

Sunrisers trump Mumbai in record six-hitting carnage



On Audit Party's Instructions, J&K Sports Council Issues 10-Point Advisory To Recognised Sports Bodies

Pj3

Pj12

India's Borders Totally Secure: Rajnath Singh

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAR 28: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said India and its borders are "totally secure" and the people of the country should have full faith in the armed forces.

During a fireside chat on the concluding day of the Times Now Summit here, while responding to a question on the criticism of the Agniveer scheme, the minister said such questions have "no standing" and underlined that everyone will accept that the armed forces should have a young profile.

During the event, the Union minister also shared anecdotes from his nearly 50-year-long political journey.

Asked how he reacted to

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"Government Open To Change In Agniveer Scheme If Needed": Rajnath Singh

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAR 28: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said that his government is "open to change" in the Agniveer recruitment scheme if necessary.

Speaking at the Times Now Summit, the Union Minister also said that the government has ensured that the future of the Agniveers is secure.

Asserting that youthfulness is necessary in the defence forces, Singh also defended the scheme, and said, "Sena mein youthfulness honi chahiye. The youth, I feel, are more enthusiastic. They are more tech-savvy. We have taken proper care that their future is also secure. We will also make changes if there is a need."

The recruits named Agniveers serve for a tenure of four years that includes training for six months followed by 3.5 years of deployment. After retirement from the service, they will have the opportunity to apply to continue in the armed forces.

As announced, the 'Agnipath' or 'Agniveer'

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

PM Modi Arriving In JK For The 3rd Time This Year

Scheduled to campaign for BJP candidates, HM Amit Shah, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh also among the Star Campaigners for JK

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to make his presence felt in Jammu and Kashmir once more, this time to actively engage in campaigning for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.

While the specific dates of his visit are still pending, this marks the Prime Minister's third visit to Jammu and Kash-



mir this year alone. Earlier, on February 20 and March 7, 2024, Modi addressed rallies held in Jammu and Srinagar.

Sources told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that in anticipation of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has unveiled an extensive campaign strategy, enlisting the support of 40 leaders, including prominent national figures and local stalwarts.

Among the high-profile leaders slated to participate in the campaign are Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP National President Jagat Prakash Nadda, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, and Home Minister Amit Shah. Additionally,

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NEWS BRIEF

Police Attach "Illegal" Properties Of A Drug Peddler In J&K

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Police on Thursday attached the "illegal" properties of a notorious drug peddler in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district.

The drug peddler identified as Mudasir Ahmad Shah, a resident of Chandraseeran is presently lodged in Central Jail Kot Bhalwal Jammu under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT-NDPS) Act, Police said.

Police said, "properties (land measuring 6 marlas under survey No. 875 & plinth of under construction poultry farm worth lacs) belonging to the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

J&K's avian diversity surges: Study identifies 592 bird species

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Jammu and Kashmir's rich avifauna has witnessed a notable surge, with the discovery of 592 bird species, according to a recent study published in Indian Birds, a journal of South Asian Ornithology.

The comprehensive analysis, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), led by Wildlife Warden North Intesar Suhail and co-authored by Muzaffar A Kichloo, Neeraj Sharma, Parvaiz Shagoo, and Parmil Kumar highlight a significant improvement from previous reports.

Previously, the last checklist in

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Ten Injured as vehicle plunges into gorge in Poonch

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: In a harrowing accident, a matador veered off course and plunged into a ditch in Manganad village of Poonch district in the Jammu division, leaving ten individuals injured, including two children. The severity of the incident led to the complete destruction of the matador, prompting immediate medical attention for the wounded, who were rushed to Raja Sukhdev Singh District Hospital for treatment.

According to initial inputs received by news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the mishap occurred on Thursday when the matador, carrying approximately ten passengers,

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CS Reviews Development Of Skilling Portal By BISAG

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 28: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today had a detailed review of the development of Skilling portal for Skill Development Department (SDD) by Bhas-karacharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BIS-AG-N) in association

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



Rains Lash Plains Of Kashmir, More In Offing: MeT

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Kashmir plains were lashed by light rain, while the Meteorological Department has predicted fairly widespread light to moderate rain and snow over Jammu and Kashmir during the next 48 hours.

The MeT said on Thursday the weather will remain generally cloudy with the possibility of fairly widespread light to moderate rain in plains and snow in higher reaches during

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Congress Leaders Grabbed Land From Landless, Modi Gave Land To Landless: Dr Jitendra

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 28: Union Minister and BJP candidate for Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency Dr Jitendra Singh on Thursday said that while the Congress leaders grabbed land from the poor, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave land to the landless and also Pucca house.

Addressing a series of BJP election



meetings in Kathua district, Dr Singh said that for more than six decades, Congress leaders including their elected representatives like MLAs and MPs had made it a norm to threaten the poor and encroach their properties. Under Congress rule, this culture became a countrywide phenomenon and did not spare even this region of Kathua, where people are innocent

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ADGP Calls For 'Pre-Emptive' Measures To Mitigate Risks

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: As the upcoming elections draw near, the Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) for Law & Order J&K, who is also State Police Nodal officer (SPNO) for parliament election 2024, called for pre-emptive measures to mitigate any risks that may arise during the electoral process.

He chaired a crucial high-level meeting on Thursday at Police Control Room (PCR) to assess and enhance the preparedness for the electoral process. The meeting focused on various aspects crucial for ensuring the smooth conduct of elections in Jammu & Kashmir.

A police spokesperson said the meeting was virtually attended by ADGP

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MHA Extends Till June 30 Validity Of FCRA Registered NGOs

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAR 28 : The Union home ministry on Thursday extended till June 30 the validity of all FCRA registered NGOs whose licences are expiring on March 31, in a relief to those whose renewal applications are still under consideration.

The ministry has also given time till June 30 to all NGOs whose five-year validity period is expiring between April 1, 2024, and June 30, 2024, so that they can apply for renewal before the expiry of their validity.

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In One Year Alone, JK Govt Earns Rs 544 Crore From Land Registrations

Numbers Witnessed Fourfold Increase-From 21,293 in 2020-21 to 80,128 in 2022-23

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Land revenues have seen a remarkable rise from Rs 291 crore in the fiscal year 2019-20 to an impressive Rs 544 crore in 2022-23, following the registration system's complete modernization and integration with the National Common Document Registration System (NGDRS). Linking this system with Aadhaar has not only enhanced transparency and credibility but has also resulted in a notable increase in government income.

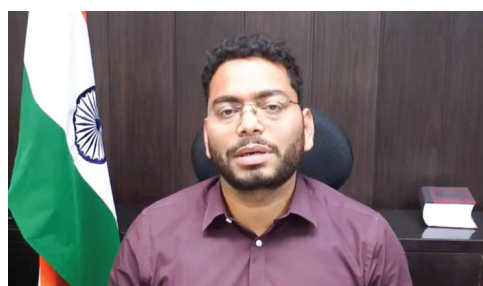
As per the reports received by news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) in the wake of the abrogation of Article 370, rural areas of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are witnessing a remarkable surge in property registrations, marking a significant four-fold increase over the past two years. According to recent data, the number of registrations skyrocketed from 21,293 in 2020-21 to an impressive 80,128 in 2022-23.

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Notification Issued For Jammu Lok Sabha Seat

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 28: Returning Officer 5-Jammu Parliamentary Constituency, Sachin



Kumar Vaishya, today issued election

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Health Experts Highlight Multiple Benefits Of Ramadan Fasting

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Medical experts say there are numerous health benefits associated with fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Doctors who spoke to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said that fasting contributes to weight loss, improves blood sugar control, and reduces inflammation.

Dr Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, Assistant Professor in the Department of General Medicine at SKIMS Soura, said that fasting instills discipline and patience while also decreasing the risk of developing metabolic disorders such as

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Aqua Cycle: A New Attraction In Srinagar's Dal Lake Draws Tourists, Locals

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: A novel addition



to the beauty of Dal Lake in Srinagar has stirred excitement among tourists

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

India's Borders.....

questions raised by many, including members of the opposition, on the India-China border issue, Singh said they never made him uncomfortable.

"In keeping with the country's interests, I tell them (opposition) whatever I can. But in defence, there are many things which have strategic importance and we cannot tell them publicly. We try to steer clear of telling those things, whether it is (about) northern, western or eastern sector," he said.

"I want to assure the people of the country... they should have full faith in our Army and security personnel," the Union minister said.

Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-and-half-year-long confrontation at certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

"Having been the defence minister for five years and home minister before that, I want to assure the people of the country based on what I have seen, understood and assessed that our borders and our country are totally secure," he added.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake area.

The ties between India and China nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process in 2021 on the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area.

Singh defended the Agniveer scheme, saying recruiting youths would result in an increased risk-taking spirit and more tech-savvy armed forces.

"Everyone will accept the fact that there should be youthfulness in the armed forces. Normally, 30-50 years has been the age range of our jawans. But when jawans aged 18-20 will join as Agniveers, then the risk-taking spirit will be a bit higher," he said.

Senior jawans are discharging their responsibilities well, there is no two ways about it, he said.

Today is the age of technology and the Indian youth should also be tech-savvy. Such youths are being recruited under this scheme as Agniveers, he added.

The future of these youths will not be impacted by the scheme. Steps have been taken to secure their future, including making provisions for reservation for Agniveers in paramilitary forces, Singh said.

"And if we see any drawbacks, then we are ready to rectify them," he said.

In June 2022, the Centre rolled out the Agnipath recruitment scheme for short-term induction of personnel into the armed forces with an aim to bring down the age profile of the three services.

The scheme provides for recruiting youngsters in the age bracket of 17 years and a half to 21 years for a four-year period with a provision to retain 25 per cent of them for 15 more years. (AGENCIES)

"Government Open....."

scheme is a process for recruiting soldiers in the Army, Navy, and Air Force, to be hired for a term of four years on contract.

Further, in a massive push to 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', the union minister said that the central government eyes wants to make India an exporter country for engines.

"I have asked DRDO to explore what kind of engines can be made in India and what countries are ready to transfer the technology, as we want to make engines in India now. We want to make India an exporter country for engines. Engines will be built in India and by the Indians," he added.

On the opposition's claim that China has occupied India's land, Singh said that the borders of the country are completely safe.

"We should have complete faith in our army. I want to assure countrymen that our country and its borders are completely safe," the Defence Minister added. (Agencies)

PM Modi Arriving.....

the lineup includes other notable personalities such as National Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and Minister Anurag Thakur, among others.

The BJP's campaign roster features a mix of seasoned politicians and emerging leaders, aiming to resonate with diverse segments of the electorate. Notable inclusions are Jairam Thakur, Sunil Jakhar, Smriti Irani, Bhajan Lal Sharma, Pushkar Singh Dhami, and Tarun Chugh, among others, highlighting the party's concerted effort to leverage both national and local appeal.

The comprehensive list also encompasses several regional leaders. Individuals such as Ravindra Raina, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Jugal Kishore Sharma, and Abdul Ghani Kohli feature prominently.

Reports inform that this comprehensive campaign strategy has been formally communicated to the Election Commission of India by Arun Singh, the party's National General Secretary and in-charge of Headquarters. With BJP fielding candidates like Dr. Jitendra Singh and Jugal Kishore Sharma, who have previously represented the party, the stage is set for

a fiercely contested electoral battle in April, when elections are scheduled to take place in Udhampur and Jammu parliamentary constituencies.

CS Reviews.....

with the NIC and IT Department of the UT. Besides Secretary, SDD the meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, IT; Secretary, Planning; DG, Planning; Director, SDD and other concerned officers of the Department.

During this meeting the Chief Secretary held detailed deliberations with all the stakeholders about the extent and ingredients to be part of this portal. He enquired from the developers about the utility and significance of this portal for the people besides the novel initiatives to be made part of it.

He further asked about the courses to be offered over this portal for skilling and the kind of alerts, information to be provided to applicants. He suggested for making it multilingual for ease of diverse population living here. He also asked for inclusion of motivational videos giving details of schemes offered in each sector of self employment besides adding those on Daksh Kisan portal.

The Secretary, SDD, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan threw light on different aspects and avenues to be onboarded over it. He gave out that the portal under development is going to host a number of online courses beneficial for the people in need of skilling themselves under different sectors or areas of interest like Agriculture, automotive, BFSI, construction, beauty & wellness etc.

Rains Lash.....

the next two days. Intermittent light rain or snow in a few places is also expected on March 31. The weather will generally remain dry from April 1 to 5.

The erratic weather may also cause disruption of surface transport over important passes, the MeT office said and advised travellers and tourists to plan their trip accordingly, particularly during March 30.

It has also advised farmers to suspend farm operations from March 27 to March 31.

There is a possibility of landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones during the above period. Thunderstorms and lightning activity, with the possibility of hailstorms and gusty winds, can also occur during March 27-30.

Srinagar received 0.1mm of rainfall, Qazigund 1.6mm, Pahalgam 4.4mm, Kupwara 2.0mm, Kokernag 0.6mm, and Gulmarg 3.4mm during the past 24 hours until 0830 hours on Thursday.

Amid cloud cover, the night temperature in Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir Valley further improved, recorded at 3-5 degrees Celsius above normal, while the day temperature also remained 5-6 degrees Celsius above normal on the previous day.

Srinagar had a low of 9.8 degree Celsius against the 9.5 degree Celsius recorded during the intervening nights of Wednesday and Thursday. It was 3.7 degree Celsius above normal for the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir during this period of the season.

The tourist hot spot of Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district recorded a low of 5.0 degree Celsius against the 1.6 degree Celsius the previous night, while the famous ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district settled at 2.0 degree Celsius against the 3.0 degree Celsius recorded a day ago, the MeT office said. (UNI)

Congress Leaders.....

and dignified. Soon after taking over as Prime Minister, Narendra Modi said, "Na Khaunga Na Khane Doonga" and all the wealth and land looted from the poor by the Congress leaders and their families will be recovered and deposited in State exchequer to be utilised for the benefit of the needy. At the same time, Prime Minister Modi said, those who are trying to escape from action by law will also be brought to book, he added.

Accordingly, Dr. Jitendra Singh said, one after the other, all the criminals, encroachers and land grabbers in the Congress Party are on their way to jail and periodically coming out on bail. He said, as a Member of Prime Minister Modi's team, each of the BJP Karyakarta has taken the vow to bring these looters to the book and restore their looted property to the genuine claimants.

As far Kathua, Dr. Jitendra Singh said, the entire region was neglected by its Congress representatives because they were keen to appease their Kashmir-centric masters. As a result, this region suffered from continuous neglect and discrimination.

In the last 10 years, said Dr. Jitendra Singh, under Prime Minister Modi, Kathua witnessed maximum development among all the districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Kathua got centrally funded Government Medical College, centrally funded Engineering College under RUSA, Passport Office, Vande Bharat Train, North India's first Industrial Biotech Park, North India's first Homeopathic College, first Seed Processing Plant, 4 percent reservation for youth along International border, border bunkers, Express Road Corridor from Delhi, network of roads, dozens of bridges including the important Keerian-Gandyal bridge, Juthana bridge and Atal Setu, several degree colleges and Kendriya Vidyalayas, Bamboo clusters, which gave employment to hun-

dreds of peoples including Women Self-Help Groups, new industrial complex and much more.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said, today Kathua is emerging as the central nodal point of education, health and trade from all across North India. This has been possible only because of personal indulgence of Prime Minister Modi and the third term of Prime Minister Modi is also going to be "Modi Ki Guarantee" for Kathua emerging as a favourite destination in North India.

