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Eid ul Fitr Being Celebrated Across J&K Today

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 09: The crescent for the month of Shawwal was sighted in Jammu and Kashmir, therefore Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated on Wednesday, Grand Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam said on Tuesday evening.

Talking to the news agency, he said that enough evidences were received from various parts of J&K about sighting of the crescent.

He said that the consultative committee headed by him (Grand Mufti) with members Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Moulana Rehmatullah Qasimi, Moulana Abdul Lateef Alqandi, Ghulam Rasool Hami and ulemas from Jammu and Chenab valley have concluded that Eid-ul-Fitr will

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Traffic Police Issues Stern Warning Against Reckless Driving Ahead Of Eid-ul-Fitr Festivities

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 09: As Eid-ul-Fitr festivities approach, the Traffic Police in Srinagar has issued a stern appeal to young individuals, urging them to refrain from fast driving, racing, and engaging in dangerous stunts on the streets.

A senior traffic official, speaking anonymously, emphasized the risks associated with

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Ahead Of Eid, Markets In Kashmir Abuzz With Shoppers

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 09: Ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr markets in Srinagar and other parts of the Kashmir valley wore a festive look on Tuesday as people came out in large numbers for shopping.

The Eid-ul-Fitr is being celebrated in Kashmir valley on Wednesday or Thursday subject to the appearance of the crescent.

At major shopping centers, the shopkeepers have displayed colourful items to lure customers on the occasion. However, many business owners in city centers complained of sluggish sales.

The rush for bakery, mutton, and garments has surged as people in large numbers were seen making purchases of their choicest items for the occasion.

Most areas of downtown Srinagar including Jamia Masjid, Nowhatta, Rajouri Kadal, and Khujabazar were abuzz with the shoppers making purchases from the branded outlets for the festival.

The business hub Lal Chowk and other markets including Amirakadal, Hari Singh High Street, Goni Khan, and Maharaja Bazar also witnessed a

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NEWS BRIEF

Festive Treat: Rajpora's Sheermal continues to be in high demand

PULWAMA, APR 09: The tradition of buying Sheermal from Rajpora in south Kashmir's Pulwama district for special occasions like Eid remains strong among people in the valley and beyond, with demand consistently increasing during festive periods.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Sheermal is a distinctive, flat and circular bread adorned with sesame seeds. This bread typically enjoyed with Kashmiri Namkeen tea or Sheer Chai, has become an essential element of

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In a first, J&K Bank's mPay surpasses Rs 1000 crore transaction in a day ahead of Eid

SRINAGAR, APR 09: Jammu and Kashmir Bank's digital team has garnered widespread praise from individuals across various sectors ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations.

Living up to its promises, J&K Bank has shattered previous records, achieving historic transaction counts during this festive period.

The bank's mPay channel achieved an extraordinary milestone, surpassing Rs 1000 crore mark in a single day for the first time.

With a staggering 493,598

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Navratra festivities illuminate Vecharnag temple in Sgr

SRINAGAR, APR 9: As a display of religious fervor and cultural harmony, Navratri festivities took center stage in Srinagar as the devotees gathered at the historic Vecharnag Temple to celebrate the auspicious occasion.

The temple grounds echoed with chants and prayers, resonating with the spirit of devotion and celebration.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), local residents and pilgrims alike flocked to the Vecharnag Temple, adorned in vibrant traditional attire, to pay homage to the divine during the nine-day festival.

The atmosphere was filled with joy and reverence as devotees offered

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Adequate Arrangements Made For Vaishno Devi Pilgrims

HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 9: Shat Chandi Maha Yagya organised by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board embarked upon at the Holy Cave Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi amidst the serene aura of spirituality and devotion besides, the performance of other religious ceremonies on the auspicious occasion of 'Chaitra Navratra'.

This sacred ritual performed at the Holy Cave Shrine spans across the nine-day long 'Chaitra Navratra' marking a significant milestone in the spiritual calendar of devotees worldwide and is being performed to foster harmony, abundance, and good health for all of humanity.

Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; K. K. Sharma, Member, SMVDSB; Vikas Anand, SDM Bhawan; other officers and staff

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Udhampur Lok Sabha Elections: Battle Of Young Turks vs Old Guards

Five Candidates Below The Age Of 40 In Fray Against 71-Year-Old GM Saroori, 76-Year-Old Jitendra Singh

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 09: As the electoral battle heats up for the Udhampur parliamentary seat in Jammu and Kashmir, an intriguing age divide emerges among the candidates vying for the coveted position.

Among the 12 contenders,

28-year-old Amit Kumar stands as the youngest aspirant, while 71-year-old GM Saroori represents the seasoned veterans in the electoral fray.

The diverse spectrum of candidates reflects a generational shift in the political landscape, with five candidates below the age of 40 and an equal number



surpassing the age of 50.

As per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Amit Kumar's youthful vigor at 28 years old marks a stark contrast to the seasoned experience embodied by GM Saroori, whose 71 years of age epitomizes decades of political engagement.

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Mufti Says Kashmiris Want Pandits To Return And Live Happily Together

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 9: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said that Kashmiri Pandits do not need any help from any political party to return and settle down in Kashmir again as



people of the valley themselves want to see Pandits return and live together just like they once did.

"Kashmiri people want to see Pandits come back and stay in the valley peacefully again like they were staying together in a

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Meet Udhampur Lok Sabha's Richest Candidates In Electoral Race

DR JITENDRA WEALTHIEST CANDIDATE; CONSTITUENCY HEADS TO POLLS ON APRIL 19



HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 09: Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate for the Udhampur-Kathua-Doda Lok Sabha constituency has emerged as the wealthiest candidate, with a significant increase in assets over the past decade.

Former J&K Minister Ghulam Mohammad Saroori from the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) and former Member of Parliament Choudhary Lal Singh from the INDIA Bloc (comprising National Conference and PDP), supporting the Congress

candidate, also possess substantial resources, although they do not match Singh's wealth.

Dr Jitendra Singh - BJP

Leading the pack is Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh whose financial portfolio has seen a remarkable surge over the past decade. His assets have soared from Rs 3.19 crore in 2014 to around 8 crore this year. This wealth includes movable assets of over Rs 3.33 crore and immovable properties valued at Rs 7.04 crore.

His spouse's assets have witnessed a surge, with movable and immovable

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J&K Waqf Board Relieves Hazratbal Shrine Cleric Over "Forced Conversion", Orders Probe

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 9: Days after an FIR was registered over alleged forced conversion, the J&K Waqf Board has relieved the cleric of Hazratbal shrine and constituted an enquiry committee to probe his role.

On Jumat-ul-Vida- the last Friday of Ramadan, a video showed a non-local converting to Islam and reciting Kalima at Srinagar's Hazratbal shrine. Police registered an FIR the same day under various sections at Nigeen police

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How Kashmir Girl Transformed Her Life Through Makeup Brush

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 09: In the quaint outskirts of Srinagar, a young girl's journey from obscurity to empowerment through the transformative power of makeup is captu-



ing hearts and minds across the region.

Azra Nazir, 23, who hails from Soitang,

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With Kids At Salons, Men Busy In Markets, Women Preparing In The Kitchen, Kashmir All Set To Welcome Eid Ul-Fitr

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 09: As the auspicious occasion of Eid ul-Fitr draws near, the vibrant valley of Kashmir buzzes with preparations and anticipation. "From bustling marketplaces to serene kitchen scenes, every corner of the region is alive with the spirit of festivity."

In the heart of Srinagar city, children flock to salon shops, eager to get their hair styled and outfits perfected for the

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Kashmir Valley.....

be observed on Wednesday. He also extended his Eid greetings to the Muslim Ummah, especially to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "May this auspicious occasion bring with it a lot of joy, happiness, peace and prosperity to all of us", he said

While the incessant rains played spoilsport during the last four days, people flooded markets across the valley for Eid shopping on Thursday. The locals had done most of the shopping for the Eid yesterday.

While the bakery and mutton shops had witnessed a massive rush of shoppers for the past few days, the traders complained of depressed sales especially in Srinagar on the eve of Eid.

"But this year, it will be quite less," he said, adding there are multiple reasons behind the depressed sales.

He said rains, the ongoing works in Srinagar under the smart city project and lack of liquidity played spoilsport this festive season.

In Kashmir, People usually observe Eid-ul-Fitr for two days and the festival begins with congregational prayers in the morning.

The largest Eid prayer congregations in Srinagar are expected at Hazratbal shrine on the banks of the Dal Lake and Jamia mosque in old Srinagar.

After Eid prayers, people extend greetings to their kith and kin. Locals prepare a host of delicacies, mostly non-vegetarian, on the festive occasion.

Traffic Police.....

reckless behavior, highlighting that violators will face on-the-spot penalties, with their parents being duly notified.

"Special teams have been deployed to monitor and deter such activities, particularly focusing on areas prone to such incidents," the official told KNS.

Collaboration with district police has been established to enhance vigilance and enforcement measures.

In a direct plea to parents, the official underscored the importance of not entrusting vehicles to minors and ensuring responsible driving habits among young drivers.

