



# 53% polling in Anantnag-Rajouri Constituency, highest after 1984: J&K CEO



HT News Network

Srinagar, May 25 (KNO): The Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary constituency Sat-

urday recorded 53 per cent polling, highest after 1984, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Jammu and Kashmir P K Pole said Saturday. He said 18.36 lakh voters were registered for the Anantnag-Rajouri LS seat.

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## 'From zero percent voting to remarkable turnout'

South Kashmir villages vote to end FIRs against youth, release jailed people

Anantnag, May 25 (KNO): In a remarkable turnaround, numerous villages across south Kashmir saw a significant increase in voter participation, marking a shift from zero percent voting to a substantial turnout.

According to details obtained by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), several villages in south Kashmir, which have a history of boycotting elec-

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# Process to hold Assembly polls in J&K to begin soon: CEC Kumar

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 25 (KNO): Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India Rajeev Kumar Saturday said that the process of holding assembly elections in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will soon commence.

This announcement comes as the final phase of voting for the parliamentary seats in the region concludes with the polls on Anantnag Rajouri seat.

As per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), CEC Kumar, while addressing media in New Delhi, expressed his satisfaction with the high voter turnout witnessed across Jammu and Kashmir during the five phases of par-



liamentary elections. He highlighted the enthusiastic participation of youth, women, and the elderly, noting that it signifies the strengthening of democratic roots in the region. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir are entitled to choose their government. They deserve their own gov-

ernment. We will begin this process very soon... we are very encouraged to do so," Kumar said.

The CEC emphasized the importance of conducting separate assembly and parliamentary elections, citing logistical and security

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## NEWS BRIEF

### Tourist slips to death at Thajwas glacier

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 25 (KS): A tourist slipped to death at Thajwas glacier in Sonamarg area of Central Kashmir Ganderbal district on Saturday evening.

An official told News Agency Kashmir Scroll said that a Tourist namely Deepak Parhlad Patil son of Dr Jagdish Patil resident of Kalyan Maharashtra aged about 37 years slipped and fell down at Thajwas Glacier.

He said that he was brought to PHC Sonamarg for treatment where Doctors declared him

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### Unidentified body recovered in Shalina Srinagar

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 25 (KS): An unidentified body was recovered in Shalina area of Central Kashmir Srinagar district on Saturday morning.

An official told News Agency Kashmir Scroll that a dead body was spotted by some locals along a bank of river Jhelum in Shalina. He said that they accordingly called police who reached the spot and took the body into their custody. They said that identification is being ascertained while further investigation has been taken up. (KS)

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### Police books notorious lady drug smuggler under PIT NDPS Act in Baramulla

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 25: Acting tough against drug peddlers and to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police booked a lady notorious drug smuggler under PIT NDPS Act in Baramulla after obtaining formal detention order from competent authority.

The notorious lady drug smuggler namely Muskaan Begum wife of Irfan Ahmad Sheikh resident of Dewanbagh Baramulla has been booked under PIT-NDPS Act after obtaining formal detention orders from the competent Authority. The booked lady drug smuggler has been detained and subsequently lodged in Central Jail Srinagar.

Pertinent to mention here that many cases are registered against

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### Anantnag: 115-yr-old visually impaired man walks 5 km to vote to end unemployment among youth

HT News Network

Anantnag, May 25 (KNO): A 115-year-old visually impaired man cast his vote in the Manzmoor Dooru area of south Kashmir's Anantnag on Saturday.

Kaka Tenda, despite his physical challenges, walked approximately five kilometres on foot to reach the polling station.

Speaking with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Tenda said he came to vote for a candidate who genuinely represents the interests of his community in parliament.

"I came to vote after walking for around five kilometres on foot so that we can send the right candidate to the parliament who can truly raise the voice for our people," he said.

Kaka said there is a pressing issue of unemployment among the youth in his area, many of whom are highly qualified yet struggle to find job opportunities. "Even in the upper areas, youth are well qualified, but the rising unemployment rate has made the lives of

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## Chief Secretary compliments civil administration & police for smooth conduct of Lok Sabha elections

Congratulates people for high voter turn-out

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 25, 2024: Chief Secretary, J&K Atal Dulloo today complimented both the civil administration and police for working tirelessly and ensuring peaceful and smooth conduct of parliamentary elections in Jammu & Kashmir.

On the culmination of the 6th & last phase of Lok Sabha election in J&K, Chief Secretary hailed the high voter turn-out during all the phases and said that huge participation and high voting percentage have demonstrated faith of people in the electoral process.

He said that adequate arrangements had been made to ensure general public do not face difficulties in casting their vote and the Media has amply highlighted the enthusiasm among the electorate and truly the election in J&K has



looked more like a festival.

On this occasion, Dulloo remarked that since the elections are the spirit of democracy, therefore, every person who played his/her role in its successful conduct, deserved appreciation. He commended the role of every person, who had been part of the polling machinery for being part of this largest democratic exercise in

the world.

He appreciated the role of officials on election duty who worked with utmost dedication and devotion for making this whole process impartial, free and fair for the electorate. He called these public servants the foot soldiers of the democracy who should take pride in their accomplishments.

Chief Secretary thanked

people for coming out in large numbers to cast their vote. He acknowledged the role of Principal Secretary Home; DG Police, Divisional Commissioners Kashmir/Jammu, ADGPs, all Deputy Commissioners, DIGs, SSPs and other civil & police officers for making fool proof arrangements, thereby providing people a peaceful environment to exercise their vote freely as per their choice.

Dulloo also complimented Election Commission of India especially Chief Electoral Officer J&K, who had been pivotal in making best of the arrangements for conduct of polling in all the districts over five phases. He expressed satisfaction that adequate security arrangements had been made which ensured peace and harmony during elections and no untoward incident was reported.

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### LG congratulates people, stakeholders on historic turnout in Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary Constituency polls

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 25: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha congratulated the people and all the stakeholders on historic turnout in Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary Constituency polls.

He also commended Jammu Kashmir Police and Security forces for elaborate



security management during polls in all five Parliamentary Constituencies of the Union Territory.

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## Four Punjab residents die, three grievously injured in Kulgam road mishap

HT News Network

Kulgam, May 25 (KNO): In a tragic incident on Saturday afternoon, four residents of Punjab lost their lives and three others sustained critical injuries in a road accident in the Nipora area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district.

An official informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the accident occurred when a vehicle travelling from Qazigund to



Srinagar skidded off the road near the grid station in Nipora. Immediately after the mishap, police, CRPF personnel, and locals rushed to the scene

to assist the victims, transporting the injured to GMC Hospital Anantnag. "Unfortunately, four individuals were pronounced dead upon arrival, and the three critically injured were later shifted to SKIMS Soura for specialised treatment," the official said.

The deceased have been identified as Sandeep Sharma, son of Jagmohan Sharma, resident of Chickpaie Mansa, Punjab; Jagdish, son of Sirjeet, resident of Attary District

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## 'LOST: FOUND': Faheem Abdullah unveils musical masterpiece in Kashmir

Highly anticipated album release draws crowd and electrifying excitement

HT News Network

Srinagar, May 25 (KNO): The music label Artiste First, also known for emerging talents, has partnered with well-known Kashmiri singer and storyteller Faheem Abdullah to release his latest album, 'LOST: FOUND'.

The collaboration has been anticipated since the release of the hit single 'Ishq' which has captivated audiences globally with its enchanting melody and beautiful lyrics.

As per the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the launch event, held in Srinagar's INOX multiplex, drew a crowd, including notable personalities from Kashmir and numerous fans.

The excitement was high as attendees gathered to celebrate Abdullah's new album.

"LOST: FOUND" features 14 eclectic tracks, including popular hits like "Sajde,"



"Chak Chuk Blues," and "Waavo." Each song tells a personal story, reflecting Faheem Abdullah's thoughts and experiences.

"The album symbolizes a soul-reviving pause, representing a journey from feeling lost to the joy of being found, and 'Ishq,' a song from the album, has deeply resonated with listeners worldwide, conveying themes of love and longing," said Faheem while speaking to KNO.

He added that it has topped charts on platforms like Spotify and Apple Music and garnered over 25 million views on YouTube. "The song has become a sensation, uniting listeners across Asia, Europe,

Africa, and America with its uplifting message of love and hope, and for that, I am thankful to everyone," he added.

As per a statement shared by the producers of the song, a copy of which lies with KNO, reads Abdullah, celebrated for his expressive lyrics and exceptional voice, shared his excitement about the album's release: "I'm delighted to have had the opportunity to unveil our labor of love in Kashmir, where my journey began. 'LOST: FOUND' is a journey of self-introspection, self-discovery, and self-realization. We are thrilled by the warm reception and eager to present the complete album to the audience."

Rohit Sobti, Co-Founder of Artiste First, also expressed his enthusiasm: "Faheem is a woke new-age artist. His journey from 'Lost' to 'Found' is like the birth of an artist finding their orbit. Faheem's music is mysterious, genre-neu

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**TOURIST**

brought dead. He said that investigation in this regard has been taken up.(KS)

**POLICE**

the said lady drug smuggler and was involved in promoting drug abuse trade by supplying drugs to local youth of Town Baramulla & other areas of the district. Despite her involvement in many FIRs, she did not mend her activities and was again involved in promoting drug abuse trade by supplying drugs to local youth.

General public appreciated the role of Police for their action against drug peddlers. Our consistent actions against the drug peddlers should reassure the community members that police are making all efforts to keep our society free from drug abuse.

**CEO**

In the J&K UT, for the all five phases of Lok Sabha elections, total poll percentage including the Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary seat, has been recorded at 58 percent.

Pole, while addressing the press conference here, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said that the previous highest voting for the Anantnag-Rajouri LS seat was 50 percent in 1996. In 1984, the Parliamentary seat had recorded 70 percent voting.

“The overall voter turnout across all five parliamentary seats in Jammu and Kashmir was 58 percent, surpassing the 49.58 percent recorded in 2014 and the 47.99 percent in 1996,” he said.

CEO Pole expressed gratitude to the voters, polling staff, security personnel and candidates for their roles in achieving this historic turnout. “The credit goes to the voters for making new records,” he stated, emphasizing the collective effort that made the electoral process a success.

Anantnag-Rajouri’s 53 percent turnout marks a significant increase from the dismal 9 percent voting in 2019. Giving the break up, Pole said that Surankote reported the highest turnout at 68 percent, while Kulgam and Anantnag saw lower participation with 32 percent and 33 percent, respectively. Migrant polling booths also recorded over 50 percent turnout, with 9,000 postal ballots cast.

A total of 9,000 polling staff were deployed in the Anantnag-Rajouri constituency to facilitate the voting process. Across Jammu and Kashmir, the turnout percentages for the other constituencies were as follows: Baramulla at 59.10 percent, Srinagar at 39 percent, Udhampur at 68 percent, and Jammu at 72.22 percent.

With 11,600 polling stations set up across the Union Territory as per P.K Pole.

