

'Can cricket solve those issues?' - Rashid to reconsider playing....

P12

LS Election: Vote To Protect Land, Jobs and future of youth: Mehbooba Mufti

P3



# Came With Hope In 2014, Trust In 2019 And Guarantee In 2024: PM Narendra Modi

HT News Network

NALBARI (ASSAM), APR 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday asserted that he went to people with hope in 2014, trust in 2019 and guarantee in 2024.

Addressing an election rally at Borkura ground here, the Prime Minister said there is "Modi's guarantee across the country and I am giving the guarantee of fulfilling all these guarantees".

"The North East is a witness to Modi's guarantee as the Congress had only given problems to the region but the BJP has made it a source of possibilities," the Prime Minister said.

"Congress fuelled insur-



gency but Modi embraced people and brought peace in the region. What could not be achieved in 60 years of Congress rule, Modi achieved it in ten years", he added.

He said that birth celebrations of Lord Ram are being held in Ayodhya after 500 years with a 'Surya Tilak' ceremony.

"We cannot join the celebrations in Ayodhya, but let us participate in the event by switching on our mobile flashlights and sending light and prayers to Lord Ram", he said.

"A new atmosphere is prevailing in the entire country as we celebrate the birth celebrations of Lord Ram in his own temple after 500 years and

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## 'Gandabal Boat Tragedy Day 2' Massive Search, Rescue Efforts Continue; Govt Provides Financial Assistance To Victims' Families

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 17: The joint rescue operation for the missing bodies, including those of a father-son duo and another minor boy, entered its second day on Wednesday in the aftermath of the tragic boat capsizing incident at Gandabal area of Batwara on Tuesday. Teams from SDRF, NDRF, Indian Army's MARCOS, Fire and Emergency, along with other officials, are intensifying efforts to locate and retrieve the bodies.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Lieutenant Governor-led administration provided financial assistance to the families of the deceased and those who sustained injuries in the incident.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### Schools Declare Two-Day Mourning After Tragic Boat Accident Claims Lives of Students

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 17: In a touching display of solidarity and empathy, local schools in Gandabal and its adjacent areas have declared a two-day mourning period, standing in solidarity with the grieving families.

A tragic incident unfolded in Gandabal, Srinagar, as a boat carrying primarily school children capsized in the River Jhelum on Tuesday, resulting in at least six fatalities. Three persons including two children are still missing and a rescue operation is underway.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### NEWS BRIEF

#### J&K Govt Appoints 20 Police Officers for Amarnath Yatra

SRINAGAR, APR 17: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has announced the deputation of 20 police officers to serve as Deputy Camp Directors for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra.

As per the details available with Kashmir News Service (KNS), the officers have been deputed to ensure a well-organized and secure pilgrimage for the thousands of devotees expected to participate in the annual event.

The officers, upon being relieved by their Controlling Officer, are to report to the office of the Chief Executive Officer of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

#### Tourism Revival Sparks Surge in Sales of Kashmir's Handicrafts

SRINAGAR, APR 17: With the revival of tourism in the valley, the region's handicrafts industry is experiencing a notable surge, signaling promising economic recovery and cultural resurgence.

In recent years, Kashmir has witnessed a resurgence in tourism, with travellers from across the world visiting Kashmir during different seasons to witness the breathtaking landscapes. This revival in tourism has not only brought a sense of hope to local businesses but has also provided a significant impetus to the handicrafts sector, which has long been a cornerstone of Kashmir's economy.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

#### Police Attaches Illegal Property Worth Lacs Of Notorious Drug Peddler In Shopian

SHOPIAN, APR 17: In continuation its unwavering efforts to eradicate the Menace of Drugs from the society, Police in Shopian under the supervision of SSP Shopian Ms Tanushree-IPS attached property (Double story residential house worth Rs. 25 lacs) measuring 1769.635 Sqft belonging to notorious drug peddler namely Mahjabeen Banoo wife of Farooq Ahmad Najar resident of Stadium Colony Batapora Shopian constructed over Shamilat Section 5 land measuring 6.5 marlas (1769.63 sqft) falling under Survey No. 952/1 at village Batapora District Shopian.

The action was taken under sections TURN ON.....PAGE 02

#### Rain, Snow Likely In J&K Over Next 2 Days

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 17: With below normal temperatures continuing in Jammu and Kashmir, the Meteorological Centre Srinagar on Wednesday predicted another spell of rain and snow over the next two days.

The Met office said that light to moderate rain, light snow over higher reaches is expected at most places with thunder and lightning during Thursday and Friday in Jammu and Kashmir.

The weather is likely to remain dry and partially cloudy on Wednesday, it said.

It is likely to be generally dry from April 21 to April 25 but afternoon thundershower activities cannot be ruled out, it added.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Kashmiri Pandits Take Out Shoba Yatra In Srinagar

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 17: Kashmiri Pandits took out Shoba Yatra on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami festival here on Wednesday.

The festival was celebrated with religious fervour and gaiety.

The Yatra with a group of children dressed in traditional attire was taken out from Kathleshwar temple in Tankipora area here and



passed through the roads of Hab-bakadal, Ganpathyar, Barbar Shah, Regal Chowk, Lal Chowk, Hari Singh High Street and Jahangir Chowk, amid tight security arrangements.

Chanting "Hare Rama Hare Rama" slogans a good number of Kashmiri pandits accompanied the yatra that passed off peacefully.

Security forces were deployed at various points in strength as

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## 'Major Breakthrough' Ahead Of Polls As 3 Powerful IEDs Seized In Poonch

HT News Network

MENDHAR/JAMMU, APR 17: Three ready-to-use improvised explosive devices (IED), each weighing between three to 20 kgs, were recovered from a terrorist hideout in the border dis-

trict of Poonch on Wednesday, officials said.

They termed it a "major breakthrough" ahead of Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

The IEDs, planted inside steel containers of five-kg, 10-kg and

20-kg capacity, were found hidden inside a cave hideout during a joint search operation by the police, CRPF and Rashtriya Rifles in the forest area of Sanai-Gursai in the Mendhar sub-division, the officials said.

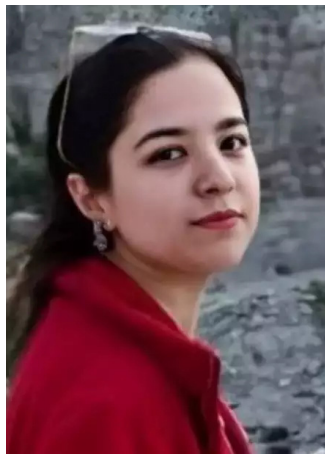
TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## "Always Wanted To Be Part Of Solution": UPSC Rank Holder From J&K

HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 17: Reflecting upon her journey in securing the 7th rank in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) exams, Anmol Rathore, hailing from Jammu, said that she always wanted to be a part of the solution to make a difference.

Anmol Rathore, who secured first rank in the Jammu and Kashmir civil services examination last year, said that her main aim has always been to crack the UPSC exams.



"Last year I qualified for the J&K Civil Services exam, in which I scored the 1st rank, and side by side I kept preparing for UPSC. This was my third attempt at UPSC. I am very thankful that I qualified for it," Anmol said.

Explaining her strategies for cracking one of the toughest known exams in the world, Anmol said, "I followed the basic sources that toppers suggest. I did not take any coaching and followed the basic procedure that everyone recommends,

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## High-Voltage Campaigning Ends In Udhampur Lok Sabha Seat In J&K

HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 17: The high-voltage electioneering came to an end on Wednesday evening in Udhampur parliamentary constituency in Jammu and Kashmir which is witnessing its first major electoral battle since it was bifurcated and downgraded to the status of a Union Territory in 2019.

The polling is slated in Udhampur Lok Sabha seat in the first phase on

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## 'Screams from Gandabal.....' Father jumps back into river to save his son after boat capsizes

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 17: "It was a father's love for his son that made him jump back into the Jhelum, after battling with the high tides of the river, to save his life. As he jumped back to save his son, he started to swim towards the rope of one shore, while he slowly started losing energy and eventually drowned along with his son," recounted an eyewitness about Showkat Ahmad, a devoted father, who made the ultimate sacrifice to save his son, Haziq, from the treacherous currents of the Jhelum River on Tuesday morning.

Heart-wrenching scenes unfolded in Srinagar's Gandabal area. Mourners recall that Showkat Ahmad, a proficient mason, left home on Tuesday morning to drop his son Haziq Showkat to school.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Udhampur, Kathua, Doda Development Journey To Continue Despite Opposition Propaganda: Dr Jitendra

HT News Network



KATHUA, APR 17: Union Minister and BJP Candidate for Udhampur-Doda-Kathua Lok Sabha constituency Dr Jitendra Singh said here today that the Udhampur-Kathua-Doda Lok Sabha constituency is on a fast track development journey and this development journey will continue despite Opposition propaganda.

Making a scathing attack on Congress and its allied opposition parties on the sidelines of a grand massive roadshow here today on the last day of the campaigning for first phase of the Parliamentary election, Dr Jitendra Singh said, Congress Party had deprived this entire region of any development for the last over 60

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Over 1,400 Polling Stations To Have Webcasting Facilities In Udhampur LS Seat

HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 17: A total of 1,472 polling stations out of 2,637 will be equipped with webcasting facilities in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur parliamentary constituency which is going to polls in the first phase on April 19, officials said.

More than 16.23 lakh voters will decide the fate of 12 candidates, including Union Minister Jitendra Singh, in the fray from the constituency consisting of 18 assembly segments spanning five districts—Kishtwar, Doda, Ramban, Udhampur



and Kathua. The constituency, which was reshaped with three assembly constituencies of Reasi district

carved out on the recommendations of the delimitation commission, had recorded 70.2

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



**CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....**

**Came With.....**

this is a culmination of centuries of devotion and generations of sacrifice", he added.

The Prime Minister said free ration will continue to be provided to all without discrimination for the next five years.

Free treatment of up to Rs five lakh under Ayushman Bharat for people aged 70 and above will be also given so that it doesn't become a burden for the family but "this son of yours (Modi) will take care of your medical costs".

During the next five years, three crore new houses will also be constructed for the poor, he said.

"The NDA government believes in 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and ensures that each citizen gets the benefits they are entitled to without any discrimination", he added.

Referring to the abolition of 'triple talaq', Modi said this has freed the Muslim women. "We made a law against it which benefited not only the Muslim sisters, but their entire family as triple talaq had destroyed the lives of many women and their families," he added.

He said Muslim women in Assam have also benefited from the law.

"Assam has also witnessed unprecedented development during the last ten years and when the intentions are right, the results are also good", he said.

"Congress for its own benefit had deliberately neglected the region so that they could indulge in corruption and loot. This situation has, however, been changed and the region is reaping the benefits of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas', he claimed.

Recently, the Prime Minister had laid the foundation of a semiconductor testing facility in Assam which will provide over 15,000 jobs to the youth.

"This has been a historic and unprecedented step. Assam will soon be recognised as a semiconductor hub", Modi said.

The electricity bill of the people will also come to zero as they will be provided with solar panels while over 3 crore women associated with SHGs will be made 'Lakhpati Didi's', he added.

All the promises made in the manifesto will be fulfilled and these will benefit the poor, deprived, dalits, farmers and the tea garden workers.

The Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farmers has been raised in Assam and they will continue to get the benefits of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi.

"For me, your dreams are my promises. Each moment is dedicated to you, your dreams and the country", he added.

Modi was here to campaign for NDA candidates of three constituencies - Asom Gana Parishad's Phani Bhushan Choudhury who is contesting from Barpeta, United People's Party, Liberal (UPPL)'s Jayanta Basumatary from Kokrajhar and BJP's Bijuli Kalita Medhi of Guwahati, who all were present at the rally. (Agencies)

**Massive Search.....**

Vijay Kumar Bidhuri and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, visited the Gandbal area on Wednesday and met with the family members of the deceased.

They expressed heartfelt condolences and solidarity with those affected by the tragic incident. Deeply saddened by the loss of six lives in the boat capsizing, they extended government assistance to the bereaved families.

As a gesture of support, the next of kin of the deceased were provided an ex-gratia relief of Rs 5 lakh each, while Rs 50,000 each was given to the four injured individuals.

Accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Syed Ahmad Kataria, SDM East, Murtaza Ahmad, Tehsildar Panthachowk, Muzamil Ahmad, and other officials from the District Administration Srinagar.

The Div Com, on the occasion, said the search and rescue operation continues in the area as efforts are on to locate three missing persons, comprising two children and an adult.

"Today, 14 teams, including those from NDRF, SDRF, ARMY, River Police, and other agencies, were deployed for rescue operations. The operation is scheduled to continue throughout the night and will resume in the morning," he said.

Bidhuri said Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha is actively monitoring the situation and has announced financial assistance for the families of the deceased and the injured.

Regarding the bridge construction, the Div Com said, "We have verified the information, and the work is expected to be completed by June of this year."

Meanwhile, the ongoing rescue operation to trace the bodies of the three missing individuals has been intensified following the boat capsizing incident.

An official, speaking with KNO, said the rescue operation, to retrieve the three missing persons, including a father-son duo identified as Showkat Ahmad and his son Hazik Showkat, along with minor boy Farhan Parry, resumed in the first light of the morning after being halted last night at around 11 pm. It continued all day, he said.

The operation continued all day, with the rescue teams from SDRF, NDRF, Indian Army's MARCOS, Fire and Emergency, and other officials making all-out efforts to retrieve the bodies.

"We have been here in Jhelum of Batwara since around 6 am, continuing our search. Initially, we started from the Batwara area in the morning where the boat capsized. We first scanned the incident spot and soon moved forward to search other areas in the river for the body," ASI SDRF, Abdul Rashid told KNO.

He said the water flow was very high on Tuesday, however, today it had receded, while no traces of the body were found. "We are hopeful of recovering the bodies," he said.

Inspector General of Police Kashmir VK Birdi told reporters that the search operation to trace the three missing persons from river Jhelum is underway. "We have alerted all the police stations along river Jhelum to keep watch on bodies," Birdi said, adding that specialised divers who are searching for the missing persons are focusing on sites where there is a high probability of finding the missing persons.

The entire Kashmir region plunged into deep shock and grief after a boat ferrying school kids, locals, and a few non-J&K residents capsized at the Gandabal area of Batwara in Srinagar on Tuesday. This resulted in the death

of six persons, including a mother, her two children, and the boatman.

**Schools Declare.....**

The neighboring areas of Gandabal—Soiteng, Lasjan, Padshaibagh, Batwara, and Shivpora—are united in mourning, their hearts heavy with sorrow for the families torn apart by this unfathomable tragedy.

Messages of condolence and sympathy pour in from all corners, echoing the shared grief and profound sense of loss.

The local schools at Gabdbal and its adjacent areas have declared two day mourning to express solidarity with victim families. Some schools have also announced to hold special prayers for the deceased especially for school going children who lost lives in this tragedy.

"We are deeply saddened about the recent tragic incident that happened in the nearby area (Gundbal) Soiteng on 16/4/2024. We have lost many precious lives. Our hearts ache for the immeasurable loss, their families are enduring and we extend our most sincere condolences to their families during this difficult time," wrote one of the local schools in its message to parents.

"The loss of their lives has left an indelible mark on all of us. Regarding this matter, the school will remain closed for two days, i.e. Thursday and Friday. With heartfelt sympathy from our side," it added.

The closure of schools for two days serve as a poignant reminder of the lives lost and the irreplaceable void left behind. "In this time of mourning, let us stand together, offering solace and support to those who need it most, and keeping the memories of the departed alive in our hearts forever," said a group of locals at Soiteng.

A somber atmosphere envelops Gandabal and its neighboring areas as the community grapples with the heart-wrenching aftermath of a devastating boat tragedy.

The toll of the tragedy stands at six young souls lost, while the agonizing wait continues for the safe return of three more, including two children. Rescue operations are underway, but the anguish and despair loom heavy in the air.

While the top officials from civil and police administrations are present at spot to supervise the rescue operation, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha is personally monitoring the rescue efforts.

**Rain, Snow.....**

Barring a few stations the night temperature was recorded below normal in the Kashmir Valley on Wednesday. The day temperature was also recorded 2-4 degrees Celsius below normal in all weather stations of Kashmir on Tuesday.

The minimum temperature recorded in Srinagar during the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday was 9.4 degrees Celsius. It was 1.5 degree Celsius above normal for the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir during this period of the season.

Pahalgam recorded a low of 2.1 degrees Celsius against the 8.1 degrees Celsius the previous night and it was 1.3 degrees below normal for the south Kashmir's tourist spot. Kupwara was at 6.2 degrees Celsius and it was 0.6 degree below normal for the frontier north Kashmir district.

Gulmarg had a low of 1.6 degrees Celsius against the 3.2 degrees Celsius recorded on previous night and it was 0.7 degree below normal for the ski resort of north Kashmir's Baramulla district, the MeT office said. (UNI)

**Kashmiri.....**

precautionary measure, an official said.

A Kashmiri pandit accompanying the yatra said that with the taking out of the Shoba Yatra, the nine-day Ram Navami, the birthday of Lord Rama, festival concluded.

