

# Good Morning Kashmir

15th Year Of Publication

**Ramadhan Kareem**

TODAY IFTAR 6:47

DAY 11

TOMORROW SEHRI 5:08

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## 'Record-Break Voting Expected In LS Polls'



**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

**SRINAGAR:** The divisional administration on Thursday said that record-break voting is expected in the Kashmir Valley and that the arrangements to ensure a smooth annual Amarnath pilgrimage is being put in place.

Divisional • P-06

## BRO Commences Work To Reopen Leh-Manali NH In Ladakh



**LEH:** The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has commenced work for the reopening of the strategic Leh-Manali national highway in Ladakh union territory, officials said on Thursday.

The 427-km long • P-06

## Fresh WD: Rains Lash Parts Of Kashmir



**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

**HOWEVER,** some of the areas including Kupwara higher reaches, Machil, Sadhna Top, Razdan Top and Zojilla received light snowfall today.

**SRINAGAR:** The shiver has once again gripped Kashmir after the fresh Western Disturbance (WD) affected Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday while the weatherman here has predicted more rains and snow in the next 24 hours.

Several areas of Kashmir including Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir has received light rainfall today, bringing down the temperature in the valley. However, some of the areas including Kupwara higher reaches, Machil, Sadhna Top, Razdan Top and Zojilla received light snowfall today.

Director Meteorological Department (MeT), Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad stated that the weather is expected to remain wet tomorrow and would record a significant improvement from Saturday. There is a possibility of light to moderate rains, snow at many places with thunder, lightning and gusty winds over parts of Kashmir and Jammu division tomorrow, he said.

He further added that the weather would remain generally dry on March 23 while on March 24, the weather is expected to remain generally cloudy with light rain and snow at isolated places.

While the weather is expected to remain dry during March 25 and 26, the MeT Director said on March 27 to March 29, the weather would remain generally cloudy with possibility of light rain and snow at few places—(KNO)

## 'Loyal Citizens Of India' Shabir Shah's Daughter, Geelani's Granddaughter Distance Themselves From Separatist Ideology



**AGENCIES**

**SRINAGAR:** Jailed separatist Shabir Ahmad Shah daughter Sama Shabir and deceased Pakistan supporter Syed Ali Shah Geelani's granddaughter Ruwa Shah have dissociated themselves from the separatist ideology and pledged their loyalty to the sovereignty of Union of India.

In identical public notices published in local newspapers, they distanced themselves from separatist politics.

Ruwa Shah, daughter of Geelani's son-in-law Altaf Ahmad Shah alias Altaf Fantoosh, issued a public notice distancing herself from the Hurriyat Conference faction founded by her late grandfather.

She also declared she has no inclination or sympathy towards Hurriyat Conference ideology.

"I am a loyal citizen of India not affiliated with any organisation or association which has an agenda against the Union of India and I owe allegiance to the Constitution of my country (India)," Shah said in the notice published in a local daily earlier this week.

Her father, who was also in jail for alleged terror funding, died last year after a prolonged illness.

In a separate public notice published in a local newspaper on Thursday, 23-year-old Sama Shabir, a former CBSE topper in Kashmir, emphasised her status as a loyal Indian citizen and unequivocally distanced herself from the banned separatist organisation founded by her father, who is currently in Tihar Jail on money laundering and terror funding charges.

"I am a loyal citizen of India and I am not affiliated with any person or organisation which is against the sovereignty of the Union of India," Sama Shabir, the elder daughter of Shah, said in the notice.

"I am not associated with the DFP or its ideology in any way," Sama Shabir stated, cautioning that legal action would be pursued against anyone linking her to the separatist group without authorisation.

Shabir Ahmad Shah (70) was arrested in 2017 by the Enforcement Directorate over alleged money laundering activities linked to terror financing. He was later chargesheeted by the National Investigation Agency also for alleged terror financing.

The case stemmed from a 2005 incident in which Mohammed Aslam Wani, an alleged hawala dealer, was apprehended by the Special Cell of Delhi Police with a substantial amount of cash, purportedly intended for Shah.

Sama was summoned by the ED in 2019 in connection with the case, but she did not appear at that • P-06

**I AM A LOYAL CITIZEN OF INDIA NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY organisation or association which has an agenda against the Union of India and I owe allegiance to the Constitution of my country (India)."**

## High-Profile Support Jitendra Files Nomination For Udhampur Seat



**ALI ASAD**

**SRINAGAR:** Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate from Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency, Dr. Jitendra Singh, on Thursday filed his nomination papers.

The nomination ceremony, held at the District Deputy Commissioner's office in Kathua, witnessed the presence of prominent BJP leaders, including the State President, Ravindra Raina, and the renowned wrestler, "The Great Khali" alias Dalip Singh.

Dr. Jitendra Singh, contesting for the third time from the Udhampur seat, received overwhelming support from party members and supporters as he embarked on a roadshow through Kalibari, • P-06

## On 'Navroz' Hundreds Let Leeches Suck Their Blood In Hope Of Getting Rid Of Long-Time Ailments

**JAHANGEER GANAIE**

**SRINAGAR:** Despite being abandoned as a medical cure by modern science long ago, many people in the Kashmir Valley still resort to leeches to suck their blood in hopes of curing everything - from swollen joints and headaches to frostbite and acne.

A significant number of people visited practitioners of 'leech therapy' on the occasion of Navroz on Tuesday, as the therapy is believed to be more effective on this particular day. Scores of people were seen standing in queues, eagerly waiting for their turn to undergo the procedure, at various places in the valley, especially at Dargah Hazratbal and other locations.

It is believed that leeches can cure frostbite, skin diseases, and other blood infections by • P-06



## No Sugar, Over-Eating Experts Highlight Ramadan Benefits On Physical Health

**MUBASHIR AALAM WANI**

**SRINAGAR:** "Ramadan can play an important role in improving one's physical health and fitness," said Farhaan Muneer, a fitness guru while highlighting the benefits of Ramadan.

As Muslims around the world observe the holy month of Ramadan, fitness gurus highlight the unexpected benefits of fasting for physical health and achieving fitness goals.

During Ramadan, Muslims abstain from food and drink from dawn to dusk, engaging in a period of spiritual reflection, self-discipline, and heightened devotion. While fasting is primarily a religious practice, fitness gurus are emphasizing its potential as a tool for optimizing health and fitness.

According to experts, the intermittent fasting practiced during Ramadan can lead to a range of physiological and psychological benefits.

"In the fitness sector, the idea of intermediate fasting is quite popular. It's • P-06



## 'No Leniency' 'Admin To Act Tough Against Pvt Schools Charging Miscellaneous Charges'



**AGENCIES**

**SRINAGAR:** Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) Thursday warned private schools of strict actions for charging prohibited capitation charges from students.

According to DSEK, Tasaduq Hussain Mir during the sidelines of an event told reporters, "Schools will face action who will charge admission or miscellaneous charges."

He also said that the department had already issued a circular in this regard and are monitoring the situation closely.

About the recent incident of distributing wrong question paper to 12th standard students, Mir said that the government has already constituted a committee in this regard. "There will be no leniency to the responsible person and the factual report will be submitted to government."

DSEK further said that it will initiate probe into the wrong question paper incident from tomorrow. "Whosoever is responsible for this blunder intentionally or unintentionally will not be spared," he said.

Pertinently, on Wednesday 12th standard students appearing in annual regular exams were given the question paper of 11th standard.

JKBOSE had wrongly distributed 11th standard physical education paper to 12th standard students that forced the board to cancel the exam and order the probe—(KNO)

## JPDCL To Lodge FIR Against Power Theft



**UNI**

**JAMMU:** In a major decision, the JPDCL has decided to lodge FIR against erring consumers who are involved in power theft by means of hooking and bypassing of meters including Smart meters.

The decision has been taken by Vikas Kundal, Managing Director Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited.

Managing Director JPDCL instructed the AEEs to lodge FIR under section 135 of Electricity Act, 2003 against those who are found to be indulging in Power theft. According to the act electricity theft shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine or with both.

MD, JPDCL, Vikas • P-06

**INOX CINEMA SHIVPORA SRINAGAR**

**MOVIES Schedule** Friday 22 March

<b>MADGAON EXPRESS (HINDI)</b> 03:10PM, 07:00PM (U/A)	<b>YODHA (HINDI)</b> 02:30PM (U/A)	<b>SHAITAAN (HINDI ATMOS)</b> 07:30PM (U/A)
<b>JATT NUU CHUDAIL TAKRI (PUNJABI)</b> 04:00PM (U)	<b>DUNE PART TWO (ENGLISH) WITH ENG SUBTITLES</b> 06:20PM (U/A)	<b>KUNG FU PANDA 4 (ENG WITH ENG SUBTITLE)</b> 05:30PM (U)

## Awareness Program for Fishing Community organized in G'bal



GMK NEWS NETWORK

**GANDERBAL:** In a concerted effort to empower the fishing community and bolster democratic participation, a Special Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) awareness programme was organised by the Nodal Officer SVEEP Ganderbal here at Gangarhama.

The event specifically focused on fisheries farmers in the district, aiming to foster a deeper understanding of the electoral process and the significance of

active participation in democratic practices. District Level Master Trainer (DLMT), fervently emphasized the importance of exercising one's right to vote & it's pivotal role in shaping the future of the nation.

The program served as an interactive platform for participants to engage in meaningful discussions, share insights, and address queries regarding voter registration, electoral procedures, and the broader implications of democratic participation.

## Forest Div G'bal organizes SVEEP program, plantation drive



GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** On World Forest Day, DFO Forest Division Ganderbal organized SVEEP awareness Program at Chattergerul Bala.

On the occasion, DLMTs of Election Cell Ganderbal educated participants on the relation & similarities between Clean Environment and Democracy.

They emphasized on the fact that electoral participation protects democracy

while plantation protects environment.

After providing detailed information regarding the voting process, they laid a focus on engaging new voters and facilitating voting for citizens of age above 85 years.

The program concluded with a plantation drive and saw participation from local tribal people, officers from the Sind Forest Division, Forest Protection Police, BLOs, and others.

## HDFC Bank, TD Bank Group sign agreement to support Indian students in Canada



GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** HDFC Bank and TD Bank Group (TD) Thursday announced an expanded relationship supporting Indian students planning to study in Canada.

With this agreement, TD and HDFC Bank are announcing a new referral program. HDFC Bank will refer students planning to study in Canada to TD's International Student GIC Program, which enables students to conveniently comply with the Government of Canada's Student Direct Stream (SDS) study permit pathway. This referral partnership builds on the two banks' existing relationship where TD has acted as HDFC Bank's main correspondent banking partner for Canadian Dollar clearing since 2015.

Students are required to provide proof of financial support, which is accomplished via a Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) from a participating Canadian financial institution. The TD International Student GIC Program is designed to enable stu-

dents to open accounts digitally and help them meet their study visa and living expense requirements.

"Canada is a leading education market and our relationship with TD aims to simplify the process for students and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) who want to study there," said S Sampath Kumar, Group Head Retail Branch Banking, HDFC Bank.