Voting commenced at 7 a.m. on Saturday in the newly delimited Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary seat, amid stringent security measures across the entire area. The Election Commission had implemented robust arrangements, including satellite phones and special equipment at polling stations with poor mobile signals, to counter threats and contingencies, particularly from potential cross-border shelling in border regions.

This election, the last of five in Jammu and Kashmir, presented significant security challenges. The region has recently experienced four terrorist incidents in the Rajouri-Poonch area.

Election officials assured that comprehensive measures have been taken to ensure free, fair, and peaceful voting. The constituency spanned 18 assembly segments, with the Election Commission establishing 2,338 polling stations to accommodate over 18.36 lakh voters.

Out of 542 polling stations in Rajouri district, 278 were categorized as sensitive. Additionally, 45 polling stations were within the direct firing range from across the Line of Control (LoC). In Poonch district, 55 out of 171 polling stations are located along the LoC.

To safeguard voters in critical areas, the district administration had devised contingency plans. Rajouri DC confirmed that five villages lie between the LoC and the fencing.

LG Sinha congratulates J&K People: “I congratulate the people for historic turnout in today’s polls for Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary Constituency. I compliment all stakeholders for successful conduct of this huge exercise, especially voters for their unique contribution in strengthening democratic values.” J&K’s LG Manoj Sinha wrote on X. “Overall, there has been 58% polling in J&K UT for 5 Parliamentary Constituencies in 5 phases, which is a record turnout and the entire process was conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner. Congratulations to the JKP & Security forces for elaborate security.

**SOUTH KASHMIR**

tions, broke the trend and voted in large numbers. These villages include Heff in the Shopian district, Mehand and Arwani in the Anantnag district, and Bugam, Mohamadpora and other areas in the Kulgam district.

Residents from these areas told KNO that they have endured hardships over the past three to four decades and are seeking change this time.

When asked about the change they desire, many pointed to the plight of hundreds of youths languishing in jails outside Kashmir and expressed a strong desire for their release. They highlighted the issue of numerous youths in nearly every village having criminal cases against them, which hampers their ability to obtain character certificates. They want these FIRs to be dropped.

Mubarak Raina, a resident of Bugam, said they voted for change. “There had been no elections in J&K for several years. Today, people came out to vote happily, with good facilities available at the polling stations,” he said.

Raina said various issues had previously kept people away from voting, but today they voted for their youth, who have suffered in recent decades. “Bugam, being a central village, has been neglected in terms of development due to its previous lack of participation in the democratic process. Now, we have voted to see development and address issues such as youth employment,” he added.

In Mehand, Heff and Arwani, voters echoed similar sentiments, saying they voted for the first time to resolve youth-related issues. They said unemployment, FIRs against youths and the imprisonment of local residents are the primary concerns they hope to address.

Mohammad Ahsan Dar, a voter from Heff, said they want to live peacefully and have voted for peace, development and youth employment. “There is a need for better healthcare facilities and educational institutions in the area,” he said.

People from these villages said they will continue participating in the democratic process to ensure development in their respective areas and to resolve issues affecting the youth—(KNO)

**CEO**

challenges as the primary reasons. Following a recent delimitation exercise, the number of assembly seats in Jammu and Kashmir has increased from 83 to 90, excluding seats allocated to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The Supreme Court had mandated the government to hold assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir by September 30, 2023. However, logistical complexities delayed the process. Now, with the completion of the parliamentary elections, the Election Commission is set to initiate the assembly elections, which typically span a month due to the region’s unique challenges—(KNO)

**115 YEARS**

young people very difficult. There is a need to address this issue immediately,” he added.

The supercentenarian also highlighted the broader economic struggles faced by the people, including inflation and rising electricity tariffs. “People of J&K have been facing problems due to inflation and rising electricity tariffs. I have voted so that the winner can raise the voice and help in lowering the electricity bills,” he said, adding that choosing the right candidate could lead to improvements in addressing these issues.

“I believe that if people choose the right candidate, their issues can be resolved to a great extent,” Kaka Tenda added—(KNO)

**LOST AND FOUND**

tral, and full of depth and emotions. There is something for every kind of listener in this collection, making ‘LOST: FOUND’ truly special.”

“The album ‘LOST: FOUND’ is now available on all leading music platforms, offering listeners a unique and diverse musical journey. With contributions from various talented artists and producers, the album promises a captivating experience for all music lovers,” it said—(KNO)

**ACCIDENT**

Moga, Punjab; Romi Sharma, son of Surjeet Singh, resident of Ferozpora, Punjab; and Gurmeet Singh, son of Darshan Singh, resident of Bigwal, Punjab. The injured have been identified as Hirchand Singh, son of Mukhtar Singh, resident of Attary District Moga, Punjab; Kiran Paul (driver), son of Veer Singh, resident of Attary

**DC Kathua inspects progress of work on High Security Prison on Dambra in Basohli**

KATHUA, MAY 25: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Dr. Rakesh Minhas, accompanied by senior officers from the Civil and Police Department, today conducted a site visit of High Security Prison coming up at Village Dambra in the Basohli sub-division.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner took a first-hand appraisal of the ongoing construction work across various segments of the prison.

Dr. Minhas directed the Executing Agency to ensure that all construction segments are completed by December 2024. He emphasized the importance of maintaining high-quality standards, adhering strictly to the specified guidelines, and ruled out any possibility of compromising on quality.

Among others, ASP Kathua Paramjeet Singh, ADC Kathua Ranjit Singh, ADC Billawar Anil Thakur, SE PWD Kathua D.K. Nayar, Superintendent District Jail Koushal Kumar, and SDM Hiranagar were present on the occasion.

**Tourism Department & Ecotourism Society Lead Cleanliness Drive at Thajwas Glacie**

**Zubair Qureshi**

SRINAGAR, MAY 25, 2024: Department of Tourism and Ecotourism Society of Kashmir, organized a cleanliness drive at Thajwas Glacier in Sonmarg on Saturday. The initiative aimed to promote responsible tourism and saw enthusiastic participation from local stakeholders and volunteers from Kashmir University.

CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority, Farooq Ahmad Baba, emphasized the importance of environmental awareness. “It’s very important that we make people aware of our environment. SDA is committed to educating the public and keeping our tourist destinations neat and clean,” he said. Sameer Baktoo, President Ecotourism Society of Kashmir,



highlighted the significance of such initiatives for responsible tourism. “Kashmir’s unparalleled natural beauty is the cornerstone of its tourism industry. Any harm to our environment would severely impact tourism and the livelihoods of many who depend on it,” Baktoo stated. He urged attendees to commit to sustainable practices, stressing

the long-term impact on Kashmir’s tourism landscape. The drive brought together volunteers and local stakeholders in a unified effort to protect the region’s natural resources. Participants learned about pollution’s impact and the importance of conservation. Baktoo extended gratitude to the Director of Tourism, Kash-

mir, and the district administration of Ganderbal for their support. He also acknowledged the contributions of the Chief Executive Officer of the Sonamarg Development Authority and the support from the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation, the Forest Department Sonmarg, the Wildlife Department Sonmarg, local stakeholders, and the management of Hotel Village Walk.

It is pertinent to mention that this collaborative effort highlighted the shared responsibility of preserving Kashmir’s natural heritage. The Department of Tourism and the Ecotourism Society of Kashmir reiterated their commitment to continuing such initiatives, aiming for a lasting positive impact on the environment and the tourism sector.

**Mehbooba's 'home turf deserted', below 50% turnout recorded at PS no 63 Baba Mohalla till 05:30 PM**

**HT News Network**

Srinagar, May 25 (KNO): At the polling booth where Mehbooba Mufti, the candidate for Anantnag-Rajouri seat as well as the former chief minister of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir State, cast her vote on Saturday, the voter turnout at the booth till 05:50 PM was below 50 percent as the majority of the voters preferred to stay away from exercising their franchise.

According to the news agen-

cy—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the polling booth set up at Islamia Higher Secondary School in Bijbehara witnessed below 50 per cent till the late afternoon hours, which otherwise was anticipated to record a massive turnout amidst the massive public participation during the poll campaigning.

Mehbooba, who earlier staged a protest against the alleged detention of her party workers ahead of the polls, cast her vote at the polling booth number 63

Baba Mohalla, Bijbehara for 45-Srigufwara Bijbehara Assembly Segment at around 12 o’clock. However, as per the details collected from the Presiding Officer only 163 votes including 77 males and 86 females, out of total 363 including four polling officers were cast till 05:50 PM.

Najam-us-Saqib, PDP spokesman, who was present at the polling booth, however, told KNO that the percentage could have crossed 60

per cent, if the detentions had not taken place.

“The people, especially the youngsters couldn’t participate in the democratic exercise after many youth were detained from their houses and even from the polling booths as well,” he said.

Pertinently, the sixth phase of ongoing Lok Sabha elections culminated on Saturday, marking an end to the polling in Jammu and Kashmir. The counting of votes will take place on June 4—(KNO)

**Tourism takes priority over voting in Pahalgam**

**HT News Network**

Pahalgam, May 25 (KNO): In the picturesque town of Pahalgam, many locals opted to prioritise their livelihoods over voting in the Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary election on Saturday, choosing instead to attend to the influx of tourists. The two polling booths in Pahalgam saw a very thin turnout.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), some voters outside the polling booths indicated that the majority of their neighbours and fellow residents were busy attending to tourists.

One voter, Mohammad Yaqoob Lone, said, “May usually remains a good tourism month and, for the past three

years, there has been a huge rush of tourists here. People who are associated with this sector cannot afford to waste a single day, especially considering the dry days of many previous years.”

I think most of the residents in Pahalgam are busy attending to the tourists and are skipping the vote, he added.

Another local, Bilal Ahmad Lone, said that residents in the

area associated with tourism earn nearly Rs 4,000 a day on average and prefer to invest all their time in attending to as many tourists as possible.

“In Pahalgam, we have a limited season for tourism. Given the past difficult events, the locals here are more focused on their livelihood than on elections,” he said—(KNO)

**Parking slot turned into election centre at Janglat Mandi Anantnag**

**HT News Network**

Srinagar, May 25 (KNO): It was not less than a surprise for the media persons as well as the locals, living in the vicinity of Janglat Mandi, Anantnag as two polling booths were set up in a parking slot.

Located on the main road, Park In Courtesy: M.C. Anantnag, a couple of security forces personnel were guarding outside

the building, which indicated that the polling booth is close to the vicinity. However, it came as an utter shock when the people pointed their fingers towards the building when asked about the polling stations set up in Janglat Mandi, Anantnag.

No vehicle was parked inside the parking slot though as the facility was closed for the general public as two polling booths for 44-Anantnag including

53-Sadak-A and 53-Sadak-B were set up there.

It was for the first time that the people had seen the establishment of polling booths in the parking slot.