He said the special prayers for the peace and prosperity of the country and Jammu and Kashmir were conducted during all these days. (UNI)

**'Major Breakthrough.....**

They said the bomb disposal squad later destroyed all the three IEDs in a controlled explosion, scuttling terrorists' plan to carry out blasts in the Union Territory.

"We received an input about the likely hideout and suspicious movement in the upper Sanai at 4 am and subsequently launched a joint 'search and destroy' operation with the Special Operations Group (SOG) of Jammu and Kashmir Police and Rashtriya Rifles.

"Three IEDs, one weighing 15 to 20 kgs, second eight to 10 kgs and third three to five kgs, having two mechanisms for initiating charge were recovered and destroyed," CRPF officer Rajnesh Yadav said.

Yadav, who is second-in-command of the 246th battalion, said the seizure of the IEDs foiled terrorists' plan to carry out an attack.

"This is an election time and terrorists are always on the lookout to disrupt elections by carrying out any sensational act," he told reporters at the scene.

The officials said no one was arrested during the operation which concluded with the safe disposal of the seized IEDs.

**Father jumps.....**

The school is situated on opposite sides of the Jhelum, and they are yet to return, as the boat they travelled in capsized in the river.

Among the father-son duo is another missing person, Farhan Parry. All three are among the fifteen persons who drowned when a boat ferrying locals and non-local J&K residents to the other side of the Jhelum capsized.

"Among the missing, Showkat Ahmad was the lone brother among six sisters and a helping hand to the family. He was a mason, but a man of his word and a hardworking person," his neighbour said while speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

"Vanni Kyaa Karre Hoo, Me Kath Laggi Yi Kadel Vanni (now what will I do, what use is this bride to me)," screamed the old mother of Showkat, as the bodies of her son and grandson are yet to be retrieved from the river.

"He was the lone brother of his five sisters. It is a shock for us and the entire locality," said a woman, wailing over the loss and missing bodies.

An eyewitness, Tahir (name changed), recalled the incident. "Showkat saved himself and reached towards the rope but jumped back into the Jhelum upon seeing his son Hazik drowning. He started to swim towards the rope

of one shore, while he slowly started losing energy and eventually drowned along with his son."

"The cries from Gandabal are haunting me, as this is such a devastating incident and the first in my lifetime. Even if the authorities would give us a bridge made of gold, it would not be enough for us as we lost innocent souls to the waters of Jhelum," he added.

Meanwhile, the rescue operation to retrieve the bodies continued all day on Wednesday, with no traces of the missing persons found.

**"Always Wanted.....**

including NCERT books and test series. This time I majorly focused on my answer writing for the Mains exam, and during the personality test, I majorly focused on the current affairs and to refine my optional subject, law".

Recalling her childhood days and how her parents words made an impact on her, Anmol asserted that she always wanted to be a part of the solution rather than the problem.

"I always wanted to be a part of the solution rather than a part of the problem. In my childhood days, I used to ask my parents about the problems, like the condition of the roads and no telephone connection at home. My parents encouraged me to become a DC and solve these issues, and since then I have wanted to be a part of the solution," Anmol stated.

Speaking on her challenges, Anmol mentioned that, to a certain extent, she faced some academic difficulties in coping as she shifted from a remote area in Kishtwar to Jammu.

"I completed my elementary education up to grade 5 in Kishtwar before moving to Jammu. Transitioning from a rural area to an urban environment presented certain academic obstacles," she said.

Recalling her time in J-K's Kishtwar, Anmol Rathore remarked, "Frequent curfews would be enforced, leaving me puzzled. It was then that my parents advised me that to contribute to solving such issues, I should align myself with the executive," Anmol said.

The Union Public Service Commission on Tuesday announced the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2023.

Aditya Srivastava has secured the first position in the Civil Services Examination, 2023. Animesh Pradhan secured the second rank and Donuru Ananya Reddy stood third.

A total of 1,016 candidates cleared the examination and have been recommended for different central government services. (Agencies)

**High-Voltage.....**

April 19 and will decide the fate of 12 contestants, including Union Minister Jitendra Singh who is seeking a third term and is facing a major challenge from Congress candidate Choudhary Lal Singh.

The presence of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) candidate and former Jammu and Kashmir minister G M Saroori makes the contest a triangular one.

"No untoward incident was reported during the campaigning by the candidates of political parties and Independents. The electioneering ended this evening (at 6 pm) and the advance parties of the security and polling staff along with election logistics and materials have been dispatched to the remote pockets including snow-bound areas to ensure free and fair polling," an official said.

Over 16.23 lakh electorate including 7.77 lakh women are going to vote at 2637 polling stations across the constituency which is spread over five districts of Kishtwar, Doda, Ramban, Udhampur and Kathua.

After Udhampur, Jammu parliamentary constituency will go to polls on April 26 followed by Anantnag-Rajouri constituency on May 7, Srinagar on May 13 and Baramulla on May 20. The counting of votes will be held on June 4.

The contestants, especially the BJP, the Congress and the DPAP, left no stone unturned to woo the voters, bringing back the focus on Article 370 that provided special status to Jammu and Kashmir and which was abrogated by the BJP-led central government in August 2019.

The BJP also came in for severe criticism by the rivals for continuing its "proxy rule" by not holding assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir and dividing the erstwhile state into two Union territories.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who reached Udhampur on April 12 and took the campaigning to its crescendo, reassured the people about holding of assembly elections and restoration of statehood.

Modi highlighted the achievements made in Jammu and Kashmir over the past five years and said this is for the first time in decades that the upcoming elections are taking place in Jammu and Kashmir without the fear of terrorism, strikes, stone-pelting and cross-border firing.

The BJP, which also brought a galaxy of high-profile leaders, including defence minister Rajnath Singh, Union Minister Anurag Thakur, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and national spokesperson Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain, to the constituency, boasted about the restoration of peace by ending Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, stone-pelting and frequent strikes besides ensuring record-breaking tourist arrivals and massive development.

Home Minister Amit Shah, during his election rally in Jammu on Tuesday, reiterated that the assembly elections will be held in accordance with the deadline of September 30 set by the Supreme Court.

The campaigning by the Congress, on the other hand, saw their star campaigners, including actor-turned politician Raj Babbar, former deputy chief minister of Rajasthan Sachin Pilot and chairman of minority department AICC Imran Pratapgarhi, addressing a series of rallies in the constituency to bolster the chances of their candidate.

The National Conference (NC), which is a part of the Congress-led INDIA bloc, also hit the campaign trail in support of Lal Singh. Its president Farooq Abdullah and vice president Omar Abdullah, both former chief ministers, undertook a whirlwind tour of Chenab valley region.

The two leaders went full throttle against the DPAP, accusing it of being a proxy of the BJP to divide the secular votes in the constituency.

Omar Abdullah also slammed the BJP for the August 2019 development and questioned its claims about massive development, saying almost all the major projects including four-laning of the Jammu-Srinagar national highway and the prestigious railway line to connect Kashmir with rest of the country were given to J-K by the Congress governments before 2014.

However, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which is also part of the INDIA bloc, was missing from the scene as it fielded candidates on three seats from Kashmir after it was sidelined in the seat-sharing agreement on the six seats of J-K and Ladakh.

DPAP chairman and former chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad also addressed a series of public meetings to garner support for Saroori and targeted both the NC and the Congress for ignoring Chenab valley region over the past six decades and also launched attacks on the NC leadership, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and Pradesh Congress Committee president Vikar Rasool Wani.

Wani, in his road shows and rallies, accused his former senior colleague in the Congress of working at the behest of the BJP. Azad left Congress in 2022 and later formed his own party, which he claimed has emerged as the fastest growing on the political map of J-K in a short period, unnerving his political opponents.

On the last day of campaigning, the contestants made a last ditch effort to reach out to the voters. Jitendra Singh carried out door-to-door campaigning and held rallies in Kathua. Lal Singh, accompanied by Wani and Pratapgarhi, visited Ramban and Saroori and was seen canvassing in Kishtwar.

Meanwhile, the concerned district election officers ordered prohibition of campaigning by means of electronic media, restriction on outsider political functionaries and use of loudspeakers. (Agencies)

**Udhampur, Kathua.....**

years and in fact deliberately also halted the ongoing project only to appease their masters and to keep particular sections of vote bank in good humour by doing discrimination with this region.

The irony is, he said, the Congress leaders who say that there is no development happening in this region are the ones who are using these facilities created by us in the last 10 years, whether it is the network of roads, or bridges or flyovers or tunnels or the Medical Colleges, etc.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, in the last 10 years under Prime Minister Modi, Udhampur-Doda-Kathua Lok Sabha constituency is among the most developed constituencies in the country. He said, it is perhaps the only constituency in the country which got three centrally funded Medical Colleges and a host of national projects including the highest railway bridge of world, longest road tunnel of Asia at Chenani, North India's first Industrial Biotech Park at Kathua, North India's first River Rejuvenation Project at River Devika, North India's first Cable Bridge Atal Setu in Basohli, two Passport offices, Radio Station at Udhampur, etc. Not only this, as Prime Minister Modi mentioned during his address at the Udhampur rally on 12th of this month, the Congress led UPA government halted the Shahpur-Kandi Project, which would benefit the twin districts of Kathua and Samba and the project was revived only after Prime Minister Modi came to power.

Taking a dig at the opposition leaders, Dr Jitendra Singh said, on the one hand, the Congress leaders and its allies say that there are no roads constructed, on the other hand, while driving through this constituency they are invariably using the 9½ Kms Syama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel from Chenani to Nashri in order to cut down their travel time by 1½ hours. If these leaders have any conscience, let them at least not use these facilities provided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Similarly, he said, even during the election campaign, these leaders travelled up to zero line on the International border on the roads constructed in the last ten years. He added, if they have any conscience, they could have avoided travelling by road and walked on foot as was being done before 2014. Dr Jitendra Singh added that in the last ten years, while three Medical Colleges came up in the constituency there were at least 20 Degree Colleges and nearly a dozen Kendriya Vidyalayas opened in this constituency. He said, those opposition leaders and critics who say that this has not happened and there are no such institutions should at least have the conscience not to get their children admitted in these colleges and schools.

The double speak of opposition leaders has become so evident, said Dr Jitendra Singh that even family members of these Congress leaders now have decided to vote for Modi because the benefits of toilets and Gas Cylinders have reached even their households and changed the destiny of their women folk. Similarly, he said, the children of the Congress leaders are using all the benefits of the StartUp and Digital India initiatives introduced by Prime Minister Modi and therefore, they will also cast their secret vote for Modi.

Appealing to voters to cast their vote in 100%, Dr Jitendra Singh said, we have no opponent and our competition is with ourselves. We have to prove before ourselves that we have put up a better performance than in 2019 when we registered a record margin in J&K by more than 3 Lakh 58 thousand votes. He said, it is a foregone conclusion that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be sworn in as Prime Minister for the third term in June 2024 with 400 plus mandate, but we have to prove to ourselves and to others that this Udhampur-Kathua-Doda constituency also made a substantial contribution in making up the figure of 400 plus.

**Over 1,400.....**

percent polling in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Encompassing an expansive area of 16,707 square kilometres, the constituency boasts of a diverse electorate comprising 16,23,195 eligible voters. Among them are 8,45,283 male voters, 7,77,899 female voters and 13 third-gender voters, reflecting the inclusivity of the democratic process, they said.

To facilitate seamless voting, the official said, a total of 2,637 polling stations — 2,457 in rural areas and 180 in urban areas — have been set up across

the constituency, including 701 in Kathua, 654 in Udhampur, 529 in Doda, 405 in Kishtwar and 348 in Ramban.

Moreover, 1,472 polling stations will be equipped with webcasting facilities to further enhance transparency in the democratic process, they said.

Kathua district, with six assembly segments of Bani, Billawar, Basohli, Jasrota, Kathua and Hiranagar, has the highest 5,03,227 registered voters, including 2,39,273 women and six third-gender electors. Udhampur, comprising four assembly segments — Udhampur West, Udhampur East, Chenani and Ramnagar — boasts of 4,19,854 electors which includes 2,19,890 male and 1,99,964 female electors, the officials said.

Doda, also with three assembly segments namely Bharderwah, Doda and Doda West, contributes 3,05,093 voters to the electoral roll comprising 1,57,375 male, 1,47,711 female and seven third-gender electors, they said.

Ramban district, encompassing two assembly segments — Ramban and Banihal — has 2,19,124 registered electors, including 1,13,814 male and 1,05,310 female electors.

Kishtwar has three assembly segments — Inderwal, Kishtwar and Padder Nagseini — and a total of 1,75,897 voters, including 90,256 males and 85,641 females, they said.

The official highlighted that 23,637 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) have been included within the electoral roll, encompassing 14,362 males and 9,275 females.

Among the young voters, aged 18-19 years, 45,825 are males, 38,641 females and two transgender, totalling 84,468 potential first-time voters, the officials said.

They said the constituency boasts of a considerable elderly population with 12,020 male voters and 13,612 female voters aged above 80 years, totalling 25,632 seasoned voters contributing to the electoral discourse.

In line with the commitment towards fair and transparent elections, the ECI has deployed 3,658 ballot units, 3,570 control units, and 3,636 VVPATs (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail) to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the electoral process.

**J&K Govt.....**

The Shrine Board will be responsible for the exact deployment of these officers, who will play a crucial role in managing the various aspects of the Yatra.

During their tenure with the Shrine Board, the officers will continue to draw their salaries from their original places of posting.

They are expected to return to their respective positions immediately after the conclusion of the Yatra in 2024.

This deployment is part of the government's efforts to ensure that the Amarnath Yatra is conducted smoothly, with a focus on the safety and comfort of the pilgrims.

**Tourism Revival....**

As per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), artisans and craftsmen in Kashmir have been renowned for their exquisite craftsmanship for centuries, producing a wide array of traditional handicrafts such as intricately woven carpets, fine pashmina shawls, intricate wood carvings, and colorful papier-mâché artifacts.

The sector during the recent past suffered immensely with artisans switching to other trades to earn livelihood following reduced demand.

With government's initiatives and revival of tourism, the handicrafts sector has again thrived in Kashmir.

Mohammed Ali Bhat, a third-generation wood carving artisan in Srinagar, expressed his delight at the recent upswing in business. "For years, our livelihoods were affected by the decline in tourism. But now, with more visitors coming to Kashmir, we are seeing a steady increase in our sales of wooden items. It gives us hope for the future," he remarked.

A number of authentic handicrafts outlets and showrooms have emerged in Kashmir during the last few years signalling the growth of the sector.

Junaid Ahmad Khan, a handicrafts showroom owner, said the tourism boom in Kashmir has scaled up the sales of handicrafts items at various tourist destinations of the valley.

"From Srinagar to Pahalgam and Gulmarg, we have witnessed that various authentic Kashmir handicrafts showrooms have emerged. Apart from that, small stalls are also being established by the locals to sell the handicrafts items to tourists. Flow of tourists has always proved beneficial for various businesses, be it handicrafts, transport and others," he said.

The growth in the handicrafts sector has also been facilitated by efforts to promote Kashmiri crafts on digital platforms, allowing artisans to reach a wider audience beyond the confines of the region. E-commerce platforms and online marketplaces have provided a valuable avenue for artisans to showcase their creations and connect with customers worldwide, further fuelling the growth of the industry.

**Police Attaches.....**

68-E read with 68-F (1) of NDPS Act of 1985 & is linked with case FIR No.21/2024 U/S 8/20 of NDPS Act of Police Station Shopian.

The property was identified as illegally acquired property during the course of investigation/enquiry conducted by Shopian Police. The property was prima facie acquired from illicit trafficking in Narcotic drug and Psychotropic substances by the drug peddler.

This operation reaffirms the commitment of Police to combat the drug menace. Local people of the area hailed the initiative of Police.





# LS Election: Vote To Protect Land, Jobs and future of youth: Mehbooba Mufti

**SRINAGAR, APR 17:** Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday said that people of Jammu and Kashmir have to vote this time to protect land, jobs, electricity and future of youth.

The former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister is contesting from the Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary seat against National Conference leader Main Altaf and the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) President Ghulam Nabi Azad.

"I am not contesting the Lok Sabha election to reach the parliament," Mufti said while addressing a public rally at Devsar in south Kashmir's Kulgam district.

"I am fighting the elections

to raise the voices of those people and youth who are suffering tremendously", the PDP President said

"This time people have to cast the votes for themselves not for me", Mufti said, adding "cast your vote to raise your voices, to protect your land, jobs, electricity and for the bright future of the youngsters".

"Parliament election is a test and you have to decide if anybody better than me could reach your voices to the Parliament, vote him", she told the gathering.

Jammu and Kashmir has become a laboratory where every test is being conducted for the first time, she said.

"Don't remain as silent spectators raise your voices peacefully", the former CM said and

warned "If we could not raise our voices today the time will come the land beneath the feet of the youth would be snatched as such an atmosphere is being created in Jammu and Kashmir".

"Delhi often says everything is alright in Kashmir. Tourists are coming and taking pictures also saying everything is fine in Kashmir. But tourists did not know what the people of Kashmir are suffering from", Mufti said.

She said what happened in 2019 when the special status of Jammu and Kashmir was snatched was an earthquake. "The earthquake jolts for some time and stops, but the earthquake that occurs in 2019 have not yet stopped", the PDP president said.