During his tour, Dr. Jitendra Singh was accompanied by former MLA and Minister, Rajiv Jasrotia, DDC Vice Chairperson Raghunandan Singh Babloo, BJP President Gopal Mahajan, senior leader Janak Bharati, Prem Nath Dogra, Councillors, BDC members and PRIs. Wherever he went, he was received with extraordinary enthusiasm by people chanting the slogan, "Abki Baar 400 Paar". (UNI)

ADGP Calls.....

Jammu alongwith the IG CRPF Jammu & other senior officers of BSF/CRPF/SSB and physically attended by IG CRPF SOS Shri Ajay Yadav, IG BSF Shri Ashok Yadav, IG CRPF KOS Shri G Verma, IGP Kashmir Zone Shri V k Birdi, DIG CCR Srinagar, DIG SKR Anantnag, DIG SSB Kashmir, DIG CRPF North Srinagar, SSP PCR Kashmir, Staff Officer to IGP Kashmir and other officers.

"Key discussions during the meeting revolved around bolstering security arrangements, particularly emphasizing on-site security measures and conduct of smooth polls. Plans for preparing safe routes for the movement of electoral personnel and facilitating the security personnel deployed for election duties were meticulously deliberated upon to ensure their safety and efficiency throughout the electoral process," he said.

Furthermore, he said, the meeting emphasized the paramount importance of securing the strong room where the ballots will be stored, highlighting the need for robust measures to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process.

"Special measures for critical polling locations were identified and strategies were devised to ensure heightened security measures at these key sites to deal any potential threats and maintain the sanctity of the electoral process," he said.

IGP Kashmir briefed the chair about the existing security plans, following which ADGP L&O underscored the need to revisit and reinforce the security arrangements. Special attention was given to the deployment of manpower in a calculated manner, ensuring strategic positioning to effectively monitor and respond to any potential threats or vulnerabilities.

ADGP L&O stressed the commitment of the law enforcement agencies to uphold the principles of democracy by ensuring a secure and fair electoral environment for all stakeholders involved.

The meeting concluded with a directive to continuously monitor and assess the evolving security situation, with a focus on pre-emptive measures to mitigate any risks that may arise during the electoral process.

MHA Extends.....

According to the law, all NGOs receiving foreign contributions have to be registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.

In a notification, the home ministry said the central government, in the public interest, has decided to extend the validity of FCRA registration certificates of the FCRA registered entities whose validity was extended till March 31, 2024, in terms of the public notice dated September 25, 2023, and whose renewal application is pending.

The validity is now extended till June 30, 2024, or till the date of disposal of the renewal application, whichever is earlier, it said.

The home ministry also said the validity of those FCRA registered entities whose five-year validity period is expiring from April 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024, and who have applied or will apply for renewal before the expiry of the five-year validity period will stand extended up to June 30, 2024, or till the date of disposal of the renewal application, whichever is earlier.

There were 16,301 NGOs in the country which had a valid FCRA licence as of July 17, 2023.

The central government had cancelled the FCRA licences of over 6,600 NGOs in the last five years for violation of the law. Overall, FCRA licences of 20,693 NGOs have been cancelled in the last decade.

According to the data disclosed in parliament last year, Rs 55741.51 crore foreign contributions were received by the FCRA-registered 13,520 associations or NGOs in the financial year 2019-2020 to 2021-2022. (Agencies)

In One Year.....

The introduction of a digital system for property registration has revolutionized the traditional approach, liberating citizens from the cumbersome process of engaging Katibs (registry scribes). Historically, land registration in Jammu and Kashmir was exclusive to the courts, dating back to 1889 when Maharaja Pratap entrusted this responsibility to the judicial system based on the Jammu and Kashmir Registration Act of 1977 Vikram Samvat. However, says a senior revenue official, with the repeal of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, and the subsequent formation of a dedicated land registration department under the Revenue Department, a paradigm shift has occurred.

This overhaul, as per the reports, led to the establishment of 77 registrars and sub-registrars who now operate under the purview of the Central Law Registration Act of 1908, replacing 153 state laws with 106 central laws. The transition to digitalization has particularly benefited rural areas, offering enhanced facilities such as SMS alerts for registration updates, mandatory thumb impressions, and the convenience of home-based and online registrations. This has proven especially advantageous for the elderly, disabled, and those unable to visit government offices.

Furthermore, reports inform that the integration of the registration system with the National Common Document Registration System (NGDRS) and Aadhaar has significantly bolstered transparency and credibility in the registration process. As a result, government revenues have witnessed a substantial increase, with income surging from Rs 291 crore in 2019-20 to a noteworthy Rs 544 crore in 2022-23.

Notification.....

notification for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in the constituency.

The election in this Parliamentary Constituency (PC) is scheduled to take place during the 2nd phase of the electoral process.

The election notification specifies the timeline and procedures for candidates wishing to contest in the parliamentary elections.

As per the notification, nomination papers can be filed by candidates or their proposers at the Returning Officer's office (Deputy Commissioner), Jammu or Assistant Returning Officer 76- Jammu East (Joint Commissioner (A) Jammu Municipal Corporation) at Deputy Commissioner's office, Wazarat Road Jammu between 11:00 am to 03:00 pm on any day (other than public holiday) not later than 04 April, 2024.

The nomination forms can be obtained from the office of the Returning Officer, located at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Jammu.

Scrutiny of the nomination papers will take place on 06 April, 2024 at 11:00 am at Deputy Commissioner's Office Jammu.

The candidates have the option to withdraw their candidature on April 08, 2024 until 03:00 pm.

The polling day for the constituency has been scheduled for April 26, 2024, and the polling will be conducted from 07:00 am to 06:00 pm.

Health Experts.....

diabetes, hypertension, and fatty liver. He mentioned recent studies that indicate a lower incidence of neurological diseases and cancer among individuals who fast. Fasting promotes the regeneration of stem cells, which contribute to tissue and organ formation in the body, he said.

"Fasting helps in promoting blood sugar control, fighting inflammation, and may enhance heart health by improving blood pressure, triglycerides, and cholesterol levels," Dr Bhat said, adding that fasting aids in weight loss by limiting calorie intake and boosting metabolism.

Dr Fayaz said there are many benefits of fasting that prevent cancer and increase the effectiveness of chemotherapy.

Similarly, Dr Shah Nawaz said that fasting contributes to weight loss, particularly among men, and helps in reducing LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol, often referred to as "bad" cholesterol. "Fasting plays a crucial role in decreasing chronic inflammation, which is associated with the development of chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer, and rheumatoid arthritis," he said.

The doctor said that fasting has been associated with improved brain function and increased growth hormone secretion, which is essential for metabolism, weight loss and muscle strength.

Medical experts said there are multi-faceted health benefits of fasting, including weight loss, improved insulin sensitivity, detoxification, reduced cholesterol levels, and enhanced leptin receptivity, contributing to overall youthfulness and well-being.

Aqua Cycle:.....

and locals alike.

The introduction of 'Aqua Cycle', a unique recreational activity, promises to add a new dimension to the experience of exploring the iconic lake.

Sharing details about the newly launched Aqua Cycle, Tahzeem, the person who operates and manages it at the Lake told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that the response to Aqua Cycle from visitors and locals has been good. "Till now, the response has been good amid Ramadan," he said.

He added that it's a new thing and people in the valley are liking it very much as it's a human-operated machine. "It's operated through manpower and has a

pedal-operated system, which gives it power and through which it moves."

Sharing details, Tahzeem added, "we offer Rs 400 as an initial fare for two persons for half an hour and Rs 200 per person for half an hour".

Likewise, locals speaking about the Aqua Cycle told KNO, riding the Aqua Cycle amidst the beautiful view of Dal Lake is truly an unforgettable experience.

They added that the initiative aims to diversify the tourist offerings in the region while promoting eco-friendly leisure activities.

"The Aqua Cycle allows tourists and locals alike to pedal their way across the shimmering waters of Dal Lake, which is a new and amazing experience. Its eco-friendly design and silent operation ensure minimal disturbance to the lake's ecosystem," a local said.

Police Attach.....

notorious drug peddler has been attached".

The action was taken under sections 68-E read with 68-F (1) of the NDPS Act of 1985.

"The property was identified as illegally acquired property during an investigation/inquiry conducted by Police. The property was prima facie acquired from illicit trafficking in Narcotic drug and Psychotropic substances by the drug peddler", Police added. (UNI)

J&K's avian.....

2020 listed 555 bird species for Jammu and Kashmir, including Ladakh.

Wildlife Warden North, Intesar Suhail told KNO that the collection of bird images has emerged as a significant and extensive ornithological database for the current checklist. Over the years, bird photography has rapidly evolved in Jammu & Kashmir.

According to the analysis report, 592 species have been reported in 21 orders and 88 families, of which 555 are supported with media documentation, 326 have been either examined in hand or deposited in museums across the world, and six species have been accepted based solely on documentation considered credible.

"586 species have been validated either through specimens or photographs, and 564 species are listed on eBird, accounting for 95% of all the birds reported from Jammu & Kashmir. A summary of the source of records is provided. Out of the total 592 species, 25 are globally threatened. We present our evaluation notes for six species accepted based solely on documentation", states the report.

The meticulous collation of ornithological literature, specimen collections, online and published sources, supported by photographic evidence, call recordings, and sight documentation, forms the basis of the report.

The study also sheds light on the global significance of the region's avian population, with 25 species classified as globally threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

Moreover, previously unexplored areas have emerged as top bird watching destinations, including the north and central Kashmir Valley, the Shiwaliks, parts of the Lesser Himalaya, and the southern plains of Jammu Division.

The report also states that seven species reported from Jammu & Kashmir are endemic to western Himalaya (Praveen & Jayapal 2024). These include Western Tragopan, Cheer Pheasant, White-throated Tit, Kashmir Nuthatch, White-cheeked Nuthatch, Orange Bullfinch, and Spectacled Finch.

Additionally, the bidulphi subspecies of the Tawny Owl Strix aluco, endemic to the western Himalaya, is also found here. Furthermore, the Kashmir Flycatcher Ficedula subrubra, is known to breed only in the Kashmir Valley.

Ten Injured.....

met with an unfortunate accident, resulting in significant injuries to those on board.

Eyewitnesses recounted the horrifying scene as the vehicle lost control and careened into the ditch, causing extensive damage. Prompt response from nearby villagers and authorities facilitated the swift evacuation of the injured to the district hospital, where they are currently undergoing medical care. Rakesh, one of the injured passengers, recounted the ordeal, attributing the accident to brake failure, which led to the driver's futile attempts to regain control before the vehicle overturned.

Dr. Nusrat Ul Nisar, the Medical Superintendent of Raja Sukhdev Singh District Hospital, confirmed the admission of the ten injured individuals, emphasizing the provision of immediate medical attention to address their injuries. As investigations into the cause of the accident unfold, authorities are working to ensure the well-being and recovery of the victims of this tragic incident.



On Audit Party's Instructions, J&K Sports Council Issues 10-Point Advisory To Recognised Sports Bodies

JAMMU, MAR 28: Acting on the instructions of the audit party of the Principal Accountant General Audit, the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council has issued a ten-point advisory to the recognised sports bodies functional across the Union Territory.

Secretary, J&K Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul, said in a circular that while conducting the audit on the activities and accounts of the J&K Sports Council by the audit party of the Principal Accountant General Audit, observations have been raised by the audit party on the functioning of the recognised sports associations,

which need to be streamlined for greater transparency and accountability in the working of the sports associations.

The ten-point advisory issued by the Secretary has stated that various office bearers are holding multiple offices in different sports associations in violation of the Sports Council guidelines and sports code.

The circular further read that some Government employees are holding offices in the sports associations without obtaining proper permission from the Compe-

tent Authority in terms of SRO-164 of 2024, and various recognised sports associations have not launched official websites, thereby violating the RTI Act.

"Irregular conduct of trials has been noticed by the audit party for selection in national tournaments due to improper dissemination of information in print media, particularly in leading newspapers, thereby denying the chances of genuine sportspeople," it read.

The circular read that for regulating transparency in the functioning of sports associations, all associations should



certify that no office bearer is holding multiple offices in

various sports associations, no Government employee is allowed to be a part of sports associations without prior permission from the government, and the sports associations should adhere to the RTI Act and guidelines of the Central Government with regard to the launch of their official websites.

The Secretary, as per the circular, has directed that the sports associations should public the notice of the trials and competitions at least two weeks ahead of the trials and competitions, besides, online measures will be initiated to

invite the participation of all eligible persons.

"Fair chance be given to a genuine and deserving person to avoid misuse or grant in aid," said Gull as per the circular, further advising the sports associations to comply with the instructions forthwith and submit a compliance report immediately.

Notably, in October 2022, Secretary, Youth Services and Sports, Sarmad Hafeez, said in a meeting that the defunct associations, for unknown reasons, have ceased to function, which shall not be tolerated. (Agencies)

Will Bring Roshni Act Back If DPAP Voted To Power: GM Saroori

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) senior leader and Lok Sabha candidate from Udhampur constituency Ghulam Mohammad Saroori Thursday said that the formation of party is aimed to work for people's interest, adding "The DPAP will bring Roshni Act back if voted to power".

GM Saroori said that the motto of DPAP formation is to provide relief to people of Jammu and Kashmir who have been trapped badly into the political tricks of anti-people parties. He said apart from doing politics on religious lines, the DPAP will focus on development and provide relief to people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"People are very much angry with the politics of BJP and those ruled J&K before. Those filled nomination from Jammu and Udhampur seats had already served 10 years as MP but they failed to do any measure for people. I'm a fresh candidate and hope people will give me a chance to serve as they have no option left in current times," DPAP leader GM Saroori said.

He said DPAP will respect everyone's faith and do not fiddle with anyone's religious sentiment. "We will not make communities to fight to each other. DPAP will contest polls on developmental issues. It is our prime wish that Statehood of J&K should be restored, land should be reserved for local state subjects only," he said.

He added during last several years the unemployment in J&K has breached all previous records that led youth into distress and indulged into drugs. "We want to do our politics on development issues. DPAP will identify more tourist destinations in every constituency so that opportunities of livelihood for youth be provided hassle-free. Also Roshni Act will be brought back. Electricity will be made free to consumers, rising inflation will be contained, and people will be provided good governance so that their issues will get resolved timely," he said.

The DPAP leader added that daily wagers who serve different departments of Jammu and Kashmir will also be regularized. Further works at local level will be reserved for local youth only, and if there will be a need to accommodate outsiders the DPAP will bring Act for that for the security of local youth.

Lashing out at Congress, the DPAP leader said that it is incompetence of Congress party which led to BJP to rule the Country. "If people of the country are in difficulties today it is because of Congress party as they failed to address people's concern in their times. Their incompetence led BJP to rule the country," he added. (KNS)

'Don't be fooled': Omar cautions against believing AFSPA repeal promises 'Ease highways travel restrictions, release jailed youth before considering repeal of AFSPA'

SOPORE, MAR 28: National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah expressed his disappointment on Thursday over the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) consideration of revoking the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) after a decade. He, however, cautioned against being misled by such promises.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), addressing a large gathering at Dak Bungalow Sopore in north Kashmir, Omar said that the tactics employed by the BJP, including "soliciting" newspaper notices from separatist families, would not win over the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"It is unfortunate that the BJP is contemplating the revocation of AFSPA after ten years. How-

ever, don't be fooled into believing that it will actually be revoked. Similarly, the people of Ladakh were deceived with promises of Sikh-Schedule status, only to be later deprived of it," he said.