Smita Bhagat Group Head Retail Branch Banking, HDFC Bank further added, "The association is designed to support the study permit requirements of Indian students planning to study in Canada. The curated program also offers a wide range of financial benefits to amplify their living experience while studying there."

Sona Mehta, Executive Vice President of Canadian Personal Banking, TD Bank Group said: "With this expanded relationship, HDFC Bank and TD can provide the financial offerings that will make for a smoother transition to the Canadian banking environment." [KNT]

### LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

# Series of activities held under SVEEP at Kothibagh, SP HSS

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** On the directions of District Election Officer (DEO), Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, a series of awareness programs were held under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation program (SVEEP) in various Schools of the District.

The awareness programmes were conducted under the supervision of District Nodal Officer SVEEP, A H Fani during which awareness programmes and rallies were organized at GGHSS Kothibagh and SP Model Higher Secondary School. Speaking about the ongoing SVEEP activities, the District Election Officer, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat urged the young voters to inspire their families, friends, relatives and neighbors for participating in the upcoming General Elections elections with enthusiasm.

The DEO also emphasized the young voters to play their role as ambassadors of democracy.

He also congratulated and commend the students who will be casting their vote for the first time in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections

The DEO further expressed his admiration for their enthusiasm and commitment to playing an active role in the electoral process. He emphasized the importance of informed decision-making and encouraged them to approach this democratic responsibility with diligence and awareness.



The programmes under SVEEP are aimed to raise awareness among the students about the importance of active participation in general elections with a special emphasis on the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

During the awareness programs, the Nodal Officer SVEEP, A H Fani highlighted the crucial role that every voter plays in shaping the democratic process,

urging them to exercise their right to vote.

He also provided important information about the various facilities available in polling booths for persons with disabilities, elders, and women. He emphasized the commitment of election machineries to ensuring a fair and accessible electoral process.

Nodal Officer, SVEEP stressed that these aware-

ness programs will continue, with the goal of reaching every school in District Srinagar to ensure maximum participation in the electoral process.

Following the successful awareness programs, rallies were conducted at GGHSS Kothibagh and SP Higher Secondary School, further reinforcing the importance of voter education and participation in the electoral process.

## GDC Marh organises SVEEP programme



GMK NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** Government Degree College (GDC), Marh Thursday organized Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) awareness programme to create voter awareness and promote voter literacy among students as well as other stakeholders.

During the programme, Principal, Prof. Rakesh Kumar Koul interacted with the students and briefed them about SVEEP, a flagship programme of Election Commission of India for

Voter's education, spreading voter awareness and promoting voters literacy in India.

SDM Marh, Manu Hansa and SVEEP Nodal Officer, Shalini Gupta also interacted with the students and faculty and appreciated the efforts of college for organising SVEEP programme.

Speaking on the occasion, SDM Marh said that the vision of SVEEP is to enlighten, enable and empower every citizen to register as a voter and cast his or her vote at every election in an informed and ethical manner.

## Training session on handling of EVMs, VVPATs held in Ramban

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**RAMBAN:** To strengthen the electoral process and enhance proficiency in handling Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) devices, a comprehensive training sessions was organized Thursday at conference hall, DC office complex under the guidance of District Election Officer, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary.

The training, facilitated by Master Trainers, aimed to equip government employees of the district with necessary knowledge and skills required for upcoming Lok Sabha election.

The session, presided over by Deputy District Election Officer, Abdul Jabar, emphasized the

importance of attending training sessions to ensure familiarity and ease of operation with EVMs and VVPATs.

During the session, detailed information was provided on the roles and responsibilities of Presiding and Polling Officers and hands-on training was also conducted to demonstrate the functioning and operational procedures of EVMs/VVPATs.

Attendees, including employees from various government departments, actively participated in the training to enhance their understanding and proficiency with the process of elections.

Similar training program was conducted in Banihal, focusing on the demonstration of VVPATs and control units.

# Seminar on 'Sexual Harassment of women at workplaces' held at NIT Sgr

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** The two-day 'Sensitization Program for sexual harassment of women at workplace' began at National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Thursday.

The awareness program is being organised by the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of the Institute. Prof. Shagoofa Rasool Shah (Chairperson), Prof. MA Shah, Prof. Zamrooda Jabeen, Lieutenant (Dr.) Nitika Kundan Member secretary and Dr. Manoj Kumar are members of the committee.

In her welcome address, Chairperson of IC, Prof. Shagoofa extended warm welcome to resource persons for the seminar and stated that this two-day event is aimed to sensitize, educate employees on the critical issue of sexual harassment at workplace.

"By fostering awareness and understanding, we aim to empower individuals to recognize, prevent, and respond effectively to instances of sexual harassment," she said.

Prof. Shagoofa highlighted the past customs and traditions where women were subjected to cruelty, and were deprived from basic fundamental rights.

"The implementation of laws safeguarding women's rights has significantly reduced this issue, as more victims are now stepping forward to register their complaints against the perpetrators," she added.

In his message, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath said such programs are need of the hour and are aimed to raise awareness about sexual harassment, its impact on



victims. Registrar Prof. Atikur Rehman appreciated the ICC for organizing this event and it would play a crucial role in promoting awareness, prevention, and support regarding sexual harassment in the workplace, and more productive work environment.

Advocate Misbah Rashid (Presently member Child Welfare Committee Srinagar) and Dr. Shahnaz (Associate professor School of Law, University of Kashmir) were the resource persons of the workshop.

Dr. Yashwant Mehta, Dean P&D, Prof. Kowsar Majid, Dean R&C, Prof. Ruhi Naz, HOD Civil Engineering Prof. Javaid, HOD Department of Humanity, Shrivastava among other staff members attended the event.

In her key address, Advocate Misbah Rashid delivered her expert talk on 'The Sexual Harassment of

women at workplace (Prevention Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act) and its aspects.

She highlighted important judgments under the POSH Act including guidelines of Vishakha vs State of Rajasthan case, Apparel Export Case vs AK Chopra, the internal complaints committee of Tata consultancy services vs Tenuja Priya Bhat, etc.

She said according to this law, both men and women can be victims of sexual harassment; however the safeguard protection under POSH Act is available only to women.

"Verbal harassment that is sexually coloured can constitute sexual harassment. Words can be just as offensive as physical acts and contact. Sexually colored jokes, comments and stories can be sexually harassing and can create a hostile work environment," Advocate Misba said.

Regarding filing of complaints, she said complaints regarding sexual harassment needs to be filed within 3 months of the date of incident and in case of a series of incidents, within a period of 3 months from the date of the last incident.

"However, the IC or the LC, as the case may be, may extend the time limit; however, not exceeding 3 months, for reasons to be recorded in writing if it is satisfied that the circumstances were such that the victim was unable to file a complaint within the said period," she added.

Advocate Misba further said that the POSH Act is aimed to safeguard women's dignity at the workplace.

Another speaker, Dr. Shahnaz said that sexual Harassment is an offshoot of male chauvinism, gender bias, gender discrimination, misogyny. It

is often spoken in whispers and suffered in silence, she said.

"The citizens of India are at the most fundamental level governed and protected by the Constitution and the SC in its landmark judgment in Vishaka and others Vs. State of Rajasthan said that the issue of Sexual Harassment at the work place is a human rights issue and not merely a criminal issue," Dr. Shahnaz said.

She further said that this change in perspective shifted the focus of Sexual Harassment from convicting the perpetrator to protecting the victim.

Dr. MA Shah also expressed his belief that a world where girls receive education is safer, more stable, and prosperous. He emphasized that when girls are educated, their own futures improve, which in turn benefits society as a whole.

He cited an African proverb: "If we educate a man, we educate an individual, but if we educate a woman, we educate a nation."

Dr. Shah, as a father of two daughters, emphasized the importance of education for girls in shaping their futures and impacting society positively

In her message, Lieutenant (Dr.) Nitika Kundan said the program aims to raise awareness among employees about the various forms of sexual harassment, its impact on victims, and the importance of creating a safe and respectful work environment.

A formal vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Manoj Kumar. He expressed gratitude to all guests, faculty, staff members, and students for making the event successful.

## 'Refrain From Endorsing Offshore Online Betting': I&B Cautions SM Influencers

AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Wednesday advised all endorsers and influencers on social media to refrain from promoting or advertising, including surrogate advertisements, of offshore online betting and gambling platforms.

The Ministry in an advisory said that these advertisements have significant financial and socio-economic implications of online betting and gambling on consumers, particularly the youth.

The Ministry has further advised the online advertisement intermediaries not to target such promotional content towards the Indian audience. Social media intermediaries have also been advised to conduct sensitization efforts among their users to refrain from publishing such content.

The advisory cautioned that failure to comply with it may lead to proceedings under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 including removal or disabling of social media posts or accounts and penal action under the applicable statutes.

It further underlined that while Section 79 of the IT Act, 2000 provides for exemption from liability of intermediaries for third-party information, data, or communication links made available or hosted by them, Sub section (3)(b) of Section 79 provides that the exemption from liability shall not apply if upon receiving actual knowledge, or on being notified by the appropriate Government or its agency that any information, data or communication link residing in or connected to a computer resource controlled by the intermediary is being used to commit the unlawful act, the intermediary fails to expeditiously remove or disable access to that material on that resource without vitiating the evidence in any manner.

# President Appoints M Y Wani As Addl. Judge HC

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** Nine days after being recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium, the President of India on Thursday appointed Mohd. Yousuf Wani as Additional Judge of the Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court, for a period of two years.

"In exercise of the power conferred by Clause (1) of Article 224 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Mohd. Yousuf Wani, to be an Additional Judge of the Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court,



for a period of two years with effect from the date he assumes the charge of his office," reads a notification issued by ministry of law and justice system. On March 12, the

Supreme Court Collegium recommended the name of Mohammad Yousuf Wani, Judicial Officer, as Judge of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh. Last year on September

21, the Chief Justice of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh in consultation with his two senior-most colleagues had recommended the appointment of Wani as an Additional Judge of the High Court.

"In order to ascertain the suitability of the candidate for elevation to the High Court, we have consulted Judges of the Supreme Court who are conversant with the affairs of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh," the Collegium headed by the Chief Justice of India Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud had said.

# PPP model to transform Achan dumpsite into sustainable waste management hub

MUBASHIR ALAM WANI

**SRINAGAR:** In a significant development to promote sustainable urban development, the Srinagar Smart City has been chosen as one of the beneficiaries of the CITIIS 2.0 Challenge, a flagship initiative aimed at fostering circular economy solutions across Indian cities.

A senior official said that the project aims to revolutionize waste management practices through an Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) facility, set to be established at the Achan dumpsite in Srinagar.

An official document available, states that CITIIS 2.0 is the second phase of the City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain (CITIIS) program which has been conceived by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in collaboration with the French Development Agency (AFD), KfW Development Bank, the European Union (EU), and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) to supplement climate initiatives taken by the Government of India through a unique model.

"Under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) approach, the ISWM facil-



ity will be developed based on the Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Transfer (DBFOT) model. Private investors will inject capital for infrastructure development, with operational rights spanning a fixed concession period", states the document.

As per the officials the project's financial viability will be bolstered by an upfront Viability Gap Funding (VGF) component, sourced from the CITIIS 2.0 funds, covering approximately 30% of the estimated project cost.