A security forces personnel, who was deployed at the polling stations, stated that he has never seen the polling booth established in the parking slot. The polling booths are being set up in the schools, other places, but it is for the first time I am

witnessing that the polling booth has been set up in any parking facility, he said in a random chat.

Pertinently, a total of 2,338 polling stations were established across the Anantnag-Rajouri constituency. Each station were manned by four election personnel, including the presiding officer, with more than 9,000 polling staff, including reserves, mobilized for duty—(KNO)

**Exceptional IAS Academy Hosts Felicitation Ceremony of UPSC CSE toppers**

**‘Passion of toppers truly inspiring: DC Srinagar**

**HT News Network**

Srinagar, May 25, KNT: Exceptional IAS Academy in Srinagar celebrated the remarkable achievements of the UPSC 2023 toppers and marked the launch of a cutting-edge E-learning platform aimed at revolutionizing education for aspiring civil servants and competitive exam candidates.

The Event started with the felicitation of UPSC 2023 toppers and the distinguished achievers felicitated were, Harneet - AIR 177, Mohammad Haris - AIR 345, Mohammad Farhan Seh - AIR 369, Aparajita Aaryan - AIR 381, Suvan Sharma - AIR 412, Major Abhinandan Singh - AIR 549.

The toppers were felicitated by Chief Guest Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary - Secretary to Government, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati



Raj, Jammu & Kashmir and Special Guest of Honour Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-din Bhat - Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar. The event also saw the attendance of other notable dignitaries: Abdul Khabir - Deputy Director, Tribal Affairs Department, Nazir Ahmad Dar director CCPC Kashmir University. The primary aim of the event

was to honour the outstanding achievements of the UPSC CSE 2023 toppers and to create awareness among the youth of Jammu and Kashmir about the importance of civil services and to launch the E-learning platform for 11th, 12th, NEET & JEE students.

The IAS qualifiers, along with the chief guests, interacted with

aspiring candidates, offering valuable suggestions and strategies for cracking this prestigious examination

Director Saqlain Bhat and Azhar Sofi of Exceptional IAS Academy proudly launched their newest offering state-of-the-art E-learning platform aims to provide comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality education to students across the region and also announced fresh Batches For one year foundation courses of IAS, KAS and Three-year foundation courses for college going students starting from 17 June and 17 July 2024

The E-learning platform was also inaugurated the platform features interactive video lectures, live doubt-clearing sessions, and a vast repository of study materials, catering to the diverse needs of students preparing for competitive exam of 11th 12th NEET and JEE.



# DC Kupwara visits far-flung Budnamal area Inspects various public institutions, hears public issues

**HT News Network**

KUPWARA, MAY 25: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan, today had an extensive tour to far-flung and border area Budnamal to take stock of the functioning of public institutions and problems of the people.

On her arrival at Budnamal, the DC paid a visit to New Type Primary Health Centre Budnamal during which she inspected various sections of the hospital and checked the atten-

dance of the doctors and paramedical staff. She also interacted with the patients and enquired from them about the health care facilities provided in the hospital.

The DC impressed upon the doctors and staff to work with zeal and added dedication to facilitate the people of this far-off area with quality health care services so that they do not face any inconvenience.

Ayushi also visited Government Higher Secondary School Budnamal and took stock of its functioning. She inspected the classrooms of the school



and interacted with the students. She also paid a visit to Upper Primary School Budnamal.

During the visit, the DC held an interactive meeting with the people including senior citizens who apprised her about their day to day issues including water supply, power supply, road connectivity, mobile network, construction of playground, establishment of a mini bank etc. She heard their demands and grievances patiently and assured them for time bound resolution.

She said that the aim of her visit to

Budnamal was to know the issues faced by the people living here and check the functioning of the public institutions. She appreciated the people for expressing their issues in a decent way adding that the development is a continuous process and District Administration is committed for upliftment of all corners of the district especially border areas like Budnamal.

The DC passed on spot directions to the concerned officers for resolving the issues raised by the people in the shortest possible time.

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR JAMMU AND KASHMIR SERVICES SELECTION BOARD CPO Chowk, Panjirthi, Jammu/Zamzam Complex, Rambagh, Srinagar

Subject: Final Selection List of the candidates for the posts of Junior Stenographer, Junior Scale Stenographer and Steno Typist for UT Cadre, Divisional Cadres and various District Cadres, advertised Vide Notification Nos. 04, 05, 06 and 07 of 2020 and 01, 02 and 03 of 2021. Release of Waiting List for Item Nos. 459, 476 and 472 thereof.

### NOTIFICATION

Whereas, the J&K Services Selection Board (JKSSB) received Indents from various departments for the posts of Junior Stenographer, Junior Scale Stenographer, Personal Assistant and Steno Typist for UT, Divisional and various District Cadres for making direct recruitment to these posts, as per following break up:

Name of / Cadre of post	OM	SC	ST	OSC	ALC/IB	RBA	PSP	EWS	TOTAL
Junior Stenographer / Junior Scale Stenographer/Steno typist	117	24	15	03	05	39	04	10	217

Whereas, the Board advertised these 217 posts, vide Notification Nos. 04, 05, 06 and 07 of 2020 and 01, 02 & 03 of 2021, for seeking applications from the eligible candidates and the Computer Based Written Test (CBT) for these posts was held on 29.11.2022; and

Whereas, the selection committee framed the Final Selection List for these posts of Junior Stenographer/ Junior Scale Stenographer/ Steno Typist, which was subsequently approved in the 227th Board Meeting and notified vide No. JKSSB/23/2023-03 (E-7164134) dated 30.05.2023; and

Whereas, the Waiting List for these posts was not forwarded with the main Selection List as it was a Combined Selection and as per the Board Regulations, the Waiting List for such selections shall be forwarded only upon the receipt of such requests from the concerned departments. Further, the provisions for drawing the Waiting Lists were also omitted altogether; and

Whereas vide S.O 134 dated 28th February, 2024, the provisions for preparation of the Waiting Lists were revived and, vide Letter No. Rev-NG/13/2023-7152177 dated 15.05.2024, a communication was received from Revenue Department/Financial Commissioner (Revenue), for furnishing the Waiting List against three Non-joining candidates; Whereas, the Selection Committee constituted for these posts, having regard to the candidature, merit/preference of the candidates, prepared Waiting List in respect of three (03) eligible candidates in the respective category/cadre (shown in Annexure to this notification), which was subsequently placed and approved in the 272nd Board Meeting.

Now, therefore, after taking into consideration all the aforementioned factors, the Waiting List for the posts of Junior Scale Stenographer, Revenue Department, advertised Vide Notification No. 02 of 2021 dated 26.03.2021, is hereby notified in respect of eligible candidates as per Annexure-A to this notification. It is further ordered that:

- The above Waiting List shall be subject to outcome of writ petition(s)/OA(s), if any, pending in the court of law.
- The Waiting list shall also be subject to the outcome of any pending enquiry, involving candidate(s), figuring in the Selection/Waiting List.
- Formal recommendations to the concerned indenting department shall be made separately.
- The candidate(s) whose recommendation is kept withheld shall submit the requisite documents/certificates within a period of one month.
- The Selection of the candidates has been made on the basis of self- declaration/Certificates submitted by them and if at any stage, it comes to the light that any candidate(s) has submitted false information or has secured selection in the list on the basis of false documents/certificates, the selection shall be liable to cancellation at any stage.

DIPK-657/24  
May 25 2024

Sachin Jamwal) JKAS, Secretary,  
J&K Services Selection Board,

## DDC Reasi reviews working of District Industries Centre

**HT News Network**

REASI, MAY 25: District Development Commissioner Vishesh Mahajan today chaired a meeting to review the working of District Industries Centre, Reasi.

DDC asked the functionaries to explore the scope of industrialization in the least touched areas of the district.

DIC General Manager Mohammed Anwar Bandy, gave a detailed power point presentation on the functioning of the department including the implementation of different schemes launched by the Govt. viz New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS) 2021, Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) scheme, PM Vishwakarma & Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021. The DDC stressed on maximum sponsorship under PMEGP and other self-employment schemes and increasing the number of Registrations under the New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS) 2021.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Reasi Sukhdev Singh Sambyal, Joint Director Chief Planning officer Narinder Kumar, Functional Manager DIC Ankur Sharma and IPO DIC Adeish Singh.

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## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS) Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate. PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of ARFAT ASIF S/O ASIF AHMAD GANIE R/O SALOOSA Tehsil Khoie Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 13/10/2020 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE  
1ST CLASS

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS) Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate. PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of S/O MOHSIN ASHRAF GANIE S/O MOHAMMAD ASHRAF GANIE R/O MANAGAM Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 13/09/2015 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE  
1ST CLASS

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The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SABREENA NAZIR D/O NAZIR AHMAD GANIE R/O BURZAWACHAN Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 19/06/2006 and event has been shown to be occurred at Home for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE  
1ST CLASS

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My Name has been wrongly written in Ladakh resident certificate as Zaheer abbas S/O Ali mohmed R/O chaniound kargil. As my actual Name is as Zaheer abbas S/O Ali Mohmmad R/O chaniound kargil. Now I want to correct it. Anybody having any objection may contact tehsildar kargil within the period of 7 days.

ZAHEER ABBAS  
S/O ALI MOHAMMAD  
R/O CHANIGOUND KARGIL

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My Name has been wrongly written in SC certificate as ZAHEER ABBAS S/O ALI MOHAMMAD R/O CHANIGOUND KARGIL. As my actual Name is as ZAHEER ABBAS S/O ALI MOHAMMAD R/O CHANIGOUND KARGIL. Now I want to correct it. Anybody having any objection may contact tehsildar kargil within the period of 7 days.

ZAHEER ABBAS  
S/O ALI MOHAMMAD  
R/O CHANIGOUND KARGIL

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My Fathers Name has been wrongly written in Ladakh resident certificate as ZAHEER ABBAS S/O ALI MOHMED R/O CHANIGOUND KARGIL. As my actual Name is as Zaheer abbas S/O Ali Mohmmad R/O chaniound kargil. Now I want to correct it. Anybody having any objection may contact tehsildar kargil within the period of 7 days.

ZAHEER ABBAS  
S/O ALI MOHAMMAD  
R/O CHANIGOUND KARGIL

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My Name has been wrongly written in ST certificate as ZAHEER ABBAS S/O ALI MOHAMMAD R/O CHANIGOUND KARGIL. As my actual Name is as ZAHEER ABBAS S/O ALI MOHAMMAD R/O CHANIGOUND KARGIL. Now I want to correct it. Anybody having any objection may contact tehsildar kargil within the period of 7 days.

