party's Provincial President Mohammad Ashraf Mir, Media Advisor Farooq Andrabi, State Convenor and District In Charge Ganderbal Haji Parvez Ahmad, District President Srinagar Noor Mohammad Sheikh, Senior Vice President (first) Srinagar Mohammad Shafi Mir, Provincial President for the party's Youth Wing

Khalid Rathore, Provincial Organiser Kashmir and DDC member Harwan Shabir Ahmad Reshi, General Secretary of the party's ST Wing Khalid Bhadana, Provincial President ST Wing Rafiq Ahmad Balote, State Secretary of Youth Wing Tanveer Hussain Pathan, Senior Vice President Srinagar and In Charge for Habba Kadal constituency Jeelani Hamid Kumar, District Youth President and In Charge for the Khanwar constituency Mohsin Zaffar Shah, District Publicity Secretary Adil Bhat, District Organiser Srinagar Sheikh Nisar, Senior Worker Parvez Ahmad, and others.

The new entrant from Kulgam was Sareer Ahmad

Sheikh, former Vice Chairman Municipal Committee Kulgam. The party president Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari along with several senior party leaders greeted these new members into the party fold. The prominent party leaders who were present on the occasion included the party's Media Advisor Farooq Andrabi, Vice Chairperson DDC Kulgam Shazia Jan, General Secretary of the party's ST Wing Khalid Badhana, Constituency IN Charge Langate Khwaja Munawar, Senior Leader Dawood Lodhi, District Youth President Kulgam Mohammad Ashraf Dar, Youth President Uri Sajad Ahmad Sheikh, and others. (KNS)

Police organises awareness programme of New Criminal Laws in Awantipora

HT News Network



Tral March 19: Police in Awantipora organized an awareness programme on the newly amended criminal laws at Government Boys Higher secondary School Tral.

The event aimed to educate the students and faculty about the three updated criminal laws; Bharatiya Naya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam. The programme featured interactive discussions to enhance the practical knowledge of the laws and emphasized people-centric and victim-centric reforms in the new legislation. Such initiatives by the Police are commendable as they help in creating an informed citizenry aware of their rights and the legal framework governing them.

The awareness programme was attended by ADC Tral, SDPO Tral, Tehsildar Tral and SHO PS Tral. The event witnessed significant participation from renowned educationists, prominent individuals, faculty members of Government Degree College Tral and students of Government Boys Higher Secondary School Tral.

All treasuries to remain open in J&K on 29-31 March

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 19 (KS):- Jammu and Kashmir government has decided to keep all treasuries of the UT open from 29th to 31 March. "It is hereby ordered that all the Treasuries of Jammu District including Civil Secretariat Treasury and New Delhi Treasury shall remain open on Friday 29th of March, 2024 for conducting government business, The Civil Secretariat Treasury, J&K and Sub Treasury, New Delhi shall remain open on Saturday 30th of March, 2024 for conducting Government business and All Treasuries of UT of J&K including Civil Secretariat Treasury and Sub Treasury, New Delhi shall remain open on Sunday 31st of March, 2024 exclusively for purpose of receiving Government receipts only." Reads the order a copy of which lies with News Agency Kashmir Scroll. "Last date/time for receipt of claims for disbursement at Treasury for the fiscal year 2023-24 shall be 29th of March, 2024 at 04:00 P.M. Treasury Officers shall communicate consolidated liability on 29th of March by 05:30 P.M. The bills / claims so presented in the Month of March are liable to Special Audit wherever required." It reads further. "Any bill presented after the cut off time in the Treasury shall be entertained with the prior approval of Finance Department", it reads further (KS)

Aryans Cardiac Care Students shine in IKG-PTU Results

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 19th Cardiac Care students of Paramedical division of Aryans Institute of Management & Technology (AIMT), Rajpura, Near Chandigarh brought laurels by giving their excellent performance in the Final Examinations. Bilal Ahmed bagged 1st position by scoring 8.68 SGPA; Ishan Manhas bagged 2nd position by scoring 8.63 SGPA and Mohd Aijaz bagged 3rd position by scoring 8.58 SGPA, in B. Sc. in B. Sc. Cardiac Care in their 3rd semester exams conducted IKG-PTU, Jalandhar.

Dr. Anshu Kataria, Chairman, Aryans Group congratulated the students and faculty for their hard work done. Kataria further said that students are performing well in every field including academics, sports, cultural, innovations etc. Apart from regular academics, co-curricular activities like workshops, seminars, Industrial visits, clinical postings are being organized to enhance the skills and knowledge of the students.

