

Smith to Hardik on crowd abuse: 'Block it out, it's all irrelevant'

Pj12

SVEEP: Orientation programme for NCC Cadets & NSS Volunteers held at GGHSS Nishat

Pj3



# Ten Killed As Vehicle Plunges Into Gorge On Ramban Highway

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 29: At least ten passengers died when a passenger taxi they were travelling in skidded off and plunged into a deep gorge on Friday morning in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Police said the passenger taxi on its way from Jammu to Srinagar met with an accident and fell into around 800-foot deep gorge near Battery Chashma area of the district.

"A passenger taxi rolled down a deep gorge on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway near Battery Chashma in Ramban area.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



## PM Modi Announces Ex-Gratia For NOKs Of Deceased

Rs 50,000 To Injured In Ramban Accident



JAMMU, MAR 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday conveyed his condolences and expressed sorrow regarding the accident in Ramban, Jammu and Kashmir. He extended sympathies to the bereaved

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## LG Manoj Sinha Expresses Grief Over Loss Of Lives In Ramban Accident



JAMMU, MAR 29: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed shock and grief over the loss of 10 lives after a car fell into a gorge in Ramban district.

Ten people were killed after a sports utility vehicle (SUV) skidded off the Jammu-Srinagar national highway and fell into a gorge in Ramban in the early hours of Friday, officials said. The vehicle, a Chevrolet Tavera,

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## President Murmu Condoles Loss Of Lives In Ramban Accident

NEW DELHI, MAR 29: President Droupadi Murmu mourned the loss

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Dr. Farooq, Omar Abdullah Grieved Over Loss Of Lives In Ramban Mishap

SRINAGAR MAR 29: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference

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## Altaf Bukhari, Sajad Lone Express Grief Over Ramban Road Accident

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: The Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari on Friday expressed shock and grief over the loss of lives in a road accident on

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### NEWS BRIEF

#### Radio Isotopes To Remain Temporarily Suspended At SKIMS, Soura: MS

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: Authorities in Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura, said that Radioisotopes will remain temporarily suspended in the first week of April.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Medical Superintendent, SKIMS Soura, Dr Farooq Jan has requested the public to cooperate as radio isotope based scans cannot be undertaken during this period.

"The general public is informed that there will be no supply of iodine -131 (Radio Isotopes) for the 1st week of

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

#### Rains Inundate Sanat Nagar, Locals Suffer

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: The moderate rainfall in Srinagar has left Sanat Nagar inundated with water, causing inconvenience to the residents and commuters alike.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the rains that continued since yesterday, submerged several streets, exacerbating the longstanding drainage issues in the area.

Local residents voiced their frustration and expressed their concerns. "Every time it rains, our locality turns into a virtual pool. It's becoming increasingly difficult to navigate through the waterlogged streets," said Zahoor, a local.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

#### Fruit Growers, Buyers Suffer Losses Due To Low Apple Demand

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: The fruit growers and buyers in Kashmir are deeply concerned, saying they face losses due to the low demand for apples.

Speaking with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), growers and buyers expressed their dismay over the current situation, saying there has been a drastic decrease in apple prices compared to the rates during the main apple season in October-November 2023.

Mohamad Ashraf, a fruit grower from Shopian, said he was offered Rs 1,200 per apple box in November last year but opted to store them in a

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Anger Brews After The Proposed Railway Line Alignment Marking In Baramulla College

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: Anger is brewing in north Kashmir's Baramulla town, a day after the proposed railway line alignment was marked in one of the oldest college grounds.

The proposed Baramulla-Uri railway line will pass through

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



## No One Can Stop Lotus To Bloom In Every House Of J&K: Chugh

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: BJP nation-



al general secretary and party incharge for J&K, Tarun Chugh Thursday welcomed the announcement of Union Home Minister Amit Shah that the Centre was prepared to revoke the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in a phased manner and said that the Opposition leaders like Abdullahs and Muftits should stop trying to politicise it to build a fake narrative.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Lok Sabha Polls More Than 79,000 Violations Reported So Far Through C-Vigil App, Says EC

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAR 29: The Election Commission (EC) on Friday said its C-Vigil mobile application has become an effective tool in the hands of people for flagging poll code violations and since the announcement of the Lok Sabha

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Infiltration Chances Along LoC Increase When There Is Important Event Like Polls But Security Forces Alert: BSF IG

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: Chances of infiltration attempts from across the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir increase as the snow melts and when there is an important event like elections, but security forces are alert and capable enough to foil any such bid, a senior BSF official said here on Friday.

"The BSF is deputised with the Army

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



## 10 Persons On Board In 2 Vehicles Evacuated Safely After Avalanche Hits Hung, Ganderbal

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, MAR 29: At least ten persons onboard in two vehicles have been evacuated safely after an avalanche struck Hung area of Sonamarg in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. An official said that a snow avalanche struck Hung area this afternoon and two vehicles got buried under it in which ten persons were onboard.

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## Widespread Rains Lash Kashmir, More In Offing: MeT

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: Jammu and Kashmir recorded widespread overnight rains, the Meteorological Centre Srinagar said on Friday.

The MeT predicted fairly widespread light to moderate rain and

snow over Jammu and Kashmir during the next 48 hours.

Kashmir Plains, including Srinagar, were lashed by intermittent light to moderate rains during the past 24 hours, resulting in a considerable drop in temperature.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



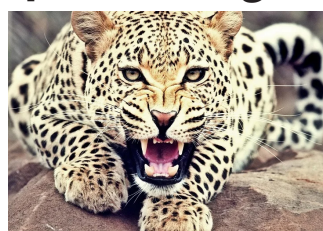
## Shoot-At-Sight Order Issued For 'Man-Eater' Leopard In Budgam

HT News Network

BUDGAM, MAR 29: Following another fatal attack on a minor child in the Khansahib area of central Kashmir's Budgam district, the Wildlife Department issued shoot-at-sight orders on Friday to eliminate the "man-eater" leopard.

The Khansahib area has been gripped with fear and anguish after a series of leopard attacks claimed the lives of two minor girls and left a minor boy injured within a span of 17 days.

Toiba Mushtaq, 7, daughter of Mushtaq Ahmad, was taken from the lawns of her home



during the evening hours, and her body was later discovered in nearby bushes. Notably, a 9-year-old girl was fatally attacked, while a minor boy sustained injuries in a separate incident involving a leopard in the neighbouring village of Samsan within the past 17 days.

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## Udhampur-Doda Lok Sabha Seat RO Rejects Papers Of Three Covering Candidates

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 29: After the scrutiny of nomination papers of candidates for Udhampur-Doda Lok Sabha seat, papers of three covering candidates of different parties were rejected by the returning officer on this parliamentary seat.

These include covering candidates of Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), Congress and Bahujan Samaj Party.

According to news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a total

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## Basohli Deliberately Neglected By Its Congress Representatives: Dr Jitendra

HT News Network

BASOHLI, MAR 29: Union Minister and BJP Candidate for Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency Dr Jitendra Singh said here today that Basohli had been deliberately neglected by its Congress representatives of the past, including its MLAs and MPs.

Addressing a series of road side meetings and public rallies enroute from Kathua and culminating in Basohli, Dr Jitendra Singh said, Congress MLAs and MPs elected by the people of Basohli had occupied Ministerial berths for years together but instead of caring for their people, they followed the Kashmir-centric appease-



ment policy of their masters and thus themselves became a party to regional discrimination against the very constituency which had elected them.

Instead of being benefited by the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02





Lok Sabha Elections 2024

SVEEP: Orientation programme for NCC Cadets & NSS Volunteers held at GGHSS Nishat

Programme marks a significant step towards fostering an inclusive and accessible voting environment for all citizens: DEO Srinagar

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: On the directions of the District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, an orientation programme aimed at empowering NCC Cadets and NSS Volunteers was successfully conducted at Government Girls Higher Secondary School (GGHSS) Nishat here today.

Participation (SVEEP) campaign. During this impactful program, both NSS volunteers and NCC cadets were given comprehensive training on how to assist elderly and physically challenged voters from their family or community in reaching polling booths and casting their votes without any difficulties.



especially those who face physical challenges or belong to older age groups.

He added that, as the orientation programmes continue to be conducted in schools and educational institutions across the district, it is expected that a greater awareness regarding the significance of voting will be instilled in the minds of the youth, further strengthening the democratic fabric of the nation.

He added that we are organizing various programs in educational institutions to raise awareness among the general public and students about the paramount importance of voting in a vibrant democracy.

Amar Singh College organizes Declaration Event

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: The Electoral Literacy Club (ELC) at Amar Singh College Friday organized a declamation event centred around the theme 'Elector as an Ideal Citizen of the Country.'

The event aimed to promote electoral literacy among students and faculty members, emphasizing the importance of active participation in the democratic process. The students participated in this declamation event.

The event commenced with an insightful address by Principal, Prof. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, who underscored the significance of exercising the right to vote as a fundamental duty of every citizen. He



emphasized that by participating in elections, individuals contribute directly to the functioning of democracy, thereby shaping the future of the nation. The event is undertaken on the directions of Election Commission of India and District Election Officer Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat.

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Rather, Convenor of the Electoral Literacy Club, provided an overview of the club's various activities and highlighted the responsibility of ELC members in fostering voter participation both within the campus and beyond.

Prof. Rather emphasized the role of students and faculty members in promoting awareness about electoral processes and encouraging fellow citizens to exercise their franchise.

The event witnessed active participation from a significant number of students and faculty members, demonstrating a keen interest in the subject matter. The diverse audience engaged in discussions and expressed their viewpoints on the theme, reflecting a deep-seated commitment to democratic values.

The declamation event was adjudicated by panel comprising Prof. Isaq Ahmad, Dr. Zubair Nazeer, Prof. Tawheed Yousuf Dadoo, and Prof. Irfan Yousuf.

Students namely Maliha of 1st semester bagged the 1st position, Muskan Javid of 2nd semester was declared runner-up and Imroz Rashid and Salika of 3rd semester got the 3rd position in the Declamation Contest.

J&K Bank lights up 1000 households with solar solutions

Reaches out to ST, other priority households in Ganderbal upper reaches under CSR

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: Extending eco-friendly lighting solutions to scheduled tribe (ST) community of district Ganderbal under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plan, J&K Bank today distributed solar lanterns among one thousand households in collaboration with MOOL Sustainability Research and Training Centre (MSRTC) - a local NGO that works on different developmental projects for building integrative and regenerative communities through capacity building and creative solutions.

one solar lantern to each of the family belonging to the ST Community and other marginal sections at a local school in Lar, Ganderbal in presence of senior bank officials and representatives from MSRTC.

After receiving the lanterns, the beneficiaries extended their heartfelt gratitude to the Bank for providing them an eco-friendly and convenient means of lighting their homes. "These lanterns mean a lot to us and our children

as we can now carry on our lives happily in case of power failure. For this we thank both the organisations and pray for their success", some of the beneficiaries said.

Speaking on the occasion, Syed Rais Maqbool said, "As a responsible financial institution, we encourage CSR interventions that play a crucial role in supporting the under-privileged sections of our society. And we see provision of these solar lanterns to the ST community not merely as act of

philanthropy but an investment in a more inclusive society geared towards an eco-friendly future."

"For such empowering initiatives not only bring ease in the living conditions of these economically weaker sections of the society but contributes to the overall progress and well-being of the inhabitants of this place", he added. "The idea of this project is to engage with the local communities especially those from economically weaker sections and to encourage them to adapt the sustainable and eco-friendly solutions for their day to day problems through collaboration with cred-

ible NGOs like MSRTC", he stated.. Notably, under the project a few villages around Chountwalar belt in the upper reaches of Lar Tehsil of Ganderbal district have been adopted for providing them an eco-friendly means of lighting. With a population comprising of about one thousand families, the subgroup of Scheduled Tribe constitutes about 46% of the population of these villages that mainly engages in agriculture, dairy/poultry & livestock farming, horticulture, bee-keeping etc. The project has facilitated eco-friendly lighting to the community in the region.

Jobs, livelihood, land and property rights will be protected: Lal Singh

JAMMU, MAR 29: Former Member Parliament and Ex Minister Choudhary Lal Singh on Friday urged upon the people to vote for him en masse and promised that the loss which they suffered in the last ten years which include loss of jobs, land, property and even the livelihood of the common masses, shall be restored.

Singh conducted his canvassing for the Parliamentary Election and started a bike and car rally from Challog that culminated at Bani in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Singh addressing the gathering reiterated its stand of fighting for the interest of the Dogra race and pledged to expose all those forces inimical to the growth of the Dogras.

"I am contesting elections for the jobs of the people of my area and state and I am struggling for the protection of the Dogra posterity and will never be demoralized," said Singh adding that the local issues of the people of his constituency will remain his top priority.

He stated that the water pipe scam of PHE will be investigated fairly and if the Congress is voted to power, all the culprits will be behind the bars.

He also took up the issue of long power cuts in the area and said the present MP does not even know the issues of the Bani where long and long power cuts are observed and what to talk of the other issues.