ZAHEER ABBAS  
S/O ALI MOHAMMAD  
R/O CHANIGOUND KARGIL

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## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS) Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate. PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of ZUHAAN BIN MUDASIR S/O MUDASIR NABI MARAZI R/O BAGH ISLAM SOPORE Tehsil SOPORE Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 31/08/2021 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH Kreeri for issuance of delay order .In this connection .

if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE  
1ST CLASS

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS) Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate. PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of HAZIQ SHABIR S/O SHABIR AHMAD BHAT R/O HAIL Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 29/03/2023 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH Kreeri for issuance of delay order .In this connection .

if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE  
1ST CLASS

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS) Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate. PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD USMAN BHAT S/O SHAFIQ AHMAD BHAT R/O VIZER Tehsil WAGOORA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 17/01/2019 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH Kreeri for issuance of delay order .In this connection .

if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE  
1ST CLASS

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my Passport under passport number V8693657 date of issue 14-07-2022. Now I am applying for its Duplicate if anybody have any objection in this He/She may contact Passport office Srinagar within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.



MEHRAJ GULZAR KHAN  
S/O GULZAR AHMAD KHAN  
R/O SHERAPORA TILGAM, BARAMULLA



EDITORIAL

## Wake up & close the schools for summer vacation in Jammu division

Few days back an order got circulated on the social media according to which the educational institutions of the Jammu division will observe the summer vacation from Monday May 27, 2024. The order was supposed to be issued by the Directorate of School Education, Jammu and nobody doubted the authenticity of the government order. The order was welcomed by one and all since the entire Jammu division is reeling under severe heat wave.

Dashing the hopes of the school children and their parents, the concerned department came out with an order saying that the order about the summer vacations is a fake one. The department said that the summer vacation has not been announced as yet and as such the students will have to attend the classes for the time being. This has somewhat disappointed the students and their parents as they want early vacation.

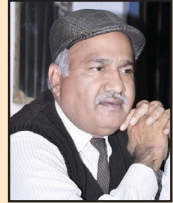
Given the fact that the heat wave has taken a toll on the people living in different parts of the country including Jammu it would be in tune if the summer vacations for the educational institutions are announced at the earliest. Although the timing for the educational institutions has been changed, still then the children are vulnerable to heat stroke as the schools close in the afternoon.

The administration should not waste any more time and directions should be issued to the concerned department so that the order for the closure of educational institutions is issued. The prime concern for all should be the safety of the children and there should be no compromise in this regard. The impact of the heat wave can be felt in Srinagar and going by the same one can easily judge the weather situation in Jammu more so during the day time.

The situation is more challenging since there are both scheduled and unscheduled power cuts in the Jammu division. In this extreme weather situation it is important that round the clock power supply is ensured for the people of winter capital of the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir. Once power goes off the people become restless and they look for different means to keep themselves cool.

It is quite possible that the heat wave will continue for some more days and the people of Jammu are up against many odds in the near future. People more so the children and their parents have hopes that the Directorate of School Education, Jammu will issue the order in a day or two so that there is relief for one and all.

# Summer break can be ensuring both physical and intellectual growth for students



Vijay GarG

By engaging in innovation and educational activities, children can make the most of their summer break, ensuring both physical and intellectual growth

School students look forward to the arrival of summer vacations with a great deal of excitement. That period is also one of the happiest phases of a student's life. It also becomes imperative that parents recognise the worth of their children's time at this point. They start to worry about how they will ever let their child utilise his time wisely during those days. On the contrary, children are full of energy and anticipation in those months. However, it becomes troublesome for working parents if their kids are younger and highly energetic. Their daily scheduled activities go wild, making it harder for parents to engage their children in meaningful activities.

Though summer vacation means different to everyone, the significance of summer learning should not be ignored. It is a vital component of children's physical as well as academic health. With just 60 days of summer vacation, every day a child does not participate in summer training represents a setback. Nevertheless, parents can engage their children in a variety of new and entertaining activities.

### Summer Vacation Courses

The hot Indian summer can be the toughest time to endure for some people, especially kids. They can suffer severely if they stay unprepared to beat the heat. Parents should be cautious about the meals their children eat during these hot days so that no additional stress is placed on their digestive systems. In order to avoid digestive and dehydration issues, parents can add watermelon, curd, cucumber, coconut water and seasonal vegetables to their children's meal plans.

Children must begin learning about the contemporary technological environment in which they live. Therefore, parents can engage their kids with engaging and innovative learning products. Trends are as follows:

AI and ML course for kids: There are various courses online to introduce children with futuristic skillset like Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Any career option kids would choose, this skillset will be must.



School students look forward to the arrival of summer vacations with a great deal of excitement. That period is also one of the happiest phases of a student's life. It also becomes imperative that parents recognise the worth of their children's time at this point. They start to worry about how they will ever let their child utilise his time wisely during those days. On the contrary, children are full of energy and anticipation in those months. However, it becomes troublesome for working parents if their kids are younger and highly energetic. Their daily scheduled activities go wild, making it harder for parents to engage their children in meaningful activities. Though summer vacation means different to everyone, the significance of summer learning should not be ignored. It is a vital component of children's physical as well as academic health. With just 60 days of summer vacation, every day a child does not participate in summer training represents a setback. Nevertheless, parents can engage their children in a variety of new and entertaining activities.

Students should opt for courses which consist of Python Coding, Generative-AI prompt writing and Industry Projects like Website & App Building, Kids and parents should not get afraid of new technologies rather take these as an opportunity to outsmart in the future job market. Learning AI tools will upgrade the performance quality of culturally active students also. Learning AI-ML will prepare the students for upcoming innovation and robotics related competitions too. The best outcome will be grabbing an online internship. It will help the kids become more confident for the future.

Summer specialised Innovation Based Online Experiments: Students and Parents should look for online innovation based experiments or projects which will not only provide a project kit but also consist of live sessions to understand the science and technology of the project. Students should be able to represent the projects in schools too. Some attractive projects could be Laser Home Security System, Rain Water Detection and automatic cloth retrieval machine, Automatic Smart

Roof, Parking Occupancy Indicator, Smart Blind Stick etc.

Apart from the ones mentioned above, there are many other innovative activities which can be explored by the parents to increase their children's confidence and interest during summer holidays. Moreover, learning is an endless process. School kids need to gain knowledge about new things every day that are useful for their career and educational growth. Some of the most important knowledge for kids during the vacation will be sustainability, space technology, Electric Vehicle technology, Autonomous Car technology, Flying Taxi system and drone technology etc. Thus, during the next summer vacation, students may simply PLAY, LEARN, EAT, REPEAT by contemplating these mentioned methods of utilising perfect and productive holidays.

Vijay GarG Educational columnist

# The Death Be Of Wetlands In Kashmir



By Mool Raj

Introduction: Kashmir often referred to as "Paradise on Earth," is renowned for its stunning landscapes, majestic mountains, and serene lakes. Among its natural treasures, the wetlands stand out as vital ecosystems that not only enhance the region's beauty but also play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. However, these wetlands, including the once-glorious Hokarsar Wetland, are facing severe degradation due to human activities and lack of proper management. This article delves into the current state of Kashmir's wetlands, the reasons behind their deterioration, and the urgent need for comprehensive conservation efforts.

The Importance Of Wetlands: Wetlands are unique ecosystems characterized by water-saturated soils, distinct vegetation, and diverse wildlife. In Kashmir, wetlands provide numerous ecological benefits:

- 1. Biodiversity Hotspots:** Wetlands support a wide variety of plant and animal species, including several migratory birds that travel thousands of miles to breed and feed in these habitats.
- 2. Flood Control:** Wetlands act as natural sponges, absorbing excess water during heavy rains and reducing the risk of floods.
- 3. Water Purification:** They filter pollutants from water, improving water quality.
- 4. Climate Regulation:** Wetlands store significant amounts of carbon, helping to mitigate.

**The Decline Of Kashmir's Wetlands:** Despite their ecological significance, Kashmir's wetlands are rapidly deteriorating. Key factors contributing to their decline include:

- 1. Urbanization And Encroachment:** Rapid urban expansion and illegal encroachments have led to the shrinking of wetland areas. Housing developments, road construction, and other infrastructure projects often encroach on wetland boundaries, reducing their size and capacity.
- 2. Pollution:** Industrial discharge, agricultural runoff, and untreated sewage have polluted many wetlands, disrupting the delicate ecological balance and harming wildlife.



**3. Lack Of Proper Management:** Despite significant investments aimed at wetland conservation, there is little evidence of effective on-ground implementation. Bureaucratic inefficiencies and mismanagement have hindered progress, leaving wetlands neglected.

**4. Climate Change:** Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns due to climate change have also impacted wetland ecosystems, altering water levels and affecting biodiversity.

**Case study: hokarsar wetland:** Hokarsar Wetland, often hailed as the "Queen of Wetlands" in Kashmir, exemplifies the dire state of the region's wetlands. Once a thriving habitat for numerous migratory birds, Hokarsar is now on the brink of collapse.

**Current Condition:** Today, Hokarsar presents a dismal picture. The wetland is choked with silt, and invasive plant species have taken over large areas. A dredging machine, procured to clean the wetland, lies idle, symbolizing the lack of follow-through in conservation efforts. Despite substantial investments, there is little to show in terms of effective habitat restoration or pollution control.

**IMPACT ON WILDLIFE:** The degradation of Hokarsar has severely impacted its avian population. Migratory birds that once flocked to this wetland are now finding it inhospitable. The shrinking habitat and poor water quality have reduced the availability of food and nesting sites, leading to a decline in bird numbers.

The current state of neglect, exemplified by the deterioration of Hokarsar Wetland, underscores the pressing need for action. Effective management, community involvement, and transparent use of funds are critical to reversing the decline of these vital ecosystems. With

concerted efforts, it is possible to restore the health of Kashmir's wetlands, ensuring they continue to support biodiversity, mitigate floods, purify water, and enhance the region's natural beauty for generations to come.

**Government Initiatives And Shortcomings:** Over the years, various government initiatives have aimed to revitalize Kashmir's wetlands. These include:

- 1. Financial Investments:** Significant funds have been allocated for wetland restoration projects, aiming to dredge silt, remove invasive species, and improve water quality.
- 2. Policy Framework:** Policies and regulations have been formulated to protect wetland areas from encroachment and pollution.

**3. Awareness Campaigns:** Efforts have been made to raise awareness among local communities about the importance of wetlands and the need for their conservation. Despite these efforts, the results have been underwhelming. Key shortcomings include:

- 1. Implementation Gaps:** There is a significant gap between policy formulation and implementation. Bureaucratic delays and lack of coordination among agencies have stalled progress.
- 2. Misuse Funds And Mismanagement:** Instances of misuse of funds and mismanagement have diverted funds away from actual conservation efforts. Resources intended for wetland restoration are often misused, leaving projects incomplete.

**3. Lack of Community Involvement:** Effective conservation requires active participation from local communities. However, many initiatives have failed to engage local residents meaningfully, leading to limited community support.

