

# Good Morning Kashmir

15th Year Of Publication

Amit Shah (Modi Ka Parivar) @AmitShah



Today, this sea of people that gathered to bless Modi Ji on the holy land of Jammu is telling that after being free from the chains of Article 370, the new Jammu and Kashmir is ready to touch new heights in the next term of the Modi government.

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LG, Div Com, 3 Former CM's Among Others Grieved  
**SRINAGAR:** The entire Jammu and Kashmir including the civil administration, political parties and others have mourned the death of six persons, who drowned to death on Tuesday morning in boat capsizing incident at Gandabal area of Batwara.  
 Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has expressed condolences over the Srinagar boat tragedy. In a tweet, the Lt Governor said: "I am deeply grieved by the loss of lives due to a boat accident in Srinagar. ●P-06

Decade On, Bridge Awaits Completion  
**REHAN QAYOOM MIR**  
**SRINAGAR:** The delay in construction of the bridge at Gandabal area of Batwara might have not caught the eyes of people so far, but today its absence left the entire Kashmir in shock after a boat capsized and left six people including a mother and her two sons dead on Tuesday morning.  
 The pall of gloom descended the ●P-06

## Rescue Operation Underway

# Six Dead After Boat Carrying School Kids Capsizes In Srinagar's Jhelum River

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

- EYE-WITNESSES** say rope got cut
- BOAT HIT IRON** Pillars of upcoming bridge
- Saw **WOMEN**, children, others crying for help
- SDRF, NDRF, MARCOS on **JOB TO TRACE** three missing persons



**SRINAGAR:** Entire Kashmir plunged into deep shock and grief after a boat ferrying school kids, locals and a few non-J&K residents capsized at Gandabal area of Batwara in Srinagar on Tuesday resulting in the death of six persons including a mother, her two children and the boatman.  
 The incident happened at 8:15 am when a boat with at least 15 persons on board including two women, four

school kids and locals was trying to cross from Gandabal to Batwara. The two school kids, accompanied by their mother, were heading for their school on the other side of the river Jhelum.

Eye-witnesses said that due to the incessant rains for the past two days in Kashmir, the level and flow of water in river Jhelum was high compared to normal days. "As the boat man tried to cross the river with the

help of the rope, the rope suddenly got cut with the result, the boat lost its control. We saw the boat hitting the iron poles installed for the construction of the bridge," said Riyaz Ahmed, an eye-witness.

Office of LG J&K @OfficeOfLGJandK



I am deeply grieved by the loss of lives due to a boat accident in Srinagar. My thoughts are with the bereaved families & I pray to the Almighty to give them strength to withstand this immense loss. Team of SDRF, Army & other agencies are carrying out relief & rescue work.

"All of a sudden, the boat broke into two or more pieces and all those who were on board started crying for help. As the water level was high, we were helpless. We could only see women, children and others drowning."  
 Another eye-witness, wishing not to be named, told KNO, that it was so ●P-06

### Dearth Of Educational Institutes In Locality

**SRINAGAR:** In Gandabal locality, only one government primary school is functional with locals saying that the 'inadequate and poor infrastructure' prompts them to send their wards to other places and cross-river to pursue education.  
 An official source said that the government primary school in Gandabal was established in year 2011 and since then have been demanding upgradation of school. ●P-06

### Valley Unites In Grief

**JAHANGIR SOFI**  
**SRINAGAR:** A heart-wrenching tragedy struck Gandabal area in the outskirts of Srinagar as six persons, including a 35-year-old mother and her two school-going twin sons, lost their lives in a devastating boat capsizing incident in the swollen Jhelum River.  
 This grievous event not only deeply impacted the local community but also stirred mourners from across the valley, who gathered to extend their condolences and support to the bereaved families. ●P-06

**I COULD SEE KIDS DROWNING WITH THEIR SCHOOL BAGS FLOATING ON THE WATER. A WOMAN** was somehow able to wave her hand for some time, but after around ten minutes, she vanished too," he said. The videos of dead floating on the river Jhelum took the social media by storm plunging entire Kashmir in a state of shock and despair.