He called upon all his party workers and supporters to be always proactive and take his vision to every nook and corner and make every worker well versed with the malafide agenda of the present government. (UNI)

روزنامہ ایشین میل کے مدیر اعلیٰ کے والد بزرگوار کا انتقال

اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی اتوار 31 مارچ کو آبائی علاقہ پانڈ پھر میں انجام دی جائے گی

سرنگرن روزنامہ ایشین میل کے مدیر اعلیٰ رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر پانڈ پھر میں جمعرات کو فاتحہ خوانی کی گئی۔ انتقال پر دلگاہا ایشیا سرگرمی کے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی اتوار کو آبائی مقبرہ واقع نوسف پانڈ پھر ایک جامع مسجد شریف پر منعقد کی جائے گی جبکہ تعزیت پری کاسلہ دن بھر جاری رہے گا۔ آبائی مقبرہ کے سربراہ سید محمد الطاف بخاری، سینئر نائب صدر غلام حسن میر، نائب صدر ظفر اقبال منہاس، نائب صدر عثمان مجید اور میڈیا ایڈیٹر فاروق ادرانی نے روزنامہ ایشین میل کے ایڈیٹر رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر اہل خانہ کے ہونے کو مبارکبادیں اور تعزیتوں کے ساتھ ساتھ رشید راہل کے پارٹی کی جانب سے جاری کئے گئے ایک بیان میں کہا گیا ہے کہ "سید محمد الطاف بخاری، غلام حسن میر، ظفر اقبال منہاس اور فاروق ادرانی نے سینئر صحافی اور روزنامہ ایشین میل کے ایڈیٹر رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر تعزیتوں کا اظہار کیا ہے۔ پارٹی قائدین نے غم غمی اس گھڑی میں سوگوار کئے کے ساتھ اہل خانہ کو تعزیتیں بھیجیں۔ سوگواروں کے لئے صبر جمیل اور مرحوم کے اہل خانہ کو ہمت دینے کے لئے دعا ہے۔"

پانڈ پھر میں ان کے ساتھ اہل خانہ بھی گیا۔ انہوں نے اس موقع پر مرحوم کے اہل خانہ کو ہمت دینے کے لئے دعا کی اور فرمایا کہ اللہ تعالیٰ ان کے لئے اجر و ثواب لکھے۔ معروف ٹی وی اینکر ایڈیٹر سید عزیز گل نے پانڈ پھر میں رشید راہل کے انتقال پر دلگاہا ایشیا سرگرمی کے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی میں شرکت کی اور کہا کہ رشید راہل ایک بہترین صحافی اور جرنلسٹ تھے۔ ان کے انتقال پر ہمیں بہت دکھ ہے۔ ان کے انتقال پر پانڈ پھر میں جمعرات کو اجتماع کی گئی اور رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر دلگاہا ایشیا سرگرمی کے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی کی گئی۔ رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر پانڈ پھر میں جمعرات کو اجتماع کی گئی اور رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر دلگاہا ایشیا سرگرمی کے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی کی گئی۔ رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر پانڈ پھر میں جمعرات کو اجتماع کی گئی اور رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر دلگاہا ایشیا سرگرمی کے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی کی گئی۔

رشید راہل کے انتقال پر پانڈ پھر میں جمعرات کو اجتماع کی گئی اور رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر دلگاہا ایشیا سرگرمی کے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی کی گئی۔ رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر پانڈ پھر میں جمعرات کو اجتماع کی گئی اور رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر دلگاہا ایشیا سرگرمی کے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی کی گئی۔ رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر پانڈ پھر میں جمعرات کو اجتماع کی گئی اور رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر دلگاہا ایشیا سرگرمی کے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی کی گئی۔ رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر پانڈ پھر میں جمعرات کو اجتماع کی گئی اور رشید راہل کے والد ماجد غلام احمد صاحب کے انتقال پر دلگاہا ایشیا سرگرمی کے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی کی گئی۔

Narkura, adjoining areas complain of unsafe drinking water amid Ramadhan, seek authorities intervention

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: Residents of several localities in central Kashmir's Budgam district on Thursday complained of unsafe drinking water in the area, and appealed authorities of Jal Shakti Department to intervene into the matter.



Localities which include Narkura, Ompora, Laloo, Gangbug and adjoining areas told KNS that the local population is facing immense hardships due to the absence of pure drinking water in the area. They said the bad and unsafe quality of drinking water supply in the respective areas have led water-

The unresolved matter has affected life of elders and children badly," a local of Narkura told KNS. He said the contaminated water supply amid the holy month of Ramadhan led hardships manifold. "Normally we used to fetch water from nearby areas in during water crisis days, but when adjoining areas also are affected and are getting unsafe water supply, what locals can do at this point of time. Most of the household purchase water bottles from the market to break their fast during Ramadhan. If authorities do not take cognizance of the matter, it will

affect the health of big chunk of population," he said. Locals appealed to officials of Jal Shakti Department to intervene into the matter and address the genuine concern of the local population. An official of Jal Shakti Department while speaking to Kashmir News Service (KNS) said that the matter has been communicated to higher ups and will be looked into soon. "We have reviewed the situation and informed the higher officials of Jal Shakti Department. Hope the matter will be look soon," the official said.

# Lok Sabha Elections 2024: Election Office Kulgam organizes day-long Orientation programme for NCC/ NSS & Campus Ambassadors

Farooq Rather

KULGAM, MARCH 29: The District Election Office Kulgam today conducted a one-day orientation programme at the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat, here for NCC/ NSS and campus ambassadors from various Colleges and Higher Secondary Schools of the district regarding conduct of election.

District Level Master trainer, Showkat Ahmad Wani and ALMT, Mushtaq Ahmad briefed the students in detail about the importance of

electoral participation of all, especially the young generation. Student Volunteers were also familiarized regarding various processes of conduct of elections. The young participants were enthusiastic and posed many questions which were answered by the DLMT and ALMT to their satisfaction. Dy DEO Kulgam, Bilal Ahmad Kamgar in his address welcomed the young volunteers and exhorted upon them to become ambassadors for enrollment of all eligible voters in the electoral list and take the message of greater participation for stronger



democracy to the community. The District Election Office Kulgam today conducted a one-day orientation programme at the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat, here for NCC/ NSS and campus ambassadors from various Colleges and Higher Secondary Schools of the district regarding conduct of election. District Level Master trainer, Showkat Ahmad Wani and ALMT, Mushtaq Ahmad briefed the students in detail about the importance of electoral participation of all, especially the young generation. Student Volunteers were also

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## Fire Safety Training held at IUST Nursing College

HT News Network

Awantipora, March 29: Alamdar Memorial College of Nursing and Medical Technology, Islamic University of Science and Technology in collaboration with Fire and Emergency Services Command Budgam, hosted a comprehensive fire safety awareness training program and mock drill at its Chair Sharief College campus today. The event was aimed to educate students and staff on fire prevention, protection, and safety measures.

Led by expert trainers, the program included demonstrations on handling various fire hazards, such as gas cylinders, liquid fuels, and short circuits. Attendees also learned proper fire extinguisher usage for emergency situations. The program also featured interactive sessions and return demonstrations, fostering a safer environment for all.

### General Public

I Hadiya d/o Abid Hussain bhat R/o Nati pora Srinagar would like to inform the general public that in my school records my mother's name is mentioned Mubeena instead of Mudassir Maqbool. Now I want to change Mubeena in the school records with Mudassir Maqbool. If anybody have any objection kindly report Fayaz education Institute Naik bagh Nowgam within seven days after this no objection will be entertained.

Sd/- Hadiya d/o Abid Hussain bhat Ro Nati pora Srinagar

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This office is in receipt of representation from GULSHANA BEGUM W/O BASHIR AHMAD SHAH R/O KACHWA MUQAM Tehsil Wagoora District Baramulla for issuance of Birth Certificate in favour of my Son namely HANAAN BASHIR S/O BASHIR AHMAD SHAH R/O KACHWA MUQAM D.O.B as per documents is 09/08/2020 & In this connection if anyone have any objection in event has been to be occurred at SDH kreeri registration of birth certificate shall present his/ her claim to this office or Tehsildar Kreeri/ Wagoora / BDO office Wagoora within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS KREERI

### Public Notice

I Hadiya D/o Abid Hussain Bhat R/o Nati pora Srinagar would like to inform the general public that in my school records my mother's name is mentioned Mubeena instead of Mudassir Maqbool. Now I want to change Mubeena in the school records with Mudassir Maqbool. If anybody have any objection kindly report Fayaz education Institute Naik bagh Nowgam within seven days after this no objection will be entertained.

Name - Hadiya D/o Abid Hussain bhat R/o Natipora Srinagar

### Public Notice

I have changed my name from (old name). RIZWAN NAYEEM. to (New name) RIZWAN NAYEEM ITOO. In future I will be known as (New name). RIZWAN NAYEEM ITOO. If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

Name:-Rizwan Nayeem Itoo S/o Nayeem Hussian Itoo Passport No:-L-1917515

## Lok Sabha Elections 2024: Voters Awareness program under SVEEP held at Langate

Dr Abdul Qayoom

Kupwara, March, 29: Mega Voters Awareness programs under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative was organized today at BHSS MH Pora Langate.

The awareness program was aimed at 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 program was attended by Dy. CEO Kupwara, Manzoor Ahmad Bhat, Dy.



SP, Principal, ZEO Mawar and Langate, District Cultural Coordinator, Cluster heads, Teachers and students from different schools, besides, officials

from various departments, first time voters, community leaders, local Artists and general public also participated in the awareness program. On the occa-

sion, the school children and the artists presented different colourful programmes designed to educate and inspire active participation in the democratic process.

Pledge taking ceremony under SVEEP was also held where participants took the pledge to vote enthusiastically in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Meanwhile, experts and various other speakers spoke and highlighted the significance of electoral literacy in empowering citizens and urged everyone, especially first-time voters, to exercise their franchise responsibly in the upcoming elections.

## Police distributes school kits among students of different Schools in Awantipora

HT News Network

Awantipora March 29: As a part of Civic Action Programme, Police have distributed school kits among 100 needy students of Subdivision Tral, Awantipora.

The school kits which include shoes, uppers and shirts were distributed among 100 needy students at Government Upper Primary Schools of Dodkulan, Nagpathri, Zisbal, Satoora, Nagbal, Gulshanpora, Shojan, Darganiegund, Hajinad & Primary School Narigistan. On the occasion, SDPO Tral Shri Suhail Reshi & DySPDAR Shri Abdul Gafoor and other officers were present.

Interacting with the students the officers present on the occasion said that we believe that education is the key to empowering students and enabling them to live with dignity, self-respect, and confidence. The officers also assured them of all possible support in their studies and also take part in extra-curricular activities.

Community members especially parents of the students expressed their gratitude for the support provided by the Police. Interacting with the students the officers present on the occasion said that we believe that education is the key to empowering students and enabling them to live with dignity, self-respect, and confidence. The officers also assured them of all possible support in their studies and also take part in extra-curricular activities.

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عنوان درخواست: بشیر احمد آہنگر ولد غلام محمد آہنگر پسر مرحوم رحیمی بیگم

زویہ غلام محمد آہنگر سائنس لاری پور پھگام نسبت اجرائی لیگل بیرواٹ جاہز سرٹیفکٹ

**اشتہار بمراد آگاہی**

ماملہ مندرجہ صدر میں درخواست سال کی ماں رحیمی بیگم زویہ غلام محمد آہنگر سائنس لاری پور پھگام مودہ 06/02/2024 کو فوت ہو چکی ہے اس نسبت سال خواہاں ہے کہ اس کے حق میں لیگل بیرواٹ سرٹیفکٹ اجراء کی جاہز ہو سہر پورٹ پٹواری حلقہ توتنی کمنہ بریل

- 1... بشیر احمد آہنگر ولد غلام محمد آہنگر 45 سال پسر مزدوری
- 2... بشیر احمد ولد غلام محمد آہنگر 39 سال مزدوری
- 3... افروز احمد ولد غلام محمد آہنگر 36 سال پسر
- 4... حمید بیگم دختر غلام محمد آہنگر 43 سال گھر بلوگام
- 5... حفیظہ دختر غلام محمد آہنگر 41 سال گھر بلوگام
- 6... فنی بان دختر غلام محمد آہنگر 35 سال گھر بلوگام

اس بلور کمنہ (6) افراد پیشل سے اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کمنہ نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سرٹیفکٹ اجراء کرنے مہی اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عور یا اعتراض ہو وہ اپنا عور یا اعتراض ساتھ ساتھ بعد پیش کر کے معاذ کر نے کے بعد کوئی عور یا اعتراض قبول نہیں ہوگا

**نائب تحصیلدار پھگام**

**ازدفتر نائب تحصیلدار کریری**

عنوان درخواست: مجانب جمیلہ بیگم زویہ مرحوم خورشید احمد میر سائنس لوسہ

نسبت اجرائی لیگل بیرواٹ جاہز سرٹیفکٹ

**اشتہار بمراد آگاہی**

ماملہ مندرجہ صدر میں پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی۔ مطابق رپورٹ پٹواری و ڈیپوٹ سرٹیفکٹ خورشید احمد میر ولد علی محمد میر سائنس لوسہ مودہ 21/06/2022 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے مودہ اس پٹواری حلقہ مندرجہ ذیل وارثان جائز چھوڑ گیا رشتہ برادر توتنی

- 1... جمیلہ بیگم زویہ مرحوم 32 سال سرکاری ملازم
- 2... افتخار خورشید پسر 08 سال زیر تعلیم
- 3... علیہ خورشید دختر 06 سال //
- 4... علیہ خورشید دختر 05 سال //
- 5... حاتمہ بیگم زویہ مرحوم علی محمد میر ولدہ 65 سال عمر رسیدہ

اس بلور کمنہ (05) افراد پیشل مطابق رپورٹ پٹواری مندرجہ وارثان جائز کے علاوہ کوئی وارثان جائز نہیں ہے سرٹیفکٹ اجراء کرنے مہی اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عور یا اعتراض ہو وہ اپنا عور یا اعتراض ساتھ ساتھ بعد پیش کر کے معاذ کر نے کے بعد کوئی عور یا اعتراض قبول نہیں ہوگا

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## Lok Sabha Elections 2024

### DEO Rajouri briefs political representatives about MCC

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 29: District Election Officer (DEO), Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat today convened an important meeting with representatives from different political parties to brief them about Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

The objective of the meeting was to underscore the importance of adhering to highest ethical standards outlined in the MCC to be observed by all in Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

The meeting served as a platform to sensitize political parties about the imperative nature of upholding integrity, fairness, and transparency throughout the electoral process. The discussions



held during the meeting underscored the collective commitment of all political stakeholders towards fostering an environment characterized by ethical conduct, accountability, and respect for democratic principles as per ECI guidelines.

The DEO urged all political parties to refrain from criticizing any party based

on unverified facts and cautioned against making personal comments or engaging in caste and communal politics. Furthermore, the DEO also urged all political parties to intimate the venue and time of their meetings and rallies to the police and administration in advance. Additionally, the DEO asked the party representatives that polling

agents should strictly adhere to the guidelines and refrain from entering the polling stations.

The District Election Officer reiterated the pivotal role of political parties in upholding the democratic ethos of the nation and emphasized the need for cooperation and adherence to the guidelines set forth in MCC. He urged all parties to conduct themselves with utmost integrity and responsibility, thereby setting a positive precedent for a free, fair, and peaceful electoral process. The DEO expressed confidence in the cooperation in conduct of political parties to the guidelines outlined, thereby fostering conducive environment for the smooth conduct of the Lok Sabha Elections.

## Lok Sabha Elections 2024

### General, Police Observer interact with AROs, Nodal officers of Kathua district

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, MARCH 29: General Observer, Dheeraj Kumar and Police Observer, Daljeet Singh for General Elections, today held a maiden meeting with Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) and Election Nodal Officers of district Kathua here.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the election preparedness for the upcoming polls scheduled to be held in the constituency on April 19.