Projected to handle a daily waste generation of 650 Tons Per Day (TPD) by 2026, the officials said that the proposed facility will address the gap of 500 TPD of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) through a compre-

hensive approach. "Components include waste pre-processing (RDF Plant), bio-methanation for wet waste, waste-to-energy conversion for dry waste, leachate treatment, and a sanitary landfill facility", the official revealed

According to the document, one of the key highlights of the project lies in its revenue model, where energy generated from the ISWM facility will be supplied to Distribution Companies (DISCOMS) at a fixed tariff, determined through a competitive bidding process. Additionally, revenue streams from by-products such as compost and recyclables will ensure long-term financial sustainability.

As per the reports, with an estimated capital cost of

INR 225.24 Crores, the project aligns with the goals outlined by the Ministry of Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 guidelines, emphasizing the need for VGF support for transformative waste management endeavors.

The CITIIS 2.0 initiative, designed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in collaboration with international partners, represents a pivotal step towards realizing India's climate objectives while fostering economic growth and environmental stewardship at the city level.

An official said that there were tireless efforts of SSSL team that made it possible, stating that the Srinagar city is one of the 18 smart cities selected out of 100 smart cities—(KNO)

## NC will announce Lok Sabha candidates after Eid: Omar

ALI ASAD

**SRINAGAR:** National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah clearing air over announcement of candidates for the coming LS polls said on Thursday that the party will make the announcement only after Eid-ul-Fitr.

Omar's remarks came in response to a question regarding the selection of National Conference candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Kashmir. He stated that the party would reveal the names of its candidates at an appropriate time. "We will announce our candidates at the right time. Voting is to be held in the third, fourth and fifth phases in our constituencies. There is still plenty of time. Let us celebrate Eid first."

Talking to reporters, Omar accused the BJP of hypocrisy, pointing to its alliances with dynastic political families such as Chirag Paswan in Bihar and recent meetings between senior BJP leaders and Raj Thackeray in Maharashtra. He questioned whether these actions did not amount to nepotism or family politics. "BJP has no problem with dynastic families.



They have a problem with families who oppose them. And I am proud to say that I oppose the BJP," Omar said.

He further cited examples such as the BJP's alliance with Chirag Paswan in Bihar and meetings between Amit Shah and Raj Thackeray, questioning the BJP's selective stance on dynasty politics.

Responding to inquiries about former BJP leader Chaudhary Lal Singh's return to the Congress, Abdullah refrained from commenting, stating that it was an internal matter of the Congress party. Lal Singh, who defected to the BJP before the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, is speculated to be a contender for the Congress ticket in Udhampur—(KNO)

Srinagar Smart City selected for innovative integrated waste management project under CITIIS 2.0 Scheme

## Stray dogs maul minor girl to death in Bijbehara

Locals stage protest, demand govt action

JAHANGEER GANAIE

**SRINAGAR:** A minor girl was mauled to death by stray dogs in the Waghama area of Bijbehara in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Thursday.

An official informed that a minor girl identified as Arshima (06), daughter of Gh Nabi Wani was attacked by stray dogs in her native village. He said the girl sustained grievous injuries in the incident and was shifted to the hospital, where she was declared dead.

Meanwhile, the police have taken cognisance of the incident.

Following the incident, locals staged protests and demanded action from the government. They expressed frustration over the frequent presence of packs of dogs on roads.

"The increasing numbers of these stray dogs pose a grave threat to the lives of people. Movement, especially during morning and evening hours, has become difficult for children, elders, and women," said a local woman.

Residents alleged that the mysterious rise in the dog population was due to

their transportation from urban areas during night hours.

"This has made life difficult for us. There is a fear among our children who are unable to move freely due to the presence of these dogs," Shakeel Ahmad, a resident, said.

Locals appealed to the concerned authorities to



tackle the menace promptly for the convenience of the people. "It has become difficult during morning and evening hours to move around freely. Due to the large number of dogs, people, especially the elderly and children, feel unsafe venturing out of their homes," said another local.

Despite several attempts to bring the issue to the attention of higher authorities, no action has been taken, residents lamented. They once again urged authorities to address the problem immediately—(KNO)

## ACB registers case against former CEO Manasbal Dev Authority

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Thursday said to have registered a case against the former Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Executive Engineer and Assistant Executive Engineer, Manasbal Development Authority for abuse of official position and misappropriation of Govt funds.

In a statement issued, a spokesman said that the Anti Corruption Bureau registered a case under FIR number 03/2024 under section 5(1)(d) r/w Section 120-B Act Svt. 2006& section 120-C RPC at PS ACB Baramulla against Zulfikar Mohammad Khan, then Chief Executive Officer, Bashir Ahmad Baba, the then Executive Engineer, Zahoor Ahmad Sheikh the then Assistant Executive Engineer/ Executive Engineer as well as beneficiary contractors namely Ghulam Nabi Mir S/o Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din R/o Treasa and Ghulam Nabi Bhat S/o Mohammad Maqbool Bhat R/o Safapora and others on account of misappropriation of Govt funds meant for various development works parks etc on the culmination of verification.

The verification conducted into matter revealed that Wullar Manasbal Development Authority executed about 23 number of civil works during the financial years 2016-17, 2017-18 & 2018-19. Out of which 18 works were tendered and in 15 works, huge illegal & fraudulent extensions were granted ranging from 44% to 218% by the then Chief Executive Officer Zulfikar Mohammad Khan in brazen violation of laid down norms by gross abuse of official position & authority as same was beyond competence of the officer, the statement reads.



The searches were conducted meticulously, in accordance with legal/laid down procedure, to gather evidence linked with the investigation of the case. During the course of searches various incriminating documents have been recovered. Further investigations of the case are going on, the statement said—(KNO)

ment Authority, Bashir Ahmad Baba and Zahoor Ahmad Sheikh AEE during the period 2016-2019.

"The accused persons not only granted illegal/fraudulent extensions in these works but also raised&provided huge exorbitant rates to contractors on various items utilized in these works during execution of works which was also in grave violation of lid down norms in vogue," the statement added.

During the course of preliminary probe the experts from Engineering wing of ACB Kashmir conducted spot inspection of the works executed by the accused public servants and scrutinized the record on the basis of which the loss caused

## Roadside encroachments cause sluggish traffic movement in Sgr areas

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

**SRINAGAR:** The residents from various areas of Srinagar have raised concerns over slow traffic movement, attributing the issue to the encroachment of roads by different types of roadside vendors on several road stretches in the district.

Residents from several Srinagar areas said that they were facing difficulties commuting through the city especially during the holy month of Ramadan in evening time, due to congested roads caused by vendors on many road stretches of Srinagar.

Sajad Ahmad, a resident of Batamalo, highlighted the problem, stating that the stretch from the AG's office opposite the Secretariat to the old bus yard in Batamalo has been particularly affected by roadside encroachments.

"The commute along this route has become a headache. Roadside vendors are encroaching carriage road, and it seems there is no authority monitoring these encroachments," Ahmad remarked.

Similarly, concerns were raised by residents living in the outskirts of Srinagar, noting that the encroachments on the service lane near the Fairdeal complex in Parimpora pose a significant threat of accidents.

"The service lane near Parimpora Fairdeal complex has become accident-prone as people park their

vehicles on the highway to shop from vendors occupying the lane," expressed a local resident.

Many people also highlighted the road stretch from Qamarwari to cement bridge as another point of traffic jam, caused due to the vendors occupying the roadsides.

Many commuters echoed frustrations, especially during the evening hours in Ramadan, citing that vehicular movement is sluggish due to vendors crowding the roadsides with their carts.

Appealing the concerned department, including the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) and traffic police, people urged upon the authorities to take immediate measures to alleviate the commuting crisis.

"Traffic congestion is impacting both public and private transportation, we urge swift action to restore smooth flow on the city's roads, particularly during this ongoing important time of religious observance", said Ahmad.

Meanwhile, in response to the issues raised by the people, traffic authorities told KNO that they would take up the issue with the SMC authorities and would start a drive against the encroachments.

Seeking a response from SMC authorities could not materialise, as there was no response to call or message sent to a top officer—(KNO)

## Court Directs Gram Sabha To Decide Grazing Rights

AGENCIES

**BUDGAM:** A local court in Chadoora Budgam has directed the Gram Sabha of panchayat halqas Branwar, Neegu and Jabbad to decide about granting of grazing rights to the local population as mandated under the Forest Rights Act-FRA. The order issued by Sub Judge Chadoora (Civil Judge Senior Division) Mir Wajahat has directed the Gram Sabha to consider the rights and preferences of both the parties within 30 days from date of issuance of the order so that there is equitable distribution of the resources.

The order was passed by the Court of Sub Judge Chadoora in the matter of Ghulam Mohammad Jahara V/S Ghulam Qadir Thekray, both residents of Branwar, Chadoora district Budgam.

The plaintiffs Ghulam Mohammad Jahara @ Chowdhary and others had claimed rights over Chaskani Nad meadow which is spread over an area of more than 5000 kanals located in Doodh Ganga forest range of Pir Panjal forest division Budgam. The other party Ghulam Qadir Thekrey (defendants) who also belong to Gujjar community allege that Ghulam Mohammad Jahara alias Chowdhary had forcibly taken control over 5000 kanals of



meadows and were earning money from it as the family takes money from Bakarwals of Rajouri and Poonch for grazing their animals in summer months while as majority of the local Gujjar and other pastoralist communities were deprived of these rights.

The matter finally landed in court last year and Sub Judge Chadoora recently directed the Gram Sabha to decide the matter. Pertinently under Forest Rights Act 2006 also Gram Sabha is the supreme authority to decide upon the claims filed by local population. The Gram Sabha is the adult population of the village and 50 % quorum is necessary to decide on the Forest Rights Act (FRA) related cases.

While talking to KNS, Chairman DDC Budgam Nazir Ahmad Khan hailed the order issued by Sub Judge Chadoora and assured that a maha Gram Sabha would be held soon to decide this long pending dispute

"The order issued by the Court of Sub Judge Chadoora on Feb 28th 2024 is in tandem with the provisions of the Forest Rights

Act and District Development Council Budgam will ensure compliance of this order and within a week or so we will make sure a joint Gram Sabha is held at Branwar for three panchayats (Branwar , Neegu and Jabbad) under the guidance of District Development Council Budgam, DFO Budgam, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat ,BDO Surasyar and others" said Nazir Ahmad Khan Chairman DDC Budgam

Pertinently the Gujjar community of Branwar, Jabbad , Neegu villages in Budgam district were denied the grazing rights for their hundreds of sheep in the pasture-land of Chaskani Naad last summer. The said pastureland is located at an altitude of 4000 meters in Doodh Ganga forest range of Pir Panjal Forest Division. The villagers had been alleging that Chowdhary family from Branwar Chadoora had taken control over the hundreds of acres grassland (5000 kanal plus) in Chaskani Naad meadow for last many years and the family takes money as "ransom" from graz-

ers especially from Bakarwal families of Rajouri and Poonch by allowing them to graze their animals in the said meadows. The matter finally landed in court which has now ordered the local Gram Sabha to decide the issue within a month's time. The defendants have also been restrained from using the pastureland until disposal of the case.

