

Lucknow Super Giants
 Want To Ease Their
 Captain Back



Health Secretary Pays Surprise
 Visit To IMHANS, Inspects
 Functioning

PJ3

PJ12

Cong Trying To Push Country Into Darkness: Amit Shah

HT News Network

0, Apr 1: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday accused the Congress-led UPA of trying to push the country into darkness during its rule and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has worked to make India a safe and prosperous nation in the last 10 years.

Addressing a public meeting here, Shah said Modi has worked to raise the flag of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the country in the world. People are now all geared up to make Modi the Prime Minister of the country for the third straight time. However, Shah cautioned the party workers



that for this to happen, they would have to ensure every voter goes out to vote. "We have prepared an action

plan, which is a bit difficult, but it is not difficult for BJP workers, and they do hard work well."

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Roads Or Death Traps: Accidents In J&K Claim 4251 Lives In 5 years

28,896 Accidents, 37,725 Injuries Reported, Reveals RTI; Traffic Dept Says Efforts On To Enhance Road Safety

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: Startling data released by the traffic headquarters in Jammu and Kashmir has shed light on the alarming number of road accidents in the Union Territory, with a huge toll on human lives and well-being.

Over the past five years, J&K has witnessed a total of 28,896 road accidents, resulting in 4,251 fatalities and 37,725 injuries, the data, accessed by the



news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reveals. Jammu region has recorded the highest number of road accidents.

In 2019, Jammu reported 3,907 road accidents, leading to 695 fatalities and 4,987 injuries, while the Kashmir division recorded 1,889 accidents, resulting in 301 deaths and 2,545 injuries.

In the following years, the Jammu division reported a higher number of accidents

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

DGP Swain Assures Robust Security Measures Ahead Of Lok Sabha Elections

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: As anticipation builds for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Director General of Police (DGP) RR Swain has reaffirmed the commitment

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



Weather Improves After Rain In Kashmir

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 1: After intermittent rains and snowfall in higher reaches for the past three days, the weather improved across Jammu and Kashmir on Monday.

The Meteorological Centre Srinagar said on Monday that the weather is likely to remain dry for the next 24 hours.

There is a possibility of rain or snow at scattered, isolated places on April 3, while rain and snow could occur at scattered places on April 6-7. Thereafter, the weather is likely to remain dry until April 11, MeT said.

Kashmir plains were lashed by widespread light to moderate rains, while the upper reaches experienced fresh snowfall during the past several

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

NEWS BRIEF

58 Cases Registered Against Drug Peddlers, 91 Arrested In Baramulla

SRINAGAR, APR 1: Police in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla District said on Monday that it has registered 58 cases against drug peddlers this year.

Police said 91 drug peddlers were also arrested during the first three months of the year.

"Police have also registered 58 cases under the NDPS Act and arrested 91 drug peddlers, which include 11 hard-core drug peddlers who have been booked under PIT NDPS, and seized 11 vehicles that were used for NDPS activities in Baramulla district during the first quarter of 2024," a

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Police Arrests Two Absconders In Kulgam

SRINAGAR, APR 01: Continuing its crackdown against absconders, Police in Kulgam arrested two absconders who were evading their arrests from last many years.

A police party headed by SHO Police Station DH Pora arrested two absconders namely Mohd Rafiq Dar son of Ghulam Rasool Dar resident of Ladgoor Rambhama, involved in case FIR No. 108/2016 under section 147, 148, 341, 336 RPC and Mohd Yousuf Wagay son of Ghulam Ahmad Wagay resident of Harpora Nagam, involved in case FIR No. 80/2015 under section 148, 323, 341, 506 RPC of Police Station DH Pora.

Warrant of arrest was issued by the Hon'ble Court of Judicial Magistrate

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Over 91,000 tourists visit Sonamarg in first quarter of 2024

GANDERBAL, APR 01: Sonamarg, a renowned tourist destination in central Kashmir, witnessed a significant increase in visitors in the first three months of this year, with approximately 91,586 tourists, including 3,079 foreigners, exploring the area.

Situated in the picturesque hills of Ganderbal district, Sonamarg has become a premier attraction for both local and non-local travellers in Kashmir.

Since the beginning of the year, there has been a remarkable surge in tourism, with 91,586 tourists, including 3,079, visiting the region in January and February alone, an official informed the news agency—Kashmir

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Defence Exports Touch Record Over Rs 21,000 Crore In 2023-24

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, APR 1: Riding on a series of policy reforms and Ease of Doing business initiatives of the Government, the Defence exports have increased to a record high of Rs 21,083 crore in 2023-24, witnessing a growth of 32.5 per cent over the last financial

year, according to an official statement from the Ministry of Defence.

Defence exports have touched a record Rs 21,083 crore (approx. US\$ 2.63 Billion) in the Financial Year 2023-24, a growth of 32.5 per cent over the last fiscal when the figure was Rs 15,920 crore. The recent figures indicate that



the defence exports have grown by 31 times in the last 10 years as compared to FY 2013-14, the government said.

"Delighted to inform everyone that the Indian Defence Exports have scaled to unprecedented heights and crossed Rs 21000 crore mark for the first time

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Sheyphali Sharan Takes Charge As Principal DG PIB

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAR 01: Sheyphali B. Sharan has today assumed



charge as the Principal Director General, Press Information Bureau upon superannuation of Manish Desai yesterday. Sharan is an officer of the 1990 batch of Indian Information Service.

During an illustrious career spanning over three decades, she has held cadre portfolios of largely looking after media publicity

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Emergency Landing Facility Drill IAF's Chinook, Mi-17 Helicopters To Land On Highway In J&K

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 1: Indian Air Force Chinook and Mi-17 helicopters will land on a stretch of the national highway linking Kashmir with the rest of the country as part of an Emergency Landing Facility (ELF) drill, the first such exercise in Jammu and

Kashmir, officials said on Monday. According to the officials, around two sorties of the US-manufactured Chinook and the Russian-made Mi-17 helicopters will land on the Wanpoh-Sangam stretch of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway during the intervening night of Monday

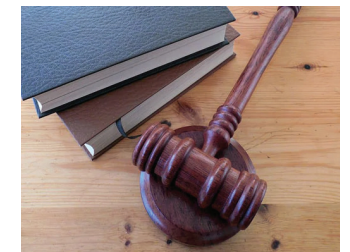
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Court Finds Lapses In Rs 91 Crore Bank Scam Case, Orders CBI To Conduct Further Probe

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: In a significant development concerning the high-profile Rs 91 crore bank scam case, Principal Sessions Judge Jammu, has returned the challan to the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



NC Leads Way By Announcing First Candidate For Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha Seat 'Other Parties Expected To Follow Suit Soon'

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: In a noteworthy decision, the National Conference (NC) under the leadership of Dr Farooq Abdullah has declared Mian Altaf Ahmad as its candidate for the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency, covering Anantnag, Kulgam, Rajouri, and other areas.

This declaration marks the initiation of the electoral battle



in the region, with Mian Altaf Ahmad becoming the first official candidate named by any political party for this pivotal constituency.

Omar Abdullah, the Vice President of the National Conference (NC), asserted that Mian Altaf is the ideal candidate for the Anantnag-Rajouri constituency, emphasizing his commitment to a campaign devoid of religious or other divisive lines.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Udhampur Lok Sabha Seat: From 40 Contenders In 1967 To Mere 12 In 2024

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: The Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency in Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a fascinating evolution in the number and diversity of candidates vying for parliamentary representation. From a modest three contenders in its debut election to a staggering 40 candidates in 1996, the electoral landscape of Udhampur has reflected the dynamic political fervor of the region. Since its establishment in 1967, the constituency has traversed a remarkable trajectory.

As per the news agency—Kashmir



News Observer (KNO), 1967: In its inaugural election, Udhampur saw a modest contest with three candidates. The contenders included representatives from Congress, Bharatiya Jan Sangh, and

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Kashmir Records Growth Of Commercial Floriculture Start-Ups, Entrepreneurs Script Success

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: Every morning Waseem Ahmad Wani (26) leaves his home with a variety of flower saplings towards Srinagar-Baramulla highway.

He stations at multiple places along the highway selling a variety of native as well as exotic flower saplings to the people.

This has been his routine during the spring and summer seasons for the last three years and gives him enough returns to make ends meet.

"I was earlier working in a private company which gave me a very low salary. In 2021, I learned about the scope of floriculture in Kashmir and utilized my five marlas of agriculture land growing a variety of follower saplings," he told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

J&K Police Welcomes 915 New Constables for Enhanced Security, 365 to Serve in Kashmir Zone

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 01: In a significant development aimed at bolstering security measures and addressing gender-based violence, Jammu and Kashmir Police has welcomed 915 women constables following the formation of two dedicated women battalions. These



women constables will play a crucial role in various law enforcement activities, including anti-terrorism operations, across the region.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the formation of women police battalions in Jammu and Kashmir was initiated to address the shortage of female personnel at various levels within the police force. Recognizing the importance of gender diversity and inclusivity in law enforcement, the Jammu and Kashmir government proposed the establishment of these battalions to the Union Home Ministry.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

Cong Trying.....

he said. Shah said the action plan has to reach the doorstep of the voter and carry Modi's message.

He alleged that the Congress-led UPA government, which was in saddle for ten years from 2004 to 2014, made the future of the people dark. On the contrary, Modi worked hard to change every sector in the last ten years.

Shah said during this time Modi worked to secure the country, which earlier used to be rocked by bomb blasts. Under Modi's leadership, the work of eliminating terrorists was done by going inside Pakistan and conducting surgical strikes.

He said Modi has brought the country from the 11th to the fifth place in the global economy. Shah exuded confidence that if Modi becomes Prime Minister for the third time, then India will become the third-largest economy in the world.

He claimed that the BJP would win the coming Lok Sabha polls by bagging 70 per cent of the votes. (UNI)

Roads Or Death.....

compared to Kashmir. In 2020, Jammu witnessed 3,086 road accidents with 487 fatalities and 3,798 injuries, while Kashmir reported 1,774 accidents resulting in 241 deaths and 2,096 injuries.

The year 2021 saw Jammu division reporting 3,584 road accidents, leading to 560 fatalities and 4,640 injuries, whereas Kashmir witnessed 1,868 accidents, resulting in 214 deaths and 2,332 injuries.

Similarly, in 2022, the Jammu division recorded 3,886 accidents, with 562 fatalities and 5,554 injuries, while Kashmir reported 2,206 accidents, leading to 243 deaths and 2,818 injuries.

In 2023, the Jammu division reported 3,943 road accidents, resulting in 598 fatalities and 5,486 injuries, and the Kashmir division recorded 2,355 accidents, leading to 295 deaths and 2,983 injuries.

As of January 31, 2024, the current year has witnessed 398 road accidents, resulting in 55 fatalities and 486 injuries. Of these, the Jammu Division reported 284 road accidents, 38 fatalities, and 342 injuries, while the Kashmir Division reported 114 accidents, 17 fatalities, and 144 injuries.

This data was shared by the traffic headquarters of Jammu and Kashmir in response to an RTI application filed by activist Dr M M Shuja. The RTI was submitted on February 2, 2024, and the response was provided by the department on March 9 of the same year.

An official from the traffic department said efforts are constantly underway to mitigate road accidents and the factors contributing to them.

"The department is dedicated to raising awareness about road safety rules and regulations among the public. Initiatives are being taken to enhance the safe movement of two-wheeler traffic through awareness campaigns and strict enforcement measures, including issuing fines," he said, adding that collaboration with various NGOs further strengthens the efforts to ensure better road safety for everyone.

DGP Swain.....

of the security forces to uphold safety and security during the electoral process.

Talking to reporters in Kathua district, DGP Swain stated, "The election process has started. We are taking many steps to ensure the conduct of elections in a safe and secure environment. Keeping in mind the safety of voters and candidates, senior officers of the police force are involved in planning and management and coordinating with the central government and central agencies," DGP said.

Highlighting the significance of the forthcoming elections in the backdrop of Jammu and Kashmir's historic phase, DGP Swain emphasized the professionalism and dedication of the police force in facilitating a smooth electoral process.

"The police will professionally ensure a smooth conduct of elections at a time when J&K is going through a historic period," he added.

Security arrangements have been intensified across the Union Territory as part of the preparations for the elections.

Close coordination between local law enforcement agencies and central security forces is being maintained to address any potential security challenges.

With the recent developments and the evolving political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir, the upcoming Lok Sabha elections hold particular importance, both regionally and nationally.

The assurance of robust security measures from DGP Swain aims to instill confidence among voters and candidates alike, ensuring that the democratic process proceeds unhindered and in a peaceful manner.

As the election date draws nearer, all eyes will be on Jammu and Kashmir, where the convergence of democracy and

security dynamics will play a crucial role in shaping the future trajectory of the region.

Weather.....

days, plummeting the temperatures at the most weather stations in the valley.

The bright sun appeared with pleasant weather conditions in Srinagar and other parts of the Kashmir valley on Monday.

As per the MeT office, Srinagar had a low of 6.4°C during the intervening nights of Sunday and Monday. However, it was normal for the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir during this period of the season.

The tourist resort of Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district dipped to 0.7°C against 0.8°C the previous night, and it was 1.0°C below normal for the tourist spot in south Kashmir.

The ski resort of Gulmarg also witnessed a dip in the night temperature, recorded at -1.6°C against -1.2°C a day ago. It was 0.8°C below normal for the ski resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Monday, the MeT office said. (UNI)

Defence Exports.....

in the history of Independent India," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh posted on his social media platform handle 'X'.

The Defence Industry, including the private sector and Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), have made tremendous efforts to achieve the highest-ever defence exports. The private sector and the DPSUs have contributed about 60 per cent and 40 per cent respectively.

In addition, there has been a rise in the number of export authorisations issued to the defence exporters during FY 2023-24. From 1,414 export authorisations in FY 2022-23, the number jumped to 1,507 in FY 2023-24.

A comparative data of two decades that is the period from 2004-05 to 2013-14 and 2014-15 to 2023-24 reveals that there has been a growth of 21 times in defence exports. Total defence exports from 2004-05 to 2013-14 were Rs 4,312 crore, which has gone up to Rs 88,319 crore in the period from 2014-15 to 2023-24.

The remarkable growth has been achieved due to the policy reforms and 'Ease of Doing Business' initiatives brought in by the Government, in addition to the end-to-end digital solution provided to the Indian industries for promoting defence exports. This growth is a reflection of global acceptability of Indian defence products and technologies. (UNI)

Sheyphali.....

work as Press Information Bureau officer for Ministries such as Finance, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. She has also served as the Spokesperson for Election Commission of India.

In addition, she has worked on Central Staffing Scheme Deputations as Director in Ministry of Health (Department of Traditional Systems of Medicine/AYUSH (2002-2007)) and Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs 2013-2017) besides working on cadre post of OSD (Information Policy at Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2000-2002) as also as Director Administration and Finance at LSTV, Lok Sabha Secretariat in 2007-2008.

Upon assumption of charge, Ms Sharan was welcomed by senior officials of Press Information Bureau.

IAF's Chinook.....

and Tuesday. The work on the 3.5-km emergency landing strip was started in 2020 and completed late last year as part of the programme initiated by the IAF with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways for the creation of ELFs at different locations across the country.