Reflecting on his tenure as Chief Minister from 2011, Omar recalled his efforts to repeal AFSPA in Jammu and Kashmir. He, however, lamented that these endeavours were consistently thwarted by various impediments.

Responding to Home Minister Amit Shah's recent remarks, the NC leader urged for the easing of travel restrictions on highways and the release of incarcerated youth before considering the repeal of AFSPA.

"The claims of unprecedented change and development touted by the government are nowhere

to be seen, especially in places like Sopore. There has been little progress since 2014, with outsiders benefitting more than Kashmiris in terms of employment opportunities and contracts," he asserted. "Whether it is employment, jobs or even sand extraction contracts, outsiders are benefitting more than Kashmiris."

The former CM further said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's repeated slogans of "Dil Ki Doori, Dilli Se Doori" hold true only if they genuinely want to implement it in letter and spirit.

He said the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019 has left the youth of Jammu and Kashmir disillusioned, with many regretting their initial support for it.

"Those who celebrated the

abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 by bursting firecrackers are now deeply upset, citing that they were okay before 2019. This is why we believe the decision is unacceptable," he said. "It is only our vote that will convey to them that the Article 370 abrogation was wrong and is unacceptable."

Omar also called for a thorough investigation into alleged fake encounters in Jammu and Kashmir, questioning the government's inaction despite prior knowledge.

"Home Minister's remarks about fake encounters in Jammu and Kashmir raise questions. If they were aware of it, why didn't they act then? They should conduct a full-fledged inquiry. The reality is that this government is now striving to release the guilty.

Machil, Rajouri and others are examples," he said.

Regarding the INDIA alliance, the NC Vice President reiterated his commitment to the coalition, saying there is no question of unity or reunification as the National Conference remains an integral part of the alliance. "BJP will face defeat in all five seats and will forget AFSPA then," he said.

Responding to queries about the recent trend of separatist families disassociating themselves from separatist organisations through newspaper notices, Omar criticised the "coercion" behind such actions.

"They are being forced. It is an old trend when NC people too were asked for the same; however, this is surely not going to win the hearts," he said.

SHOPIAN, PIR PANJAL RESIDENTS DEMAND REOPENING OF MUGHAL ROAD FOR TRAFFIC

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: The historic Mughal Road remains closed for traffic due to ongoing snow clearance operations.

Officials from the Mechanical department informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the snow clearance work, which began recently, is nearing completion.

The Mughal Road, linking Kashmir via Shopian with the Pir Panjal region in Jammu, is annually closed during winter due to heavy snowfall. This closure disrupts the routine life of residents and busi-



nesses in the area.

Residents of Shopian and the Poonch and Rajouri areas of Pir Panjal have been calling for the reopening of the road, saying they face inconvenience by longer alternative routes. The clo-

sure adversely affects local businesses and hampers travel for residents, particularly those with familial connections across the region.

The students traveling from Kashmir to Baba

Ghulam Shah University in Rajouri are also impacted by the road closure.

Despite being granted national highway status in 2016, the proposed all-weather tunnel to mitigate seasonal closures remains unrealised.

Residents on both sides of the road have urged authorities to expedite the snow clearance process and reopen the road for traffic at the earliest.

An official said the snow clearance operations are in their final stages. He said the decision regarding the road's reopening will be taken shortly.

Dry, hollow chinar trees risk lives of students, people in Ganderbal's Saloora

GANDERBAL, MAR 28: Dry and hollow chinar trees are posing a threat to the Government Girls Middle School Saloora in Ganderbal.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the mighty Chinars located along the main road instil fear not only among students studying there but also in pedestrians and commuters.

The area's Chinars are fragile and pose a threat to anyone passing by. Local resident Niyaz Ahmad Bhat mentioned that they have alerted the Naib Tehsildar about the issue and are expecting an action now.

He said that if these dried Chinars are not removed there could be untoward incidents in the area.

Highlighting a past incident, a major tragedy was avoided when a dry Chinar fell on the school premises during the night in December 2022. But the incident occurred when there were no students present, said a local resident Hilal Ahmad.

Arni University's Two-Day Bike Rally Passes on Strong Messages

'SAY NO TO DRUGS' AND EMPOWER WOMEN

SRINAGAR, MAR 28: Arni University (AU), at the forefront of championing social causes, recently orchestrated a two-day bike rally with a dual mission: spreading awareness on "Say NO to Drugs" and advocating for women empowerment. Led by Mr. Vivek Singh, Chancellor of Arni University, the rally witnessed active participation from a diverse group of individuals, including 100 bike riders, of which 30 were women. A large number of students and faculty were from J&K.

Along with Kashmiri faculty Mehr Un Nisa, Dr. Neha Salaria, Ms. Monica Thakur, Dr. Gurvinder Singh, along with faculty member Mr. Mayank Sharma, and students

Kunal, Sheeran, Gulshan, and Tauseef, played pivotal roles in organizing and executing the rally, ensuring its resounding success.

The rally, with its strong emphasis on drug prevention and women empowerment, served as a platform to galvanize community support and drive home important societal messages. The active involvement of women riders, comprising nearly one-third of the total participants, underscored AU's commitment to gender equality and inclusivity.

Commencing from Chandigarh, the rally embarked on a symbolic journey, culminating at Khatkar Kalan, a village renowned for its memorial



honoring Bhagat Singh, a revered figure in India's freedom struggle. Mr. Vivek Singh, leading the rally, emphasized the importance of societal values and collective action in combating substance abuse. He remarked, "The bike rally serves as a powerful reminder of the values we cherish as a society. It's heartening to see the community come together to promote positive messages and honor the heroes of our nation."

The rally continued its course to the Arni University campus, where an enthusiastic reception awaited the bikers, highlighting the unity and support from students towards the cause. The subsequent day saw the rally traversing

through Pathankot-Nurpur-Dharamshala, attracting significant attention and participation at each stop.

At Dharamshala, the rally reached its zenith, with nearly 1000 people gathering to welcome the riders. Among the distinguished speakers addressing the crowd was Dr. Kshama Metre, popularly known as Doctor Didi, and a recipient of the esteemed Padma Shri award. Flagging off the rally, Dr. Metre underscored the importance of redirecting energies towards constructive endeavors, stating, "Addiction, when directed towards sports, education, or nation-building activities, holds the key to individual and societal progress."

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

DEA Doda conducts extensive SVEEP campaign

HT News Network

DODA, MARCH 28: As the Lok Sabha elections draw near, District Election Authority (DEA), Doda, under the direction of District Election Officer, Harvinder Singh, is leaving no stone unturned to ensure maximum voter awareness and participation. A comprehensive Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation Program (SVEEP) was organized across different locations in the district, aiming to educate and mobilize the public for the upcoming electoral process. SVEEP, an initiative by the Election Commission of India, is designed to engage voters



and encourage their maximum participation in the democratic process.

Through a series of awareness campaigns and outreach activities, SVEEP aims to empower voters with the necessary knowledge and motivation to exercise their voting rights.

The SVEEP program was organized at various government schools in the

district. Government Higher Secondary School in Koti, Bhagwah, Khellani and Trown witnessed the celebration of SVEEP activities and conducted various beautiful programs regarding SVEEP to create awareness. The SVEEP program in District Doda saw active participation from citizens of all age groups and backgrounds. Various initiatives

such as voter awareness rallies, street plays, poster campaigns, and door-to-door campaigns were organized to disseminate important information about the electoral process, including voter registration, polling booth locations, and voting procedures. Speaking about the significance of the SVEEP program, various speakers emphasized, the success of democracy hinges on the active participation of citizens in the electoral process. The program also utilized digital platforms and social media channels to reach out to tech-savvy voters, ensuring comprehensive coverage and engagement across all segments of society. Additionally,

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 28: As the nation gears up for General Lok Sabha Elections 2024, District Election Officer Kishtwar, Dr. Devansh Yadav spearheaded an impressive Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign in collaboration with District Election Office, SVEEP Cell, and Education Department.

The successful execution of the campaign was made possible through the coordinated efforts of Deputy DEO Kishtwar, Idrees Lone (District Nodal Officer SVEEP) besides active involvement of all Stake-

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

DEO leads impressive SVEEP Campaign in Bonjwah Kishtwar



holders including School Education Department.

This initiative, held at HSS Binooon of Block Bonjwah in district Kishtwar, aimed to generate extensive awareness to foster greater participation in the electoral process.

The awareness campaign featured a painting Com-

petition, rally and Nukkad Natak, drawing enthusiastic participation from school students at HSS Binooon and local artists who delivered impactful performances during the Nukkad Natak.

The rally, resonating with chants advocating for ethical right to vote and high-

lighting the democratic ethos, commenced from HSS Binooon and culminated in Nali, Bonjwah echoing the message of ethical voting and the imperative of citizen engagement in the democratic process.

During the Painting Competition, students utilized vibrant hues to disseminate messages promoting electoral awareness.

The winners and participants in the painting competition were felicitated on the occasion by DEO in presence of District Information Officer Dr. Kuldeep Kumar, Tehsildar Bonjwah, Tejinder Singh and Chief Education Officer, R. K. Vesheshta.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

Training on handling of EVMs, VVPATs for Anganwari staff organised at Ramban

HT News Network

RAMBAN, MARCH 28: Election Department Ramban, under the dynamic leadership of District Election Officer (DEO), Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, has taken several significant steps towards ensuring electoral transparency and efficiency in the district. As part of preparation for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections, a comprehensive training on handling of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPAT) was organized for Anganwadi staff here today. Acknowledging the crucial role of Anganwadi workers in community outreach, the training aimed to equip them with requisite skills and knowledge to effectively assist and aware voters during the electoral process. Conducted under the supervision of Nodal Officer for Women Awareness and Welfare AC-54, (CDPO) Ramban, Ravinder Kour, and Nodal Officer for Women Awareness and Welfare AC-55, BDO Ramban, Shalini Chandail, the sessions focused on familiarizing participants with operation, handling, and troubleshooting of EVMs and VVPAT machines. By providing Anganwadi staff with this essential handholding of EVMs and VVPAT, the Election department Ramban reaffirms its dedication to upholding the integrity of election process. Through such initiatives, the department endeavours to ensure a seamless, transparent, and inclusive electoral experience for all citizens. As the General Election Lok Sabha scheduled to be held on April 19, 2024 for 04-Udhampur, the Election department Ramban remains steadfast in fostering a culture of electoral awareness and participation within the community.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

DEO Rajouri chairs Nodal Officers' meeting to review preparedness for Lok Sabha Elections 2024

HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 27: District Election Officer, Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat, today chaired a meeting with district Nodal Officers to review the preparedness for Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

During the meeting, threadbare discussion was held on training of polling staff, functioning of control rooms, welfare of polling parties, complaints redressal through the control room, implementation of MCMC and MCC as per the guidelines of ECI and other related tasks assigned to the District Nodal Officers.

The District Election Officer exhorted the election team to perform assigned duties with utmost dedication and sincerity.



He emphasized on the paramount importance of meticulous and flawless preparedness for the smooth conduct of the electoral process. He stressed the need for heightened vigil, transparency, and adherence to ECI guidelines to uphold the sanctity of the democratic process.

During the comprehensive review, the DEO outlined the tasks and duties

assigned to the Nodal Officers. He directed the officers to exhibit exemplary commitment and diligence in discharging their duties, recognizing their pivotal role in facilitating free, fair, and peaceful elections.

The meeting was attended by the ADCC, Raj Kumar Thapa; ADC Rajouri, Rajeev Kumar Khajuria; ; ACR, Mohammad Jhangir Khan; Dy DEO, Shakeel Ahmed;

CPO, Maqsood Ahmed; DSEO, Sandeep Sharma; DPO, Mohammad Nawaz Choudhary; DIO NIC Muzaffar Mir and other concerned officers. The District Election Officer exhorted the election team to perform assigned duties with utmost dedication and sincerity. He emphasized on the paramount importance of meticulous and flawless preparedness for the smooth conduct of the electoral process. He stressed the need for heightened vigil, transparency, and adherence to ECI guidelines to uphold the sanctity of the democratic process. During the comprehensive review, the DEO outlined the tasks and duties assigned to the Nodal Officers. He directed the officers to exhibit exemplary commitment and diligence in discharging.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

SVEEP programme held at MIE Fatehpur

HT News Network



RAJOURI, MARCH 28: The Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program was organized today at MIE Higher Secondary School Fatehpur under the guidance of District Election Officer, Om Parkash Bhagat. Prof. Mohammad Iqbal Raina, Nodal officer SVEEP Rajouri, briefed the students about the importance of organizing such programmes as these reflect commitment to nurturing responsible citizenship and empowering youth to make informed decisions.

The Voters Awareness Program was designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the electoral process, voting rights, and the importance of active participation in democracy. By empowering our youth with the tools and knowledge to participate in democracy, we are helping to shape a better future for our country. The program was attended by Dr. Khalid Reyaz, Prof. Ajaz Nazir, and Tanweer Ahmed Chowdhury members of district SVEEP Cell along with the staff and students of MIE Fatehpur.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

Inspection team visits examination centers in Doda

HT News Network

DODA, MARCH 28: An inspection team led by Chief Education Officer (CEO), Parkash Lal Thapa today inspected examination centers of 12th class Zone here.

He visited Government Higher Secondary School Girls, GHSS Boys and Faridya Model GHSS Doda reaffirming the administration's dedication to maintain the integrity and fairness of the examination process.

During the inspection, the CEO assessed the facilities and arrangements, prioritizing optimal conditions for students. He also held interactions with examination staff, supervisors, and students and provided valuable insights and facilitated prompt issue resolution.

The CEO Doda, who is also Nodal Officer for Assured Minimum Facility (AMF), conducted the physical verification of schools where polling stations have been set in the educational zone Doda and ensured AMF are in place at polling stations for Lok Sabha Elections 2024 which are going to be held from April 19 (Phase-1).

Police solves theft case in Anantnag, 02 accused persons arrested

HT News Network

Anantnag March 28: Police in Anantnag solved a theft case and arrested two accused persons involved in the commission of crime. Stolen property was recovered from their possession. Police Station Kokernag received a written complaint from a lady namely Ruby Akher wife of Mohd Iqbal Waza resident of Sagam Kokernag stating therein that some unknown thief/thieves entered in her residential house while she was visiting her sisters house and have stolen some cash, Golden ornaments, copper utensils etc. Accordingly, a case FIR No 30/2024 under section 454, 380 IPC was registered and investigation was set into motion. During the course of investigation, a police party from Police Station Kokernag arrested two suspected persons namely Faizan Gulzar Lone son of Gulzar Ahmad Lone.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

Awareness Rally "Run for Democracy," under ongoing SVEEP campaign held in Srinagar

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 28 :- On the directions of the District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat an awareness Rally, "Run for Democracy," under ongoing SVEEP campaign was organized here today.

The event under the supervision of Nodal Officer SVEEP/AMF Abdul Hamid Fani was held at Government



Girls Higher Secondary School, Kothibagh, to instill a sense of responsibility and educate the public, particularly students, about the significance of exercising their vote in a thriving democracy.

The initiative, named "Run for Democracy," brought together a diverse group of participants, including District Education Planning Officer Ms. Anjum Raja, teachers from different education zones, and

community members." The main objective of the "Run for Democracy" awareness rally was to emphasize the importance of democratic participation and the impact individuals can have through casting their votes.