Awareness programme under SVEEP held at Sumbal

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 19: The District Election office Bandipora on Tuesday organised an awareness programme under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) for specially abled persons at Government Girls High School Sumbal.

The programme was aimed to raise awareness about the importance of ensuring equal participation in the electoral process for individuals with special needs.

The programme was attended by Nodal Officer Man Power and Trainings (Chief Education Officer) Dr. G. M. Pujoo; Nodal Officer SVEEP (Principal NM Higher Secondary School) Ab. Rasheed Lone; Election Icon/ General Secretary Handicapped Association J&K, Nazir Ahmad Lone; Coordinator SVEEP Arsalan Habib and specially abled persons besides other concerned.

Nodal officer Man Power Management and Nodal officer SVEEP highlighted various facilities available at polling sta-



tions for specially abled persons to ensure their participation.

The speakers said that electoral authorities are committed to provide the neces-

sary support to facilitate participation of specially abled persons and polling stations are equipped with ramps and wheel chairs besides trained persons shall be available to provide assistance to voters with special needs.

Coordinator SVEEP activities said that the programme was conducted to educate individuals with special abilities about their voting rights, the accessibility of polling stations, and available support services.

Speaking on the occasion, election Icon Nazir Ahmad Lone urged public particularly individuals with special abilities to exercise their fundamental right to vote in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

He said participation in the democratic process is vital for building an inclusive society that represents the diverse needs and perspectives of all its members.

Later, the SVEEP team District Bandipora also visited transit accommodation Odina Sumbal and interacted with migrant employees as part of awareness generation programme under SVEEP.

Watermelon controversy in Kashmir



SAHIL MANZOOR

With the arrival of the Islamic month of Ramadan, the controversy over watermelon got started. In Kashmir, the importance of watermelon increased during the Islamic month of Ramadan. It has been just 5 years since the Islamic month shifted to winter. After a couple of years, it will shift to harsh winters. The Islamic calendar has 354 to 355 days. It means 10 to 11 days less than the Gregorian calendar. Alhamdulillah, the holy month is passing, and Muslim Ummah in Kashmir are enjoying fasting from dawn to dusk. Watermelon is not the only food to be consumed this month. The Almighty has bestowed on us unlimited food items for our survival. We can take other food items as alternatives for the watermelons. Some people have concerns for our health, and some are mean with money, and they always prioritize their business. As we have been experiencing for the last week, the doctor fraternity has utterly had issues with the consumption of watermelon, and some people who are earning their livelihood with watermelon are trying their best to motivate people and expand their market.

We know that the market for watermelon has increased to certain limits during the holy month of Ramadan. Muslims consume watermelon at the time of iftar due to its great and immense health benefits. It keeps you hydrated and quenches your thirst.

In the future, after passing every year, the holy month will shift to winter for 15 years. After three years, one Ramadan shifts to next month. The Islamic calendar has less than 10 days.

Role of government administration



The government should interfere in any controversy as soon as possible. As we know today, social media is playing a negative as well as positive role among people. There are some You Tubers and news channels who do not have adequate knowledge and are discussing unnecessarily each and every issue. The government has proper channels, manpower, and technology through which administration can go to any extent for the safeguarding of the general public.

People who are related to the fruit business can introduce new varieties during the holy month of Ramadan, which has great and immense health benefits, and earn their livelihoods.

Why are we after watermelons? We should stop discussing whether watermelons are good for health or not. If we have choices, then quit and look for other food items at the time of iftar.

Health benefits of watermelons

As is well known, fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables are important for our health. Every fruit variety contains a number of basic components of food that help with the development and repair of the

body, play an immense role in the overall development of the proper functioning of our bodies, and keep us fit and healthy. So let's learn how important watermelon is for our body and for our overall health.

These days, we are passing through the holy month of Ramzan-ul-Mubarak. The month has immense importance from a religious point of view. During the month, the Muslim Ummah across the globe follows the fast, as it is one of the basic pillars of Islam, and stops eating every bit from fajr to magrib (morning and evening prayers). Fasting is a month of purification for the body. helps obese people reduce their extra weight. Fasting has great health importance, but at the same time, during scorching heat, the body gets dehydrated due to a lack of fluid in the body. In this article, I am going to explore the benefits of watermelon.