Security has been heightened along the landing strip with additional personnel deployed to ensure that people do not stray close to the area, the officials said.

"Traffic on the highway has been diverted from Wanpoh to Sangam to bypass the Bijbehara emergency landing strip where trial landing and takeoff is scheduled," an official said.

Chinook helicopters, which have a top speed of 310 kmph, are used for lifting heavy weights. The main cabin can hold over 33 fully-equipped troops.

It can also be used for medical evacuation and the helicopter, which has a travel range of 741 km, can accommodate 24 stretchers. The Mi-17 helicopters can accommodate up to 35 troops.

Both these helicopters have been pressed into relief and rescue operations during natural disasters.

The IAF's ELF drill is to showcase the synergy and liaison between civil agencies, such as the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), district

administration and state police, and the air force towards the conduct of complex multi-faceted activities.

After this exercise, Jammu and Kashmir will be the first Union Territory to have operationalised an ELF. Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan are the three states where ELFs are currently operational. (Agencies)

Court Finds.....

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) while also raising serious questions on the investigation. The judge has directed the CBI to conduct further investigation, citing apparent lapses in the initial probe.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the order was issued during the hearing of chargesheets against Jhelum Industry, Jhelum Infra Project India Pvt. Ltd., and New Jammu Flour Mills RC. These firms were implicated in alleged illegal transactions and fraudulent activities related to loan accounts.

Principal Sessions Judge Sanjay Parihar expressed dissatisfaction with the investigation, stating that it appeared to be inadequate and lacking in depth. He noted that the investigating officer failed to pursue crucial lines of inquiry to uncover the truth behind the alleged scam.

The prosecution had accused the defendants of fraud and forgery, alleging that false documents were created to secure cash credit facilities from the complainant bank. However, the court observed that the forensic report from a handwriting expert yielded negative results, indicating a lack of substantive evidence.

Furthermore, the court criticized the CBI for failing to investigate the role of bank officials implicated in the scam. Judge Parihar emphasized the need for impartial and thorough investigation to rule out any possibility of evidence fabrication.

Against this backdrop, the court ordered further investigation into all three cases. The charge sheet was returned to the CBI Special Task Branch (Banking-Fraud Area), CBI Headquarters, New Delhi, with instructions to take appropriate action in accordance with the law.

The background of the case involves allegations against Raj Kumar Gupta, purportedly the promoter of the accused companies. Gupta and a representative of the complainant bank were alleged to have availed cash credit limits from Punjab & Sind Bank. Subsequent investigations revealed transactions totaling Rs 91 crore involving Jhelum Industries, Jhelum Infra Project India Pvt. Ltd., and New Jammu Flour Mills.

NC Leads Way.....

Abdullah highlighted Mian Altaf's extensive popularity across various societal segments, expressing confidence in his ability to garner substantial support from the electorate.

The announcement took place in the presence of several key party figures including Party General Secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar, State Secretary Chowdhary Ramzan, Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani, and Chief Spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq.

Mian Altaf Ahmad, a stalwart Gujjar leader and former Minister, brings with him a legacy deeply rooted in Kashmiri politics.

News agency KNS reported that hailing from the influential Mian family, Ahmad has served as a Minister and Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Kangan, Kashmir, since 1987, initially contesting under the banner of the Indian National Congress (INC) before joining the NC.

The political lineage of the Mian family traces back to Mian Nizamuddin, followed by his son Mian Bashir Ahmad, both of whom held vital positions as MLAs and Ministers.

The family's stronghold over Kangan is evident from their consecutive victories in nine Assembly elections since 1962. Mian Nizamuddin secured the seat in 1962, succeeded by his son Mian Bashir Ahmad, who won three subsequent elections. Mian Altaf Ahmad continued this legacy by triumphing in the Assembly elections of 1987, 1996, 2002, 2008, and 2014 from the same constituency.

The NC's decision to nominate Mian Altaf Ahmad for the Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary seat reflects a unified stance within the party.

A spokesperson for the NC expressed confidence in Ahmad's candidacy, emphasizing the party's anticipation of a significant voter turnout and a resounding mandate.

The spokesperson further underscored the importance of reclaiming Jammu and Kashmir's identity, "urging voters to thwart any attempts aimed at undermining the region's integrity".

The Mian family's widespread influence extends beyond Kangan, resonating strongly in Jammu's Rajouri and Poonch districts, now integral parts of the South

Kashmir Lok Sabha constituency. Their enduring political legacy and grassroots support position Mian Altaf Ahmad as a formidable contender in the upcoming elections, poised to navigate the complex socio-political landscape of South Kashmir.

J&K Police.....

Subsequently, the proposal received approval during a meeting of the State Administrative Council (SAC) chaired by the then Governor, Satyapal Malik, in 2019. Following the requisite recruitment and training processes, a total of 915 women constables have now joined the police department.

Among these newly recruited constables, 550 will be deployed in various districts of the Jammu Zone under Mahila Battalion One, while 365 will serve in districts across the Kashmir Zone as part of Mahila Battalion Two.

Following their passing out parade, these women constables will report to their respective zones, where they will be deployed based on operational requirements as determined by zone authorities.

The establishment of these women battalions was approved by the Home Ministry in June 2018, with one battalion designated for each of the Jammu and Kashmir regions. The formation of these battalions represents a significant investment in enhancing security measures and promoting gender equality within the police force.

Reports inform KNO that total expenditure incurred in the formation of these women battalions amounts to Rs 235.86 crore, with the central government contributing Rs 105.11 crore and the state government providing Rs 129.94 crore towards the initiative.

From 40.....

Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. Congress candidate GM Brigadier emerged victorious, setting the stage for subsequent electoral dynamics.

1971: The number of candidates doubled to eight, reflecting a growing political landscape. In addition to Congress and Bharatiya Jan Sangh, Shiromani Akali Dal also entered the fray. Political participation expanded, signaling increased interest in Udhampur's parliamentary seat.

1989: The electoral arena expanded further, with 24 candidates contesting from Udhampur. Independent candidates surged, comprising the majority of contenders. Congress, Janata Dal, BJP, Panthers Party, and Protist Bloc of India also fielded their nominees.

1996: Witnessed a record-breaking turnout, with an unprecedented 40 candidates vying for victory. Major parties such as BJP, Congress, Janata Dal, BSP, and Panthers Party contested alongside a significant contingent of 34 independent candidates. BJP candidate Chaman Lal Gupta emerged victorious amid fierce competition, exemplifying the fervor of electoral engagement.

2004: The number of candidates reduced to 20, reflecting a consolidation in political participation. Independent candidates remained notable, comprising a significant portion of the contestants. Despite fewer contenders, the electoral landscape remained vibrant with diverse political ideologies represented.

2024: In the forthcoming election, 12 candidates are vying for parliamentary representation, marking a continuation of the trend of declining candidate numbers. Major parties like Congress, BJP, and NC are fielding their nominees, alongside independent aspirants. While the number of candidates has decreased, the diversity of political representation remains integral to Udhampur's democratic discourse.

Kashmir Records.....

Wani said he sought assistance from the floriculture department in growing exotic flower saplings. "I installed a greenhouse and bought some exotic seeds to grow them here. I am now making good money out of this trade and I shall expand it to grow some more varieties in coming years," he said.

Like Wani scores of the educated youth are exploring commercial floriculture to generate income and employment.

Traditionally known for its saffron cultivation, the region is now embracing the blooming flower industry as a promising avenue for economic growth.

In recent years, several entrepre-

neurs have ventured into floriculture, drawn by the region's conducive climate and fertile soil, combined with increasing demand for flowers both domestically and internationally.

These start-ups are not only redefining the agricultural sector but also providing employment opportunities and contributing to the socio-economic development of the valley.

Another such start-up is "Kashmir Blossoms," founded by Muneer Shah, a young entrepreneur with a passion for floriculture. Shah, a native of Kashmir, recognized the potential of the flower industry and decided to capitalize on it. "Kashmir has a rich tradition of floriculture, and I saw an opportunity to modernize it by focusing on high-value flowers," said Shah.

Shah who hails from Narbal area said as many as 30 families in the village have been associated with commercial floriculture for the last three years. "It was me who started this business in my village and now we have more than 30 such businesses in my area," he said.

Moreover, the government's supportive policies and initiatives aimed at promoting floriculture have further propelled the growth of startups in the sector.

Officials said the subsidies on equipment, technical assistance, and access to markets have encouraged more individuals to venture into floriculture, thereby diversifying Kashmir's agricultural economy.

58 Cases.....

police statement said. Police said they recovered contraband and psychotropic substances worth Rs 1.37 crore in the black market. Meanwhile, the police have also attached property worth Rs 1.55 crore to drug peddlers this year in Baramulla district.

The property and vehicles attached to the district included four residential houses, a shopping complex, a land plot, two 120 cars, one Swift car, and a scooter belonging to drug peddlers in the district during the first quarter of 2024, they said.

"The property of the drug peddlers attached is worth Rs 1.55 crore," a police statement said.

They said the action was taken under Sections 68-E and 68-F (1) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985.

The police said the properties attached were identified as illegally acquired property during the course of investigations and inquiries conducted by the police.

"The properties were prima facie acquired from illicit trafficking in Narcotic drug and Psychotropic substances by the drug peddlers," the statement said.

This operation reaffirms the commitment of Police to combat the drug menace, the statement said.

The police have requested that community members come forward with any information regarding drug peddling in their neighbourhood.

"Persons found indulging in drug peddling will be dealt with as per law. Our consistent actions against drug peddlers should reassure the community members that we are making efforts to keep our society free from the scourge of the drug menace," police said. (UNI)

Police Arrests.....

1st Class DH Pora against the said accused persons. They were evading their arrests since 2016 and 2015 respectively. The duo was produced before the Hon'ble Court of Judicial Magistrate 1st Class DH Pora today.

Our consistent actions against anti-social elements should reassure the community members that we are making every effort to keep our society free of crime. Police has resolved to act as per law against those who indulge in criminal activities.

Over 91,000.....

News Observer (KNO). Local shopkeepers are delighted with the increase in tourist activity, expressing gratitude to the tourism department for its promotional efforts. They said the influx of tourists has surpassed previous records, indicating that the region is becoming increasingly appealing to travellers.

Members of the tourism sector enthusiastically welcome the tourists, seeing it as a revival of their businesses after nearly three years of hiatus. They urge the tourism department to continue promoting Sonamarg to attract even more visitors.



7 years on, Mini Secretariat Tral awaits completion

PULWAMA, APR 01: Despite elapsing seven years, a mini-secretariat in Tral town has been awaiting completion with no work carried out in the last four years.

Locals told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that the mini-secretariat Tral was sanctioned in 2017 with an estimated cost of around Rs 7 crore. But with no funds, the project is nowhere near completion.

They said that the mini-secretariat was sanctioned with an aim to provide all services in Tral and to cut down travel time as district headquarters Pulwama is around 30 Kms from Tral.

They said that a land which was under horticulture department was given for the purpose of the mini Secretariat but now over seven years have passed and the project is nowhere near completion.

They said that even after the completion of six years, only 30 percent of the work has been done and work is on complete halt for the last three years.

Mansoor Ahmad, a local, said that the residents of far flung areas of Tral are facing a lot of problems in order to reach Pulwama to get their work done.

"If mini Secretariat will be made functional at Tral, then they can avail benefit of every service at Tral only which will save their time and money as well," he said.



Health Secretary Pays Surprise Visit To IMHANS, Inspects Functioning

SRINAGAR, APR 01: Secretary, Health and Medical Education, Dr Syed Abid Rashid Shah, today paid a surprise visit to the Government Psychiatric Diseases Hospital (IMHANS-K), Srinagar.

He took a round of the hospital along with the HoD Psy-

chiatry, Professor Mohammed Maqbool Dar, Professor Arshad Hussien and Medical Superintendent, Dr Ajaz Ahmed Baba and visited various sections like the Crisis Management Area (Casualty), Wards, OPD, ECT, Chronic Wards, MRI and other

units and reviewed the functioning.

The Secretary interacted with the faculty, resident doctors and the staff besides the patients and attendants and asked them regarding the status of patient care facilities available in the hospital. He also sought feedback from the

patients and attendants regarding shortcomings, if any, in working of the hospital.

Dr Abid Rashid also reviewed the functioning of 24x7 Telemanas Counselling Center and was briefed about its functioning by Nodal Officer Telemanas, Professor Arshad Hussein.

Traffic Police To Realign Deployments Ahead Of Eid For Smooth Traffic Movement

SRINAGAR, APR 01: Anticipating a surge in traffic ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, Srinagar traffic police are gearing up to recalibrate their deployment across the city.

A senior traffic police officer told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that they expect an increase in traffic volume on Srinagar roads ahead of Eid -Ul-Fitr, and urged responsible parking behaviour from motorists to utilise designated parking areas rather than obstructing vehicular movement on roads.

"There is no doubt that traffic load will increase on Srinagar roads. We expect good behaviour from motorists and they should park their vehicles in parkings, not on roads," the senior officer said.

The officer said that in preparation for the anticipated traffic rush, particularly around the city center, traffic police were in process of strategizing their deployments too to ensure smooth and hassle-free commuting experiences.

"As Eid-ul-Fitr draws near, efforts are underway to facilitate safe and efficient traffic management in Srinagar. Traffic police's proactive measures aim to maintain order and safety on Srinagar's roads during this busy period," the officer added.

Notably, the last 10 days of the holy month of Ramadan traditionally sees increased footfall of shoppers purchasing items including clothing, groceries, bakery goods, mutton and other household items.

ZEO Office Hawal flays CEO, Director Education's Orders

SRINAGAR, APR 01: Office of the Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) Hawal is turning into a favouritism hub with concerned ZEO who recently attached superannuation not implementing the orders of the directorate, undermining the laid down rules and violating government directives.

As per the reports coming to the fore, the ZEO Office at Hawal has sidelined the recently issued order of rationalisation issued by Chief Education Officer Srinagar in view of the growing demand of rationalisation of teachers in district Srinagar.

The Order titled 'Rationalisation of Academic Teaching Staff across the UT of J&K' issued Vide Order Number CEO/Sgr/Estt/1880-96, dated:09-03-2024 is yet to be implemented to the fullest with several teachers posted at their earlier postings not asked to join the new places.

Sources informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that there were several teachers within the zone who were attached to different schools of the zone in the past. However, the latest order issued by CEO Srinagar and even vetted by Director of School Education Kashmir nullified the previous postings or verbal attachments of teachers. "While the latest order had to be implemented in letter and spirit, violations were found and several teachers have been asked not to join their new places of posting. All this is being done insidiously and the palms of a few clerks are being greased by those teachers so that they are not moved away from their choosiest places," says a senior official at the Director School Education office.

He added that LG Office may be informed about such gross irregularities within this particular zone and it is highly likely that action is taken against the matter in hand. "We are keeping a very close vigil on this zone and it is concerning that the rationalisation order has not been implemented on the ground. We may ask the concerned office to rectify the mistakes sans delay," the officer divulged.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

DEO Srinagar holds meeting with AROs, Nodal Officers

Reviews Status of Poll Staff Trainings, Progress about AMF at Polling Stations and SVEEP activities for Lok Sabha Elections

SRINAGAR, APR 01: District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Monday chaired a meeting of Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) and Election Nodal Officers here in his Office Chamber to review the progress of preparation with regard to conduct of upcoming Lok Sabha Elections-2024 for 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency in the District.