Mehbooba alleged that the central government wants to grab our lands, forests, water sources and jobs of the youth. Mufti alleged that the youth

are being booked under Public Safety Act (PSA) for uploading contents to express their anger on social media and media persons are being booked under UAPA for writing the truth.

She alleged that about 200 youth have been arrested after militants recently attacked a tourist guide in Shopian district. "As the elections are nearer the authorities have started arresting the youth of the valley for their no fault", the PDP President alleged.

"The Kashmiri people are dumb stricken and the Gujjars and Bakarwals are being shunted out from the forests. The time should not come that the people would be also driven out of their homes here", she warned.

The central government

closed our schools on the name of "kahcharai land" and people who are being told to vacate that land on the name of government land... what is their (government) motive and intentions", the former CM questioned.

Mehbooba said under a policy the government imported cheap apples from America and Iran to sabotage the apple production of Kashmir valley. Efforts are being made to make the people of Kashmir poorer, she said.

"This is not a contest between the National Conference and PDP. It is the fight who will raise the voices of the people and who not", Mufti said.

She said "I tried to bring all the parties to pull the rope of success together and not to

contest separately".

"I said in Mumbai that the seat sharing will be done by the senior leader Dr Farooq Abdullah and what decision he will take would be acceptable to us". But they said PDP existed nowhere", the PDP Chief said.

"If Farooq and Omar had decided that PAGD will field only National Conference candidates they would have at least called me once", she said and added "even if they would have said in the interest of Jammu and Kashmir NC is the lone party which could raise the voice of the people, I would have saluted them".

But, instead they trampled us and said that PDP is a 4 or 5 number party, Mehbooba said. (UNI)

## Will fight for development, dignity of J&K: Sajad Lone

**SRINAGAR, APR 17:** Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference (JKPC) Chairman Sajad Gani Lone Wednesday reiterated that he will fight for development and dignity of Jammu and Kashmir.

Talking to media person in north Kashmir's Kupwara, Lone said that his aim is to empower people of Jammu and Kashmir with rights the people of other parts of the country are availing. He said gun has brought lot of destruction to Jammu and Kashmir, and has left army of orphans and widows in helpless situation.

Taking dig at former chief minister, he said Omar Abdullah should introspect what he and his party done with people of Jammu and Kashmir. "Like the term good Taliban and bad Taliban, the former chief minister has also categorised BJP into good and bad. The one with which he is comfortable is good BJP, while another one is bad. I want to make him correct that it was Late Vajpayee who rejected the resolution of internal Autonomy, and said this on the floor of house that if BJP will have majority it will undo Article 370 without any delay," Lone said.

He said Omar Abdullah in day in and day out are abusing people which won't be allowed. "We will not allow him to humiliate people of north Kashmir. If there are 25 percent NC voter, does it means the rest 75 percent are not humans. What he thinks? Does he forgot 1987 rigging?", he said.

Lone added that our youth are being implicated into verification processes started by police and other security agencies which has created panic among those who are not associated with any particular ideology. "Our youth in the name of Police verification are being trapped everywhere. This process is only for J&K, while youth belongs to the rest of the country are enjoying their life in a dignified way. This harsh law was also brought NC to J&K. What is the fault of a youth whose relative was associated with militancy in past. I want to bring my people out of this situation and I will work for it," he said.

Lone added that his struggle will remain for development and dignity which people of Jammu and Kashmir deserves.

## LS Election: BJP Likely To Support Proxy Candidates In Kashmir: Omar Abdullah

**SRINAGAR, APR 17:** National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said that Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is unlikely to field its candidates in Kashmir as they may support their proxy candidates in the Valley.

"Home Minister Amit Shah has indicated during his public address in Jammu region yesterday that BJP is not fielding their candidates in Kashmir valley", Omar told media persons in south Kashmir Anantnag district.

"If I am not wrong what the Home Minister had said that BJP is not in a hurry to field its can-

didates to blossom the lotus in Kashmir valley. During the 2019 elections, BJP has fielded its candidates in all seats but failed to win any seat. When they could not win the hearts of the people, how could they field their candidates in Kashmir", he asked.

The NC vice president said that "BJP is contesting elections in collaboration with others and the only difference is there that we are openly contesting elections with the INDIA alliance".

He said the BJP will face defeat again too.

The former JK CM recalled that recently BJP senior leader Tarun



Chugg visited the house of Apni Party President Altaf Bukhari in Srinagar where Peoples Confer-

ence president Sajad Lone was also called on, that clearly prove BJP is not fielding their own can-

didates but there will be Apni Party and Peoples Conference candidates from the BJP.

Replying to a question, Omar said "that it could be the BJP's plan to field these candidates, but to win the elections for these candidates would not be easy, but impossible".

He said Main Altaf of his party contesting from Anantnag-Rajouri parliament seat is the lone candidate who will represent the voices of the people across the Pir Panjal range. The NC Vice President said the people will accept him when they will poll their ballots on May 7. (UNI)

## Leh Apex Body (LAB), Environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk Call Off Proposed 'Intra-Country Road March'

**SRINAGAR, APR 17:** The Leh Apex Body (LAB) and environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk have announced the cancellation of the proposed 'Intra-Country Road March,' scheduled for Wednesday. This decision was confirmed during a press conference held on Tuesday evening, where LAB leaders and Sonam Wangchuk addressed the media.

As per the info received by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) cancellation comes amidst concerns raised by the administration, indicating potential repercussions if the march proceeds. LAB leaders and Wangchuk expressed apprehensions that the administration's warnings of imposing Section 144 and shutting down internet services could adversely impact the local tourism industry. Fearful of financial losses, particularly for tourism businessmen, the decision to call off the march was deemed necessary.

Sonam Wangchuk raised allegations against the administration,



accusing them of resorting to intimidation tactics to deter the march. While acknowledging Ladakh's sensitive geopolitical position, Wangchuk

emphasized the need for understanding the government's concerns regarding law and order, especially in light of the region's proximity to China and Pakistan.

Highlighting the primary motive behind the proposed march, Wangchuk stressed the importance of addressing the grievances of local shepherds in Skangchu-Thang, who have reportedly faced challenges related to land acquisition by industrialists. Despite the cancellation of the march, Wangchuk reiterated his commitment to advocating for the rights of Ladakhi people, indicating that discussions would continue with LAB and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA).

Initially announced to commence on April 17th, the 'Intra-Country Road March' aimed to traverse towards Skangchu-Thang on the Ladakh-Himachal Pradesh border, facilitating direct engagement with local communities affected by land acquisition issues.

## NC, Cong Cutting Votes Of DPAP not BJP: Azad

**JAMMU, APR 17:** Chairman DPAP Ghulam Nabi Azad strongly criticizes Congress's Rahul Gandhi & NC's Omar Abdullah for endorsing a candidate who supported the rapists of Kathua's daughter.

Such alliances betray the trust of the people and compromise justice. He expressed disappointment with the present leadership of Congress, stating, "Their actions have severely tarnished the Congress ideology we've worked hard to uphold. I would have never allowed this in Congress." Such deviation from the party's principles is regrettable and undermines the legacy we strive to maintain. He further said, Omar Abdullah is campaigning in Chenab Valley against DPAP, not BJP. He has been tasked to divide secular votes.

He did nothing for his own constituency. I gave district status to Ganderbal, which is the family constituency of Abdullahs. I provided them with colleges, hospitals. What has Omar done for his home constituency? He only exploited and harmed the people." While addressing public meetings in Sangaldan, Ukhral areas of Banihal constituency Azad raised concerns about the Congress party's approach to addressing public issues, particularly in BJP-ruled states. He criticized the party for what he sees as a reluctance to engage in direct confrontations and a tendency to seek out safe seats where minority populations are stronger.

He questioned the party's commitment to fighting the BJP on the ground, highlighting its preference for safe seats, notably in states like Kerala, over contested battlegrounds. He said, "Why is Rahul Gandhi hesitant to contest in BJP-ruled states?" Azad noted that while Gandhi claims to be fighting the BJP, his actions suggest otherwise. "Why fly from BJP-ruled states and seek refuge in minority-dominated ones?" Azad remarked on Rahul Gandhi and Omar Abdullah, referring to them as "spoon-fed kids" rather than politicians. He pointed out that they have not made personal sacrifices in life and are merely enjoying political legacies inherited from figures like Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah.

"Both have done nothing of their own," he added. Azad reiterated his commitment to development, urging the public to distance themselves from exploitative politicians. He emphasized the importance of supporting candidates dedicated to addressing public issues. Azad urged people to rally behind G.M. Saroori in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, highlighting Saroori's dedication to raising and addressing pressing public concerns.

## World Hemophilia Day: Medical experts call for awareness on bleeding disorders, early diagnosis

Say with advancements, people with hemophilia can lead 'fulfilling' lives

**SRINAGAR, APR 17:** On World Hemophilia Day, medical experts called for the need to raise awareness about bleeding disorders and diagnosing patients early to prevent complications.

Speaking with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Dr Iqbal Saleem highlighted the advancements in medical research and treatment options that enable people with haemophilia to lead fulfilling lives.

He said this year's theme for World Hemophilia Day 2024 is "Equitable Access for All: Recognizing All Bleeding Disorders."

This theme underscores the urgent need to spread awareness about bleeding disorders, diagnose patients early to prevent complications and ensure access to treatment options for our underprivileged population, he remarked.

Achieving these goals requires collaboration among all stakeholders, working together as a cohesive team, Dr Saleem added.

Dr Mir Mushtaq, the spokesperson for the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), echoed Dr Saleem's sentiments, saying it is important to stand united to raise awareness about

haemophilia and other bleeding disorders.

"Let us acknowledge the resilience of those living with haemophilia and their caregivers, and advocate for improved access to treatment and care," Dr Mushtaq urged. He said knowledge is essential for managing haemophilia effectively, urging people to educate themselves and others to ensure early diagnosis and proper treatment.

"By fostering awareness and creating a supportive environment, we can pave the way for a brighter future for people with haemophilia and their families,



Dr Mushtaq said. Medical professionals said that World Hemophilia Day provides

an opportunity to advocate for improved healthcare infrastructure, increased availability of factor replacement therapies and better education for healthcare professionals and the public about haemophilia and its management.

With ongoing advancements in medical research and treatment options, individuals with haemophilia can lead fulfilling lives.

World Hemophilia Day aims to address disparities by promoting equitable access to treatment and raising awareness about the challenges faced by people living with haemophilia and other bleeding disorders.



# J&K at threshold of mega development under PM Modi's leadership: Slathia

## HT News Network

SAMBAPRIL 17- With peace gaining momentum across the Valley, Pradesh BJP Vice President and former minister Mr Surjeet Singh Slathia today said Jammu and Kashmir is at the threshold of mega transformation after large scale investments pouring in various sectors and focus shifting on holistic development and implementation of welfare schemes.

Welcoming new entrants into BJP in village Nehari in Block Sumb Samba here this afternoon, Mr Slathia said the initia-

tives underway will open up vistas of opportunities in terms of jobs and economic upliftment across the Union Territory.

Mr Slathia said rapid industrialization and infrastructure upgradation is the preamble for Naya Jammu and Kashmir under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He referred to the cherished agenda of Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and said the BJP is working towards realizing this vision by ending discrimination and ensuring holistic development of all the regions and sub-regions irrespective of caste, creed and religion.



He said the BJP is a mass movement, standing for empowerment of the people and support from all sections of the society. Public goodwill and support is the biggest strength that enables the party

to fight for the just cause of the marginalised segments and stands steadfast in resolving issues confronting them. As a result of sustained efforts, the BJP has emerged as a force to reckon with, he added.

Mr Slathia said the BJP's focus would be to usher Jammu and Kashmir in a new phase of progress and development with restoration of complete normalcy and peace remaining a focal point. The BJP is commit-

ted to address the issues of the youth, the marginalized and weaker sections besides women, he said and asserted that the party will ensure to remove the disparity between region and sub regions with regard to allocation of funds for development and opportunities to flourish.

The Pradesh Vice President said the BJP has paved the way for the people to have access to all the privileges, rights and facilities available to their fellow citizens across the country. This is something not known in this part of the country due to wrong policies adopted over the decades, he said adding that

continued support of the people to the BJP will help in expediting the development and making Jammu and Kashmir part of the country's growth story, he added.

Mr Slathia said the joining of public spirited activists will further strengthen the BJP at the grassroots level, enabling it to face the challenges faced by the nation with resilience and courage.

Prominent among those present on the occasion included Vice President BJP Samba Mohan Lal Sharma, Vijay Singh Mandal President, Balbinder Singh Naib Sarpanch, Thodu Ram and others

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**People's Public School Wagoora**  
UDISE: 01022202209  
Email: [peoplespublicschoolwagoora@gmail.com](mailto:peoplespublicschoolwagoora@gmail.com)

Subject: Proposed school managing committee.

S.No.	Name of the Member	Parentage	Residence	Designation
01.	Mohammad Assadullah Rather	Abdul Aziz Rather	Wagoora	Chairman
02.	Bilal Ahmad Bhat	Abdul Samad Bhat	Jehangirpora Shrakawara	Principal
03.	Ghulam Hassan Ganaie	Ghulam Mohammad Ganaie	Jehangirpora Shrakawara	Secretary
04.	Mohammad Ashraf Ganie	Gh Ahmad Ganie	Jehangirpora Shrakawara	Parent/Teacher Representative
05.	Riyaz Ahmad Bhat	Mohd Sultan Bhat	Wagoora	Member
06.	Sareer Ahmad Rather	Ali Mohammad Rather	Wagoora	Member
07.	Shaheena Bano	Ghulam Rasool Bhat	Wagoora	Female Teacher Representative

Any person having any objection may report to DSEK within 7 days positively.

Sd/- Chairman

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

SUBJECT: GRANT OF REGISTRATION OF THE PROPOSED TOUR & TRAVEL AGENCY UNDER THE NAME & STYLE "ARRIVE & EXPLORE KASHTOURS" SITUATED AT RAMPORA, QAMMERWARI, SRINAGAR.

Whereas ISHABIR AHMAD DAGA S/O ABDUL AZIZ DAGA R/o Rampora, Qammerwari, Srinagar Kashmir in partnership with Mr. INAYAT MANZOOR S/o Manzoor Ahmad Shagoo R/o Danamazar, Safakadal Srinagar intend to apply in the Directorate of Tourism for Registration of our proposed Tour and Travel agency under the name and style "ARRIVE & EXPLORE KASHTOURS" situated at Rampora, Qammerwari, Srinagar Kashmir.

Now before my case is processed for registration by the prescribed authority. The matter is hereby notified for information of general public organization for objections if any and the same should reach the office prescribed authority within a period of 15 days from the publication of this notice in the leading local newspaper of the valley, objections received beyond the period of 15 days from the date of publication shall not be entertained and the case shall be processed under rules as per merit.

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Subject: Proposed Fee Structure for 2024-25.

S.No.	Class	Fee
01.	8 <sup>th</sup>	750
02.	7 <sup>th</sup>	750
03.	6 <sup>th</sup>	750
04.	5 <sup>th</sup>	650
05.	4 <sup>th</sup>	600
06.	3 <sup>rd</sup>	600
07.	2 <sup>nd</sup>	600
08.	1 <sup>st</sup>	550
09.	UKG	550
10.	LKG	550
11.	Nursery	550

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Sd/- Chairman

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# Shat Chandi Maha Yagya concludes at Vaishno Devi Shrine

■ HT News Network

Katra, April 17- The 9-day long deeply revered Shat Chandi Maha Yagya organised by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) at the Holy Shrine during Chaitra Navratra for universal peace and prosperity concluded on a grand note with "Purna ahuthi" on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami. Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Dr. Neelam Sareen, Board Member, Vikas Anand, SDM Bhawan, other officers and staff of the Shrine Board, besides pilgrims participated in Purna ahuti and other religious ceremonies performed amidst vedic mantras on the occasion. A group of pandits led by Padma Shri Prof. Vishwamurti Shastri, performed the Maha Yagya.

More than 3 Lakh devout pilgrims made their journey to the revered Shrine during the auspicious Chaitra Navratra. To ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all devotees visiting the Vaishno Devi Shrine regardless of their physical abilities, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board has been continuing providing free pony, battery



car service and assistance in darshans to Divyang pilgrims during Navratra as per directions of Sh. Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Lt. Governor, JK-UT who is also Chairman, SMVDSB. Elaborate decorations with exquisite fresh flowers of varied varieties brought from various parts of the country and abroad, traditional motifs and ornate lighting captivated the hearts of devotees who thronged to seek the blessings of Mata Vaishno Devi ji during these Navratras. Artistically designed huge reception doors were also installed in the Bhawan area. Besides, the Board had also made impressive arrangements for the pilgrims visiting the Holy Shrine including round the

clock water and power supply all along the tracks and in the Bhawan Area, Sanitation and Sanitisation, Medicare and availability of special "fast related" food at the catering outlets of the Board. The Board also made arrangements for free food for the pilgrims at Tarakote Marg, Prasad Kendra at Sanjichhat, and Bhairon Ji. For the ease and comfort of pilgrims, facilities like battery operated vehicles, passenger ropeway and helicopter services were available through both online and offline modes. Other special features were bhajan and bhaint performances by the renowned artists such as Hansraj Raghuvanshi, Lakhwinder Wadali, Kapil Sharma, Akriti Kakkar, Sagar Bhatia, Roshan Prince besides budding students of SMVD Gurukul during morning and evening Atka Aarti during these Navratras. The live telecast of Atka Arti witnessed an unprecedented engagement from pilgrims worldwide who partake in the divine rituals from the comfort of their homes. As a special feature, Bhajan Sandhya was also organised by the Board twice a day for the pilgrims at the newly constructed Sheetla Bhawan at Adhkuwari and the same shall be a regular feature henceforth.