**The Way Forward:** Comprehensive Conservation Strategies. To prevent the complete loss of Kashmir's wetlands, a multi-faceted approach is needed. Key strategies include: To prevent the complete loss of Kashmir's wetlands, a multi-faceted approach is needed. Key strategies include:

- 1. Strengthening Legal Frameworks:** Robust legal protections must be enforced to prevent encroachment and pollution. This includes strict penalties for violators and regular monitoring of wetland areas.
- 2. Effective utilization of Funds:** Transparent and accountable mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that funds allocated for wetland conservation are used effectively. This includes regular audits and public disclosure of expenditure.
- 3. Community engagement:** Local communities must be actively involved in conservation efforts. This can be achieved through awareness campaigns, capacity-building programs, and incentivizing community-led initiatives.
- 4. Scientific Research And Monitoring:** Continuous scientific research and monitoring are essential to understand the health of wetlands and the impact of conservation measures. Data-driven approaches can help in devising effective strategies for restoration.
- 5. Climate Adaptation Strategies:** Wetland conservation efforts must incorporate climate adaptation strategies to address the impacts of climate change. This includes measures to maintain water levels, protect against extreme weather events, and preserve biodiversity.
- 6. Sustainable Tourism:** Promoting sustainable tourism can generate revenue for conservation efforts while raising awareness about the importance of wetlands. Eco-friendly tourism practices should be encouraged to minimize environmental impact.

**Conclusion:** Kashmir's wetlands are invaluable ecological treasures that need urgent and sustained conservation efforts. The current state of neglect, exemplified by the deterioration of Hokarsar Wetland, underscores the pressing need for action. Effective management, community involvement, and transparent use of funds are critical to reversing the decline of these vital ecosystems. With concerted efforts, it is possible to restore the health of Kashmir's wetlands, ensuring they continue to support biodiversity, mitigate floods, purify water, and enhance the region's natural beauty for generations to come.

The author is a columnist and freelance writer



# Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha Election: ECI establishes 163 special polling stations to enhance electoral experience

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY25: With an aim to ensure maximum voter participation besides making the electoral process pleasant and enriching, the Election Commission of India (ECI) had established 163 special polling stations of different categories for voters in Anantnag- Rajouri Parliamentary Constituency (PC) which went for polling today in the sixth phase and last phase of general elections to Lok Sabha 2024.

These women manned, youth manned, PwDs manned, Green Polling Stations, Border Polling Stations, Model Polling Stations and Unique Polling Stations were designed to cater specifically to women, youth, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) besides promoting eco-friendly prac-



tices in the region. The polling stations were established under specific themes in all five districts of Anantnag- Rajouri Parliamentary Constituency.

In Anantnag district, seven women manned, seven PwDs manned, one youth manned, four green, one unique and twenty nine model polling stations were

established. Similarly, three women manned, one PwDs manned, four youth manned, three green, twenty border, two unique and nineteen model polling stations were established for ease of voters of Rajouri district.

Likewise, three women manned, three PwD manned, three youth manned, six

green, eight border, three unique and four model polling station were established in Poonch district. Besides, three women manned, three PwDs manned, one youth, one green, two unique and fifteen model polling stations were established in Kulgam district.

In Shopian (Zainpora AC only) district, one women manned, one PwDs manned, one youth manned, one green and three model polling station were established.

The newly established polling stations aim to revolutionize the electoral process by ensuring accessibility and representation for all segments of society. With a special focus on women, youth and PwDs, these stations had been equipped with amenities tailored to meet their unique needs, fostering an environment conducive to active participation in the democratic process.

## RDD Ramban conducts cleanliness drive in Panchayat Maitra-A

HT News Network



RAMBAN, MAY 25: Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department today organized a cleanliness drive under Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen at Panchayat Maitra-A Block Ramban with emphasis on cleanliness and disposal of waste.

The RDD officials led by Block Development Officer Yasir Wani, besides locals took part in the cleanliness drive and resolved to strive for cleanliness, sanitation and hygiene in and around their houses and vicinity.

Streets, roads and vicinities of Panchayat were cleared and the collected waste was disposed of in an eco-friendly way. On the occasion, the BDO sensitized the locals about different factors responsible for creating garbage and unhygienic conditions in and around their houses.

They were motivated to protect the environment and maintain hygiene.

The public cooperation was sought to achieve the target of Sampoorna Swachta in Gram Panchayats across the district.

## DDMA issues Advisory; cautions against swimming in open Water bodies

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAY 25 In view of the prevailing weather conditions and forecast of sustained high temperatures till 29th of May 2024 by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) Srinagar Station, the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) today issued an advisory asking masses especially children to desist from swimming in open water bodies. As per the advisory, the general public especially children have been advised to refrain from bathing swimming in open water bodies including River Jhelum and its Tributaries, Dal Lake without Expert Guidance and supervision and Protective Equipment including but not restricted to life saving jackets to prevent drowning incidents.

Heads of Educational Institutions have an added responsibility to ensure the safety of the students, who are at a higher risk of facing such mishaps.

Further, local Shikara Wallas are advised to keep a close vigil in the Dal Lake to avoid any mishap.

All Tehsilidars (Responsible Officers) shall activate and sensitize the already constituted Zonal Committees in their respective jurisdictions and spread awareness among the vulnerable population to prevent any untoward incident. They shall also maintain a close liaison with their Police

## ADC Handwara inspects several schools

HT News Network



KUPWARA, MAY 25: In order to ensure punctuality and quality education in Government schools, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Handwara, Aziz Ahmad Rather today paid surprise visit to different schools of Handwara sub division and inspected their functioning.

During the visit, the ADC inspected Government Central School Devaspora and Government Boys High School Shailhall and interacted with the staff members of these schools. He enquired them about the performance and progress of the academic and co-curricular activities.

On the occasion, the ADC impressed upon the teachers and staff of these schools to work with added zeal and enthusiasm to make good atmosphere for quality education and best performance. He also interacted with the students.

## Police destroy Poppy cultivation in Handwara

HT News Network

May 25: As a part of persistent efforts to curb the menace of drugs in the society, Police along with civil administration launched a special drive against illegal cultivation of Poppy in Bonibath Vilgam Handwara.

Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 32/2024 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Vilgam and investigation has been initiated.

General public have appreciated the action of the police and civil administration and has urged to continue this drive in other areas also. J&K Police appeals to the public to extend their cooperation in this drive against drug abuse

## CHINAR PREMIER LEAGUE 3RD EDITION MACC Kashmir Lost the match by 6 runs but qualifies Quarter Finals as per Net Run Rate

HT News Network



In an ongoing Chinar Premier League edition 3rd Organized by Mehboob ul Alam Sports and sponsored by Kashmir Harvard Educational Institute at Radapora Nowhatta, Srinagar a league match played between MACC Kashmir and Lions Ganderbal. Batting first Lions Ganderbal set a target of 207 runs in allotted 20 overs for the loss of 10 wickets. Sahil of Lions Ganderbal contributed 58 runs for his team. In reply MACC Kashmir were managed 201 runs in allotted 20 overs and lost the match by 6 runs. Younis Taploo, Auqib, Faiq & Zahid of MACC Kashmir contributed 71, 33, 28 & 22 respectively for their team. At the end Sahil of Ganderbal Lions declared Man of the match for his all-round performance.

## Week long Photo Exhibition titled "Resilient Heritage" begins at Kala Kendra

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAY 25: Principal Secretary, Culture and Tribal Affairs, Suresh Kumar Gupta, today inaugurated a 7-day photo exhibition by noted journalist Sunny Dua at Kala Kendra.

The event, titled as "Resilient Heritage", is being organized by the Kala Kendra Society, Jammu with theme "Heritage of Jammu and Kashmir".

Sunny Dua, speaking at the inaugural function, shared insights from his decade-long effort to document hundreds of heritage buildings, sites and monuments. He told that about 150 pantographs are on display across five galleries in Kala Kendra, featuring both popular heritage sites and lesser-known buildings, including private Havelis.

Suresh Kumar Gupta praised the exhibition for showcasing the J&K's rich cultural inheritance. He highlighted that these sites and buildings connect us to our historical roots. He also mentioned about government's expedited efforts being initiated to restore numerous heritage



buildings including the Mubarak Mandi Complex, a significant portion of which is expected to be restored to its pristine glory within the next few months.

The Principal Secretary commended Sunny Dua for his meticulous documentation of region's rare heritage and recalled his association with the senior journalist.

Kuwarani Ritu Singh, founder Chairperson DPS and MHS Social and Educational foundation, stated that exhibited photographs representing rich heritage of Jammu and Kashmir should be documented in a coffee table book. She also assured all support in preserving and documenting the precious cultural her-

itage of the region.

Dr. Javaid Rahi, Secretary of the Kala Kendra Society, stated that the event's primary objective is to promote a deeper understanding, appreciation and awareness about the monuments, cultural sites besides promoting heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

The event was attended by eminent Dogri writer Lalit Magotra, noted educationists Veena Handa, Vijay Lakshmi Gupta, Ritupal Singh, Sangeeta Sharma, Arvind Kotwal, Shivani Khajouria, Dr. Vikram Handa, Manesha Malhotra and Sirvinderjeet Singh along with journalists, artists and other distinguished guests.

# Dear Daddy .....

## A tribute on 32th anniversary



Dr. Sartaj Manzoor Parry

As we commemorate the 32nd anniversary of your passing, I find myself reflecting deeply on the profound influence you've had on my life. Despite the years that have gone by, your presence remains vividly etched in my heart and mind. You were more than a grandfather to me; you were my hero, mentor, and guide. I cherish the countless hours we spent together, your laughter filling the room as you recounted your adventures and the lessons you learned. These stories were more than just tales; they were life lessons that have guided me throughout my journey. Your wisdom and kindness knew no bounds. You instilled in me the values of honesty, hard work, and respect for others. These principles have become the cornerstone of my character, and I owe so much of who I am today to you. I miss the sound of your voice and the way your comforting words could make everything seem alright.

One of my dearest memories is sitting on your knee as you fed me chewed pieces of bread. Your early departure left some experiences locked in my heart, and I never fully got to savor those moments. I always dreamed of being your driver in your old age, walking in your shadow, and receiving your guidance at every step. Though I have achieved everything necessary for a common man's survival, your absence still brings me to tears. Dear Daddy, I have never cried for anything or shed away

from challenges, but I cannot fill the void you left. All your four sons are well settled now, and many of your grandchildren, having attained doctorates, are making their mark across the country. Your love for nature and life's simple pleasures remains with me. Whenever I see a beautiful sunset or hear birds chirping, I think of you and the joy you found in the world around you. These small moments remind me that you are never truly gone but live on in the beauty of nature and our shared memories.

Daddy, I wish I could sit with you once more, hear your voice, and seek your advice. There are so many things I want to share with you, so many achievements and challenges where your guidance would have been invaluable. Yet, I know you are still watching over me, guiding me in your own way, and that gives me strength. I remember being a small two-year-old boy napping on the handle of your bicycle and the delicious ladoos you always made for me. The taste of the chewed bread you fed me still lingers as the sweetest memory, a flavor I have yet to find again, even in the sweetest things. Had you not left early, I feel I could have reached

the moon by now.