During the meeting, Returning Officer for 4-Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency, Dr. Rakesh Minhas (District



Election Officer Kathua), briefed the Observers about the status of election-related processes being followed

in the parliamentary constituency.

The General Observer and Police Observer interacted with AROs and Nodal Officers, sought updates on progress made in election-related duties. They also inquired about the measures being implemented to ensure smooth, fair and transparent election process in the constituency.

The meeting emphasized the importance of efficient coordination among all stakeholders involved in the election process to uphold the integrity of democratic exercise and ensure that voters can exercise their rights freely and without any hindrances.

## Lok Sabha Elections 2024

### SVEEP awareness programme held at Madra-Tut-Touheed Thanamandi

■ HT News Network



THANAMANDI, MARCH 29: An awareness program under the aegis of Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program was today held here at Madra-Tut-Touheed Thanamandi.

Led by Nodal Officer SVEEP Prof. Iqbal Raina, the event was attended by Prof Manzoor Ahmed Dar, Prof. Khalid Rayaz and Mohammad Ayaz Raina, lecturer. The team visited Madrasa-Tut-Touheed Thanamandi to enlighten students and teachers about the importance of voting.

The attendees were provided insights into the election process. The event was organized as part of the SVEEP's door-to-door campaign.

Later, the team engaged with the public at Jamia Masjid Thanamandi, underscoring the significance of adult franchise in democracy and urging maximum participation in the electoral process.

## SVEEP sensitises masses in using their democratic right to shape their future, including gatherings after Friday-Prayer in Banihal area

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, March 29: On the directions of District Election Officer (DEO), Ramban Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, a series of awareness programs were held under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation program (SVEEP) in various institutions and other areas of the District.

Resource Persons and members of the district SVEEP Cell dispersed across key locations and institutions such as Doligam Banihal, Bus Stand Banihal and other adjoining area besides sensitized the gathering after Friday prayer in town Banihal.

Through comprehensive presentations, they elucidated the imperative of inclusive voter participation



in safeguarding democratic principles and fortifying the electoral framework.

The awareness programmes were conducted under the supervision of District Nodal Officer SVEEP, Mohammad Ashfaq

Kanji. The events, conducted in the Sub-division of Banihal, aimed to invigorate citizens' involvement in the electoral process, General election Lok Sabha, 2024 and cultivate a culture of civic responsibility.

The campaign emphasized the pivotal role of strong civic engagement in shaping the democratic landscape. The vibrant participation of youth, alongside members of the public and election personnel, underscored the collective commitment to fostering an informed electorate.

The District Nodal Officer for SVEEP, played a pivotal role in ensuring the seamless execution of the programme. The unwavering dedication of SVEEP to its mission significantly contributed to the success of the initiative. The District Nodal Officer for SVEEP, played a pivotal role in ensuring the seamless execution of the programme. The unwavering dedication of SVEEP to its mission significantly contributed to the success of the initiative.

## Dr. Farooq, Omar Abdullah grieved over loss of lives in Ramban mishap

■ HT News Network

Srinagar Mar 29 (KNS): The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Vice President Omar Abdullah have expressed profound grief over the loss of lives in Ramban road mishap and impressed upon the administration to reach out to the affected families with adequate relief and compensation.

Expressing grief over the unfortunate accident, Omar Abdullah said, "A terrible tragedy as our highway claims more precious lives. We eagerly await the day when the promised four lane highway is completed and people are able to undertake this journey with the assurance of greater safety. May the souls of the deceased rest in peace."

Expressing anguish over the mishap and the loss of precious lives there, Dr. Farooq said, "Jammu-Srinagar highway stretch in Ramban has become a death trap. In the last few years, hundreds of people have lost their lives, leaving their families shattered. The concerned authorities must look into both the causes and take serious measures to prevent occurrence of the accidents. Meantime district administration Ramban should reach out to the affected with adequate relief and compensation."

Among others GS Ali Muhammad Sagar, AGS Sheikh Mustafa Kamal, Ajay Kumar Sadhotra, Treasurer Shammie Oberoi, Provincial Presidents Nasir Asham Wani, Rattan Lal Gupta, party leaders Sajjad Shaheen, Aijaz Jan, Khalid Najeeb Suharwardhy, Sajjad Kichloo have also extended sympathies and condolences with the victim families. (KNS)

## Lok Sabha Elections 2024

### Patnitop to Gauri Kund Spiritual Trek organised as part of SVEEP campaign

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 29: In a collaborative effort, Patnitop Development Authority, Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, District Administration, Udhampur and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University today came together to organize Patnitop to Gauri Kund Spiritual Trek as part of the SVEEP campaign for forthcoming general elections.

The trek was flagged off by ADC Udhampur, Joginder Singh Jasrotia which traced an ancient pilgrimage route leading to Sudh Mahadev-Mantalai, prominent Shaivite centers and is steeped in natural wonders especially with the onset of spring.

Commencing from the Nag Temple, renowned for its construction using stones—a deviation from the prevalent use of Deodar wood in the region—the trek concluded at the Gauri Kund Temple, dedicated to Bhagwan Shiv and Mata Parvati. The participants relished traditional cuisines offered year-round in the temple's bhandara.

Enthralled by picturesque vistas and enveloped in a mystical aura throughout the trek, more than fifty students from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, representing various districts of the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory, expressed gratitude to the authorities for this endeavour. After the trek, the participants paid obeisance at Sudh Mahadev temple.

At Sudh Mahadev, the participants from SMVDU, who were mostly first time voters, were sensitized about the electoral process, the importance of exercising the right to vote, and rights and responsibilities of voters by Pan-kaj Singh Bhau, Tehsildar Chenani. Additionally, they were given hands-on experience of voting equipment like EVM and VVPAT. Students of Government Higher Secondary School Sudh Mahadev created placards, presented skits and dance, which was followed by Sangam Theatre group's nukkad natak for voter awareness.

Devender Singh Bhau, CEO, PDA, said that beyond electoral processes, adventure, and spirituality, the event also underscored cleanliness, environmental consciousness, and the preservation of natural beauty that attracts travelers from far and wide. He added that the PDA staff, as part of ongoing PDA initiatives like 'Clean Patnitop Green Patnitop', 'Carry the Trash Back' and 'Clean Mountains Save Future', collected waste along the trail.

## Lok Sabha Elections 2024

### DEO Rajouri reviews security arrangements

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 29: District Election Officer (DEO), Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat today convened a meeting with the Army and police authorities to discuss security arrangements for Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

Recognizing the critical importance of maintaining law and order, and to contain any untoward incident during the electoral process, the DEO emphasized

the need for robust coordination among all security forces and law enforcement agencies for smooth execution of elections.

The DEO underscored the significance of border area sanitization to contain all potential security threats and asked for keeping high vigil in border areas, towns and at sensitive locations.

Furthermore, the DEO stressed the importance of maintaining dominance at the ALG Rajouri, underscoring

its strategic significance in ensuring the security and integrity of the electoral process.

By fostering collaboration and synergy among the stakeholders, the District administration Rajouri aims to create a conducive environment wherein voters can exercise their franchise without fear or intimidation in a properly secure environment.

Dy. Commandant BSF, Gajendra Prasad; ASP CID, Zulfqar Ahmed; Town CDR, Munish

Chandan; SDPO Manjakote, Tussif Ahmed; DySPHQr Rajouri, Ashwani Sharma; Dy. SP CID, Deepak Jasrotia; Sector Officer IB, Vivek Rattan and other concerned officers were present on the occasion. By fostering collaboration and synergy among the stakeholders, the District administration Rajouri aims to create a conducive environment wherein voters can exercise their franchise without fear or intimidation in a properly secure environment.

## Residential house, 3 shops, transformer damaged in Srinagar fire incidents

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 29 (KNO): A residential house, three shops and a transformer were damaged in separate fire incidents in Srinagar, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that at around 10:53 PM, one electric transformer caught fire at Kathi Darwaza area of Makdoo Sahab Srinagar, which soon spread to two shops, causing damage to transformer and the shops as well. He added that one residential house, double-storey also got

damaged in another blaze at Kralpora area of Srinagar.

The attic portion of the house has got damaged, the officials said, adding that the cause of fire is said to be electric short circuit. Also, one more incident of fire has taken place at Hawal Chowk in the intervening night of Thursday-Friday in which one shop at the first floor of a double-storey shopping complex was damaged. Moreover, he added that no loss of life was reported in any of the incidents and investigations have been taken up—(KNO)

## Delegation Of Private School Association Doda Meets Chief Education Officer

■ Amir Iqbal Khan

Doda, March, 29: A delegation representing Private School Association of Doda headed by O.P. Chandail, District President of the Association, met CEO Doda P.L. Thapa, in his office chambers here today. DEPO Doda, Dr. Anees Ahmed was also present on this occasion. A cordial commitment to advancing educational standards in the region was focussed upon during the meeting.

CEO Doda stressed on the comprehensive guidelines delineating the protocols to be adhered to by private schools, encompassing aspects such as curriculum materials, fee structures and other pertinent considerations. The Private School Association emphasised on the establishment



of minimum conditions for result confirmation, underscoring the significance of maintaining academic integrity and transparency. Assuring proactive measures, CEO Doda, P.L. Thapa reiterated departmental

support to address the concerns raised by the private school Association. He while insisting on the facilitative approach, expressed his commitment to leave no stone unturned in bolstering the efforts

of private schools in delivering quality education and acknowledging their indispensable role in the educational landscape.

Private School Association however, extended gratitude to CEO Doda for his receptive stance and affirmed their commitment to adhering to the prescribed guidelines. The delegation assured CEO Doda of full support and resolved for their continued cooperation. They further expressed satisfaction on his dedication to make education sector in this region successful in all its manifestations.

The delegation comprised prominent representatives from various private educational institutions including Hafeez Khudwani, Shahab Ul Haque, Rizwan Ahmed, Javed Ahmed Khan, Anil Kumar, Surinder Singh, Nishad Ahmed and Bashir Ahmed.

EDITORIAL

Rising Tide of Drowning Tragedies in Kashmir

The serene beauty of the Kashmir Valley belies a growing menace that has claimed far too many lives over the past 14 months. Drowning incidents have surged alarmingly, with 49 tragic occurrences reported from January 2023 to March 2024, according to the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) department.

Each death not only snuffs out a precious life but leaves behind a trail of grief and shattered families.

This grim trend demands immediate attention and concerted efforts from both authorities and the community at large. Preventive measures are urgently needed to stem this tide of tragedies and ensure the safety of residents and visitors alike.

First and foremost, there is a pressing need for enhanced public awareness campaigns. Many drowning incidents occur due to a lack of awareness about water safety practices. Educating individuals, especially children, about the dangers of water bodies and imparting essential swimming skills can go a long way in preventing accidents.

Furthermore, the installation of warning signs near water bodies, especially in areas prone to strong currents or sudden drops, is crucial. These signs serve as visual reminders of potential hazards, prompting individuals to exercise caution.

Additionally, the deployment of trained life-guards at popular tourist spots and recreation areas cannot be overstated. These vigilant professionals can swiftly respond to emergencies and provide timely assistance to those in distress, significantly reducing the risk of fatalities.

Moreover, community engagement plays a pivotal role in fostering a culture of safety. Local leaders, schools, and grassroots organizations must collaborate to promote water safety initiatives and organize training programs.

In the face of this escalating crisis, complacency is not an option. The time to act is now. By prioritizing preventive measures, raising awareness, and fostering community involvement, Kashmir can turn the tide against drowning tragedies and ensure a safer, brighter future for all.

India's transformation under the great leadership of Shri Narendra Modi



■ Syed Irfan Hashmi

The leadership of Narendra Modi in India has been a subject of diverse opinions. Since taking office as Prime Minister in 2014, Narendra Modi has implemented various policies and initiatives aimed at transforming different aspects of the country. Some of the key areas where his leadership has had an impact include:

1. Economic Reforms:

The Modi government has launched several initiatives to boost economic growth, such as the "Make in India" and "Digital India" campaigns. The implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has aimed to streamline the tax system and improve ease of doing business.

2. Infrastructure Development:

The government has focused on developing infrastructure, including the construction of roads, highways, and the expansion of the railway network. The "Smart Cities Mission" was launched to modernize urban infrastructure and improve the quality of life in cities.

3. Foreign Policy:

Modi has sought to enhance India's global standing through active diplomacy and international engagement. Initiatives such as "Act East Policy" and "Neighborhood First Policy" have aimed at strengthening relationships with neighboring countries and enhancing India's influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

4. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:

The cleanliness campaign aimed at improving sanitation and hygiene has been a significant initiative under Modi's leadership.



5. Digital Initiatives:

The government has focused on promoting digital literacy and expanding access to digital services, such as the "Digital India" campaign and the push for digital payments.

6. Social Welfare Schemes:

The government has introduced various social welfare schemes, including the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, and Ayushman Bharat, aimed at financial inclusion, clean cooking fuel, and healthcare for the underprivileged.

Narendra Modi's leadership as Prime Minister of India has been marked by a number of ambitious initiatives and reforms aimed at transforming various aspects of the country. The government has launched programs to address issues such as infrastructure development, economic growth, digital innovation, sanitation, technology, Education and social welfare. These initiatives have been designed to propel India towards the status of a developed and progressive nation. While there have been initiatives and policies that have been praised for their potential to bring about positive changes.

The concept of India becoming a superpower is a complex and multifaceted topic. As of my last knowledge update in September 2021, India has made significant progress in various fields under the leadership of Narendra Modi, and it possesses many attributes that are important for a country aspiring to be a global power. These include a large and rapidly growing economy, a young and increasingly educated population, a vibrant democracy, a diverse and innovative culture, and a

growing influence in regional and global affairs.

While these initiatives have the potential to contribute to India's development and progress, it's important to note that the country still faces significant challenges in areas such as poverty, education, healthcare, environmental sustainability, and social inequality. The success of these initiatives and the overall transformation of India into a developed and progressive nation will depend on their effective implementation, as well as the ability to address these ongoing challenges. Everyone needs to come forward to support in making India as next global superpower.