## DDC member Rathsun Sheikh Khurshid joins PC

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, April 17 (KNS): In a significant boost to the PC in Beerwah, DDC Rathsun, Sheikh Khurshid, Ex-Sarpanch Kanihama Imtiyaz Ahmad, alongside a host of socio-political activists representing diverse ideologies, embraced the party.

Moreover, Mohammad Ashraf Mir, Nazir Ahmad Parry from Bundgam, and many others also joined the party ranks. They were welcomed by PC President Sajad Gani Lone on the fold. Provincial President Kashmir Mohammad Khurshid Alam, Provincial Secretary Irfan Mattoo, and PS to President Tasaduq Yaseen were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, PC President termed the huge influx of new members as a testament to the unwavering faith of the common people in the party's vision and agenda.

"The burgeoning support for our party's agenda to foster development and restore dignity resonates across the Kashmir Valley. It underscores our commitment to uplift the weaker sections of society and create a conducive environment for growth and development, which common people have been deprived of for decades altogether."

Encouraging the newly inducted members to amplify their outreach efforts, PC President emphasized the pivotal role each member plays in advancing the party's mission.

The new members praised the party's principles and pledged to carry forward its mission and message with dedication and determination. (KNS)

## Altaf Bukhari Greet People on Ram Navami

■ HT News Network



Srinagar, April 17 (KNS): Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party President Altaf Bukhari on Wednesday extended warm wishes to the Hindu community and all celebrants of the festival on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami.

He called upon the devotees to embrace the spirit of the festival and pray for peace and prosperity in the region of Jammu and Kashmir.

"May this holy festival bring abundant joy and blessings into the lives of all. I humbly urge the devotees and all those who observe this festival, with profound religious fervor, to pray for tranquility and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir", he added. (KNS)

## RDD starts temporary restoration work of bridges, other infrastructure at Kalaroos, Magam

■ HT News Network

Kupwara, April 17, Following the directions of the District Development Commissioner Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan (IAS), Rural Development Department, Kupwara has started the temporary restoration of vital assets and infrastructure damaged by recent flash floods at Kalaroos and Magam blocks of Kupwara district.

Temporary Restoration work on Badi Haji - Sarkuli bridge, Badi Behack - Nagsari Bridge, Magam - Putwari bridge, restoration of fencing of Government Middle School Nagsari and other infrastructure has been started by the Rural development department.

ACD Kupwara, Muzaffar Ahmad Sheikh said that makeshift arrangement/ temporary restoration of these bridges will be completed within a week's time so that people don't suffer.

Pertinently, recent flash floods triggered by heavy rains had damaged these vital bridges and District Development Commissioner, Kupwara, on Tuesday visited these far-flung areas, took a first-hand appraisal of the situation and assessed the measures being taken by the administration. The District Development Commissioner had directed ACD Kupwara to restore the bridges and other infrastructure.

## District Election Media Cell conducts training session for media persons in Ramban

■ HT News Network

Ramban, April 17: The District Election Media Cell in Ramban, under the leadership of District Election Officer Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, organized a one-day training session for media persons, focusing on their roles and responsibilities, particularly on Poll Day.

The District Election Officer, alongside Senior Superintendent of Police, Anuj Kumar, engaged with the media to elucidate their roles and constraints according to Election Commission of India (ECI) guidelines, underscoring the significance of responsible coverage during the 1st polling phase of General Election Lok Sabha, 2024 scheduled on April 19, 2024 in the district.

Emphasizing the pivotal role of media in ensuring the successful conduct of elections, the DEO urged compliance with ECI guidelines. SSP Anuj Kumar also briefed participants on various security aspects pertaining to media coverage.

Earlier sessions conducted by Nodal Officer MCMC and Media Centre (District Information Officer) Ramban, Mohammad Ashraf Wani and Nodal Officer for Women Awareness and Welfare, Shailini Chandel, acquainted participants with ECI directives concerning media coverage, especially on polling day. The training session aimed to foster a conducive environment for informed and responsible media coverage, contributing to the integrity and transparency of the electoral process.

## Rather grieved over loss of lives in Batwara boat capsizing incident

■ HT News Network

Srinagar April 16 (KNS): Senior NC leader and Former Finance Minister Ab Rahim Rather has expressed shock and grief over the loss of precious human lives including some school going children in a heart wrenching boat capsizing incident in river Jehlum near Gandabal Batawara in Srinagar. In a statement issued on Tuesday Ab Rahim Rather has expressed profound grief over the death of many school going children, after a boat capsized in river Jehlum near Gandabal Batawara in Srinagar early on Tuesday morning. He has sought a thorough inquiry into the tragic incident. He said locals have alleged that today's tragedy is because of the absence of a bridge adding that the work on construction of a bridge near the accident has been abandoned since the last 10 years. He said it was amply clear that inordinate delay.

## Prof. Quint from GSI, Germany, delivers expert talk on 'Ion Trap' at NIT Srinagar

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 17: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, in collaboration with the Indian National Young Academy of Science (INYAS), Tuesday organized an expert talk featuring Prof. Wolfgang Quint, a senior professor, from GSI Helmholtzzentrum für Schwerionenforschung, Darmstadt, Germany.

Prof. Quint, an esteemed academic researcher from Heidelberg University and his expertise spans various topics, including Penning trap and Antiproton research.

HOD Department of Physics, Prof. Mohd. Ikram expressed his gratitude to Prof. Quint for accepting the invitation and delivering the expert talk on the Ion Trap'. He said Ion traps



are important today because they help scientists do precise work in fields like physics and chemistry. Prof. Ikram praised Dr. Vijay Kumar for setting up talks by experts on campus. He said these talks are really important and students should take the chance to learn and get inspired from them. During his speech, Prof. Wolfgang Quint talked about how he studies really tiny particles using special techniques. He showed traps

and controls these tiny particles, and also demonstrated methods he has developed. Dr. Quint explained how his research helps us understand the basic rules of the universe better. He talked about how his work can reveal secrets about how everything works at the smallest level. The session concluded with a vibrant Q&A segment, during which attendees engaged Dr. Quint in stimulating discussions on various topics, from quantum

entanglement to the search for new physics beyond the Standard Model. Earlier Dr. Vijay Kumar, a Member of INYAS and Assistant Professor at Department of Physics welcomed the guest speaker. He commended Dr. Wolfgang Quint for his enlightening presentation and emphasized how these experiences inspire students to pursue research in various cutting-edge fields.

Earlier Dr. Vijay Kumar extended a warm welcome to Prof. Quint and other dignitaries. The purpose of such sessions is to bridge the gap between academia and industry.

Dr. Vijay said such initiatives are instrumental in advancing research and education, promoting a culture of continuous learning and innovation within academic institutions.

## General Election Lok Sabha, 2024: DEO Ramban convenes crucial meeting of Key Officers;

■ HT News Network

Ramban, April 17: With the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 just around the corner, the District Election Officer, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, chaired a pivotal meeting today to ensure the smooth conduct of polling in Ramban district on April 19, 2024.

In collaboration with Senior Superintendent of Police, Anuj Kumar, ADC, Varunjeet Singh Charak, Addl. SP, Gourav Mahajan Dy. DEO, Abdul



Jabar and other key officials, DEO briefed Zonal Magistrates, Zonal Officers, Sector Magistrates, Sector Officers, polling parties, security personnel, and other concerned officers about

their roles and responsibilities for the upcoming Election Day. Addressing the gathering, the DEO emphasized the importance of adhering to Election Commission of India's

guidelines to ensure fair and transparent polling. Precautions, do's, and don'ts were highlighted to guarantee a hassle-free voting process.

Interacting with media persons, DEO said that Ramban civil and police Administration is fully prepared for a democratic exercise characterized by efficiency, transparency, and adherence to electoral protocols as it prepares to participate in shaping the nation's future on April 19, 2024.

## Foundation World School conducts Plantation Drive in Tangmarg

■ HT News Network

Srinagar April 17 (KNS): In a remarkable display of environmental stewardship and community engagement, Grade 7 and 8 boys from Foundation World School took the lead in a Plantation Drive held at Gogaldara, Tangmarg.

The event, which saw the active participation of approximately 50 students and school staff, was conducted in collaboration with the Forest Department.

Under the guidance of Shameem Ahmad Dobi, Block Forest Officer, and Mr. Abdul Aziz Marazi, Forester, the initiative aimed to instill a sense of responsibility towards nature among the younger generation. The event was further supported by Mr. Aijaz, PE Head at FWS, and Mr. Shadab.

eration. The event was further supported by Mr. Aijaz, PE Head at FWS, and Mr. Shadab, Event Organizer, who emphasized the critical role of environmental conservation and community involvement. The Plantation Drive not only provided an opportunity for hands-on environmental action but also served as a platform for educational outreach, raising awareness about the importance of plant's. Under the guidance of Shameem Ahmad Dobi, Block Forest Officer, and Mr. Abdul Aziz Marazi, Forester, the initiative aimed to instill a sense of responsibility towards nature among the younger generation. The event was further supported by Mr. Aijaz, PE Head at FWS, and Mr. Shadab.

## Harvest 'Mushk Budji' Twice A Year: Agriculture Dept. Kulgam's Two Scientists Conduct Successful Experiment

■ Farooq Rather

Srinagar 17 Apr (CNS): To grow "Mushk Budji" twice a year in a soil-less environment, two Agriculture Scientists of the Agriculture Department Kulgam have successfully conducted an experiment of Kashmir's aromatic rice by using vertical farming, requiring less space compared to traditional farming.

As per the news agency CNS, the experiment through vertical farming to sow Mushk Budji, which is anticipated to be cultivated twice a year with the new method of farming, was conducted by Dr Zahoor and Dr Kousar Makeen under the direction of the Director Agriculture Kashmir Chowdhury Mohammad Iqbal.



"In vertical farming, plants grow in upright towers and the Mushk Budji too has been experimented to develop in the same way, which requires comparatively

less space than traditional farming. With this farming technique, we are expecting the crop to grow twice in one year as we have done early sowing of the Mushk Budji," Dr. Kousar and Dr Zahoor said.

They said that vertical farming is a soil-less culture, eliminating the need for soil. "It is done in a controlled environment using techniques such as aquaponics, hydroponics and aeroponics, that do not make use of soil," they added.

To conduct the experiment, the duo agriculture scientists said that moderate cost was incurred and could be easily afforded by a common farmer.

Meanwhile, it was learnt that farmers and Agriculture graduate students would be given classes very soon pertaining to vertical farming. (CNS)







# Swamiji and Truth

Swami Vivekananda was a Rishi. Truth was the essence of his life. Standing on truth, he fought many a battle and emerged invincible. His struggles to uphold truth amidst untruth were legendary and an object lesson to those who wished to tread the path of truth.

## Swami Sandarshananda

Swami Vivekananda was a Rishi. Truth was the essence of his life. Standing on truth, he fought many a battle and emerged invincible. His struggles to uphold truth amidst untruth were legendary and an object lesson to those who wished to tread the path of truth.

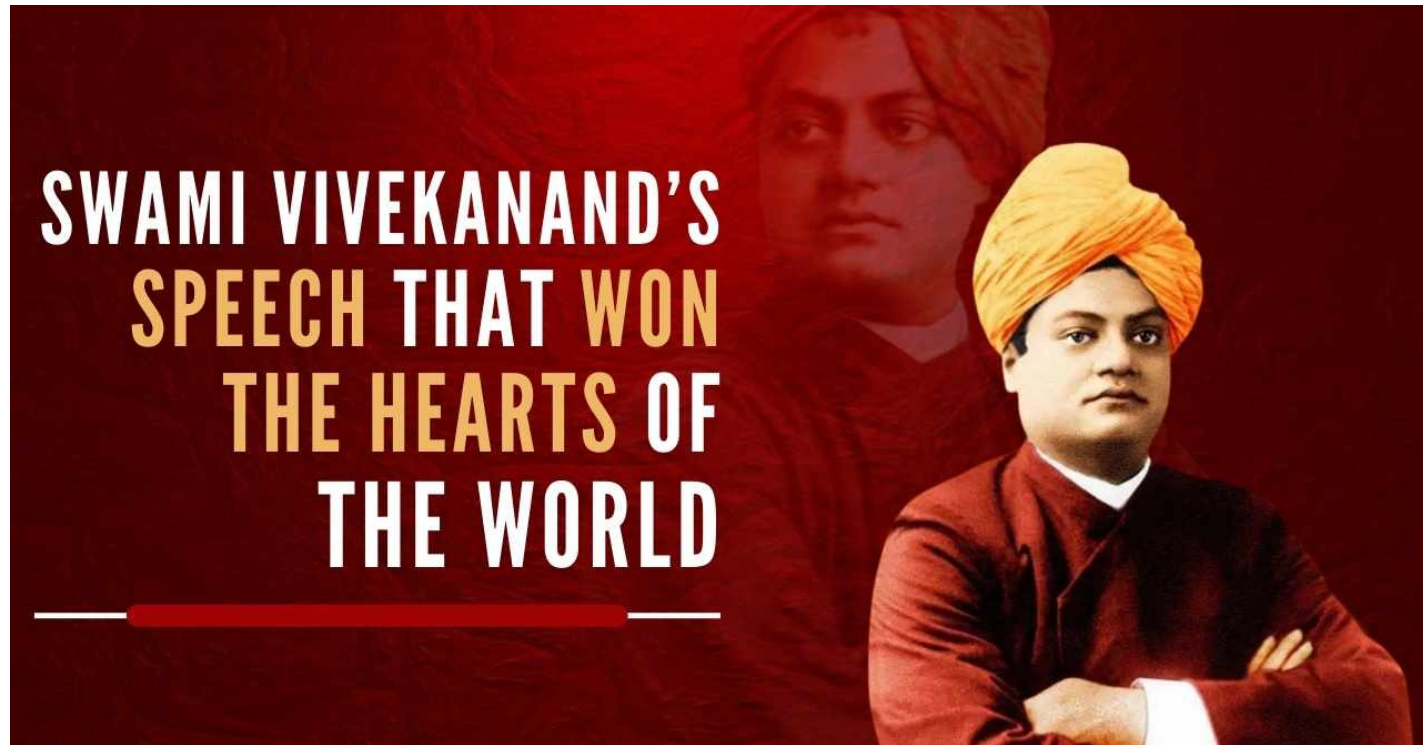
The seed of truth was planted in him by his mother in his childhood. It was later watered and nourished by his Master Sri Ramakrishna to grow and flourish enormously. Finding him a stickler for truth, his mother firmly supported him, saying, "Whatever might be the result, you must do that alone always which you know as the truth." Sri Ramakrishna inspired him to test the truth of his words and deeds before accepting them.

He was sure that he would one day make an exceptionally successful teacher of truth. His teaching in moral, intellectual, social, cultural and religious spheres was unmatched. Its impact on the world was evidently spectacular because it was laden with truth, righteousness and reason. Sri Ramakrishna raised him to be an Acharya. Swamiji learnt from Sri Ramakrishna that the austerity (tapasya) of this age (Kali yuga) was to speak the truth.

He exemplified and illustrated this in his own life and had earned the reputation of an authentic teacher. He proclaimed in the light of his experience of the truth, "It is truth alone that gives us strength." But then he also sarcastically mentioned observing our frivolity: "We are always after truth, but never want to get it." The reason he gave for this was because we are selfish.

He said: "Truth can never come to us as long as we are selfish." Truth is knowledge which reveals itself to those who are pure at heart. Swamiji demonstrated it to others who wanted to learn from him. In one of his classes he taught them, "Seek truth for truth's sake alone, look not for bliss. It may come but do not let that be your incentive."

Have no motive except God. Dare to come to Truth even through hell." His appeal to them being indomitable, they came again and again. Giving her impression, one wrote: "The swami held his audiences, for his was the grasp of the 'master hand' and he spoke as one with authenticity. His arguments were logical, convincing, and in his most brilliant oratorical flights never did he once lose



sight of the main issue. ~ the truth he wished to drive home."

He urged them to speak the truth in order to get rid of bondage, keeping away from intelligent people who do not respect truth. He said: "Tell the truth boldly, whether it hurts or not. Never pander to weakness. If truth is too much for intelligent people and sweeps them away, let them go; the sooner the better." He would not stop there.

Going further to drive home the idea of truth's indispensability, he would say, "Truth is to be judged by truth and by nothing else. Doing good is not the test of truth; the Sun needs no torch by which to see it. Even if truth destroys the whole universe, still it is truth; stand by it." People cutting across nations followed him to build their characters in his teaching. His unequivocal instruction to them was, "Truth cannot be partial, it is for the good of all."