The event particularly targeted students, aiming to educate them on the significance of exercising their right to vote in a flourishing democracy like India.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

NYK's Youth Parliament held at Ganderbal

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, MARCH 28: The Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK) Srinagar today organised District Level Neighbourhood Youth Parliament-2024 at the Auditorium of Government Degree College Ganderbal.

The programme witnessed huge participation of students, social activists, volunteers and youths.

Principal Govt Degree College, Ganderbal Prof Fouzia Fatima attended the programme as the

Chief Guest.

The speakers emphasized on the Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) and deliberated upon the importance of vote in the democratic setup. On the occasion, Deputy Director NYK, Abdul Aziz Hakeem also spoke, and through light on the functioning of NYK and its youth parliament concept. standards in all polling stations as per ECI guidelines. The DEO was accompanied by SSP Samba, Vinay Kumar; Nodal Officer Training Management, Dr. Kusum Chib and other district and sectoral officers.

PCCF chairs 8th UT Level Monitoring Committee on Forest Fire Prevention and Management

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 28: Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, Roshan Jaggi today chaired the 8th meeting of the UT Level Monitoring Committee on Forest Fire Prevention and Management.

The meeting was attended by APCCF Kashmir, CCF Jammu, Environmental experts Dr. C M Seth and Nadeem Qadri, and other senior officers from the Forest Department.

During the meeting, the preparedness of Forest Department to combat the ensuing fire season in summer months was reviewed.

The PCCF & HoFF, instructed the field officers of the Social Forestry Department, Wildlife Protection Department and For-

est Protection Force to be on high alert and in full readiness and respond to fire incidents immediately.

The DFOs were instructed to publicize toll free numbers of the department to receive firsthand information on any forest fire occurrence. He further instructed that the fire alerts issued by the Forest Survey of India shall be responded on priority and action taken to control the fire be reported by 11 A.M. every day.

The PCCF reviewed the budgetary provisions to take care of mobility of men and resources to combat forest fires.

Chief Wildlife Warden, Sarvesh Rai stressed upon the smooth functioning of joint control rooms so that the protected areas are also kept fire-free. He suggested fortnightly meetings by the Block Forest Officers at the local level to

sensitize all the stakeholders and take stock of the situation.

Dr. C M Seth, (Retd. IFS & Environmental Activist Jammu), suggested raising awareness amongst both rural and urban population through panel discussions and catchy jingles on radio and other outreach programs for the next three months of forthcoming fire season.

Nadeem Qadri, (Environmental Lawyer, Srinagar) stressed upon the importance of coordination between the departments to prevent forest fires in the protected areas, especially Dachigam National Park.

The PCCF emphasized on the importance of immediate response to forest fire incidents during the golden hour which remains crucial to counter forest fires and prevent loss to human life as well as forest resources. The preparedness of the forest

department to prevent forest fires in the Trikuta Hills especially along the Yatra track to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine was also reviewed and necessary directions were passed on to DFO Reasi to coordinate with Shrine Board and pool the resources and ensure the yatra is free from any unforeseen eventualities.

The PCCF stressed upon coordination with the State Disaster Response Force in all vulnerable areas.

It was decided that services of State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) & Fire Services department shall also be utilized wherever feasible to control the fires. It was decided that services of State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) & Fire Services department shall also be utilized wherever feasible to control the fires.

EDITORIAL

The Enduring Significance of the Battle of Badr

The Battle of Badr stands as a pivotal moment in Islamic history, echoing through centuries to shape the collective consciousness of the Muslim Ummah globally. Fought on the 17th of Ramadan, in the year 624 CE, this clash between the small, ill-equipped Muslim army and the powerful Quraysh of Mecca marked a turning point, not only in the early days of Islam but also in its enduring significance for Muslims today.

Badr represents more than a military victory; it symbolizes the triumph of faith over adversity. Despite being outnumbered and outmatched in weaponry, the Muslims' unwavering belief in their cause and their trust in Allah led to a decisive victory. This victory was seen as a divine endorsement of Islam, bolstering the morale of the early Muslim community and solidifying their resolve to uphold their faith against all odds.

The Battle of Badr also carries profound lessons for contemporary Muslims. It teaches the importance of unity, faith, and perseverance in the face of challenges. Just as the disparate tribes of Medina came together under the banner of Islam at Badr, Muslims today are reminded of the strength that lies in unity and solidarity. Moreover, the battle underscores the principle of divine assistance to those who trust in Allah and strive for righteousness, offering solace and inspiration to believers navigating the complexities of the modern world.

Furthermore, Badr serves as a reminder of the ethical conduct expected of Muslims in times of conflict. Despite their victory, the Prophet Muhammad and his companions exemplified mercy and magnanimity towards their defeated foes, setting a precedent for the humane treatment of prisoners of war—a principle that resonates deeply in today's turbulent geopolitical landscape.

In essence, the Battle of Badr is not merely a historical event but a timeless beacon of hope, resilience, and righteousness for the Muslim Ummah. Its legacy continues to inspire believers worldwide, serving as a source of strength and guidance in the pursuit of justice, righteousness, and the greater good. As Muslims commemorate this momentous occasion, they reaffirm their commitment to the values exemplified at Badr and draw strength from its enduring significance in their lives.

COLOURS ARE THE SMILES OF THE NATURE



By Mool Raj

In a world where words often fall short, colours emerge as an untapped avenue for communication, evoking emotions and thoughts

Communicate one must, to share or just to unburden oneself. Else one may cease to stay alive and kicking. Yet communication, with known modalities of gestures and words has never been an issue. It is so because both of these have limitations. The less explored is the application of colours to convey thoughts, feelings and emotions that come in myriad shades and hues. Colours speak when gestures and words betray, something Nature does

with masterly finesse. In the countryside, I recently chanced to witness intriguing yellow flowers with red patches towards the centre and dark violet bands along the periphery. A miraculously impressive colour pattern mesmerising the eyes. Colour! What a deep and mysterious language, the language of dreams.

Human beings are not destined to lead a drab life engrossed with ratiocinations, value judgements or analytics of what goes around or will, with heads down but to live with ease, spontaneity, relishing each moment. With colour, you stand out and shine. Be colourful. The world needs your prismatic soul. So, Nature created colours; all in nature is in colours for a purpose. It is colours that imbue our otherwise drab routine with vibrancy and optimism. Colours are the smiles of Nature.

Let the scientists and philosophers argue whether colour is a physical entity defined by the visual effect of light refracting and reflecting due to varied frequency & wavelengths of diverse colours, or just an individual perception, anything in colour makes better sense. Colours also help keep our body, mind and spirits in healthy

mode so that we can live fully. The purest and most thoughtful minds are those which love colour the most. The 5000-odd years old abstract art tradition of Rangoli of South Indian origin, still popular, is the art of 'saying it with colours'. Among believers of any description, colours are widely used apropos to religious or other occasions. Rangoli is also integral to the inaugural ceremonies of scientific, engineering, and cultural meets; followers of different sects have distinctly coloured dress codes. The outsides of main entrances are often, if not daily, decorated with Rangoli of various hues made of powdered rice, flower petals, leaves, sand, sugar etc. Coloured designs of Rangoli and other figures represent an array of diverse human sentiments and ratiocinations. The circles of Rangoli symbolise eternity, the dots and small lines depict the hurdles creeping into our lives unawares. The ambience around Rangoli is believed to be charged with energy, ushering in positive vibes, and good luck, and keeping the negative, evil spirits at bay.

A look at the rainbow in the sky, the Nature's exquisite colour pattern, made

the bard's heart leap up. Most in our strife-torn world direly await a healing touch. If you could become a rainbow in someone's cloud, as suggested by Maya Angelou, it would be a great, very meaningful life indeed.

Artists and thinkers often compare the world with a canvas, and life with a box of crayons makes great sense. "With color one obtains an energy that seems to stem from witchcraft" said Henri Matisse, the leading proponent of modern art. Each of us is an energy pack of enormous possibilities that we rarely understand. In keeping with our destination, and optimally using discretion, we can give a shiny, dull or any colour to our life; it is one's individual choice.

This Holi, ignore for a while the propriety of playing with colours with or without song & dance. And immerse in spontaneous expression of verve, drinking life to the lees, because all moments of life are not for analysis nor a mathematical puzzle to be resolved. Like a Kolavari song just to be enjoyed, no matter if you don't understand it!

The author is a columnist and freelance writer

LIFE SHOULD BE A PRECIOUS JOURNEY



By Mool Raj

Life is something very precious, a divine gift given to us by God or nature. Do humans realise how high-priced is it? When we wake up in the morning, aren't we in a tearing hurry to accomplish all the unfulfilled tasks of yesterday?

Do we spend some quality time embracing nature, take a few deep breaths, spend moments in solitude and feel the silence encompassing us? Are we grateful for our existence or do we mechanically hit the gym and head for the kitchen to have the mandatory morning cup of coffee?

Yes, for sure morning exercise like a walk, a jog, or executing the chores are essential, but it is equally important to slow down the pace of life and become grateful to the Universe for its vastness and its exquisite grandiose geometry.

Pierce Brosnan, who wielded guns and gals with remarkable felicity once

remarked, 'I realise how precious life is, probably because I've seen how it can be taken away.' As the cloud moves across the sky, so do moments in our lives. We need to be in harmony with our thoughts and actions and also realise the ephemeral nature of events.

Once, a student approached his Master and complained that he could not meditate as his body ached, he felt distracted or asleep and was extremely disconcerted. The wise man smiled and merely said that this would pass. After some days, the tutee was in an ecstatic mood and apprised his teacher that the meditation was wonderful and he had had an experiential feeling. He could observe stillness in the mind; see a shimmering light and experience levitation. The Master merely smiled and added that even this would pass.

Life should be treated as a celebration and as a precious gift since it is fleeting and transitory.

The sacrosanct premise of life therefore should be to focus on its truly celebratory nature and savour its prepossessing moments.

For all this to happen, we need to increase our prana/energy levels manifold. We derive energy from food, breath and rest provided to the body and by maintaining a calm and meditative mind. These sutras or tenets are imparted during the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living.

However, the prana/energy level needs

to be sustained to nurture the precious moments of life. Humans have to treat their minds and bodies as sacred.

Early morning blues can be combatted with warm lime water laced with honey. It is efficacious for the human body to have a few glasses of this elixir of life. A sattvic diet helps in increasing prana levels and also in meditation. The purpose of yoga is not just performing physical exercises but to ultimately do pranayama and meditation. This helps assuage the mind so that we are in a position to recognise and appreciate life's precious journey.

Physical sciences, till recently, were all about matter and particles. However, newer studies reveal the mysteries of science have transcended the boundaries of matter and dwelled on waves and their patterns. Waves connect us to science and also to people.

While acknowledging the precious nature of life, we need to harness the potential further by choosing a passion. This is an outlet from the dreary ho-hum of life and we can appreciate the droplets on the petals, a nest built on our roof or a koel bird singing mellifluously.

In this age of a wired world, humans need to break the chains of tech bondage and develop a harmonious dwelling place where people care and share making life a truly momentous journey.

The author is a columnist and freelance writer

Festive Of Tulips

By Qurat ul Ain

The summer's song is on
Snowy gusts now gone

Floral veins revived and blooded virdis
The bosky acreage sheen within

The floret left to verdure
Certes! wide eyed vista

The rizz ingrain the vitality
A gala to the ocular

The mottled buds in long rows
Dancing heads as they bow

The panoramic view
Goggled by flock!

One intoxicated with Tulips
wakeful to budge the toes
En-route to heavens

The commotion around
The Red, the White, the Yellow
And the still cluster

Tis invictus fairyland
A brave paints!

No Daffodil, No Carnation
Hot Orchid, Elegant Dahlia
Scented Peony, Colorful Panze

Nay....! The Festive Of Tulips

The Indian Dream

The sorry episode at Vatry airport, in the eastern Marne region of France, where a flight from Dubai to Nicaragua, carrying 303 Indian passengers was grounded by French authorities for five days, on suspicion of illegal immigration, put the entire country to shame.

■ **Devendra Saksena**

The sorry episode at Vatry airport, in the eastern Marne region of France, where a flight from Dubai to Nicaragua, carrying 303 Indian passengers was grounded by French authorities for five days, on suspicion of illegal immigration, put the entire country to shame. The aircraft was eventually sent back to Mumbai. However, twenty-five passengers, including five minors, stayed back in France, where they applied for asylum.

On questioning by Indian police, it was revealed that the passengers were planning to travel to Mexico via Nicaragua, before crossing the border illegally into the United States. Reportedly, they had paid smugglers sums ranging from Rs.40 lakh to Rs 1.20 crore. This is not an isolated instance; variations on this theme have played out a number of times; in the last two years, at least nine Indians have died while attempting to cross into the US from Canada or Mexico.

The desperation to reach the US is heartrending; in January 2022, a family of four was found frozen to death in a blizzard on the US-Canada border. Later in the year, another person died while attempting to scale the Mexico-US border wall. A family of four died when their boat capsized at the US-Canada border. Also, numerous instances were reported, where aspiring illegal immigrants were cheated out of their life-savings by immoral travel agents. According to 'International Migration 2020 Highlights', published by the Population Division of UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, India had the largest diaspora population in the world, with 17.9 million Indians living in diverse countries across the globe ~ but regrettably, a sizeable segment of the Indian diaspora had migrated illegally. According to a Pew Research Centre estimate, the US had about 725,000 Indian illegal immigrants ~ 96,917 Indians were arrested while attempting to enter the US illegally during the period October 2022 to September 2023.

Similarly, around 1 lakh Indians were found to be staying illegally in the UK, with the number of illegal entrants spiking in recent months. Questioning of detained illegal immigrants has revealed that organised immigration rackets were responsible



for the recent flux in illegal immigration. Recently, answering a question on illegal immigration, the Minister of State for External Affairs pleaded inability to quantify the number of illegal migrants from India. The Minister, however, disclosed that as on 30 October 2023, 2,925 illegal agents had been identified and their names were put up on the e-Migrate portal.

Yet, till date, no significant action had been taken against these human traffickers, probably because illegal migration is a money-spinning business ~ both for operators and authorities. Legal migration is also rising apace ~ more than 17.5 lakh Indians have given up their citizenship since 2011 with 2.25 lakhs giving up their Indian citizenship in 2022 alone. A study of migration patterns reveals that the preferred method of migration of well-qualified youngsters was to enter the country of their choice on a student visa, acquire relevant qualifications and stay on in well-paying white-collar jobs.

This timeless migration route has seen the cream of Indian youth leave India for greener pastures; earlier it was called 'brain drain' but has been renamed by PM Modi as a 'brain gain' ~ a bank of loyal talent, accessible on demand. Many of the earlier student immigrants left India because research and entrepreneurial opportunities were limited at that time; however, it is a different ball game now, with most youngsters migrating to the

West in search of a better life.

Earlier, a major segment of immigrant Indians was that of people displaced internally by partition, who saw Europe as a safe haven. Also, a large number of Indian origin British citizens are those who had been sent to British colonies during British rule, but were expelled when those colonies achieved independence; Rishi Sunak and some of his cabinet colleagues fall in this category. Recently, a worrying trend of high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) migrating from India has been noticed.

According to the Henley Private Wealth Migration Report 2023, based on global trends in wealth and investment migration, 6,500 HNIs relocated from India in 2023. Also, most illegal immigrants, hailing from the prosperous western states of Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana, are not poor by any standard ~ many pay a bomb to dubious human traffickers. Thus, both intellect and capital are hot footing it from India, at an alarming rate. On the other hand, Indian migrants make a significant contribution to the Indian economy; according to the World Bank's latest Migration and Development Brief, Indian migrants remitted a sum of US\$125 billion to India in 2023.