Article written by Socio political Activist / Freelancer Journalist, Email at: irfan.hashmi.syed@gmail.com

U-turn from the road of death



■ Aadil Ghulam Bhat

An inscription of Shah Jahan's diwan-l khas about Kashmir in Delhi stated: "If there is Paradise on Earth, it is here, it is here, it is here". Beautiful Kashmir in the August of 2019 was surrounded in gloom and doubt. Moments after Article 370 was repealed, the valley was silent. The residents were suddenly cut off from the rest of the world as all internet and mobile connectivity was turned off. The previously bustling streets were now eerily quiet, evoking sad reflections on days gone by. As the days turned into weeks, and the weeks into months, the lockdown continued, bringing up memories of the difficult year 2016 in Kashmir. People's emotions were permanently altered by the events of that year, which left a permanent reminder of the numerous lives lost, frustrated people, fearful mindset, hopes dashed, and tears poured on the bloodstained streets.

The hartal continued, casting a pall over the Kashmir valley as the days turned into weeks. My mom's eyes reflected a mix of perplexity and concern, and I could see it written all over her face. She continued to be blind to the political difficulties that gripped the region and the complicated issues of Article 370. Her innate comprehension of the

issue, however, did not change. Her sorrow, "Meh basan hartal gasseh baye—The hartal is going long," resounded in my head like a mournful tune.

Even though she didn't fully understand the bigger picture, she had an unwavering sense of the seriousness of the issue.

We didn't know where we were going in those first few days, so we just kind of walked about. The constant presence of uniformed soldiers was a sobering reminder of the tense atmosphere around the state. Disturbingly, the sight of armoured vehicles driving through the streets became the norm.

My mom, on the other hand, never gave up. She had trust that would not be shaken because she had endured adversity before. Her voice had an undercurrent of dread, but her will would not be broken. She seemed to be angry, "Cxe chui neh shayad behit lagan garreh—why don't you stay at home, don't you know about the red alert?". Maybe now is the time for perseverance," as if she were in a state of panic.

The future of our family's finances was hanging on a thread. My father, a diligent man who drove a goods carrier "Tipper", had his job suddenly eliminated. The shutdown's gloomy shadow had fallen upon us, and we were not immune to its effects. Our family was under much more stress. We were one of the many families in Kashmir that relied significantly on daily salaries but were suddenly forced to face an uncertain future. The situation was heavy, and it threatened to crush our spirits.

We were all assembled on the sixteenth day of the lockdown when my cousin's voice rang out: "Ho abu-g chu duty gomut, payii che neh kate chu garkin chu tension— My father is on duty and we had not communicated, our family is very in tension." The

family is concerned because Father is still away on duty. He was in the forest service and by relationship he is my my uncle.

My cousin's resolve one day compelled me to set out into the night in an effort to return his father to the family. As part of his job, he had to travel to a forested area high in the highlands of Manzgam, in the Kulgam district. We got in his car and drove off into the darkness, the motor humming quietly. It was getting close to midnight as we slowly made our way around the streets. Our spirits were linked with a gleam of hope as the journey began pleasantly. The darkness engulfed us, taking in the air's rumblings of unease. We kept on driving, following the well-worn paths that we knew would lead us to our final destination. Damhal, a tehsil with the wounds of strife, appeared on the horizon as if a spectral memory were inscribed there. The town's core was marked by a burned-out shell, a sad reminder of the riots that had shaken the area in 2016. It was the local police station, destroyed by arsonists who felt their anger needed an outlet.

As the fog engulfed the road and reduced visibility, we were taken aback by the appearance of police barriers. We were startled and slammed on the brakes, the screaming of the tyres adding to the mounting anxiety. In a matter of seconds, we were encircled by the piercing brilliance of flashlights and the chill of metal firearms. As we were compelled to kneel on the hard concrete road, the world around us began to blur. A terrible reminder of the precariousness of life was the pressure of the rifles on our necks, backs, and chests. It was a terrifying brush with death that brought home how quickly life's precious possessions may be taken from us. To keep my faith strong, I clung to the words of "Aayat-ul-Kursi" as I whispered them to myself

at that dreadful time. But the cops, motivated by prejudice and suspicion, beat us up and slapped us again and again. They accused us of being terrorists because of our young age and looks, and they became violent as a result of their own faulty reasoning. It is a sad reality that in times of war and upheaval, innocent people sometimes fall prey to false allegations. Retrieving a parent who is serving the state from the high, forested mountains is an admirable gesture of love and responsibility to one's family. It is in no way comparable to acts of terrorism. The event we experienced brought home how unfair things can get when prejudice and fear cloud people's perceptions. It's proof that we must act with compassion, awareness, and respect for the rights and dignity of every person. No one, regardless of their background, beliefs, or line of work, deserves to be treated so brutally. The police eventually cleared us after an inquiry, but we still had to make it past an Army camp. We, however, were far from done. The prospect of having to make our way through an Army camp was a huge source of anxiety. The situation was tight, and there were severe limitations on freedom of movement. It appeared improbable that we would be allowed passage, which added further stress to an already taxing journey. We made it to the base camp.

The soldiers of the Indian Army surprised us by treating us with unusual respect. Despite their reprimand, they made us feel secure and took down our details. Their deeds demonstrated a dedication to fairness and an openness to finding the truth. While they painstakingly took down our names, arrival time, and car's number plate. It had been planned that way to guarantee responsibility and safety.

They questioned me in an effort to get

answers that would ultimately decide our fate. The troops saw through our pretences and accepted our story of innocence and a justifiable need to reconnect with loved ones. After they finished asking questions, we were allowed to proceed. Our time spent interacting with the Indian Army will forever shape our journey. It was a powerful demonstration of the resilience of the human spirit in the face of hardship. Their deeds demonstrated a dedication to fairness and an ability to separate fact from bias.

We must keep speaking out against this wrongdoing and demanding truth, justice, and responsibility. We need to fight against harmful preconceptions and develop a community that respects every person for who they are.

Rather of continuing down the path to destruction, this initiative seeks to educate people about the destructive effects of war and the vital role that overcoming prejudice and appreciating diversity play in creating a more equitable and compassionate society. And we truly made U-turn from the road of death.

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Poet, author, and novelist Aadil Ghulam Bhat is from Kulgam in Jammu & Kashmir and is renowned for his vivid and engrossing creative creations. Bhat, who has a Bachelor of Science from Kashmir University, writes with a keen awareness of his surroundings and the vibrant cultural history of Kashmir. His writing spins compelling stories that dig into the human mind, while his poetry examines topics of love, nature, and spirituality. Bhat is now recognised as a rising star in the field of writing thanks to his skill in the literary world. Ph: no. +91 7051672115, E mail. adilgulambhat@gmail.com. Pin code: 192231 India (j & k).

# A Time For Us All To Reject Negativity

While India is celebrating an upward trajectory of economic growth combined with ecstatic euphoria through the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya it would be foolish to remain oblivious to the upheavals of a tottering civilization.

■ **A. K. Merchant**

While India is celebrating an upward trajectory of economic growth combined with ecstatic euphoria through the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya it would be foolish to remain oblivious to the upheavals of a tottering civilization. We are just 90 seconds from a global catastrophe as per the latest announcement of the Security Board of Bulletin of Atomic Scientists for the second consecutive year.

Let me, therefore, focus on the theme of United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week, 1-7 February which is "Uniting for peace," and the positive role that religious communities can play to save our planet. In this age of interdependence and interconnectedness at every level of human existence followers of religions or dharmas or mazhab, whatever term is used, have to accept that no spiritual system or cultural milieu can thrive in isolation or compartments. Believers and even non-believers must transcend petty differences and conflicting doctrines to create a people's movement of interfaith harmony. This is, indeed, an important goal of all interfaith conferences and seminars. The legacy of the interfaith movement may be traced to the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions held in Chicago. Leaders of religions and the laity have shown that harmonious relationships can be forged to live side by side and peacefully for tackling other major crises such as poverty alleviation, gender imbalances, climate emergencies, conflicts and wars fueled by a range of causes by building capacity through educational institutions and selfless services for the welfare of all.

The spiritual luminaries described variously as the avatars, the tathagathas, the tirthankaras, the prophet or messenger, and 'manifestation of God', have come periodically to guide the people and provide for the progress of an ever-advancing civilization. From an unprejudiced point of view their message may be taken as a chapter of a Divine



Book; each time a Message was given it gave rise to a new path for humankind's growth and spiritual development. We should also remember that differences among peoples due to culture or whatever other reasons should not breed hostility but should lead to deepening and enriching our thoughts and enable us to live in mutual harmony and peace. Just as unity is a fundamental truth diversity is also intrinsic in creation. Differences test our capacity to tolerate.

While recognizing differences we should understand the commonalities and it is this tension between differences and commonalities which enrich our lives. There are practical steps and universal principles that all can follow to remove the causes for hatred, misunderstandings and conflicts. We

need to take two steps – first, forging the unity of all the world's leaders and officials in leading us to peace, stopping wars, setting national boundaries, ending civil, religious, or ideological differences, and facilitating fairness and justice. They can only do that by signing an inviolable Pact. In this context, there are a host of Declarations and practical educational curricula that have been endorsed repeatedly by leaders or representatives of all faiths and belief systems, the most recent one was at the Parliament of the World's Religions held in Chicago in August 2023.

Second, the world's peoples must also set aside prejudices and differences, and begin to cooperate, support each other and their governments, and be well-wishers of humankind – the ancient

and renewed Golden Rule commemorated every year on 5 April was put into worldwide motion and action at the Centenary of the Parliament of the World's Religions held in September 1993. Words will not save us – only action can. Viewed from the lens of positivity, without doubt, history shows that we are making progress towards these cooperative ends and new beginnings. This is not to suggest that everything is hunky-dory because one must realise that there is a great deal of lawlessness, rampant corruption, and widespread unbelief that together are eating away at the vitals of present-day society. It is necessary to assert that all of humanity is responsible for reversing these negative tendencies.

Those in authority and the decision-makers have the chief responsibility.

They must gather their peers in a single great assemblage empowered to stop religiously motivated violence and bring a lasting peace to all. The interfaith movement has abundantly reiterated that the sacred scriptures belong to all. In the past due to lack of means of communication and limited education of the vast majority of humanity it was confined to particular sections of the religious community but today access to knowledge by all peoples has made it possible to read any Scripture in one's mother-tongue. Through independent search after truth and the study of the holy Books of different religions one can easily dispel blind faith and nip distortions in the bud. We can help each other to build bridges of understanding among peoples, regardless of their spiritual background.

Not only this, such a dispassionate study strengthens the belief in the common set of core values found in the teachings of every extant religion, and these form the basis of a global ethic, the Golden Rule – a powerful guideline for human behaviour that instils courage to reject prejudices of every kind. Indeed, "the rising fires of religious prejudice call for decisive action against fanaticism and intolerance.

The crisis demands of religious leadership for a break with the past as decisive as that which opened the way for society to address equally corrosive prejudices of caste, race, gender and nation." Ruling elites, be they religious or secular, can make no more serious error than to imagine that the power they have managed to arrogate to themselves provides an enduring bulwark against the relentless tides of historical change. May World Interfaith Harmony Week this year become a turning point in the history of civilization and unite the world for peace.

**The writer is a social worker, independent researcher and an active promoter of interfaith harmony. Views expressed are personal**

## FROM REPORT CARDS TO REAL LIFE: 5 WAYS SCHOOL GRADES SHAPE YOUR FUTURE

■ **Alexandra Starr**

Undoubtedly, Albert Einstein was one of the smartest people in history. His work revolutionised theoretical physics, earned him a Nobel Prize, and fundamentally changed the way we understand the world. Yet, Einstein's school grades were only mediocre: One of his teachers even told him that he would never achieve anything important in life – a prediction that clearly proved to be false. Perhaps your school grades don't matter for who you become later in life?

Children are told from when they first enter school that good grades are the key to success. Good school grades unlock possibilities for further educational qualifications that pupils pursue after leaving school, and how well they will do, for example in terms of earning high university grades. Attaining better educational qualifications will in turn benefit someone's chances of getting a job, making good money, and living a fulfilled life.

An alternative viewpoint is that school grades only matter for climbing the next rung of the education ladder, like going to university. In the real world, school grades may hold little relevance for success. For example, high earnings and one's happiness in life. The rationale behind this perspective is that grades during the school years reflect traits that are only important for school but not for other practical aspects of everyday life. For example, being a bookworm and diligently doing homework are unlikely to prepare you for pitching a new idea to your boss or negotiating a higher salary.

To find out if school grades matter or not for later life, we studied the effect of GCSE results at age 16 on developmental outcomes at age 23, including university performance, job status, income, and financial attitudes, as well as whether a

person showed behaviour problems or anxiety symptoms, their level of alcohol consumption, and their overall well-being. GCSEs are exams taken by all students in the UK school system at the age of 16 years. They are not only a prerequisite for further education, but reflect the level of achievement in a broad range of subjects, and students are advised to spend long hours on revisions in preparation for exams. We looked at data from about 6,500 school students who were born between 1994 and 1996 in England and Wales and took their GCSEs between 2010 and 2013. Our study has recently been accepted for publication in the journal *Developmental Psychology*.

### GCSE Grades as Indicators of Future Paths

We found that GCSE grades at age 16 predicted what your life looked like at age 23. A first and much expected finding was that students who excelled in their GCSEs were much more likely to attend university, and almost half of them achieved a first-class degree. By comparison, less than 10% of the students who struggled passing their GCSEs went on to complete a university degree. Only about 1% of them received a first-class degree.

But the effect of school grades extended far beyond climbing the educational ladder: School grades also explained about 3% of the differences in people's income. Although that might sound like a rather small effect, it translates into a sizeable difference in actual income: Top GCSE performers may earn up to £1,000 more per month at age 23 when compared to the lowest GCSE performing students.

Our findings also showed that our participants differed greatly in the type of jobs they performed in their 20s. Statistically, school grades accounted for about 7% of whether the young adults in our study had a more or less prestigious



job. In real-world terms, this means that those with excellent GCSE results most likely worked as highly qualified professionals and technicians when they reached their 20s. Their less successful peers most commonly held jobs as personal service workers and in retail – occupations which are often viewed as less prestigious and also earn lower salaries.

School grades indicated how people developed socially and emotionally: On average, students with better GCSEs had fewer behaviour problems, such as becoming involved in physical fights, bullying, or violence, and they reported feeling more satisfied with their lives in their 20s.

The next finding surprised us: The role of school grades on all these outcomes was independent of getting more education after school. This means, for example, that irrespective of whether someone will go on to pursue a university degree or not, their school grades at the end of

secondary school will predict their occupational, financial, and social-emotional development in young adulthood.