As the matter took an ugly turn last year the Chairman DDC Budgam Nazir Ahmad Khan had to write to Lt Governor Shri Manoj Sinha regarding this issue and had ordered for holding a gram sabha to address this issue under Forest Rights Act -FRA.

"Finally the Court of Sub Judge Chadoora has also ordered for holding of gram sabha to decide the grazing rights to sheep and cattle at Chaskani Nad meadow. This meadow belongs to the entire population but few families are illegally claiming rights over it. We hope to get the certified copy of the order in a few days. We also appeal DDC Budgam, DFO Budgam and SDM Chadoora to facilitate for holding the gram sabha soon and address this issue democratically as mandated under Forest Rights Act " said Ali Mohammad Jahara a local resident of Branwar Chadoora and an aggrieved person.(KNS)

Good Morning Kashmir

GMC Situation

The resident doctors in Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar are threatening massive protests against the administration which has withheld their salaries for one month. According to the resident doctors they have repeatedly brought the matter to the notice of the Chief Accounts Officer and Principal GMC for timely disbursement of salaries for resident doctors and stipends for postgraduate residents but nothing much has happened. The resident doctors claim that despite their tireless efforts to seek clarification from the relevant authorities in this matter the only answer they got is the proverbial, 'shortage of funds'. Why was not proper allocation of funds done? And most importantly why was salaries and stipends taken as a matter of least priority in this hierarchy of funds allocation? These are serious questions and they need to be answered by the authorities. Despite putting in considerable work hours and working with dedication it makes absolutely no sense to withhold the salaries of these resident doctors. The GMC and affiliated hospitals are the cornerstones of our healthcare infrastructure and are the first responders after a casualty-hit patient seeks health care. The Resident Doctors Association further claims that the outstanding arrears from the fiscal year 2023 remain unresolved and this has led to disappointment among the members who put in many hours beyond schedule to ensure the patients get ultimate healthcare benefits. Kashmir, like many parts of South Asia, also suffers from brain drain. We have seen how the best among our doctors left for Europe, USA, and Gulf countries because they could not take the shabby treatment. These young post-graduate students or resident doctors definitely must be getting offers from healthcare institutions from other foreign countries. This delay in salaries and unresolved arrears can tilt their opinion in a great way. We hope the government is aware of this. We impress upon the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to personally involve himself in the matter and get it resolved in a time-bound manner. Doctors are an important pillar of our society. Their well-being, for all practical purposes, means our overall well-being.

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Hearing Loss

Understanding Cochlear Implants

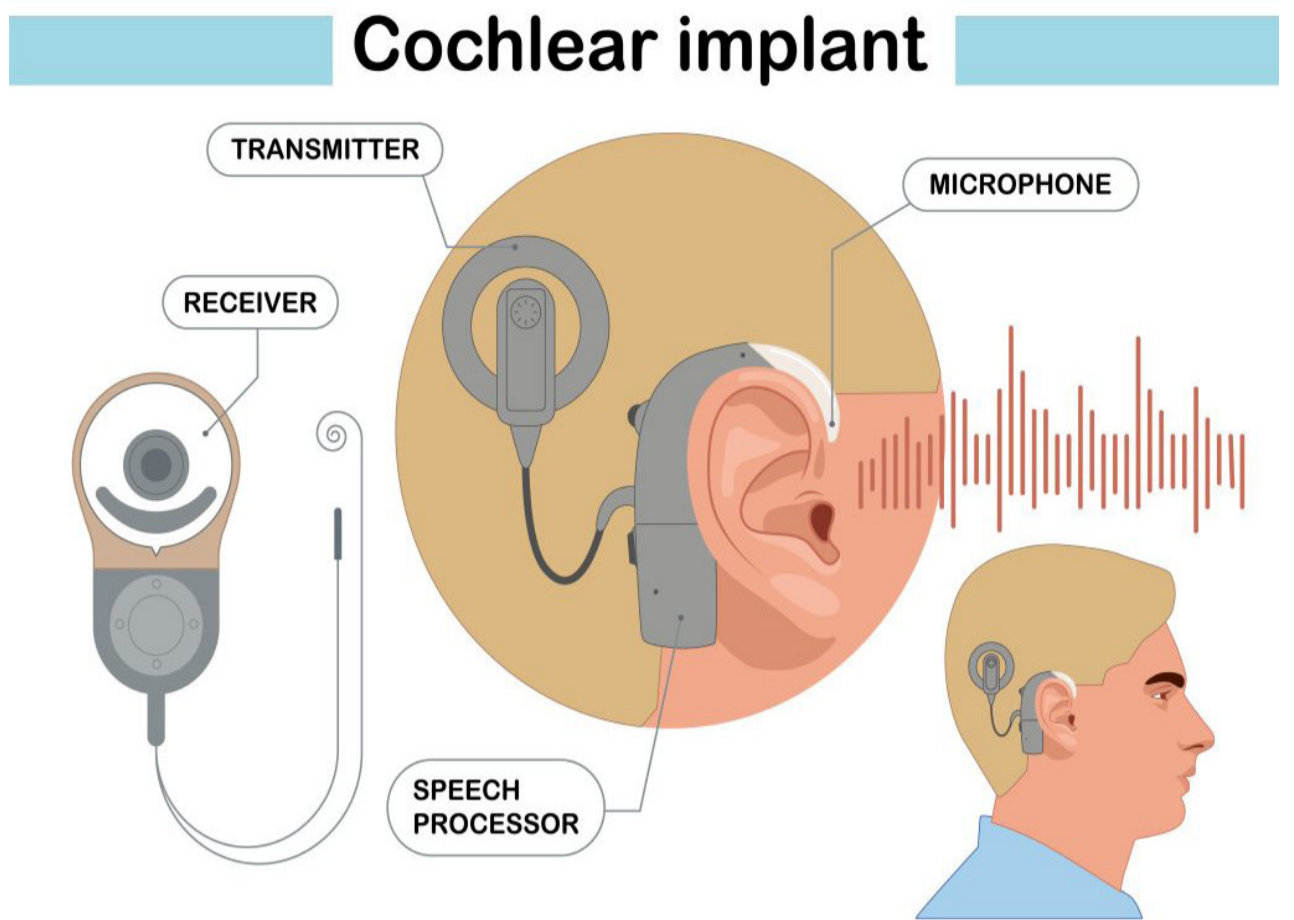


DR. SUMIT MRIG

Cochlear implant surgery is done in India to treat severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss in children and adults when hearing aids fail to provide benefits. In India for every 1000 births 3 to 4 children are born deaf & many more become deaf in the first 2 to 4 years of their life because of childhood infections. nowadays with the universal newborn hearing screening program hearing can be tested on day one of birth

In India for every 1000 births 3 to 4 children are born deaf & many more become deaf in the first 2 to 4 years of their life because of childhood infections. nowadays with the universal newborn hearing screening program hearing can be tested on day one of birth with the help of a simple screening test called OAE -oto acoustic

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Emissions, through this test, you can come to know whether a child will hear or not & if the test is referred then a repeat test is done after ENT consult and with further refer an advanced test called BERA (brain stem evoked response audiometry) is done and if a child is found to be suffering from severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss where hearing aids do not give any benefit and after few radiological tests like CT scan and MRI of the ear are done to see if the cochlea (the main organ of hearing) and the auditory/cochlear nerve of hearing is present, then the child can undergo cochlear implant surgery. What's most important is early the age of implantation the better the result in terms of speech & language acquisition for the child. starting early and starting right as the maximum brain development takes place within the first 2 years of age a child & is called a s brain plasticity. A child who undergoes an implant as early as 9 months up till 18 months of age can develop normal speech and language can go to a normal school & can get formal School education is like any other child. Currently, in India, the average age of cochlear implants is about 4 to 5 years. Because of this implantation delay, most children cannot attend formal school education. with the latest criteria of WHO of the rule of 1,3&6 months is detection at 1 month, complete diagnosis at 3 months, and intervention at 6 months with hearing aid trial and therapy and undergoing a bilateral cochlear implant surgery as early as 9 months of age will enable these children to not only get back their hearing but also have normal speech and language acquisition like any other normal child in the society. The message is obvious: Do not waste time in alternate modes of therapy if your child has been diagnosed with severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss.

Author is Associate Director and Head ENT, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Saket

Revelries

Every Holi Treat Has A Colourful Story Behind It



DR. SHIBEN KRISHEN RAINA

Holi, the Festival of Colors, is a vibrant Indian celebration that marks the triumph of good over evil. Observed worldwide, it is known for its joyous festivities unlike any other. Holi is celebrated over two days in the Hindu month of Phalgun, according to the lunar calendar.

The first day, called Chhoti Holi or Holika Dahan, sees a massive bonfire lit to commemorate the mythical victory of devotion/virtue over evil. The following day, known as Dhulandi, (Khelne wali Holi) or Badi Holi, is when the true revelry begins. Friends and families gather, exchanging sweets and traditional Holi delicacies, as they playfully shower each other with vivid colors.

Holi provides a unique opportunity to celebrate the colors of nature and the emotions they evoke within us. Since ancient times, civilizations have been captivated by the presence and impact of color in the world around them, and how different hues influence our moods and productivity. Colors enhance our experiences, and Holi allows us to revel in their significance.

As the vibrant festival of Holi approaches, a wave of nostalgia washes over me, reminiscing about the days when the consumption of Thandai, a kind of soft drink (cannabis-infused) was an integral part of the celebrations. This personal account takes me back to the



The first day, called Chhoti Holi or Holika Dahan, sees a massive bonfire lit to commemorate the mythical victory of devotion/virtue over evil. The following day, known as Dhulandi, (Khelne wali Holi) or Badi Holi, is when the true revelry begins.

city of Nathdwara, a temple town in Mewar (Rajasthan) where the tradition of consuming hemp during Holi was deeply ingrained.

From 1967 to 1977, after being selected by the Rajasthan Public Service Commission, Ajmer as a lecturer in Hindi, I was posted to a government Postgraduate college, Nathdwara. One of my colleagues, Professor Chand Narayan Shrivastava, who taught English, had a liking for consuming Bhang on this festive (Holi) occasion. Though he would often invite me to join him, I

would politely decline.

However, on one particular Holi day, Professor Shrivastava persuaded me to accompany him to Chowpati, a renowned spot for indulging in such delights. We ventured into a familiar Thandai shop, where a coded exchange took place between the professor and the shopkeeper. With a gesture, Professor Shrivastava ordered, "Two glasses," prompting the shopkeeper to inquire, "Whether Both positive?"

After receiving an affirmative response, the shop-

keeper probed deeper, asking, "Short wave or medium wave?" Professor Shrivastava clarified, "One medium and the other one short wave."

As an outsider to this ritual, I could only partially decipher the coded language they shared, but the experience that followed was nothing short of surreal. By the time I reached home, I found myself soaring very high in the sky indulging in a delightful activity of eating sweets, dancing, and indulging in other merriments. Those were truly the days

when the celebrations of Holi held a unique charm, intertwined with age-old traditions and a touch of revelry. As we approach another Holi, this reminiscence serves as a reminder of the vibrant and culturally rich experiences that have shaped our festive heritage.