Finally, in perfect rest and peace meditate upon it, concentrate your mind upon it making yourself one with it. Then no speech is needed; silence will carry the truth." His message to them was, "To accomplish anything we must be willing to die for truth." He taught, "Everything can be sacrificed for truth, but truth cannot be sacrificed for anything."

They saw he was a burning example

of this cardinal precept. That is why his influence on them was inexorable. An elite American lady had undergone a thorough transformation attending his teaching. She made him her life-long mentor. He also significantly relied on her for his work because of her impeccable faithfulness. She took his message to different lands. Her name was Miss Josephine Macleod.

She thought she was born anew having come to him. On 29 January 1895 she heard him first in a crowded class. She wrote in her reminiscences: "He said something... but instantly to me that was truth, and the second sentence he spoke was truth, and the third sentence was truth. And I listened to him for seven years and whatever he uttered was to me truth."

From that moment life had a different import. It was as if he made you realise that you were in eternity. It never altered. It never grew. It was like the sun that you will never forget once you have seen." Swamiji never shrank to speak truth, even if it was bitter and could invite trouble.

Those who loved him were worried lest he suffered the wrath of his detractors whom he exposed as liars in public. What he said in this connection was richly educative. He wrote: "I know full well how it is good for one's worldly prospects

to be sweet. I do everything to be sweet, but when it comes to a horrible compromise with the truth within, then I stop. I do not believe in humility."

I believe in samadarshitva ~ same state of mind with regard to all. The duty of the ordinary man is to obey the commands of his 'God', society; but the children of light never do so. This is an eternal law. One accommodates himself to surroundings and social opinion and gets all good things from society, the giver of all good to such.

The other stands alone and draws society upwards. The accommodating man finds a path of roses; the non-accommodating, one of thorns. But the worshippers of 'Vox Populi' go to annihilation in a moment; the children of truth live forever." Swamiji brooked nothing that divided humanity. His aim was to galvanize humanity on man's true identity which is divine and one, as well as unalterable. He said, "Everything that makes for oneness is truth."

Laying exorbitant stress upon such truths, he tried to make mankind one, especially when it was severely divided. He exhorted: "Truth is nobody's property; no race, no individual can lay any exclusive claim on it." Clarifying it, he had further stated, "The truth can be learnt from the lowest individual, no matter to what caste or creed he belongs." Needless to say, he

had incessantly said all that since he keenly noticed how humanity was sinking in the abyss of untruth to perish.

Swamiji warned us that, "Truth doesn't pay homage to any society, ancient or modern; but it is the society which has to pay homage to truth or die." He wanted us to be conscious about the fact that we cannot have a secure future, unless we apply truth in our way of life.

He said society is a graded organization in which each is great in his own place. We must admit this truth and then consider our social development inclusively. He said, "That society is the greatest where highest truths become practical." Role of religion in human life is vital because it is the constitutional need of man. Swamiji told: "When we come to the real, spiritual, universal concept, then, and then alone, religion will become real and living." He believed that there should be a universal religion beyond sectarianism that could satisfy man's nature and evolve a sense of oneness.

He said, "Truth religion is positive and not negative." He said religion is realisation of God present in every being. Hence he told us, "I shall call you religious from the way you begin to see God in men and women." He thought it was the greatest truth society has to adopt first to make real progress. "Religion comes with intense self sacrifice," he said.

He brought the idea of service into perspective. He said, "Doing good to others is the one great universal religion." Swamiji gave an alert call, saying: "When principles are entirely lost sight of and emotions prevail, religions degenerate into fanaticism and sectarianism." He presented religion to us as a science. He said, "Religion is the science which learns the transcendental in nature through the transcendental in man."

For, he said, religion wants to know the truth. To fulfill its purpose, in his view, "Religious teaching must be constructive, not destructive." Thus, Swamiji hammered truth after truth upon us with the immaculate dream of a truthful world. But the world is now in the hands of some inordinately powerful purveyors of lies and subterfuge vigorously active to thwart truth with ulterior motives! Even then, truth must ultimately prevail, vanquishing untruth, as Swamiji had spiritually realised.

The writer is associated with the Ramakrishna Mission, Narendrapur

## THE CURSE OF LONGEVITY: THE CHALLENGE OF DEMENTIA IN AGING POPULATIONS



Dr Pallavi Rajhans

As advancements in healthcare and living standards lead to increased life expectancy, a new challenge emerges – the curse of longevity. One of the most formidable foes of aging populations is dementia, a group of disorders characterized by cognitive decline and memory loss. This article delves into the complex issue of dementia, exploring its impact on individuals, families, and societies, and the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address this growing public health concern.

### Understanding Dementia:

Dementia is not a specific disease but a term encompassing a range of cognitive disorders, with Alzheimer's disease being the most common form. Other types include vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, and frontotemporal dementia. As individuals age, the risk of developing dementia increases,

posing a significant threat to cognitive function and overall well-being.

### The Burden on Individuals and Families:

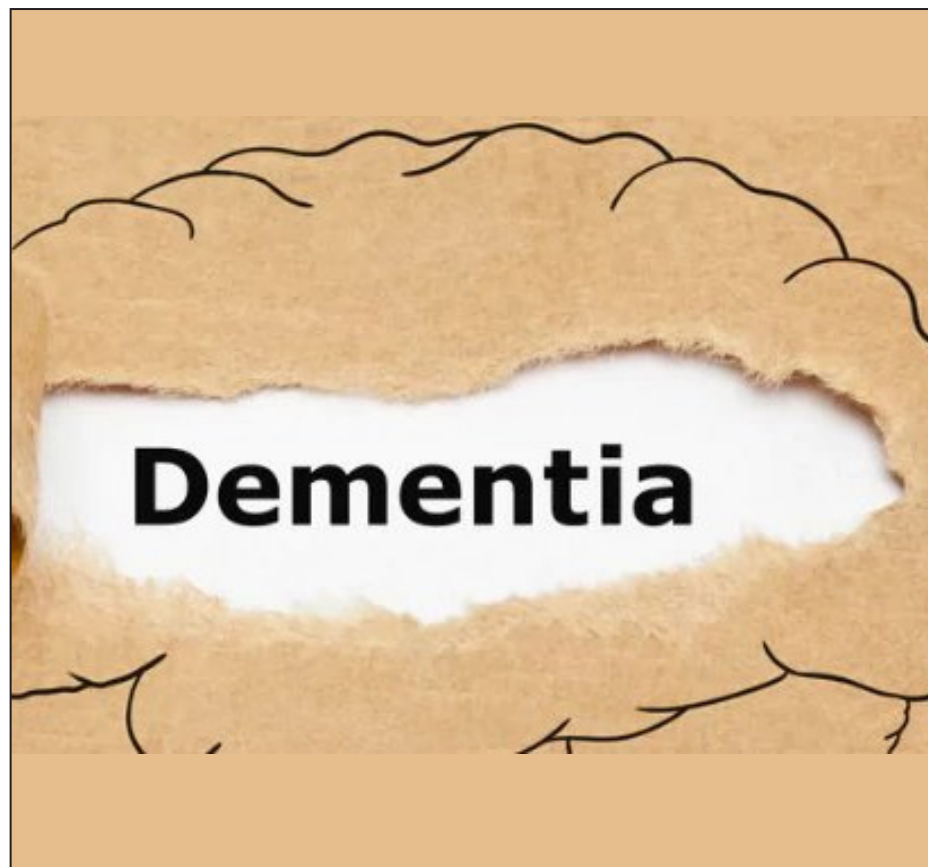
Dementia not only erodes memory but also impairs a person's ability to perform daily activities and make sound judgments. This places an immense burden on affected individuals and their families, who often become primary caregivers. The emotional toll, financial strain, and the challenges of providing round-the-clock care contribute to the profound impact of dementia on the quality of life for both patients and their loved ones.

### Societal Challenges and Economic Impact:

As populations age, the prevalence of dementia is expected to rise dramatically. This demographic shift poses significant challenges for healthcare systems, economies, and societal structures. The economic burden of dementia, including healthcare costs and lost productivity, is staggering. Nations worldwide grapple with the need to allocate resources for research, care, and support services to address this looming crisis.

### The Role of Genetics and Lifestyle Factors:

While aging is a primary risk factor for dementia, genetics and lifestyle choices also play crucial roles. Individuals with a family history of dementia may be genetically predisposed to the condition. However, lifestyle factors such as diet, physical activity, and cardiovascular health



can influence the risk of developing dementia. Addressing modifiable risk factors becomes imperative in the quest to mitigate the impact of dementia.

### Challenges in Diagnosis and Treatment:

Diagnosing dementia poses challenges as symptoms may be subtle and vary among individuals. Early detection is

critical for implementing interventions that can slow down the progression of the disease. Currently, there is no cure for most forms of dementia, making research into effective treatments and preventive measures a priority in the scientific community.

### Promoting Brain Health and Research Initiatives:

To combat the curse of longevity and the rising tide of dementia, a multi-faceted approach is necessary. This includes promoting brain health through healthy lifestyle choices, fostering research initiatives to understand the complexities of dementia, and developing innovative treatments and interventions. Public awareness campaigns are vital in reducing stigma, encouraging early diagnosis, and enhancing support for affected individuals and their families.

The curse of longevity, in the form of dementia, stands as a formidable challenge that demands immediate attention and concerted efforts from individuals, communities, and government. As we navigate the complexities of an aging population, prioritizing brain health, investing in research, and developing comprehensive care and support systems are essential steps toward alleviating the impact of dementia and fostering a future where longevity is a blessing rather than a curse.

Dr Pallavi Rajhans is Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, Tulasi Healthcare, New Delhi



# PM Modi Conceived 'Surya Tilak' Ceremony At Ram Temple: Construction Panel Head

HT News Network

The 'Surya Tilak' ceremony on Ram Navami today, during which the forehead of the idol of Ram Lalla was anointed with a ray of sunlight, was conceived by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who wanted the temple in Ayodhya to be a blend of ancient and modern technology, the temple's construction committee head has said.

Speaking exclusively to NDTV today, Nripendra Misra, the chairman of the Ayodhya Ram Temple Construction Committee, also said that the 'Surya Tilak' ceremony will take place every year. As part of the ceremony, a ray of sunlight, with a diameter of 5.8 cm, adorned the forehead of Ram Lalla idol for three to three-and-a-half minutes starting at noon today. The feat required inputs from 10 eminent scientists, who used a combination of mirrors and lenses to precisely direct the light beam. Speaking about the origins of the idea, Mr Misra said, "It was entirely the idea of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In one of our conversations, the PM suggested that while there is a great deal of emphasis on the use of ancient technol-



ogy to make the temple durable for 1,000 years, new technologies should also be used. This was one of the ideas. He has a certain vision about technology and is comfortable with, and receptive to, new technologies. "He told me 'Why don't you talk to the Central Building Research Institute and CSIR (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research)?' After I got back to my office, I got a call from the director-general of CSIR within an hour, who said he had got a call from the PM. So you can

visualise the kind of follow-up the PM does, but he does so from a distance. He doesn't interfere or dictate, but influences you in a manner that you get a sense of belief about what is possible and what isn't," he added. Mr Misra said that the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust intends to ensure that the 'Surya Tilak' ceremony is held every Ram Navami. "The 'Surya Tilak' ceremony was a much-talked-about event and there is a sense of satisfaction. We

have to ensure this happens every year. This time, we had to make a few adjustments because the construction of the 'shikhar' (spire over the sanctum sanctorum) has not been completed. When that is done, a permanent aperture will be made calculating the direction and angle of the sun's rays. By next year, it will be 100% fool-proof," the construction committee's chief revealed.

The former bureaucrat said he was expecting a much bigger crowd on Ram Navami but that probably did not happen because schools are open and the harvesting season is underway. On the status of construction, he said the process is a challenge because of the high number of people who visit the temple every day.

"We have to ensure devotees' safety. Only the first and second floors are left now and we are getting everyone's support. The way we worked in 2023, we will complete the construction by the end of 2024," he said. The former bureaucrat said he was expecting a much bigger crowd on Ram Navami but that probably did not happen because schools are open and the harvesting season is underway. On the status of construction.

# Centre's Big Praise For Former PM Manmohan Singh In Supreme Court

HT News Network



New Delhi: The BJP-led central government commended former prime minister PV Narasimha Rao and his then finance minister, Manmohan Singh, for their pivotal roles in initiating economic liberalisation and opening up the Indian economy in 1991. During a hearing in the Supreme Court, the government said that the move effectively marked the end of the era of 'licence raj'. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed a nine-judge bench led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud that the economic reforms introduced by Mr Rao and Mr Singh had liberalised numerous laws, including the company law and the Trade Practices Act MRTIP. However, he highlighted that subsequent governments over the following three decades did not see the need to amend the Industry (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951. The response came after the bench criticised of the

IDRA, 1951, describing it as archaic and indicative of the restrictive policies of the 'licence raj' era. Mr Mehta emphasised that despite the winds of change brought by economic reforms, the IDRA remained untouched, allowing the Centre to maintain significant control over various industries. In 1991, faced with a foreign reserves crisis, the Narasimha Rao-led government introduced three transformative economic reforms: globalisation, liberalisation, and privatisation. Mr Mehta also clarified that

the Centre's withdrawal from controlling industries did not indicate a lack of regulatory authority. He stressed that the Centre retained the power to regulate industries in the national interest, particularly during emergencies like the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr Mehta elaborated that had the Union government not had the authority to regulate industrial alcohol, especially for producing hand sanitizers during the pandemic, the robust response to the crisis would have been compromised.

# Modi Government Will Eliminate Maoists Across India Very Soon: Amit Shah

HT News Network

Ahmedabad: The Narendra Modi government will eliminate Maoists from the country very soon, Union Home Minister Amit Shah asserted today.

The central government has been conducting incessant operations against terrorism and Maoists, he said in a statement, a day after security forces gunned down 29 Maoists in Chhattisgarh.

"I can say with conviction that operations against Maoists will continue in the times to come, and under the leadership of PM Modi, we will uproot Maoists from our nation in a very short period of time," Amit Shah said. The Home Minister said since the formation of a BJP government in Chhattisgarh three months ago, more than 80 Maoists have been eliminated, more than 125 arrested and more than 150 have surrendered.

Amit Shah said a large number of camps of security forces have been set up in Maoist-affected areas since 2014. Since 2019, as many as 250 such camps have been set up, ending the security vacuum, he said.

In the biggest ever encounter in Chhat-



tisgarh, security personnel on Tuesday gunned down 29 Maoists, including some senior members, in Kanker district. This was the highest fatalities suffered by Maoists in a single encounter in the history of the state's fight against Left-Wing Extremism.

Since the start of 2024, as many as 79 Maoists have been killed in separate gun-battles with security forces in the Bastar region, a Maoist stronghold.

Three security personnel also suffered injuries in the fierce gun-battle and a large quantity of weapons was seized from the spot, officials said.

# "Think PM Modi Will Give You Justice?" Mamata Banerjee in Assam

HT News Network

New Delhi: Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee ripped into the BJP today, accusing the Centre of being a government of "rioters, bluffers and looters". Speaking of behalf of her party's candidate in Silchar, Assam -- a state next-door to Manipur which saw massive ethnic violence last year -- she questioned "You think Prime Minister Narendra Modi will give you justice?". The entry of Trinamool Congress candidate, former MP Radheshyam Biswas, in Silchar has added a third angle to the broadly two-party contest. A Congress bastion till the '90s, Silchar has developed its own revolving door system since, alternately voting in the Congress and the BJP.

The BJP's Rajdeep Roy is the sitting legislator and the Congress is prepping for a battle that the party considers half-won. The BJP, though, has switched candidates, opting to field Assam minister Parimal Suklabadya, against whom the Congress has named senior leader Surya Kanta



Sarkar. Ms Banerjee, a stern critic of the BJP and its government at the Centre, was vocal.

"This election is going to be scary," she told the gathering. "You have not seen an election as tainted as this. It's a government of the agency, for the agency and by the agency," she added.

Pointing to the ethnic violence in Manipur, she said, "You think Modi will give you justice? Do you believe in this? If you think you are dying now, you can believe that. But don't even believe that Modi will do something for someone. Because this is a government of rioters, bluffers and looters. This is a jumlaabaz government. They don't

deserve to be forgiven".

One of the key promises in the Trinamool manifesto is the removal of Citizenship Amendment Act is crucial for Assam -- a state hugely uneasy over its implementation. The state, which shares border with Bangladesh, has always been sensitive over the issue of illegal migrants from the neighbouring country. In that backdrop, the implementation of the CAA -- which grants Indian citizenship to persecuted minorities in Muslim majority neighbouring countries -- has upset many. There have been massive protests in Assam over the issue already, spearheaded by the AASU, All Assam Students Union.

# Congress Adopted 'Loot East' Policy, BJP Turned It To 'Act East' Policy: PM Modi

HT News Network

Agartala: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today slammed the Congress, saying the party had adopted the 'loot east' policy while the BJP turned it into the 'Act East' policy.

Addressing an election rally here, the Prime Minister said Tripura has witnessed pioneering transformations under the BJP government.