The Traffic Police has been actively engaging with youth through counseling sessions, urging them to redirect their energy towards constructive pursuits, such as education, to foster responsible citizenship.

Efforts to streamline traffic movement ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr have been successful, thanks to meticulous planning and deployment of specialized traffic squads. Reports indicate smooth traffic flow across key areas of Srinagar, attributed to the cooperation of the public and diligent efforts of traffic personnel.

With collaborative efforts and continued vigilance, the Traffic Police aims to maintain safe and efficient traffic conditions throughout the Eid festivities in Srinagar.

Ahead Of Eid.....

rush of shoppers. However, some shopkeepers were complaining about less business as people are making online purchases.

At several uptown markets, the people were seen making purchases from the roadside vendors.

Despite the bustling activity, traders have voiced concerns over lower-than-expected sales and decreased business this time.

They said the skyrocketing prices of the items have further hampered sales, with the government opting to eliminate price regulation mechanisms instead of decontrolling prices.

The demand for edible items, particularly mutton, bakery goods, and confectioneries, has soared leading to long queues forming outside retail shops catering to Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations, a resident of south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

He said the traditional buzz was missing from the markets in south Kashmir amid stringent economic conditions of the people.

Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI) joint secretary General Umar Nazir Tibet Baqal, who also owns a travel agency said that with the onset of festive time, it's just the buzz in the market and buying sentiment is down as people are shopping necessities mainly which include food and groceries.

He said the market has not been able to bounce back this festive season most probably of looming economic uncertainty.

Meanwhile, Peoples Democratic Party President Mehbooba Mufti said that the closure of banks on the eve of Eid ul Fitr is causing considerable panic & distress amongst people.

The banks and government offices remain closed on Tuesday amid a holiday on the occasion of Navratra in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Even ATMs are non-functional and have run out of cash in most areas. What explains such insensitivity & apathy on behalf of the local administration?", Mehbooba wrote on X. (UNI)

Adequate.....

of the Shrine Board, besides a large number of pilgrims were present on the occasion.

The intricate floral arrangements, coupled with traditional motifs and embellishments, have enhanced the divine ambiance of the shrine while evoking a sense of reverence and joy among the visiting devotees.

The Shrine Board has also made elaborate arrangements as per directions of Manoj Sinha, (Lt. Governor JK-UT), Chairman SMVDSB for facilitating a large number of pilgrims who are expected to pay their obeisance at the Sanctum Sanctorum during Navratras.

These arrangements include round-the-clock water and power supply all along the tracks leading to the Shrine, sanitation, medicare, and availability of special "fast related" food at the Board's Bhojanalayas.

Besides, all the routes leading to the Holy Cave Shrine are fully maintained for smooth movement of pilgrims.

The illumination of the Bhawan area with attractive and colourful lights has also been done. For the ease and comfort of pilgrims, facilities like accommodation, battery-operated vehicles, passenger ropeway, and helicopter services are operating smoothly.

The Shrine Board has also made arrangements for free food for the pilgrims at Tarakote Marg, Prasad Kendra at Sanjichhat, besides free Langar Sewa at Bhairon Ji.

To facilitate the smooth pilgrimage of Divyang pilgrims, the Shri Mata Vaishno devi Shrine Board is also providing free pony and battery car services to ensure their journey to the holy shrine without hindrance.

Other special features of arrangements during these Navratras are bhajan and bhaint performances during morning and evening Atka Aarti by the renowned artists.

CEO Shrine Board constantly reviews and monitors the regulation of Yatra along with other arrangements all along the track and in the Bhawan Area and interacts with the pilgrims enquiring about the facilities made by the Shrine Board for their facilitation. (UNI)

Udhampur Lok.....

Among the contenders, notable candidates include 67-year-old Ghulam Mohammad Saroori representing the Democratic Progressive Azad Party, followed by BJP candidate Dr. Jitendra Singh at 67 years old and Congress' Choudhary Lal Singh at 65 years old.

However, the youth brigade is not to be underestimated, with Bahujan Samaj Party's Amit Kumar leading the charge at a mere 28 years of age. Additionally, independent candidate Swarnveer Singh Jaral, aged 30, and Ekam Sanatan Bharat Dal candidate Manoj Kumar, aged 32, bring a fresh perspective to the electoral arena.

Other candidates in the mix include independent contenders Mehraj Deen at 36 years old and Sachin Gupta at 37 years old. Mohammad Ali Gujjar, contesting independently, clocks in at 43 years old, while Dr. Pankaj Sharma and Rajesh Manchanda represent the 40s age bracket at 44 and 56 years old, respectively. Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party candidate Balwan Singh, aged 57, rounds out the diverse array of contenders vying for the Udhampur parliamentary seat.

Mufti Says.....

very beautiful atmosphere," Mufti told media persons here on Tuesday.

She said Kashmiri Pandits who are living in Jammu or any other places in extreme situations do not need any help from Government or from Mehbooba Mufti or BJP or any other to settle down in Kashmir.

"The common people here want to see the Kashmiri Pandits return and live together as they happily did earlier," she said.

Mufti said that when Kashmiri Pandits, Sikhs, Buddhist Christians and Muslims were living together it represented a real cultural view of the society.

Mehbooba slammed those films being made on Kashmir that give people here a bad name.

"In spite of the unpleasant situation, Roshan Lal's family stayed in Kashmir and lived alongside with Muslims, is an example of brotherhood and the answer to those people who are making films to give a bad name to Kashmir", Mufti said. (UNI)

How Kashmir.....

has become a beacon of hope for many, breaking stereotypes and paving the way for others to follow suit.

Azra's ascent in the makeup industry is nothing short of meteoric. From a modest beginning of one client slot per day in 2022, she now juggles five appointments daily, cementing her status as the fastest-growing makeup artist in the Valley.

She shot to fame when her success story featured in a local news portal in 2022, which thrust her into the spotlight and transformed her life forever.

What sets Azra apart is not just her exceptional talent, but also her enigmatic persona. Despite her burgeoning popularity, she remains a mystery to her clients, as she doesn't reveal her face and clients only catch her glimpse on booking days.

"Yet, my anonymity hasn't deterred me from making a profound impact. I try to charge nominal fee and if any don't afford even these charges, I extend a generous discount to them," she says.

Azra, the youngest makeup artists of the Kashmir Valley, says she gives generous discounts to clients who cannot afford even her nominal charges, ensuring her services are accessible to all, regardless of their financial means.

Her success goes beyond her flourishing career, it's a testament to her resilience and determination to defy societal norms. In a culture where traditional gender roles often dictate a woman's place, Azra's story challenges the status quo. She not only supports herself but also provides support to her parents.

She says that girls can indeed be pillars of support for their families. As she continues to inspire and empower, her story serves as a rallying cry for girls everywhere to shatter barriers, defy stereotypes, and pursue their dreams with unwavering determination.

In her journey, she proves that with passion, perseverance, and a touch of makeup magic, anything is possible.

She says her mantra is simple, "Don't think you cannot do it, don't think you cannot be a support to your family, especially to your parents. Believe in yourself, defy the odds, and remember, you have the power to support your family, especially your parents. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise."

Meet Udhampur.....

assets valued at Rs 1.64 crore in 2024. Their combined financial strength has contributed to this increase.

Dr Singh's annual income has shown a consistent rise, from Rs 8 lakh in 2013-2014 to Rs 33 lakh in 2022-23. In terms of movable assets, Singh possesses Rs 3.33 crore, while his wife holds Rs 88.88 lakh. They also maintain substantial balances in their bank accounts and fixed deposits. Their vehicle assets include a Ford SUV valued at Rs 26 lakh owned by Dr Singh and a Chevrolet Aveo valued at Rs 2.7 lakh owned by his wife. Their jewellery holdings include Rs 13.30 lakh worth for Dr Singh and Rs 16.50 lakh worth for his wife.

The Union Minister also possesses significant real estate, including an ancestral orchard in Doda valued at over Rs 1 crore and a residential home in Jammu's Trikuta Nagar valued at over Rs 2.5 crore. His spouse owns non-agricultural land in Gaghwal, Kathua, and a residential flat in Noida with a combined value of Rs 1.68 crore.

Singh's income sources include pension, salary as a Member of Parliament and Minister of State, and interest from deposits, while his spouse's income is from interest on deposits.

In contrast, his opponents, Choudhary Lal Singh (former MP and former minister) of the INDIA Bloc and Ghulam Mohammad Saroori (former minister) representing the DPAP, although not as affluent, still command substantial resources. Interestingly, while Dr Singh and Saroori have maintained clean records devoid of any pending police cases, Choudhary Lal Singh has mentioned one ongoing case under investigation by the Enforcement Directorate in his records.

Ghulam Mohammad Saroori - DPAP

Ghulam Mohammad Saroori, a former minister representing the DPAP, declared assets worth Rs 5 crore, with his wife also possessing significant gold jewellery. Saroori, previously a minister in the Omar Abdullah-led Congress-National Conference coalition government but who switched to the Ghulam Nabi Azad-led DPAP last year, reports an annual income of Rs 7.55 lakh, primarily from his pension. His wife, a retired government teacher, has considerable wealth.