### LG Sinha Greets People On Ram Navami



**GMK NEWS NETWORK**  
**JAMMU:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has greeted the people on the occasion of Ram Navami, which is being celebrated today.  
 In a message, the Lt Governor said: "On the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami, I extend my greetings and best wishes to all the citizens.  
 Maryada Purushottam Lord Ram is the embodiment of humility, justice and moral values. His life inspires us to follow the path of righteousness and selfless service. The festival of Ram Navami is an occasion for us to renew our resolve to serve humanity with ●P-06

### HM Accuses NC, PDP, Congress Of Staging Fake Encounters



**AMIR TANRAY**  
**JAMMU:** Hinting that BJP won't field candidates for the three crucial Lok Sabha seats of Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Thursday said that BJP was not in a hurry to see Lotus bloom in Valley and urged Kashmiri people especially youth not to vote for parties like National Conference, Congress and PDP. Shah also accused the Congress, NC and PDP of staging fake encounters and handing over guns in the young hands.  
 Addressing the ●P-06

### 'BJP Believes In Winning Hearts'

**JAMMU:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that BJP will occupy the Kashmir Valley but will win people's hearts by loving them.  
 "Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti keep on saying that BJP will occupy the Kashmir Valley. We don't occupy places. We win hearts. People in Valley can vote for anyone. They are under no pressure. We will win their hearts ●P-06

### No Discrimination With Muslims Under PM Modi: Anurag Thakur



**AGENCIES**  
**JAMMU:** Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Tuesday said that there was no discrimination with the Muslim community in the country under Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government which focused on "service, good governance and well-being of the poor" after coming to power in 2014.  
 The information and broadcasting minister accused the Congress of dividing people on the name of 'creed, caste and religion' and said the BJP believes in uniting the country and taking it forward.  
 "Before 2014, Muslims were being told if Modi comes to power you will be finished...have you seen the Modi-led government discriminating against anyone on the basis of ●P-06

### Record Breaking Season

## Tulip Garden Welcomes Over 286,000 Visitors



**RAJA SYED RATHER**  
**SRINAGAR:** Since its inauguration, the Srinagar tulip garden has attracted a total of 286,350 visitors, with daily numbers steadily increasing.  
 According to tulip garden management, there has been a surge in footfall, particularly since Eid, with over 10,000 visitors flocking to the garden daily.  
 Despite recent heavy rains, the garden has remained a popular spot, attracting thousands even on rainy days, Contractor Mudasir Khan, who oversees the garden, informed.  
 He said that over the past six days, the garden saw a total of 92,000 visitors, including 12,202 on Wednesday, 23,660 on Thursday, 17,580 on Friday, and 21,121 on Saturday. Despite heavy rains in the past two days, the garden still received 9,100 visitors on Sunday, 8,300 on Monday, and 10,350 on Tuesday.  
 The official expressed confidence in surpassing last year's record of 366,000 visitors, crediting the government's efforts to enhance the visitor experience and introduce new tulip varieties for the increased interest.  
 Established in 2007 to extend Jammu and Kashmir's tourism season, the tulip garden continues to fulfill its vision. However, the garden's popularity has led to traffic congestion on roads leading to ●P-06

### ACB Arrests Lambardar For Accepting Bribe

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**  
**SRINAGAR:** The Anti Corruption Bureau trapped and arrested a Lambardar for demanding and accepting Rs 4,000 bribe for handing over two NOCs of building permissions.  
 According to a statement, issued complainant alleged that he along with his father applied for building permission at Municipal Council Baramulla with two separate applications which were forwarded by MC Baramulla to different departments for issuance of NOCs and report.  
 The statement reads that the complainant further alleged that when he went to Patwari of village Kuntbagh for NOC and revenue report, he kept delaying and finally he got a phone call from Manzoor Ahmad, Lambardar who told him that both NOCs and Patwari reports of are with him and he asked the complainant to pay him Rs 5000 which he finally agreed for Rs 4000.  
 "He asked him to take the report from him as Patwari halqa has kept the NOC and revenue reports with him. Under these circumstances the complainant ●P-06