Watermelon helps improve digestion. Watermelon contains lots of water and a small amount of fiber, which is important for healthy digestion. Fiber can provide bulk for your stool, while water helps keep your digestive tract moving efficiently. Eating water- and fiber-rich fruits and

vegetables, including watermelon, can be very helpful for promoting normal bowel movements. Drinking water is an important way to keep your body hydrated. However, eating foods that have a high water content can also help. Interestingly, watermelon is 92% water. What's more, a high water content is one of the reasons why fruits and vegetables help you feel full. The combination of water and fiber means you are eating a good volume of food without consuming a lot of calories. Watermelon has a high water content. This makes it hydrating and helps you feel full.

Because it contains nutrients and beneficial plant compounds, watermelon is a low-calorie fruit. That's lower than even low-sugar fruits such as berries. One cup of watermelon has many other nutrients as well, including these vitamins and minerals: vitamin C, vitamin A, potassium, magnesium, and vitamins B1, B5, and B6.

Watermelon contains important antioxidants. Vitamin C is an antioxidant that helps prevent cell damage from free radicals. Carotenoids are a class of plant compounds that include alpha- and beta-carotene, which your body converts to vitamin A. Lycopene is a type of carotenoid that does not change into vitamin A. This potent antioxidant gives a red colour to plant foods such as tomatoes and watermelon and is linked to many health benefits. Watermelon is good for skin and hair. Two vitamins in watermelon, A and C, are important for skin and hair health. Vitamin C helps your body make collagen, a protein that keeps your skin supple and your hair strong. Vitamin A is also important for healthy skin since it helps create and repair skin cells. Without enough vitamin A, your skin can look dry and flaky. Watermelon may improve heart health; heart disease is the number one cause of death worldwide.

SAHIL MANZOOR

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NEWS

Daily Exercise Can Reduce Risk Of Stroke



A stroke, also known as a cerebrovascular accident (CVA), occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is interrupted or reduced, depriving brain tissue of oxygen and nutrients. This can happen either due to a blockage in an artery (ischemic stroke) or the rupture of a blood vessel (hemorrhagic stroke).

Without prompt treatment, brain cells begin to die within minutes, leading to potentially severe consequences such as permanent disability or death. Regular exercise can significantly reduce the risk of stroke in various ways, primarily by improving cardiovascular health and reducing risk factors associated with stroke. Read on as we discuss how exactly can exercise reduce stroke risk.

1. Improving blood pressure

Exercise helps to lower blood pressure, a significant risk factor for stroke. By strengthening the heart and improving blood circulation, exercise contributes to maintaining healthy blood pressure levels.

2. Enhancing cardiovascular health

Regular physical activity strengthens the heart muscle, improves its efficiency, and enhances overall cardiovascular health. This reduces the likelihood of conditions such as atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), which can lead to stroke.

3. Lowering cholesterol levels

Exercise can raise levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, which is beneficial while lowering levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, which is harmful. This helps to maintain healthy cholesterol levels and reduces the risk of plaque buildup in the arteries.

4. Managing weight

Regular exercise helps to control weight by burning calories and promoting the development of lean muscle mass. Maintaining a healthy weight is important for reducing the risk of stroke, as obesity is a significant risk factor.

5. Reducing blood sugar levels

Exercise helps to regulate blood sugar levels by improving insulin sensitivity and glucose metabolism. This is important because high blood sugar levels increase the risk of diabetes, which in turn is a risk factor for stroke.

6. Preventing blood clots

Physical activity reduces the risk of blood clots by promoting healthy blood flow and preventing the formation of clots in the arteries and veins. Blood clots can block blood flow to the brain, leading to ischemic stroke.

How Does Curcumin Improve Gut Health?

Curcumin is a natural compound found in the root of the turmeric plant (*Curcuma longa*), which is a member of the ginger family. It is responsible for the bright yellow colour of turmeric and has been used for centuries in traditional medicine, particularly in Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine, for its potential health benefits. Curcumin is known for its potent anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anticancer properties. It has been the sub-

ject of numerous scientific studies investigating its potential therapeutic effects on various health conditions. In this article, we cover some common benefits of curcumin on your gut health.

1. Anti-inflammatory properties

Curcumin has potent anti-inflammatory effects, which can help reduce inflammation in the gastrointestinal tract. This can be beneficial for conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), Crohn's disease, and ulcerative colitis.



2. Protects intestinal barrier

Curcumin has been shown to strengthen the intestinal barrier, which helps prevent the leakage of harmful substances

from the gut into the bloodstream. A healthy intestinal barrier is crucial for optimal gut health and immune function.