As per the financial statement, Saroori's movable assets are valued at Rs 4.44 lakh, including amounts deposited in various bank accounts. His wife's movable assets are valued at Rs 28.276 lakh, including gold worth over Rs 26 lakh and some deposits in bank accounts. Saroori also possesses a residential house in Srinagar and commercial properties in Jammu and Kishtwar, besides agricultural land, amounting to Rs 5.19 crore. His spouse has also contributed to the wealth with multiple properties in Kishtwar valued at Rs 84 lakh.

Choudhary Lal Singh - Congress
Choudhary Lal Singh of Congress earned an annual income of Rs 11.41 lakh in 2013-14, although his recent declaration shows a decline. He declared an income of Rs 4.55 lakh in 2022-23.

His wife, also a former legislator, receives a yearly income of Rs 16.74 lakh as per the 2022-23 declaration. She shows her income sources as pension as an MLA, interest from savings, and salary as the Chairman of an Educational Trust. There are no criminal cases registered against Choudhary at any police station. However, he has been investigated under a Prevention of Money Laundering case registered by the Enforcement Directorate in the RB Education Trust Case.

In terms of liquid assets, Choudhary holds Rs 45,000 in cash, while his wife possesses Rs 40,000. They also maintain balances of Rs 26.53 crore and Rs 73.60 lakh in multiple bank accounts, respectively.

Choudhary has invested in land in Basholi and Kandi Khurd in 2022 and 2010, respectively, with the current market value estimated at Rs 1.5 crore. Similarly, his wife, also a former legislator, has invested in land at Mareen Kathua, currently valued at Rs 1 crore. The Choudhary family's property holdings are valued at Rs 4.3 crore. Lal Singh also mentioned liabilities of Rs 20 lakh in the form of bank loans, while his spouse has a liability of Rs 5 lakh.

J&K Waqf Board.....

station alleging that a Srinagar resident forced the non-local who was his domestic help to convert to Islam.

The J&K Waqf Board has now acted against the cleric and relieved Kamal-ud-din Farooqui from the duties of Imaam-o-Khateeb, Aasar-i-Shareef, Hazratbal till the completion of the enquiry. The Waqf said there were allegations that Farooqui presided over forcible conversion during Friday prayers.

Given the allegations, an emergency meeting was convened at the Central Waqf office on Monday to discuss the incident and determine the future course of action.

The meeting noted that due process was not followed during the conversion and that both Islamic law and government regulations were not followed.

"During the meeting, all leading Imaam-o-Khateeb of the Board unanimously concluded that this incident has caused confusion and

chaos among the general public and has the potential to disturb public harmony. Additionally, it was noted that due process was not followed during the conversion and that both Islamic law and government regulations were not followed," an order issued by the Executive Magistrate (Tehsildar) Waqf Board read.

It was also agreed that a committee should be formed to inquire into the matter. "Furthermore, they deemed it improper for Dr. Kamal-ud-din Farooqui to retain the position of Imaam-o-Khateeb until the conclusion of the inquiry. Accordingly, in light of this, sanction was accorded to the constitution of an Enquiry Committee," the order read.

The committee will be headed by Syed Mohammad Hussain, a Board Member, of the J&K Waqf Board and it will have two members Ghulam Nabi Haleem, a Board Member, of J&K Waqf Board and Mohammad Yaseen Khan, Imaam-o-Khateeb, Syed Karam Shah Sahib, Karan Nagar, Srinagar

"Kamal-ud-din Farooqui is relieved from the duties of Imaam-o-Khateeb, Aasar-i-Shareef, Hazratbal till completion of the enquiry or till further orders," the order read.

The Committee shall examine the matter and furnish a factual report within seven days. (UNI)

With Kids.....

upcoming celebrations. Amidst laughter and excitement, the young ones eagerly anticipate the joyous festivities ahead.

Meanwhile, men navigate through the crowded markets, meticulously selecting gifts, sweets, and traditional attire for their loved ones. "With a sense of duty and affection, they weave through the vibrant stalls, ensuring that every detail is just right for the special day."

Likewise, in the ambiance of Kashmiri households, women take on the role of culinary artists, skillfully preparing delicious meals and sweet treats to delight their families and guests. The aroma of spices fills the air as they lovingly craft traditional dishes, adding a touch of warmth and flavor to the festive occasion.

Reflecting on the month of Ramadan, which precedes Eid ul-Fitr, a local resident shared with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), stating that Ramadan has been a time of spiritual reflection, self-discipline, and communal unity.

"As we bid farewell to this blessed month, we carry its lessons of compassion and gratitude into the joyful celebrations of Eid," added Wahid, a local resident from Srinagar.

He added as Ramadan fades away and Eid draws near in Kashmir, we feel the excitement building. With tomorrow, Eid is likely, and as we say goodbye to Ramadan, we cherish the connections we've made through prayer and reflection.

Moreover, as the sun sets valley, stands united in anticipation of Eid ul-Fitr, cherishing the traditions and bonds that make this occasion truly special.

Festive Treat.....

various social customs and traditions in Kashmir. It comes in two varieties: sweet, enjoyed with Khewa, and salty, savoured with Noon-Chai.

Mohammad Akbar Sofi, a bread-maker in Rajpora town, has been working tirelessly in recent days to fulfill Sheermal orders ahead of Eid. Alongside him, more than two dozen bakers in Rajpora have been putting in extra hours to meet the high demand for Sheermal.

Akbar said that in the past, only those with the means could afford Sheermal. "However, now it is accessible to nearly everyone in the village," he said, adding that while people from various parts of Kashmir traditionally come to Rajpora for Sheermal, the customer influx significantly increases during festive periods, which boosts sales. Shakeel Ahmad, another baker, said their Sheermal variety has been in high demand for decades due to its uncompromising quality. "Kashmiris living elsewhere often visit Rajpora to purchase Sheermal in bulk as a special gift for their friends," he said.

During Eid and other festive occasions, hundreds of customers from distant places flock to the area to buy Sheermal, Shakeel said, adding, "Each baker typically sells around 4000-5000 kgs of Sheermal on Eid, providing a substantial source of income for those involved in bread-making."

Customers queuing at bakeries in Rajpora expressed their willingness to travel long distances to purchase Sheermal and share it with their relatives.

They said that while Sheermals are made in other regions, none match the crispiness and flavour of Rajpora Sheermal.

Rajpora Sheermals are preferred across Kashmir and beyond for their unmatched quality and taste.

In a first.....

transactions totaling Rs 3230.77 crore, the bank's digital platform has witnessed unprecedented activity. Branch transactions also contributed significantly, amounting to Rs 9586 crore over the past four days, even with two of those days being public holidays.

As Eid-ul-Fitr approached, J&K Bank's digital channels seamlessly facilitated historic transactions, culminating in a jaw-dropping total of Rs 11,000 crore. This monumental achievement underscores the bank's commitment to providing efficient and reliable digital banking services to its customers.

A spokesperson for J&K Bank expressed delight at the overwhelming success of their digital initiatives, particularly highlighting the milestone reached by MPay Delight+, which contributed to the total of Rs 11,082 crore in transactions over the last five days.

The record-breaking performance of J&K Bank's digital channels reflects not only the growing reliance on digital banking solutions but also the bank's dedication to meeting the evolving needs of its customers.

Catering to huge transactional traffic with interrupted service, J&K Bank recorded around five crore transactions amounting to more than Rs. 11000 crore across the channels in the last five days. Bank's Digital channels including mobile banking application Mpay Delight Plus witnessed a huge traffic with around Rs 7500 transactions effected smoothly.

So much so, Mpay Delight Plus breached a Rs. 1000-crore transaction mark in a single day twice on a trot affirming ever evolving and improving Bank's digital ecosystem.

Branches across the enterprise especially in UTs of J&K and Ladakh catered to customer rush providing them uninterrupted banking services recording impressive transaction figures to the tune Rs. 3200 in last two working days in the build up to auspicious occasion of Eid ul Fitr.

Social networking platforms witnessed netizens from all walks of life hailing Bank over flawless functioning of Mpay Delight Plus and other banking channels like ATMs, banking etc.

Notably, six months ago J&K Bank upgraded its earlier mobile banking app to a more sophisticated version boasting of features at par with the best in the country. Unlike earlier version which had experienced glitch on Eid last year, mPay Delight Plus withstood the massive transactional traffic with much to the satisfaction of people across J&K.

Keeping pace with the ever changing digital landscape and needs of its customer base, J&K Bank has of late given a huge impetus by weaving a bouquet of digital offerings attuned to the demands of contemporary times.

Expressing satisfaction over the uninterrupted services provided by the bank and while revealing the figures, the bank's spokesperson said, "This is something we have been working on for the last year or so. Last year's glitch pushed us to the drawing board with our management led by MD and CEO Mr Bsldev Prakash pledging that no such hiccups would have to be witnessed in the future.