At the outset, the District Election Officer reviewed Assembly Segment wise status of Election Training imparted to the Polling Staff on handling of EVMs, VVPAT machines in all eight Assembly Constituencies of the Srinagar District.

The DEO was informed that as many as 7000 employees have been imparted Election related necessary Trainings in the District so far after the first Randomization process.

The DEO asked the concerned Nodal officers to expedite the process of



imparting Election related Trainings to the Poll Staff and undertake the process of conducting a second Randomization of Polling Staff in Srinagar.

The DEO directed the AROs and Officers of R&B, PDD, PHE and others concerned to work with utmost coordination to complete all assigned tasks related to the conduct of the Lok Sabha elections-2024. He

stressed that Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) should be ensured for PwD Voters at each and every Polling Station viz Permanent ramps, drinking water, toilet facilities as per norms of ECI.

The DEO also enjoined upon the Nodal Officer Postal Ballot & all AROs to take up all necessary arrangements for facilitating voting by Postal Ballots by various categories of



Voters including service voters, personnel on Poll Duty (EDC), migrant electors, absent electors, etc so that they cast their vote in upcoming Lok Sabha Election without any difficulty.

The meeting was attended by Nodal Officer Permissions, Zahoor Ahmad Mir, Assistant Returning Officer (ARO), Hazratbal, Syed Ahmad Kataria, Assistant Returning

Officer (ARO), Hazratbal, Dr, Khalid Hussian, Assistant Returning Officer (ARO), Headquarter, Mohammad Aslam Choudhary, Nodal Officer Trainings, Riyaz Ahmad Shah, Deputy District Election Officer, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Nodal Officer Postal Ballot, Shohab Latief, Nodal Officer ETPBS/IT, Mujtaba Ahmad Bandy and other concerned.

Waaih Ajlās Chare MaKeh Duniya Che Aakher Baiwafa

Death of Syed Aijaz Bukhari Widely Condolled



Bukhari family of Kreeri Bereaved Affarwat-XI President Sajad Lone expresses Profound grief Over the death of Young Soul Syed Ajaz Bukhari

KREERI, APR 01: Affarwat-XI Sports Club Baramulla President Sajad Lone on Saturday expressed profound grief and sorrow over the untimely death of Young Soul of Kreeri Syed Ajaz Bukhari at the age of 36. The deceased was suffering from brain tumour and finally lost the battle on Saturday evening. Affarwat-XI Sports Club Baramulla president Sajad Lone extended his deepest sympathies to the bereaved parents.

Affarwat-XI Sports Club management expressed profound grief and sorrow on the demise of Syed Ajaz Bukhari S/o. Syed Bashir Ahmad Bukhari R/o. Ziyarat Mohalla Kreeri. In a statement, the management of Affarwat-XI said, "Our thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved family in this hour of grief. May Almighty Allah grant the departed soul the highest place in Jannah. Ameen.

Bukhari Family of Kreeri Bereaved JK Teachers Forum Baramulla expressed deep shock & sorrow, offered heartfelt condolences and solidarity with the bereaved family

KREERI, APR 01: In a press statement issued here District President JKTF Baramulla Mr Tahir Ahmad Sofi expressed heartfelt condolence on the sad demise of Syed Aijaz Bukhari, who left for heavenly abode. Tahir Sofi shared his sympathies with the bereaved family and said that the whole teaching fraternity of District Baramulla stands with the bereaved family in this hour of grief and

sorrow. Mr Tahir Sofi prayed for the eternal peace and the highest Place in jannah to the departed soul besides prayed for patience to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss. The statement also added that the whole leadership of JKTF Baramulla including all zonal presidents also expressed their sympathies and solidarity with Family and prayed for the departed soul.

Basharat Bukhari, Irfan Hafeez Lone, Suhail Bukhari, G M Sofi, Mohd Yaqoob Wani and Asif Lone visit Bukhari residence at Kreeri to offer condolence

■ **Aashiq Hussain**

KREERI, APR 01: Son of Syed Bashir Ahmad Bukhari Syed Aijaz Bukhari passed away. His last rites were performed at kreeri baramulla in which hundreds participated. The demise of Syed Aijaz Bukhari has been widely mourned various, Social religious organizations have condoled with the bereaved family. Former law minister Syed Basharat Bukhari, DDC Member sangrama irfan hafeez lone, PDP Chief Spokesperson Suhail Bukhari, BJP Leader GM Sofi, and People's Conference District president Baramulla Asif lone visited Syed Bashir Bukharis residence at Kreeri to offer condolences. NC leader Mohd yaqoob condoles the said demise of Syed Aijaz Bukhari

In a condolence message wani expressed shock and grief over the sad demise of son of Syed Bashir Bukhari

Wani prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss.

BJP General Secretary Baramulla express heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved family especially with Syed Bashir Bukhari.

DDC Member Sangrama Advocate irfan hafeez lone, also expressed grief over this irreparable loss and prayed for the peace to the departed soul.

District president People's conference Asif lone expresses shock and sorrow on the sad demise of Syed Aijaz Bukhari. The deceased is also brother of Syed Wahid Bukhari.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

Voters Awareness program under SVEEP held at ANMT Doda

HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 01: A mega voters awareness programme was today organized at ANMT School Doda, here under the aegis of Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign.

The awareness programme was aimed to raise awareness about voting-related activities and promote electoral literacy among citizens, especially first-time voters in run up to the upcoming Lok Sabha Election 2024.

The program was attended by CMO, Dr. Om Kumar, DIO, Dr. Versha Sharma,



Principal ANMT Doda, Anusuya Bhan, Dr Javed

Parray, Mohammad Shafi Attu, Priyanka Manhas,

Indra Devi, Naveeda Anjum, Saima Kousar, Ram Raj, Sajad Hussain, Amjad Ali besides health staff participated in the awareness programme. Faizan Ali Trambo, on the occasion highlighted the significance of inspiring people about active participation in democratic process. Meanwhile, a pledge taking ceremony under SVEEP was also held to vote enthusiastically in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. CMO Doda, in his address, 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.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

Training on handling of EVMs, VVPATs for female staff of model polling stations held at Doda

HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 01: A training session on the handling of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines was today organised for female staff members of model polling stations here in the DC office.

The training aimed to ensure that female staff members are well-equipped with knowledge and skills required to effectively operate these machines during the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections-2024.

District Election Officer, Harvinder Singh briefed the



staff about their significant role in the election process and directed them to take full benefit of the training program and implement the same throughout their

election related duties. The training was conducted by District Level Master Trainers (DLMTs) and Assistant Level Master Trainers (ALMTs) who pro-

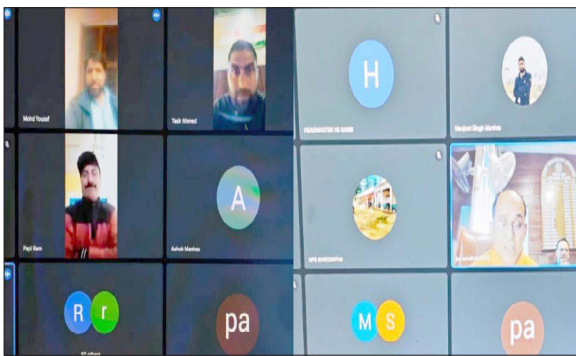
vided full guidance to participants in various facets of the electoral process and operator EVM/VVPAT.

The training session covered various topics related to the functioning and maintenance of EVMs and VVPATs, including how to setup and test the machines, how to troubleshoot common issues, and the importance of maintaining the integrity and security of the voting process. The participants also had the opportunity to practice using the machines in a simulated polling station environment. Chief Planning Officer Doda, Nodal Officer Trainings Doda and other concerned were also present at the event.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

Provision of AMF reviewed in all polling booths of Doda District

HT News Network



DODA, APRIL 01: The District Administration Doda has geared up the stakeholder departments to make provision of electricity, washrooms and cleanliness in polling Stations to meet the Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) prescribed by the Election Commission of India (ECI)

Chief Education Officer, Parkash Lal Thapa, Nodal Officer for AMF, under the direction of District Election Officer, Harvinder Singh has been tasked to meet the set standards. In this regard Chief Education Officer today held a virtual meeting with Booth level officers (BLOs) to take feedback about the Assured Minimum Facilities in every polling station in the district. The meeting was also attended by District Education Planning Officer, Dr. Anis Ahmed and 529 Booth Level Officers through Zoom. The CEO interacted with BLOs and instructed them to make sure basic arrangements including Power Supply,

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

Mega SVEEP event inspires voters in border sub-division Hiranagar

HT News Network

KATHUA, APRIL 01: The District Election Office Kathua orchestrated a monumental SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) event today in the Sports Stadium of Border Sub Division Hiranagar, marking a significant stride towards fostering voter awareness and participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The event commenced with a spectacular display of unity as students from KV Hiranagar crafted an impressive human pattern echoing the resounding slogan of 'Kathua Vote for Sure', emblematic of the overarching SVEEP campaign. This initiative aimed to galvanize every eligible voter to exercise their franchise in the forthcoming elections.

Adding artistic flair to the event, students from Girdhari Lal Dogra Memorial Degree College Hiranagar captivated the audience with a riveting nukkad natak, showcasing the



importance of electoral participation and civic duty. The highlight of the event was the grand SVEEP rally, featuring participants from Polytechnic College, Degree College, and local school students parading through the bustling main market areas of Hiranagar town. The rally was ceremoniously flagged off by ARO Hiranagar Rakesh Kumar, who underscored the significance of voter engagement in the democratic process. Addressing the gathering, SDM Hiranagar emphasized the pivotal role of electoral sensitization in shaping the democratic landscape. He reiterated the commitment of educating voters, particularly the youth, and ensuring inclusivity for all segments

of society, including women, persons with disabilities, and elderly. He urged voters not to forgo the opportunity to exercise their fundamental right to vote and underscored their indispensable role in fortifying the democratic ethos. The ARO Hiranagar expressed optimism that such concerted efforts would resonate with every voter, igniting a fervent desire to actively participate in the electoral process, which stands a testament to the vibrancy of Indian democracy. Nodal Officer SVEEP, Neeraj Bhargav, CDPO Hiranagar Priya Lakshmi, Tehsildar Hiranagar Shreya Sharma, EO MC Hiranagar Subhash Chandra, ZPEO Yograj Sharma and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion. As Kathua gears up for the Lok Sabha elections, the resounding success of the Mega SVEEP event serves as a beacon of hope, inspiring citizens to embrace their democratic responsibility and uphold the principles of inclusivity, equality and participatory governance.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

SVEEP program held at GHSS Boys Baderwah

HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 01: A Voters' Awareness programme under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative was today organized at Government Higher Secondary School Boys Baderwah here. The awareness programme was aimed to raise awareness about the voting-related activities and promote electoral literacy among citizens, especially first-time voters in run up to the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections 2024. Meanwhile, a pledge taking ceremony under SVEEP was also held. District Election Authority in Doda has initiated an extensive SVEEP Campaign Ahead of Lok Sabha Elections.

The SVEEP programmes were organized under the able guidance of District Election Officer Doda, Harvinder Singh in various government schools in the district.

The SVEEP activities witnessed active participation from citizens of all age groups and backgrounds.

The program also utilized digital platforms and social media channels to reach out to tech-savvy voters, ensuring comprehensive coverage and engagement across all segments of society. Additionally, interactive sessions and workshops were conducted in educational institutions to educate students about the importance of electoral participation and civic responsibility.

Through initiatives like SVEEP, the administration endeavours to strengthen the foundation of democracy by fostering a culture of active citizenship and voter engagement.

Police accords warm send-off to retiring officers on their superannuation in Awantipora

HT News Network

Awantipora April 01: Police in Awantipora organised farewell functions to accord warm send off to the officers who superannuated from their active services.

On attaining the age of superannuation SI Javid Ahmad Rather, SI Manzoor Ahmad were given a warm send off by all ranks of Police in Awantipora. On their retirement, a simple but impressive farewell party was organized at DPO Awantipora. Speaking on the occasion, SSP Awantipora Shri Ajaz Ahmed Zargar-JKPS appreciated the work and dedication of retiree officers towards their duties. He extended good wishes and healthy post-retirement life to them and presented gifts to retirees as a token of love and respect for their exceptional services. Moreover, DySP DAR Shri Abdul Gafoor-JKPS and other police officers were also present on the said occasion who also acknowledged the contribution of the outgoing officers and conveyed their best wishes to them for post-retirement life.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024; 'Mera Pehla Vote, Desh ke Liye' campaign under SVEEP held at GDC Ukhral

HT News Network

Srinagar 30 Mar : Hundreds of workers of the Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPIM) Saturday staged a protest in south Kashmir's Kulgam district against an erratic electricity supply and hike in power tariff. As per the news agency CNS, the CPIM workers, after hitting the road in Kulgam, were joined by the local populace and jointly raised slogans against the Power Development Department for plung-



ing the people into darkness by frequent power cuts and affecting the MSME sector due to shortage of power. "The Power Development Department is still following the schedule of winter and that too with the unscheduled cuts time and again. Jammu and Kashmir is bestowed with rich resources. The region has an approximate estimate of 24 thousand MWs of power potential yet the people are suffering," said CPIM in its memorandum addressed to LG Manoj Sinha. The CPIM party termed the power purchase agreement

between Ratle Hydro-electric Power Corporation Limited and J&K Power Development Corporation with Rajasthan Urja Vikas and IT services for a period of 40 years as an "injustice" with the people of J&K. It said that the people are finding it hard to pay the electricity bills as the enhancement in the tariff was done "without any proper survey". The party also listed six demands regarding electricity and sought the intervention of LG Manoj Sinha for its fulfillment.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

Vote ka Parv Desh ka Garv- Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye

HT News Network

SAMBA, APRIL 01: NSS Unit (KHIDMAT) of GDC Vijaypur today organized a screening of documentary on 'Types of Elections in India' under the banner of Vote ka Parv Desh ka Garv and Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye to students and faculty members of the college.

The documentary was a great inspiration for the students as the students came to know about the importance of voting and types of elections in India. NSS volunteers and other college students participated in the documentary

screening with great enthusiasm and zeal. The documentary deliberated upon the purpose to delineate constitutional obligations and to encourage staff and students to cast their vote. It also deliberated upon how India runs the world's biggest democratic elections. The event was organized under able guidance of Dr. (Prof.) Vandana Gupta, Principal of the college where she briefed the students about the fundamental rights and duties of the Indian Constitution. The idea of this programme is to educate college students about the importance of voting.

Illegal extraction & transportation of minerals

Police seizes 02 vehicles, arrests 02 persons in Sopore

HT News Network

Sopore April 01: Cracking a whip on illegal extraction and transportation of minerals, police have seized two vehicles and arrested two drivers in Sopore.