### Widening Participation in University

The achievement gap between students coming from highly educated, wealthy families and those brought up under less privileged conditions has long been reported. On average, students from poorer family backgrounds are less likely to attend university and complete a degree. Our findings shed some light on how this persistent family background disadvantage may be overcome.

In our study, achieving good GCSEs mattered more for students from less affluent backgrounds than for students from richer families for going on to university. A likely reason is that students from poorer families must rely on their own hard schoolwork, when trying to climb the educational ladder. By contrast,

students from more privileged backgrounds may have other resources to compensate in case they only achieved mediocre grades. For example, having the financial means to complete unpaid internships in leading businesses over the summer and receiving intense, personal tutoring by a subject matter expert, might outweigh the effect of only average school grades on your CV.

Doing well in school is not going to make family background inequalities in education disappear. But for kids from disadvantaged backgrounds, acing their GCSEs is a sure way to gain access to the education opportunities that offer prosperous life chances. Schools and teachers need to be funded to ensure they can support students from poorer families to achieve the best grades they can.

### 5 Ways School Grades Shape Your Future

Contrary to the common belief that school grades only determine university admissions, we found that their influence goes much further. Our findings support five reasons why working hard in school matters for our adult life.

Good school grades can help you find a well-paid, prestigious job in your 20s. Good school grades can allow you to earn a higher income in your 20s.

Good school grades might lower the risk for problematic social behaviour and make you happier about your life.

Good school grades can mean that you outperform your fellow students at university.

Good school grades can help you get into university and earn a degree, even if you're from backgrounds underrepresented at university.

Researchers at the Hungry Mind Lab at the University of York study the causes and consequences of individual differences in cognitive and social-emotional development across the life course.

# PM Modi Tells Bill Gates What's Special About His Recycled Jacket

HT News Network

New Delhi: India is moving ahead at a rapid pace in scaling up its renewable energy capacity in areas such as wind and solar energy and wants to move fast in nuclear energy and green hydrogen, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said.

In an interaction with Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, PM Modi talked about India's culture of recycling waste and said the half-jacket he was wearing was made of recycled material. It had been made using spare cloth pieces at tailors' shops and also using recycled plastic bottles, he said.

"Recycling and reusing are inherent to our nature. This jacket is made from recycled material. Even this has a speciality. There are waste cloth pieces at the tailor's shop, all this waste material has been collected. It has been made of old clothes and 30-40 percent waste plastic bottles have been used and all this has been recycled to make the cloth (for the jacket)," PM Modi said.

PM Modi told Mr Gates that the country is making rapid growth in renewable energy and has pro-



vided for a corpus fund of 1 lakh crore in the budget to encourage the younger generation to contribute with innovative ideas.

"I believe we should adopt a two-prolonged strategy. First is innovation, and the goal should be to evaluate environment-friendly and climate-friendly innovations. To this end, India has established a corpus fund of 1 lakh crore in this budget inviting the younger generation to contribute their innovative ideas. We are offering interest-free loans for 50 years to support these innovations," he added.

PM Modi also told Mr Gates

about the launch of India's first indigenous green hydrogen fuel cell inland waterway vessel.

"In Tamil Nadu, I launched a green hydrogen fuel cell boat. This environmental-friendly boat ride I have thought of running from Kashi to Ayodhya so that it reinforces my movement for clean Ganga and there is message towards environment-conscious society," PM Modi said.

"There's another important thing we need to focus on in our lifestyle. That's why I started Mission Life, which stands for lifestyle for environment. It's because living

a climate-friendly life daily is crucial. If we don't embrace a life that respects nature, it doesn't matter how much external effort we put in and how many new innovations we create. Our way of life should be in sync...our current challenge is how we view progress," he said.

PM Modi launched a hydrogen fuel cell inland waterway vessel under the Harit Nauka initiative during his visit to Tamil Nadu last month and said it is a gift of the people of Tamil Nadu for Kashi. He said that he witnessed the enthusiasm and affection of the people of Tamil Nadu in Kashi Tamil Sangamam. India has invested 16.93 lakh crore in the power and renewable energy sectors since 2014, with an additional 17.05 lakh crore in the pipeline. In 2024, India is likely to witness an investment of 1,37,500 crore (about USD 16.5 billion) in renewable energy capacity, which would be higher than 13.5 GW with an investment of 74,250 crore (nearly USD 9 billion) seen in 2023.

PM Modi said that data security is of concern and public awareness is crucial.

PM Modi said technology should be used to ease of living of citizens.

# "When Government Changes...": Rahul Gandhi After RS 1,800 Crore Tax Notice

HT News Network



New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi today promised the party will take exemplary action against those who have destroyed democracy - "when the government changes" - after the party received a 1,800 crore income tax notice which it called "tax terrorism".

The fresh tax notice is for the assessment years 2017-18 to 2020-21, and includes penalty and interest. "When the government changes, action will definitely be taken against those who are destroying democracy. And the action will be taken in such a manner that no one will have the courage to do all this again. This is my guarantee," Mr Gandhi said in a post on the microblogging platform X. The Congress is already facing a funds crunch after the Income Tax authorities imposed a penalty of 200 crore and froze its funds. It has not got any relief from the high court. The Congress is

likely to go to the Supreme Court next, just weeks before the Lok Sabha elections. Mr Gandhi alleged central departments such as the income tax are working at the behest of the BJP. The Congress is preparing to fight a long legal war to scrap the tax demands. Congress leader Ajay Maken said the BJP has in the past few years got donations from thousands of people, and their income tax should also be calculated. Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh told reporter the BJP is also in serious violation of income tax laws, and requested the tax depart-

ment to raise a demand of 4,617.58 crore from the BJP. Congress treasurer Ajay Maken said political parties have to fill up Form 24A, in which two basic and important pieces of information have to be given -- the names and addresses of donors. "We have analysed all the submissions of the BJP to the Election Commission. The party has faltered every year," Mr Maken alleged. Mr Ramesh alleged the BJP has collected 8,200 crore through the "electoral bonds scam" by using "prepaid, postpaid, post-raid bribes and shell companies".

# BJP Must Apologise To Manmohan Singh: Sanjay Raut On Air India Probe Report

HT News Network

Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut has asked the BJP to apologise to former prime minister Manmohan Singh after the CBI filed a closure report in its Air India-Indian Airlines merger case.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a closure report in its probe into the alleged irregularities in the leasing of aircraft by NACL, a company formed by the merger of Air India and Indian Airlines during the UPA era, as there was no "evidence of any wrongdoing", officials said Thursday.

NCP leader Praful Patel, who now belongs to the outfit headed by Ajit Pawar, was the Union civil aviation minister in the earlier Congress-led United Progress Alliance (UPA) government when the leasing was done.

Talking to reporters, Raut said the BJP had made a hue and cry over alleged corruption in the civil aviation sector during Manmohan Singh's tenure as PM.

"The BJP must apologise to Dr Singh," he said. The National Aviation Corporation of India Limited (NACL) was formed after the merger of Air India and Indian Airlines.

The CBI has alleged that the decision was made "dishonestly", and the aircraft were leased even while an acquisition programme was going on.

The leasing decision was taken "in conspiracy with other unknown persons on extraneous considerations" that resulted in "pecuniary benefit" to private companies and consequent "loss to the govern-



ment exchequer," the CBI had alleged in its FIR. About the reported discord among MVA partners ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, Raut said there is no dispute among the allies over seat sharing.

The opposition grouping MVA comprises the Congress, Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar).

"On April 3, a press conference of MVA leaders will be held at Shivalaya, the Sena (UBT) office. Uddhav Thackeray, Sharad Pawar and Congress leaders Nana Patole, Prithviraj Chavan and Balasaheb Thorat will be present," he said.

Sanjay Raut also said that Mr Thackeray will also attend the opposition INDIA bloc rally at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi on March 31, organised to "safeguard the country's interests and democracy". The opposition parties announced the rally last week following the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with an excise policy-linked money-laundering case.

# After Mukhtar Ansari's Death, Akhilesh Yadav Demands Supreme Court Probe

HT News Network

Lucknow: Raising a question mark on the law-and-order situation in Uttar Pradesh after the death of gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari following a cardiac arrest in Banda, Akhilesh Yadav today said there should be a probe supervised by a Supreme Court judge into such "doubtful" cases. Ansari died in the Banda Medical College due to a cardiac arrest on Thursday. He was rushed to the hospital from the district jail after his health condition deteriorated. In a post in Hindi on X, Akhilesh Yadav said, "It is the foremost responsibility and duty of the government to protect someone's life in every situation and at every place." The death of a hostage or prisoner in any of the following circumstances will erode public confidence in the judicial process - while confined in a police station, in a fight inside the jail, on falling ill inside the prison, while being taken to hospital, during treatment in hospital, by showing a false encounter, by showing a false suicide, by showing casualties in an accident - all such doubtful cases should be probed under the supervision of a Supreme Court judge," he added. "A



government that cannot protect lives has no right to remain in power," the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said, claiming that the state is going through the worst phase of "government anarchy". "This is the zero hour for law and order in Uttar Pradesh," he said in the microblogging platform. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president Mayawati also pitched for a high-level probe into Ansari's death.

In a post in Hindi on X, she said: "The persistent apprehensions and serious allegations made by Mukhtar Ansari's family regarding his death in jail require a high-level investigation so that the true facts of his death can be revealed." Ansari's son Umar, who arrived in Banda late on Thursday night, told reporters that his father had raised apprehensions that he was being slow-poisoned.

# "Arvind Kejriwal's Time Limited, Madam Prepping For Post": Minister's Attack

HT News Network

New Delhi: Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri today took a swipe at jailed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal as someone who has "very limited time", alluding to the end of his chief ministership.

Mr Puri said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief's wife, Sunita Kejriwal, is likely preparing to take the top post soon. "Kejriwal's wife was not only a colleague in the revenue service. They have sidelined everyone. Now madam is likely preparing for the top post," the Housing and Urban Affairs Minister told reporters in Delhi today.

"The madam is perhaps preparing to hold the post like how Rabri Devi did in Bihar," Mr Puri added, referring to Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Yadav's wife who became Chief Minister after he was jailed in many corruption cases. "Kejriwal didn't answer summons nine times. Then the Enforcement Directorate officers went to his house. Let it be, Kejriwal's time



is very limited," said Mr Puri, who is also the Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister.

Mr Kejriwal has been arrested over alleged money laundering in framing the now-scrapped Delhi liquor policy case. His custody with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was extended by four days yesterday.

The Union Minister also criticised the Congress for protesting over legitimate tax demand. "Everyone has to file tax returns. Their revenue

has only been increasing," he said.

The Congress received a 1,700 crore notice from the Income Tax Department, a day after the Delhi High Court dismissed the party's petition challenging the tax notices. The fresh notice is for assessment years 2017-18 to 2020-21, and includes penalty and interest.

Referring to a planned protest by the Opposition INDIA bloc on March 31, Mr Puri said, "Their time is over. Talk about them in the past tense." While Mr Kejriwal is in the ED custody, his wife Sunita Kejriwal today made her third video announcement on his behalf, announcing a "Kejriwal ko aashirwad" campaign. She shared a WhatsApp number and asked people to send messages for Mr Kejriwal.

Sunita Kejriwal is a former Indian Revenue Services (IRS) officer, who served in the Income Tax department for 22 years. She met Arvind Kejriwal during a training programme in Bhopal. She is from the 1994 batch, while her husband is from the 1995 batch.

# Opposition Finalises Seat-Sharing In Bihar, 1 Constituency To See Friendly

HT News Network

New Delhi: After some consternation over the Rashtriya Janata Dal unilaterally announcing the names of candidates for the four constituencies going to polls in the first phase, the opposition Mahagathbandhan, or Grand Alliance, in Bihar has finalised seat-sharing for the Lok Sabha elections. One constituency will still, however, witness a friendly fight between Lalu Yadav's RJD and the Congress, who are also allies in the INDIA bloc.

The RJD, which had not won a single seat in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, will contest from 26 of Bihar's 40 seats while the Congress has got nine and the Left parties have been left with five - three for the CPI(M) and one each for CPI and CPM. Seat-sharing talks, which were expected to be much easier since Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal United returned to the NDA fold, turned out to be protracted, but a resolution has finally been achieved. At a press conference on Friday, RJD Rajya Sabha MP Manojjha, who was flanked by leaders from the Congress and other parties, said, "We



have arrived at a unanimous decision and we will win". Experts said, however, that the Congress has not been able to drive a hard bargain, as is evidenced by seats like Purnea, Supaul and Madhepura going in the RJD's kitty. Jan Adhikar Party (Loktantrik) chief Pappu Yadav had merged his party with the Congress last week and was slated to be nominated from the Purnea seat, while his wife Ranjeet Ranjan won from the Supaul seat in 2014 as a Congress candidate and had contested from there in 2019. NDTV spoke to Mr Yadav, who has said that he will be filing his nomination as a Congress candidate from Purnea, and the RJD has all but finalised new entrant Bima Bharti, who joined the party from the JDU, as its

candidate. The stage is, thus, set for a friendly fight in the constituency.

The CPI will be contesting from Begusarai, where it had fielded former JNU Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar last time. Mr Kumar is now with the Congress.

Bihar will be crucial for the INDIA alliance as it sends the fourth highest number of MPs to the Lok Sabha and 39 of the 40 seats had been won by the NDA in 2019. The remaining seat went to the Congress. The opposition alliance was jolted earlier this year after Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar switched sides yet again and went back to the NDA, but it is still seen to be in a stronger position in the state than it was during the last elections.

# RBI Will Not Accept Or Exchange ₹ 2,000 Notes On April 1

HT News Network

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that it will not be exchanging or accepting 2,000 notes on April 1 due to the annual closing of accounts. The service will resume on April 2, India's central bank announced.

"The facility of exchange/deposit of 2,000 banknotes will not be available on Monday, April 1, 2024, at the 19 Issue Offices of the Reserve Bank of India due to operations associated with the Annual Closing of Accounts. The facility will resume on Tuesday, April 2, 2024," the RBI said in a statement.

As of February 29, the RBI said that approximately 97.62% of the 2,000 currency notes have been returned to the banking system. On May 19, 2023, the RBI announced that the 2,000 bank notes were to be discontinued from circulation, and urged the public to deposit them in banks or exchange them for banknotes of other denominations. This was part of the bank's clean note policy.