Recognising the contribution of the Indian diaspora, the Government has rolled out various benefits for Indian-origin migrants; most significantly, they are called 'Pravasi Bhartiya's' and

can avail of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) status, which is just short of actual citizenship. The question arises: Why are so many Indians jumping ship when the Indian economy is doing well, and a fairly elected democratic government is in saddle? There is no easy answer; both 'push factors' that force people to migrate e.g., 'lack of jobs', 'low wages', 'poor financial condition', 'debt on the family', 'social insecurity', and 'social discrimination' and pull factors such as 'better employment opportunities', 'improved living standard', 'personal development', 'presence of relatives' and 'attractive environment,' appear to be at play. Earlier cross-border migration was the last option because of social taboos and a fear of the unknown but with loosening of societal control, faster modes of transport, almost universal internet and TV penetration, no one thinks twice about going abroad.

The current exodus from India confounds migration theorists because the Indian economy is booming, and if Niti Aayog is to be believed, multidimensional poverty has declined rapidly from 29.17 per cent in 2013-14 to 11.28 per cent in 2022-23, and about 24.82 crore people have moved above the poverty line. With Western economies not doing so well, logically, the allure of the West should be much less. Also, a major chunk of illegal immigrants, who may have been gainfully employed in India, almost

always land up in sweat shops ~ where they are shamelessly exploited.

An unconventional explanation for the increased outward emigration, despite these negative factors, could be that a critical point has been reached, when almost everyone is aware of global opportunities and has the wherewithal to pursue them, and at the same time is fearful of the intense competition in India. Concomitantly, Western countries, with falling populations, are facing a severe manpower and talent crunch, providing a ready market for immigrants, including illegal ones. Thirdly, the narrative of widespread, well-distributed prosperity is open to serious doubt; currently, two-third of our population is dependent on heavily subsidised rations, and all studies, except by government economists, point to a K-shaped economic recovery after the Covid19 pandemic. According to Oxfam, during pandemic times, the number of Indian billionaires grew from 102 to 142 (which are 169 at the latest count) and their wealth increased from Rs.23 lakh crore to Rs.53 lakh crore.

At the same time 84 per cent households suffered a decline in their incomes, with 4.6 crore persons falling into abject poverty. Earlier, too, the "World Inequality Report 2022," and the homegrown PRICE Survey had reached a similar conclusion i.e., the emergence of an unacceptable degree of poverty and inequality in India. Today, the entire world views migration as a problem and most countries operate strict border controls, losing sight of the fact that great countries like the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, were all founded by immigrants.

Also, few can understand the agony of the migrant who enriches his adopted land, but still pines for his homeland. As Salman Rushdie, himself a migrant, has written: "... mingling with the remains of the plane, equally fragmented, equally absurd, there floated the debris of the soul, broken memories, sloughed-off selves, severed mother tongues, violated privacies, untranslatable jokes, extinguished futures, lost loves, the forgotten meaning of hollow, booming words, land, belonging, home" (The Satanic Verses).

The writer is a retired Principal Chief Commissioner of Income-Tax

World Cancer Day 2024: 'Close the care Gap'

Eye Cancer's Hidden Impact on Lives and the Urgent Call for Early Detection



■ **Dr Santosh G Honavar**

In a world where discussions around cancer often revolve around more common forms, it's imperative to bring attention to the silent yet impactful realm of eye cancer. The uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells, known colloquially as a tumor, can manifest within the eye or at remote locations, posing a profound psycho-social and economic impact on the affected individuals and their loved ones.

Eye cancer, though not as prevalent in public discourse, carries the weight of affecting life from the very first cry to the last breath. Its occurrence is notably higher in individuals with a familial history of cancer, hinting at the genetic



predisposition of certain eye cancers.

The origin of eye cancer may vary, ranging from tissues constituting and protecting the eye to locations distant from the eye. Notably, cancers from other parts of the body, such as breast, lung, or gut, can metastasize through the bloodstream, affecting one or both eyes.

Some of these eye-originating cancers possess a propensity to spread to vital organs like the liver, bone, and brain, underlining the critical importance of early detection and timely intervention.

The significance of eye examination is a pivotal tool for early detection. The eye, being the only organ allowing direct

visualization of cancer, serves as the first information report (F.I.R) to a concealed crime scene within the body.

Recognizing symptoms such as a white reflex in a newborn's eye, discoloration on the white part of the eye, red-pink coloured discoloration around the eye, changes in the size or

color of eye surface bumps, persistent redness or pain, and any bulging of the eye, warrants an immediate consultation with an ophthalmologist. The importance of a simple photograph can aid both patients and doctors to understand the progression of the condition, providing a valuable visual reference for treatment planning.

Harnessing the power of technology, internet becomes a valuable ally in the pursuit of eye cancer management. Internet can help individuals find an ophthalmologist trained in treating eye cancers, while Photos enables a visual before-and-after comparison of treatment outcomes. Calendars play a role in scheduling regular check-ups, fostering a sense of community and support.

Centre For Sight Group of Eye Hospitals, pledges to make every effort to address eye cancer with a commitment to life, eye, and vision salvage. As a call to action, Centre For Sight urges for a collective and tireless efforts with unwavering faith in our abilities to achieve years of disease-free and happy living.

Dr Santosh G Honavar is Director, Ophthalmic and Facial Plastic Surgery and Ocular Oncology Centre For Sight, Hyderabad

PM's Scathing Tweet On Congress After 600 Lawyers Write To Chief Justice

HT News Network

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a strong attack on the Congress party today after hundreds of lawyers and some bar associations across the country wrote to the Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, expressing concerns over attempts to undermine the judiciary's integrity using political and professional pressure.

"To browbeat and bully others is vintage Congress culture. Five decades ago, they itself had called for a 'committed judiciary' - they shamelessly want commitment from others for their selfish interests, but desist from any commitment towards the nation," PM Modi said in a post on the microblogging website X.

"No wonder, 140 crore Indians are rejecting them," PM Modi said. To browbeat and bully others is vintage Congress culture.

5 decades ago itself they had called for a "committed judiciary" - they shamelessly want commitment from others for their selfish interests but desist from any commitment towards the nation.

PM Modi's comments came after over 600 lawyers, including



Harish Salve and Bar Council chairperson Manan Kumar Mishra, wrote to Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, alleging that a "vested interest group" is trying to put pressure on the judiciary and defame courts, especially in cases of corruption involving politicians.

Union Minister and Arunachal West candidate Kiren Rijiju said sane voices are openly coming out now, referring to the letter by the lawyers.

"These Congress people coined the concept of committed judiciary and suspended Indian Constitution. The Congress and leftists want courts and constitutional

authorities to serve them or else they immediately start attacking the very institutions," Mr Rijiju said.

Sane Voices are openly coming-out now. These Congress people coined the concept of committed Judiciary and suspended Indian Constitution.

Congress and Leftists want Courts & Constitutional Authorities to serve them or else they immediately start attacking the very institutions. <https://t.co/UyQmY0D5Zi>

Yesterday, the All Manipur Bar Association had also written to Chief Justice DY Chandrachud high-

lighting the need to speak out against "underhanded attacks" on the judiciary. The bar association in the letter had said it was extremely concerned about recent trends where vested interest groups were trying to defame the courts with "frivolous logic" and "stale political agendas".

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, responding to PM Modi, said the Prime Minister's comments "is the height of hypocrisy".

"The PM's brazenness in orchestrating and coordinating an attack on the judiciary, in the name of defending the judiciary, is the height of hypocrisy. The Supreme Court has delivered body blows to him in recent weeks. The electoral bonds scheme is but one example..." Mr Ramesh said in a post on X.

"All that the Prime Minister has done in the last 10 years is divide, distort, divert, and defame. 140 crore Indians are waiting to give him a befitting reply very soon," the Congress leader said.

The PM's brazenness in orchestrating and coordinating an attack on the judiciary, in the name of defending the judiciary, is the height of hypocrisy!

"Unwarranted, Unacceptable": India On US Remarks On Arvind Kejriwal Arrest

HT News Network

New Delhi: Remarks by the United States on Arvind Kejriwal's arrest are "unwarranted" and a strong protest has been lodged, the Ministry of External Affairs said during a routine press briefing Thursday.

"... yesterday India lodged its strong objection and protest with a senior official from the United States Embassy with regard to comments made by the State Department. The recent remarks are unwarranted. In India, legal processes are driven by the rule of law. Anyone who has similar ethos... especially fellow democracies... should have no difficulty in appreciating this fact," the MEA said.

The MEA also snapped back at the US' comments on the Congress' claim that its bank accounts have been frozen - over unfair tax demands - just days before the 2024 Lok Sabha election. The Congress has said the hold on its bank accounts means it has no



money to spend on its poll campaigns. The MEA underlined India's "robust and independent democratic institutions" and said that "external imputation on our electoral and legal processes is completely unacceptable".

The ministry spokesperson emphasised the Indian government's commitment to protect the country's judiciary and democratic institutions "from any form of undue external influences".

"Mutual respect and understanding form the foundation of international relations and states are

expected to be respectful of the sovereignty and internal affairs of others," the MEA said.

"Interference...": India On US, Germany Remarks

The External Affairs Ministry's strong-worded statement comes after the US on Wednesday reiterated calls for "fair, transparent, and timely legal processes" involving Mr Kejriwal's arrest.

The US said it "continues to follow these actions closely" when asked about the meeting Wednesday between MEA officials and Gloria Berbena, the US Acting Deputy Chief of Mission.

Congress To Release Poll Manifesto On April 6, 'Nyay' Pillars In Focus

HT News Network

New Delhi: The Congress will launch its manifesto for the 2024 Lok Sabha election - expected to contain several social welfare promises and 25 guarantees, five each under 'nyay (justice) pillars' - from Jaipur on April 6, the party's Rajasthan state boss, Govind Singh Dotasara, said Thursday afternoon.

The big-ticket event will be attended by top Congress leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and Mallikarjun Kharge, as well as senior members of the party's state unit.

The Congress is at the head of the INDIA opposition bloc, which was formed in June last year to take on the BJP's formidable election-winning machinery.

In January the party had invited ideas and suggestions from the public. Ex-Union Minister P Chidambaram, who led the framing committee, called it a "people's manifesto".

"Besides public consultations... in every state, the Congress has set up an e-mail account and a website for suggestions," he said. "The party will incorporate as many suggestions as possible."

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor - nominated to defend his Thiruvananthapuram seat - said the manifestos would focus on unemployment, price rise, and income support for the poor, as well as women's rights and the condition of farmers. The contentious MSP, or minimum support price, at the heart of farmers' protests from 2020 and earlier this year, is also expect-



ed to be mentioned. The party is also expected to promise a stringent law to punish those responsible for leaking exam papers, and suggest measures to ensure transparency in public service recruitments. The Congress has said that many of these points, and others that will be included in the manifesto, were flagged by the electorate to Rahul Gandhi during his second 'Bharat Jodo Yatra'.

But among the more significant points that will be watched are the party's position on the national caste survey topic and its response to the amended citizenship law. In its manifesto for the 2023 Rajasthan Assembly election, the party promised it would order such a survey in the state.

The choice of Rajasthan to launch the manifesto is interesting; the Congress has not won a Lok Sabha seat in the state since the 2009 election. In 2014 and 2019, powered by the 'Modi wave', the Bharatiya Janata Party trounced its rival, winning all 25 seats in the former and 24 in the latter. In the 2019 election the 25th seat went to a BJP ally, the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party. Rajasthan is also where the Congress slipped to a shock (and sizeable).

"China May Repeat Its Baseless Claims": India Hits Back At Beijing On Arunachal

HT News Network

New Delhi: Reiterating that Arunachal Pradesh is an "integral and inalienable part of India," the Ministry of External Affairs said that China may repeat its "baseless claims" as many times as they want but that will not change the position. In response to a query during a weekly media briefing on Thursday, Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "Our position on the matter has been made very clear on Arunachal Pradesh time and again. We have recently also issued statements in this regard. I think a couple of statements." "China may repeat its baseless claims as many times as they want. That is not going to change the position. Arunachal Pradesh is, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India," he added.

Randhir Jaiswal's statement comes days after China again came up with its claim over Arunachal Pradesh. Terming the Indian State as "Zangan--an inherent part of China's terri-



tory," the Chinese Defence Ministry said that Beijing "never acknowledges and firmly opposes" the "so-called Arunachal Pradesh illegally established by India." Following this, India once again rejected the "absurd claims" and "baseless arguments" while asserting that the northeastern state is an "integral and inalienable part of India." In an official statement, MEA noted that the people of Arunachal Pradesh will "continue to benefit" from India's development programmes and infrastructure projects.

On March 23, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar stressed on Saturday that the northeastern state is part of India. While referring to Beijing's claims as "ludicrous," the Minister said that Arunachal Pradesh is a part of India because it is a part of the country, and not only because a foreign country says so.

During his visit to Singapore, Mr Jaishankar spoke at the Institute of South Asian Studies of the National University of Singapore on his book 'Why Bharat Matters'.

Responding to a question during the event, Mr Jaishankar said, "This is not a new issue. China has laid claim, expanded its claim. The claims are ludicrous to begin with, they remain ludicrous today. And Arunachal Pradesh is part of India because it is part of India, not because some other country says it is part of India."

"So, I think we have been very clear, very consistent on this. And this is something that will be part of the boundary discussion which are taking place," he added.

High Court Rejects Plea To Remove Arvind Kejriwal As Chief Minister After Arrest

HT News Network

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court today dismissed a PIL seeking the removal of AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal from the post of chief minister following his arrest in the excise policy-linked money laundering case.

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan refused to comment on the merits of the issue, saying the same fell outside the scope of judicial interference.

"It is for the other wings of the government to examine in accordance with the law," the bench, also comprising Justice

Manmeet PS Arora, said.

During the hearing, the court asked petitioner Surjit Singh Yadav's counsel to show the legal bar on the continuation of Arvind Kejriwal as the chief minister.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener, who was arrested on March 21 and subsequently remanded to the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) custody till March 28 by a Delhi court, faces allegations of direct involvement in a conspiracy related to the formulation of the excise policy favouring specific individuals.

SBI Revises Annual Maintenance Charges For Debit Cards From April 1

HT News Network

New Delhi: State Bank of India (SBI) has announced increase in its annual maintenance charges associated with certain category of debit cards. The new rates will be effective from April 1, the first day of the new financial year, as per a release posted on SBI website. The new charges will be applicable on Classic/Silver/Global, Yuva/Gold, Platinum and Pride/Premium Business categories of debit cards, the website further said. The bank has listed the new charges in a tabular form for the convenience of its customers. The annual maintenance charges have been increased by 75 across various categories, the website shows. The revision in annual charges on SBI website. The revision in annual charges as mentioned on SBI website. The public lender has also mentioned other fees associated with debit cards. These include issuance and replacement of debit cards. The issuance charges vary depending on the type of card, ranging from Nil for Classic, Silver, Global, and Contactless debit cards to 300 plus GST for Platinum debit cards.

Jailed Ex Cop Sanjiv Bhatt Sent To 20-Year Jail For Planting Drugs To Frame Lawyer

HT News Network

Banaskantha, Gujarat: A sessions court in Palanpur in Gujarat's Banaskantha district on Thursday sentenced former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt to 20 years in jail in a 1996 case involving planting of drugs to frame a lawyer.