Beyond its vibrant displays, Holi fosters unity and amity, bridging divides and dissolving animosity. Enemies become friends, as the spirit of brotherhood prevails. People visit one another, exchanging warm wishes, playing with colors, and sharing gifts, allowing the festival to weave bonds of harmony throughout communities.

Writer is Former Fellow at IIAS, Shimla (HP). He can be mailed at skraina123@gmail.com

# Towards A Worsening Climate Emergency

BILL HENDERSON

“All countries must also very rapidly decommission the fossil fuel infrastructure (e.g. existing oil wells, old coal plants) they already have in place—even if it’s profitable and even if people depend on it for their livelihoods. Such a decommissioning process is going to be both expensive and disruptive, in both political and economic terms, and in ways that are particularly hard on poor and insecure populations.” The US and Canada must rapidly decommission their fossil fuel industries by 2031.

The fire is bearing down on the town. The authorities have ordered an emergency evacuation; from their big picture perspective everybody has to get out quickly and even then, as the situation rapidly worsens, some might not make it.

But a lot of people in the town, if not most, have not anticipated the emergency even though they have been warned for several days that the fire was approaching; hopeful disinformation about the path of the fire and a refusal to consider the worst case scenario have left many ill prepared. And most aren’t fleeing yet but are still trying to sort through their belongings about what to try and save; more than a few are still considering staying to try and protect their home or business.

Except this emergency analogy doesn’t fit our impending climate catastrophe. Yes, those focused upon the short-term, self-interest picture are not paying attention to the evolving climate reality. Yes, the authorities should be calling for an emergency



evacuation. Yes, the town (modernity) can’t be saved but if the people flee safely they can come back and rebuild.

But in truth few of us alive today need to fear death and destruction in the climate emergency. Like David Suzuki said many decades ago, it’s a slow motion catastrophe. And if you live in a rich, technology powerful country, the danger of personal death or even loss of possessions or property is low. The fires, the drought, the extreme storms are all survivable. Global economic col-

lapse or war is a growing possibility but not likely for decades.

Only in the big picture is climate an emergency: the lack of effective mitigation today, our preoccupation with living in BAU, and, as a result, the continuing rise of GHGs is leading to silently crossing tipping points to feedbacks like the melting Arctic icecap and latent carbon bombs like burning forests. This won’t put our lives at risk in at least the first half of the century but it’s criminal negligence for every future human generation.

Warming from our continuing GHG emissions threatens to cause a cascade of potential feedbacks and a 5C rise in temperature to Hothouse Earth. (The new concern about AMOC failure is only one example.) Our intransigence about ending our use of fossil fuels will destroy ‘the town’ and kill most if not all of the citizens. The authorities should know this big picture and should have wound down fossil fuel production and use starting decades ago; but they didn’t and as climate is recognized as an emergency

most if not the majority of people will still be preoccupied with saving their personal belongings and businesses.

Although the science will be clear and what’s reasonable and responsible in the emergency should be understood by all, the lack of imminent personal danger vs the cost of emergency action necessary – rapidly winding down fossil fuel production and use, powering down and leaving modernity, at least for the immediate term – will keep us from needed emergency action (even half steps like no new fossil infrastructure) as the emergency worsens.

The authorities haven’t even warned the town about the fire let alone warned: “Stop trying to save your possessions; get out of town as quickly as possible!” We’re in such denial that we haven’t really digested how our production and use of fossil fuels is a key factor in making the fires so dangerous. Premier Smith, Sultan bin Salman, and Donald Trump are the authorities and they’re far more concerned with their political survival and being anti-woke than in the community’s long-term health, welfare, or even survival.

Everybody is still in short-term, self-interest, economic-centric mode, and just, orderly, and equitable is even too big a picture. I’d be bright siding if I said that it looks like we’re beginning to wake up now from society-wide implicatory denial, in 2024, and even considering effective mitigation. But good guys like Athanasiou are still trying and the vision they are crafting might still be a clarion call that will save some for future renewal, after the fire. (C-Counter Currents)

Author is a long time climate activist

# Holi - The Festival Of Colors



PRIYANKA SAURABH

Holi is such a colorful festival, which people of every religion celebrate with full enthusiasm and fun. On the day of Holi, we forgot all the animosity and hugged each other. But Holi, the festival of social brotherhood and mutual love and harmony, is also now witnessing a phase of change. The fun scene of Falgun is now a thing of the past. The colors of Holi, which have been fading for a few years, are now making us sad. The elders of the city say ‘No laughter, no fuss, no colours, no dhap, and no bhang’ Is Falgun like this? Neither ‘kheli’ filled with water nor the noise of Holi. Now nothing, after a few hours of chaos everything is calm. He is no longer enjoying Holi. The sounds of Aao Radhe Khela Paag Holi Aayi... Get the copper and brass pot filled... Bring Sona Rupali Pichkari... have gradually slowed down.

The hustle and bustle of Holi started as soon as Phalgun started. Even in temples, ‘Phaag’ used to start as soon as Phalgun arrived. Holi folk songs echoed. As the evening approached, traditional dances on the songs of Phaag along with Dhap-Chang spread the colors of Holi at various places. While playing Holi, people were caught and thrown into water games. There was no resentment, everything happened happily. Used to prepare for Holi from Vasant Panchami. Holi songs would echo along with the beat of change in the streets of the society and in the temples. The night was graced with dance to the beats of Chang. People singing Phalgun songs and Rasiya from outside used to dance in the night to celebrate Holi.

There is a difference between the earlier Holi and today’s Holi, a few years ago people used to be enthusiastic about the festival of Holi, and there was love among themselves. There was no hatred towards anyone. People used to play Holi with love and togetherness. Due to other means of entertainment, people’s interest in traditional folk festivals has decreased. The reason for this is that people have less time. There are only a few days left for Holi, but the colors of Holi are not visible anywhere in



the city. Let alone a month away, now the fun of Holi has not lasted even for a day or two. This festival has been reduced to just half a day. Colors and gulal were applied and Holi was done.

As traditions are changing, the sweetness of relationships is waning. As far as Holi is concerned, now ‘Happy Holi’ starts and ends on mobile and internet only. Now there is no longer that joy as before. Earlier, children used to form groups and create ruckus in the streets. Just 10-12 days before Holi, there was a different kind of love seen in the hooliganism of Holi with friends collecting donations for Holi in every street and throwing colors on someone without asking. During this time, people used to laugh at him even when he abused him. Now people start fighting.

Earlier, people considered the daughters-in-law of strangers to be exactly like their own. Dishes were prepared in homes throughout the day and guests were welcomed. Now everything is confined to homes only. Nowadays, it seems as if there is no room left for reconciliation in relationships. If I felt like it, I formally bid adieu by saying Happy Holi over the phone. Now there is no sweetness

left in relationships. This is the reason why people do not allow their daughters-in-law to go to any acquaintance’s place. Earlier, the girls of the house used to go to everyone’s house and create a lot of ruckus during Holi. Now the situation has become such that if a girl stays at a relative’s house for a long time, the family members get worried as to why it got so late. They immediately call and ask what are you doing, and come home soon. Why now people no longer have that much trust in relationships?

On the other hand, there has been a difference in the food habits on the day of Holi. Gujhiya, Puri-Kachori, Aloo Dum, Mahjoom (Khowa), etc. have become mere formalities. Now even on the day of Holi, things like cold drinks and fast food are being served to the guests. At the same time, taking seven rounds around Holika and pray for the happiness and peace of one’s home, making cakes of different shapes from cow dung, making garlands of grandmothers’ Makhanas, distributing sweets from house to house with their friends in colorful dress up. Sharing, roasting wheat plants, and singing Holi folk songs. Now all these traditions are left in name only.

The fun of Holi starts after the planting of Holi. Little girls used to make balls from cow dung for Holi. In it, she used to make garlands by making ornaments, cocoanuts, anklets, toes, etc. out of cow dung. Now all this is not visible. Before Holi, people used to make colors in homes by grinding Teshu and Palash flowers. Women used to sing Holi songs. On the day of Holi, there was also a Goth in which Holi songs were sung to the beat of Chang. Before planting Holi, songs of Phag started resonating from Basant Panchami. Today, Holi songs are heard only in some temples. On the day of Holi, people of many communities used to come out to play Holi collectively. Dholak and change used to be played along with it, now where is that fun and hubbub?

Now Holi is only a continuation of tradition. In recent times, anger and hatred in society have increased to such an extent that elite families do not want to go out on the day of Holi. People have been celebrating Holi with great enthusiasm since year after year. The purpose of this festival is to maintain mutual brotherhood by burning evils and vices. Today there are many problems in India.

Talking about social inequality, due to this mutual love, brotherhood, humanity, and morality are ending in society. Holi festival once had its importance, the entire family used to be present together on Holika Dahan. And on the day of Holi, they applied colors to each other and celebrated the festival of Abir Uda. A group of people used to sing Pagua songs while enjoying Bhang and went from door to door to spread the love of Holi.

Now the situation is such that on the day of Holi, 40 percent of the population locks themselves in their rooms. Every month, every season brings the news of the arrival of some festival or the other, and why not, these festivals of ours make us alive, infuse energy, and awaken hope in sad minds. The burden of loneliness is reduced even if for a short while and the company of friends fills us with feelings. It is this festive spirit that gives our country a different identity compared to others. To reduce the growing hatred in the society on Holi, we have to look at it from the perspective of human and basic necessity.

Author is a Research Scholar in Political Science

# Here's Why You Should Reduce Excessive Salt Intake & How To

**S**alt is a mineral made up of sodium and chlorine ions. It is commonly used as a seasoning and preservative in food. Excessive salt intake can be unhealthy for several reasons. There are various ways in which consuming excessive salt can affect our health. Below we share ways in which excessive salt can affect our health and how we can reduce our intake.

Reducing excessive salt intake is crucial for improving overall wellbeing due to the following reasons:

- 1. High blood pressure**  
Excessive salt consumption is closely linked to high blood pressure, which increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, and kidney problems.
- 2. Increased cardiovascular risk**  
High salt intake can lead to arterial stiffness, narrowing of blood vessels, and an increased risk of heart attack and other cardiovascular diseases.
- 3. Fluid retention**  
Consuming too much salt can cause the body to retain water, leading to bloating, swelling, and weight gain.
- 4. Kidney damage**  
Excess salt puts strain on the kidneys, potentially leading to kidney stones, reduced kidney function, and even chronic kidney disease.
- 5. Osteoporosis risk**  
A diet high in salt can cause increased calcium excretion, which may lead to a reduction in bone density and an increased risk of osteoporosis.
- 6. Increased risk of stomach cancer**  
High salt intake has been linked to a higher risk of stomach cancer, as it can damage



the stomach lining and promote the growth of Helicobacter pylori bacteria.

- 7. Impaired cognitive function**  
Studies have shown that high salt consumption may negatively impact cognitive function, including memory and attention.
- 8. Dehydration**  
Excessive salt intake can disrupt the body's fluid bal-

ance, leading to dehydration and its associated symptoms, such as fatigue, dizziness, and reduced physical performance.