# Mayawati Demands Probe Into Death Of Gangster-Politician Mukhtar Ansari

HT News Network

Lucknow: BSP president Mayawati today demanded a high-level inquiry into the death of gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari, saying the truth of the case needs to come before the public. Ansari, 63, died of cardiac arrest at a hospital in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh on Thursday. In a post on X, the BSP president said "The persistent apprehensions and serious allegations made by Mukhtar Ansari's family regarding his death in jail require a high-level investigation so that the true facts of his death can be revealed." Bhim Army founder and Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) president Chandra Shekhar Azad also demanded a CBI investigation into the death of Ansari.



# "We Hope That In India...": UN On Arvind Kejriwal's Arrest

HT News Network

United Nations: A spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said we very much "hope" that in India and any country that is having elections, people's "political and civil rights" are "protected" and everyone can vote in a "free and fair" atmosphere.

Spokesperson for the Secretary-General Stephane Dujarric made these remarks on Thursday while he was responding to a question on the "political unrest" in India ahead of the upcoming national elections in the wake of the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the freezing of the opposition Congress Party's bank accounts. "What we very much hope that in India, as in any country that is having elections, that everyone's rights are protected, including political and civil rights, and everyone is able to vote in an atmosphere that is free and fair," Dujarric said at the daily press briefing Thursday.

The response from the United Nations comes a day after the US also reacted to a similar question on Mr Kejriwal's arrest and freezing of the Congress party's bank accounts. On Wednesday, hours after India sum-



moned a senior US diplomat to protest remarks on Mr Kejriwal's arrest, Washington reiterated that it encourages fair, transparent, timely legal processes.

On the US diplomat being summoned in Delhi, US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said "I'm not going to talk about any private diplomatic conversations. But of course what we have said publicly is what I just said from here, that we encourage fair,

transparent, timely legal processes. We don't think anyone should object to that, and we'll make the same thing clear privately."

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) officials summoned Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Gloria Berbena to their office in South Block in the Indian capital. The meeting lasted for more than 30 minutes.

On Thursday, India said the US State Department's recent remarks on the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal are "unwarranted" and asserted the country is "proud of its independent and robust democratic institutions" and committed to protect them from any form of undue external influences.

Any "external imputation" on India's electoral and legal processes is "completely unacceptable", MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in New Delhi during his weekly press briefing.

In India, legal processes are driven "only by the rule of law", Mr Jaiswal said on Thursday.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had said in a statement that India took strong objection to the remarks of the Spokesperson of the US State Department about certain legal proceedings in India.

## Taliban To Resume Stoning Women In Public For Adultery: Report

HT News Network

New Delhi: The Taliban has announced that the women in Afghanistan will be stoned to death for adultery, a report has said. Taliban's Supreme Leader Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada made the announcement - that it is resuming publicly stoning women to death - in a voice message broadcast on state TV last Saturday, reported the Telegraph.

In a video that has been accessed by the Telegraph, Akhundzada said that the women's rights that the international community had been advocating for were against the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic Sharia. "You say it's a violation of women's rights when we stone them to death. But we will soon implement the punishment for adultery. We will flog women in public. We will stone them to death in public," he said. "The Taliban's work did not end with the takeover of Kabul, it has only just begun," Akhundzada added.

Afghanistan's women have faced numerous challenges since the Taliban returned to power in 2021. Girls and women in the war-torn country have no



access to education, employment and public spaces. Only one month after returning to power, the Taliban authorities banned girls from attending secondary school, before closing university doors to them in December 2022 and then heavily restricting their participation in the workforce. Conditions for women and girls in Afghanistan are the "worst globally," a UN report said, saying that the Taliban government's policies -- which are based on their strict interpretation of Islam -- could amount to a "gender apartheid."

For many families, the only path forward for their daughters is marriage, "regardless of their consent," the AFP said quoting a young student. "Depression is widespread. The rate of suicide for girls has gone up a lot in the last two years. It is tragic," she told the news agency.

## Palestinian PM Mustafa forms new cabinet

HT News Network

RAMALLAH: Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa formed a new cabinet on Thursday in which he will also serve as foreign minister, making an immediate ceasefire and Israeli withdrawal from Gaza a top priority, Palestinian news agency Wafa reported.

Mustafa, an ally to President Mahmoud Abbas and a leading business figure, was appointed premier this month with a mandate to help reform the Palestinian Authority (PA), which exercises limited self-rule in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

He was also assigned to lead the relief and rebuilding of Gaza, which has been shattered by more than five months of war, while he performs double-duty as foreign minister, replacing Riyad al-Maliki who had served in the position since 2009.

Abbas, who as president remains by far the most powerful figure in the PA, appointed the new government in a demonstration of willingness to meet international demands for change in the administration.

Calls for immediate ceasefire, Israeli



withdrawal from Gaza

He approved Mustafa's cabinet with financial expert Omar al-Bitar as finance minister, and Muhammad al Amour, who served as the president of the Palestinian Businessmen Association, as economy minister, but kept Ziad Hab al-Reeh, former chief of the PA's internal intelligence agency, as interior minister, Wafa said.

The new cabinet will also include a state minister for "relief affairs".

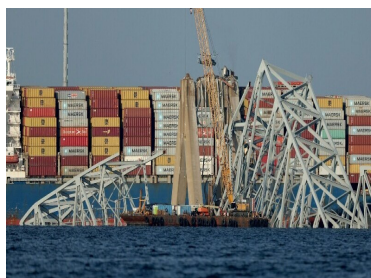
Mustafa said in a cabinet statement addressed to Abbas that the first national priority is an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and a complete Israeli withdrawal from the enclave, in addition to allowing humanitarian aid to enter in large quantities and reaching all areas, Wafa reported.

## US provides Maryland \$60m to start rebuild of collapsed Baltimore bridge

HT News Network

The United States government awarded the state of Maryland an initial \$60 million in emergency funds on Friday to clear debris and begin rebuilding the collapsed Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, an extraordinarily fast disbursement after such a disaster.

The bridge came tumbling down early on Tuesday after a massive cargo freighter that had lost power ploughed into the structure in Baltimore Harbour. Two bodies have been recovered and four others are missing and presumed dead, believed to be trapped in a vehicle beneath concrete and steel that fell into the water. Maryland Governor Wes



Moore had requested the \$60m earlier on Friday, and within hours the US Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration approved the request to fund emergency work.

Such funding typically takes days, but President Joe Biden told reporters on Tuesday he directed the federal government to "move heaven and earth" to quickly rebuild the

bridge, which forms part of a highway loop around Baltimore.

Moore told a press conference the top priority was to recover the missing construction workers who were conducting repairs on the bridge when the vessel known as the Dali struck a support column around 1:30am on Tuesday. Officials hope to clear the channel to resume shipping operations; tend to workers, families and first responders affected by the tragedy; and rebuild the bridge.

But first, a team of experts must assess how to remove the vessel, loaded with thousands of containers and trapped by bridge debris. The US Army Corps of Engineers was bringing in the largest crane on the Eastern Seaboard to remove pieces of bridge, Moore said.

## ICJ tells Israel to 'ensure urgent assistance' in Gaza

HT News Network

THE HAGUE: The world's top court on Thursday ordered Israel to "ensure urgent humanitarian assistance" in Gaza without delay, saying "famine has set in".

The International Court of Justice's latest order comes as heavy street battles continued to rage in besieged Gaza -- and a major medical charity said it "hasn't seen any change" since a United Nations Security Council resolution this week demanding an immediate ceasefire.

"Israel shall... take all necessary and effective measures to ensure, without delay... the unhindered provision... of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance" in Gaza, the ICJ said. "Palestinians in Gaza are no longer facing only a risk of famine, but... famine is setting in," the Hague-based court said.

At the ICJ, South Africa has charged that Israel is perpetrating a genocide in Gaza, an accusation strongly denied by Israel. Court says Palestinian deaths are not solely caused by ground attacks, but also by disease and starvation.

## Human Skin Used To Bind 19th Century Book Removed By Harvard Library

HT News Network

New York: Prestigious Harvard University said Wednesday it had removed human skin from the binding of a book held for over 90 years at one of its libraries. A copy of the 19th-century book "Des Destinées de l'Amé" -- or Destinies of the Soul, a meditation on life after death -- was found in 2014 to be bound in the skin of a woman.

Harvard said it had removed the binding and noted "past failures in its stewardship of the book that further objectified and compromised the dignity of the human being whose remains were used for its binding."

The university said it was consulting with French authorities "to determine a final respectful disposition of these human remains."

Harvard -- widely considered the oldest college in the United States -- had indulged interest in the morbid story of the book, calling the 2014 discovery "good news for fans of anthropodermic bibliopegy, bibliomaniacs and cannibals alike."

Anthropodermic bibliopegy -- the practice of binding books in human skin -- was once a relatively common practice, Harvard said in a 2014 blog post.

The university said at the time that Dr. Ludovic Boulard, the first owner of the book written by French author Arsene Houssaye, had taken skin from the body of a mentally ill woman, who died of a heart attack, at a hospital where he worked.

Boulard was said to have told Houssaye in a note: "A book about the human soul deserved to have a human covering."

In Wednesday's media release, Harvard said its stewardship practices related to the book had "failed to meet the level of ethical standards to which it subscribes."

It noted that, following scientific analysis confirming it was bound in human skin, the library made blog posts which "utilized a sensationalistic, morbid, and humorous tone that fueled similar international media coverage."

## Biden, Obama And Clinton Raise \$25 Million At New York Poll Campaign Stop

HT News Network

New York: US President Joe Biden was joined in New York on Thursday by his predecessors Barack Obama and Bill Clinton at a blockbuster fundraising event where he collected \$25 million to go towards his re-election bid.

The Democrat's bumper evening took place at Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan, around an hour's drive from where his Republican rival Donald Trump had earlier attended a wake for a New York police officer killed on duty. As Biden raked in financial support ahead of November's election, pro-Palestinian demonstrators protested outside the venue -- and several inside the hall whistled and shouted before being ushered away. Biden's campaign team announced ahead of the event a "record" collection of more than \$25 million, noting it was more than Trump had raised for the whole of February.

Singers Queen Latifah and Lizzo, among others, warmed up the room before the 42nd, 44th and 46th presidents of the United States sat down for a question-and-answer session moderated by comedian Stephen Colbert. Vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour was also in attendance. The discussion mixed serious topics with jokes, and ended when Obama and Clinton joined Biden in donning aviator sunglasses, Biden's favorite accessory. Trump's campaign spokesperson, Steven Cheung, had blasted on social network X the "glitzy fundraiser... with their elitist, out-of-touch celebrity benefactors." Earlier in the day, Trump made a short statement after attending the wake of police officer Jonathan Diller, who was shot and killed on Monday during a traffic stop. "We have to stop it. We have to get back to law and order," said the 77-year-old billionaire, who refrained from criticizing his 81-year-old rival directly. Trump devotes much of his campaigning to attacks on illegal immigration and criticizing Biden for being lax on policing. The White House said Biden had called New York Mayor Eric Adams on Thursday to offer his condolences over Diller's killing.

The Democrat has not been in contact with the officer's family but "grieves" with them, his spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said, adding that the president "has stood with law enforcement his entire career and continues to stand with them."

## Russian Attacks Kill 3 In Ukraine As Kyiv Calls For More Air Defences

HT News Network

Kyiv, Ukraine: Russian attacks on eastern and southern Ukraine killed at least three people on Wednesday, officials said, as Kyiv called for more Patriot air defence systems to battle a surge in missile strikes.

Moscow has escalated aerial attacks on Ukraine in the past few weeks, targeting key infrastructure -- including power stations -- in retaliation for fatal bombardments of Russia's border regions.

In Ukraine's second largest city of Kharkiv, which has been reeling from power outages due to the strikes, officials said shelling killed at least one person and injured 16 others. "Four children are among the wounded. Apartment buildings were damaged. The number of victims may increase," the region's governor Oleg Sinchukov said. The governor of Ukraine's southern Kherson region, which is partially occupied by Russia, said one woman had been killed in a drone attack on the village of Mykhailivka.

## In first letter to PM Shehbaz, Biden says 'enduring' Pak-US partnership critical to ensuring world security

HT News Network

US President Joe Biden, in a first letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday, stressed that the "enduring partnership" between the United States and Pakistan was "critical to ensuring the security of our people -- and people around the world".

According to the US Embassy in Islamabad, the letter said: "The enduring partnership between our nations remains critical to ensuring the security of our people -- and people around the world -- and the United States will continue to stand with Pakistan to tackle the most

pressing global and regional challenges of our time."

Biden said this included advancing the two countries' shared vision for a future of "greater health security, economic growth and access to education for all".

He added that through the US-Pakistan Green Alliance framework, the two nations would continue strengthening their climate resilience; supporting sustainable agriculture and water management and advancing Pakistan's recovery from the devastating floods of 2022.

"The United States remains committed to working with Pakistan to protect human rights and promote progress.

"Together, we will continue to forge a strong partnership between our nations and close bond between our people," the letter concluded.

On March 15, US Ambassador Donald Blome had said that Pakistan was considered an "important partner" and expressed hope in working with the newly elected government to continue building stronger bilateral ties.

The development had come in a meeting between Blome and PM Shehbaz, their first after the latter was recently elected as the premier. Blome had congratulated Shehbaz on his election who in turn expressed satisfaction with the current

bilateral relations between the countries.

Earlier this month, US lawmakers had urged President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken to refrain from recognising the new government until allegations of election rigging were thoroughly investigated.

The lawmakers, all Democrats like President Biden, in their joint letter, had expressed concerns about pre and post-poll rigging in Pakistan's parliamentary elections. They called for a transparent and credible investigation before recognising a new Pakistani government, citing evidence of violations and disruptions on election day.

# Swami Gurdeep Giri Ji Maharaj addresses congregation Peace, compassion essence of harmonious society: Rana

■ **Dr Abdul Qayoom**

Jammu March 29:- Senior BJP leader Mr Devender Singh Rana today called for imbuing the spirit of love, compassion, peace and harmony as professed by great saints and seers all their life, saying that striving for social justice and equality will be best tribute to Guru Ravi Dassji.

"Relevance of the teachings of great Gurus and Saints assume significance in this age more than ever before as intolerance, hatred and greed have become the way of life", Mr Rana said while attending a congregation which was blessed by the presence and

discourse of Shri Shri 108 Swami Gurdeep Giri Ji Maharaj, at Devikan in Ranjan in Nagrota assembly constituency here this afternoon.