Sanjiv Bhatt, who is already behind bars in a custodial death case, was held guilty of falsely implicating a Rajasthan-based lawyer by claiming, in 1996, that police had seized drugs from a hotel room in Palanpur where the lawyer was staying. Sanjiv Bhatt, who was sacked from the force in 2015, was serving as the superintendent of police of Banaskantha district at the time.

Trinamool Leader Mahua Moitra To Skip Third Probe Agency Summons

HT News Network

New Delhi: Trinamool leader Mahua Moitra is likely to skip summons issued by Directorate of Enforcement (ED) to question her in connection with a foreign exchange violation case today. The probe agency sent its third summons to the West Bengal leader on Wednesday after she skipped the first two over scheduling conflicts. Ms Moitra was supposed to appear before the probe agency at its Delhi office today but will instead be campaigning for her party in West Bengal's Krishnanagar. "I will be out for campaigning in the Krishnanagar constituency in the afternoon," she told reporters, news agency PTI said.

The ED wants to question her over transactions linked to a non-resident

external, or NRE, account, sources said on Wednesday. Ms Moitra has denied any wrongdoing in the matter.

The former MP was expelled from Lok Sabha last year over cash-for-query allegations. She was accused of receiving "luxury gifts" and 2 crore in cash from businessman Darshan Hiranandani to ask questions critical of the government in Parliament. A parliamentary ethics panel had found her conduct "immoral" and "indecent" after she allegedly shared log-in details to her parliament MP account with Mr Hiranandani. The account was also allegedly accessed multiple times overseas. Mr Hiranandani has also been called for questioning in a case related to his Mumbai-based real estate group. Earlier his father, Niranjan Hiranandani, was also questioned.

"Pledge To Make India Developed": Anurag Thakur On First-Time Voters

HT News Network

New Delhi: Union Minister Anurag Thakur today urged the first-time voters to take a pledge to make India a developed country.

"Cast your first vote for the growth of the country and pledge to make it a vikshit Bharat or developed India in the next 25 years," he said.

There is a lot of awareness among today's youth, Mr Thakur said, adding that they also know about their rights.

"The youth must get their voter ID cards and go and vote despite how hot it may be. Don't lose this opportunity," Mr Thakur told the young audience at the NDTV Yuva conclave.

"Yuva means empowerment, development, passion, growth and commitment," Mr Thakur said.

Speaking at the mega event, Mr Thakur claimed that his boss, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is the best as he is strict at work, but kind towards the citizens of India.

"Most people here have their bosses. But My boss, PM Modi, is the best. He is the strictest at work, but kindest for the



citizens of India," Mr Thakur said. "He hasn't taken a single holiday in 23 years. Even when his mother passed away, he just took a 2 hour break for the funeral and then got back to work. That is the type of commitment the PM has," he added.

India's biggest youth disruptors from politics, cinema, music and comedy have come together at NDTV's Yuva - Youth For Change mega conclave today. There is a lot of awareness among today's youth, Anurag Thakur said, adding that they also know about their rights.

Trump In Court, Biden In Kitchen: The Unique Campaigns For 2024 US Elections

HT News Network

Washington: Though the candidates are the same as last time, the 2024 US presidential election promises to be unique in other ways -- pitting two men facing challenges unprecedented in the 235-year history of US democracy.

Joe Biden was already fending off misgivings about his advanced years in 2020, but America's oldest-ever president will have four more candles on his birthday cake this November.

And Donald Trump, who was facing scrutiny during the last election over his conduct before and during his term in office, now has four criminal indictments to his name -- unprecedented for a US president.

There isn't much 81-year-old Biden can do about his age, except crack the occasional joke and point out that his opponent is less than four years younger.

But Trump has tried to leverage his



legal woes -- treating his court appearances as if they were campaign rallies, complete with defiant, grievance-laden speeches before the media and cheering fans. The speeches themselves aren't exactly presidential -- it's hard to imagine

Abraham Lincoln lashing out at judges or smearing political opponents as "Marxist thugs" -- but Trump's loyal base enjoys his proclivity for incendiary rhetoric and personal grievance.

They are likely to see more of it, with

jury selection beginning April 15 in Trump's trial for campaign finance violations in New York.

"He likes to be able to play the role of a victim," says Todd Belt, a politics professor at George Washington University.

The strategy comes at a price. Trump has been buried under legal costs stretching into the hundreds of millions of dollars -- bills that he finances, in part, via campaign funds.

"It also takes him away from being able to do his MAGA rallies, get out among the people," says Belt.

The contest is not set in stone until the parties' nominating conventions this summer, but since the rematch became all-but-inevitable weeks ago, Trump has held just one of his signature rallies, in Ohio. His step back is unusual for a showman who -- despite his own many verbal slip-ups -- enjoys putting on a stiff gait and pretending to be confused as he mocks Biden, delighting supporters in packed arenas.

S Jaishankar Discusses Cooperation In Technology, Defence With Malaysian PM

HT News Network

Kuala Lumpur: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday called on Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and the two leaders exchanged views and discussed cooperation in the areas of trade, science and technology, education, agriculture, tourism, defence and also on regional issues including Myanmar.

S Jaishankar, who is here on a two-day official visit, met Anwar Ibrahim at the Prime Minister's Office and the meeting lasted about an hour, the official Bernama news agency reported.

In a statement issued after the meeting, the Prime Minister's Office said that Anwar Ibrahim and S Jaishankar exchanged views and discussed cooperation in the areas of trade, science and technology, education, agriculture, tourism, defence and digital, and also on regional issues including Myanmar. Anwar Ibrahim gave his commitment to facilitate the establishment of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) branch campus in Malaysia, it added.

The Prime Minister also expressed appreciation to his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi for assisting Malaysia when



the country was hit by a shortage of rice and hoped for further facilitation on the import of agricultural produce from India.

"May the Malaysian-Indian relationship continue to grow and blossom for the benefit of the people of both friendly countries," Anwar Ibrahim said.

The Prime Minister looks forward to visit India soon, the statement said.

S Jaishankar, who is in Kuala Lumpur on the third and last leg of his three-nation tour to Singapore, the Philippines and Malaysia, conveyed the warm greetings of Prime Minister Modi.

"Honour to call on Prime Minister @anwaribrahim of Malaysia. Conveyed the warm greetings of PM @narendramodi," S Jaishankar said in a post on X.

Philippines' Marcos vows countermeasures in response to Chinese 'attacks' in South China Sea

HT News Network

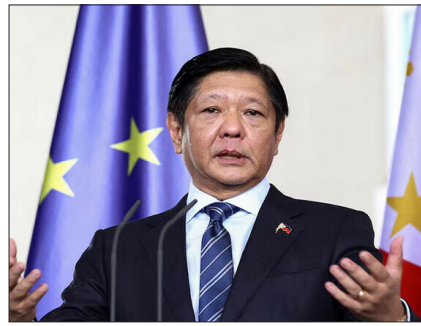
The Philippines will implement countermeasures proportionate and reasonable against "illegal, coercive, aggressive, and dangerous attacks" by China's coastguard and maritime militia in the South China Sea, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said on Thursday. "We seek no conflict with any nation, more so nations that purport and claim to be our friends, but we will not be cowed into silence, submission, or subservience," Marcos said on Facebook.

He did not specify what the countermeasures would include.

The Philippines has been furious in the past year over what it calls repeated aggression by China's coastguard and allied fishing vessels around disputed features located inside Manila's 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

The latest flare-up occurred last week when China used a water cannon to disrupt another Philippine resupply mission to the Second Thomas Shoal for soldiers posted to guard a warship intentionally grounded on a reef 25 years ago.

China, which claims almost the entire South China Sea as its own, has accused the Philippines of encroaching on its territory and says it took necessary measures



against the vessels. China warned the Philippines on Monday to behave cautiously and seek dialogue, saying their relations were at a "crossroads" as confrontations between their coastguards over maritime claims worsened tensions.

Marcos said he met his defence and security officials and has been in contact with "friends in the international community". "They have offered to help us with what the Philippines requires to protect and secure our sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction while ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific," Marcos said. The deterioration in relations with China comes as Marcos seeks to deepen defence ties with the United States. He has increased US access to Philippine military bases and joint exercises will now include sea and air patrols over the South China Sea.

Germany Changes Tone After India Summons Envoy Over Arvind Kejriwal Remarks

HT News Network

New Delhi: Germany has changed its tone after India summoned a senior German diplomat over their government's remarks on Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's arrest.

A German foreign office spokesperson exuded confidence in the Indian Constitution on Wednesday, days after his government said they expected Mr Kejriwal to get an impartial trial. "The Indian constitution - and I can say this from my own perspective as I was posted in India myself - guarantees fundamental human values and freedoms. And we share these democratic values with India as an important partner in Asia," the official said.

The spokesperson also said that



India and Germany work together in an atmosphere of trust.

"The topic was discussed with the Ministry of External Affairs on Saturday. Let me emphasise once again that we - India and Germany - have a great interest in closer cooperation and together in an atmosphere of trust," he added.

Mr Kejriwal was arrested last week by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the third Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

leader after Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh to be taken into custody in connection with the alleged liquor policy scam.

Sebastian Fischer, a German foreign office spokesperson, on Saturday said it had taken note of the arrest and expects basic democratic principles to be applied in this case.

"Like anyone facing accusations, Mr Kejriwal is entitled to a fair and impartial trial, this includes he can make use of all available legal avenues without restrictions. The presumption of innocence is a central element of the rule of law and must apply to him," the spokesperson had said.

This prompted a quick backlash with India dubbing the remarks as a "blatant interference in India's internal matters". They also summoned the Deputy Head of Mission.

Nigerian Woman Faces Jail for Reviewing Tomato Puree Online

HT News Network

A scathing online review of tomato puree has landed a Nigerian entrepreneur, Chioma Okoli, in hot water. The 39-year-old Lagos resident faces jail time after the product's manufacturer accused her of violating cybercrime laws with a "malicious allegation" that damaged their business. This unusual case has sparked outrage in Nigeria, with many believing Ms Okoli is being punished for simply exercising her right to free speech, CNN reported.

Chioma Okoli, a children's clothing importer, turned to her 18,000 Facebook followers on September 17th for their thoughts on a tomato puree substitute she'd recently purchased. Disappointed by its sweetness, she sought their opinions. Ms Okoli's post featuring a photo of an opened can of "Nagiko Tomato Mix" by Erisco Foods, a local company, drew mixed reactions from her followers. A comment read, "Stop spoiling my brother's product. If (you) don't like it, use another one then bring it to social media or call customer service." Reacting to the comment, Ms Okoli wrote, "Help me advise your brother to stop ki****ing people with his product, yesterday was my first time of using and it's pure sugar."

More Rafah strikes raise fears of all-out Israeli assault

HT News Network

GAZA STRIP: Israel bombed at least four homes in Rafah on Wednesday, raising fresh fears among the more than a million Palestinians sheltering in the last refuge on the southern edge of the Gaza Strip that a long-threatened ground assault could be coming.

One of the airstrikes killed 11 people from a single family, health officials said. The health ministry said on Wednesday that at least 32,490 people have been killed in the territory during more than five months of war between Israel and Hamas. The toll includes at least 76 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said, adding that 74,889 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip since the Israeli invasion began on October 7. Fighting has raged since last week around Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital, the territory's largest, and more recently near two hospitals in the main southern city of Khan Yunis, Al-Amal and Nasser. Israeli tanks and armoured vehicles have also massed around the Nasser Hospital, the Gaza health ministry said, adding that shots were fired but no raid had yet been launched. The Palestinian Red Crescent warned that thousands were trapped inside and "their lives are in danger". Talks in Qatar towards a truce and prisoner release deal, involving US and Egyptian mediators, have brought no result so far, with Israel and Hamas blaming each other. One of Wednesday's airstrikes killed 11 people from a single family, health officials said.

Mussa Dhaheer, looking on from below as neighbours helped an emergency worker lower a victim in a black body bag from an upper storey, said he had awakened to the blast, kissed his terrified daughter, and rushed outside to find the destruction. His father, 75, and mother, 62, were among the dead.

"I don't know what to do. I don't know what to say. I can't make sense of what happened. My parents. My father with his displaced friends who came from Gaza City," he told Reuters. "They were all together, when suddenly they were all gone like dust."

At another bomb site, Jamil Abu Houry said the intensification of air strikes was Israel's way of showing its disdain for a UN Security Council resolution last week demanding an immediate Israel-Hamas ceasefire. Next up, he fears a ground assault on Rafah, which Israel has threatened for weeks to carry out despite pleas from its closest ally Washington that this would wreak a humanitarian disaster.

"The bombing has increased, and they have threatened us with an incursion, and they say that have been given the green light for the Rafah incursion. Where is the Security Council?" Abu Houry said.

"Look at our little ones. Look at our children. Where should we go? Where should we go?" Another Israeli airstrike in Rafah on Wednesday afternoon killed four Palestinians including a woman and a child and injured other residents, Gaza health authorities said.

Just west of Gaza City in the enclave's north, seven people were killed in an airstrike on a house, health officials said.

18 Gazans die trying to collect airdropped aid

HT News Network

GAZA STRIP: Twelve people drowned and at least six were killed in stampedes trying to recover aid airdropped into Gaza, local authorities said on Tuesday.

The deaths occurred in the north of the besieged territory on Monday, with people rushing to collect packages dropped from planes along Gaza's Mediterranean coast.

The UN humanitarian office called on Tuesday for Israel to revoke a ban on food deliveries to northern Gaza from the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA, saying people there were facing a "cruel death by famine".

UK minister threatened with jail over Afghanistan probe

HT News Network

LONDON: AUK government minister is on a collision course with the law over his refusal to reveal the sources of allegations that British special forces committed war crimes in Afghanistan.

Johnny Mercer, Britain's minister for veterans, has said "multiple officers" told him about alleged murders and a subsequent cover-up during the Afghan conflict.

He has refused to divulge their identities to a public inquiry examining whether a unit executed males of "fighting age" who posed no threat in the war-torn country between 2010 and 2013.

The Independent Inquiry Relating to Afghanistan ordered Mercer, 42, to hand over the names next week or face a potential prison sentence.

Mercer refuses to disclose sources of allegations that British forces committed war crimes

In a statement, the Independent Inquiry Relating to Afghanistan revealed it had issued the MP with a Section 21 notice under Britain's Inquiries Act, 2005 on March 13. The published order compels Mercer to provide a witness statement containing the names of the whistleblowers by the evening of April 5. Failure to comply without a reasonable excuse would be "a criminal offence punishable with imprisonment and/or a fine", the notice says. Signed by the probe's chairman, Charles Haddon-Cave, it adds that the High Court in London could enforce the order through contempt of court proceedings, which "may result in imprisonment". The order insists the names "will be treated in confidence" and would not be disclosed to anyone who is not a member of the inquiry's legal team without Mercer's consent. If he is unable to fulfil the order or believes it is unreasonable, then he has until April 3 to appeal. Mercer is expected to do so.

Justin Trudeau Answers A Key Question Over Hardeep Nijjar's Killing Probe

HT News Network

Ottawa: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Thursday said they are looking to work constructively with the Indian government in the probe into the killing of designated terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

According to Canada-based Cable Public Affairs Channel (CPAC), Mr Trudeau was asked, "How is India's cooperation shaping up on the assassination investigations of Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar when Canada has credible allegations and India expects Canada to complete its own investigation first?"