### MOVIES Schedule

Wednesday 17 April

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**BADE MIYAN CHOTE MIYAN (HINDI)**  
11:45AM, 02:30PM, 03:40PM, 07:00PM (U/A)

**SHAITAAN (HINDI)**  
06:30PM (U/A)

**MAIDAAN (HINDI)**  
11:15AM, 03:00PM (U/A)

**CREW (HINDI)**  
06:00PM (U/A)

**GODZILLA X KONG (U/A)**  
12:10PM (ENG)



# DC Kupwara visits various areas, assesses post-rainfall situation

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**KUPWARA:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan Tuesday took an extensive tour of various areas of district Kupwara to assess the situation after incessant heavy rainfall in the district.

During the tour, the DC inspected the River Front on Lolab Nallah at Helpal that was damaged due to overnight flash floods. She asked the concerned officers for immediate repairs of the Nallah to prevent any untoward incident.

In the Kalaroose block, the DC inspected Sarkoli-Hajibal Bridge which got damaged during the heavy rainfall, and directed the concerned department for its immediate repairs. She also visited Madmadow and Nagsari villages of the block and took stock of the post flash flood situation.

Meanwhile, the DC directed ACD Kupwara to immediately visit Nagsari area of Kalaroose block to personally monitor the restoration work of public infrastructure.



She also took stock of ongoing Sarkoli-Paraypora road widening project and directed the officers of PMGSY to further strengthen the protection wall alongside the road, keeping in view the landslide prone nature of the area.

The DC said that immediate steps for temporary restoration of the public infrastructure including bridges and roads have been taken up by the District Administration to ensure that no area remains cut off.

She said that fortunately the Tehsildars have already been directed to report the damages caused if any to the personal properties of the people to provide them intermediate relief as per Government guidelines.

She said that fortunately no incident of loss of lives have been reported in the district and appealed to the people especially living in flood prone areas to take utmost precautionary measures by avoiding venturing in and around rivers during heavy rains to prevent any untoward incident.

During her extensive tour, the DC paid a surprise visit to Health & Wellness Centre Sarkoli and inspected its functioning.

The DC also interacted with various deputations of people during the visit who apprised her about their problems and issues due to heavy rainfall. She heard them patiently and assured of every possible support from the District Administration in resolving their genuine issues.

# Daylong seminar on Indian Nuclear Power Program concludes at NIT Sgr

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** A daylong seminar on "Indian Nuclear Power Program: Evolution, Present and the Way Forward" under the aegis of the Indian Nuclear Society (INS) and Indian Geotechnical Society (IGS) concluded at National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar.

The seminar, organized by the Civil and Mechanical Engineering Departments of NIT Srinagar, forms part of a two-day programme by INS, the twin seminar successfully concluded at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu earlier last week.

Speakers included eminent professionals from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd., Department of Atomic Energy, and Atomic Energy Regulatory Boards.

Their engaging talks provided valuable insights into the history and operations of nuclear power plants, including the evolutionary designs, commissioning and decommissioning, site selection and structural engineering safety, as well as aspects of nuclear materials and applications of rare earth elements.

Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath was the chief patron of the event. The inaugural session was presided over by Heads of Civil Engineering,



Mechanical Engineering, and Physics departments.

Prof. B.A. Mir, honorary Secretary (IGS), convened the seminar, with Prof. Adnan Qayoom, Dr. Majid Hussain and Dr. Falak Zahoor as the coordinators. Post-graduate scholars of Geotechnical Engineering (Civil Department) played a vital role in the smooth conduct of the event.

The seminar attracted over 40 participants including UG and PG students from various disciplines of engineering and other sciences from several educational institutes.

Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Ravinder Nath in his inaugural address, mentioned the tremendous opportunities presented

by the event for UG and PG students.

He also appreciated the efforts of NIT Srinagar and INS for providing a significant platform for professionals from all disciplines.