And accordingly Bank's IT team came up with more robust and upgraded mobile banking application Mpay Delight Plus that could withstand the huge transactional traffic on big occasions like Eid. The historic numbers recorded in the last five days or so is a testament to the Bank's commitment to bring home a highly upgraded digital offering besides reinforcing its base through conventional channels."

Meanwhile customers across J&K and Ladakh expressed their satisfaction over haslefree services provided by the J&K Bank as no outage reported anywhere.

"M-Pay has eased our transaction hugely. I saw customers happily making payments during last few days without any issues" said a famed uptown bakery owner.

"Frankly saying, I didn't trust the assurances J&K Bank leadership made during their technology upgradation exercise, but I am happy to see them proving people like me wrong. Today I proudly say - my bank is the best bank", he said.

"I went to at least 5 times to different ATMs since Thursday, and these all were dispensing out cash without any hassles this time. J&K Bank has made our Eid sweater", said a retired lecturer from shehr-e-khas.

Navratra.....

prayers and participated in rituals, marking the triumph of good over evil.

One of the devotees told KNO that they look forward to Navratra every year as it brings our community together in celebration and devotion. She added that Vechnag temple holds immense significance for them, and being able to participate in the festivities here fills their hearts with happiness and spiritual fulfillment.

Another devotee voiced the sentiments, saying the vibrant celebrations of Navratra at Vechnag Temple fill me with pride and joy. It's heartwarming to see people from all walks of life come together to celebrate our rich cultural heritage and traditions.

Pertinently, 'Navratra' is a time when Hindus celebrate the goddess Durga for killing the demon, Mahishasura. A more powerful God, Lord Brahma, had blessed Mahishasura with the gift of immortality because of his dedication to him, which meant he could never die—(KNO)

SHAHEED SHUJAAT BUKHARI REMEMBERED ON HIS SIXTH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

SPECIAL PRAYERS HELD AT KREERI

Ashiq Hussain

KREERI, APR09 (HT) Veteran Journalist Dr. Syed Shujaat Bukhari remembered on his sixth death anniversary with many programmes being organised throughout the day and the week by different associations and organ-



isations to pay tribute to the great journalist. The Rising Kashmir mediagroup founder fell to the bullets of unknown gunmen on June 14th 2018 along with his two security guards outside his Press Enclave office. According to reports a special prayer was held this morning at his ancestral graveyard at Kreeri in Baramulla district, in which hundreds of mourners participated. A large number of people from the area had assembled early morning along president Abdi markaz Kamraz Mohd Amin bhat to pay tribute to the departed soul.

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R/O ..Kripalpura Payeen Pattan Baramulla

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R/O ...KREERI
TEHSIL...KREERI

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EDITORIAL

Ensuring Fair Apple Trade Amidst South African Competition

The recent influx of South African apples into Indian markets has triggered a concerning trend for Kashmiri apple growers and consumers alike. The ensuing decline in Kashmiri apple prices not only threatens the livelihoods of local growers but also jeopardizes the quality and uniqueness of this cherished produce.

Kashmiri apples have long been celebrated for their exceptional taste, aroma, and nutritional value.

However, the sudden surge in competition from imported South African apples has led to a sharp drop in prices, resulting in significant financial losses for Kashmiri farmers who depend on this crop for their sustenance.

While competition in the market is inevitable, it is crucial to ensure a level playing field that safeguards the interests of domestic producers. The arrival of South African apples, often sold at lower prices due to different production and labor costs, highlights the need for fair trade practices and policies that protect local farmers from unfair competition.

Moreover, the decline in Kashmiri apple prices not only impacts growers but also consumers who appreciate the superior quality of locally grown produce. With cheaper alternatives flooding the market, there is a risk of compromising on taste, freshness, and nutritional value, ultimately depriving consumers of the authentic Kashmiri apple experience.

To address this issue, policymakers must prioritize the implementation of measures aimed at supporting Kashmiri apple growers, such as providing subsidies, improving infrastructure, and promoting their produce in domestic and international markets. Additionally, stricter regulations on imported fruits should be enforced to ensure compliance with quality standards and fair pricing practices.

In the face of increasing globalization and market integration, it is imperative to strike a balance between promoting free trade and protecting the interests of local farmers. Preserving the legacy of Kashmiri apples requires concerted efforts to uphold the principles of fairness, sustainability, and quality in the agricultural sector. Only then can we ensure the continued prosperity of Kashmiri apple growers and the preservation of this iconic fruit for generations to come.

Eid ul Fitr: A Beacon of Hope and Unity



■ **Aubaid Ahmad Akhoun**

As we embrace the joyous occasion

of Eid ul Fitr, we extend our warmest wishes to all those celebrating. May this Eid serve as a beacon of peace, health, and prosperity, casting a light of joy and serenity on everyone's life. In this moment of jubilation, let's also spare a thought and a prayer for the marginalized and overlooked, with hopes that this Eid marks the beginning of an end to their prolonged sufferings.

We earnestly pray that Allah Azza Wajal showers His boundless mercy upon you and your loved ones, recognizing your fasts, prayers, charity, and all forms of worship. May He grant us the honor of being among those for-

given and empower us to sustain our deeds of kindness throughout the coming year.

Eid ul Fitr is not just a celebration but a moment for gratitude, reflection, and a renewal of our commitment to values of unity, compassion, and solidarity. As we celebrate, let us not overlook our brothers and sisters facing adversity around the globe, including those in Palestine. May the Almighty bestow His blessings upon them, easing their burdens and ushering in an era of peace. Our unwavering support for them persists, today and always.

Let this message of hope and togeth-

erness spread far and wide, reminding everyone of the strength found in compassion and collective support. This Eid, let's come together to herald a new chapter for humanity, one where everyone is included in our circle of kindness.

WISHING YOU ALL A TRULY BLESSED, WONDERFUL, JOYOUS, AND PROSPEROUS EID.

The author is a Educational Columnist, Associate Editor Weekly Educational Newspaper "Education Quill", EDP Head SKIE Classes Khanyar & Soura. akhoun.aubaid@gmail.com

Celebration of Eid ul Fitr 2024



■ **Sahil Manzoor**

Eid means joy, peace, and happiness. The day has great significance among Muslims around the world. Now that the Almighty has bestowed great blessings upon us and poured his blessing upon all of us this year, we have offered prayer five times in masjids, which is quite great for the whole world. A calendar year has 365 days and 6 hours, or a cycle of 12 months. Every month has religious and celebratory events that we observe or celebrate. Every religion on this list has had great importance among its followers for thousands of years. Every follower of it has strong beliefs and faith and feels proud of what he or she follows. The world is full of towering religious places. Every community has a democratic, fundamental right because they believe there are no religious restrictions for anyone but those who are bestowed by almighty Allah in various aspects. They never ignore or fail to notice the signs of the almighty Allah. As we know, this world is quite bizarre, and there are natural phenomena beyond our imagination. There are countless practices happening around us; we have to keep focusing on the righteous ones for our hereafter. In this article, I am going to put forward my personal views on Ramadan ul Mubarak and Eid ul Fiter. The pious month is about to leave us, and we have to wait for another 11 months to welcome it again. Let us pray that the Almighty may forgive our sins, shower his blessings upon us, and bestow long life on our parents, friends, nears, and dears. My belief is clear



and fair: every activity happening in this universe is controlled by some superpower that belongs to Almighty Allah. There is only one, and that is Allah, who cares for the present and the future, who gets rid of all your worries, and who always keeps us under his blessings. Ramadan ul Mubarak is a period of 29 or 30 days. During this month, Muslims around the world observe fasting from dawn to sunset, gives charity to the needy and holds iftar arrangements for the needy and poor. The month has great religious importance among Muslims throughout the world. The month is the 9th month of the Islamic calendar, coming in between Shaban and Shawal. After the completion of Ramadan ul Mubarak, the festival of Eid ul Fiter is being observed with great enthusiasm

among Muslims. message for Eid: As the religion of Islam teaches us peace, prosperity, and brotherhood, it is our duty to maintain peace and spread the message of love among all people, no matter their religion, nation, caste, sex, etc. I am requesting all my near and dear ones and the whole Muslim Ummah to celebrate this Eid as the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, directs us. Take care of your relatives, neighbors, and needy people, and pray for peace and brotherhood around the world. May Allah shower his blessings upon us and bestow upon us what is best for us. Eid Mubarak

Raiyar-Ich, Khansahib, sahilmanzoor0401@gmail.com

Role of Parents In Child's Formative Years



■ **By Mool Raj**

The first five years of a child's life are termed 'golden period,' a pivotal phase where parents play a monumental role in shaping its future

The first five years of a child's life are a unique opportunity for parents to nurture and guide their child's development so that they can realise their full potential and become the best version of themselves.

This period is often referred to as the "golden period," a critical and transformative phase that lays the foundation for all their future development, learning, and well-being. Let's understand why.