A Police party led by SHO Police Station Panzla under the supervision of incharge SDPO Rafiabad Dr. Hilal Ahmad Hilal-JKPS assisted by mining department seized two vehicles (tractors) at Dachanpara Rafiabad besides, arrested two drivers on the spot, involved in illegal extraction and transportation of minerals from nala Vij. The accused drivers have been identified as Mohammad Yousuf Parray son of Mohammad Sultan Parray resident of Wanpora Rohama Rafiabad and Sajad Ahmad Dar son of Abdul Rashid Dar resident of Rohama Rafiabad. They have been shifted to police station where they remain in custody.

Large number of women joined BJP

There is no platform for women in the Congress party; Priya Sethi

HT News Network

Jammu April 1: Former Minister, National executive member Priya Sethi today said that programmes and policies of Narendra Modi government implemented in their right earnest have empowered women to the extent that our daughters, sisters and mothers are getting attracted towards BJP and joining the party to strengthen party and build a strong India. Having given women equal rights in J&K, built toilets across the length and breadth of country, ensured voting rights to refugees and Valmiki Samaj besides ended triple talaq are some of the achievements that are enabling women join BJP in large numbers.

Priya Sethi was speaking at a function Where State Secretary, Women Wing Smt



Geeta Dogra along with her team from Congress Party Joined Bhartiya Janata

Party in the presence of Former Minister Smt Priya Sethi accompanied by District

Jammu South President Smt Rekha Mahajan, General Secretary Mahila Morcha Smt Neha Mahajan and Reema Padha.

Priya Sethi said that it's because of Narendra Modi that women are using cooking gas, having electricity and tapped water in their homes in far off places and are also having their bank accounts where they get their subsidies and benefits directly credited into their accounts. This has ended middle men and their corrupt system which was prolonged and promoted by Congress and it's allies for the past over 70 years. During the Joining Program, Smt Priya Sethi welcomed and congratulated the new entrants on joining the largest Political Party and said that everyone is joining the BJP for Social service and not for self-interest. Especially, Former Minister focused on the Women schemes.

EDITORIAL

Deluge and the Drainage Crisis

In the heart of Srinagar, the picturesque downtown areas, renowned for their vibrant culture and historical significance, are grappling with a relentless adversary, inundated roads that emerge with each rainfall. The recurring deluge not only symbolizes the city's drainage shortcomings but also serves as a poignant reminder of the long-lasting plight endured by its residents.

The inadequacies in the city's drainage system have rendered downtown Srinagar particularly vulnerable, with even the slightest rainfall transforming its streets into waterlogged impediments. Commuters navigate through a maze of inundated roads, their daily routines disrupted by the unforgiving torrents that inundate their paths. For the denizens of downtown Srinagar, this isn't merely a seasonal inconvenience but a year-round struggle, perpetually overshadowing their lives.

The repercussions of this drainage debacle extend far beyond mere inconvenience, infiltrating every facet of life in downtown Srinagar. Businesses suffer as potential customers are deterred by the daunting prospect of navigating through submerged streets. Education is hindered as students encounter impassable routes to their schools and universities. Healthcare access becomes precarious, with emergency services impeded by flooded thoroughfares.

Furthermore, the persistent flooding poses a severe threat to public health, as stagnant waters become breeding grounds for diseases and contamination. The risk of waterborne illnesses looms large, casting a shadow over the already burdened populace.

It is imperative for the municipal authorities to address this longstanding crisis with urgency and diligence. Investments in robust drainage infrastructure, coupled with proactive maintenance measures, are essential to safeguarding the livelihoods and well-being of downtown Srinagar's residents. Failure to do so not only perpetuates the suffering of the populace but also undermines the city's prospects for sustainable development and prosperity.

As the rain continues to descend upon the resilient streets of downtown Srinagar, so too does the call for decisive action to alleviate their enduring plight. The time for half-measures and temporary fixes has passed; only through concerted efforts can the city reclaim its promise and ensure a future where its residents no longer fear the rain.

J&K's Fragile Environment



By Mool Raj

In the shadow of seismic vulnerability, Jammu and Kashmir grapples with a growing environmental crisis. Rampant construction and disregard for natural resources amplify the region's susceptibility to disasters.

Cease the wanton destruction of vital ecosystems, including water bodies, orchards, mountains, agricultural fields, and forests. Despite the perilous classification of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) in seismic Zones IV and V, rendering the region highly susceptible to earthquakes, construction activities persist in delicate areas. The collective memory seems to have blurred the recollection of the powerful 7.6 magnitude earthquake that shook J&K on October 8, 2005, leaving widespread devastation in its wake.

Jammu and Kashmir's distinctive topography makes it inherently prone to an array of natural disasters, from earthquakes and floods to landslides and the increasingly erratic climate patterns of recent times. Environmentalists argue that the majority of these calamities are direct consequences of reckless developmental pursuits and the unchecked vandalism of natural resources, including water bodies, orchards, agricultural fields, mountains, and forests. Furthermore, the intensification of human activities is accelerating the alarming rate of glacier melting in the region.

Despite witnessing the disruptive consequences of poorly executed developmental projects on fragile ecosystems, there appears to be a glaring lack of learning from past mistakes. Humanity seems indifferent to the toll on nature, which, in turn, responds with vengeance in the form of natural disasters.

A poignant example is the catastrophic flooding that engulfed J&K on September 7, 2014. Excessive rainfall in higher elevations led to the overflow of the Jhelum, Chenab, and Tawi basins,



resulting in devastating floods. The floodwaters, estimated at about 120,000 cusecs, surpassed the carrying capacity of the Jhelum by five times during this calamitous event.

Environmentalists contend that human-induced factors, rather than purely natural ones, contribute significantly to such floods. Unregulated constructions in the floodplains of the Jhelum over several decades have compromised the wetlands' ability to act as natural reservoirs, exacerbating the impact of flooding. Wetlands like Hokersar, Bemina, Narakara, Batamalo nugal, Rakh-e-arth, Anchar lake, and Gilsar have suffered degradation due to encroachment and rapid urbanization, affecting their capacity to absorb floodwaters.

Similarly, the unchecked encroachment on flood channels and wetlands, which could serve as crucial defenses against floods, further highlights the disregard for nature's warning signs. The blame for floods, therefore, extends beyond nature to the passive complicity of human beings.

The vulnerability of J&K to natural disasters, especially earthquakes, is exemplified by the seismic Zones IV and V classification. Nevertheless, ongoing constructions in delicate areas persist, overshadowing the memory of the devastating 7.6 magnitude earthquake of October 8, 2005. As a resident of Doda, I emphasize that this region, with its unique geoclimatic conditions, is particularly fragile, having experi-

enced nine earthquakes within 60 hours in August of the previous year. The mountainous Doda district, housing massive dams like Dul Hasti and Baglihar, is inherently prone to natural disasters.

Amidst numerous hydropower projects in the Chenab region, it becomes imperative to establish and enforce stringent policy guidelines to mitigate damage to the fragile environment. Unscientific developmental activities, such as deforestation, improper road construction, terracing, and encroachment on steep hill slopes, have significantly heightened the risk of landslides in this geologically young and unstable region. The ongoing four-lane Srinagar-Baramulla-Uri highway project exemplifies the short-sighted approach to development. Fruit-bearing trees and other vegetation are being indiscriminately felled, impacting the region's biodiversity. The destruction of the famous tree-line along the Srinagar-Baramulla highway, once a major tourist attraction, underscores the need for more sustainable development practices.

The loss of trees is not only irreversible but also represents a substantial and irreparable damage to the environment. Despite the ongoing climate fluctuations in J&K, marked by heavy snowfall, unseasonal rain, and heatwaves, there is a palpable lack of foresight in development projects. The retreat of glaciers like Kolahai, Thajiw, Hoksar, Nehnar, and Shishram is

emblematic of the escalating impact of climate change on the region. Doda, a hotspot for earthquakes, faces an uphill battle against unscientific development. From massive dams to hydropower projects, the region stands on the brink of environmental disaster, urging stringent policies and eco-friendly interventions.

While the Union Environment Ministry and the J&K government have taken steps, such as formulating Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for disaster management plans and eco-fragility studies, the implementation remains selective. These SOPs should be universally applied throughout J&K to safeguard against further environmental degradation. Recognizing the urgent need for reforestation, Union Home Minister Amit Shah rightly emphasized that environmental protection hinges on extensive tree planting. A tree planted today, he noted, would provide oxygen for future generations, countering the escalating threat of pollution and ozone layer depletion. There is an immediate imperative for sustainable development practices. Conducting Environment Impact Assessments before embarking on projects could prevent further harm to the environment. The time to act is now, for the sake of the fragile ecosystems and the future generations that depend on them.

The author is a columnist and freelance writer

"Beyond Words: Exploring the Silence of Extraordinary Experiences"



Aubaid Ahmad Akhoo

In the intricate weave of human existence, a profound sense of solitude engulfs those who have weathered the tempests of extraordinary experiences. It transcends the mere challenges faced; it's about grappling with the isolating silence that emerges when these profound tales resist easy sharing, leaving human empathy struggling to plumb the depths of such narratives.

"Ibn e Mariyam Hua Kare Koi Mere Dukh Ki Dava Kare Koi"
"Son of Mary, Let there be one. If only someone would cure my pain."

These poignant lines by an esteemed poet Mirza Ghalib capture the essence of the isolation felt by those navigating extraordinary journeys. The invocation of the Son of Mary signifies a plea for divine intervention or the emergence of someone capable of understanding and alleviating the pain that comes with such unique experiences.

Within the realm of empathy, cognitive understanding dominates—a knowledge-based approach where the mind dissects emotions by drawing parallels to personal experiences. While noble, this falls



short of genuine empathy, an emotional resonance that transcends comparison.

Consider the person handed a prognosis of limited time by their doctors. No matter how one contemplates this situation, the seismic shift from life to death cannot be truly felt without living it, evoking an existential tremor that eludes the empathetic observer.

Picture an individual emerging from two decades of incarceration, standing on the precipice of freedom. The quivering uncertainty, the struggle to integrate back into a life now foreign, and the insidious

force of institutionalization lingering like a shadow—these are layers of experience that elude understanding without direct encounter.

The struggle intensifies for those grappling with the aftermath of loss: a lost limb, a debilitating disability, or the heart-wrenching grief of losing a child. The depth of these experiences creates an impenetrable solitude, a space where true understanding becomes elusive.

"Bak Raha Hon Junoon Main Kya Kya Kuch Kuch Na Samjhe Khuda Kare Koi"

"Babbling in frenzy, I do not know what am I saying, May the lord grant that no one would understand anything."

People who carry the weight of extreme experiences often find themselves in a world that fails to comprehend the nuances of their journey. The challenge is not merely the experiences themselves but the profound inability to share them adequately, deepening their sense of isolation.

Reducing the significance of these experiences, attempting to simplify them as a coping mechanism for our own empa-

thetic limitations, only exacerbates the wounds. It is a disservice to gloss over the intricacies of these unique narratives.

"Kya Sufi-O-Mullah Ko Khabar Mere Junoon Ki Un Ka Sar-E-Daman Bhi Abhi Chaak Nahin Hai"

"How can the priest and monk assess the height of craze that I possess? still sound the bells of robes they wear, which have no rifts and know no tear."

This couplet by Allama Iqbal adds depth to the discussion, highlighting the inability of conventional wisdom or religious authority to grasp the intensity of one's fervor or suffering. It underscores the notion that extraordinary experiences often lie beyond the comprehension of those who have not lived through them, further emphasizing the isolation felt by individuals navigating such journeys.

Tailpiece : In a society grappling with the complexities of human existence, a genuine empathetic revolution is called for. Let us strive to acknowledge the uniqueness and intricacies of each person's journey. Only then can we hope to build bridges over the isolating chasms created by extreme experiences, fostering a collective understanding that transcends the limitations of mere cognitive empathy. It is in this empathetic embrace that we truly connect, weaving a more compassionate fabric into the diverse tapestry of humanity.

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My School Time Memory- Wooden Slate And Takhti



■ Mool Raj

Despite facing challenges and fluctuations over the years, Takhti in Schools was once a thriving tradition. (TAKHTI) the traditional wooden slate children used to carry upto school either in bag Or hand was an indispensable tool to improve their learning as well as writing skill. It boasts eye hand coordination and writing concentration. It was an economical and affordable for every kid enrolled in the school. Those days of schooling was absolutely mesmerizing and jubliance. Takhti served as profound benefits. Teachers in school used to check its writing quality and negative reinforcement for those whose writing is not legible. It was essential that takhti look clean and freshly written.

"Mashaq" is a Kashmiri word for takhti (wooden slate). Mohjendro depicting the use of takhti and history dates from the period of Indus Valley Civilization and use of takhti and indicating indus valley people knew the writing skill. It is a wooden plank about the size of cutting board with same thickness and children use to write on it with "Narou Qalam Or twig" during the initial years of schooling. No doubt there was stiff competition in schools- teachers used to appreciate and encourage those whose takhti looks clean both in writing and maintenance. Competition among students remains there as soon as the morning assembly comes to an end.

Takhti purely is an effective tool not only students to improve writing skill, but also reduces the defect known as dysgraphia. Sharing my nostalgic when I was reading in Govt Middle School Panjsoo Distt and Tehsil Doda We used to go school in groups and reach almost an hour before school timings. There we assemble with class fellows and check each ones takhti (wooden slate) and



gettyimages
Credit: pixelfusion3d

notice which ones look clean and freshly written. It was actually the teachers fears that we used to have during those days. No one dares to cross or play before teachers even after schooling/class is over.

I recall my experience that when we attend the morning assembly and during the time few teachers namely ShBhagat Ram from Trown, Sh Dev Raj, Sh Mahant Ram and Sh Nath Ram and many more inspects in the lines of morning assembly in order to check hull juice hands we felt goosebumps, and sweating comes out automatically weather my uniform is not up to date, or I slowly pronounce the words of prayer or my takhti is not legible written. We secretly rubbing our hands with saliva to dimen the colour of hull juice. Such was the fear and respect of our teachers.

As soon as the morning assembly comes to an ended An announcement is made by teachers all those students who remained absent in previous day were asked to stand up and explain the cause of his or her absence. Teachers have begun the checking process, a sort of fear looms whether teacher might pick out and made to stand in guilty row. Those standing in the guilty row, have bent to cock form and lashed on the back with long and hard twig. By the time checking process is completed and we are asked to move one by one to our respective classrooms.

Meanwhile we were asked to clean our takhtis and prepare them for writing again in the next day. Preparing and erasing the takhti was a tedious job. The cotton cloth mixture with blacksoot and water was rubbed on both sides followed by drying in sun. Once dried both sides are shinned rubbing them by bottle bottom or cup brims. Such was the charm and competition among us during those days.

Back in memories, during my school days no one dares to enter the school without having takhti in his hand. It was not costly but the poorest of poor could afford it easily. It is durable, manageable and easy to handle. Takhti doesn't only help in improving writing but it also improves vocabulary. The pen we use to write was called "Narou kalam" which was sharpened with knife and dipped in the ink bottle and then writing on takhti becomes possible.

To put in succinct, tradition of takhti is fast becoming the rare sight in our valley. If present generation is being appraised about the same they would hardly believe. With the advent of technology and modern tools have badly ruled out the tradition of writing by hand. This tradition is rapidly dwindling and copy paste becomes modern trend of writing. We desperately need to revive this tradition.