The Canadian PM responded saying, "The killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is something that we all should

take extremely seriously."

"The credible allegations that agents of the Indian government were involved in -- that is something that we did not declare lightly, but our responsibility to protect all Canadians from illegal actions by foreign governments is something that, as a country grounded in diversity, we need to take very seriously," he added.

India has earlier denied the charges as baseless. Mr Trudeau said the Canadian government is ensuring appropriate probe is being done, according to a video shared by the CPAC.

"That's why we have been unequivocal about standing up for the rule of law and ensuring that the appropriate investigations are being done in full accordance with our justice system and our police independence," the Canadian PM said.



Moreover, he said they are working constructively with the Indian government to get to the bottom of this matter.

"At the same time, we are working. We're looking to work constructively with the government of India to get to the bottom

of this, to understand how this could have happened, and to make sure that no Canadians are ever vulnerable again to foreign interference by any international power," he added.

Nijjar, who was designated a terrorist by the National Investigation Agency in 2020, was shot and killed as he came out of a Gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, on the evening of June 18, 2023.

Trudeau had alleged the Indian government's role in Nijjar's killing, a charge that India rejected and led to the deterioration of diplomatic ties between the two countries. India has rejected the allegations as "absurd and motivated".

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Canada has not been able to present any evidence to back its claims over the killing.

Severe Waste Management Crisis Grips Rural Areas of RDD Block Langate

■ Dr Abdul Qayoom

Langate, Mar, 28: Residents of rural areas within the RDD block Langate, located in North Kashmir's Kupwara district, are grappling with a severe waste management crisis, leading to environmental and health concerns. Despite government initiatives, including the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen, aimed at improving waste management, the situa-

tion persists, with garbage accumulating in villages, roadsides, water bodies, and designated dustbin sites. While several waste collection and segregation sheds were constructed under government schemes, including the installation of thousands of soak pits and compost pits, effective waste segregation and disposal processes have not been achieved. Residents are indiscriminately filling the sheds with various types of waste,



leading to overflowing dustbins and garbage being disposed of in local rivers, canals, and roadsides. Both locals and officials are being held accountable for the worsening condition, emphasizing the urgent need for action and collective responsibility. Local residents are urging for cooperation between residents and officials to address the crisis, emphasizing the proper disposal of waste in designated soakage and com-

post pits. While taking to HEADLINES TODAY the officials from the RDD block Langate have assured to address the issue by sanitizing the areas and continuing efforts to improve waste management until the first week of April. The situation highlights the importance of effective waste management practices and the need for collaborative efforts to safeguard the environment and public health in rural areas.

Lok Sabha Election-2024 DEO flags-off SVEEP Van for Voter awareness in Kulgam

■ Farooq Rather



KULGAM, MARCH 28: In an effort to generate awareness among the public regarding the significance of Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) in the district, the District Election Officer, Athar Aamir Khan today flagged-off a voter awareness van from DC Office Complex, Kulgam.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Deputy District Election Officer/ Nodal Officer SVEEP and other officers/ officials were present on the occasion.

Highlighting the objectives of SVEEP, DEO stressed the importance of widespread awareness about importance of vote and informed that the initiative aims to educate the public regarding the significance of systematic voters' education and electoral participation (SVEEP) and to increase turnout during the elections.

He added that a comprehensive SVEEP activity calendar has been formulated and activities are being carried out accordingly as per the devised activity calendar.

Police arrests 03 drug peddlers in Anantnag, contraband substance recovered

■ HT News Network

Anantnag March 28: Continuing its unwavering efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police in Anantnag have arrested three drug peddlers and recovered contraband substance from their possession.

A police party from Police Post Sangam at a checkpoint established near Tulkhan Crossing Sangam intercepted a vehicle (Santro) bearing registration number JK03B-1781. During search of the vehicle, about 17 Kgs of Poppy Straw was recovered from the said vehicle. Three persons boarding the vehicle identified as Sajad Ahmad Dass son of Mohd Sultan Dass, Javid Ahmad Mantoo son of Wali Mohd Mantoo, both residents of Waghama Bijbehara and Muzaffar Ahmad Sheikh son of Nazir Ahmad Sheikh resident of Tulkhan Bijbehara were arrested. Vehicle used in the commission of crime has also been seized.

Lok Sabha Election-2024 Distt Admin hosts Voters Awareness program under SVEEP at Lolab, Keran

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, MARCH 28: Mega Voters Awareness programs under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative were today organized at Govt. Higher Secondary School Maidanpora (Lolab) and Government Higher Secondary School Keran (close to LOC). The events were aimed to raise awareness about various voting-related activities and promote electoral literacy among citizens, especially first-time voters in the run up



to the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections 2024. The events were attended by the principals, teachers, and students from different schools, officials from various departments, general public, first time voters, community leaders and

local Artists. Participants were enthralled by election related skits, scintillating cultural performances and interactive sessions designed to educate and inspire active participation in the democratic process. Pledge taking ceremonies under SVEEP were held where participants took the pledge to vote enthusiastically in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. On the occasion, as a token of appreciation, achiever students were also felicitated. Mass awareness regarding electoral participation was generated through painting and Quiz competitions. Speaking at the events, Resource Persons emphasized on the significance of electoral literacy in empowering citizens and urged everyone, especially first-time voters, to exercise their franchise responsibly in the upcoming.

PD&SJ/ Chairman DLSA, Ganderbal chairs UTRC meeting

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, MARCH 28: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal under the aegis of J&K Legal Services Authority today conducted the first Quarterly meeting of the Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) in District Ganderbal for the quarter of January - March, 2024.

The meeting was held in order to expedite the identification and review of prisoners who are eligible to be considered for release, as well as to accelerate the regular functioning of UTRC and review all eligible under-trial prisoners (UTPs)/Prisoners.

The meeting was chaired by Pr. District and Sessions Judge (PD&SJ), Chairman DLSA Ganderbal,



Ritesh Kumar Dubey, with the members of the Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC).

In the meeting, the committee reviewed cases of eligible UTPs/Prisoners shortlisted by the Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal for consideration.

The committee recommended four cases of UTPs/

Prisoners and directed Legal Aid Defense Counsels to take necessary steps and file applications/bail applications.

The meeting was attended by Secretary District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal, Nusrat Ali Hakak; Senior Superintendent of Police, Ganderbal, Sandeep Gupta; Addition-

al Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Gulzar Ahmad Khan; Chief Prosecution Officer, Ganderbal, Shafat Ahmad; Officer Incharge, Subsidiary Jail, Dignibal Ganderbal, Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel, Ganderbal and Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel, Ganderbal. The meeting was held in order to expedite the identification and review of prisoners who are eligible to be considered for release, as well as to accelerate the regular functioning of UTRC and review all eligible under-trial prisoners (UTPs)/Prisoners.

The meeting was chaired by Pr. District and Sessions Judge (PD&SJ), Chairman DLSA Ganderbal, Ritesh Kumar Dubey, with the members of the Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC).

Market Inspection intensified at Anantnag

■ HT News Network



ANANTNAG, MARCH 28: To ensure compliance with market regulations and protect consumer interests during the holy month of Ramadan, a rigorous market inspection was conducted today under the guidance of the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Anantnag, Fayaz Ahmad Bandy.

The inspection team comprised Tehsildar Anantnag, EO Municipal Committee Anantnag, and representatives from the Enforcement Committee of Municipal Committee and officials of Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs.

During the inspection, a thorough assessment was conducted on multiple fronts including pricing accuracy, product quality, hygiene standards and licensing compliance. Any discrepancies found during the process were duly documented, and appropriate actions will be taken within the purview of the established legal framework.

The team emphasized the importance of upholding the highest standards of ethics and legality in their operations. Such adherence not only fosters trust within the community but also contributes significantly to the overall prosperity and well-being of the society.

Cash, liquor worth Rs 29 Lakh seized post MCC enforcement in Kathua

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, MARCH 28: Multiple enforcement teams operating across Kathua district have intercepted and seized cash and liquor valued at Rs 29,51,630 since the enforcement of Election Model Code of Conduct.

The vigilant enforcement teams have demonstrated infallible commitment to uphold the sanctity of electoral process," stated District Election Officer Kathua, who is also the Returning Officer for the 4-Udhampur PC. "We are determined to prevent any violation of the model code of conduct promptly and decisively," he added.

As the Lok Sabha elections progress, the administration has urged the citizens to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activities or violation of the poll code to the concerned authorities.

DC Kulgam reviews implementation of COTPA-2003

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, MARCH 28: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a review meeting of District Level Coordination Committee for implementation of Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, COTPA-2003 under National Tobacco Control Program, at mini-secretariat Kulgam. During the meeting, Divisional Nodal Officer NTCPS DHS Kashmir, Dr. Mir Mushtaq through a PowerPoint presentation enumerated the role and responsibilities of various departments/ stakeholders in tobacco control.

The DC instructed CEO and other concerned to ensure that no sale of Tobacco products is permitted within 100 yards of institutional premises.

Moreover, he emphasized the necessity of formulating a detailed Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activity calendar to disseminate awareness campaigns effectively. In addition to these directives, officers and heads of institutions were tasked with ensuring that all offices maintain tobacco-free environments. The DC urged all stakeholders present to collectively ensure the rigorous implementation of COTPA-2003, which is aimed at combating the tobacco menace within society.

District-Level NCORD committee reviews drug control measures in Udhampur

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 28: The district-level Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) committee today reviewed drug control measures in Udhampur district, here at a meeting chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Joginder Singh Jasrotia.

The meeting aimed to assess the implementation of previous directives and devise strategies to combat drug abuse and illicit narcotics trade in the district.

District Information Officer Rajinder Kumar Dagra; District Social Welfare Officer Kanika Gupta; CMO Dr. Anil Manhas; Medical Superintendent and other key officers attended the meeting.

Detailed discussions were held on multiple facets, including tackling drug addiction cases, identifying and apprehending individuals involved in illegal drug trafficking, combating unlawful cannabis



cultivation, rehabilitation of youth struggling with addiction, pinpointing drug abuse hotspots, and reviewing ongoing

district-wide initiatives.

The ADC urged the concerned officers to compile comprehensive action taken

reports on previous directives. He further emphasized on installation of CCTV cameras at medical shops.

In remote areas where CCTV installation is unfeasible, the enforcement departments were asked to take undertaking from medical shop owners confirming the non-sale of psychotropic drugs.

The ETO was directed to conduct raids and seize illicit drugs, while also establishing a sleeper cell for intelligence gathering. Officers were also instructed to conduct sensitization programs on perils of drug abuse across all blocks of the district. Detailed discussions were held on multiple facets, including tackling drug addiction cases, identifying and apprehending individuals involved in illegal drug trafficking, combating unlawful cannabis cultivation, rehabilitation of youth struggling with addiction, pinpointing drug abuse hotspots, and reviewing ongoing district-wide initiatives.

Night Nourishing



SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

There's a reason it's called 'beauty sleep'—some of the most powerful skincare products work their magic best when you're catching up on shut-eye.

Nourishing your skin with the right ingredients during bedtime is as crucial as taking care of your skin during the daytime.

From hydrating and repairing to restoring and rejuvenating the skin, night creams are the perfect solution for healthy and glowing skin.

Night nourishing is important for normal to dry skin, especially during summer. People with dry skin are prone to early aging and nourishing helps to delay the formation of early lines and wrinkles, keeping the skin smooth and youthful. Nourish the skin at night, before bedtime, with a night cream. A night cream is basically a nourishing cream and is useful for normal to dry skins. Those who are prone to pimples, or have oily skin, should not use night creams. Night nourishing also preserves the elasticity of the skin and improves its ability to retain moisture. It tones the skin and improves blood circulation to the skin surface.

A night cream is to be used at night, before bedtime, after cleansing the skin thoroughly. The night time routine is important, as all the pollutants and make-up should be removed from the skin. The skin should be nourished and clean. When we sleep, all the repair and restoration work of the body can go on efficiently. Proper cleansing and nourishing help to remove dead cells and speed up the skin's regeneration of new skin cells. Nighttime pampering of the skin also helps us to give special care to particular areas, like the area around the eyes, the neck and hands. These are areas which are the earliest to show signs of age. Massaging the nourishing



cream into the skin also helps to tone the muscles and improve blood circulation.

First, cleanse the skin thoroughly to get rid of the pollutants and impurities that have deposited on the skin during the day. After cleansing, apply the night cream on the face. Taking a little water, massage the cream on the skin, using circular motions, with outward and slightly upward strokes. Massage for 3 to 4 minutes and then remove all cream with moist cotton wool. Remember that when you massage, use gentle strokes, without pulling or stretching the skin. Massage the delicate skin around the eyes, with the ring finger only. Using the lightest touch, stroke outwards over the brows, continuing underneath the eyes and over the eyelids. Use movements in one direction only and not back and forth. Apply the night cream on the neck too and massage with strokes starting from the chin and going downwards. Use both hands to massage the neck, one hand following the other.

1---Apple Night Cream

Take 2 Apples, 5 Tablespoons of Rosewater and 1 tablespoon of Olive Oil

Peel the apples and cut them after removing the seeds and blend them with olive oil. Put the mixture into a boiler and heat it on low flame until hot and then allow it to cool.

Once it gets cool then pour the rosewater in mixture and stir well. Store in a tight jar and put in the refrigerator. Use the cream in a week time for best results

2---Aloe Vera Night Creme

Take 4 tbsp aloe vera gel, 2 drops lavender essential oil and 3 tsp rose water.

Mix the aloe vera gel with the lavender essential oil in a glass jar. Add rose water to obtain a thick paste. Keep it in a watertight jar in a refrigerator. Use at night on face and neck uniformly

Aloe vera gel effectively heals acne, pimples, redness, boils and scars. Lavender essential oil checks inflammation and banishes blackheads and whiteheads. Rose water balances pH of the skin, removes excess sebum and oil to leave behind clear, smooth and sparkling skin.

3---Cocoa Butter Creme

Take 2tsp cocoa butter, 3 tsp rose water, 1 tsp honey and 1 tsp almond oil

Mix cocoa butter and almond oil in a vessel, heat it on low flame and then allow it to cool naturally. Now add honey and rose water and stir it well and then store in an air-tight jar and refrigerate it. You can use this cream in 7 days for best results

4---Green Tea Night Cream --

Take 1 green tea bag, Few drops of hot water, 1 tablespoon of beeswax, 1 tablespoon coconut oil and 2-3 drops of almond oil

Combine a tablespoon of beeswax with few drops of almond oil and mix properly in a bowl

Dip the Green Tea bag in a little hot water and add it to the earlier prepared mixture

Thereafter, add a tablespoon of coconut oil to the mixture. Store it in an air-tight container

Apply it daily on face and Neck before sleeping.

The author is international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of India

What Is Brain Bleeding Causes, Symptoms

Much to the relief of Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev's followers, the spiritual leader was discharged from Delhi's Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals on March 27 after he underwent an emergency brain surgery on March 17. Sadhguru suffered from multiple bleedings in the brain before he was hospitalised. He was reportedly having persistent headaches for many weeks before his condition was diagnosed.

So what is brain bleeding and can it be prevented? How can one identify the problem? Dr Kunal Bahrani, Director of Neurology, Fortis Escorts Hospital, Faridabad, sheds light on the matter.

What Is Brain Bleeding?