Unraveling Synaptic Pruning
Every baby is born with about 100 billion brain cells which are largely not connected with each other. As the baby comes into the world and experiences the world through sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feel, these brain cells start firing and connecting with each other at an astounding rate to form "synapses". But, starting around the age of 2, the brain wants to be efficient and it starts pruning off brain connections (synapses) that it thinks are not strong or important enough by a process called synaptic pruning. It's almost as if the child starts losing their talents even before they have a chance to fully develop them.

Pivotal Role Of Parents in Early Childhood
For parents, it's crucial to understand the significance of synaptic pruning in the early years of a child's brain development, and it highlights the importance of providing rich, engaging learning experiences for their baby right from birth. By offering diverse and holistic learning experiences - that includes physical play, creative stimulation - parents can help ensure that the most beneficial synapses are strengthened



in their child's brain, setting the foundation for a lifetime of talents and skill development.

Sooner, the Better
During the first five years the brain is exceptionally malleable, and experiences leave a lasting impact on cognitive, emotional, and social development. Maximising positive experiences and interactions during this critical phase sets the foundation for a child's future success in various aspects of life.

The younger the baby, the faster they learn, and wider the window for them to explore their fullest potential.

Practical Tips for Parents:
1. Quality Interactions: Your young baby or toddler is capable of amazing feats, much beyond your imaginations! Treat them not as a helpless being, but as a fearless and curious learner!
2. Deliberate Stimulations: Create deliberate opportunities to provide

your baby or child with the right stimulations to grow and develop their physical, intellectual, social, cognitive, creative, logical, and problem solving skills through play.

3. Consistent Activity: Get into an easy-to-follow routine, where you are not stressing out daily about researching and reading on what to do with your child, but can follow a done-for-you program that tells you what activities to do with your child on a daily basis for their all-round development.

4. Meaningful Playtime: Try and give many opportunities to your child to play with kids of their own age to help develop compassion, confidence, social skills and even a higher IQ. It is as important for them to interact with other kids as it is for them to interact with adults, and we can't neglect one over the other!

5. No Screentime: Yes, it's easy to feed your child while watching a video on mobile! But, screentime may lead to long term impact on your child's brain development, and may also lead to speech delays, so avoid screentime as much as you can!

Bill Gates has said that the first five years of a child essentially shape how the next 80 years turn out to be. Parents thus have a huge responsibility towards their children to understand the significance of synaptic pruning and recognise this golden window of opportunity. Through love, engagement, and thoughtful nurturing, parents can contribute to the flourishing of strong neural connections, laying the groundwork for a bright and promising future.

The author is a columnist and freelance writer

DEO Ramban holds press briefing; Ensures Free, Fair, Transparent and inclusive GELS 2024 across the district; Urges voters to vote for future prosperity of the nation

■ DHT News Network

Ramban, April 09: District Administration all set to conduct smooth and fair General Election of Lok Sabha, 2024 (GELS, 2024) in both the assembly segments, AC-54 Ramban, AC-55 Banihal of the district; it was stated by District Election Officer, (Deputy Commissioner) Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, while addressing the media persons at District Election Control Room here today.

Extending warm wishes to the public on festive occasions, Chaudhary urged citizens to actively participate in the world's largest festival of democracy, GELS 2024, by exercising their voting rights on the polling day scheduled for April 19, 2024 in Parliamentary Constituency 04-Udhampur. Emphasizing the significance of voter participation, he highlighted the District Administration's



efforts, including Special Voter's Enrollment and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) activities aimed at sensitizing first-time voters, women, persons with disabilities (PwD), and elderly voters about their voting rights. Briefing about SVEEP activities being organized by the District Administration targeting all 2,19,000

registered voters of the district, especially First Time, Women, PwD and Elderly voters to sensitize them about their Right to Vote by a dedicated team across the district, the DEO said that the Administration is focusing the polling station which have experienced low turnout in previous elections, to enhance the polling

turnout in the district during ensuing elections. The DEO urged all political parties contesting candidates, Media persons and all other stakeholders to go through with Model Code of Conduct guidelines issued by the Election Commissioner of India while campaigning in the district. The DEO said that to ensure free, fair, transparent and level playing field during the elections, all 28 activities including implementation of Model Code of Conduct, functioning of 24x7 Election Control Room having toll free number 1950 and landline numbers 01998-295500, 266790, Statical Surveillance Teams, Video Viewing Teams, Paid News Cell, Expenditure Monitoring Cell, Flying Squad Teams, Postal Ballot Cell, Video Surveillance Teams, Accounting Teams, Media Certification and Monitoring Committee and Grievances Cell etc are effectively managed by the dedicated teams headed by the respective.

Tarigami greets people on Eid

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 9(KNS): CPI (M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami today extended greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Eidul Fitr.

Wishing a happy and prosperous Eid, Tarigami said he hopes this festival of joy and happiness will usher peace and prosperity to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "May this festival strengthen mutual goodwill and inspire each one of us to follow the path of love, friendship, harmony and peace in the state," he said, in his Eid message.(KNS).

Ashok Bhan greets people on Eid-ul-Fitr

■ HT News Network

Srinagar April 09 (KNS): Noted Supreme Court Lawyer and a prominent Kashmiri leader Ashok Bhan warmly in the best traditions of Kashmir extends his greetings and warm wishes to people of Jammu & Kashmir especially the native Kashmiris on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

He wished that the next Eid and Navreh which is today is jointly celebrated next time as a festival after return and repatriation of the displaced brethren. Bhan a peacenik and track-2 leader expressed his optimism for a new era of peace mutual trust and inclusive coexistence in the Kashmir valley known as cradle of civilisation. He wished people shall unitedly strive to defeat the enemies and bring in an inclusive societal atmospherics for a lasting peace.

JK Hoteliers Club Chairman Mushtaq Chaya extends Eid-ul-Fitr greetings

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 09 (KNS): Jammu And Kashmir Hoteliers Club (JKHC) Chairman Mushtaq Ahmad Chaya on Tuesday extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

In his message, JKHC Chairman Mushtaq Chaya hoped that this holy festival may bring brotherhood and usher the J&K into an era of sustained peace, progress and prosperity. Chaya said the festival of Eid embeds the message of remembering economically downtrodden and underprivileged people. "Eid-ul-Fitr teaches us to take care of people economically weak in our surroundings. We all should celebrate this festival with simplicity and take care of the needs of under privileged class," Chaya said. (KNS)

CCIK President Greet People On Eid-ul-Fitr

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 09 (KNS): Chamber of commerce and industries President Tariq Ghani on Tuesday extended their warm Eid-ul-Fitr greetings to the people Jammu Kashmir. In his message, CCIK president Tariq Ghani prayed for the peace, prosperity, and wellbeing of people across the Kashmir valley. President Tariq Ghani has also appealed to the people to help out the needy who stay in the neighbourhood and extend helping hand to all those in need, so that they can also enjoy the auspicious occasion.

Saroori slams NC, Congress for Splitting Secular Votes, Calls for Unity

■ HT News Network

JAMMU April 09 (KNS): G.M. Saroori DPAP candidate for Udhampur- Doda Lok Sabha seat today while addressing a public meeting in Bunjwan, slammed the Congress and National Conference (NC) for allegedly dividing secular votes to favor the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Saroori criticized their focus on attacking Chairman DPAP, Ghulam Nabi Azad and their party instead of addressing the BJP and its candidate. He expressed dismay over the divisive tactics employed by the Congress and NC, emphasizing the need for unity among secular forces to counter the BJP's divisive agenda effectively. "Why don't they speak against the BJP and its candidate? They seem to be solely focused on attacking Ghulam Nabi



Azad," he stated. Saroori also promised to fight for the restoration of statehood and the protection of land and job rights for the people of the region.

Understanding the significance of statehood, Saroori pledges to advocate tirelessly for the reinstatement of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, ensuring that the voices of the people are heard and respected in

the corridors of power. Moreover, he has vowed to be a staunch advocate for the protection of land and job rights, which are crucial for the socio-economic development of the region. He slammed regional parties for deceiving the people with false issues. Saroori said, Ghulam Nabi Azad was the sole leader in Parliament who ardently fought for Article 370 and

statehood. I promise to uphold his legacy and continue fighting for the people with the same fervor. He emphasized the need to transcend voting along religious lines and prioritize progress, peace, and development. Amidst prevailing hardships, he stressed the importance of uplifting all, irrespective of religion or caste, for the collective welfare of society. He said, "This is a time for unity and uplifting our people, not religious politics. We have suffered enough." DDC Member Amina Choudhary was also present in the meeting. Understanding the significance of statehood, Saroori pledges to advocate tirelessly for the reinstatement of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, ensuring that the voices of the people are heard and respected in the corridors of power.(KNS)

'Indian Civilization Is One Of The Oldest, Continuous Civilizations': NSA Ajit Doval

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: The Supreme Court favoured remission to an ailing 96-year-old convict serving life term in the 1993 Rajasthan train blast case and currently on parole, saying continued incarceration is "like capital punishment".

Habib Ahmed Khan moved the top court seeking permanent parole given his deteriorating health and age, and a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan asked the Rajasthan government to consider his case from the human rights angle.

His counsel said he has been in jail for over 27 years after which he was granted parole thrice. The third parole is being now extended by this court from time to time.