Prof. Ravinder Nath expressed the vision of NIT Srinagar to host more such future events pledging full support for the same. In his keynote address, Prof. J.A. Bhat (HOD, Civil Engineering) and Prof. Adnan Qayoom (HOD, Mechanical Engineering), highlighted the significance of the engineering disciplines in the effective development of nuclear power plants.

Various challenges during the construction and operation phases of

the power plants were discussed, especially seismic hazards and other natural catastrophes.

Prof. Ikram Ahmad (HOD, Physics) and Prof. M.A. Shah underlined the importance of various engineering and science disciplines to planning, building and security. They emphasised the importance of physics in the origin of nuclear power and materials.

Prof. B.A. Mir emphasised the role of geotechnical and geological engineering in the selection of proper sites for nuclear power plants as well as the construction of resilient foundations. In this respect, the indispensable role of geotechnical engineers and the responsibility of IGS were recognised.

Enthusiastic discussions between the participants and the speakers after the lectures created a motivational environment for learning and exchange of knowledge.

The seminar presented a wonderful opportunity for interaction between academic institutions and the members of INS, opening up prospects of future collaborations in projects, internship opportunities, and exchange of expertise.

The session concluded with the possibility of signing a memorandum of understanding between NIT Srinagar and the institutions associated with INS.

# Yasha Mudgal conducts extensive tour of Srinagar City



GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** Mission Director, Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Yasha Mudgal Tuesday conducted an extensive tour of Srinagar district to assess the agricultural scenario of the district.

During the tour, the Mission Director visited hi-tech polygreen houses at Maloora Qamarwari, vegetable mandi Lalmandi Srinagar, controlled crop growing unit HMT. She held interaction with vegetable farmers and agripreneurs of different areas of the district.

Interacting with farmers, the Mission Director reiterated departments commitment to socio-economic development of the farming community of UT of J&K. She highlighted the importance of HADP and asked the farmers to

come forward and avail the benefits of this scheme.

The Mission Director directed the concerned officers to ensure maximum awareness among the farming community across the UT regarding the projects implemented under HADP.

Earlier, Mission Director visited vegetable mandi at Directorate of Agriculture Lal Mandi here and inspected vegetable stalls and community seed bank. She also held interactions with progressive farmers.

The Mission Director also released a book on PGS INDIA Organic Certification on the occasion.

Director Agriculture Kashmir Chowdhury Mohammad Iqbal, Joint Directors, Sectoral officers, Chief Agriculture officer Srinagar and other senior officers of the department were present on the occasion.

# 3rd Randomization of polling staff held in Ramban

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**RAMBAN:** District Election Officer Ramban, Baseer Ul-Haq Chaudhary Tuesday presided over the third randomization process of polling staff designated for deployment across 348 polling stations for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections-2024.

Virtually monitored by the General Observer for 4-Parliamentary Constituency, Dheeraj Kumar, and Police Observer Daljit Singh, the randomization exercise took place in video conference hall of DC office complex with all stakeholders in attendance.

Meanwhile, randomization by draw of lots of polling staff for identified Model Polling stations designated as Pink, PwD, and Youth Polling Stations was also done by the authorities.

The randomization adhered meticulously to the guidelines stipulated by Election Commission of India (ECI), ensuring fairness and impartiality in the selection of polling staff.

ARO, AC-54 Ramban, S. Harpal Singh; Dy. DEO, Abdul Jabar; DIO DIPR, Ramban, Ashraf Wani and DIO NIC, Parshant were also present during the randomization process.

While giving the insight of ongoing election process, the DEO Ramban, said all prerequisites are being fulfilled as per ECI mandate. He further underscored on paramount importance of transparency and integrity in electoral process, reaffirming the commitment towards conducting free, fair and credible elections.

# SSCL clarifies Urdu daily's Article on 'Pace of Work by SSC'

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** The Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) Authorities Tuesday issued a clarification in response to the news article by a local Urdu daily on the pace of work by Srinagar Smart City (SSC).

As per an official hand-out issued here, it has been given out that the SSCL is implementing 168 projects of which 90 are completed amounting to approximately 450Cr, and 68 projects are ongoing worth another 490Cr.