3. Modulation of gut microbiota

Curcumin can modulate the composition of gut microbiota, promoting the growth of beneficial bacteria while inhibiting the growth of harmful bacteria. This balance in the gut microbiota is essential for digestive health and overall well-being.

4. Reduction of oxidative stress

Curcumin is a potent anti-

oxidant that helps neutralise free radicals and reduce oxidative stress in the gut. By protecting against oxidative damage, curcumin supports the health of gastrointestinal tissues and cells.

5. Improved digestive function

Curcumin has been shown to stimulate the production of digestive enzymes, which aid in the breakdown and absorption of nutrients. This can improve digestion and nutrient absorption, promoting overall gut health.

Experimental Blood Test May Help Detect Colon Cancer Earlier

A blood test known as a cfDNA test has proven to be accurate in detecting colorectal cancer in the majority of cases.

Colorectal cancer is often deadly, but screening for it can be inconvenient, so getting more adults to adhere to screening guidelines is a top priority.

Experts believe the novel test could help bridge the gap and get more people to regularly screen for colorectal cancer.

A novel blood test for colorectal cancer screening appears effective in clinical trial data, but questions remain about how it can be utilized.

Colorectal cancer screening has a reputation for being difficult, but a new type of screening could make the process as easy as giving some blood. It could even be done during a regular check-up with your doctor.

It's effective too, but with some caveats. In a study published this week in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, researchers found that a type of blood test known as a cell-free DNA blood-based test or cfDNA test was able to detect colorectal cancer in 83% of patients who had the disease. The study was funded by Guardant Health, the maker of the test.

The detection rate is similar to an



already widely used at-home screening test known as a fecal immunochemical (FIT) test, which is accurate in about eight out of 10 cases.

Colonoscopies remain the "gold standard" for colorectal cancer detection and prevention but require significantly more time, scheduling, and preparation. A colonoscopy is able to accurately identify colorectal cancer in about 95% of cases.

Experts told Healthline that the combination of accuracy and accessibility could be a game changer for screening.

"It's very, very exciting. I think this has real potential to reshape the entire landscape of colon cancer early detection," Dr. Christopher Chen, an Assistant Professor of Oncology and Director of Early Drug Development at the Stanford Cancer Institute, Stanford Medicine, told Healthline.

Dr. Ben Park, MD, PhD, Director of

the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center at Vanderbilt University, told Healthline, "It's studies like these that we really need to move the needle forward and demonstrate that there is validity, or what we call clinical validation, of a test like this. It's not perfect, as probably everyone can read from the numbers, but it's a big start."

Park was not affiliated with the research but disclosed that he is currently engaged in separate clinical trials involving Guardant Health. Accurate in 83% of cases

The results of the study come from a large, multi-center trial known as the ECLIPSE trial. Some 8,000 patients between the ages of 45 and 84. Participants were at average risk for colorectal cancer and were already undergoing routine screening for colorectal cancer.

The trial tested the effectiveness of Guardant Health's Shield blood test compared to colonoscopy. Sixty-five participants in the trial had confirmed colorectal cancer from a colonoscopy. The cfDNA test positively identified cancer in 54 of 65 (83.1%) of those participants.

What the test does not do is test for precancerous lesions or polyps, which can develop into cancer. For precancerous lesions, the test only detected about 13% of cases.

Maternal Deaths May Be Overestimated, but There's Still a Maternal Health Crisis

New research challenges current CDC reporting about rising maternal death rates in the U.S., suggesting maternal mortality is stable and on par with other developed countries.

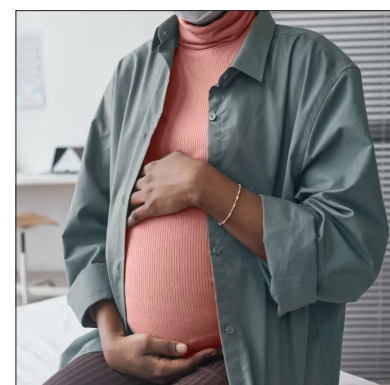
The study authors claim a "pregnancy checkbox" introduced by the CDC in 2003 may have contributed to inaccurate pregnancy-related death tolls.

Discrepancies around direct, indirect, incidental, and accidental deaths among pregnant people may have led to reporting errors, researchers say.

The CDC disagrees with the study findings and stands by the accuracy of its data collection methods.