The bench, which perused Mr Khan's medical reports, asked what purpose will be served by his incarceration at this point.

"Just see his medical report. Where will he go? It's the worst. Yes, he was convicted for a terror offence but he was not awarded capital punishment. Continued incarceration for him is like capital punishment," the bench told Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Vikramjeet Banerjee, appearing for the Rajasthan government.

The bench asked Mr Banerjee to consider his remission and see the case from a human rights angle.

The ASG submitted that for remission, the convict has to make an application to the state government but in this case, his conviction for terror offence would be a hindrance. Then what is Article 21 in the Constitution for, Justice Oka asked, adding that Mr Khan can neither walk nor see properly according to his medical reports.

Kotwal Visits Chirala Area Of District Doda To Meet Disabled Person

■ Amir Iqbal Khan

Bhadarwah, April 09: Ajit Singh Kotwal, Vice President J&K Saksham (A National Organization For Specially Aabled Persons) visited today different remote areas under Panchayat Puneja of tehsil Chiralla to aware Divyangjan about the power of their vote. Jammu and Kashmir Saksham vice president Ajit Singh Kotwal said that many of Specially abled persons are still unregistered. "How can they cast their vote as per the guidelines of the Election commissioner of India from home," he said. "BLO's should be deputed to physically contact each and every disable person to fill their forms so that they can also cast their vote through democratic way. Kotwal particularly raised the issue of the need for increased awareness among Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) regarding their rights and participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha Election and to ensure PWD's may vote in person comfortably. Additionally, it proposed that Booth Level Officers (BLO's) be instructed to assist those PWD electors who wish to vote from home by filling out Form 12 B, thereby ensuring that no voter is left behind due to mobility issues or lack of access.

Barring Jumat ul Vida and Shab e Qadr prayers at Jamia Masjid akin to admission that the situation is not all well : Basharat Bukhari

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, April 9 : Dismayed over barring the Jumat ul Vida and Shab e Qadr prayers in historic Jamia Masjid, former law minister Syed Basharat Bukhari on Tuesday said the govt must be appreciated for finally admitting that the situation in Kashmir was not all well as they've been publicly boasting about.

In his statement Mr. Bukhari said "LG administration deserves appreciation for conceding to the fact that the situation in Kashmir has not turned normal as yet. Shall that not have been the case there was no reason for administration for barring the prayers of the sacred day of Jumat ul Vida and Night of Shab e Qadr in Jamia Masjid Srinagar".

Haryana Guv Joins Kashmiri Pandits In Navreh Celebration, Promises To Restore Valley Temples

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, Apr 9: Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya on Tuesday visited an ancient Shiva temple here and joined the Kashmiri Pandit community in commemorating 5,100 years of their existence through the celebrations of Navreh – the Kashmiri New Year.

Dattatreya promised the devotees to renovate the old temples in the Kashmir valley and and restore their pristine glory.

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A large gathering of Kashmiri Pandits and locals under the banner of Vishwa Kashmiri Samaj



celebrated 'Saptarishi Samvat-5100' at a function at the historic Vichar Nag temple here on Tuesday, a spokesperson of the organisation said.

The organisers said such a huge Navreh celebration took place at the temple after 35 years.

The Haryana governor, who was the chief guest on the occa-

sion, highlighted the contribution of Kashmir towards the development of 'Sanatan Dharma', the country's knowledge system, and spiritual consciousness among Indians.

Addressing the gathering of the Kashmiri Pandits, Dattatreya assured them to restore the glory of temples of Kashmir through renovation work, the spokesperson said.

The governor dedicated a book written and published by Amit Raina on efforts of Jammu and Kashmir police combatting terror in the region, and also released a special calendar to commemorate 5,100 years of the 'Saptarishi system'.

Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir greets people on Eid-ul-Fitr

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 09 (KNO): Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Dr Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq Tuesday expressed heartfelt greetings to the Islamic World and all the Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. His Eid message is as follows:

On the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, I extend my heartfelt greetings to the Islamic World and all the Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir, a statement issued to the news agency - Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

"We are celebrating today's Eid in these circumstances while we are facing various challenges and problems at the social, societal and religious

levels. As a Muslim Ummah, we are facing many problems locally as well as on the global level as Muslims regarding our Milli identity," Mirwaiz said. By the grace and mercy of Allah Almighty, all of us have been blessed with an opportunity for worship, fasting purification of the soul and improvement of our conduct during the blessed month of fasting. Let us strive to maintain this spiritual atmosphere and disposition in the future as well, he added. "On this occasion of Eid, as a servant of Islam and an advocate of humanity, I urge the entire community to focus not only on the rights of Allah but also on the significant religious obligations related to the rights of fellow human beings.

EHSAAS Trust Unit Bhadarwah Distributes Free Ration Among The Needy

■ Amir Iqbal Khan

Bhadarwah, April 09: In keeping with the Holy month of Ramadhan and to reach out to the poor and needy in this month of fasting, EHSAAS Trust-an NGO (Bhadarwah Unit) distributed ration kits among the poor here today.

The initiative was launched in order to support those who are fasting and observing this religious tradition. These ration kits typically contain essential food items such as rice, oil, sugar, Dals and other basic necessities that are needed to prepare meals during the fasting period. "By distributing these kits, organization's aim is to alleviate hunger and provide relief to those who are less fortunate," said Zaffar Hussain Wani District President of the Trust adding, "This initiative not only helps individuals in need but also promotes a sense of community and solidarity among people from all walks of life. Additionally, it showcases the spir-



it of giving and compassion that is an integral part of Ramadan observance for Muslims around the world".

Poor and destitute Families from areas Nai Basti, Chakka, Gatha, Vasakdera, Chinari

Mohalla, Chinote, Halyan etc were identified for providing assistance of essential commodities. "In future also, such programs shall be organised by the Trust to come to assist the needy in hour of their crisis and

every effort would be in the direction of ameliorating the abysmal lot of destitute and hapless," informed Wani.

The drive was conducted under the direct guidance of Chairman of the Trust for Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Shohab Ul Haq Butt and it was supervised by Zaffar Hussain Wani District Present EHSAAS. Prominent among those who took part in it included Shahid Malik(District Secretary), Umar Tak(Core Committee Member), Mohammad Altaf Khan, Mehraj Uddin Zargar, Kiran Pandit, Sanjay Kumar, Mohammad Salim Butt and others. The initiative was launched in order to support those who are fasting and observing this religious tradition. These ration kits typically contain essential food items such as rice, oil, sugar, Dals and other basic necessities that are needed to prepare meals during the fasting period. "By distributing these kits, organization's aim is to alleviate hunger and provide relief to those who are less fortunate," said.

"Judges Not Bound By Politics": High Court Dismisses Arvind Kejriwal's Petition

HT News Network

New Delhi: In a huge setback for the Aam Aadmi Party, the Delhi High Court ruled Arvind Kejriwal's arrest in the Delhi liquor policy case as valid. The court dismissed the Chief Minister's petition against his arrest and said his remand can't be called illegal.

Arvind Kejriwal's challenge to the timing of his arrest before the Lok Sabha elections in the absence of any mala fide on the part of the Enforcement Directorate is not sustainable, the Delhi High Court said.

The ED was in possession of enough material which led them to arrest Arvind Kejriwal. Non-joining of the investigation by Mr Kejriwal and the delay caused by him also impacted those in judicial custody, the Delhi High Court said on the necessity of arrest.

Judges are bound by law and not by politics. Judgments are writ-



ten by legal principles and not political affiliations, the High Court said.

Political considerations can't be brought before a court of law. The matter before this court is not a conflict between the central government and Arvind Kejriwal but between him and the ED, the court said.

Courts are concerned with constitutional morality and not politi-

cal morality, it said.

This court holds that the ED was able to place enough material, statements of approvers, and their own candidate stating he was given money for the Goa elections. It completes the chain regarding the money sent for the Goa elections, the court said. Arvind Kejriwal will remain in jail, the Delhi High Court said Tuesday afternoon as it knocked back the Chief Min-

ister's challenge to his March 21 arrest in the alleged liquor policy scam. Mr Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party responded swiftly, confirming, within the hour, that it will appeal to the Supreme Court.

The court noted the Enforcement Directorate submitted material to suggest the Aam Aadmi Party leader had conspired to formulate the now-scrapped policy and was involved in demanding alleged kickbacks of 100 crore, some of which was used to fund campaign expenses for the 2022 Goa election. The court also noted the ED's submission of statements by approvers (accused turned government witnesses) and an AAP Goa candidate claiming he had been paid with the alleged kickbacks. Mr Kejriwal's arrest was therefore ruled valid and his plea dismissed. The court, therefore, upheld earlier remand orders - which sent him to the ED's custody and then to Delhi's Tihar Jail till April 15.