Downtown is an extremely important area in Srinagar and SSCL is currently implementing public space improvement and street improvement projects of length more than 25km, among other illumination and facade improvement projects.

The mentioned projects of Dalgate Gojwara road is being implemented at a cost of 25 Cr and the street improvements in Bohri Kadal, Maharaj Bazaar and Ali Kadal area are worth 50 Cr. All of the above projects are more than 60% complete and shall be completed before June 2024, read the statement.

Habba Kadal was recently inaugurated as one of the flagship projects in downtown Srinagar. 'All the ongoing projects are happening as per schedule and are expected to be completed before June 2024' was mentioned in the official handout.

SSCL works have been meticulously planned and implemented diligently with work going on in the day as well as on the night in two shifts. The comprehensive infrastructure works are being carried out in the downtown that includes not just road surface, but rationalizing drainage, sewerage, communications and electricity, which in the long run shall make the life of the residents easier and comfortable.

Infrastructure works may cause some inconvenience to shoppers and residents as underground works require digging. But the works are proceeding on time and SSCL is creating better footpaths, on street parking, signage, proper drain works, road works, lighting, and geometric improvements, added the statement.

# DC Kishtwar reviews arrangements for Ramnavmi festival

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**KISHTWAR:** Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Dr. Devansh Yadav Tuesday reviewed the arrangements for Ramnavmi festival while chairing a meeting of officers from Line Departments.

The meeting was attended by SSP, Abdul Qayoom; ADDC, Gulam Rasool; ADC, Pawan Kotwal; ACR, Idrees Ahmed Lone; AD Food Shafiqat Keen; CMO, ARTO, Tehsildar, XEN Jal Shakti, senior officers, representatives of PDD, MC, Traffic and other line departments besides representatives of Santan Dharma Sabha Kishtwar.

During the meeting, representatives of Santan Dharma Sabha put forth valuable suggestions on various issues like sanitation, uninterrupted electricity and water supply, traffic management, and adequate stocks of ration.

The DC emphasized the importance of maintaining cleanliness and hygiene, besides ensuring proper lime lining at festive venues, in and around the temples. He directed the concerned departments to promote sanitation, to promote sanitation. He also emphasized the need for concerned officials to visit the temples to assess the overall scenario.

DC also stressed on following all necessary guidelines, as the Model Code of Conduct is in force. He asked the police authorities to provide adequate security arrangements at temples.

The chair further called for interdepartmental coordination to put in place all necessary arrangements well in time for the smooth celebration of the festival.

He asked the PHE and PDD Departments to take all measures to provide uninterrupted water and power supply. PDD was asked to ensure proper lighting arrangements in addition to uninterrupted power supply.

Tehsildar Kishtwar was asked to keep a check on the rates and quality of food items being sold during the festival through market checking.

The Health Department was directed to keep sufficient provision for Medicare facilities and medical staff.

Other arrangements for ensuring fool proof traffic management during festive processions, stage settings, along with other necessary safety arrangements were also discussed and necessary directions were given to the concerned.

# RRC meets representatives of Kashmiri Migrant community



GMK NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** In a meeting with Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (RRC) Migrants J&K, Dr. Arvind Karwani, group of representatives from the Kashmiri migrant community presented a series of proposals aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the ration distribution system.

The delegation highlighted the challenges faced by migrants due to current monthly ration distribution framework and proposed shift to an annual distribution model.

The representatives also

put forth several alternatives and recommended the exploration of technology-driven solutions. These measures are expected to streamline the process and ensure that the distribution is conducted without any discrepancies, directly benefiting the legitimate relief recipients.

Dr. Karwani provided a thoughtful and attentive response to the delegation, assuring them that their valuable suggestions regarding the improvement of ration distribution system will be considered and discussed with higher authorities for potential implementation.

## OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KHANPETH GENERAL PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to all the general public through this notice that the applicant namely Mushtaq Ahmad Malla produced the school certificates duly countersigned by ZEO Singhpora Kalan according to which his daughter Roohi Zehra date of birth is recorded as 01-11-2015. Now the applicant Mushtaq Ahmad Malla S/o Ali Mohammad Malla, R/o Harinarra intends to obtain DOB Certificate in favour of daughter. If anybody has any objection regarding the same, he/she may kindly contact to this office within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice, after that no objection will be entertained.