The author is a columnist and freelance writer

Management Education covers a General set of Core Areas



■ Vijay GarG

The intricate balance between practical demands of commercial relevance and scholarly aspirations within management education reflects the ever-changing nature of academia

A lot of management text and advice is common-sensical. It is common sense if one agrees that the basic objective of management is a propulsion of commercial interest. That this proposition may itself be in doubt is another matter altogether. There is no substantial reason to see commerce as the domain of all management activities. If the purpose of management efforts is business management, then to some extent, it can become an extenuative logic because, at least, the assumption there is to focus on the optimization of business.

However, there is business and business; manufacturing can be a business but has a veneer of its own. It does not cover the business of ideas, and the business of ideas can be a specialization of its own, especially when it comes to being focused on education, financial exchanges, the exchange of news, and indeed exchange of money in stock exchanges. Thus, it is that business management has many forms of focus and interest. To cover all of it is difficult in a simple MBA program spread over 1200 to 1300 contact hours.

This kind of super specialisation or focus is difficult to achieve. Thus, it is that management education covers a general set of what could be called core areas and then specialisations of a more focused variety.

The lay of the land is so far to create specializations in finance, marketing, and the like; the emphasis on sectors such as Agriculture or Research & Development

is yet to gather its range and depth. This is not going to come easy because to create a curriculum, one needs reading material. The reading material is often in the form of books or publications in journals, and this requires research. It also requires a forum for publication, which is in the form of print. Unless there is a definite market for these journals or magazines they cannot survive. Has the touchstone of journals or magazines, like much else, also become commercial?

However, what is commercially relevant may not always be intellectually feasible. Hence, there is a contradiction, if not a hiatus.

Be that as it may, it delays the creation of a critical mass of material, which in its own right is worth publishing, disseminating and preserving. The touchstone again becomes commercial. It is therefore not unusual to find colleges taking a lesser interest in non-commercial areas than in activities that have a commercial overlay. This is not usual, but by the same token, it is not in the best interest of pursuing a scholarly interest.

In fact, it may be arguable that scholastic interest is an endeavour in its own right and is indeed the heart of an educational institution. To sustain this focus requires funds and research orientation.

The problem with finding funds or this sort of effort is, of course, the problem of justifying the return on those funds. A one-to-one correlation in such matters is difficult to establish, and it is even more difficult to create a climate of justifying this as a scholastic effort, which is the foundation of any good educational institution.

It is difficult to argue that worldwide, well-established academic institutions invest a substantial amount of resources in creating this research climate, and their global recognition as institutions of distinction is rooted in precisely this kind of environment. Such contradictions are common in life.

It is natural to envy the distinctiveness of others, but the same kind of ease does not accompany recognizing what it takes to create that kind of distinctiveness.

Vijay GarG Retired Principal Educational columnist malout

How Mindfulness Practice Reduces Pain

■ Shana Johnson

The practice of mindfulness reduces pain levels in a couple of ways. First, it improves awareness of negative emotions and your ability to control them. Two, it reduces the connection between the parts of the brain that process pain and the parts that generate self-awareness. Together, these factors reduce the pain experience.

Negative Emotions Intensify Pain

Chronic pain is a physical and emotional experience. Your emotional state, whether it be sadness, frustration, or happiness, affects how you experience pain. Negative thoughts and emotions increase pain levels.

For example, if you have a headache and are angry about a work conflict, the pain feels worse than if you have the same headache while outside, enjoying the sunshine, feeling content and free.

Chronic pain is a physical and emotional experience. Source: Courtesy of Shana Johnson

Emotions affect the experience of pain because the brain processes the physical and emotional aspects of pain together.

Pain is registered in the brain through multiple inputs.

One set of inputs reports the location and intensity of the pain (physical experience).

Another set of inputs connects to the emotional center of the brain, called the limbic system, and reports how unpleasant the pain feels (emotional experience).

From here, circuits adjust the pain signal, either increasing or decreasing it. Then, the brain lets you know how it feels.

A negative emotional state increases pain, whereas a positive state lowers pain.

The practice of mindfulness improves your awareness and ability to regulate negative thoughts and emotions—such as sadness, anger, or frustration—thereby reducing the pain experience.

Mindfulness Separates "You" From



"Pain"

Research shows mindfulness practice reduces perceived pain levels by up to 30 percent.

Mindfulness meditation decreases the communication between the parts of the brain responsible for relaying pain information (thalamus) and the parts that generate self-awareness (default mode network).

There is awareness of self, and there is awareness of pain, but they are not mixed into one. Because they aren't working as one, the pain level is lower. Think of this pain communication as if the self is not answering pain's phone calls. The weaker connectivity between the two areas reduces the pain you experience.

Mindfulness fosters a nonreactive sense of self, which includes the experience of pain. The benefits of mindfulness can be gained from a practice of just 20 minutes a day.

Mindfulness Meditation Quick-Start

Here is a simple guide to get started on a mindfulness meditation practice. Sit in a comfortable position.

Focus on your breath, paying attention to breathing in and out. Don't think or follow any thought streams that pop up. Say "in" as you breathe in and "out" as you breathe out; this blocks intrusive thoughts.

Start with five minutes a day and work up to 20 minutes a day. Find what works

for you.

During meditation, don't think about anything. If a thought pops up, do not follow it; refocus on your breath. Think of your thoughts as clouds. You are watching them and letting them pass. Focus on blue skies. If the sky fills with clouds, refocus on your breath, refocus on the blue sky.

Learn more about chronic pain management in my book Sunbreak: Healing the Pain No One Can Explain.

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Shana Johnson, M.D., is a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician, media contributor for medical news, and author of Sunbreak: Healing the Pain No One Can Explain.

Arvind Kejriwal Sent To Jail After Probe Agency Claims He's "Uncooperative"

HT News Network

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will spend the next two weeks in jail in the liquor policy case after his Enforcement Directorate custody ends today. The probe agency did not seek custody of the AAP leader, after which a local court this morning sent him to jail till April 15.

The court has also allowed him to meet his wife Sunita Kejriwal and ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bhardwaj before he is shifted to the Tihar Jail.

Mr Kejriwal was arrested on March 21 in the alleged liquor policy scam after he skipped nine central agency summons, and has been running his government from the ED lock-up since then. In Delhi's Rouse Avenue court, where Mr Kejriwal was produced this morning before the expiry of his probe agency custody, the ED said he had been "uncooperative" and was giving evasive answers. He did not reveal the passwords of his digital devices, the ED told the court.

The central agency, which is probing money laundering charges in the alleged liquor policy scam, also said it may need his custody



again in the future.

The agency said Mr Kejriwal gave false evidence against other AAP members, and when confronted with the statements of his own party leaders, he called them confused. He also said that Vijay Nair, AAP communications in-charge who has turned an approver, didn't report to him but to Atishi and Mr Bhardwaj, according to the ED.

Mr Kejriwal's lawyer has demanded some medicines and a

special diet for him inside the jail in view of his illness. A request has also been made to provide a copy of Ramayan, Shrimad Bhagvad Gita, and How Prime Ministers Decide (by Neeraj Chowdhury) to the jailed Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister has also moved the Delhi High Court against his arrest, arguing that his fundamental rights were violated by the probe agency. The court had issued a notice to the ED, seeking a reply by April 2. The hearing will resume

on April 3.

Mr Kejriwal is the third AAP leader after his former deputy Manish Sisodia and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh to be arrested in the liquor policy case. He has dubbed his arrest a "political conspiracy".

He had also addressed the courtroom during his last hearing and asserted no court had proven him guilty. "The CBI has filed 31,000 pages (of chargesheets) and ED filed 25,000 pages. Even if you read them together... the question remains... why have I been arrested?" he had said.

The excise policy was introduced to bring an overhaul to the liquor business in Delhi but was scrapped after Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena ordered a probe into the alleged irregularities in the policy.

The ED believes the policy provided a high profit margin and bribe money was allegedly used to fund the AAP's election campaigns. The excise policy was introduced to bring an overhaul to the liquor business in Delhi but was scrapped after Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena ordered a probe into the alleged irregularities in the policy.

BJP Asks Poll Body To Act Against Rahul Gandhi Over "Match-Fixing" Remark

HT News Network

New Delhi: The BJP on Monday urged the Election Commission to take the "strictest action" against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for the "match-fixing" remarks and other comments he made during an INDIA bloc rally here a day ago.

A BJP delegation comprising Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and the party's national general secretary Arun Kumar lodged the complaint against Mr Gandhi with the poll panel.

Addressing the media after meeting Election Commission officials, Mr Puri said the former Congress chief's comments during the public meeting were "extremely objectionable" as they are not just in violation of the model code of conduct but could have serious implications.

Addressing the public meeting yesterday, Rahul



Gandhi said this (Lok Sabha polls) is a fixed match. He also said that the Central government has deployed its people in the Election Commission. He also raised questions on the credibility of the EVMs and said the Constitution will be cancelled (changed) after elections," he told reporters.

"We urged the Election Commission to take strictest action against Rahul Gandhi, other Congress leaders and those of the opposition's INDIA alliance," Mr Puri added. Mr

Kumar accused Mr Gandhi of repeatedly making such comments and said the Election Commission should consider censoring him from speaking during the Lok Sabha elections as the Congress leader would not stop making such remarks. "We urged the Election Commission to take strictest action against Rahul Gandhi, other Congress leaders and those of the opposition's INDIA alliance," Mr Puri added. Mr Kumar accused Mr Gandhi of repeatedly making

Poll Body Warns BJP's Dilip Ghosh, Congress Leader Over Derogatory Remarks

HT News Network

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Monday censured BJP leader Dilip Ghosh and Congress' Supriya Shrinete for derogatory remarks against the dignity of women.

The Commission said it is convinced that they made a low-level personal attack and thus violated the provisions of the Model Code of Conduct.

They have been warned to remain careful in public utterances during the Model Code of Conduct period. Their election-related communications will be specially and additionally monitored by the Commission from Monday onwards.

A copy of the warning notice or censure is also being marked to their respective party chiefs for sensitising their functionaries to be careful while communicating in public domain and refrain from any such derogatory comments and violations of model code guidelines.

A controversial comment was posted



on social media platforms from Ms Shrinete's accounts against Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut, who has been fielded by the BJP as its candidate from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. Following a row, Ms Shrinete removed the controversial remarks from all her social accounts, claiming that those were not posted by her but by someone else who had access to her accounts. Mr Ghosh was captured on video mocking Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee's family background. He later apologised for his contentious remarks against the West Bengal Chief Minister.

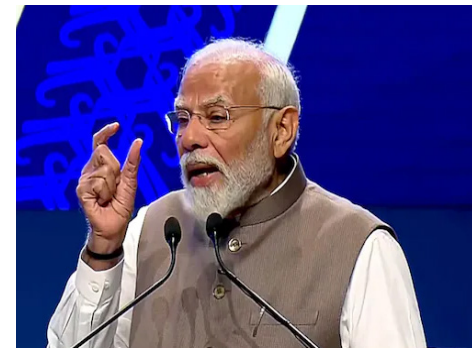
As RBI Marks 90 Years, PM Modi Calls For "Newer Banking Structure" For Future

HT News Network

Mumbai: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said there is a need to study "newer banking structure" with the evolving changes in the financial industry's landscape.

Speaking at the inauguration event for the commemoration of 90 years of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) here, PM Modi said there may be a requirement for newer ways of "financing, operating and business models" in the changing landscape. The PM said the banking industry needs to move forward to ensure that it can fund the credit needs of the projects necessary for the country's future growth. There are some challenges confronting the industry along with this, including artificial intelligence and blockchain, which are changing the face of banking, cyber security amid the increasing reliance on digital banking and innovations like fintechs, he said.

"In such a situation, we need to think about the changes that will be required in the coun-



try's banking sector and its structure," PM Modi said in his address to the audience, which included richest Indian Mukesh Ambani, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran, Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra, and some top bankers. PM Modi also said an assessment of the credit needs should be done by the RBI, keeping in mind the growth prospects and potential of the country. The PM did not spe-

cifically mention ownership of banks, but it can be noted that corporate ownership of banks has been a very controversial issue in the past. Those in support of allowing corporates to own banks said business houses can pump in the required capital into a lender that can ensure that funding needs of the economy can be fulfilled. Those against the idea, which include former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan and Deputy Governor Viral Acharya, have flagged the risk of conflict of interest in such a structure where corporates or large industrial houses own lenders. In 2020, an RBI working group had suggested that the rules can be changed to allow large corporate houses to promote banks, but media reports a year later said the RBI had sidestepped the rules. A slew of business houses had applied unsuccessfully to get a universal banking licence in 2013. At present, large corporate houses have promoted non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) as part of their financial sector play.

What S Jaishankar Said On US Envoy's "Red Line" Remark On Khalistan Terrorist Case

HT News Network

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday asserted that India's national security interests are involved in its investigation into the alleged involvement of a government official in the assassination plot aimed at Khalistani terrorist Gurbhagat Singh Pannun.

"It is something we are investigating as we believe our own national security interests are involved in that investigation," he told reporters, replying to a question about US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti's statement that the involvement of a government official in an assassination bid on the citizen of another country is an "unacceptable red line". Mr Jaishankar said the US ambassador will say what he feels is the thinking or position of his government. "The position of my government is that in this particular case, there has been certain information provided to us which we are investigating," he said, adding that India's own security interest is involved in this. "So, as and when we have something



to say on the investigation we would be very glad to speak about it. At this point, beyond the fact that there is an investigation going on, we have nothing more to say," the external affairs minister said. To a question about Indians getting caught up in the Ukraine conflict after being taken to Russia on job promises, he said India has taken up the matter "very very strongly" with the Russian government. "We are trying to get all these people back to India safely," he said. Last month, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that several Indians had been "duped" to work with the Russian Army and New Delhi had strongly taken up the matter with Moscow for their early release. He had appealed to Indian

nationals to not get "swayed" by offers made by agents for support jobs with the Russian Army, saying it is fraught with danger and risk to life. Mr Jaishankar said the US ambassador will say what he feels is the thinking or position of his government. "The position of my government is that in this particular case, there has been certain information provided to us which we are investigating," he said, adding that India's own security interest is involved in this. "So, as and when we have something to say on the investigation we would be very glad to speak about it. At this point, beyond the fact that there is an investigation going on, we have nothing more to say," the external affairs minister said.

"Arvind Kejriwal Named 2 AAP Ministers": BJP Sharpens Attack

HT News Network

New Delhi: The BJP lashed out at Arvind Kejriwal Monday after the Enforcement Directorate said the Delhi Chief Minister gave "false and contradictory evidence (regarding) other members of (his) AAP" in interrogation. The BJP also pointed to Mr Kejriwal - the "kingpin" in the liquor policy scam - reportedly calling AAP colleagues "confused" when asked about their statements.

The sharp attacks came shortly after Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court was told Mr Kejriwal had given "evasive replies" and concealed information relevant to the investigation into the alleged scam.