On this day, as we mark thirty-two years since you left us, I feel a profound sense of loss but also immense gratitude. I am grateful for the time we had together, for the love and lessons you gave me, and for the legacy you left behind. I strive to honor you in all that I do, living a life that would make you proud. I honor your bravery on May 20, 1992, as you performed your duties as a Headmaster of Govt. Girls High School Hajin. On that day, two masked men armed with AK47s barged into the school premises and kidnapped you. Your courage in facing the Pakistan-trained militants without any weapons is inspiring. With nothing but your bare hands, you subdued enemies armed with AK47s, creating a historic example of how to defeat those who threaten society. Your final act and words before your last breath fill me with pride, knowing that your blood runs in my veins. Thank you, Daddy, for being my rock, my inspiration, and my guiding light. You are forever in my heart, and I will carry your memory with me always.

With all my love,  
\*Dr. Sartaj Manzoor Parry\*  
\*Assistant Professor, Department of English\*  
\*Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Science and Commerce College, Bhopal\*

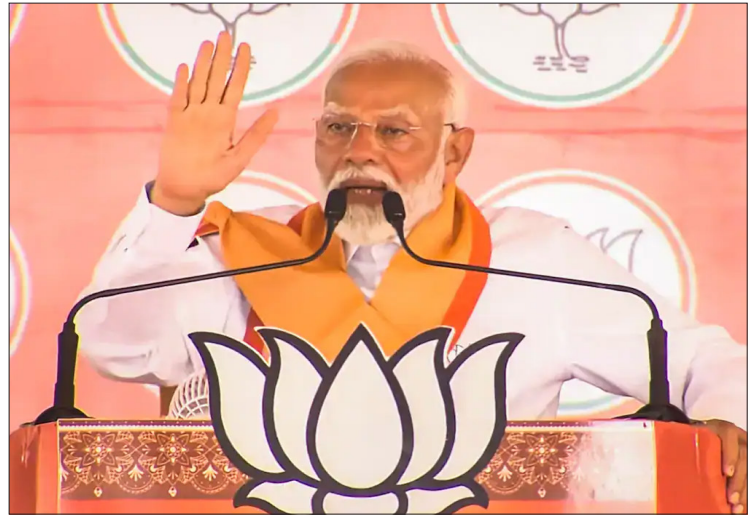


# INDIA Bloc Doing "Mujra" For Its "Vote Bank": PM Modi At Bihar Rally

HT News Network

Bikram, Bihar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today vowed to thwart alleged attempts to rob Dalits and backward classes of reservations by the INDIA bloc which he accused of "enslavement" and performing "mujra" for Muslim vote bank. PM Modi launched the blistering attack at a rally in the Pataliputra Lok Sabha constituency, about 40 kms from Patna, where he also blamed parties like RJD and Congress for SCs, STs and OBCs "being deprived of quotas" in minority institutions.

"Bihar is the land which has given a new direction to the fight for social justice. I wish to declare on its soil that I will foil the plans of INDIA bloc to rob SCs, STs and OBCs of their rights and divert these to Muslims. They may remain enslaved and perform 'mujra' to please their vote bank", said the PM. He also alleged that the opposition alliance was banking on the support of those who were indulging in "vote jihad" and referred to the Calcutta High Court order that struck down the West Bengal government's decision to include a



number of Muslim groups in the list of OBCs. PM Modi was canvassing for two-term BJP MP Ram Kripal Yadav and remarked sarcastically "many people have such a quarrel with Lord Ram that they may frown upon even the name of Ram Kripal". Referring to "Maner Ka laddoo", a renowned sweetmeat named after a nearby locality, PM Modi said at the rally, "Have these ready for June 04... Your vote is too significant. It is not just to elect your MP but to choose your PM".

The Lok Sabha election results will be out on June 4. PM Modi also mocked RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav, without mentioning him by name, saying "in the age of LED bulbs, they are moving around with a lantern that lit up only their house while keeping the entire Bihar in the dark". Notably, Lalu Prasad Yadav's eldest daughter Misa Bharti is contesting from Patliputra for the third time in a row. He added, "India needs a PM who can do justice to the country's

might on the world stage. But INDIA bloc seems intent on playing musical chairs with the top post".

PM Modi said scions of families heading Congress, RJD, NCP, Samajwadi Party and others were all pining for brief stints as Prime Minister.

The PM also promised the people that his next five years in power would ensure faster development for Bihar with better electricity supply and more pucca houses even as he slammed the previous Congress-led UPA government for lacking the resolve to provide free foodgrains to the common people. Mocking at the predictions of many pollsters who have forecast a dip in the NDA's tally, PM Modi said, "INDIA bloc has come up with its exit polls even before the elections conclude. Soon they might go back to crying hoarse on EVMS". PM Modi launched the blistering attack at a rally in the Pataliputra Lok Sabha constituency, about 40 kms from Patna, where he also blamed parties like RJD and Congress for SCs, STs and OBCs "being deprived of quotas" in minority institutions.

# PM Modi's Struggling Rival Rahul Gandhi Votes In Elections: Foreign Media

HT News Network

Barmer: The scorching heat continues in New Delhi: Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi voted today as the country's six-week election resumed, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rivals accusing his government of unjustly targeting them in criminal probes.

PM Modi, 73, remains roundly popular after a decade in office and his ruling BJP is widely expected to win a third term next month after a poll hit by recurrent early summer heatwaves.

His prospects have been further bolstered by several criminal investigations into his opponents, sparking concerns from UN rights chief Volker Turk. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi cast his ballot at a polling station in Delhi, where temperatures were forecast to reach 43 degree Celsius.

A son, grandson, and great-grandson of former prime ministers, Rahul Gandhi paused after voting to take a selfie with his mother Sonia Gandhi, but did not speak to crowds of reporters.

The scion of a dynasty that dominated Indian politics for decades, he was convicted of criminal libel last year after a complaint by BJP leader.

His two-year prison sentence saw him disqualified from parliament until the



verdict was suspended by the Supreme Court.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, 55, and chief of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), who was detained in March in a long-running graft case, also voted today.

The Supreme Court bailed Mr Kejriwal earlier this month, and he returned to the campaign trail. "Modi has started a very dangerous mission," he said soon after his release. "Modi will send all opposition leaders to jail," he said.

The Congress is spearheading an Opposition alliance of more than two dozen parties competing jointly against PM Modi, including the AAP.

Mr Kejriwal's organisation grew out of an anti-corruption movement a decade ago, and has been elected to office in Delhi and Punjab, but has struggled to establish itself as a nationwide force.

# Lok Sabha Polls: President Murmu Casts Vote At All-Women Polling Booth

HT News Network

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu cast her vote at an all-women polling booth in New Delhi constituency here on Saturday in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha polls, officials said.

Droupadi Murmu reached the booth, which was decorated in pink and white colours, inside the President's Estate, around 9 am, they said.

Later, Droupadi Murmu held up her inked finger as she posed for photos for media persons against a backdrop that read "I'm a proud voter".

"President Droupadi Murmu joined the queue and cast her vote at the polling station in Dr Rajendra Prasad Kendriya Vidyalaya inside the Rashtrapati Bhavan complex. It is a pink booth managed by women staff," the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a post on X.

Voting for seven Lok Sabha constituencies of Delhi -- Chandni Chowk, North East Delhi, East Delhi, New Delhi, North West Delhi, West Delhi and South Delhi -- began at 7 am. Droupadi Murmu, who hails from Odisha, was sworn in as the 15th President of India on July 25, 2022.

She received her new voter identifica-



tion card with the updated address on November 28 last year. Her old voter ID carried her Odisha address. Droupadi Murmu reached the booth, which was decorated in pink and white colours, inside the President's Estate, around 9 am, they said. "President Droupadi Murmu joined the queue and cast her vote at the polling station in Dr Rajendra Prasad Kendriya Vidyalaya inside the Rashtrapati Bhavan complex. It is a pink booth managed by women staff," the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a post on X.

Voting for seven Lok Sabha constituencies of Delhi -- Chandni Chowk, North East Delhi, East Delhi, New Delhi, North West Delhi, West Delhi and South Delhi.

# "Pattern In Creating False Narratives": Poll Body Amid Voter Turnout Data Row

HT News Network

New Delhi: The Election Commission (EC) today released the absolute number of voters for all the completed phases - six of the seven phases - of the Lok Sabha elections 2024. In a statement, the EC also said it has "noted a pattern of false narratives and mischievous design to vitiate the electoral process."

The EC statement came a day after the Supreme Court adjourned - till after the Lok Sabha election - petitions seeking release of voter turnout data, including votes polled and/or rejected, within 48 hours of end of polling at each booth. The petitions had sought directions to the EC to compile and publish this data on its website after each phase, beginning with the next round of voting in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The EC feels duly strengthened by the Supreme Court's observations and verdict on the process of release of turnout data, the poll body said in a statement today while vot-



ing was going on in the sixth phase. The final phase is on June 1. "This brings upon the Commission, a higher responsibility to serve the cause of electoral democracy with undeterred resolution," the EC said. Commission releases absolute number of voters for all completed phases of General Elections 2024. The EC said the whole exercise of release of turnout data from the day elections began on April 19 has been accurate, consistent and in accordance

with election laws and "without any discrepancy whatsoever." The EC refuted allegations about delay in releasing voter turnout data. It said the data was always available 24x7 on the "facilitator voter turnout app from 9.30 am on the polling day in each phase." It (app) publishes estimated voter turnout on two hourly basis till 1730 hours (5.30 pm). After 1900 hours (7 pm) when the polling parties start arriving, data is continuously updated. By midnight on the poll day, the voter turnout app will show best estimated "Close of Poll (COP)" data in percentage form," the EC said. "Different media organisations pick up data at different points in time as per their convenience to report next morning. After the arrival of the poll parties, depending on geographical and weather conditions, the data of voters attains finality on P+1 or P+2 or P+3 (p denotes polling day) or more days, depending upon arrival of parties and number of re-polls, if any," the EC said in the statement.

# Man Uses Voice-Changing App To Pose As Woman Professor, Rapes 7 Students

HT News Network

Bhopal: He is illiterate, but that didn't stop him from leveraging technology to commit a string of heinous crimes.

Using an app to morph his voice, Brajesh Kushwaha, a former mill worker, would pose as a woman teacher from a college and fool tribal college students from Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi district into believing that she would help them get a scholarship. In a female voice, Kushwaha would tell the students to go to a deserted area where she would send a man to meet them and bring them to her house on a motorcycle. Kushwaha would show up, take the students to a forest and rape them.

Police said he sexually assaulted at least seven tribal college students this way. The survivors have told the police that Kushwaha would wear a helmet, making him difficult to identify. The only giveaway was the fact that he would always wear gloves. This little detail led the police to



Kushwaha, who had burnt his hands while working at a rolling mill in Maharashtra. Kushwaha was arrested on Saturday, along with three alleged accomplices, and the Sidhi district administration has razed his house using a bulldozer.