- 9. Increased risk of autoimmune diseases**  
Research suggests that a high-salt diet may contribute to the development of autoimmune diseases, including multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis.
- 10. Negative impact on**

mental health  
High salt intake has been associated with an increased risk of mood disorders like depression and anxiety.  
To improve overall wellbeing, it is essential to reduce excessive salt intake.  
Here are a few steps to help reduce your salt intake:  
Pay attention to the salt content listed on packaged foods and opt for low-sodium

or no-added-salt alternatives.  
Prepare meals at home using fresh ingredients, allowing you to control the amount of salt used in cooking.  
Enhance the flavour of your dishes with herbs, spices, and citrus juices, reducing the need for added salt.  
Processed and fast foods often contain high levels of added salt, so reducing their consumption can significantly

lower salt intake.  
When purchasing canned foods or condiments, opt for low-sodium versions.  
When eating out, select restaurants that offer lower-sodium menu options or request modifications to limit salt content.  
Staying well-hydrated helps maintain fluid balance and supports overall health.  
Fruits and vegetables are

naturally low in sodium and rich in minerals, fibre, and antioxidants, which are beneficial for overall wellbeing.  
Snack on healthier alternatives, such as fresh fruits, nuts, or plain popcorn, instead of salty snacks like chips or pretzels.  
Consult with a registered dietitian or healthcare provider for personalised advice on reducing salt intake and achieving a balanced diet.

## FROM THE FRONT PAGE .....

### Shabir Shah's Daughter, time as she was in the United Kingdom studying law.(PTI Inputs)

### 'Record-Break

Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri said that the reports they are getting from the field, a record-break voting is expected to take place in the Valley in the Lok Sabha polls.  
"The people should come forward to vote and in this regard, elaborate arrangements have been put in place," Bidhuri said. He also said that the arrangements are also being put in place for a smooth annual Amarnath pilgrimage here.  
Bidhuri also said that the roads in Srinagar are being developed and the black-topping will be done once weather conditions improve—(KNO)

### BRO Commences

highway, which lies across high-altitude areas in the Himalayas, remains closed for several months during peak winters due to heavy snow.  
"Project Himank has commenced snow clearance works to clear the accumulated snow and restore access to the Ladakh region from Manali side," a defence spokesperson said.  
A team of engineers of the Border Road Task Force (BRTF) have been tasked with snow clearing and provided with advanced equipment, he said.  
The extreme cold climatic conditions, gusty winds and sub-zero temperatures in treacherous terrain at altitudes ranging beyond 17,000 feet makes the work more challenging, the spokesman said.  
"Despite this, the team of BRO is working tirelessly to reopen the highway and timely restore the crucial link to Ladakh," he added.  
This highway connecting Ladakh to the rest of India via Manali in Himachal Pradesh has strategic importance for the movement of the armed forces and their supplies to forward areas in Ladakh, apart from connecting the people of Ladakh to the rest of India.  
Every winter, this national highway witnesses extreme weather conditions leading to heavy snowfall and avalanches, which leads to road closure, the spokesperson said. (AGENCIES)

### Jitendra Files

Kathua, leading up to the nomination venue. The atmosphere was charged with excitement as BJP enthusiasts danced to the rhythmic beats of drums.  
After completing the formalities of filing his nomination, Dr. Jitendra Singh proceeded to address a spirited rally at Ramlila Maidan in Kathua city.  
Dr. Singh, who previously served as the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office.  
r. Jitendra Singh has previously secured victory in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections from the same constituency. Prior to filing his nomination, Dr. Singh commenced the day with a morning puja, seeking divine blessings for a successful

campaign ahead.  
As the deadline for nominations approaches on March 27, political fervor intensifies in the region. The scrutiny of nomination papers is slated for March 28, followed by the withdrawal of candidature by March 30. The Lok Sabha elections for the Udhampur seat are scheduled for April 19.  
Meanwhile, in a significant development, former BJP-PDP government minister Chaudhary Lal Singh, a two-time MP, has returned to the Congress fold after nearly a decade. Lal Singh, has expressed his intent to contest from the Udhampur seat—(KNO)

### Hundreds Let Leeches

extracting impure blood from the body. Leech therapy on Novruz has been a common practice in many parts of the valley, as people believe that being treated on that day is more effective.  
Mohammad Akbar, a practitioner of leech therapy, said he has been practicing this technique for the last 40 years and has witnessed people finding relief through leech therapy. "In my experience, people have been cured with this therapy. They believe that this therapy provides the best cure for their illnesses, which they don't get from other medications," he said.  
"I tried medicines worth almost 10 to 20 thousand rupees, but I couldn't find any relief from my pain with any medication. However, when I tried leech therapy, I started feeling relief in my pain," said Waqar Ahmad, a patient from Srinagar.  
"When the leeches feed on blood, chemical substances like hirudin, proteins and bio-active molecules from the leeches' saliva mix with the patient's blood," explained Gh Nabi, a Unani doctor. "This thins the blood, and hirudin is helpful in cardiac diseases. These substances have analgesic, anti-inflammatory, anticoagulant, and antimicrobial functions."  
The practice of leech therapy is ancient, and the tradition is still alive in Kashmir, particularly on Novruz. Practitioners used to collect leeches from local water streams and rivers in the past, but now they obtain them from outside Kashmir.  
Leech therapy is said to be a long-practised procedure in the Perso-Arabic traditional medicine of Unani, which is also practised in Muslim culture in South Asia and modern-day Central Asia.  
According to doctors, leeches are effective in increasing blood circulation and breaking up blood clots. "It should come as no surprise that leeches can be used to treat circulatory disorders and cardiovascular disease. Chemicals derived from leech saliva have been turned into pharmaceutical drugs that can treat hypertension and other diseases," they added—(KNO)

### Experts Highlight

a blessing that we have this wonderful chance throughout Ramadan. People, however, fail to achieve physical transformation during the month as they overeat and have unhealthy food at sehri and iftar, which makes them more susceptible to unhealthy lifestyle and diseases," said

Farhaan who is also a nutrition entrepreneur.  
He said people should avoid over-eating and sugary foods in particular, to witness results during the holy months.  
"A person mostly gets sugar cravings during the day as glycogen level goes down in the blood. With oily and sugary foods, calory intake increases, which makes a person more vulnerable to an unhealthy body," Farhaan said.  
He said a person can go from being overweight to fit with intermediate-level training or a simple brisk walk along with "disciplined food habits" During the month.  
"A person should eat healthy foods which include fiber, protein, and small amounts of carbohydrates during Ramadan because a person's body is not in a normal state during this time," Farhaan said.  
Waqar Younis, another fitness expert suggested the people to maintain an active lifestyle during the month.  
"It is important to maintain a balanced diet during non-fasting hours to maximize the benefits of Ramadan fasting. We mostly see that people here sleep or remain in an inactive state for maximum hours. This is not good for the body as physical activity during the daytime is essential. It is crucial to listen to your body during Ramadan and rest when needed," he said—(KNO)

### JPDCL To Lodge FIR

Kundal, in a statement cautioned strict action including imprisonment against those who try to hoodwink the department by indulging in bypassing of Electronic/Smart meters.  
He said that such practices are causing massive loss to the public exchequer and honest consumers suffer due to illegal practices by the some miscreants.  
He added that it is the highest priority of the UT Government to reduce the aggregate transmission and Distribution losses and the same can only be achieved if such practices are curbed.  
Managing Director, JPDCL further explained that tampering of meter, use of tampered meter, loop connection or any other device or method which interferes with accurate or proper registration, calibration or metering of electric current or otherwise results in a manner whereby electricity is stolen amounts to power theft and general public shall refrain from such practices.  
In a drive against 'illegal' power connections and delinquent payments, the Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDCL) has disconnected more than 5256 defaulters, raking in an impressive revenue in last 3 days, officials said today.  
"In the first place, connections of 5256 consumers including influential consumers (Industries, Hotels and Influential persons) were disconnected to sensitize the masses to clear their liabilities on account of electricity bills and develop habits of paying electricity bills in time," it added.  
The crackdown, part of JPDCL's ongoing efforts to curb energy theft and address financial irregularities, witnessed an intensified inspection pro-

cess, including day and night patrolling to check power pilferage. JPDCL spokespersons highlighted that the initiative aimed to tighten the noose on consumers engaged in widespread hooking, violation of agreed load, and bypassing of meters.  
In an official statement, the JPDCL emphasized its commitment to provide relief to genuine consumers, ensuring that they are not burdened by the actions of erring individuals. The power distribution company further underscored the need to crack down on practices such as energy pilferage, which not only lead to outages but also result in damage to transformers, causing inconvenience to legitimate consumers.  
Meanwhile, JPDCL in its official statement said that taking cognizance of huge arrears despite providing a reliable power supply amid harsh winters, various Sub Divisions of JPDCL launched a fresh massive disconnection drive vis-a-vis influential and chronic defaulter having huge arrears. During the drive Domestic, Industrial and Commercial consumers having huge arrears were targeted.  
Managing Director JPDCL in a statement urged consumers to settle their pending bills promptly to avoid power disconnections, emphasizing that it remains committed to provide uninterrupted and reliable power supply to those who fulfill their financial obligations.

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# US says it recognises Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory

IAN S

WASHINGTON: Recognising Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory, the US has said that it "strongly opposes" any unilateral attempts to advance territorial claims across the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The remarks came with Beijing repeatedly asserting that it "never acknowledges and firmly opposes" the "so-called Arunachal Pradesh illegally established by India", following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the state.

"US recognises Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory and we strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to advance territorial claims by incursions or encroachments military or civilian, across LAC," State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson, Vedant Patel, said.



Having routinely objected to Indian leaders' visits to the state in the past, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said that it "strongly deplored" PM Modi's visit and India's move would "only complicate" the boundary issue.

In response, India reject-

ed Wenbin's comments and said that the Chinese side has been made aware of India's "consistent position on Arunachal several occasions."

This week, New Delhi lashed out at Beijing for "advancing absurd claims" over the territory of Arunachal Pradesh and reiterated that the north-

eastern state will always remain its "integral and inalienable part" of India.

"We have noted the comments made by the Spokesperson of the Chinese Defence Ministry advancing absurd claims over the territory of the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh," the Ministry of External Affairs said.

## People within Congress not on board on caste census: BJP's jibe at Sharma's bombshell

IAN S

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), reacting to Congress veteran leader Anand Sharma's bombshell on the party's caste census push, on Thursday said that the party leaders are not on the same page despite its top brass making a strong pitch on the issue and also going to great lengths in mobilising public support on it.

BJP national spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad, speaking to the media on the IANS newsbreak, said, "Truth is coming out now, people within the Congress are not on board."

When quizzed further, the BJP leader mockingly said, "Congress leaders will have to now clarify their stand on the caste census issue."

Notably, IANS in exclusive possession of Anand Sharma's letter to Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, first reported about the fresh cracks within the party over caste census.

"Congress has never engaged in nor endorsed identity politics and the proposed caste census



can neither be a panacea nor a solution for unemployment and prevailing inequalities," wrote Anand Sharma, also a member of the Congress Working Committee (CWC).

The veteran Congress leader dubbed Rahul Gandhi's caste census pitch as a "departure from the historic position of the party and also amounting to disrespecting the legacy of former Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi."