The court was hearing a plea by the ED seeking judicial remand of the Chief Minister for 15 days; the request was granted, with Mr Kejriwal - arrested last month - sent to Delhi's Tihar Jail till April 15. Specifically, the agency claimed Mr Kejriwal said former AAP comms boss Vijay Nair reported to Delhi Ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bhardwaj and not himself, and that his "interaction with Mr Nair was (of) limited" duration. The ED, however, pointed to Mr Nair's statements to it, in which he claims he stayed in a bungalow allotted to a cabinet minister and worked from Mr Kejriwal's office. "... there are reports Arvind Kejriwal said prime accused Vijay Nair used to report to Atishi and Saurabh Bhardwaj. Delhi Government's liquor policy situation is becoming clearer. It is to be seen if Kejriwal resigns or heads towards a new politics..." BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said.

Mr Kejriwal reportedly also made contradictory statements when asked about ND Gupta; according to the ED, Mr



Kejriwal first recognised Mr Gupta as a senior leader with knowledge of the party's functioning. But he backtracked after a statement about Mr Kejriwal's role in the alleged scam.

The BJP pounced on these, and other arguments made by the ED in court today to attack Delhi's ruling AAP and call (again) for Mr Kejriwal's resignation on "moral and Constitutional grounds". Mr Trivedi delivered the jabs with Shazia Ilmi - with the AAP till she joined the BJP in 2015 - by his side.

The BJP today also attacked Mr Kejriwal over "moral and Constitutional questions" and mocked the anti-corruption activist-turned-politician for having "changed his guru (teacher)".

"Anna Hazare used to be his (Mr Kejriwal's) guru. The guru said he would not join politics, but the discipline joined and became Chief Minister. Now he has changed his guru... now the guru is Lalu Prasad Yadav," Mr Trivedi ranted, referring to former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav. Mr Yadav was forced to resign as Chief Minister after being convicted in corruption scams. "Lalu Yadav at least resigned when he was going to jail (the Rashtriya Janata Dal patriarch handed the reigns to his wife, Rabri Devi) but he (Mr Kejriwal) hasn't resigned yet.

India's Defence Exports Cross ₹ 21,000 Crore-Mark For First Time

HT News Network

New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said the country's defence exports have scaled to "unprecedented heights" and crossed 21,000 crore-mark for the "first time" in the history of Independent India. "Delighted to inform everyone that the Indian Defence Exports have scaled to unprecedented heights and crossed 21,000 crore mark for the first time in the history of Independent India!" he said in a post on X.

The Union minister also said that India's defence exports have reached to the level of 21,083 crore in the financial year 2023-24 which is a "spectacular growth" of 32.5 per cent over the previous fiscal. During an interaction with members of the Indian diaspora in Nigeria in May 2023, the defence minister had emphasised on the government's focus on 'Aatmanirbharta' and the "significant progress" made in defence exports in the recent years towards achieving the objective of "Make in India, Make for the World".

These States Likely To See Worst Impact Of Heat Wave This Year

HT News Network

New Delhi: India is set to experience extreme heat during the April to June period, with the central and western peninsular parts expected to face the worst impact, the IMD said on Monday as the country prepares for seven-phase general elections from April 19.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said above-normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country during the April-June period, with a high probability over central and western peninsular India. Normal to below-normal maximum temperatures are likely over some parts of the western Himalayan region, northeastern states and north Odisha, he said.

"First Burn Wives' Sarees": Sheikh Hasina Slams Rivals' India Boycott Call

HT News Network

New Delhi: Opposition leaders demanding a boycott of Indian products must declare how many Indian sarees their wives have and why they are not setting these on fire, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said.

Addressing a meeting of the ruling Awami League, of which she is the president, Ms Hasina tore into the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leaders calling for a boycott of Indian products. "My question is, how many Indian sarees do their wives have? And why are they not taking the sarees from their wives and setting them on fire? Please ask BNP leaders," she said.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister, who secured the fourth consecutive term in office in the elections held earlier this year, said that when the BNP was in power, ministers and their wives would buy sarees on India trips and sell them in Bangladesh.



Sheikh Hasina then moved to Indian spices and their role in Bangladesh's kitchens. "Garam masala, onions, garlic, ginger, all spices that come (from India) should not be seen in their (BNP leaders') homes," she said.

The remarks came after BNP leader Ruhul Kabir Rizvi threw away his Kashmiri shawl on the road as a symbolic protest against Indian products, The Daily Star reported.

The developments are taking place

against the backdrop of an 'India-Out' campaign in Bangladesh. Launched by some activists and influencers and backed by a section of Opposition politicians, the campaign has gathered steam after the Awami League's recent victory in an election boycotted by the Opposition BNP.

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Those involved in the campaign claim India has been backing Sheikh Hasina to stay on in power because the status quo suits its interests.

While some BNP leaders such as Mr Rizvi have voiced support for the campaign, the party has not spelt out its stand clearly. "Our policymaking body discussed the issue when some leaders wanted clarity on the party's stand on the boycott call. Till now, our party doesn't have any official stand on it. But it is also true that this is a call from the people and some of our leaders are supporting it," said Sayrul Kabir Khan, a member of BNP's media cell, The Telegraph has reported.

9 children killed by landmine blast in Afghanistan

HT News Network

Nine children were killed in a blast in southeastern Afghanistan caused by a landmine, laid during the country's decades of conflict, a provincial official said on Monday. The mine went off as a group of young boys and girls were playing with it in the Geru district of Ghazni province on Sunday, said the provincial head of the information and culture department, Hamidullah Nisar.

"An unexploded mine left over from the time of the Russian invasion went off when they were playing with it," Nisar told AFP. "Unfortunately, it killed nine children."

Ghazni police said the children — five girls and four boys — were aged from four to ten years old.

Swathes of Afghanistan are littered with unexploded mines, grenades and mortars from decades of conflict, spanning from the Soviet invasion in 1979, the civil war that followed, and the 20-year Taliban insurgency against foreign-backed governments.

Violence has reduced dramatically since the Taliban seized power in August 2021, ending their insurgency.

Unexploded ordnance and mines, however, still claim lives regularly, with the International Committee of the Red Cross saying children are the main victims. Also on Sunday, another child died and five other people were wounded when unexploded ordnance went off in Herat province, local police said on social media platform X.

Thousands rally against Netanyahu govt in Jerusalem

HT News Network

JERUSALEM: Tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Jerusalem on Sunday against Benjamin Netanyahu's government and against exemptions granted to ultra-Orthodox Jewish men from military service, in scenes reminiscent of mass street protests last year. Protest groups, including some that led the mass demonstrations that rocked Israel in 2023, organised the rally outside parliament, the Knesset, calling for a new election to replace the government.

The protesters also want a more equal share in the burden of army service that binds most Israelis. Around 600 soldiers have been killed so far since Oct 7 and the ensuing war in Gaza, the military's highest casualty toll in years.

Israel's N12 News said it appeared to be the largest demonstration since the war began. Haaretz and Ynet news sites said it drew tens of thousands of people. Netanyahu's cabinet has faced widespread criticism over the security failure of the Hamas attack on southern Israel in which 1,200 people were killed and more than 250 taken hostage to Gaza.

"This government is a complete and utter failure," said 74-year-old Nurit Robinson, at the rally. "They will lead us into the abyss."

Israel's incursion in Palestine has aggravated a longstanding source of friction in society that is also unsettling Netanyahu's coalition government — exemptions granted to ultra-Orthodox Jewish seminary students from service in the country's conscript military. With a March 31 deadline looming for the government to come up with legislation to resolve a decades-long standoff over the issue, Netanyahu filed an application to the Supreme Court last week or a 30-day deferment.

Moscow asks Kyiv to hand over those linked to terror acts

HT News Network

MOSCOW: The foreign ministry on Sunday called on Kyiv to hand over all persons linked to terrorist acts in Russia, including head of Ukrainian security service.

A Russian Foreign Ministry statement listed violent incidents that have occurred in Russia since the Kremlin's forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022, including bombings that killed the daughter of a prominent nationalist and a war blogger, and an incident in which a writer was seriously hurt.

The ministry said investigation of these incidents showed that "the traces of these crimes lead to Ukraine." "Russia has turned over to Ukrainian authorities its demands... for the immediate arrest and extradition of all those connected to the terrorist acts in question," the statement said. Among those listed in the statement to be handed over are SBU head Vasyl Maluk, who has acknowledged his service was behind attacks on the bridge linking Crimea to the Russian mainland since the Kremlin's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Russia arrests three attack suspects from Dagestan; Putin calls up 150,000 conscripts

"The Russian side demands that the Kyiv regime immediately cease all support for terrorist activity, extradite guilty parties and compensate the victims for damages," the ministry statement said.

Separately, Russian authorities also arrested three people in the North Caucasus republic of Dagestan on charges of planning terrorist attacks, following a deadly attack on a concert hall near Moscow.

The arrests were made during an operation in Dagestan's capital Makhachkala and in the town of Kaspiysk, around 10 kilometres (six miles) to the south, the Russian National Anti-Terrorist Committee said in a statement.

"Three criminals planning to commit a series of terrorist crimes have been arrested," the statement added. The announcement comes more than a week after an attack on the Crocus City Hall in Moscow's outskirts killed at least 144 people and injured 551. The Islamic State group (IS) has claimed the attack, while Russian authorities insist Ukraine is responsible.

An anonymous security source quoted by the RIA Novosti news agency said two suspects were "trapped" in their flat in Kaspiysk before being apprehended.

Who May Donald Trump Pick As His Running Mate In 2024 US Election

HT News Network

Being second in line for leadership of the most powerful country in the world is not an easy job. But for Mike Pence, vice president under Donald Trump, things were even harder than usual.

As insurrectionists descended on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, they had a specific target in mind — the outgoing vice president. They built a wooden gallows, and called out for him by name: "Hang Mike Pence! Hang Mike Pence!"

As the extensive congressional hearings into the insurrection later documented, the threats were not hollow. One informant told FBI investigators that "if given the chance", certain far-right insurrectionists would have tried to kill him. Pence escaped with his life, but only just. The insurrectionists, as a federal investigation alleges, were drawn to the Capitol by Trump, who had just lost the 2020 election to Joe Biden. They were after Trump's VP because, as one later claimed, he had "betrayed" Trump by not refusing to certify the election results. The job of vice president of the United States is not a normal one at the best of times. The person chosen to run



alongside Trump in this year's election will no doubt be keeping Pence's experience in mind. It will likely be someone who can convincingly pledge undying loyalty to Trump. The former president — and his supporters — will expect nothing less. Speculation over who that person might be is heating up, and Trump, as usual, is relishing drawing out the process in order to gain as much attention as possible. So, who — and how — will he choose?

A vice presidential candidate is usually chosen based on a political calculation. For instance, the running mate can be seen to offset a presidential nominee's weaknesses (be they real or perceived).

The relatively young northerner John F. Kennedy, for example, chose the much more politically experi-

"Bring Down Visa Wait Time In India": US Envoy Eric Garcetti Recounts Biden's Order

HT News Network

New Delhi: Shedding light on visa appointments and the waiting time concerning them, the US envoy to India, Eric Garcetti, said that President Joe Biden told him to bring down the waiting time for it in India, adding that it was the first instance that an ambassador was told to look into something like this in any country.

Mr Garcetti underscored that a part of the green card backlog issue is a legislative problem and said that it is what Congress will have to address. However, he highlighted that the number of visas that have been adjudicated has brought down the waiting time by 75 per cent. This is a modal window. The media could not be loaded, either because the server or network failed or because the format is not supported.

While speaking to ANI, Mr Garcetti said, "Now, part of this is a legislative problem that Congress will have to address on the whether it's the number of legal immigrants, the number of green cards, or the number of people who can become citizens. There's just limits on that. Like any country, I'm sure there's limits here, too. And that is frustrating for Indians, I think, because there's so many Indians who want to come to America. And that's a great part



of our news, by the way. Second only to Mexicans, where Indian visas last year, the biggest number of students double the second biggest." "Last year, over 245,000 student visas came from India. Number one in adoptions, number one in all these categories that show 1.4 billion people, a lot of them would love to come to America. And so it's a good problem to have. But a couple of things were changing..." he said, on being asked about the green card backlog issue, and why there are mostly Indians who are on the backlog. "We've here in not just Delhi, but across India, increased 60 per cent in a single year with the same number of people, the number of visas that we adjudicated, and brought down wait times by 75 per cent. So again, that would be more of a question."

Erdogan concedes defeat in Turkiye local polls

HT News Network

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan conceded defeat on Sunday in the country's local elections, saying the vote was a "turning point" for his party after two decades in power.

Partial results from across the nation of 85 million people showed major advances for the Republican People's Party (CHP) at the expense of Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Istanbul's mayor, the opposition's Ekrem Imamoglu, claimed re-election with nearly all ballot boxes opened, telling a euphoric crowd of supporters:



"Tomorrow is a new spring day for our country."

ADVERTISEMENT
Final results are expected to be released on Monday (today) by the country's electoral commission.

Erdogan, 70, had launched an all-out personal campaign to win back Istanbul, the economic powerhouse where

he was once mayor. Rampant inflation and an economic crisis have, however, hit confidence in the ruling party.

Large crowds filled the square outside the opposition party's Istanbul city headquarters waving Turkish flags and lighting torches to celebrate the result.

After casting his vote,

Imamoglu emerged to applause and chants of "Everything will be fine", the slogan he used when he first took the city hall from the AKP in 2019.

The 52-year-old is increasingly seen as the biggest rival to Erdogan's AKP ahead of the next presidential election in 2028. In Ankara, mayor Mansur Yavas — also of the CHP — claimed victory in front of large crowds of supporters, declaring "the elections are over, we will continue to serve Ankara". "Those who have been ignored have sent a clear message to those who rule this country," he added.

Yavas led with 58.6 per cent of the vote to 33.5 per cent for his AKP opponent.

Iran Alerted Russia To Security Threat Before Concert Hall Attack: Report

HT News Network

Dubai: Iran tipped off Russia about the possibility of a major "terrorist operation" on its soil ahead of the concert hall massacre near Moscow last month, three sources familiar with the matter said. In the deadliest attack inside Russia in 20 years, gunmen opened fire with automatic weapons at concertgoers on March 22 at the Crocus City Hall, killing at least 144 people in violence claimed by the Islamic State militant group. The United States had also warned Russia of a likely militant Islamist attack but Moscow, deeply distrustful of Washington's intentions, played down that intelligence. It is harder, however, for Russia to dismiss intelligence from diplomatically Iran on the attack, which has also raised questions over the effectiveness of Russian security services. Moscow and Tehran, both under Western sanctions, have deepened military and other cooperation during the two-year Ukraine war. "Days before the attack in Russia, Tehran shared information with Moscow about a possible big terrorist attack inside Russia that was acquired during interrogations of those arrested in connection with deadly bombings.

IHC suspends Imran, Bushra Bibi's sentence in Toshakhana case

HT News Network

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday suspended the 14-year sentences handed out to former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana reference.

However, the two will not be released as they have been convicted in other cases. Imran and Bushra Bibi were sentenced in the Toshakhana reference by an Islamabad accountability court on January 31, days before the general elections. According to the verdict, Imran and Bushra were barred from holding any public office for 10 years and slapped with a fine of Rs787 million each.