Inspector General of Police Mahendra Sikarwar said, "A woman approached us and said a man had raped her after luring her to a deserted area in the name of helping her get a scholarship. After our investigation, we identified Brajesh Kushwaha, who has been arrested. He told us that he used to change his voice to a woman's using a cell-phone app. Three of his accomplices have also been

arrested." "The clue that helped us crack the case was the fact that the students' assaulter wore gloves when he met all of them," Mr Sikarwar added. A police official said Kushwaha is illiterate but learned how to use the app as well as extract numbers from phones to identify potential targets. The cyber cell has also issued an advisory, asking people to be careful about the misuse of voice-changing apps. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has ordered the constitution of a nine-member special investigation team to probe the case and check whether Kushwaha had targeted more women.

# PM's "Mujra" Attack On INDIA Bloc, Priyanka Gandhi's "Decorum" Reply

HT News Network

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "mujra" remark at a rally in Bihar today drew a sharp response from Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who said the Prime Minister must maintain the decorum of his post. The remark, made when the Prime Minister was accusing the Opposition of vote bank politics, was panned by other INDIA leaders too.

Mujra is a dance performance widely associated with courtesans.

Addressing a rally in Bihar, the Prime Minister doubled down on his charge that the INDIA bloc plans to rob backward classes of their rights and favour Muslims -- an allegation denied by the Congress and its allies.

"Bihar is the land which has given a new direction to the fight for social justice. I wish to declare on its soil that I will foil the plans of the INDIA bloc to rob SCs, STs and OBCs of their rights and divert these to Muslims. They may remain enslaved and perform 'mujra' to please their vote bank," the Prime Minister said. He also said the people of Bihar have been hurt by remarks against migrants allegedly made by leaders of the Congress in Punjab and Telangana, DMK in Tamil Nadu and Trinamool Congress in West Bengal. In another "mujra jab" targeting the Tejashwi Yadav-led RJD, he said, "These RJD people who keep doing 'mujra' with their lantern (poll symbol) do not have the courage to speak a word in protest."

The Prime Minister went on to say that the Opposition parties will change the Constitution if they are voted to power -- a charge earlier levelled by the



Congress on the ruling BJP. "If they are voted to power, the first thing they would do is to change the Constitution so that even the court is unable to overrule their attempts to divert reservations to Muslims. I have been challenging them to refute me in writing, but they have been reluctant because they have a guilty conscience," he said.

Stressing that the INDIA bloc is headed for a defeat in the ongoing general election, the Prime Minister said, "When the results are out, RJD and Congress workers will be seen tearing off each other's clothes. The royal family of the Congress will put the entire blame of defeat on Mallikarjun Kharge and leave for holiday abroad," he said.

Hitting back, Ms Gandhi Vadra said no Prime Minister would have used such language. "What is Modiji saying? Is it not his responsibility to maintain the decorum of his post? We respect the Prime Minister post. His reality can now be seen. Do not show so much reality to the country. He has forgotten that he represents the country. What will the future generations say," the Congress leader said at a rally with ally and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur.

# NASA To Give Indian Astronauts "Advanced Training" For Joint Mission: US Envoy

HT News Network

Washington: NASA will soon provide advanced training to Indian astronauts to send a joint mission to the International Space Station this year or shortly thereafter, US envoy to India Eric Garcetti has said.

Eric Garcetti made these remarks while speaking at the "US-India Commercial Space Conference: Unlocking Opportunities for US & Indian Space Startups," hosted by the US-India Business Council (USIBC) and the US Commercial Service (USCS) in Bengaluru on Friday.

"NASA will soon provide advanced training to Indian astronauts, with the goal of mounting a joint effort to the International Space Station, hopefully, this year or shortly thereafter, which was one of the promises of our leaders' visit together," Garcetti said.

"And soon we will launch the NISAR satellite from ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Center to monitor all resources, including ecosystems, the Earth's surface, natural hazards, sea level rise, and the cryosphere," Garcetti said, according to a USIBC press statement issued here.

NISAR is a joint Earth-observing mission between NASA and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

"You see whether it's the pursuit of peace and the peaceful use of space, things like the Artemis Accord, we are hand in hand, arm in arm. When it comes to prosperity and jobs, which is a big part of this conference today, it can be produced by startups in this sector, good-paying, high-tech jobs for Indians and for Americans. Space is right there," Garcetti said.

The Artemis Accords lay out a framework for collaborating nations' safe exploration of the moon and beyond.

The day-long event in Bengaluru saw the participation from senior officials from both the US and Indian governments, including Garcetti, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Dr. S Somanath, representatives from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Government of India, as well as prominent leaders from the commercial space industry, industry stakeholders, venture capitalists, and market analysts.



# Smoking May Lead to Weight Gain, Increased Belly Fat

Many don't quit smoking out of fear they will gain weight. Weight gain is typical after quitting smoking because nicotine suppresses appetite.

However, a new study indicates that smoking can also contribute to weight gain. In particular, it increases unhealthy visceral fat.

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

Quitting smoking has many potential health benefits. Trusted Source. It can decrease your risk for heart disease, lung disease, and cancer. It can even add as many as ten years to your life.

Many people would like to quit but are reluctant to try because they fear that they will gain weight. However, according to the findings of a new study, Trusted Source published in the journal *Addiction*, continuing to smoke may also contribute to weight gain.

The study found that both starting smoking and lifetime smoking may increase a person's abdominal fat.

This was especially true for visceral fat, the fat buried in the abdomen. This type of fat is associated with a greater risk of heart disease, stroke, dementia, and diabetes. So, while stopping smoking might lead to some short-term weight gain, in the long run, if you don't stop, you could increase belly fat and put your health at greater risk.

The genetic link between smoking and abdominal fat

To study the problem, researchers at the NNF Center for Basic Metabolic Research at the University of Copenhagen used two large European ancestry studies. These studies included 1.2 million individuals who had started smoking and



more than 450,000 who were lifetime smokers.

The researchers also had body fat distribution data for a study including more than 600,000 people.

They used a technique called "Mendelian randomization" to see whether smoking causes increased body fat.

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

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

They additionally sought to rule out other factors that might have influenced the outcome, such as alcohol use, risk-taking behavior, ADHD, and socioeco-

nomnic status.

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Lauren Mahesri, RDN, LD, from The Pediatric Dietitian, explained that the connection between smoking and a variety of metabolic disorders — such as high cholesterol, insulin resistance, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes — is well known.

"Although the mechanism of this connection is not fully understood, it's likely that

these metabolic disorders are the connection between smoking and increased visceral fat," she stated.

Mahesri also noted that although the

study controlled for certain behavioral factors — like alcohol consumption, exercise, and dietary intake — smoking, poor diet, and a sedentary lifestyle can all contribute to the formation of visceral fat.

Jessie Dickinson, RD, from Nudj Health, further stated that the nicotine in tobacco is directly correlated with cholesterol levels.

"Smoking can raise LDL cholesterol levels (bad cholesterol) and lower HDL cholesterol levels (good cholesterol)," she said, adding that visceral fat is directly linked with high total and LDL cholesterol, low HDL cholesterol, insulin resistance, and metabolic syndrome.

"Overall, most findings suggest that there should be an emphasis on the risk of increased visceral fat (central obesity), insulin resistance, and associated conditions among smokers," she stated.

Why people are afraid of gaining weight if they quit

In the short term, of course, quitting smoking is associated with a small amount of weight gain. In the months after people cease tobacco use, they might gain around 5 to 10 pounds.

According to Mahesri, this occurs because smoking is able to suppress your appetite both physically and behaviorally.

"The nicotine in the cigarettes increases your fullness hormone in your body to physically decrease your hunger," she observed.

"As well, the hand-to-mouth action of smoking can behaviorally lessen your appetite by limiting boredom eating or stress eating."

"Both of these things can lead people to continue smoking in fear of gaining weight if they stop," said Mahesri.

**NEWS**

## Vitamin A Deficiency: Here's How It Affects Your Eye Health



Vitamin A is essential for your body to complete many processes. It is a fat-soluble compound that is present in both vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods. Studies have shown that vitamin A can help prevent certain cancers, support a healthy immune system and promote bone health. Vitamin A can also help prevent and treat acne.

Vitamin A plays a crucial role in maintaining your eye health. Its deficiency can affect your vision and overall eye health in more ways than one. Here, let's discuss how a lack of vitamin A in the body can be detrimental to your overall health.

Vitamin A deficiency can lead to many complications. According to the World Health Organisation, night blindness is one of the first signs of vitamin A deficiency. When left untreated, vitamin A deficiency can contribute to blindness by making the cornea very dry, thus damaging the retina and cornea.

Other eye-related issues linked with vitamin A deficiency include conjunctival xerosis, bitot's spots, corneal xerosis, corneal scarring and more.

In minor cases, one may experience dry eyes, an inability to produce tears.

WHO has also highlighted that an estimated 250,000 - 500,000 children who are vitamin A-deficient become blind every year, and half of them die within 12 months of losing their sight.

The adverse effects of Vitamin A deficiency are not just limited to your eyes. It can contribute to other consequences as well. Some of these include:

- Inflammatory skin conditions and extremely dry skin
- Infertility in both men and women and trouble conceiving naturally
- Delayed growth in children
- Frequent chest and throat infections in children
- Slow healing of wounds
- Frequent acne and breakouts
- Severe deficiency can also negatively affect pregnancy and lactation
- May contribute to slow bone development in children
- Food sources of vitamin A

Several foods are naturally loaded with vitamin A. Some of these include carrots, broccoli, salmon, spinach, sweet potato, mango, watermelon, papaya, apricot, guava, tomatoes, milk and eggs.

## Study May Help Uncover HIV Reservoirs

In a new study, researchers found that by targeting a type of protein, they were able to suppress replication of HIV in certain cells. This is a potential step toward complete elimination of the virus.

A new study published this week in *Cell Chemical Biology* suggests a path forward for eliminating the so-called viral reservoir cells in people with HIV. By targeting a type of protein called the Nef protein, researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine were able to suppress the replication of HIV in target cells, a potential

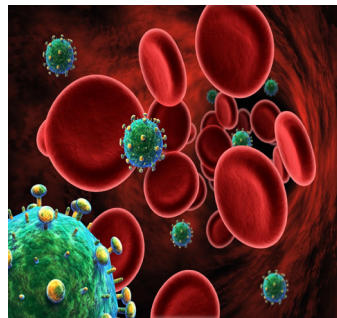
step toward complete elimination of the virus.

The Nef protein helps HIV-infected cells avoid detection by a person's immune system.

Why scientists targeted this protein

The Nef protein was long considered "undruggable" because it provides few ways for any antiviral drugs to bind.

Previous Nef inhibitors, which only bind to those proteins, can block some of its functions but were unable to disrupt others that are essential for HIV infection. If a person has stopped taking antiretroviral drugs but reservoir cells remain because



the Nef protein is helping them hide, the reservoir cells can eventually reactivate and start producing new virus again.