Sd/- Naib Tehsildar Khanpeth

## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION QAZIGUND. CANCELLATION

The tenders invited vide this office NIT No.02 of R&B/ Qazigund/2024-25/E-Tendering/162-76 Dated: 11-04-2024 for (item No.03 only) and NIT No. 02 of R&B/ Qazigund/ 2024-25/ E-Tendering/ 162-76 Dated: 11-04-2024 for (item No.02 only) are hereby cancelled due to technical error. The fresh tenders shall be re-advertised shortly.

No: 267-69 SD/- Dated: 16-04-2024 Executive Engineer DIPK-106-23 PWD (R&B) Division DT: 16/04/2024 Qazigund.

# 'WORLD HERITAGE DAY' JKAAM to organize exhibition at Art Museum Shergari

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** On 'World Heritage Day' being celebrated globally on the 18th of April every year, the Department of Archives, Archaeology, and Museums J&K, is organizing an exhibition at the Art Museum, Stone Building, Shergari Complex here.

The aim of this exhibition is to raise awareness about the importance of protecting and preserving Cultural Heritage.

The theme for this year's 'World Heritage Day' is 'Discover and Experience Diversity.' The inaugural function

is scheduled for 11:00 am on April 18th, 2024.

The Department is cordially inviting all art and heritage lovers, students,



scholars, teachers, and others to visit the exhibition, which will undoubtedly enhance the knowledge and make their tour joyful.

Entry to the exhibition is free of charge.



# BJP-led NDA to cross 390-mark in Lok Sabha polls, predicts India TV-CNX survey

IAN S

**NEW DELHI:** Days ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, a leading pollster has forecast that the BJP-led NDA is likely to miss its much-touted goal of winning 400 seats by a whisker.

The alliance is projected to win 393 out of the 543 Lok Sabha seats, as per the latest estimates.

According to the opinion poll conducted by India TV-CNX, the BJP alone is likely to fetch 343 seats, while its allies will win close to 50 seats, taking the total tally to 393.

The Congress-led INDIA bloc is projected to finish below the 100-seat mark despite the support of the regional satraps.

The Trinamool Congress, YSRCP, TDP, and the BJD could be the other factions bagging significant numbers of seats, the survey said.

The Congress may be headed for its worst-ever performance in Lok Sabha polls, with the opinion poll putting its tally at just 40 seats. The Trinamool is projected to win 19 seats, followed by the DMK (17),



TDP (12), Aam Aadmi Party (8), and the Samajwadi Party (4).

The BJP is expected to make a clean sweep in many states, including Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Haryana.

Uttar Pradesh, the biggest state with 80 Lok Sabha seats, will also be the biggest contributor to

the BJP's poll numbers, accounting for as many as 72 seats.

The Congress and the BSP are likely to draw a blank in UP, while the Samajwadi Party may manage to win four seats, it said.

The survey also predicted that the other states with a lion's share of contribution to the BJP's tally will be Bihar (17/40), Jharkhand (12/14), Karn-

taka (21/28), Maharashtra (29 / 48), Odisha (10/21), Assam (11/14), and West Bengal (23/42) seats.

The India TV-CNX opinion poll says that it conducted surveys in all the 543 Lok Sabha constituencies in the country between April 1 and April 13, and took the views of close to 1.22 lakh respondents, including about 60,000 female voters.

# Development of Chenab Valley my top priority: Azad

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** Chairman of the DPAP, Ghulam Nabi Azad, lambasted the Congress party for directing unwarranted attacks towards him rather than focusing on crucial issues.

While addressing a public meeting in Banihal's Khari, Azad highlighted the party's failure to address pressing matters such as Article 370 and 35A, emphasizing their misplaced priorities. He said, "Congress's relentless attacks stem from their frustration over DPAP's growing popularity and acceptance."