"The Congress had adopted the 'loot east' policy while the BJP turned it into the Act East policy," PM Modi said, adding that the grand old party did not do any justice to the Northeast and turned the region into an 'adda of bhrastachar' (hub of corruption) while the communists spoiled the state's prospects.

The Prime Minister said the BJP government has been working hard for development in the region.

PM Modi said his government has decided to construct three crore new houses in India for the poor. "Tripura's people are going to benefit a great deal from it," he added.

PM Modi said the birth celebrations of Lord



Ram is being held in his own temple in Ayodhya after 500 years.

"After a long wait of 500 years, Ram Lalla is finally in a grand temple in Ayodhya instead of a tent," he added.

The Prime Minister said his government is focusing on enhancing connectivity in the Northeast. "Rs 3,000 crore will be spent for the facelift of highways in the state while the Feni bridge connecting Bangladesh with South Tripura's Sabroom subdivision has been built.

Electrification on the railway tracks has been progressing", he said.

"Earlier, mobile towers didn't work properly in the state, but now work is on to improve 5G connectivity. It is the Modi government which has reduced mobile bills to around 400-Rs 500 per month. Had the Congress been in power, your mobile bills would have been 4,000 to 5,000," he said.

Taking a dig at the Congress and the CPI(M), the PM said, "The Congress Yuvraj, who is critical over the use of investigative agencies, is now demanding the arrest of Kerala Chief Minister on corruption charges. No corrupt person will be spared," he said.

Terming the achievements of his government over the last 10 years as a trailer, PM Modi said there will be much more for the people if the party is voted to power.

The Prime Minister said free ration will be provided to all without discrimination for the next five years.

# Rahul Gandhi Is A Lucky Charm For Congress: DK Shivakumar

HT News Network

Mandya, Karnataka: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday praised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and called him the "lucky charm" of the Congress party.

Speaking at Prajadvani Yatra 2 here, he said, "As part of the historic Bharat Jodo yatra, Rahul Gandhi walked from Chamarajanagar to Raichur. Congress party won all the seats en route to the yatra in Karnataka and came to power. He is a lucky charm for the Party."

"Rahul Gandhi is fighting against inflation and unemployment on behalf of the people. The people of Mandya gave the Congress party 7 of 8 seats last time. I am confident the people will support this time too. I am not going to talk about the Opposition candidate because he has not been there for the people of Mandya when they needed it," he said.

He further said that the Congress party is thinking about building the lives of the people, while the BJP is thinking of exploiting the people emotionally.

"I have taken an oath to complete the Mekedatu project. The Centre did not give approvals to Mekedatu project even when there was a 'double engine sarkar'. In spite of difficult conditions, we have given water to the people of this region," Mr Shivakumar added.

"Rahul Gandhi called JDS the B team of BJP in the last election. Now, the JDS has officially joined hands with the BJP and become one team. Star Chandru isn't the only candidate in Mandya, DK Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah, Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjuna Kharge are all candidates," he said.

He further said that Kumaraswamy



has cheated the people who elected you to the Legislative Assembly and has now come to take the people of Mandya for a ride.

"Why is JDS fielding Kumaraswamy? Did the party not have anyone from Mandya? Many leaders worked hard to make him the CM and they could have been given the seat. He has cheated the people who elected you to the Legislative Assembly and has now come to take the people of Mandya for a ride. The Congress party will have 20 seats, including Mandya, Hasan, Bengaluru Rural and Kolar," he said. "The women of the state have fought for their self-respect. You have done the right thing by condemning those who said that women are losing their way because of guarantee schemes. Thousands of JDS workers are joining Congress, former JDS MLA Srinivas joined the Congress today," he said.

"BJP State President Vijayendra has said Congress guarantees are temporary. He said he would stop the guarantee schemes if the BJP came to power. They need to understand that guarantee schemes are part of people's lives and livelihoods. I dare you to stop these guarantee schemes," Mr Shivakumar challenged. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections,

# India Opened Up Its Market That Benefited American Farmers: US

HT News Network

Washington: After resolving half a dozen WTO disputes last year, India opened up its market for several US products which have benefited American farmers, a top Biden administration official told lawmakers on Tuesday.

The steps taken by India have given more market access for turkey, duck, blueberries, and cranberries benefiting farmers from several American states, US Trade Representative Katherine Tai told members of the House Committee on Ways and Means on President Biden's 2024 Trade Policy Agenda.

"Last June, India and the United States terminated six WTO disputes, and India agreed to remove retaliatory tariffs on several US products," Tai said. "This means improved access for chickpeas, lentils, almonds, walnuts, and apples benefiting farmers across the country, including in Michigan, Oregon, and Washington," she said.

# Adani Group Infuses Another ₹ 8,339 Crore In Ambuja Cements, Raises Stake To 70.3%

HT News Network

New Delhi: Billionaire Gautam Adani's family infused an additional ₹ 8,339 crore into Ambuja Cements, raising its stake in the company to 70.3%, to help the cement maker's manufacturing capacity. The Adani family had previously invested ₹ 5,000 crore in the company on October 18, 2022, and ₹ 6,661 crore on March 28, 2024. With the latest investment, it has completed the planned ₹ 20,000 crore infusion, the company said in a statement. "The promoters of the company - Adani family - has fully subscribed to the warrants program in the company by further infusing ₹ 8,339 crore, thereby infusing a total amount of ₹ 20,000 crore," it said.

The latest infusion raises the Adani family stake in Ambuja Cement by 3.6% to 70.3%.



# Biden pushes to triple tariffs on Chinese steel, aluminum

HT News Network

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday urged a tripling of tariffs on Chinese steel and aluminum, citing "unfair competition" as he seeks to win blue-collar votes in November's election. Biden's call comes as the US Trade Representative (USTR) announced it is launching a probe into China's trade practices in the shipbuilding, maritime and logistics sectors in response to a recent petition by five US unions. The president is preparing to address steelworkers in Pittsburgh on Wednesday, the second day of a three-day trip through the crucial swing state of Pennsylvania. Both Biden and his election rival Donald Trump are competing for vital blue-collar voters, promising to revive American manufacturing.

"Chinese policies and subsidies for their domestic steel and aluminum industries mean high-quality US products are undercut by artificially low-priced Chinese alternatives produced with higher emissions," the White House said in a statement. A senior US official told reporters that China accounts for about half of global steel



production, while exporting the metal at a significantly lower cost than US steel prices. As the USTR reviews tariffs imposed on China during Trump's administration, Biden urged it to triple an existing rate under Section 301 of the Trade Act. Currently, the average tariff on steel and aluminum under this section is 7.5 per cent.

The so-called Section 301 investigation was the primary tool the Trump administration used in the trade war with China to justify tariffs.

The White House added on Wednesday that Biden

is also directing officials to work with Mexico to prevent tariff evasion by China. Meanwhile, the USTR investigation into shipbuilding and other sectors comes after a petition last month by unions, including the United Steelworkers. They urged for action to address "unreasonable and discriminatory" policies and practices used by Beijing to dominate these industries.

Biden won the backing last month of the United Steelworkers union and has opposed a bid by Japan's Nippon Steel to take over the Pittsburgh-based US Steel.

The White House said on Wednesday that Biden would continue making clear that it is "vital" for US Steel to remain an American company that is domestically owned and operated.

Biden's National Economic Adviser Lael Brainard said the president understands American steel "built our nation" with steel mills helping to grow the US middle class in states like Pennsylvania and Ohio.

While there is a need to invest in US manufacturing, she said officials also considered it necessary to "protect those investments and workers from unfair exports associated with China's industrial overcapacity".

## TikTok Routinely Sent US Data To China, Claims Report. Company Reacts

HT News Network

TikTok ordered employees to send US user data to its Beijing-based parent company, according to a report in Fortune. It included spreadsheets full of names, emails, demographic data and location data, the report further said, attributing the information to former employees. According to the investigation, TikTok followed a stealth chain of command and concealed the close contact with ByteDance starting in 2022, claiming that it had cut most ties with its parent company. TikTok has reacted strongly to the report, calling it "fabrications from disgruntled former employees".

The Fortune report is based on interviews of 11 former TikTok employees between August 2022 and April 2023.

One of the employees said in the interview that TikTok's distance from ByteDance was just for appearances, and that there remained a secret chain of command where US employees continued reporting to Chinese executives.

"I literally worked on a project that gave US data to China. They were completely complicit in that. There were Americans that were working in upper management that were completely complicit in this," Evan Turner, who worked as a senior data scientist from April to September in 2022, told Fortune.

Mr Turner said that after his hiring, he reported to a ByteDance executive in Beijing but was reassigned to a US-based executive soon after. The shift came after TikTok kicked off an initiative to keep US user data in the US. But the shift was only on paper and Mr Turner claimed he was told by the human resource team that he would continue to report to the ByteDance executive.

He was tasked with sending data to ByteDance workers in Beijing every 14 days.

It is not clear whether the Chinese government had access to the data, though any Chinese company by law must provide data to the government if requested.

Nnete Matima, who worked in business development at both TikTok and ByteDance in the US, sold Lark to corporate customers from July 2022 to August 2023. It is a Slack-like internal messaging system that ByteDance and TikTok share.

Mr Matima said Lark was monitored by Chinese-based ByteDance employees, including conversations about US user data.

"You could never really get any straight answers that could be solid enough to bring back to your client to basically let them know that this is a trustworthy platform, and that their American data is safe. They are not transparent to the point where I had to lose a deal because I couldn't answer basic security questions that people are entitled to," she told Fortune.

## US, China Defence Chiefs Hold Talks For First Time In 18 Months

HT News Network

Washington: US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke with his Chinese counterpart Dong Jun via video teleconference Tuesday, in the first substantive talks between the superpowers' defence chiefs in nearly 18 months.

The United States has been working to strengthen defence cooperation with its allies in the Asia-Pacific region to counter China's growing influence but also wants to maintain lines of communication with Beijing to prevent tensions from spiralling out of control.

"The two officials discussed US-PRC defence relations and regional and global security issues," the Pentagon said in a statement, referring to the People's Republic of China.

"Secretary Austin emphasized the importance of continuing to open lines of military-to-military communication between the United States and the PRC" following talks between the two sides in recent months, the statement said.

Austin also "reiterated that the United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate -- safely and responsibly -- wherever international law allows," and "underscored the importance of respect for high seas freedom of navigation guaranteed under international law, especially in the South China Sea."

Beijing, in turn, said Dong had used the talks to call for greater "trust" between the two powers.

"China and the United States should... take peace as the most precious, stability as the most important," Dong told Austin, according to a Beijing readout.

"The military sphere is the key... to stabilizing the development of the relationship and preventing major crises from occurring," Dong said.

But he also warned the US over the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own.

"Dong Jun emphasized that the Taiwan issue is the core of China's core interests," the defence ministry readout said. He also urged the US to respect his country's position on the South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost in its entirety and where tensions have flared in recent months. "The US side should recognize China's firm position, respect China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea, and take practical actions to safeguard regional peace," Dong said. Austin's last significant interaction with a Chinese counterpart occurred in November 2022 when he met with Wei Fenghe in Cambodia.

Wei was subsequently replaced by Li Shangfu, who shook hands and spoke briefly with Austin at a defence conference in Singapore last June but did not hold a formal meeting with the Pentagon chief. China was unwilling to agree to talks between Austin and Li while the latter was under American sanctions, a senior US defence official told journalists -- an obstacle that was removed when Li was replaced by Dong last year.

## Middle East on edge after Israel vows 'response' to Iran

HT News Network

JERUSALEM: Israel and Iran traded threats on Tuesday after Tehran's first-ever direct attack on its arch-foe sharply heightened regional tensions as the Gaza war ground on with no truce in sight.

Israeli military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said Iran would not get off "scot-free" after Iran launched a barrage of over 300 missiles, drones and rockets at Israel at the weekend.

"We cannot stand still from this kind of aggression," Hagari said, a day after Israel's military chief vowed there would be "a response" to Iran's offensive.

Iran said its attack was an act of self-defence following a deadly Israeli air strike on its consulate in Syria and that it would consider the matter "concluded" unless Israel retaliated.

Putin, Erdogan join list of world leaders calling for restraint; US warns of further sanctions on Tehran

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi warned that "the slightest action against Iran's interests will definitely be met with a severe, extensive and painful response".

Israel weighs options



Israel was weighing its options after the Iranian drone and missile onslaught, which caused little damage as Israeli defences intercepted most projectiles, helped by US, British and French forces, as well as regional allies.

It remained unclear when Israel might strike and whether it would target Iran directly or attack its interests or allies abroad, including in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

Israel made its first official comment on Monday on the strike that levelled a five-storey Iranian consulate building on April 1, killing seven Iranian Revolutionary Guards, including two generals.

"These were people who engaged in terrorism against the State of Israel," Hagari said. Meanwhile, world leaders have urged restraint and de-escalation.

## Scholz urges China to use Russia 'influence' to end Ukraine war

HT News Network

BEIJING: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Tuesday he had urged Xi Jinping to press ally Russia to end its "senseless" war in Ukraine and that the Chinese president had agreed to back a peace conference in Switzerland.

Scholz said after a meeting with Xi at Beijing's Diaoyutai State Guesthouse on Tuesday that "China's word carries weight in Russia". "I have therefore asked President Xi to influence Russia so that Putin finally calls off his senseless campaign, withdraw his troops and ends this terrible war," he said on social media platform X.

He said Xi had agreed to back a peace conference in Switzerland, which is due to take place in June without Russia in attendance.

Welcoming Xi's backing, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy responded on X that China could help deliver a "just peace" for his country by playing an "active role" in the international conference. China says it is a neutral party in the Ukraine conflict but it has been criticised for refusing to condemn Moscow's offensive.

China and Russia have ramped up economic cooperation and diplomatic contacts in recent years, with their strategic partnership only growing closer since the invasion of Ukraine.



Scholz said in talks with Xi on Tuesday "the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and Russia's arms build-up have a very significant negative impact on security in Europe", according to a recording provided by the chancellor's office.

"They directly affect our core interests," he told Xi, adding they "damage the entire international order because they violate a principle of the United Nations Charter".

Scholz, whose country is Ukraine's second-biggest military backer after the United States, stressed at a news conference later that it was important to "advance the diplomatic efforts that Ukraine is also working very hard on".

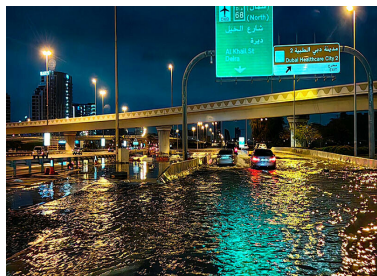
## Dubai airport faces disruptions as heavy rains set off flash floods in UAE

HT News Network

Authorities and communities across the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were clearing debris on Wednesday after a torrential downpour killed at least one person and caused damage to homes and businesses while Dubai's airport faced disruptions.

The UAE witnessed a record rainfall with 254mm falling in Al Ain on Tuesday in less than 24 hours, according to the national meteorology centre. That was the most since records began in 1949, before the country was established in 1971.

Although heavy rains had eased by late Tuesday, disruptions were continuing on Wednesday with Emirates airline suspending check-in for



passengers departing Dubai airport until midnight. Dubai International Airport, one of the world's busiest, said it was facing significant disruptions after the heavy rains delayed or diverted flights and had impacted flight crews. Passengers departing Dubai were advised against heading to the airport and to check their flight status with their airline. "We are working hard to recover operations as quickly as possible in very chal-

lenging conditions," the airport wrote on X.

Emirates said passengers who were already in transit would continue to be processed but warned that delays to departures and arrivals should be expected. The Dubai airport website showed hours-long delays for some arrival and departure flights.

Air Arabia, in a post on X, said that flights had either been cancelled or rescheduled due to weather conditions in the UAE and the region. It urged passengers to visit its website or contact its call centre for the latest updates. Local media reported that an elderly Emirati man in his 70s died on Tuesday morning when his vehicle was caught in flash floods in the Ras Al Khaimah emirate, in the country's north.

## US university cancels Muslim valedictorian's speech citing safety concerns

HT News Network

The University of Southern California (USC), citing safety concerns and passions around the latest Middle East conflict, has cancelled its valedictorian speech from a Muslim student who said she was being silenced by anti-Palestinian hatred for her views on human rights.

USC Provost Andrew Guzman said in a statement on Monday that the decision to scrub the traditional valedictorian address at next month's graduation had "nothing to do with freedom of speech" and was simply aimed at protecting campus security.

The valedictorian, biomedical engineering major Asna Tabassum, in her own statement, challenged the university's rationale, questioning "whether USC's decision to revoke my invitation to speak is made solely on the basis of safety". Guzman's statement did not refer to Tabassum by name, or specify what about her speech, background or political views had raised concerns. Nor did it detail any particular threats. The provost referred more broadly to how "discussion relating to the selection of our valedictorian had taken on an alarming tenor" in recent days.

## Iran President To Visit Pakistan "Very Soon", Says Shehbaz Sharif

HT News Network

Islamabad: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi will visit Pakistan "very soon", Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Wednesday, as the Muslim neighbours look to mend ties after January's tit-for-tat missile strikes at what they said were militant targets.

The strikes had fed concern about wider regional instability after the war between Israel and Hamas erupted on Oct 7.