"If India Renames Places in China will it make them ours, Defence Minister's Poser To Beijing

HT News Network

New Delhi: Taking a strong stand on China 'renaming' some places in Arunachal Pradesh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday posed a big question to Beijing. If India renames some places in China, will it make them ours, Mr Singh asked the neighbouring country. Addressing a rally at Namsai in the Arunachal East constituency less than two weeks before the state votes in the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, the defence minister said the BJP-led government has taken steps to develop infrastructure as well as villages along the border. "This is our home. Recently, China has 'renamed' three places in Arunachal Pradesh and posted them on its website. I want to tell our neighbour that changing names will not achieve anything. Tomorrow, if we change the names of some places or states in China, will it make them ours? China should not make this mistake," Mr Singh said in Hindi. "I think such steps harm the relationship between India and China. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee used to say that one can change one's friends, but not one's neighbours. India wants to maintain good relationships with all its neighbours, but if someone tries to hurt our self-respect, the India of today has the strength to hit back," he thundered. In a jibe at the Congress, the



defence minister said large tracts of land had been ceded before the BJP-led government came to power at the Centre. Pointing to the infrastructure development in the region, Mr Singh said it was proof of PM Modi's focus on the northeast. "No one can take India's land now. I assure you. We have fixed the Congress' mistakes and developed border infrastructure. The Congress used to call villages near the border the last villages, but we say they are the first villages of the country. We are developing the villages fast and our belief is that we will not be able to protect the borders to the extent that we want until the border villages are developed," he said.

"Not only are these villages strategically important but the people living in them, in Arunachal, are our strategic assets. This is why all of us have a special love and respect for you. Every time there has been a war with China, the role played by all of you will never be forgotten," he added.

"CAA Deliberately Set Aside In Manifesto": Pinarayi Vijayan Slams Congress

HT News Network

Kollam (Kerala): Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday slammed the Congress for allegedly being silent about the Citizenship Amendment Act in their election manifesto and alleged that it reflects their fear of speaking about the contentious act.

Addressing a press conference here, he said the grand old party, in the manifesto for upcoming Lok Sabha polls, has promised to repeal many other laws which violated the Constitutional norms, including the GST, if they come back to power.

But, it should be seen that even when all these laws are promised to be repealed, not a single word is uttered about the CAA, he alleged. "It can be seen that the CAA has been deliberately set aside in the manifesto without mention. This shows that the Congress, which promises to repeal several laws by particularly naming them in the manifesto, is afraid to speak about it," the chief minister said.

He also questioned the claim of the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, V D Satheesan, that the party manifesto clearly mentions the protection being assured to the linguistic and religious minorities in the country.

The chief minister said on page 8 of the Congress manifesto, the party promises to uphold the fundamental right to practice one's faith and the rights guaranteed to religious minorities under Articles 15, 16, 25, 26, 28, 29, and 30 of the Constitution. But the Congress does not address the issue being raised by the CAA with this, he said. The CAA is essentially a violation of Article 14 of the Constitution.



What should be noted here is that Article 14 is not mentioned on page 8 of the manifesto (as Satheesan said)," the Left veteran added.

Stating that the Congress, in its manifesto, promised to review and change all anti-people laws passed by the BJP-NDA especially those relating to workers, farmers, criminal justice, environment, forests and digital data protection, Mr Vijayan said it was good and the CPI(M) also agreed to it.

The Citizenship (Amendment) bill was passed in Parliament in December 2019 and subsequently got the President's assent, following which protests broke out in several parts of the country against it, with many opposition parties speaking out against the law, calling it "discriminatory". The CAA, which was notified on January 10, grants Indian citizenship to non-Muslim minorities -- Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian -- who migrated to India from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh till December 31, 2014.

India Showing World Nothing Is Impossible, Says PM Modi At UP Rally

HT News Network

Pilibhit: Amid the various difficulties being faced by the world now, India is showing that there is nothing impossible for it to achieve, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday.

He said this has been possible due to every single vote of the people.

"No matter how difficult the goal is, if India is determined to achieve it, it will definitely achieve. Today, with this inspiration and energy, we are working towards the resolution of a developed India," he said at a poll rally here. "Amidst the difficulties of the entire world, India is showing that there is nothing impossible for it," he said.

The prime minister noted there was a time when the Congress government used to ask for help from the world, but during the Covid pandemic, medicines were made available to the whole world from India.

"When India became the world's fastest growing economic power, were you (people) proud of it or not? When our Chandrayaan



hoisted the tricolour on the moon, were you proud or not? The grand G20 summit held in India was praised all over the world," he added.

"When the country becomes strong, the world listens to it," PM Modi said.

Eight parliamentary constituencies in Uttar Pradesh will vote in the first phase of Lok Sabha polls on April 19. These are Saharanpur,

Kairana, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Nagina (SC), Moradabad, Rampur and Pilibhit. The counting of votes will be held on June 4. Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Madhya Pradesh's Maoist-affected Balaghat on Tuesday, state cabinet minister Prahlad Singh Patel said that his visit would create history.

PM Modi will address a public gathering during his visit to Balaghat and it will be PM Modi's second visit to the state in the last three days.

Speaking to news agency ANI, on PM's visit to the state, MP minister Prahlad Singh Patel said, "We are all fortunate and excited, not only the workers but also the public. Narendra Modi is coming here for the first time as Prime Minister. Today is a historic day and it is the first day of Navratri." In Balaghat, women are more than that of men in sex ratio and Balaghat parliamentary seat got a woman candidate for the first time after independence, a woman MP will be elected from here, Mr Patel said.

China Couldn't Encroach An Inch Of Land Under Modi Government: Amit Shah

HT News Network

Lakhimpur, Assam: Asserting that China couldn't encroach a "single inch" of land under the Narendra Modi government, Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday claimed that people will never forget how former PM Jawaharlal Nehru said "bye-bye" to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh during the 1962 Chinese aggression. Addressing an election rally in Lakhimpur, he said the BJP-led government at the Centre secured the country's border with Bangladesh and stopped infiltration. "During the Chinese aggression of 1962, Nehru had said 'bye-bye' to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. People of these states can never forget that," Mr Shah said. "But now, China could not encroach even a single inch of our land. Even in Doklam, we pushed them back," he added. He said that Assam's border with Bangladesh was earlier "open for infiltration". "Then the Modi government came at the Centre, and the Himanta Biswa Sarma's government here. Now, we can say that infiltration has stopped," Mr Shah said. He alleged that the previous Congress government in Assam did injustice to the state, and scores of youths were killed in different violent movements and insurgency-related incidents.

"Under the Modi government in the last 10 years, peace accords were signed and 9,000 youths surrendered," he said. "2014 To 2024 Was Just An Appetiser, Prepare For The Main Course": PM Modi "2014 To 2024 Was Just An Appetiser,



Amit Shah noted that the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act has been withdrawn from 80 per cent of areas of the state. "They signed the (Assam) Accord but did not fulfil the clauses. We signed the Bodo Accord and within two years, all clauses were fulfilled," he said.

Hitting out at the Congress manifesto, Amit Shah claimed that it favoured the Muslim personal law. "Himanta Biswa Sarma has stopped child marriages. In Uttarakhand, there is the UCC," he said, drawing a comparison. Amit Shah said the development of the Northeast is centre to the overall growth of the nation, and urged the people to vote for the NDA candidates in all the seats of the region.

"There are two alternatives before you -- to vote for Rahul Gandhi and INDI Alliance, or vote for the Modi-led BJP," he said, urging people to ensure a third term for the BJP-led government at the Centre.

After Congress Complaint, Poll Panel To Verify Union Minister's Affidavit

HT News Network

New Delhi: The Election Commission has directed the CBDT, or Central Board of Direct Taxes, to verify any potential mismatch - between actual and declared assets, and income - in affidavits filed by the BJP's Rajeev Chandrasekhar, ahead of his candidature for the Lok Sabha seat in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram.

The poll panel's direction to the CBDT came after the Congress - which leads the opposition United Democratic Front in the southern state - filed a complaint that claimed the Union Minister misrepresented information about assets and income streams. Kerala's ruling Left Democratic Front - led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's Communist Party of India (Marxist) also filed a complaint. The law says candidates concealing information in nomination papers or affidavits - a violation of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 - could face a six-month prison sentence and/or get a fine.

Controversy over Mr Chandrasekhar's poll affidavit broke after it showed his income for FY 2021/22 was just 680. For FY20 and FY23, however, he declared incomes of 17.5 lakh and 5.50 lakh.

Mr Chandrasekhar also declared total assets worth 28 crore; these included cash, bank deposits, holdings in non-banking financial companies and cooperative societies, as well as investments in bonds, debentures, shares, units in companies/mutual funds, and other financial instruments.

His moveable assets included a vintage motorcycle - a 1942 Red Indian Scout - and other items valued at an estimated 3.25 crore. His sole declared immovable asset was a plot of non-agricultural land in Bengaluru in Karnataka worth an estimated 14.4 crore. The opposition had also alleged that the Union Minister did not disclose other owned real estate, including property in Bengaluru. In addition, the ruling LDF has also claimed Mr Chandrasekhar neglected to disclose his connection to a holding company called Jupiter Capital, despite its website listing him as its 'founder'.