A day later, Imran and Bushra Bibi were also sentenced to seven years in jail in a case related to their marriage during the latter's Iddat period. Prior to this, a special court established under the Official Secrets Act had also sentenced Imran and his foreign minister Shah Mehmood



Qureshi to 10 years in prison for the breach of state secrets. The reference in question was filed against the two by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in December for retaining a jewellery set received from the Saudi

crown prince against an undervalued assessment. The anti-graft watchdog had alleged in the reference that during his term as prime minister, Imran and his wife had received a total of 108 gifts from different heads of state and foreign dignitaries. Bushra Bibi had challenged her conviction on February 17 — a day after Imran did the same in the cipher and Toshakhana cases. The former first lady also challenged a government notification that declared her Banigala residence as a sub-jail following the verdict. On February 27, the IHC had admitted the appeals against their conviction and had requisitioned records related to the trial court proceedings by March 7. The IHC division bench had also taken up applications seeking suspension of their sentences till the final adjudication of the main appeals against their conviction. At the outset, the bench overruled the objections to the petitions raised by the registrar's office. Earlier in March, the IHC had asked if the authorities had sought permission from Imran before converting his Bani Gala residence.

Rigged 1987 elections in J&K under Rajiv Gandhi responsible for terrorism: Rana

HT News Network

JAMMU APRIL 01- Senior BJP leader Mr Devender Singh Rana today said the rigged elections to Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly in 1987 during the tenure of the Congress government under Prime Minister Mr Rajiv Gandhi led to widespread disillusionment and eventually germination of terrorism. "The Congress set a stage for Pakistan to take advantage of the situation post rigged elections to unleash terrorism that led to large scale

destruction, mayhem and ethnic cleansing of the minuscule but peaceful minority community from their homes and hearths", Mr Devender Rana said while addressing said while addressing prominent members of Gujjar community of Tehsil Nagrota and Dansal here this evening along with DDC Chairman Mr Bharat Bhushan and District President Jammu North Mr. Omi Khajuria and former MLC Haji Mohammad Hussain. He said the guns would not have entered into the Valley had the elections not been rigged and the concerns of the then Governor Jagmohan



headed to by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. It was because of the muteness of the Congress government at New Delhi that led to eruption of

terrorism, followed by total surrender by the then Union government, which served as a booster for terrorists and separatists to call the shots. Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Government played havoc with democratic ethos and brought Jammu and Kashmir to such a morass that thousands of people got killed and widespread destruction became the norm for nearly three decades, he added. "But for the course correction by the BJP under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi, the Congress with its lackeys in the political spectrum of Kashmir would

have continued with their agenda of allowing political instability and disturbed conditions to bully New Delhi and remain leeches to power", Mr Devender Rana said, adding that the meaningful efforts towards restoring trust in the mechanism of governance by the double-engine dispensation has made a huge difference post August 6, 2019. Redressal of grievances has hugely contributed towards fostering peace and stability in the region that has manifested huge transformation on development and economic fronts, he said.

Khyber Cement Spreads Ramadan Cheer Across Kashmir with Grand Iftar

HT News Network



Srinagar: Khyber Cement a leading name in the cement industry, initiated its Ramadan Iftar celebrations, bringing dealers and retailers together across Kashmir, in a significant milestone for the company. The gatherings, held at various locations, like Baramulla, Kupwara, Anantnag, Shopian, and Pulwama aimed to foster connections with the company's network of dealers and retailers and embrace the region's diversity.

The events were executed and organized by a team of 10 sales officers, with each officer assigned to a specific district and 3 technical service engineers covering the north, south, and central zones of Kashmir. These efforts culminated in a special outreach iftar event at the Zakura crossing in Srinagar, which saw a large turnout. These events reflected the spirit of unity, compassion, and community service.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024 Series of activities under SVEEP held at Ramban

HT News Network

RAMBAN, APRIL 01: A series of activities were held today in Ramban District under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program.

In a proactive move towards enhancing female voting turnout and participation, Nodal Officer, Women Awareness and Welfare (AC-54), CDPO Ramban, Ravinder Kour organized a camp at Girls High School, Batote. The camp was meticulously designed to engage and encourage new women voters, emphasizing their crucial role in the electoral process.

This initiative underscores SVEEP team's commitment to inclusivity and democratic participation, ensuring that every segment of society is empowered to exercise their right to vote effectively. Speaking on the occasion, Nodal officer said that such initiatives play a pivotal role in strengthening the democratic fabric of our nation and fostering a culture of active citizenship.

Lok Sabha Elections-2024 Awareness program under SVEEP for Tribal Voters held at Chountwaliwar Ganderbal

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, APRIL 01: A transformative SVEEP awareness programme was held today at Government High School Chountwaliwar, aimed at enlightening tribal voters on the pivotal role of voting in modern democracy.

The programme was organised by Nodal Officer SVEEP Ganderbal in which CDPO, ICDS Kangan, who oversees SVEEP programme for 17-Kangan ST Assembly Constituency also par-

ticipated. The event brought together tribal communities to delve into the democratic ethos and underscored the significance of electoral participation.

Through interactive sessions and informative presentations by the DLMTs of Election Cell Ganderbal, attendees were equipped with essential knowledge on electoral procedures and the collective responsibility of citizens in shaping the nation's future.

The SVEEP team, comprising dedicated Lecturers of BHSS Lar, DLMTs,

SVEEP team members, teachers, students and BLOs, collectively worked tirelessly to foster an inclusive environment conducive to dialogue and learning.

With a focus on promoting electoral literacy and fostering democratic engagement among tribal voters, the programme stands as a testament to collective efforts towards ensuring equitable representation and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups in the democratic process.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

General Observer reviews election preparedness in Udhampur

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 01: General Observer for the 4-Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency, Dheeraj Kumar, and Police Observer Daljit Singh today conducted a comprehensive meeting with Assistant Returning Officers (AROs), Nodal Officers, Sector and Zonal Magistrates in the Conference Hall of DC Office Complex, here, to assess and enhance election preparedness.

The meeting was attended by District Election Officer, Saloni Rai; Senior Superintendent of Police Joginder Singh; Additional District Development Commissioner Rajinder Singh; Additional Deputy Commissioner Joginder Singh Jasrotia; Deputy District Election Officer Dr. Anirudh Rai AROs, and Nodal Officers.

During the meeting, District Election Officer provided a detailed over-



view of election preparedness at the polling station level, including plans related to single-window system for granting permissions, monitoring model code of conduct, Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC), vigilance on expenditure by political parties and candidates, and management of paid news. The General Observer was apprised about provision made for the Assured Minimum Facilities at polling stations, working of expenditure monitoring cell, training of polling personnel, appointment and training of sectoral and zonal officers,

randomization of polling personnel and Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), among other essential aspects of conducting elections. Detailed discussions were held on the enforcement of model code of conduct, expenditure monitoring, security plan, and transport and communication plan. The Observers also interacted with AROs of 59-Udhampur West, 60-Udhampur East, 61-Chenani, and 62-Ramban Assembly constituencies respectively.

Emphasis was placed on conducting Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP)

activities comprehensively throughout the district, with AROs and Nodal Officers urged to adhere to latest guidelines from the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Furthermore, the General Observer directed teams to enhance readiness for the smooth conduct of general election, emphasizing coordination and providing theoretical and practical training to polling staff. Sector officers were instructed to sensitize vulnerable areas to encourage participation in the democratic process. Senior Superintendent of Police, Udhampur also briefed the General Observer about the security plan being prepared for the smooth conduct of election in the district. Later, the General Observer also conducted a field visit and inspected the preparedness on ground. He was accompanied by Daljit Singh, Police Observer District Election Officer and other officers.

Estates Department Seals Shop in Pratap Park Amid Allegations of Illegal Occupation

HT News Network

Srinagar, April 01, KDC: In a decisive move, the Estates Department, in collaboration with authorities including Magistrate Kothibagh and the police, sealed Shop No. 2-M in the middle block of Pratap Park. The action was taken following reports of alleged illegal occupation by the present occupant, who reportedly acquired the space through unauthorized means.

An official told Srinagar based news agency Kashmir Dot Com that the shop, which was originally allotted to Secretary Handloom Fabrics Corporation Society, was purportedly sold or sublet to the current occupant after a transaction involving substantial sums of money, amounting to crores.

This development comes in the wake of an ongoing investigation, with an FIR filed against former members of the corporation, registered at Police Station ACB Srinagar under case number 09/2023.

The Estates Department's intervention marks a significant step towards rectifying the situation and restoring the rightful ownership of the premises, the officer said adding that this action underscores the commitment to uphold the rule of law and combat instances of illegal occupancy and corruption within the system. (KDC)

SVEEP Cell Rajouri organizes voters awareness drive at GMHS Palma

HT News Network

RAJOURI, APRIL 01: To enhance voters' awareness and engagement, the SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) Cell Rajouri today organized a compelling awareness drive at Government Model High School (GMHS) Palma, under the supervision of District Election Officer, Om Parkash Bhagat.

The event was managed by Nodal Officer SVEEP, Prof. Mohammad Iqbal Raina to enlighten and involve students in the exercising of their voting rights and assuming an active role in the democratic fabric. The event featured interactive sessions and thought-provoking discussions tailored to instil the young minds with a profound sense of civic duty. By nurturing this ethos, the SVEEP Cell Rajouri endeavors to empower the forthcoming generation of voters, fostering a culture of informed and engaged citizenship. This fervent commitment to engaging and enlightening the youth underscores the SVEEP Cell's unwavering dedication to nurturing a dynamic and participatory democracy. The proceedings of the program were steered by Dr. Sajaad Mir, Lecturer, with a comprehensive presentation delivered by Prof. (Dr.) Khalid Reyaz, followed by a vote of thanks rendered by Prof. Manzoor Ahmed Dar. The event featured interactive sessions and thought-provoking discussions tailored to instil the young minds with a profound sense of civic duty. By nurturing this ethos, the SVEEP Cell Rajouri endeavors to empower the forthcoming generation of voters, fostering a culture of informed and engaged citizenship. This fervent commitment to engaging and enlightening the youth underscores the SVEEP Cell's unwavering dedication to nurturing a dynamic.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024: DEO Shopian reviews arrangements for special polling booths

HT News Network

SHOPIAN, APRIL 01: The District Election Officer (DEO) Shopian, Faz Lul Haseeb today reviewed the arrangements being made for setting up Special Polling booths in the district in a meeting with concerned officers for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections.

It was intimated that dedicated and exclusive polling booths for 'All-women'/PW/D/youth managed and green polling stations at specified locations of the district shall be set up. Speaking on the occasion, DEO directed the concerned officers to ensure that all basic facilities/ Assured Minimum Facilities and other arrangements vis a vis logistics and other ancillary services are provided and kept in place for the voters on the polling day.

Every model polling station should be neat and clean, DEO instructed during the meeting. To greet voters and ensure best possible participation of voters.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024

UT Media Nodal Officer interacts with AROs, Nodal Officers at Srinagar

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 01: UT Media Nodal Officer for General Elections-2024, Sapna Kotwal (Secretary, J&K Advisory Board for Development of Pahari) today held an interaction session with Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) and Election Nodal Officers of District Srinagar here regarding Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) activities taken up in the district. The meeting was held to take first hand appraisal of progress on activities being held under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign in Srinagar district for voter education, spreading voter awareness and promoting voter literacy in view of the upcoming polls in 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency. On the occasion, the UT Media Nodal Officer was given a detailed PowerPoint Presentation regarding the SVEEP activities held in Srinagar



district during 2023-24. She was informed that over 90 thousand eligible new voters were added including over 25 thousand young voters during the SVEEP campaign held across the district. She appreciated the efforts of the SVEEP team of Srinagar district for sensitizing the new voters. She asked the officers to continue the SVEEP

activities and install hoardings at prominent public places besides publicizing through different print/electronic and social media platforms to maximize the voter turnout in the district. Besides, Deputy District Election Officer, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, the meeting was attended by AROs, Nodal Officer SVEEP and other

concerned officials. The meeting was held to take first hand appraisal of progress on activities being held under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign in Srinagar district for voter education, spreading voter awareness and promoting voter literacy in view of the upcoming polls in 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency. On the occasion, the UT Media Nodal Officer was given a detailed PowerPoint Presentation regarding the SVEEP activities held in Srinagar district during 2023-24. She was informed that over 90 thousand eligible new voters were added including over 25 thousand young voters during the SVEEP campaign held across the district. She appreciated the efforts of the SVEEP team of Srinagar district for sensitizing the new voters. She asked the officers to continue the SVEEP activities and install hoardings at prominent public places besides publicizing through different print/electronic and social media platforms to maximize.

Eating 12 Eggs a Week Didn't Raise Cholesterol Levels, New Study Finds

People who ate 12 fortified eggs per week had similar cholesterol levels after four months as people who ate fewer than two eggs per week. The study was small, but suggests that fortified eggs may be a heart-healthy addition to the diet, even for people with or at risk of heart disease.

Experts recommend that eggs be eaten in moderation due to their high cholesterol content.

While eggs are a nutritious, lean source of protein, they contain high amounts of cholesterol. So do they fit in a heart-healthy diet?

A new study suggests that, yes, moderate consumption of eggs may be good for your heart. However, experts caution that people with existing heart disease or diabetes should talk to their doctor about what will work specifically for them.

In the preliminary study, researchers found that people who ate 12 fortified eggs per week had similar cholesterol levels after four months compared to those who ate fewer than two eggs of any kind per week.

"This is a small study, but it gives us reassurance that eating fortified eggs is okay with regard to lipid effects over four months, even among a more high-risk population," study author Dr. Nina Nouravesh, a research fellow at the Duke Clinical Research Institute in Durham, North Carolina, said in a news release.

Eating a dozen eggs didn't affect cholesterol levels

The study, which will be presented April 6 at the American College of Cardiology's Annual Scientific Session, involved 140 people 50 years of age or older who had cardiovascular disease or were at high risk for it.

Risk factors Trusted Source for cardiovascular disease include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, and diabetes.

The average age of participants was 66 years, around half were female, and just over one-quarter were Black. Almost one-quarter of participants had diabetes.

Researchers randomly assigned people to eat either 12 fortified eggs per week or to eat fewer than two eggs of any kind per week. People could cook the eggs however they liked.



Michelle Routhenstein, a preventive cardiology dietitian at EntirelyNourished.com, cautions that when eggs are cooked at high temperatures, it can result in higher levels of advanced glycation end products (AGEs), which may negatively impact heart health.

Fortified eggs contain less saturated fat and additional vitamins and minerals, such as iodine, vitamin D, selenium, vitamin B2, vitamin B5, vitamin B12, and omega-3 fatty acids. This is accomplished by feeding hens a special diet.

In the study, after following participants for four months, researchers did not see any adverse effects on cardiovascular health among people who ate 12 fortified eggs per week.

For example, blood cholesterol levels were similar between people who regularly ate fortified eggs and those who ate few or no eggs.

People in the fortified egg group also had a reduction in their total cholesterol level, insulin resistance scores, and high-sensitivity troponin (a marker of heart damage). They even saw an increase in their vitamin B levels.

In addition, "there were signals of potential benefits of eating fortified eggs that warrant further investigation in larger studies," Nouravesh said in the release.

In particular, there were possible benefits of eating

fortified eggs among older adults and those with diabetes, including a rise in HDL ("good") cholesterol and a decrease in LDL ("bad") cholesterol.