News of the visit comes as the United States and its allies plan fresh sanctions against Iran for its unprecedented attack on Israel on Saturday, while seeking to deter the latter from a major escalation.

Sharif's office issued a statement on Raisi's visit following a cabinet meeting, after Pakistan signalled earlier that it could take place.

This week broadcaster Geo News said the Iranian president would arrive in Pakistan on April 22, citing



sources. Pakistan's foreign office did not respond to a request from Reuters for comment on the report, however. The neighbours have had a history of rocky relations,

but the missile strikes were the most serious incidents in years. Swift efforts to lower the temperature subsequently led to assurances that they respected each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while vowing to expand security cooperation.

Pakistan has previously called on all parties in the Middle East to "exercise utmost restraint and move towards de-escalation".

In another sign of warming Middle East ties, Sharif's office added that Saudi Arabia would invest billions of dollars following a visit to Pakistan this week by its foreign minister. It also plan fresh sanctions against Iran for its unprecedented attack on Israel on Saturday, while seeking to deter the latter from a major escalation.

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# Tourism Revival Sparks Surge in Sales of Kashmir's Handicrafts

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 17 (KNO): With the revival of tourism in the valley, the region's handicrafts industry is experiencing a notable surge, signaling promising economic recovery and cultural resurgence.

In recent years, Kashmir has witnessed a resurgence in tourism, with travellers from across the world visiting Kashmir during different seasons to witness the breathtaking landscapes. This revival in tourism has not only brought a sense of hope to local businesses but has also provided a significant impetus to the handicrafts sector, which has long been a cornerstone of Kashmir's economy.

As per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), artisans and craftsmen in Kashmir have been renowned for their exquisite craftsmanship for centuries, producing a wide array of traditional handicrafts such as intricately woven carpets, fine pashmina shawls, intricate wood carvings, and colorful papier-mâché artifacts.

The sector during the recent past suffered immensely with artisans switching to other trades to earn livelihood following reduced demand.

With government's initiatives and revival of tourism, the handicrafts sector has again thrived in Kashmir.

Mohammed Ali Bhat, a third-generation wood carving artisan in Srinagar, expressed his



delight at the recent upswing in business. "For years, our livelihoods were affected by the decline in tourism. But now, with more visitors coming to Kashmir, we are seeing a steady increase in our sales of wooden items. It gives us hope for the future," he remarked. A number of authentic handicrafts outlets and showrooms have emerged in Kashmir during the last few years signalling the growth of the sector. Junaid Ahmad Khan, a handicrafts showroom owner, said the tourism boom in Kashmir has scaled up the sales of handicrafts items at various tourist destinations of the valley. "From Srinagar to Pahalgam and Gulmarg, we have witnessed that various authentic Kashmir handicrafts

showrooms have emerged. Apart from that, small stalls are also being established by the locals to sell the handicrafts items to tourists. Flow of tourists has always proved beneficial for various businesses, be it handicrafts, transport and others," he said. The growth in the handicrafts sector has also been facilitated by efforts to promote Kashmiri crafts on digital platforms, allowing artisans to reach a wider audience beyond the confines of the region. E-commerce platforms and online marketplaces have provided a valuable avenue for artisans to showcase their creations and connect with customers worldwide, further fuelling the growth of the industry—(KNO)

## ADC Kupwara visits Trehgam

■ HT News Network



Kupwara, April 17: On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan (IAS), Additional Deputy Commissioner, Muhammad Rouf Rehman today visited different areas of Trehgam to take stock of the situation and assess the measures being taken.

The ADC visited Gund-Moomen and inspected the Bridge. Taking serious note of the violations by way of extraction of sand, Bajri and stones from the local nallah, notices to the accused were issued to appear before the ADC Kupwara for personal bonds on 20 April.

## Nukkad Natak held at Ramban to Promote Voter Participation in General Lok Sabha Elections-2024

■ HT News Network

Ramban, April 17: In a spirited effort to boost voter participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections 2024, a lively Nukkad Natak performance took place at the Ramsoo and main market Banihal.

Led by District Election Officer (DEO) Baseer-UI-Haq Chaudhary, the District Administration organized various vibrant Voter Awareness programs at prominent locations in Ramban under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign.

Today, Sangam Theatre Reasi presented a theme-based Nukkad Natak on SVEEP, engaging a large number of youth and citizens in the Electoral Awareness program. Supervised by District Nodal Officer, SVEEP (ACP), Ashfaq Khanji, the initiative aimed to enhance understanding of voting-related processes and promote electoral literacy, particularly among first-time voters, preparing them for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

Artists and speakers emphasized the initiative's commitment to inspiring young voters and strengthening the democratic setup to empower citizens.

They urged people, especially youth, to propagate the message of electoral participation to their families, relatives, and communities, emphasizing the significance of their role in nation-building through elections.

## Leh Apex Body (LAB), Environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk Call Off Proposed 'Intra-Country Road March'

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 17 (KNO): The Leh Apex Body (LAB) and environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk have announced the cancellation of the proposed 'Intra-Country Road March,' scheduled for Wednesday. This decision was confirmed during a press conference held on Tuesday evening, where LAB leaders and Sonam Wangchuk addressed the media.

As per the info received by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) cancellation comes amidst concerns raised by the administration, indicating potential repercussions if the march proceeds. LAB leaders and Wangchuk expressed apprehensions that the administration's warnings of imposing Section 144 and shutting down internet services could adversely impact the local tourism industry. Fearful of financial



losses, particularly for tourism businessmen, the decision to call off the march was deemed necessary.

Sonam Wangchuk raised allegations against the administration, accusing them of resorting to intimidation tactics to deter the march. While acknowledging Ladakh's sensitive geopolitical position, Wangchuk emphasized the need for understanding the government's concerns

regarding law and order, especially in light of the region's proximity to China and Pakistan.

Highlighting the primary motive behind the proposed march, Wangchuk stressed the importance of addressing the grievances of local shepherds in Skangchu-Thang, who have reportedly faced challenges related to land acquisition by industrialists. Despite the cancellation of the march, Wangchuk reiterated his commitment to advocating for the rights of Ladakhi people, indicating that discussions would continue with LAB and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA).

Initially announced to commence on April 17th, the 'Intra-Country Road March' aimed to traverse towards Skangchu-Thang on the Ladakh-Himachal Pradesh border, facilitating direct engagement with local communities affected by land acquisition issues—(KNO)

## Tehsildar Karnah visits far-flung areas of Sub division

■ HT News Network

Kupwara, April 17: On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan, Tehsildar Karnah, Mohammad Amin Bhat, today visited various villages of Karnah Sub Division to assess the post heavy rainfall situation.

Tehsildar Karnah took an extensive tour of various villages/areas of Karnah Sub Division to assess the situation after incessant heavy rainfall in the Sub Division. During the tour, the Tehsildar Karnah inspected residential houses in village Kandi, Tangdar, Khawarpara, Navagabra, Hajitra, Sudhpura, Dhani & Chanipora damaged due to flash floods.

The Concerned departments were asked for immediate repairs of the Roads to prevent any untoward incident.

Meanwhile, Tehsildar Karnah has directed all the field functionaries, Naib Tehsildars, Patwaries to visit their respective jurisdictions to report the damages caused if any to the personal properties of the people to provide them intermediate relief as per Government guidelines.

## SSP Kulgam extends warm greetings and best wishes on the auspicious occasion of Ram Nawami

■ Farooq Rather

Kulgam: April 17: On the auspicious occasion of Ram Nawami, SSP Kulgam Shri Sahil Sarangal-IPS with all ranks of Kulgam police have extended heartfelt greetings to the people, families of Police martyrs, all ranks of J&K police, security forces and their families.

SSP Kulgam in his message said that "Lord Rama was an embodiment of great virtues, righteousness, courage and compassion. He stood for the values of truth, kindness and love for all living beings. His resolute commitment to justice, good governance and welfare of his people will continue to inspire us. Let each one of us strive to imbibe similar virtues and leave behind a better world for our future generations and let this festival of Ram Navami bring about the best in each one of us."

## Ex MLA Ganderbal to field candidate from Srinagar LS constituency

■ HT News Network



Ganderbal, Apr 17 (KNO): Former MLA of Ganderbal and President Jammu Kashmir United Movement (JKUM), Sheikh Ishfaq Jabbar, has confirmed that his party will field a candidate for the Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency. As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), he made the announcement at a public rally in Qamriya Stadium at Ganderbal, on the 34th death anniversary of Sheikh Abdul Jabbar.

However, Jabbar clarified that the final candidate would be nominated following discussions among party members. Highlighting the party's agenda, his party's focus would be on regional development and addressing the day-to-day issues faced by the people.

Additionally, he stressed efforts towards amnesty for imprisoned youth and political leaders across the country. Jabbar criticized regional parties, particularly the National Conference, for exploiting the people of Jammu and Kashmir for decades.

Alleging neglect by the Sheikh Dynasty, he stated that despite being elected from Ganderbal, the district faced hardships under their rule.

Furthermore, Jabbar announced that for other Parliamentary constituencies, his party would extend support to like-minded candidates—(KNO)

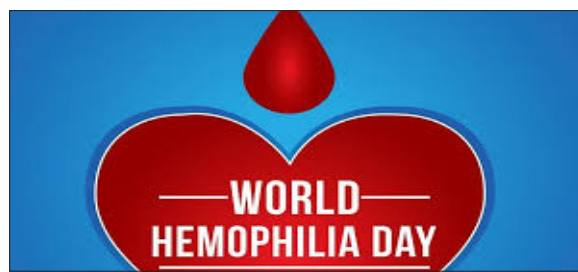
## World Hemophilia Day: Medical experts call for awareness on bleeding disorders, early diagnosis

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 17 (KNO): On World Hemophilia Day, medical experts called for the need to raise awareness about bleeding disorders and diagnosing patients early to prevent complications.

Speaking with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Dr Iqbal Saleem highlighted the advancements in medical research and treatment options that enable people with haemophilia to lead fulfilling lives.

He said this year's theme for World Hemophilia Day 2024 is "Equitable Access for All: Recognizing All Bleeding Disorders." This theme underscores the urgent need to spread awareness about bleeding disorders, diagnose



patients early to prevent complications and ensure access to treatment options for our underprivileged population, he remarked.

Achieving these goals requires collaboration among all stakeholders, working together as a cohesive team, Dr Saleem added.

Dr Mir Mushtaq, the spokesperson for the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), echoed Dr Saleem's sentiments, saying it is important to stand united to raise awareness about haemophilia and other bleeding disorders.

Dr Mushtaq said.

Medical professionals said that World Hemophilia Day provides an opportunity to advocate for improved healthcare infrastructure, increased availability of factor replacement therapies and better education for healthcare professionals and the public about haemophilia and its management.

With ongoing advancements in medical research and treatment options, individuals with haemophilia can lead fulfilling lives.

World Hemophilia Day aims to address disparities by promoting equitable access to treatment and raising awareness about the challenges faced by people living with haemophilia and other bleeding disorders—(KNO)

"Let us acknowledge the resilience of those living with haemophilia and their caregivers, and advocate for improved access to treatment and care," Dr Mushtaq urged. He said knowledge is essential for managing haemophilia effectively, urging people to educate themselves and others to ensure early diagnosis and proper treatment.

"By fostering awareness and creating a supportive environment, we can pave the way for a brighter future for people with hae-

# No female candidate from NC, Congress BJP in LS Polls 2024 'Womenless'

Apart from Mehbooba Mufti, no major party has nominated any woman candidate

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 17 (KNO): Jammu and Kashmir, a region known for its political dynamism, has a glaring gap in female representation in its political landscape. Despite rhetoric advocating for equal rights and representation, the reality tells a different story. Since 1967, only three women have made it to Parliament, a mere five times collectively, from the region. As per the info received by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) there is a stark gender disparity in political representation. Of the three women who made it to Parliament, four times were from the Kashmir division, while once was from Ladakh. Surprisingly, no woman has ever



been elected from the Jammu division. The first woman MP from Jammu and Kashmir was Akbar Jahan Begum, the wife of Sheikh Abdullah. She represented the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat in 1977 under the National Conference banner. Later, she

won from the Anantnag seat in 1984. Following her, Parvati Devi secured a seat from Ladakh on a Congress ticket in 1977. The most recent addition to this list is Mehbooba Mufti from the PDP, who became an MP from the Anantnag seat in

2004 and again in 2014. Despite her success, the BJP, which holds significant political sway in the region, has never fielded a woman candidate for Parliament. In the ongoing election season, political parties are vying for women's votes, yet, apart from Mehbooba Mufti, no major party has nominated a woman candidate. While independent women have contested, victory has remained elusive due to various factors. With over 42 lakh women voters in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the numbers reflect a growing female electorate. However, the disparity between the number of women voters and their representation in Parliament remains a significant concern, highlighting the urgent need for genuine efforts to bridge this gap and ensure equitable



# Watermelon The Super Nutritious Summer Fruit



Shahnaz Husain

With a lip-smacking taste and having a distinct juicy, sweet and refreshing quality to it, watermelons are synonymous with summertime.

Watermelons and Indian summers are made for each other. High in water content and low in calories, watermelon is a cool option on a scorching afternoon.

A slice of juicy watermelon is one of summer's most delicious seasonal treats. Its refreshing sweetness makes it a versatile ingredient for all kinds of dishes, from salads to salsas to smoothies.

Nothing beats a big, juicy wedge of watermelon on a hot summer day, whether it's berries, mango, peaches, or litchi.

It is rich in salt, potassium, and electrolytes, all of which are essential for maintaining your body's strength. Watermelon is also loaded with the healthy vitamins A, B, and C, as well as the antioxidant lycopene.

Watermelon the 'summer's blessing' contains 90% water by weight and is packed with vitamins and nutrients, especially lycopene, ascorbic acid, and citrulline. Watermelons are tasty, hydrating, and negative calorie food, which helps in burning calories.

When you're incredibly thirsty and need to replenish fluids in your body, watermelon is the ideal summer go-to. Since 90 percent of watermelon is just water, it helps in nourishing the skin and makes it more radiant.

This luscious summer fruit is not only a delicious summer snack, but it also has several advantages for the skin.

From keeping you cool to maintaining your skin health, let us look at some of the benefits of consuming watermelons in summer

## Benefits of Watermelon for skin

Hydrates your skin ----- Whether you apply a watermelon face mask or consume a fresh slice, it has a huge influence on keeping your skin hydrated. From acne-prone to sensitive, dry to combination, it's a one-fruit-fits-all kind of thing. If you have sensitive, acne-prone skin, the strong anti-inflammatory properties in

watermelon can help calm skin irritation, redness, and inflammation. Vitamin A, B6, and Vitamin C in Watermelon help in collagen production, which improves skin texture and suppleness, make the skin brighter, and fade spots and blemishes. Lycopene content in watermelons has a sun-protection effect, so you are less likely to get sunburnt. The vitamin A in watermelon keeps your eyes sparkly and healthy too and can prevent macular degeneration.

At home, you may make your own moisturizing facemask using watermelon and honey. Honey is a humectant that replenishes moisture and works quickly to give you smooth, bright skin. It hydrates and cures dry skin.

Combine two tablespoons of watermelon juice and one tablespoon of honey in a mixing dish. On your face, apply the mixture. Allow it to sit for 10-12 minutes before washing it off. For the best results, do this once a week.

Additionally, watermelon juice helps to calm and lessen the redness of the skin that is prone to acne.

## Prevent oily skin

Watermelon is an excellent skin component, particularly for individuals with oily skin. The delicious red fruit reduces pores and has unparalleled moisturizing effects. It treats oily skin by controlling the oil-producing glands called sebaceous glands, allowing your face to be free of oil and acne.

Watermelon is beneficial for eliminating excess oil from your skin.

Mix one tablespoon of watermelon pulp and one tablespoon of banana pulp in a bowl with a spatula and apply the face and neck. Allow 20 to 25 minutes for the face pack to dry. After that, wash it with warm water. This is the finest watermelon face mask for those who suffer from acne and pigmentation.

A mixture of mashed watermelon and tomato pulp can be used by those with oily skin to smoothen the skin. The malic acid in watermelon and lycopene in tomato act as natural exfoliators and soothe the skin

## A natural skin toner--

Watermelon juice is a natural toner that is as good as rose water for your skin because of its natural extracts. Vitamin C and antioxidants present in watermelon help regenerate skin cells and protect them from injury. These nutrients prevent free radical damage and also protect your skin from any further disruption.

To tone your skin, gently apply fresh watermelon juice to it and rinse it off.

Watermelon seeds are a good source of magnesium which lowers cortisol levels that help reduce acne and also balances out your hormones.

They also contain protein, fatty acids, and ceramides

that help in locking the moisture in your skin.

## Natural Exfoliator--

The grainy particles present in the fruit helps gently exfoliate the skin.

Watermelon is rich in vitamin C, which brightens your skin quickly. The gritty particles in the fruit assist in gently exfoliating the skin while also moisturizing it. To naturally scrub off dead skin cells, apply a teaspoon of mashed watermelon to your skin.

To remove dead skin cells, rub watermelon and tomato pulp across the face or body in circular motions. The malic acid in watermelon and the enzymes in tomato help break down the glue that holds the dead skin cells together.