Dr. Lori Emert-Sedlak, Ph.D., a research associate professor in the Department of Microbiol-

ogy and Molecular Genetics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and one of the study's authors, told Healthline that their approach to targeting Nef proteins was based on a type of drug called PROTAC drugs that have been successful in attacking cancer cells.

"PROTAC stands for proteolysis targeting chimeras, which are 'two-headed' small molecules; one end binds selectively to the drug target (HIV Nef in our case) and the other end binds to a cellular machine...that marks the target protein for degradation. The PROTAC, therefore, acts as a bridge between

the target protein and this cellular machine," Emert-Sedlak said. The research for this latest discovery has been in the works for a long time, she added.

"Discovery and development of small molecules that bind selectively to Nef took us about 10 years, and extending the work to the targeted degrader approach required another 3 years," Emert-Sedlak said.

Researchers "synthesized more than 500 unique compounds for this project, all of which had to be screened for activity in a battery of biophysical, biochemical, and virological tests," Emert-Sedlak said.

## How Olivia Munn's Doctor Helped Calculate Her Breast Cancer Risk, Leading to Early Diagnosis

Earlier this month, actor Olivia Munn publicly shared her journey with breast cancer. Munn's doctor shares insight on the assessment test that Munn said saved her life.

Understanding the benefits of knowing your Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Score can help you advocate for yourself.

On March 13, 43-year-old actor Olivia Munn announced on Instagram that she underwent a double mastectomy after being diagnosed with breast cancer.

In her post, she thanked her gynecologist Dr. Thaïs Aliabadi, co-host of the SHE MD Podcast, for calculating her Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Score, which determined that Munn has a 37% lifetime risk of getting breast cancer.

Because of this, Munn qualified for an MRI, which led to an ultrasound and a biopsy that found Luminal B Cancer in both breasts.

In her post, Munn credits the assessment and follow-up preventive MRI screening for saving her life. Just months before, in February 2023, she took a genetic test that looked at 90 different cancer genes, for



1 cancer in her breast tissue. She personally relates to her patients like Munn.

"Olivia's journey is truly remarkable, and as a breast cancer survivor myself, I couldn't be prouder of her," Aliabadi told Healthline. "By raising awareness about the importance of risk assessment and screening, she's not only making a difference in her own life but also in the lives of countless others...I adore her." Aliabadi said Munn's advocacy is a step toward achieving her ultimate goal as a doctor, which is for every female to know their lifetime risk of breast cancer, no matter their family history or lifestyle. "In my office, we calculate the lifetime risk of breast cancer for every single woman," she said. "Knowledge empowers, and it's vital for each individual to advocate for their own health." Any female over age 18 can ask for a breast cancer risk assessment from their doctor or through a specialized healthcare professional in the cancer risk space, such as a genetic counselor, said Sara Pirzadeh-Miller, president-elect of the National Society of Genetic Counselors and associate director of cancer genetics at UT Southwestern.

Dr. Aliabadi also calculated her own risk that led to a diagnosis

Aliabadi also saved her own life after calculating her own lifetime risk of breast cancer. Knowing her risk led to a double mastectomy and, after surgery, the discovery of Stage

## Diabetes At 65? Being Moderately Overweight May Reduce Cardiovascular Death Risk

For those suffering from type 2 diabetes, keeping an ideal body weight is always recommended. However, according to new research, those aged over 65 can remain "moderately overweight" to minimize their risk of dying from any cardiovascular disease.

The findings, based on health data from the UK Biobank, indicate that for adults aged 65 years or younger, maintaining a body mass index (BMI) within the normal range of 23-25 was associated with the lowest risk of dying from cardiovascular disease.

But for those over 65 years old, being moderately overweight with a BMI of 26-28 had the lowest risk.

"Importantly, we demonstrate that optimal BMI for people with type 2 diabetes varies by age, independent of traditional cardio-metabolic risk factors," said Dr. Shaoyong Xu from Xiangyang Central Hospital, Affiliated Hospital of Hubei University of Arts and Science, Xiangyang, China. The findings suggest that for older individuals who are moderately overweight but not obese, maintaining rather than losing weight may be a more practical way of reducing their risk of dying from cardiovascular disease, Xu added.

Maintaining a healthy weight is crucial for reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases, particularly for people with type 2 diabetes who



are predisposed to cardiovascular disease and death.

To conclude, researchers explored the age differences in the association between BMI and risk of cardiovascular death in 22,874 UK Biobank participants with a previous diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.

The average age of all the participants was 59 years, and around 59 per cent were women.

Researchers analysed data in two age groups: the elderly (over 65 years) and the middle-aged (age 65 years or younger). The authors say that in the future, measures of central obesity, such as waist circumference,

would be used to further refine the risk. For those over 65 years old, being moderately overweight with a BMI of 26-28 had the lowest risk of cardiovascular disease. To conclude, researchers explored the age differences in the association between BMI and risk of cardiovascular death in 22,874 UK Biobank participants with a previous diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. The average age of all the participants was 59 years, and around 59 per cent were women.

Researchers analysed data in two age groups: the elderly (over 65 years) and the middle-aged (age 65 years or younger).



## After Justin Langer And Ricky Ponting, Another Legend Opts Out Of India Head Coach Job

Kumar Sangakkara clearly refused any intention of applying for the India head coach's job, citing time issues.

New Delhi:-Rajasthan Royals' Director of Cricket Kumar Sangakkara has admitted that fatigue played a big part in their poor run at the back end of the ongoing IPL, which possibly derailed their campaign. RR, who won eight out of their opening nine matches, were firmly in contention to finish in the top two. But, the Sanju Samson-led side endured a four-match losing streak besides a washout tie, which forced the side to settle for a third-place finish. Although they bounced back with a win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the Eliminator, Sunrisers Hyderabad got the better of RR in Qualifier 2 here on Friday.

"I think it was a great season for us. We started well, and then we lost a close game to SRH in Hyderabad and (in) Delhi also, we put ourselves in winning positions," he said during the post-match media interaction after their 36-run loss to SRH.

"Sometimes you have streaks. RCB lost almost every game at the start and then caught up. That's how T20 goes. All we can do is put ourselves in positions of playoffs and vying for finals, which we did.

"I think all the guys throughout the season played phenomenal cricket. There was a little bit of fatigue at the back end, but it doesn't matter when you're in games like this. You gotta turn up and perform." Chasing a target of 176, RR were 65 for two by the



eighth over, but kept on losing wickets in clusters thereafter, leading to their downfall. Commenting on the defeat, Sangakkara felt the middle-order could have done better.

"It was just a case of being smart and keeping our composure. Unfortunately, when you lose wickets in clusters, it becomes hard," he said.

"Even in the RCB chase, if you lose wickets, it gets tense and close. Unfortunately, we needed a little bit more from our middle-order." RR were also without Jos Buttler, who has been a force for the team in the top order.

While Sangakkara said that international scheduling was something that they couldn't control, he felt that other batters should have stepped up.

"We always say that the best ability is availability, and unfortunately, we lost Jos. He is a big loss, without a doubt," he said.

"When you're in a playoff like this, and you've got that start without Jos, we expect the other batters to also step up." RR have a few players travelling to the Americas for the T20 World Cup next month, namely Avesh Khan, Sanju Samson, Yuzvendra Chahal and Yashasvi Jaiswal.

Avesh has been the side's highest wicket-taker for the season, with 19 wickets in 15 innings at an economy of 9.59, and Sangakkara was all-praise for the fast bowler.

"We traded Devdutt Padikkal (to Lucknow Super Giants) for Avesh because we knew how good he was, and he's shown that through-

out this tournament. And, that's why he's a travelling reserve as well for the World Cup for India," he said. "He's got a great presence and good clarity. He's very good at finishing off in the death. I think he's been phenomenal for RR.

"And, we couldn't task for a better trier. He bowls a lot in training. He's always up for a game. I thought again today he was outstanding."

"Don't have time to commit full-time to an India coaching job" Sangakkara clearly refused any intention of applying for the India head coach's job, citing time issues.

"I have not been approached, and I don't have time to commit full-time to an India coaching job. Happy with my stint with Royals, and let's see how it goes," he concluded. "Even in the RCB chase, if you lose wickets, it gets tense and close. Unfortunately, we needed a little bit more from our middle-order." RR were also without Jos Buttler, who has been a force for the team in the top order.

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## Nadal to play Zverev at farewell French Open as Swiatek, Osaka eye clash

PARIS: Rafa Nadal was handed a tough start to what is expected to be his farewell to the French Open as the record 14-times champion was drawn against fourth seed Alexander Zverev in the first round while women's champion Iga Swiatek and fellow four-time major winner Naomi Osaka are on a second-round collision course.

Defending men's champion Novak Djokovic will begin his quest for a 25th Grand Slam crown against local hope Pierre-Hugues Herbert in his opener.

Unseeded Nadal, who missed his favourite Grand Slam tournament due to injury last year, has plummeted down the rankings during an extended spell on the sidelines and has said he expects to retire after this season.

The pairing drew an audible gasp in the room and the two will meet for the first time since their 2022 semi-final clash at Roland Garros which Nadal won after Zverev suffered an injury and retired.

"It's coming a little early in the tournament surely," former world number one and tournament director Amelie Mauresmo said about the Nadal-Zverev pairing. "This is good news for neither of them." Nadal, the winner of 22 Grand Slam titles, will turn 38 next week and this season will be his last on tour.

He holds a 7-3 winning head-to-head record against Germany's Zverev with five of those victories coming on clay.

Zverev, 27, arrives in Paris on the back of lifting the Rome Open title last weekend.

As well as 14 titles in Paris, Nadal can boast a record of 112 wins and just three losses, two of which came against Djokovic who will be chasing a fourth French Open title. "I imagine that looking at the draw, Nadal is not going to be delighted," said Mauresmo. "Zverev is in very good shape, obviously it looks very complicated. But Nadal is a warrior, an extraor-



dinary competitor. It's Rafa so anything is possible."

Should Nadal win the match, he could face 2021 US Open winner Daniil Medvedev in the quarter finals.

There were cheers from the audience when Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka was drawn against fellow three-time Grand Slam winner, Briton Andy Murray.

"It's a superb matchup," Mauresmo, who used to coach Murray, said about the match with Wawrinka.

The 37-year-old Murray, the 2016 runner-up, is also competing at the tournament for the final time.

He and Wawrinka, 39, have met 22 times in a two-decade rivalry with Murray boasting a 13-9 edge. Three of those clashes have come at Roland Garros with Murray winning in the semi-finals in 2016 while the Swiss came out on top in the last-four in 2017 and first round in 2020.

Djokovic has struggled in the first half of 2024 and is yet to win a title this year. The Serbian was knocked out of the Italian Open in the third round this month after suffering a freak head injury.

The world number one turned 37 on Wednesday and marked the occasion by winning the 1,100th match of his career in Geneva.

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