The results of the study, which was funded by Eggland's Best, have not been published yet in a peer-reviewed journal, so should be viewed with caution.

Larger trials needed to confirm the results Dr. Yu-Ming Ni, cardiologist and lipidologist at MemorialCare Heart and Vascular Institute at Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, Calif., is pleased that researchers carried out this kind of study.

Many earlier studies looking at the impact of egg consumption on cholesterol or cardiovascular disease risk were observational.

The new study was a randomized controlled trial — the "gold standard" for research — in which people were randomly assigned to eat more eggs or to limit their egg consumption, with ongoing follow-up of participants.

"We don't commonly see clinical trials in the nutrition space," Ni told Healthline. However, "there are enough issues with this study that it's hard to make strong conclusions about whether eggs are healthy or not."

One of these issues is the small number of participants. Ni said you would need a larger study to be able to see differences between the egg group and the low-egg group, such as changes in cholesterol levels.

Dr. Nieca Goldberg, a cardiologist and clinical associate professor of medicine at NYU Grossman School of Medicine in New York City, said a larger study would also be needed to know if the heart-related risks of egg consumption were different for people with diabetes versus those without diabetes.

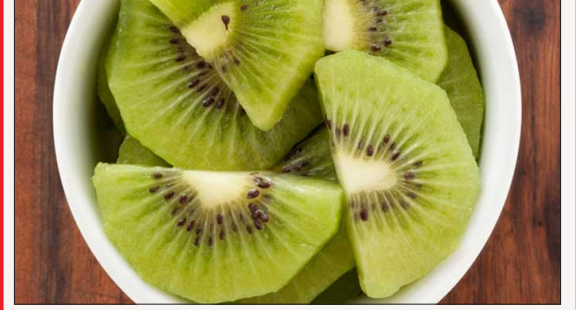
Participants also knew which study group they were in, which could have influenced what they ate overall or their other health behaviors.

So are eggs actually heart-healthy?

When it comes to egg consumption and risk of cardiovascular disease, past research has been mixed. This is due in part to how studies were carried out, including how well they took into account all the factors that can affect the outcomes.

NEWS

Add Kiwi To Your Diet To Achieve These Health Benefits



Kiwi, also known as Chinese gooseberry, is a nutrient-dense fruit packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Incorporating kiwi into your diet can contribute to overall health and well-being due to its rich nutritional profile and numerous health-promoting properties. In this article, we list the many benefits of consuming kiwi.

1. Rich in vitamin C

Kiwi is exceptionally high in vitamin C, which supports the immune system, enhances wound healing, and acts as a powerful antioxidant, neutralising free radicals that can damage cells and lead to chronic diseases.

2. High in fibre

Kiwi contains both soluble and insoluble fibre, promoting digestive health by preventing constipation, improving bowel regularity, and supporting a healthy gut microbiome. Fibre also helps regulate blood sugar levels and may reduce the risk of heart disease.

3. Supports heart health

The high fibre content, along with potassium and antioxidants like vitamin C and polyphenols, in kiwi can help lower blood pressure, reduce cholesterol levels, and decrease the risk of heart disease by supporting healthy blood vessel function and reducing inflammation.

4. Boosts digestive health

The combination of fibre, enzymes (such as actinidin), and prebiotics found in kiwi supports digestion by aiding in the breakdown and absorption of nutrients, promoting the growth of beneficial gut bacteria, and reducing gastrointestinal discomfort.

5. Anti-inflammatory properties

Kiwi contains various antioxidants, including vitamin C, vitamin E, and polyphenols, which possess anti-inflammatory properties that help reduce inflammation throughout the body, potentially alleviating symptoms of conditions like arthritis and asthma.

6. Supports vision health

How it benefits: Kiwi is rich in lutein and zeaxanthin, two antioxidants known to support eye health by filtering harmful blue light, protecting against oxidative damage, and reducing the risk of age-related macular degeneration and cataracts.

7. Enhances skin health

The combination of vitamin C, vitamin E, and other antioxidants in kiwi helps maintain healthy skin by promoting collagen production, protecting against UV-induced damage, and reducing the appearance of wrinkles and age spots.

Health Benefits Of Having An Early Dinner

An early dinner typically refers to consuming the evening meal earlier in the evening, typically between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM, depending on individual schedules and cultural norms. Whether an early dinner is good for you depends on various factors, including your lifestyle, dietary needs, and personal preferences.

1. Improved digestion

Eating dinner early gives your body more time to digest the food before bedtime. This allows for better absorption of nutrients and prevents digestive discomfort during sleep.

2. Enhanced sleep quality

A lighter stomach at bedtime can promote better sleep as it reduces the risk of acid reflux and indigestion, which can disrupt sleep patterns.

3. Weight management

Eating earlier in the evening gives your body more time to burn calories before going to bed, which may



aid in weight management and prevent overeating.

4. Regulated blood sugar levels

Consuming dinner early allows for better regulation of blood sugar levels since the body has more time to process and metabolise carbohydrates before resting.

5. Reduced risk of heart disease

Early dinner habits have been associated with a lower risk of heart disease. This may be due to better blood sugar control and improved lipid profiles associated with earlier eating times.

6. Lowered blood pressure

Eating dinner earlier may help lower blood pressure levels, as the body has more time to process food and relax before bedtime, reducing stress on the cardiovascular system.

7. Improved metabolism

Eating earlier can help regulate circadian rhythms and optimise metabolism, leading to better energy levels and overall metabolic health.

8. Prevention of acid reflux

Late-night eating can exacerbate symptoms of acid reflux due to lying down shortly after eating. Having an early dinner allows for better digestion and reduces the risk of reflux.

9. Increased energy levels

Eating earlier in the evening provides sustained energy levels throughout the night and into the next day, promoting better productivity and mental alertness.

Not Getting Enough Sleep May Raise Hypertension Risk, Especially for Females

According to a study due to be presented at the American College of Cardiology's Annual Scientific Session, which is being held in Atlanta from April 6-8, 2024, sleeping fewer than seven hours is linked to being at greater risk for high blood pressure.

The researchers also found that the risk was even higher for people who slept fewer than five hours.

The principal investigator on the study, Kaveh Hosseini, MD, further noted in a press release that the risk of hypertension was greater for females than males.

However, they were not certain whether this would actually make a difference in how patients are treated.

How sleep duration is related to high blood pressure risk

An association between sleep patterns and high blood pressure has previously been observed, according to the study authors. To further elucidate this relationship, they



pooled data from 16 studies done between January 2000 and May 2023.

These studies included over 1 million people from six countries who had no history of high blood pressure.

People were followed up on average for five years, although the follow-up periods ranged from 2.4 to 18 years.

After adjusting for other factors that can influence the risk of developing high blood pressure — such as smoking, BMI (body mass index), and age — a short sleep duration of less than seven hours was associated with a 7% higher risk

of developing the condition.

Additionally, sleeping fewer than five hours strengthened this link, increasing the risk by 11%.

While the scientists did see an association between sleeping longer and high blood pressure, they did not find this to be statistically significant, meaning that it could simply have occurred by chance.

They also did not find any differences based on age. However, they did find that females who slept fewer than seven hours had a 7% greater risk than males. The study authors did note that the study has

several limitations, including the fact that sleep duration was self-reported, so it was not possible to see how sleep duration changed throughout the follow-up.

There were also variations in how short sleep duration was defined in various studies, with some saying fewer than five hours and some saying fewer than six.

Why not getting enough sleep might contribute to high blood pressure

Kubanych Takyrbashev, MD, Health & Wellness Advisor at NAO, who was not involved in the study, pointed to three ways in which sleep can potentially impact blood pressure: sympathetic nervous system activation, hormonal imbalance, and inflammation.

"When we don't get enough sleep, our body perceives it as a stressor, triggering an increase in the activity of the sympathetic nervous system," he said. "This system is responsible for the 'fight or flight' response.

Extreme Heat May Impair the Immune System, Increasing Inflammation

New research shows how exposure to hotter temperatures over a short duration could affect the immune system and drive inflammation.

These effects could make the body more vulnerable to infections and accelerate the development of cardiovascular disease.

The research underscores the potential dangers of heat exposure as global temperatures continue to rise.

The findings were presented during the American Heart Association's EPI|Lifestyle Scientific Sessions 2024 Trusted Source in Chicago March 18-21.

"Most research only considers temperature as the exposure of interest, which may not be adequate to capture a person's response to heat," lead study author Daniel W. Riggs, PhD, an assistant professor of medicine in the Christina Lee Brown Envirome Institute at the University of Louisville in Louisville, KY, said in a news release Trusted Source.

"In our study, we used alternative measurements of heat in relation to multiple markers of inflammation and immune response in the body to investigate the short-term effects of heat exposure and produce a more complete picture of its health impact," Riggs said.

What does excessive heat do to



the body? For this study, researchers looked at blood samples of Louisville participants to analyze immune system function and how it was affected by heat.

Effects of heat exposure included temperature, net effective temperature (taking into consideration relative humidity, air temperature, and wind speed), and the Universal Thermal Climate Index (UTCI).

The findings show an increase in inflammation markers for every 5-degree increase in UTCI.

These markers included increases in immune cells involved in inflammation, such as monocytes and eosinophils, as well as rises in certain pro-inflammatory cytokines, proteins that promote inflammation in the body.

There was also a decrease in B-cells, which help the immune system identify and fight pathogens like

viruses and bacteria.

These findings suggest that increases in inflammation and reduced immune function due to heat exposure may increase susceptibility to infections and could worsen cardiovascular disease.

How does heat exposure affect the immune system?

The new research explores a link between elevated body temperatures resulting from heat exposure and the body's ability to fight off infection.

This should not be confused with fever, however, which is how the immune system responds to bacterial or viral infection or inflammation.

"Our immune system response to infection raises the temperature of the body above the normal state," Dr. Hilary Fairbrother, emergency medicine physician with UTHealth Houston, told Healthline.

"There is no known connection between an elevated body temperature and the ability to fight off an infection. It is this very theory that this article was considering on a cellular level," Fairbrother noted.

Dr. Anjali Bharati, emergency medicine physician at Lenox Health Greenwich Village, explained that environmental heat exposure could worsen an existing inflammation or infection.



Lucknow Super Giants Want To Ease Their Captain Back

RAHUL DIDN'T KEEP WICKETS AT TRAINING ON THE EVE OF THE GAME, AND STAND-IN CAPTAIN POORAN ONLY SAID "WE'LL SEE HOW HE GOES"

NEWDELHI: Lucknow Super Giants will take a late call on KL Rahul's participation - whether in part or more - in Tuesday's away fixture against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Rahul played as an impact substitute in Saturday's home game against Punjab Kings, with the LSG management keen on "easing him back" from injury. IPL 2024 is Rahul's comeback tournament after a quadriceps injury ruled him out of the last four Tests of the five-match series at home against England earlier this year. Rahul had pulled up with the same injury - against RCB, incidentally - during IPL 2023, and had to under-

go surgery followed by lengthy rehabilitation. "We'll see how he goes at training," stand-in captain Nicholas Pooran said when asked about Rahul's availability on Tuesday. At training, Rahul stayed away from keeping wickets entirely. He first underwent a series of timed sprint and mobility drills that were monitored by head coach Justin Langer. Rahul then practiced the full range of his body movements while playing the sweep in particular and felt his left hamstring repeatedly. He then occupied a quiet corner of the field and kept a close eye on the session for more than an hour. Later, he

examined at length the slightly unusual M Chinnaswamy Stadium pitch that had more than a smattering of grass right through the 22 yards. Rahul also padded up and went out for a hit against the team's net bowlers and throw-down specialists. After a 15-minute session, he got back to finishing a few more rounds of mobility drills before walking off to have another long chat with Langer. "It's always tough when you have to change combinations," Pooran said when asked how Rahul's absence on the field had impacted the team so far. "Obviously, it's different with KL on

the field. But our senior players came together and assisted me in making decisions as well. It's something that happens. Sometimes when your captain isn't available, all the senior players stand up, and try and make up for his absence." LSG have one win and one loss in two games so far, with Rahul returning scores of 58 (in 44 balls, vs Rajasthan Royals) and 15 (in nine balls, vs Punjab Kings). He kept wickets only in the first game, before handing over the responsibility to Quinton de Kock for the second. Rahul is among the contenders for the wicketkeeper-batter's slot in India's T20 World Cup squad.

Leading into the IPL 2024 season, there had been debate among observers whether he would bat in the middle order to play a similar role he plays for with the national team. So far, Rahul has opened in both matches. "I am not going lose one second's sleep over KL Rahul," Langer had said on his regular captain last week. "He is a beautiful player, he's an outstanding player. There's a reason he's had so much success for India and I'm blessed to have him in our team, not only as an opening batsman or a batsman and wicketkeeper, but also as the captain. He is so calm. He's a wonderful person."

Bold and beautiful: Dhoni and Pant jazz up Vizag with modern classic

LONDON: Matheesha Pathirana had bowled a perfectly acceptable yorker on off stump at 142.3kph. Rishabh Pant, though, sat deep in the crease, opened up his hips and pumped it away to the left of long-on for six, with his immense bottom-hand power. Pathirana's next ball was also a yorker. This time, he tried to tuck Pant up by hitting the blockhole on middle, but the batter sat deep in the crease once again, cleared his front leg, and whacked it to the right of long-on for four. The reading on the speedgun was 150.4kph. Earlier in the evening, Pathirana had yorked both Mitchell Marsh and Tristan Stubbs with similar rapid deliveries, but Pant was unhurried and unruffled. The yorker is designed to make batters powerless, but Pant manufactured so much that he pinged the boundary. Pathirana is a bit like the OG slinger Lasith Malinga. Even if you are expecting a yorker, or sight it out of the hand, it's fiendishly difficult to keep it out because of the low release point and the angled seam, which causes the ball to dip sharply on the batter. Pant defied all of that and took down Pathirana, a super-specialist at the death, with shots that scream power. Mustafizur Rahman wasn't spared either. He had bowled a slower offcutter into the pitch and tried to hide it away from the swinging arc, but Pant shovelled him over deep square leg for six with just one hand. That's the Rishabh Pant calling card. After being on 23 off 23 balls, he finished with 51 off 32 balls on a Visakhapatnam pitch that offered swing and seam movement to the fast bowlers throughout the game. And this was a player who was learning to "walk properly again" not too long ago after a serious car accident. Many wondered if Pant would be able to lead a normal life, let alone return to action. But Pant always had self-belief - both on and off the field. "Yes, that one-and-a-half years was a wait but at the same time you've got to keep doing what you can as a cricketer and keep learning from it," Pant said at the post-match presentation. "I think I always had self-belief that whatever happens in life, I need to be back on the ground. That was the thought process and I never thought about anything else." Pant's blitz was central to Delhi Capitals piling up 191 for 5. But it wasn't the only special innings on the night. MS Dhoni also thrilled the crowd with a big-hitting display, emphasis on the big. His 37 off 16 balls was the innings that actually turned Visakhapatnam wild. On the eve of the game, hundreds of fans had turned up outside the gates of the ACA-VDCS stadium to catch a glimpse of Dhoni, but he didn't train on Saturday.

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