Mr Devender Rana hoped the life and teachings of Guru Ravi Dassji will continue to inspire and motivate humanity to work for betterment of all, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. The society, he said, has an onerous responsibility to work for the upliftment of marginalized segments and ensure that opportunities of growth and progress are provided to all, he added. Mr Rana said the glorious heritage and legacy of inclusiveness has to be sustained, strengthened and bequeathed to the poster-



ity by spreading the divine message of righteousness. The spirit of humanism alone can guide the society to overcome hate, animosity and bitterness that is pivotal for making this world a better place to live in, he

added. He said the life and teachings of Guru Ravi Dassji have inspired the generations and helped in transforming the society, making it conducive for various communities, irrespective of caste, creed and colour.

"Guruji emerged as a beacon of light at a time when the society was ridden with hate and discrimination on the basis of caste and creed", Mr Rana said while enumerating the great role played by Guruji in ensuring that all segments of the society live with honour and dignity.

Mr. Rana said the best way to remember the apostle of peace is to take a pledge to follow his teachings in letter and spirit and work for build-

ing a society based on the natural principles of social justice, equality, compassion, love and togetherness.

Shri Shri 108 Swami Gurdeep Giri Ji Maharaj, in his illuminating and thought provoking discourse in the congregation, dwelt upon various facets of the eventful life of Guru Ravi Dassji and said he emerged as a beacon of light at a time when the society was engulfed by darkness. "Those were the times when fellow human beings were being discriminated on the basis of caste and creed", he said and referred to the great role played by the Guruji in ensuring that all segments of the society live with honour and dignity.

## Day-long search continues as man jumps into river Jhelum near Zaina Kadal

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 28 (KNO): A man jumped into the river Jhelum near Zaina Kadal area of Srinagar on Thursday evening while the search operation continued throughout the day.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that Farooq Ahmad Shangloo (60), a resident of Zakoora, Srinagar, jumped into the river Jhelum near Zaina Kadal yesterday late evening.

He added that a rescue operation was launched, but unfortunately, the person was not located until late evening.

Additionally, ASISDRF Abdul Rashid told KNO, a rescue operation was initiated in the early morning at around 06:30 AM by the SDRF department. Despite efforts, no traces of the body were found, and the search concluded as daylight diminished.

Moreover, police have already initiated an investigation, while awaiting further details—(KNO)

## President J&K EJAC appeals for a two-day festive holiday in anticipation of Eid ul Fitr.

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, March 29, 2024 – President J&K Employees Joint Action Committee (EJAC) Wajahat Hussain Durrani has issued a heartfelt appeal for a two-day festive holiday in anticipation of Eid ul Fitr. Expressing gratitude to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Secretary of J&K UT, Shri Atal Dullo ji, Durrani commended the administration's dedicated efforts in ensuring adequate arrangements throughout the holy month of Ramadan. In his statement, President Durrani expressed appreciation for the unwavering commitment of administrative officials in providing essential facilities to the people during Ramadan. Recognizing the significance of Eid ul Fitr, celebrated by Muslims worldwide at the conclusion of Ramadan, President Durrani has appealed to LG saheb and Chief Secretary J&K to consider extending the holiday to two days instead of one. This gesture, he believes, would allow individuals who have observed a month-long fast ample time to rejoice and celebrate the culmination of this sacred period. President Durrani's appeal resonates with the sentiments of numerous individuals eagerly anticipating the joyous occasion of Eid ul Fitr, emphasizing the importance of ensuring communities.

## Nehru Yuva Kendra Budgam organises Intensive Voter Awareness and Registration drive at SIPS Soibugh

■ **Noor Ul Amin**

Under the "Out of School Youth Programme" Nehru Yuva Kendra Budgam in collaboration with Roseland Welfare Community for youth volunteers at Soibugh organized. In this programme, resource person was booth level officer Mr Naseer Ahmad intensive voter awareness and registration drive. The programme witnessed participation of numerous youth from across the village who put light on the importance of vote and right to vote. Mr Naseer Ahmad throws light on the voting rights and the importance of votes for the ensuring of smooth democracy. Besides he urged the youths



to participate in upcoming Lok Sabha Elections and choose the well deserved representative for them. Socio-Political activist and Youth President Mr Arshid Malik applauding the efforts of Nehru Yuva Kendra Budgam and said that such programmes must be

organised in every village to generate awareness on these topics. The programme ended with the vote of thanks by socio-political activist who appealed people to participate in voting process and also requested them to get enrolled in voting lists

## Lok Sabha Elections 2024; DEO Rajouri interacts with polling personnel undergoing training

■ **HT News Network**

RAJOURI, MARCH 29: District Election Officer (DEO), Om Prakash Bhagat today interacted with the polling personnel undergoing training in morning shift at Government Degree College, here.

As many as 650 officials will be trained in two shifts. The training session emphasizes the pivotal role of polling personnel in upholding the democratic process and ensuring the fair and efficient conduct of elections.

Addressing the gathering, the DEO reiterated the importance of meticulous preparation and unwavering dedication in facilitating smooth functioning at



the polling stations. He emphasized that the success of the electoral process depends upon the dedica-

tion and diligence of each individual involved in the electoral machinery. During the interactive session,

polling personnel were acquainted with various aspects of the election procedure, while hands-on training was also imparted in each training session.

The District Election Officer impressed upon the polling personnel to perform their duties with utmost sincerity and commitment, upholding principles of democracy and ensuring a transparent and impartial electoral process.

Among the others, ACR, Mohammad Jhangir Khan; DPO, Mohammad Nawaz Choudhary; Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Dr Khalid Hussain; District Nodal Officer SVEEP, Iqbal Raina and other concerned officers accompanied the DEO during his visit.

## Swami Mast Bab's death anniversary observed in Jammu, Budgam

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 29: The first death anniversary of Swami Mast Bab was observed in several areas of Budgam and Jammu district on Friday.

DC Budgam Akshay Labroo joined the devotees at Hushroo area in paying obeisance to Swami Mast Bab.

Meanwhile, chairman Save Sharda Committee Ravinder Pandita said that his mission on Sharda Peeth will continue and his services to the community will be remembered.

## Sajjad Shaheen anguished over the loss of lives in Battery Cheshma road accident

■ **HT News Network**

Banihal, March 29: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) leader and district president, Ramban, Mr Sajjad Shaheen, has expressed profound sadness and concern over the tragic loss of lives in a road accident at Battery Cheshma, Ramban, on the Jammu Kashmir National Highway in which ten precious lives were lost during the intervening night of Friday. All the ill-fated passengers were mostly from Bihar excluding driver of the vehicle who hails from Jammu.

Shaheen highlighted the alarming rise in road accidents not only on the Jammu-Srinagar highway but also on other key routes. He criticized the lack of proactive steps by the administration to address this issue, emphasizing the need for immediate action to ensure the safety of commuters. "For years, our pleas for measures to enhance safety on the Jammu-Srinagar highway have gone unanswered. It is unacceptable that lives continue to be lost due to the lack of effective interventions," Shaheen stated. He urged the administration to take steps to curb the occurrence of such fatal accidents and also prioritize the installation of crash barriers along vulnerable stretches of the National highway.

Expressing deep sorrow and sympathy with the families of the deceased, Shaheen emphasizes the critical importance of providing timely assistance to ensure that the victims are laid to rest in their hometowns with dignity and respect.

## Sajad Lone Express Grief Over Ramban Road Mishap

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 29 (KNS): People's Conference chief Sajad Lone on Friday expressed shock and grief over the loss of lives in a road accident on Jammu-Srinagar highway

"Heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in a road accident in Ramban," Sajad Lone said in a post on X.

Earlier, ten people, most of them said to be non-locals, were killed when a Taxi (Tavera) carrying passengers on way to Kashmir from Jammu rolled down about 300 meters deep gorge near Battery Chashma along Jammu-Srinagar highway midnight. (KNS).

## Altaf Bukhari Express Grief Over Ramban Road Accident

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 29: The Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari on Friday expressed shock and grief over the loss of lives in a road accident on Jammu-Srinagar highway.

"Devastated by the tragic accident near Battery Chashma on national highway, where 10 people are feared dead," he said in a post on X.

"My deepest condolences to the families of the deceased. Grateful for the relentless efforts of district administration Ramban and local youth who carried out this difficult rescue operation in deep gorge," he wrote.

"Appreciating local heroes like Banihal volunteers, civil QRT volunteers Ramban, and civil QRT volunteers Ramssoo, and other volunteers always available for rescue operations on the national highway.

Sending prayers for strength and healing to all affected families," Bukhari added. (KNS).

## Sericulture Department embarks on Doubling Silkworm Seed Production in J&K Indigenously

■ **HT News Network**

Baramulla, March 29 (KNS): Ajaz Ahmad Bhat (IAS), Director Sericulture J&K, in a significant move during his visit to the Silkworm Seed Station Tarhama in District Baramulla announced that the Department of Sericulture is actively working on doubling Silkworm Seed Production in U.T of Jammu & Kashmir indigenously. During his visit to the Seed Station Tarhama he inspected the ongoing up-gradation of the existing Silkworm Seed Unit and mulberry nurseries and farmers existing in the Station.

Speaking on the occasion Mr. Ajaz Ahmad Bhat (IAS), said that a proactive approach and concerted efforts are needed to make U.T of J&K self sufficient in Silkworm Seed production for which the department will rope in Silkworm Rearing in doubling the Silkworm Seed Production all across J&K.

This initiative will certainly pave way for making the U.T of J&K self-reliant in Silkworm Seed production as envisioned under the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP). The Seed Station Tarhama hosts a sprawling 110 Kanals Mulberry Farm with 10,000 mul-



berry plants of Dwarf and Tall plantation of exotic Mulberry varieties. The mulberry foliage harvested in the farm are being utilized in the Seed Station Tarhama for seed crop rearing and producing F1 Silkworm Seed for distribution among Silkworm Rearing of Kashmir Division including adjacent villages of Seed Station for Commercial Silkworm Cocoon Crop. Moreover, the commer-

cial seed production capacity of seed Station is 1.0 lac to 1.20 lac DFLs capacity by rearing 1000 P1 DFLs to 1200 P1 DFLs.

During his visit, he took review meeting with the officers of Seed Station and stressed on the need to remove all the bottlenecks which hamper the progress of technical operations in the Seed Station Tarhama with respect to availability and optimum use of vital infrastructure at the Seed Station Tarhama. Moreover, he assured that the matter will be taken up with the authority for streamlining the operations at the Silkworm Seed Station.

Addressing the gathering, the Director urged silkworm rearers and farmers from adjacent villages to actively participate in silkworm seed production in addition to their silkworm rearing activities in order to bolster their income significantly. He pledged the department's commitment to provide technical guidance and support to interested individuals venturing into silkworm seed production. This move aims to enhancing productivity and doubling the production of Double Hybrid Silkworm Seed in J&K.

The Manager Seed, Basic Seed Station, Mirgund and other officers were also present on the occasion. (KNS)

# Health Benefits of Dates



SAHIL MANZOOR

**D**ates are sweet; dates are delicious; and dates are tasty. Dates are available in the market throughout the year for the preparation of different mixtures of dry fruits and many other things. Dates are being cultivated in Saudi Arabia in the months of August to mid-November every year. Besides it, dates are also cultivated in other countries like Egypt, Iran, the UAE, Pakistan, etc. There are tremendous benefits to dates, and during the holy month of Ramadan, the demand increases.

But on the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan, the demand increased, so the Muslims who are fasting like to break their fast with a few dates for some religious reasons. Breaking a fast with few dates is a Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (saw). There are many date varieties found in the market, ranging from low quality to the best quality, that are being sold to customers. Now it has been believed that breaking a fast with a few dates is a Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad.

Dates contain numerous health benefits, like vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Dates are packed with fiber, which has many good health benefits as it cleans our stomach and keeps our bowels healthy. Eating dates increases your mineral quantity and provides you with vitamins for good health. These ancient cultivated fruits, which have thrived for thousands of years in the region, aren't just delicious; they're chock-full of tremendous health benefits. A Lot of Fiber-Packed Goodness Dates are just packed with fiber; in fact,

according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one pitted date contains 1.6 grams (that's six percent of the recommended daily intake). The indigestible parts of plant

ing dates is one of the best ways to keep your heart ticking like a clock. They are a rich source of potassium, which, according to some studies, is believed to reduce the



food are essential for keeping your colon healthy; what's more, the insoluble and soluble fibers found in dates help the colon work optimally. A healthy colon means you are less likely to suffer from colitis and colon cancer.

More fiber also helps aid digestion by softening and increasing the weight and size of your stool, making it easier to pass, and preventing constipation and hemorrhoids. Additionally, dietary fiber is known to decrease cholesterol levels, especially the "bad" type, LDL, and fight and prevent obesity. In "Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition," it was reported that since the fiber in dates is primarily insoluble, it binds to fat and cholesterol and carries them out of the body.

Helping You Have a Healthy Heart Eat-

risk of stroke and other heart-related diseases. And we've already mentioned that this sweet brown fruit is a healthy (and tasty) way to reduce levels of LDL cholesterol, which seriously influences heart issues, including heart disease and stroke. Apparently, to get the most out of your dates, you should soak them overnight, then crush them before you eat them first thing the next morning.

It increases your intake of essential minerals and vitamins. A 2003 study in the "International Journal of Food, Science, and Nutrition" called dates "an almost ideal food, providing a wide range of essential nutrients and potential health benefits." The study concluded that dates have at least 15 minerals, numerous amino acids, and fairly good unsaturated

fatty acids. They also have a host of vitamins and are considered a superfood for strengthening bones, enabling us to fight off diseases like osteoporosis when we're older, and keeping blood strong and healthy. Here's how some of the major minerals, nutrients, and vitamins found in these age-old fruits can help you:

**Potassium:** We've already touched on how potassium is excellent for your heart, but it also builds muscle, controls fluid balance, and regulates blood pressure.

**Copper:** This trace mineral is crucial for the production of hemoglobin and red blood cells, increases the absorption of iron, and boosts energy. It also helps maintain a healthy metabolism and prevent premature aging. **Magnesium:** Known for its anti-inflammatory benefits, this mineral has several functions within the body. It reduces blood pressure, the risk of cardiovascular disease, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, and other health problems related to inflammation.

**Selenium:** Researchers have proven selenium is a powerful anti-cancer agent. It is great for boosting immunity. **Iron:** As they're an excellent source of iron, dates are excellent for people with anemia. Iron is important for making red blood cells and helping them carry oxygen to the cells in your body. **Vitamin B6:** A study in JAMA Internal Medicine found getting enough B6 is associated with improved brain performance and better test scores. It is also used to build muscle and grow hair and nails. **Niacin:** This is an important vitamin your body uses to help break down food into energy and to assist with nerve function. **Vitamin A:** Vitamin A is needed for protecting the eyes, skin, and mucous membranes.