Voters' Right To Know About Candidates' Assets Not Absolute: Supreme Court

HT News Network

New Delhi: The Supreme Court today observed that voters do not have an "absolute right" to know about each and every asset of the candidates fighting elections. "It is not an absolute right for any voter to delve deep into the private life of a candidate and each and every disclosure has to be of such nature which will impact the voting," the bench of Justices Anirudha Bose and PV Sanjay Kumar said. The top court said that the candidates have the right to privacy regarding matters which are irrelevant to the candidature for public office. "It is not necessary that a candidate declare every item of moveable property that



he or his dependent family members owns such as clothing, shoes, crockery, stationery, furniture etc., unless the same is of such value as to constitute a sizeable asset in itself or reflect upon his candidature in terms of his lifestyle and require to be disclosed", the top court observed.

The Supreme Court direction came as it upheld the election of Independent MLA Karikho Kri from Tezu in the 2019 Arunachal

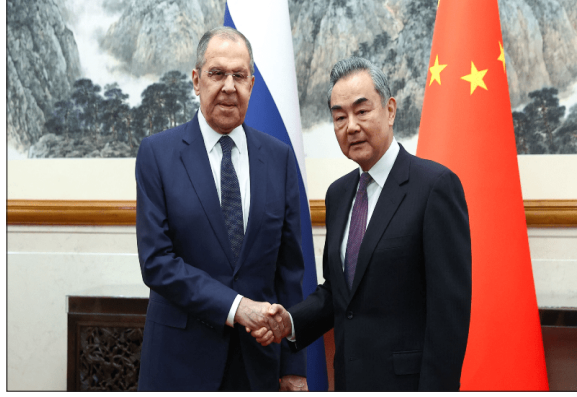
Pradesh Assembly election, setting aside the Gauhati High Court order that had declared his election as null and void. The High Court had declared his election null and void while hearing a petition filed by Congress candidate Nunez Tayang, challenging the declaration of the 2019 Assembly election result. Mr Tayang had alleged that Mr Kri made false declarations in his election nomination paper by not disclosing that he was in occupation of a government accommodation.

The petitioner also claimed that Mr Kri did not submit "No Dues Certificates" from the concerned department for the rent, electricity charges, water charges and telephone charges of the government accommodation.

China to 'strengthen strategic cooperation' with Russia as FM Lavrov visits

HT News Network

China's top diplomat said on Tuesday that Beijing would strengthen strategic cooperation with Moscow and that the two must stand on the side of "fairness and justice" as he met his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. Lavrov arrived in China for a two-day official visit on Monday, with the two countries looking to deepen diplomatic ties as Russia's war in Ukraine grinds on. Russia and China have in recent years ramped up contacts, and their strategic partnership has only grown closer since the invasion of Ukraine. Lavrov held discussions with President Xi Jinping on Tuesday afternoon, Chinese state media announced, in a previously undisclosed meeting. State broadcaster CCTV showed footage of chairs arranged around a glossy table in an opulent room in Beijing's Great Hall of the People ahead of the talks. In earlier meetings on Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi promised: "China will support Russia's stable development under the leadership of (Vladimir) Putin." "Beijing and Moscow will continue to strengthen strategic cooperation on the world stage and provide each other with strong support," Wang said, according to Russia's RIA Novosti news agency.



"Under the strong leadership of President Putin, the Russian people will have a bright future," he said. Lavrov, in turn, thanked China for its "support" after Putin's recent re-election, in which he was unchallenged by any meaningful opposition. "Xi Jinping [...] was among the first ones to send congratulations to the president-elect Putin, and we are overall grateful to our Chinese friends for this support," Lavrov said, according to a video of the meeting shared by Izvestia on Telegram. "The election results confirmed

the deep trust of the Russian people in our leader and the ongoing domestic and foreign policies," he added, according to RIA Novosti. "This applies not least to the course to strengthen strategic interaction and partnership with the PRC," the top diplomat said, referring to China by its official acronym. Lavrov last visited Beijing in October for an international forum on Chinese President Xi's flagship Belt and Road infrastructure initiative. Analysts say China holds the upper hand in the relationship with Russia, with its sway growing as Moscow's international isolation deepens following its invasion of Ukraine. That asymmetry is still "changing in China's favour" as it enables Moscow "to continue the war by providing very necessary materials for the Russian war machine", Alexander Gabuev, director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, told AFP. "Integrating Russia's economy, brainpower, and military technology into... a Chinese-led order with Eurasia at its geographic heart, is the only way Russia can sustain its confrontation with the West," he wrote in Foreign Policy magazine this week. "China has stronger bargaining power and many more options than does Russia, and its leverage over its northern neighbour is growing all the time," he added. "Russia is now locking itself into vassalage to China."

27 go on trial in Panama Papers tax evasion case

HT News Network

PANAMA CITY: Twenty-seven people went on trial on Monday in connection with the "Panama Papers" tax evasion scandal, with one of the main defendants denying accusations of money laundering. The 2016 leaks revealed how many of the world's wealthy stashed assets in offshore companies, exposing high-profile personalities and triggering scores of investigations around the globe. The defendants on trial include Jurgen Mossack and Ramon Fonseca Mora, the founders of the now-defunct law firm at the centre of the scandal, as well as other lawyers and former employees. They are charged with money laundering and if convicted face up to 12 years in prison. Leaked trove of 11.5m files from a law firm implicated influential figures, including billionaires, politicians and sports stars. Mossack, 76, said at the hearing that he was "not responsible" for alleged crimes. Earlier he told journalists outside the court he was "very optimistic" and that "if there is real justice" then he would be cleared. Defence lawyer Dionicio Rodriguez said the case was "a trial against the Panamanian legal profession" because "activities are being prosecuted that are legal in many other countries in the world." Fonseca, 71, did not attend because he was in the hospital, according to his lawyer.

EU nears final vote on landmark asylum reform

HT News Network

BRUSSELS: The EU will vote on Wednesday on a vast overhaul of its immigration policies that would notably harden entry procedures for asylum-seekers and require all the bloc's countries to share responsibility. The European Parliament will decide a series of laws forming the bloc's migration and asylum pact, based on a European Commission proposal first made in September 2020. The overhaul was reached only after overcoming years of tensions and divisions among EU member countries. Once fully adopted, it would come into effect from 2026. Alongside its passage, the European Union has been striking agreements with several outside countries to try to reduce the number of migrants leaving their territories with the goal of reaching Europe. 1.14m people sought asylum in 27-nation bloc last year. The backdrop of the two-pronged approach is a rise in asylum applications in the 27-nation EU, which last year reached 1.14 million, the highest level since 2016. Irregular migrant entries into the bloc are also increasing, to 380,000 last year according to the EU's border and coast guard agency Frontex. The migration and asylum pact has been opposed, for very different reasons, by the far right, the far left and some socialist lawmakers. "After years of impasse, the new migration rules allow us to regain control over our external borders and reduce pressure on the EU. State authorities, not smugglers, have to decide who enters the European Union," said Manfred Weber, head of the biggest political group in the European Parliament, the centre-right European People's Party.

With No Pay, Pak Finance Minister Leaves Banker Life Behind To Fix Economy

HT News Network

Pakistan's new finance minister is on a mission to fix his country. To many, it's an unenviable task. Muhammad Aurangzeb took up the post last month at a time when Pakistan's economy is enduring the most turbulent period in its history. Lurching from one bailout program to the next with the International Monetary Fund classifying its debt as only borderline sustainable, Pakistan has Asia's fastest inflation, anemic growth, and one of the lowest tax-collection rates in the world. With No Pay, Pak Finance Minister Leaves Banker Life Behind To Fix Economy Muhammad Aurangzeb was a member of the prime ministers economic advisory council in 2022. Pakistan's new finance minister is on a mission to fix his country. To many, it's an unenviable task. Muhammad Aurangzeb took up the post last month at a time when Pakistan's economy is enduring the most turbulent period in its history. Lurching from one bailout program to the next with the International Monetary Fund classifying its debt as only borderline sustainable, Pakistan has Asia's fastest inflation, anemic growth, and one of the lowest tax-collection rates in the world. As a prominent banker and JPMorgan Chase & Co. alumnus, Aurangzeb comes as well equipped as any of his predecessors to face the challenge. But that's to disregard an array of extra factors affecting the role which are outside his control, including volatile domestic politics, tensions with neighbors India, Afghanistan and Iran, and a catastrophic position on the front line of climate change. "Broadly, the finance minister's job is to manage and steer the economy," said Mosharraf Zaidi, a former government adviser and founder of policy think tank Tabadlab based in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad. "It seems simple when framed this way. In fact, it is one of the most complex jobs on the planet." Among the most immediate of his tasks is to seal a deal by June with the IMF for a minimum three year program worth at least \$6 billion. Key objectives in the negotiations for the fund will include broadening the tax base, improving debt sustainability and restoring viability to the energy sector - all steps that Pakistan has avoided for decades.

Eid Mubarak

Dr Darakhshan Andrabi

All Jammu & Kashmir Shia Association

عید الفطر مبارک

Eid Al-Fitr Mubarak

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