Combining mashed watermelon with yogurt and honey and then leaving the paste on the face for 10-15 minutes can be beneficial. The antioxidants in honey and watermelon can reduce inflammation, while yogurt can exfoliate the skin.

## An Anti-Ager

Watermelons are enriched with antioxidants and vitamins, which all involve offering you glowing skin. Antioxidants help combat free radical damage and enhance suppleness, which reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles and makes skin appear tighter. Vitamins brighten dull skin and take off that layer that makes it look tired and overworked. Mix watermelon pulp, milk, and honey. Make a paste and apply it to your face. Wash it with running or lukewarm water. Watermelon has potent antioxidants that fight free radicals to prevent premature aging. Milk, on the other hand, is a natural cleanser that deep cleanses the skin and removes dead skin cells.

## Cure sunburn

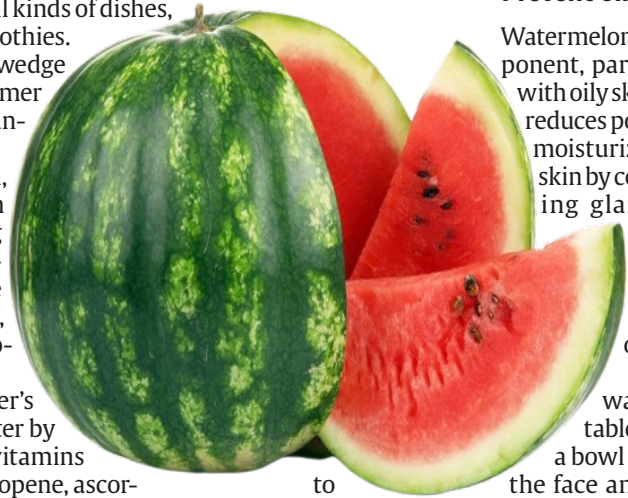
Applying a watermelon and cucumber face pack to cure sunburn is recommended. Both watermelon and cucumber are excellent for your skin. Cucumber is a cooling substance that aids in the removal of tan. Watermelon has various aesthetic advantages, including moisturizing and soothing inflammation and itching. It also contains lycopene, protecting the skin from sunburn and skin cancer. It blocks UV rays at least twice as well as an antioxidant.

Mix a spoonful of cucumber pulp with watermelon juice to make the face mask. Apply the pack evenly to your face and leave it on for 15-20 minutes before washing it off.

The best time to eat watermelons is in the morning between 10 am to 12 pm, as breakfast or between breakfast and lunch. You can also have it as an evening snack, before 5 pm. Do not consume it at night or with your meals.

## Thanks and Regards

Dr. G.L. Mahajan , PhD New Delhi  
Mobile/ Whatsapp -----#9868520019



## NEWS

# Summer Foods That Help Control Blood Sugar Levels



Controlling blood sugar levels is crucial for overall health, particularly for individuals with diabetes or those at risk of developing diabetes. Keep reading as we share a list of foods you can add to your summer diet to better maintain your blood sugar levels.

### 1. Berries

Berries are rich in fibre, antioxidants, and polyphenols, which slow down the digestion and absorption of carbohydrates, leading to more stable blood sugar levels. Additionally, berries have a low glycemic index (GI), meaning they have a minimal impact on blood sugar levels.

### 2. Leafy greens

Leafy greens are low in carbohydrates and calories but high in fibre, vitamins, and minerals. They help slow down the digestion of carbohydrates and improve insulin sensitivity, promoting better blood sugar control and overall health.

### 3. Tomatoes

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, a powerful antioxidant that may help reduce inflammation and improve insulin sensitivity. They also have a low GI and are a good source of vitamins C and K, which contribute to overall health.

### 4. Avocado

Avocado is high in monounsaturated fats, fibre, and potassium, which help regulate blood sugar levels and improve insulin sensitivity. The healthy fats in avocado also promote satiety and may reduce cravings for unhealthy, high-sugar foods.

### 5. Cucumbers

Cucumbers are low in carbohydrates and calories but high in water and fibre, making them a hydrating and filling summer snack. The fibre content helps slow down the digestion of carbohydrates and stabilise blood sugar levels.

### 6. Zucchini

Zucchini is low in carbohydrates and calories but rich in fibre, vitamins, and minerals. It can be used as a substitute for higher-carb foods like pasta or rice, making it an excellent option for controlling blood sugar levels and promoting weight management.

### 7. Bell peppers

Bell peppers are low in carbohydrates and calories but rich in fibre, vitamins A and C, and antioxidants. They have a low GI and may help improve insulin sensitivity, making them a beneficial addition to a blood sugar-friendly diet.

# High-Seafood Diets May Increase Risk of Exposure to 'Forever Chemicals'

A new study showed that people who eat seafood on a regular basis may have an increased risk of exposure to PFAS, toxins more commonly described as "forever chemicals" since they remain in the body indefinitely. Exposure to forever chemicals is linked to health issues such as cancer, fetal abnormalities, high cholesterol, and thyroid, liver, and reproductive

disorders.

For the study, published April 12 in Exposure and Health, researchers combined a PFAS concentrations analysis of fresh seafood with a survey of eating habits in New Hampshire. According to national data, New Hampshire is the leading state in seafood consumption.

They measured 26 types of PFAS in the most consumed fish: cod, haddock,



lobster, salmon, scallop, shrimp, and tuna. Results showed shrimp and lobster had the highest levels of PFAS compounds.

The survey findings showed that men in New Hampshire eat just over one ounce of seafood per day and women eat just under one ounce. These amounts are more than 1.5 times the national average for adults. For New Hampshire children (2 to 11 years old).

# Treating High Blood Pressure May Help Reduce The Risk of Developing Fibroids

Hypertension medications are associated with a lower risk of uterine fibroids in people with high blood pressure.

A new study Trusted Source, published in JAMA Network Open Tuesday, found that women who were newly diagnosed with hypertension in their 40s and 50s had a higher risk of uterine fibroids, which are benign tumors in the uterus.

The risk of being diagnosed with a fibroid decreases with hypertension treatment, such as ACE inhibitors.

The report adds to growing evidence suggesting there's a link between cardiovascular risk factors, like cholesterol levels, and uterine fibroids.

"More research is definitely required in order to better understand the link between high blood pressure and fibroid development and thus put this into clinical practice," Supreeti Behuria, MD, a cardiologist at Staten Island University Hospital, told Healthline.

Behuria is not connected to the study. High blood pressure prevention is linked to a lower risk of fibroids

The study evaluated the health data of 2,570 participants, sourced from the Study of Women's Health Across the Nation, between the ages of 42 and 52 who did not have a history of uterine fibroids.

The participants were tracked from



their enrollment in the study, which occurred between 1996 and 1997, all the way through 13 semi-annual follow-up visits, which were held between 1998 and 2013.

The participants had their blood pressure, biomarkers (which included cholesterol, triglycerides, and C-reactive protein), and physical measurements recorded at each medical visit. Additionally, they were asked whether or not they used medications to treat hypertension. The research team also looked at fibroid diagnoses.

Over the course of the study, 20% (526 women) reported a new fibroid diagnosis. The researchers found that, compared to people who did not have high blood pressure, those with untreated hypertension had a 19% greater risk of developing fibroids and those with treated hypertension had a 20% lower risk of getting a fibroid.

Of the group who had hyperten-

sion, those who sought treatment had a 37% lower risk of being diagnosed with fibroids compared to those who did not pursue treatment.

Those who took ACE inhibitors had a 48% lower risk.

In addition, compared to people who never had hypertension, those with new-onset hypertension had a 45% greater risk of being diagnosed with a fibroid.

It's unclear if and how hypertension medications impact fibroid development

According to the researchers, the findings highlight the relationship between cardiovascular health and the development of fibroids.

G. Thomas Ruiz, MD, a board-certified OB/GYN and lead OB/GYN at MemorialCare Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, CA, says it's important to understand that the report doesn't describe how anti-hypertension medications might prevent uterine fibroids. Ruiz was not involved in the study.

"They just note that there is a correlation or association between being treated for hypertension incidence of uterine fibroids," he said.

Prior research has similarly found that ACE inhibitors — a type of drug that relaxes the veins to lower blood pressure — were associated with 32% lower odds of being diagnosed with a fibroid.

# Physical Activity Reduces Stress and Lowers Cardiovascular Disease Risk

According to researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital, physical activity appears to reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease.

They say this may occur because physical activity can reduce stress-related signaling within the brain.

The study, which was published in the April 2024 issue of the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, might also explain why those with depression — which is known to be related to stress — experienced the greatest cardiovascular benefits.

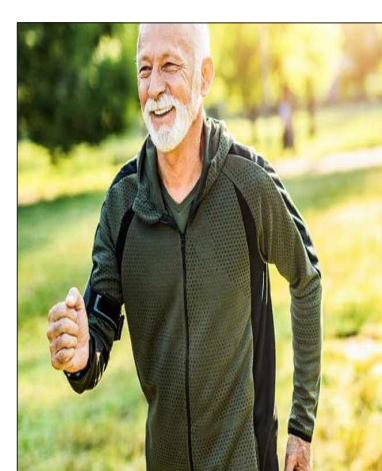
It is already known that physical activity can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease by affecting risk factors such as blood lipids, high blood pressure, and arterial stiffness.

However, according to the study authors, the mechanisms we know about account for only 59% of the benefits of physical activity's benefits on cardiovascular risk.

The goal of the current study was to learn more about what might make up the other 41%.

In formulating their hypothesis, they considered the fact that physical activity is known to reduce stress as well as depression. Also, stress and depression are associated with increased cardiovascular disease risk.

They felt that it could be that



physical activity's effects on stress-related brain mechanisms could be how it influences cardiovascular disease risk.

How the link between physical activity cardiovascular risk was studied

To carry out the study, senior author Ahmed Tawakol, MD, and his team examined medical records of over 50,000 patients from the Mass General Brigham Biobank who had participated in a survey about their physical activity.

Of these people, 774 also had brain imaging done and measurements made of their stress-related brain activity.

The median length of follow-up was 10 years. During this time, 12.9%

of people developed cardiovascular disease.

However, those who met the recommendations for physical activity had a 23% lower risk for these diseases.

Those who engaged in the advised amount of physical activity also had lower stress-related brain activity.

The authors note that these reductions were mainly due to gains in function in the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for decision-making and impulse control. It is also known to regulate our reactions to stress.

Further, the reductions in stress-related brain signaling partially accounted for how physical activity benefitted the cardiovascular system.

An additional finding reported by the team was that physical activity was about twice as effective in reducing cardiovascular risk in those with pre-existing depression.

"Effects on the brain's stress-related activity may explain this novel observation," Tawakol said in a press release.

However, he noted that more research is needed before causality can be proven.

Why less stressed-related brain signaling might reduce cardiovascular risk





## 'Been whispering in his ears'

Powell is trying to get Narine to play T20 World Cup

**NEW DELHI:** Is Sunil Narine being coaxed into coming out of international retirement for the T20 World Cup in the Caribbean and USA that follows IPL 2024?

Three nights ago, Narine, who had announced his international retirement in November 2023, was certain he'd be watching the tournament from home. But on Tuesday night, after hitting a magnificent century to power Kolkata Knight Riders to 223 for 6, Narine gave an inkling of that stance changing.

"It is what it is, but let's see what the future holds," Narine, said after the match, when asked if he'd reconsider his decision to retire.

After the match, Rovman Powell, West Indies' T20I captain, revealed he'd been trying to change Narine's mind

through every channel possible.

"For the last 12 months, I've been whispering in his (Narine's) ears, but he's blocked out everyone," Powell said when asked about trying to convince Narine to reverse his decision. "I've asked [Kieron] Pollard, [Dwayne] Bravo, [Nicholas] Pooran. Hopefully, before they select the team, they can crack his code."

Powell himself was a key contributor to Rajasthan Royals' chase, hitting 26 off 13 balls. He came into his own in the 17th over, when he took apart Narine for a four and two back-to-back sixes in a 16-run over that left Royals needing 46 off the last three.

They eventually got home off the last delivery when Jos Buttler, who struck his second century of the competition, heaved Varun Chakravarthi

into the leg side with the scores level.

Powell was one of Royals' big-ticket auction signings at INR 7.4 crore, but opportunities have been limited. Tuesday's game at the Eden Gardens was just his second outing with the bat this season, but he was all praise for the team management.

"The morale in the team is very good, even when I am not playing the communication has been very good and as an international player, I really appreciate when the communication is precise and clear," he said. "The guys are in good space and long may that continue."

Powell was also asked tongue-in-cheek if he'd been whispering into Kumar Sangakkara's [director of cricket] ear about a batting promotion. "I told them, 'hey, I bat at

No. 4 or 5 for West Indies and if you think West Indies is a good T20 side, then you can push me up the order," he said with a smile. "We have got a few days off now and I will keep ringing it in their (the management) ears."

Powell likened the emotions at the end of that roller-coaster ride as Royals pulled off IPL's highest successful chase. He also revealed he went out to bat with not set plans of taking down spin, and was merely reacting to the situation.

"The emotions are all over the place at the moment," he said. "I didn't plan to take on Sunil, I knew he's their best bowler, but when it comes down to 80 off 30, you have to take your chances. I backed my strengths, took my chances and came off today."

## 'Can cricket solve those issues?' - Rashid to reconsider playing BBL over CA stance on Afghanistan

**GUJARAT:** Rashid Khan is "hurt" by Cricket Australia's decision recently to indefinitely postpone Australia's scheduled three-match T20I series against Afghanistan. In response, Rashid, who is currently playing for Gujarat Titans in IPL 2024, will reconsider participating in the 2025 edition of the BBL.

The T20I series, a part of the ICC's future tours programme, was scheduled for August at a neutral venue, but CA said in January that it was postponing the engagement after consultations with the Australian government because of "a marked deterioration in human rights for women and girls" in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

"It does hurt you," Rashid told ESPNcricinfo on Tuesday in Ahmedabad, where Titans will play their next IPL 2024 game, against Delhi Capitals, on Wednesday. "You do want to play against the best teams and that's where your cricket is going to improve more and more. You only get the opportunity playing against them [Australia] in the World Cups, but not in bilateral series."

Rashid, who will lead Afghanistan at the 2024 T20 World Cup in June, said that playing against top-ranked teams would be hugely beneficial for the growth of his team. As an example, Rashid cited the three-match T20I series Afghanistan played this January against India, which they lost 3-0.

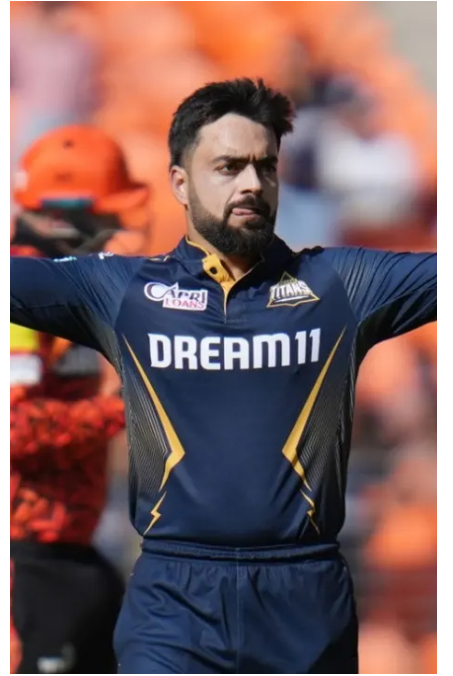
"Recently, we played three T20s against India, and it helped us a lot," he said. "We nearly chased 200 [212] against India. Imagine if you wouldn't have played that, where would the confidence come from? Playing against big teams is huge for us."

This was the third time CA had chosen not to honour a bilateral engagement with Afghanistan: in 2021, what would have been the first Test match between the two teams, was postponed, and then, in 2023, an ODI series was called off.

"You don't want to play with my colleagues and you want to play with me. So what's the difference? It means I'm putting my colleagues down as well. My country down as well"

"As a player you can't do much about it," he said. "It's the issue of governments to resolve. But what hurts me the most is when things like that happens, why it is hurting cricket [in Afghanistan]?"

"If something is [in the hands of the] governments, why is hurting cricket? Why



it comes to cricket? Can cricket solve those issues? I think if cricket is solving those issues, then it's fine, then I'm happy with it."

Rashid stressed that cricket was a "source of happiness" for Afghanistan, and that was something Australia needed to understand. "Cricket is the only source back home in Afghanistan which give people happiness," he said. "And if you are taking that happiness [away] from the people as well, you are hurting more people as well back home. And that is something which I feel like is more hurting as a captain where you are so excited as a youngster playing against Australia and then this thing just happens."

Last year, Rashid had threatened to withdraw from the BBL, but changed his mind and entered the BBL draft, before missing the tournament because he had to undergo a back surgery. Rashid said that CA's latest move had again forced him to reassess his stance on participating in the BBL, where he has represented Adelaide Strikers since 2016-17.

"Lots of things come in the mind," he said. "Like, if you don't want to play against my team, then why you want me to play in your country? Because I'm not allowed then in your country as well to play cricket."

"You don't want to play with my colleagues and you want to play with me? So what's the difference?"

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