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## NEWS

### Try Fennel Seed Water To Achieve These Amazing Health Benefits



**F**ennel seeds water, also known as fennel tea or fennel-infused water, offers several health benefits due to its nutritional composition and bioactive compounds. Incorporating fennel seed water into your diet can contribute to overall health and well-being when consumed as part of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.

#### 1. Digestive aid

Fennel seeds contain volatile oils like anethole, which have been shown to stimulate the production of digestive enzymes. This aids in digestion, reduces bloating, and relieves constipation by promoting smooth bowel movements.

#### 2. Reduces gas and bloating

Fennel seeds possess carminative properties, which help to relax the muscles in the gastrointestinal tract, reducing gas and bloating.

#### 3. Relieves indigestion and heartburn

The soothing properties of fennel seed water can help alleviate indigestion and heartburn by calming the digestive system and reducing acidity.

#### 4. Anti-inflammatory effects

Fennel seeds contain anti-inflammatory compounds such as flavonoids and phenolic acids, which can help reduce inflammation in the body, potentially offering relief from conditions like arthritis or inflammatory bowel diseases.

#### 5. Antioxidant properties

Fennel seeds are rich in antioxidants like polyphenols, which help neutralise harmful free radicals in the body. This can protect cells from oxidative damage and reduce the risk of chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease.

#### 6. Regulates blood sugar levels

Some studies suggest that compounds in fennel seeds may help regulate blood sugar levels by improving insulin sensitivity and reducing blood sugar spikes after meals. This can be beneficial for individuals with diabetes or those at risk of developing the condition.

#### 7. Supports weight loss

Fennel seed water can aid in weight loss by suppressing appetite, promoting feelings of fullness, and boosting metabolism. Additionally, its diuretic properties may help reduce water retention and bloating.

#### 8. Improves eye health

Fennel seeds are a good source of vitamin A, which is essential for maintaining healthy vision. Consuming fennel seeds water regularly may help protect against age-related macular degeneration and other eye conditions.

## How Calcium and Vitamin D Supplements Can Affect the Risk of Dying by Cancer and Heart Disease

**A** new study looks at how common supplements are associated with mortality risk from heart disease and cancer.

The study found that women taking calcium and vitamin D had a lower risk of dying from cancer.

But women had a slightly increased risk of dying from heart disease if they were postmenopausal.

Calcium and vitamin D supplements appear to lower the risk of dying from cancer, and,

potentially, slightly increase the risk of dying from heart disease in postmenopausal women, new research suggests.

The Women's Health Initiative (WHI) previously investigated the health effects of daily calcium and vitamin D supplementation in postmenopausal women but didn't notice any significant effects.

The recent report, published this month in the Annals of Internal Medicine, looked at follow-up death data on those participants to identify the longer-term



health effects associated with calcium and vitamin D (CaD) supplementation.

In the United States, older women's diets tend to lack vitamin D and calcium, past evidence suggests, causing many doctors to recommend supplementation to those in this age group.

"This study highlights the complex relationship between supplements and biological effects and clinical outcomes, and the need for more research in this field," Dr. Cheng-Han Chen, board-certified interventional cardiologist and medical director of the Structural Heart

Program at MemorialCare Saddleback Medical Center in Laguna Hills, CA, told Healthline.

Chen was not involved in the study.

Calcium and vitamin D supplements appear to lower the risk of cancer mortality

The researchers evaluated health data gathered from the WHI's trial in addition to National Death Index data to determine if long-term daily calcium and vitamin D supplements impacted women's risk of cancer or heart disease.

## Smoking May Lead to Weight Gain, Increased Belly Fat

**M**any don't quit smoking out of fear they will gain weight. Weight gain is typical after quitting smoking because nicotine suppresses appetite. However, a new study indicates that smoking can also contribute to weight gain. In particular, it increases unhealthy visceral fat.

People can avoid weight gain after quitting by changing their lifestyle.

Quitting smoking has many potential health benefits. Trusted Source. It can decrease your risk for heart disease, lung disease, and cancer. It can even add as many as ten years to your life. Many people would like to quit but are reluctant to try because they fear that they will gain weight. However, according to the findings of a new study Trusted Source published in the journal Addiction, continuing to smoke may also contribute to weight gain. The study found that both starting smoking and lifetime



smoking may increase a person's abdominal fat.

This was especially true for visceral fat, the fat buried in the abdomen. This type of fat is associated with a greater risk of heart disease, stroke, dementia, and diabetes.

So, while stopping smoking might lead to some short-term weight gain, in the long run, if you don't stop, you could increase belly fat and put your health at greater risk.

The genetic link between smoking and abdominal fat To study the problem, researchers at the NNF Center for Basic Metabolic Research at the University

of Copenhagen used two large European ancestry studies.

These studies included 1.2 million individuals who had started smoking and more than 450,000 who were lifetime smokers.

The researchers also had body fat distribution data for a study including more than 600,000 people. They used a technique called "Mendelian randomization" to see whether smoking causes increased body fat.

This method of statistical analysis provides scientists with genetic proof that a particular behavior is actually causing the

observed effect.

They first looked at the genetic studies to determine what genes are linked to smoking and body fat distribution. They were then able to use this information to see if people with the genes linked to smoking also had a different body fat distribution.

They additionally sought to rule out other factors that might have influenced the outcome, such as alcohol use, risk-taking behavior, ADHD, and socioeconomic status. Lauren Mahesri, RDN, LD, from The Pediatric Dietitian, explained that the connection between smoking and a variety of metabolic disorders — such as high cholesterol, insulin resistance, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes — is well known. "Although the mechanism of this connection is not fully understood, it's likely that these metabolic disorders are the connection between smoking and increased visceral fat," she stated.

## Benefits of Cold Water Immersion May Lack Quality Science, Report Says

**A** new review found the Wim Hof Method, a form of the cold water immersion therapy, lacks sufficient scientific evidence and needs further investigation.

While cold water immersion therapy may offer some potential benefits, it may not be safe for everyone.

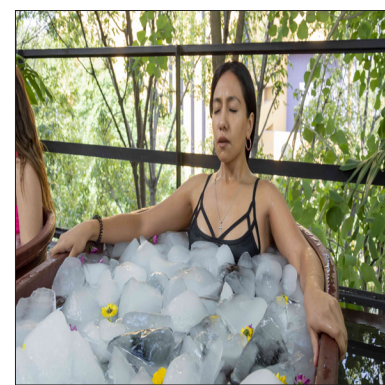
A 2022 lawsuit was filed against Wim Hof after a teenage girl drowned and other people have allegedly drowned after practicing this form of cold water exposure.

Experts recommend starting a cold plunge practice with a warm-up, choosing a safe temperature, and gradually increasing the duration over time.

The cold water plunge has become a wellness trend in recent years, with many health influencers and experts touting its benefits, from reduced inflammation to heart and weight loss.

Wim Hof, an extreme athlete from the Netherlands and founder of the Wim Hof Method (WHM) is widely known for breaking records in cold water exposure. The "Iceman's" method combines cold therapy and a specific breathing technique designed to build mind-body resilience.

Proponents of the Wim Hof Method praise this practice for its health



benefits, but adverse reactions and drownings tied to the technique have been reported.

Now, new research brings the health benefits of the Wim Hof Method into question. A systematic review, published March 13 in PLOS ONE Trusted Source, was unable to validate the effectiveness of this particular form of cold water therapy.

"The most compelling aspect of this study is its exploration of the potential benefits of the Wim Hof Method on reducing inflammation in healthy participants," study author Dr. Omar Almahayni from Warwick Medical School at the University of Warwick, told Healthline.

"However, given that all studies included in our systematic review exhibit 'high concern' for risk bias, it is important to acknowledge that

the Wim Hof method is still in its early stages of investigation, with limited trials conducted thus far. Due to the low methodological quality and small sample sizes across these studies, caution should be exercised in interpreting the findings," Almahayni said.

Can cold therapy reduce inflammation?

While more studies on the benefits of the Wim Hof Method are needed, the results did show promising findings in the inflammatory response category.

"The focus of future studies should further investigate the benefits of WHM in non-healthy participants with inflammatory disorders and explore the use of Wim Hof breathing method to enhance exercise performance," a spokesperson for Wim Hof told Healthline.

Almahayni said the Wim Hof Method could potentially help lower inflammation in people with inflammatory disorders, but cannot be prescribed without further, more rigorous research.

"To be able to recommend Wim Hof Method in an unwell population, future trials should publish a protocol outlining their experiment before starting the trial, increase the sample size, and make sure to account for loss to follow-up," Almahayni noted.

# Smith to Hardik on crowd abuse: 'Block it out, it's all irrelevant'

**NEW DELHI:** Smith, target of constant heckling across the globe a few years ago for his role in the 2018 Newlands ball-tampering scandal, said that Hardik needed support from his team-mates at Mumbai Indians, including from Rohit Sharma, who Hardik replaced as captain ahead of IPL 2024 after a 11-year stint.

"I'd try and just say, to block it out, it's all irrelevant," Smith said on ESPNcricinfo's TimeOut show. "No one outside knows what you are going through. No one [from outside] is in that change room."

Smith was handed a year-long ban by Cricket Australia after admitting to "leadership failure" in the Newlands Test, and was also forced to "step down" as Rajasthan Royals captain in IPL 2018. He said he had treated the heckling he had experienced - including at the 2019 ODI World Cup in England where fans chanted "cheat" - as "white noise".

But can the abuse from fans, coupled with criticism of his captaincy in Mumbai Indians' back-to-back losses in IPL 2024 by pundits, impact Hardik adversely?

Smith suggested that Hardik might have been surprised at the reception because it is not often India's top players are booed by fans. It is not unprecedented, though, with Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar and Ravi Shastri being at the receiving end at various points in their careers.

"Personally, for me, it doesn't bother me. I don't care. I don't pay any attention," Smith said. "You know it's all white noise, but certainly players do hear things and everyone's entitled to their own emotions and how they respond to those."

"So is it affecting him [Hardik]? Maybe. It's possible. He probably hasn't experienced that before in, in any walk of life. So it's natural, I suppose, and particularly being in India and a star Indian player, to be in that position where some fans



are booing you, it's certainly something he wouldn't have experienced."

It has been a poor start for Mumbai Indians to IPL 2024, where they have suffered two defeats in two games, first against Gujarat Titans in front of a near sellout crowd in Ahmedabad, and then in Hyderabad where Sunrisers Hyderabad registered the highest IPL total, which Mumbai lost by 31 runs. Smith said that while he could understand the Ahmedabad crowd coming down heavily on Hardik as he left Titans to rejoin Mumbai Indians. However, he failed to get the "context" of why fans in Hyderabad joined in.

Hardik was picked by Titans and appointed captain immediately after Mumbai Indians released him ahead of the 2022 mega IPL auction. Titans won the IPL in their maiden season and reached the final in 2023, establishing Hardik as a successful leader. Last November,

though, Mumbai Indians pulled off a coup of sorts by bringing Hardik back into their fold via a monetary trade, details of which have remained a source of intrigue. Immediately after that, Hardik was appointed captain.

In his first media briefing, responding to a query on whether he had spoken with his predecessor Rohit, Hardik was vague, triggering a critical response including vitriolic trolling on social media.

In 2017, Smith was installed as captain at Rising Pune Supergiant replacing MS Dhoni, who had then recently retired as India's white-ball captain. It was a challenging moment for Smith, but he said that Dhoni had supported him all the way.

"It was an enjoyable season and we had some success that year [2017], I suppose, which helped as well," he said. "But MS was great with everything that he did. He was supportive, he helped me in any way that he could. He was great

behind the stumps, obviously. He's got a great view of what's going on in the game and the angles that sort of take place on the field, and was able to sort those out and get people in the right areas."

"Hardik is in the middle of a challenging time, losing the first two games their IPL season. It's a big one for him. He's filling big shoes with Rohit Sharma, who's been the most successful captain [with Dhoni] in IPL history, lifting five titles, and it hasn't started well for him."

"So he's under a little bit of pressure at the moment and it'll be interesting to see what the reception's like in their first home game at Wankhede in a couple of days' time. We have heard a few boos going around at the grounds, which... that's been disappointing from my aspect. But I'm intrigued to see what the reception's like in Mumbai. We know how big a star Rohit is and how much he is loved inside that stadium."

# Zak Crawley: England 'need to stay positive' despite defeat to India

**RANCHI:** Zak Crawley says that England will not allow their shortcomings in India to derail their positive approach to Test cricket but admits that a bit of "refinement" is needed to capitalise on their positions of dominance, such as the one that slipped through their fingers in the fourth Test in Ranchi last month.

Speaking at the Kia Oval on the eve of the county season, Crawley insisted that England had never lost faith in their attacking methods, even though they were distinctly second-best by the time the series culminated in an innings defeat inside three days in Dharamsala.

The 4-1 series scoreline, he added, could have been very different had England seized their opportunity in Ranchi. After two days of the fourth Test, India were facing a 100-plus first-innings deficit having slipped to 177 for 7 in reply to 353, only for Dhruv Jurel's hard-fought 90 to turn the tide and allow his team's spinners to put the pressure back on England.

"We never really lost faith and had the same attitude, as you can tell from some of our press!" Crawley said, as he joked about some of the more outlandish expressions of optimism that came out of the England camp in the course of the tour.

"We had the same attitude throughout and I don't think that is arrogance. We genuinely believed in ourselves and thought we could win the series. We were in all the games. We certainly weren't in the games when I was in India last time, so we gave ourselves a good chance and we weren't quite clinical enough, like they were, to be fair."

"We should have won in Ranchi to make it 2-2 and then you never know how the last one goes, but it is always hard to wrestle the momentum back. Over five days, their skills are always going to come out, and they are a phenomenal team. It was a really enjoyable tour though, we gave it a good crack, and there is a lot



to learn from."

On a personal level, Crawley was pleased with his own performances, having been England's leading performer for the second major series in a row, with 407 runs at 40.70 in the five Tests to go alongside his 480 at 53.33 in the Ashes. Given his struggles in the preceding two years, in which he had averaged 20.57 across 20 Tests between January 2021 and November 2022, that represented a significant uptick in fortunes.

"Hopefully I can push on from here but I certainly feel in a better place now than I did at the start of last year," Crawley said. "Whenever I try to maintain [my form], I think you start getting worse, so I am always looking to improve."

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