## Controversies apart, supporters of Brij Bhushan confident about his LS ticket

AMITA VERMA

GONDA: BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh's sprawling home 'Shakti Bhawan' in Gonda, is bustling with activity even in his absence.

Singh's ticket has not yet been announced by the BJP for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections but there is no uncertainty in the air.

Supporters of the six-term MP are confident. "Chunav to ladna hi hai," says one of them rather confidently before another supporter asks him to keep quiet.

Singh himself has been overly active on the social media in recent weeks, posting photographs with his grandchildren and presently a 'family man' picture of himself.

A little away from Singh's residence, at a tea kiosk, people are more vocal. "He is sure to win whether he gets a ticket or not. Even if his son Prateek Bhushan contests, victory is sure. That is why no one is worried about the delay. Besides, the Samajwadi Party is waiting with open arms to welcome Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh," says the tea stall owner on

phone as his 'boys' bustle around attending to customers.

The Samajwadi Party has not named a candidate for the Kaiserganj seat yet and the buzz is that the state's main opposition party is ready to back the 67-year-old wrestler-turned-politician if the BJP chooses to drop him.

His winnability factor makes him an acceptable choice for other parties.

That Singh does not welcome queries from the media about his political future and the status of his case related to sexual harassment, is evident from the several skirmishes he has had in the past few months with media persons.

However, it is also noteworthy that ever since Singh has been facing charges from wrestlers, not a single senior BJP leader has opposed him publicly which confirms the kind of clout he wields within the party.

Political analysts feel that dropping Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, this time, may have an adverse impact on, at least, four to five seats in eastern UP because he enjoys immense influence in the region.

# CM Kejriwal likely to skip ED's 9th summons, moves Delhi HC for protection

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is likely to skip Enforcement Directorate's ninth summons issued in connection with the now-scrapped excise policy case, said the AAP sources.

This decision comes after he submitted a fresh plea to the Delhi High Court, requesting the court to instruct the ED to refrain from taking "coercive action" against him regarding the summonses issued in connection with the Delhi excise policy case.

Delhi Minister and AAP leader Atishi said that CM Kejriwal has approached the high court, appealing for protection against coercive measures.

"At present, CM is willing to participate in the ED investigation and extend full cooperation to the agency. However, we believe that the ED's intentions are more political than investigative, serving as a tool for the BJP. It appears that the ED's aim is to summon Arvind Kejriwal only to subsequently arrest him," Atishi remarked.

"If the ED genuinely seeks an investigation, they should assure in court that they will not arrest Arvind Kejriwal," she said, adding that ED just wants to arrest the CM.

Last week, ED issued ninth summonses to Kejriwal in excise policy case, asking him to appear before it on Thursday.

The CM, who was to appear before the Enforcement Directorate on Thursday on the ninth summons, has moved the court for



no coercive action, saying there is a clear intent to arrest him and he won't appear before the agency.

A division bench of Justices Suresh Kumar Kait and Manoj Jain had, on Wednesday, asked CM Kejriwal as to why he doesn't appear in response to the summonses.

Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi appearing for Kejriwal, in response, said that he is not running away and will appear, provided he is granted protection and a "no coercive steps" order in his favour.

Moreover, the court had asked the ED to reply on maintainability of Kejriwal's plea challenging the agency's nine summonses issued to him. The bench put up the matter for hearing on April 22.

The bench had asked the federal agency to file its reply in two weeks' time and granted CM Kejriwal one week to file a rejoinder.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG), SV Raju, appearing for the ED, had argued that the AAP National Convenor's petition is not maintainable, seeking additional time to file a detailed response on the issue.

person' occurring in Section 2(1)(s) in PMLA and, therefore, the issuance of summonses in terms of Section 50 thereof to the office bearers of political party are non-est, blatantly illegal, arbitrary and cannot sustain the test of law or reasonableness," the plea states.

On March 16, a magisterial court granted bail to CM Kejriwal in complaints filed by the ED over non-compliance with the agency's summonses issued to him in connection with the money laundering case related to the now-scrapped excise policy case. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Divya Malhotra of Rouse Avenue Court granted the Chief Minister relief on a bail bond of Rs 15,000 and a surety of Rs 1 lakh.

The ED which said its investigation into the Delhi excise policy scam case found BRS leader K. Kavitha conspired with the top AAP leaders, including Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his then deputy Manish Sisodia, for getting favours, has also revealed that out of proceeds of crime generated, assets worth Rs 128.79 crore have been traced and attached so far.

"In exchange for these favours, she was involved in paying Rs 100 crore to the leaders of AAP. By the acts of corruption and conspiracy in the formulation and implementation of Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22, a continuous stream of illegal funds, in the form of kickbacks from the wholesalers, was generated for the AAP," a senior ED official said.

## Punjab Health Secy gets notice on Moosewala's father's harassment claim

IAN S

CHANDIGARH: The Punjab government has issued a show-cause notice to Ajoy Sharma, Principal Health Secretary, after Sidhu Moosewala's father alleged 'harassment' regarding the birth of his second child.

The government has questioned why the matter was not brought to the attention of the Chief Minister or the Health Minister before an investigation.

"However, you proceeded to act in the matter without bringing this issue to the notice of your Minister-in-charge and Hon'ble Chief Minister and with-

out taking any orders from them," the government said in a notice.

"This is a serious lapse on your part. Hence, you are asked to show cause within two weeks as to why proceedings under the All India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1969 should not be initiated against you," the notice read further.

Moosewala's father Balkaur Singh in a video message has accused the state government of harassing him over the birth of his second son. He alleged that the Punjab government was questioning the family over the "legality" of the child.

## Budaun murders: Second accused arrested from Bareilly

IAN S

BADAUN: Uttar Pradesh Police arrested Javed, the second accused in the Budaun double murder case, from Bareilly on Thursday.

Javed was on the run after the murder of two children on Tuesday evening. His brother and the main accused Sajid was gunned down in a police encounter within two hours of the incident.

Javed was arrested on Thursday, said IG Bareilly range R K Singh.

In a video after his arrest, he is heard saying, "I ran straight to Delhi after the incident and from there I have to come to Bareilly to surrender. I have received phone calls from people about what my brother did." He claimed that he had no idea why his brother committed the crime. He said he fled because he feared for his own life.

Javed is now being brought to Budaun for further interrogation.



Sajid, who had recently opened a barber shop in the locality, allegedly attacked three brothers - Ayush (12), Honey (8), and Piyush (10), with a knife. Ayush and Ahaan died in the attack, while Piyush was rushed to a hospital with grievous wounds. BJP MP from Budaun, Sanghamitra Maurya, visited the victims' houses and assured them of her full support. "I condemn the murder of the two minor boys," she said.

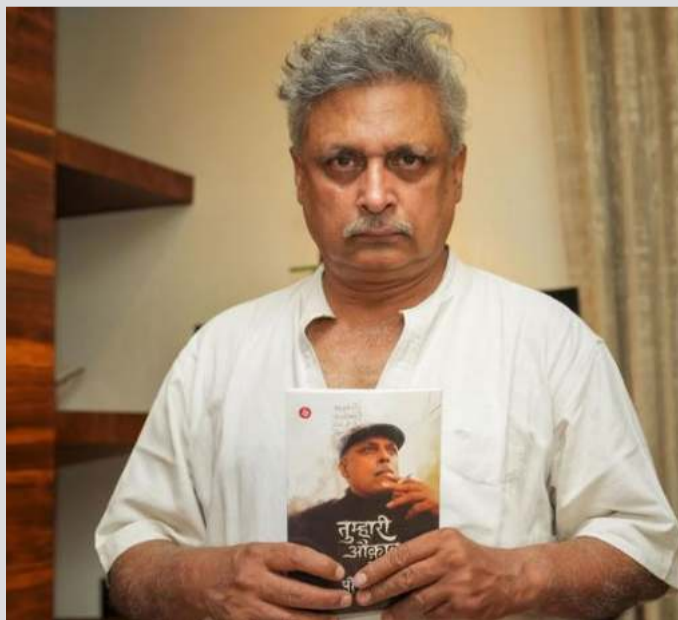
# I am not a star, but a rockstar: Actor Piyush Mishra

PIYUSH MISHRA

NEW DELHI: If you have watched him from his days in the Capital where he was theatre's superstar and his solo acts 'An Evening with Piyush Mishra' were the talk of the town, to now, a play could be written on his dramatic persona change.

Unlike the past, when many were scared even to talk to him to save themselves from his arrogance and burning gaze; actor, lyricist and singer Piyush Mishra has not only become calmer and serene, but also a giver -- the way he encourages young theatre makers, guiding them to be passionate about the craft but also think of financially sustaining themselves, telling them that arrogance will only harm them, just like how it treated him.

"The Delhi days were not just about passionate theatre, but arrogance, self-indulgence and alcoholism...Everybody was supposed to admire my brilliance -- all the time. For me, nothing existed beyond me. I remember leaving for rehearsals early in the morning and coming home at midnight -- drunk. You know, my wife Priya deserves an award for keeping everything together," Piyush,



originally from Gwalior, who joined NSD in 1983 told IANS.

While his first stint in Mumbai, where he was part of Mani Ratnam's 'Dil Se' left him completely broken, it was the second one after he shifted base to that city post the age of 40 that the actor felt settled -- both personally and professionally.

"By now I was a more open person ready to absorb what life offered me. The arrogance

had been left behind and I had a brush with spirituality. I may not be a star, but a rockstar - definitely," smiles Piyush, who received much acclaim for his acting in 'Maqbool', 'Gangs of Wasseypur' (both parts), 'Gulaal', and 'Rockstar'.

Known for his lyrics from theatre days, the actor wrote them for movies like 'Black Friday', 'Gulaal', and also some tracks in 'Dil Pe Mat Le Yaar!!',

'Aaja Nachle', 'Tashan', 'Chal Chalein', 'Lahore', and 'Jalpari: The Desert Mermaid,' among others, when asked how he looked back at his never-ending struggling days in Delhi, Piyush remembers, "I learnt a lot. My total commitment to acting and fine-tuning my craft made things easier for me during my second stint in Mumbai. Of course, there are a lot of regrets. When I was in Delhi, I would see my contemporaries rise in Mumbai, that did lead to much frustration..."

In Chandigarh, on a private visit Piyush also addressed young theatre practitioners at the Tagore Theatre.

The actor, who recently wrote his memoir 'Tumhari Aukat Kya Hai Piyush Mishra' advised them to follow their passion with complete commitment. "During our days, parents would frown if you adopted this profession. That is not the case now. Also, do not let small setbacks discourage you. Manoj Bajpayee could not get admission at NSD, but did that stop him from being a brilliant actor? And do not think of 'reaching' somewhere. Just work consistently, and focus on that. Also, it is important that you are financially independent."

Talk to him about his band

'Ballimaaraan', which blurs the lines between genres and eras, crafting a distinctive tapestry and has managed to carve out a niche of its own, and he stresses, "I do this because I enjoy it. It serves my passion for poetry and music. Sometimes even I am surprised to see young audience members enjoying songs that were written decades back during my early theatre days," he said about the band that recently undertook a multi-city tour in the US.