Instead of confronting the BJP or addressing public concerns, they choose to target us. Where does Congress stand on Article 370? It was I who fought for it in Parliament, while Congress MPs sided with the BJP government. Yet, even today, their leadership remains conspicuously silent on the issue."

Press Note: In a forceful rebuke of the National Conference (NC), Chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad castigated their governance track record in Jammu and Kashmir, spanning over 70 years. Azad questioned the party's legacy of violence and hollow promises, accusing them of exploit-



ing the populace.

He countered recent assertions by Omar Abdullah, reminding him of the pivotal role Azad's MLAs played in his six-year tenure as Chief Minister. Azad denounced Abdullah's lack of gratitude as indicative of his character. He stated, "I want to ask Omar Abdullah, if you served as Chief Minister for 6 years, it was because of the support of my MLAs."

I extended your tenure by sharing the alliance. You didn't do any favors. The MLAs who supported you for the Chief Ministership are still with me. He added, "When Farooq Abdullah left J&K due to militancy, it was my initiative that brought him back. At that time, the NC was in a precarious state. While I hold great respect for Dr.

Farooq Abdullah, his son displays a lack of political maturity and understanding. For how long will they bask in the legacy of Sheikh Abdullah? They couldn't endure a day in jail like him. They're riding on his political coattails without achieving anything significant on their own. He was an ineffective Chief Minister".

Azad emphasized his unwavering commitment to development, dismissing the rhetoric of certain leaders whom he views as exploiters. Azad criticized their habit of chanting slogans in Kashmir only to retreat to foreign vacations, leaving the impoverished people to bear the brunt. He underscored the urgent need to uplift the underprivileged by investing in essential infrastructure

such as roads, schools, colleges, hospitals, tehsils, universities, and tourism spots. Azad stressed that genuine progress requires tangible actions, not just hollow words. He pledged to establish degree colleges, primary health centers, hospitals, expand road networks, and create new tehsils if DPAP assumes power.

Azad urged the public not to fall prey to religious politics and instead vote for his candidate, G.M. Saroori, known for his integrity and diligence, who will champion public concerns in Parliament. Chief Spokesperson Salman Nizami, reassured Azad of the unwavering support of the people of Banihal for his leadership, pledging to secure victory for his cause in the upcoming elections.

# Political parties suspend election campaign following boat capsizing tragedy



AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** Various political parties in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday suspended campaigning for the parliamentary elections in the wake of the boat capsizing tragedy that left six people dead.

National Conference (NC) candidate for the Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi suspended his campaigning for two days.

"This is a tragic day today for all of us and the bereaved families of the children who lost their lives in #Batwara. I cancel all my campaigning programmes for today and

tomorrow. Prayers for the angelic souls and the families of the deceased," Mehdi, an influential Shia leader, posted on X.

The Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference (JKPC), led by Sajad Lone, also suspended all election-related activities of the party.

"Out of respect for the families affected by the boat capsizing tragedy today, JKPC cadres and leaders are directed to suspend all election-related activities. Our hearts are with those enduring this loss. We stand together with the affected families in support and solidarity," the party said.

Lone is contesting the Lok Sabha polls from the

Baramulla constituency in north Kashmir.

The Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party, led by Altaf Bukhari, said there would be no political activity for the day in the Kashmir valley.

"In view of the tragedy caused by the boat capsizing incident, the Apni Party is postponing all its activities and events that were scheduled for today. The loss of precious lives, including those of children, in this fatal incident is a monumental tragedy for all of us, and we are grieving."

"Therefore, there will be no political activity anywhere in the valley today," the party said on X.

# Div Com expresses grief over loss of lives in unfortunate incident of boat capsizing



GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri today called an urgent meeting of officers of various departments to frame the strategy to avoid unfortunate incidents of boat capsizing in future and save precious lives.

While stressing on the safety measures for Water Transportation, Div Com issued advisory for compulsory lifesaving jackets for all on-board passengers. He also directed for safety audit of all means of water transportation.

Besides, he issued

directions to prohibit ferrying the passengers beyond the capacity of boats by boatmen.