Brain bleeding, also known as intracranial haemorrhage, is a type of stroke and it happens when there is bleeding inside your brain. "Your brain needs oxygen to work and gets this oxygen through blood vessels. When blood vessels in the brain leak or burst, blood collects inside the skull and brain. This puts pressure on the brain and stops oxygen and nutrients from



reaching brain tissues and cells," says Dr Kunal Bahrani.

Why Brain Bleeding Occurs

Dr Bahrani says that brain bleeding often occurs after accidents or traumatic injuries like falls. "But it

can also occur spontaneously known as non-traumatic brain bleeding of which the most important cause is uncontrolled high blood pressure. It's crucial to understand that a brain bleed is a serious emergency. If brain cells don't get enough oxygen you can start to die in just a few minutes. Getting treatment quickly is very important for the best chance of recovery."

Brain Bleeding Symptoms

Dr Bahrani, talking about intense or frequent headaches, mentions, "Yes, and this could be a symptom of an underlying health condition. While they may not always be serious, this can be a sign of something more concerning going on in your body. For example, migraines can cause severe complications together. Cluster headaches are intense and generally arise in clusters over a period. But headaches also can be a symptom of a brain bleed or other critical conditions. Take note if you abruptly experience the worst headache of your life, especially if it comes suddenly and is accompanied by other signs and symptoms like sudden numbness or paralysis of your face, arm, or leg.

NEWS

How Taking A Hot Shower Can Boost Your Health



Taking a hot shower can offer several health benefits, both physical and mental. Incorporating hot showers into your routine can be beneficial in various ways. Keep reading as we share the many benefits of taking a hot shower.

1. Muscle relaxation

Hot water helps to relax tense muscles by increasing blood flow to the muscles and promoting their flexibility. This can alleviate muscle soreness and stiffness.

2. Improved circulation

The heat from a hot shower dilates blood vessels, improving circulation throughout the body. This can help deliver oxygen and nutrients more efficiently to tissues and organs, promoting overall health.

3. Pain relief

Hot showers can provide relief from various types of pain, including joint pain, arthritis, and menstrual cramps. The heat helps to soothe pain receptors and reduce discomfort.

4. Stress reduction

The warmth of a hot shower can have a calming effect on the body and mind, reducing stress and anxiety. It promotes the release of endorphins, which are natural mood-boosting hormones.

5. Detoxification

Sweating induced by hot water helps to flush out toxins from the body through the pores of the skin. This can aid in detoxification and promote healthier skin.

6. Improved sleep

Taking a hot shower before bedtime can promote relaxation and help to improve sleep quality. The drop in body temperature after the shower can signal to the body that it's time to rest.

7. Respiratory relief

The steam from a hot shower can help to clear nasal passages and relieve congestion associated with colds, allergies, or sinus infections. It can also soothe irritated throat tissues.

8. Skin cleansing

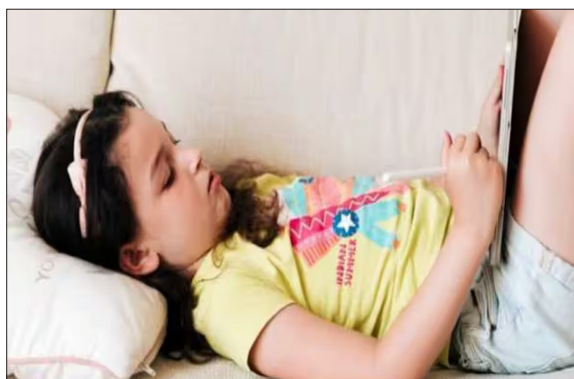
Hot water opens up pores and helps to cleanse the skin of dirt, oil, and bacteria more effectively. This can prevent acne and other skin conditions and promote a clearer complexion.

9. Easing tension headaches

The combination of heat and relaxation from a hot shower can help to alleviate tension headaches by reducing muscle tension in the neck and shoulders.

Sedentariness In Childhood Can Accelerate Premature Vascular Damage: Study

According to a new study, increased sedentary time beginning in childhood is related to deteriorating arterial stiffness, a surrogate for premature vascular damage. However, light physical activity may help to minimise the risk. The research was undertaken in partnership with Oxford University, the Universities of Bristol and Exeter, and the University of Eastern Finland, and the findings were published in Acta Physiologica. A prior study using the same data found that between childhood and young adulthood, sedentary time increased from around 6 to 9 hours per day, increasing the risk of fat obesity, dyslipidaemia, inflammation, and an enlarged heart. The researchers also identified arterial stiffness as a novel risk factor for childhood and teenage obesity, insulin resistance, hypertension, metabolic syndrome, and early heart ailments. Aging also worsens arterial stiffness. Adult studies suggest that high arterial



stiffness as opposed to natural stiffening increases the risk of premature death by 47%. So far it has remained unclear if sedentariness increases arterial stiffness independent of aging and known cardiometabolic risk factors. Video Player is loading. Light physical activity (LPA) is now emerging as an effective approach to reversing the deleterious effect of childhood sedentariness. However, whether long-term exposure to LPA from childhood reduces arterial stiffness has not been examined. This is because only a few studies have repeatedly measured arterial stiffness on a large scale in healthy young

populations. The current study is the largest and the longest follow-up accelerometer-measured movement behaviour and arterial stiffness study in the world using the University of Bristol's Children of the 90s data. The study included 1339 children followed up from 11 to 24 years of age. They wore accelerometer devices on their waist at ages 11, 15, and 24 years for 4-7 days and had arterial stiffness measurements at ages 17 and 24 years. Their fasting blood samples were repeatedly measured for glucose, insulin, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, triglyceride, and

high-sensitivity C-reactive protein. Blood pressure, heart rate, smoking status, socio-economic status, and family history of cardiovascular disease were controlled for in the analyses.

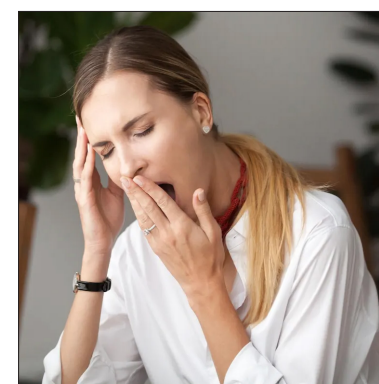
Arterial stiffness is determined by carotid-femoral pulse wave velocity. During the 13-year follow-up, increased sedentary time from 6 to 9 hours per day accelerated this velocity by 10 per cent indicating increased stiffness, and one in a thousand adolescents was estimated to have severe vascular damage. On the other hand, engaging in LPA of at least 3 hours per day reversed arterial stiffness and vascular damage. Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) did not reduce arterial stiffness, but slightly increased it, due to the physiological vascular wall adaptation caused by an increase in muscle mass. However, the MVPA-induced increase in arterial stiffness was at least three times less than that caused by sedentary time.

Feeling The 'Blues' At Work? 5 Tips To Increase Productivity And Motivation

Employee happiness and well-being are important elements of a productive and happy work environment. The office atmosphere has a big impact on how happy and productive people are overall, but there are other elements at play as well. If you want to improve productivity and create a more positive work environment in your business, try using these four aspects. Establishing a creative and exciting workplace culture is essential to increasing employee happiness and productivity. Dr Reema Gupta, Consultant, Clinical Psychology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Shalimar Bagh explains, "Workplace stress can significantly contribute to the increasing prevalence of mental stress, including conditions like anxiety and depression, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Several factors within the work environment that can lead to mental stress include excessive workloads, tight deadlines, long working hours, job insecurity, little control over their work or decision-making processes, and poor Work-Life Balance. These factors can lead to emotional strain, negatively affecting mental well-being."

Tips to Mangle Stress At Work

In the pursuit of productivity and happiness at work, incorporating



five key elements can significantly impact your workplace environment. According to Anuj Saxena, Co-Founder & Director at Skootr Global Private Limited, these elements include natural light, greenery, ergonomic furniture, personalization, and collaborative spaces. Here are some ways to avoid the blues at work and better your mental health by Mr Anuj:

1. Make a creative and exciting work culture

To improve communication and foster a sense of unity, hold frequent team-building exercises and gatherings. Add playful aspects to the office, such as gaming sections, themed décor, or motivational sayings, to make it feel upbeat and engaging. Setting these factors as your top priorities can help you create a work environment that supports your

employees' general happiness and well-being in addition to increasing productivity.

2. Facilitate a comfortable working environment

For increased productivity and happier employees, a comfortable workplace is essential. Reducing stress and promoting physical well-being are achieved by incorporating comfortable furniture, good lighting, and a well-organized layout. Having access to natural light and vegetation creates a pleasant ambience that improves concentration and mood.

3. Including All Five Senses

Including the five senses in your workplace creates a more holistic and engaging environment that increases employee productivity.

Sight: Create a visually stimulating environment by utilising bright colours and natural light.

Sound: To improve focus and lower tension, incorporate relaxing background music.

Touch: To promote tactile comfort, use textured surfaces and ergonomic furniture.

Taste: To foster a good culinary experience, provide nutritious snacks.

Smell: Add calming odours to your environment, such as plants or light perfumes, to improve your mood and focus.

Sunrisers trump Mumbai in record six-hitting carnage

SUNRISERS MADE 277, THE HIGHEST EVER TOTAL IN IPL HISTORY, AND MUMBAI, JUST AS INCREDIBLY, FELL ONLY 31 SHORT

MUMBAI: Sixes were being hit for fun. Runs were flowing at a breakneck pace. You wouldn't be blamed for thinking you were watching a video game. The carnage in Hyderabad resulted in an 11-year-old IPL record falling, RCB's seemingly insurmountable total of 263 from 2013 falling by the wayside thanks to a breathtaking, collective show from the Sunrisers Hyderabad batters. They notched up the highest total in the 16-year history of the IPL - 277 for 3 - but then, just as incredibly, Mumbai Indians almost paid them back with the same coin, their batters coming out with a nothing-to-lose attitude. Eventually, they ran out of steam and finished on 246 for 5, the highest IPL total in a losing cause.

Travis Head set the pace on the night, striking an 18-ball half-century, the fastest for SRH in the IPL. His record lasted roughly four overs, Abhishek Sharma slamming a 16-ball fifty to relegate him to No. 2. An hour after that, Heinrich Klaasen cut loose to seemingly bat MI out of the contest. But the sixes kept rolling off the Mumbai bats too, helping them keep up with the asking rate for most of the chase, eventually falling only 31 short.

Never were more runs scored in a men's T20 match (523). Never were most sixes hit in a men's T20 (38). At the end of the close to four-hour six-fest, only two bowlers returned with an economy rate of under ten an over.

Head, in for Marco Jansen, continued from where he had left off on his previous tour of India. He was off the mark with a four off IPL debutant Kwena Maphaka, the 17-year-old who played for South Africa at the Under-19 World Cup earlier this year. Head was given a



life when Tim David dropped him at mid-off off Hardik Pandya's first ball. But there was no looking back from there.

Head smacked two fours and two sixes in a 22-run Maphaka over before hitting two fours and a six off Gerald Coetzee in an over that went for 23 to end the powerplay. Head had scored 59 of the 81 SRH made in the first six overs. In his next over, though, Coetzee bowled a short and wide one, which the batter could only carve to deep backward point.

Head's inclusion in the XI meant Abhishek had to move down the order, and he walked in at No. 3 after Mayank Agarwal fell in the fifth over. Abhishek got going with a pull off Coetzee and then meted out a special treatment to the leg-spin Piyush Chawla, hitting him for three sixes in an over. That

helped SRH notch up their 100 in just seven overs, their second-fastest in the IPL.

Abhishek also tore into Maphaka's third over, hitting him for a sequence of 4, 6, 6, 4 to complete his fifty and snatch the record from Head. The key was how early he picked the length of the bowlers. He hit seven sixes in his 23-ball stay for 63 runs, before heaving a half-tracker that Chawla fired in seam-up at 112.8kph straight to deep midwicket.

With nine overs to go and two right-hand batters in the middle, Hardik Pandya sensed an opportunity to get left-arm spinner Shams Mulani in the game. That played into the hands of Klaasen, though, who is a spin-basher. In T20s since January 2022, no batter who has faced at least 500 balls had a higher strike rate against spin

than Klaasen's 174.38 before the start of the game.

True to form, he smacked Mulani over long-off to get his rhythm going. Klaasen then hit a six each off Hardik and Jasprit Bumrah as SRH crossed 200 in the 15th over. Aiden Markram, at the other end, hit a six and a four but was happy to give the strike to his South Africa team-mate. Klaasen brought up his fifty off 22 balls, which was only the third quickest on the night.

Klaasen hit two successive sixes in the last over bowled by Mulani to take Sunrisers past RCB's record score. SRH added 63 in the last four overs to post the fourth-highest total in all men's T20s.

Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan kicked off Mumbai's reply in fine fashion. Rohit muscled Bhuvneshwar Kumar down the ground before hitting Jaydev Unadkat - brought in for T Natarajan, who had a niggly - for back-to-back sixes. Kishan meanwhile took 23 off Bhuvneshwar's second over, hitting him for a four and three sixes. Kishan then slogged Shahbaz Ahmed to deep midwicket, but Rohit kept going.

He whipped Pat Cummins' second ball over midwicket before miscuing a pull to fall for 26 off just 12. Only twice in the IPL has Rohit scored more - 37 in April 2015 vs RCB, and 27 in May 2015 vs Chennai Super Kings - off the first 12 balls he faced.

Naman Dhir and Tilak Varma also kept Mumbai abreast with the required rate. They found boundaries regularly, with Tilak leading the charge, and added 84 off 37 for the third wicket. But once they fell within 21 balls of each other, MI lost momentum. David managed to hit a few into the stands, but by then it was too late.

Liam Dawson: 'I don't want to be running drinks for England at my age'



SYDNEY: Liam Dawson has conceded that his ambitions as a Test cricketer are at an end after missing England's tour of India this winter, saying that he was happy with his decision to prioritise commitments in overseas T20 leagues rather than potentially wind up running the drinks again as an unused squad member.

Dawson, who won the last of his three Test caps in 2017, was the leading English spinner in last year's County Championship, taking 49 wickets at 20.00 - in addition to scoring 840 runs - but was not included in the group to take on India. He had previously indicated that he would have to weigh up whether to accept an England call, having agreed a lucrative contract to play for Sunrisers Eastern Cape in the SA20, a tournament that clashed directly with the start of the Test tour, and in which he ended up lifting the trophy.

England instead selected the uncapped pair of Tom Hartley and Shoaib Bashir alongside Rehan Ahmed, with one Test appearance to his name, and the experienced Jack Leach. Hartley went on to be England's leading wicket-taker on tour, with 22 at 36.13, while Bashir claimed the first two five-

wicket hauls of his first-class career to finish with 17 at 33.35. Even with Leach ruled out due to injury after the first Test, there was no move to call up a replacement, with England eventually slumping to a 4-1 series defeat.

Speaking at Hampshire's media day ahead of the start of the County Championship season, Dawson said that there had been "a few conversations" with the selectors over the winter but that, at the age of 34, he felt his international career was likely behind him.

Asked if he was still keen to play Test cricket, he told ESPNcricinfo: "Probably not now, no. Being honest, there's a few things that have happened over the last year. For me, probably Test cricket now is completely off the radar. But it is what it is, I'm 34 and I want to enjoy my cricket and try to win trophies towards the end of my career."

"Knowing that going to South Africa, knowing I was going to play there - obviously with the [Sunrisers] coach, Adi Birrell, here at Hampshire, I knew I was going to play, which was nice. It's not something I want to be doing, running drinks at my age anymore. I was really happy with what I chose this winter and it went well."

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