Even as 'method acting' seems to be the newly learnt term by many in the Hindi film industry, Piyush laments, "This irritates me no end. I have always stressed on instinctive acting, where the reaction is the key. In fact, during our days at the NSD, Irrfan Khan and I would get into long arguments about this. He would often say that I would not have anything to 'fall back on'. However, during the shoot of 'Maqbool', we were comfortable together in a frame and understood - 'to each his own'."

"Every actor needs to develop his method. And it is not that I have not thoroughly read Stanislavski, who developed the Method system of acting," concludes Piyush, who composed his first poem in grade 8.(IANS)

## I-T raid at residence of Bengal minister's kin continues

IAN S

KOLKATA: The marathon raid and search operation by the Income Tax sleuths at the residence of Swarup Biswas, the younger brother of West Bengal Power and Housing Minister, Aroop Biswas, continued on Thursday, said officials.

The Income Tax sleuths reached his residence at New Alipore in South Kolkata on Wednesday morning and were there till the time the report was filed.

Sources said that since Wednesday morning different teams of Income Tax sleuths were involved in the raids and search operations at six different places, including the residence of Biswas.

A local Trinamool Congress, which was mainly the party office of Biswas's wife Jui Biswas, a ruling party councillor of Kol-

kata Municipal Corporation, was also raided by the Income Tax sleuths.

The other places where similar raid and search operations were conducted included the offices of some real estate development entities known to be close to Biswas. The names of two such entities which have surfaced are Eden Real Estate and Multicon Real Estate.

Sources said that during the course of the operation, the Income Tax officials have recovered crucial documents from some of the places. The operation is being conducted on the basis of specific clues of major tax defalcations.

However, the Income Tax officials are tight-lipped over the exact links between Biswas and the real estate development agencies that are under scanner.

# CAA will not snatch citizenship, Indian Muslims need not to fear it: Amit Shah

AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday reiterated that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) will not snatch citizenship and Indian Muslims need not fear the legislation.

Addressing the News 18 Bharat Rising Summit, HM Amit Shah accused the Opposition of spreading misinformation about CAA.

"After the law was passed, a lot of confusion was spread in the country... Opposition spreads falsehood in the country for vote bank politics. CAA won't take away anyone's citizenship," he said.

"During that time, pandemic broke out. We are a democratic organisation. When such misconceptions are being spread, the party in power has the responsibility to reach out to the public with the facts. Opposition spread the rumour to consolidate the vote bank by misleading our Muslim brothers and sisters that their citizenship would be lost. In reality, no one is going to lose citizenship due to CAA but rather it is a law to give citizenship. The Muslims of this nation need not fear," the Home Minister said while speaking at the fourth edition of the CNN-News18 marquee leadership conclave — Rising Bharat Summit 2024 — which was held in New Delhi from March 19 to 20.

The Home Minister also said, "The last 10 years were a golden period for the country where every citizen now takes pride in being Indian."

He said that during these 10 years, 60 crore poor people had been given basic amenities like food, water, healthcare, and homes.

Shah said that former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee left India at 11th rank in the largest economies of the world.

"The economist Prime Minister Manmohan Singh maintained it in the same rank for 10 years and Modi Ji made it the 5th largest economy in 10 years," he said. "This is PM

Modi's guarantee that we will make India the 3rd-largest economy in the third term."

The Home Minister said that in the last 10 years, the digital revolution transformed lives and Indian startups gained sway on the global platform during this period.

About the issue surrounding electoral bonds, he said: "If Rahul Gandhi considers donations as extortion, then he should be speaking about the donations received by the Indi Alliance. He should make it clear from where they received Rs 6000 crores. The court verdict will make way for the return of cut money by way of cash payments. PM Modi had assaulted this corrupt system. Through bonds a ban was imposed on black money through electoral bonds, there is no scope for cutting money in it."

After the truth about electoral bonds comes out, the opposition will not be able to show its face. The ones in the INDI Alliance take donations not for their parties, but to run their

generations."

Shah said that the more the opposition abuses PM Modi, the more the lotus would bloom.

"In 2014, the BJP received 81 percent of donations in cash, in 2018 it became 17 percent, and in 2023 it is only 3 percent," he said. "Ninety percent of the donations received by the BJP were during the code of conduct."

The Home Minister said that the agencies had recovered Rs 51 crore from Mamata Banerjee's minister's home and Rs 355 crore from a Congress MP's home and they were saying that enquiries should not take place.

"If they want to say that actions have not been initiated against BJP leaders they can always file a case in the court. During the UPA rule, we filed 42 such PILs and the Congress government was forced to file cases against its leaders due to court orders," he said.

"But the Congress did not fulfil this promise but we did. It is a sort of implementation of the Nehru-Liaquat pact. But Rahul Gandhi has nothing to do with these historical documents. He is rather used to speaking and reading some chits," Shah said. He said that the custom of rights of a group as per its population had been followed even today.

"But Rahul Gandhi has no right to speak on this. The Congress suppressed Kakashaheb Karlelekar's report for 30 years. The same was done to the Mandal Commission report. Rajiv Gandhi even opposed the Mandal Commission report and spoke against OBC reservation for 1 hour in the Parliament. But PM Modi gave the OBCs constitutional recognition. Now they talk about the number of OBC secretaries. But they do not see the 27 OBC ministers in the Modi cabinet and the PM is also an OBC," the Home Minister said.

He said that the Congress neither knows about India's traditions nor does it have respect

for the traditions.

"In our tradition, the Matri Shakti has been considered the biggest power. No blessing can be bigger than a mother's blessing and no affection can be bigger than a sister's affection. They do not know what they are saying. The Matri Shakti of this nation is standing like a rock with PM Modi. Rahul Gandhi's words cannot affect that. As far as the feedback I have received from the ground women from across the nation have decided to introduce Rahul Gandhi to the power of Matri Shakti," Shah said.

"I also want to appeal to the women of our nation that after the independence of the nation, PM Modi gave the women 33 percent reservation in the Lok Sabha and the state assemblies fulfilling their long-standing aspiration to make them participants in the policy and law-making platforms."

He said that if Arvind Kejriwal and Mamata Banerjee were so concerned about the jobs of youth then why do they not speak about the Bangladeshi

and Rohingya infiltrators?

"It is because it hurts their vote banks," the Home Minister said. "When the regime changed in Afghanistan many Sikh brothers and sisters came to India with the holy Guru Granth Sahib. Are they infiltrators? Every Sikh brother and sister has the same rights as we do in this nation. All Hindu brothers and sisters have the same rights as us. It is wrong to name them infiltrators. As far as the question of jobs is concerned they are already in India. Where does the question of additional load arise?"

He said that it was the right of the nation to decide who was to be given citizenship.

"It is the promise to our citizens that during the Modi government, no one can take a single inch of land. There is no virus of National Register of Citizens (NRC) in CAA, minorities need not fear," Shah said. "Opposition is spreading confusion about CAA. Why is it silent on Bangladeshi infiltrators and Rohingyas?"

## Forest Deptt celebrates 'Int'l Day of Forests' at SKICC

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** As a part of International Day of Forests being observed across the globe, the J&K Forest Department Thursday organized a Mega UT Level Function at SKICC, in which the frontline staff of Forest and allied wings, students of different educational institutes, NGOs, Wildlife experts, Pariyavaran and Van Mitras, officers from different departments and citizens participated.

The event was aimed to highlight the importance of forests and trees in mitigating the effects of climate change, biodiversity loss, increasing noise pollution because of increasing urbanisation and other anthropogenic pressures.

The Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, who was the chief guest on the occasion, emphasized the need to lay emphasis on use of new technology to check

illegal felling of trees, prevent encroachments, devise methodology for consistent monitoring of health of forests and management and promoting research for developing improved varieties to increase the survival percentage of plantations.

Additional Chief Secretary, Forest, Dheeraj Gupta, while speaking on the occasion, highlighted the critical role of Forests in maintaining the ecological balance and improving the quality of life of present and future generations.

PCCF & HoFF, who is also the Chairman of Biodiversity Council of J&K, Roshan Jaggi, informed that department is using emerging technologies for preventing forest fires, monitoring health of plantations, strengthening forest boundary lines and producing high quality planting material in modern nurseries.

## Kathua Admin establishes eco-friendly polling station

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**KATHUA:** District Election Office, Kathua, spearheaded by District Electoral Officer, Dr. Rakesh Minhas, Thursday organised SVEEP event in collaboration with forest department here.

During the event, an eco-friendly polling station was inaugurated in the border sub-division Hiranagar of district, ahead of the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, aligning with the SVEEP objective of sensitising voters about eco-friendly measures and encouraging them to exercise their right to vote.

The green polling booth

situated near the Indo-Pak international border at Government Higher Secondary School, Chakda, showcases a blend of natural elements and eco-friendly materials.

Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Kathua, Ashok Kalsi, highlighted the features of the eco-friendly polling station, ensuring a green and sustainable polling environment for upcoming polls.

The eco-friendly green model polling station aims to attract voters and ensure maximum electoral participation while promoting eco-friendly practices among voters and polling officials.

## Painting by Syed Shahzaib Andrabi



# نقشہ روافط

افطاری	ختم سحری	دن	تاریخ شمسی	تاریخ قمری
06:38	05:24	منگل	12 مارچ	1
06:39	05:23	بدھ	13	2
06:40	05:20	جمعرات	14	3
06:41	05:19	جمعۃ المبارک	15	4
06:42	05:18	سنیچر	16	5
06:42	05:16	اتوار	17	6
06:43	05:15	پير	18	7
06:44	05:14	منگل	19	8
06:45	05:12	بدھ	20	9
06:46	05:11	جمعرات	21	10
06:47	05:10	جمعۃ المبارک	22	11
06:48	05:08	سنیچر	23	12
06:48	05:06	اتوار	24	13
06:49	05:05	پير	25	14
06:50	05:04	منگل	26	15
06:50	05:02	بدھ	27	16
06:51	05:00	جمعرات	28	17
06:52	04:58	جمعۃ المبارک	29	18
06:53	04:56	سنیچر	30	19
06:54	04:56	اتوار	31	20
06:54	04:55	پير	1 اپریل	21
06:55	04:53	منگل	02	22
06:55	04:52	بدھ	03	23
06:56	04:50	جمعرات	04	24
06:57	04:48	جمعۃ المبارک	05	25
06:57	04:47	سنیچر	06	26
06:58	04:45	اتوار	07	27
06:59	04:43	پير	08	28
07:00	04:42	منگل	09	29
07:01	04:41	بدھ	10	30

نقشہ ہذا سے بڑھائیے:

01 منٹ	بارہمولہ	03 منٹ	اورڈی
02 منٹ	پونچھ	02 منٹ	بانڈی پورہ
04 منٹ	ٹیٹوال	01 منٹ	ٹنگمرگ
04 منٹ	کرناہ	01 منٹ	سوپور

نقشہ ہذا سے گھٹائیے:

01 منٹ	پلوامہ	02 منٹ	اسلام آباد
02 منٹ	ترال	03 منٹ	پہلگام
01 منٹ	کولگام	02 منٹ	کد
01 منٹ	ہرموگھ	11 منٹ	لیہہ

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