The ongoing maternal health crisis in the United States affects millions of women who do not have access to quality prenatal and postnatal care, particularly those who live in areas with restricted abortion access. These disparities fuel rising maternal mortality rates that disproportionately affect women of color. Trusted Source.

But, new research suggests that the number of maternal deaths in the past two decades may have been overestimated. The study, published March 12 in the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, shows maternal mortality in the U.S. held steady and was



on par with other developed countries.

The study data also indicate that maternal deaths from direct obstetric causes declined over the past 20 years.

Researchers say the 2003 inclusion of a pregnancy checkbox on death certificates, which showed whether a person was pregnant at or near their time of death, misrepresented the increase in the number of maternal deaths.

"Our study showed that maternal mortality rates were low and stable between 1999-2002 and 2018-2021, which is very different from the high rates and dramatic increases reported by the NVSS [National Vital Statistics System] Trusted Source in recent years," lead author Dr. K.S. Joseph, PhD, a Professor in the Departments of Obstetrics and Gyn-

aeology and the School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia and the Children's and Women's Hospital & Health Centre of British Columbia said in a news release.

"We found that exclusive reliance on the pregnancy checkbox on death certificates, without corroboration from the cause-of-death information, led to an overestimation of maternal mortality rates by the NVSS in 2018-2021."

Maternal death rates lower than CDC estimates

The researchers found that maternal deaths in the U.S. were stable overall, averaging at just over 10 per 100,000 live births from 1999 to 2002, as well as from 2018 to 2021. This conflicts with maternal mortality rates reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which increased from 9.65 per 100,000 live births to 23.6 per 100,000 live births for the same time period, respectively.

These findings challenge upward trends that were previously reported by the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS), a division of the CDC. The CDC's 2021 maternal mortality report Trusted Source shows nearly a 40% increase in overall maternal deaths from 2020, with rates for non-Hispanic Black women 2.6 times higher than white women.



IPL INTRODUCES SMART REPLAY SYSTEM FOR QUICKER, MORE ACCURATE REVIEWS

NEW DELHI: To increase the accuracy and speed of decision-making, IPL 2024 will have the Smart Replay System.

ESPNcricinfo has learned that under the Smart Replay System, the TV umpire will receive inputs directly from two Hawk-Eye operators who will be sitting in the same room as the umpire and provide him with images captured by Hawk-Eye's eight hi-speed cameras across the ground. The TV broadcast director, who used to be a conduit between the third umpire and the Hawk-Eye operators until now, will no longer be involved under the new system.

It is understood that the Smart Replay

System will allow the TV umpire to refer to more visuals than they previously had access to, including split-screen images. Take the example of a relay catch taken mid-air by the first fielder on the boundary rope. In the past, the broadcaster was unable to provide a split screen of the fielder's feet and hands at the precise moment when the ball was caught. Under the new system, a split screen can show the umpire when the ball was caught, or released, alongside synchronised footage of the feet.

Similarly, a split screen can now show, in case of an overthrow that goes for four, whether the batters had crossed or not

when the fielder released the ball (think 2019 World Cup final for an example of a specific use case). Previously the TV umpire did not get such clear visuals, primarily because the broadcaster couldn't marry the two images.

There are eight Hawk-Eye cameras at any match: two on each side of the ground on the straight boundaries and two on each side square of the wicket. Until IPL 2023, Hawk-Eye cameras were mainly used for ball tracking and UltraEdge. So, outside of checks for lbws and edges, the broadcaster largely used footage from their own cameras for any on-field referral. That included referrals for stumpings,

run-outs, catches and overthrows.

In the case of a stumping referral, under the Smart Review System, the TV umpire can ask the Hawk-Eye operators to show him the split screen. In case there is a visible gap when the ball passed bat, he will not ask for the UltraEdge (to see if it was a caught behind) and instead directly proceed to check the side-on replay for the stumping. If the TV umpire doesn't see a clear gap between bat and ball, only then he will refer to UltraEdge.

For stumpings, the new system will show the TV umpire tri-vision - essentially footage from side-on cameras as well as from front-on in a single frame.

The front-on camera angle is important because it gives an accurate picture of bails being removed. Previously the broadcaster would show the side-on angle from each side along with footage from Stump Cam. But Stump Cam records the action at a low speed of approximately 50 frames per second, as opposed to the Hawk-Eye cameras which record at approximately 300 frames per second, meaning there will now be more accurate footage for the umpires to base their decision on. The Smart Review System is also likely to provide more clarity in the case of a catch taken inches off the turf.

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