The meeting discussed the licensing and regulation of means of water transport for operation in Jhelum and other water bodies.

Regarding the under construction bridge at Gandbal Batwara, the meeting was informed that the work on the bridge is going on and shall be completed by June 30, 2024.

On the occasion, Div Com directed concerned officers of R&B to strictly adhere to the deadline for the completion of the bridge.

Meanwhile, Div Com constituted a committee headed by Additional Commissioner Kashmir, Qazi Sarwar to frame the policy for the regulation of water transport with other members from District Administration, LCMA, I&FC, Tourism, Police, SDRF and Transport department.

Div Com also expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of lives in an unfortunate incident and expressed heartfelt condolences with the bereaving families.

Among others, the meeting was attended by VC, LCMA; ACR Central; Officers of Tourism department, I&FC and R&B.

# UPSC-2023 LG Sinha congratulates selected candidates

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** At least eleven candidates from Jammu and Kashmir have cracked the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) civil services 2023 examination of which results were announced on Tuesday.

Among the selected candidates from Jammu and Kashmir, Anmol Rathore has secured all India 7th rank in UPSC 2023 results.

Hailing from Udrana village of Bhadarwah area, Anmol has been a topper of JKAS 2022 exams.

Similarly, the JK Police Officer Farhan She of Dooru Bragham of in southern Anantnag district have secured 369th rank followed by Aparajita Aryan with 381st rank, Ghulam Maya Din with 388th rank, Suvarn Sharma with 412th rank, Seerat Baji with 516th rank and Dinash Kumar have secured 1003rd rank.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha on micro blogging website X congratulated Anmol Rathore and other short-listed candidates.



The other candidates who have cracked the UPSC civil services exam 2023 include Arjun Gupta with 32nd rank, Manan Bhat with 88th rank, Harnit Singh Sudan with 177th rank and Mohamad Haris Mir has secured 345th rank.

Sinha said, "Heartiest congratulations to Anmol Rathore (AIR:7) and all aspirants from J&K who have cleared UPSC CSE-2023. Your remarkable achievements will inspire the youth of J&K. Best wishes to all the successful candidates." (SIC)—(KNO)

# Amid caution, growth regulators in high demand in Kashmir orchards

JAHANGEER GANAIE

**SRINAGAR:** Kashmir orchardists are spraying growth regulators worth crores despite not being recommended by SKAUST or the department of horticulture.

With the onset of spring, growers in several areas of Kashmir have started spraying growth regulators in their orchards with the claim it helps in better fruit set. But some still believe it is a waste of time.

Experts said that there are over a dozen brands of growth regulators available in the market but none of them have been recommended either by the directorate of horticulture or by SKAUST (Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology).

Mohammad Ashraf, a fruit grower from Shopian said that fruit sets main-

tained by growth regulators don't last long and all these fruits fall in June and July.

He termed it wastage of time and money and even if one year it helps in full fruit set but next year the produce remains very low.

"If regulators will be used continuously for a few years, time will come when trees won't give any fruit," he said.

Javid Ahmad, another fruit grower said that he has been using growth regulators for the past few years now and with the help of growth regulators, the production has doubled.

Growers demand that the government must break silence and issue directions in this regard whether it is safe to use growth regulators or not.

They said that usually if growth regulators are being sprayed one year there remains good results while

in the next year, the produce decreases.

Experts say that though fruit growers in Kashmir are using these growth regulators for the last 10 years, there is neither any recommendation to use them nor any research to know whether it should or should not be used by the growers.

A scientist from SKAUST Kashmir said that people spray these regulators despite not recommended by SKAUST or horticulture department.

SKAUST has recommended only boron spray at the pink bud stage, which is a micro nutrient, not a growth regulator, he said.

"There are some other micronutrients recommended at the pea bud stage of fruit and other stages but no such growth regulators or micro nutrients are recommended at full bloom stage," he said. —(KNO)

# Trade bodies express grief over loss of lives

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) is distressed over the loss of life in the Boat Capsizing Tragedy at Batwara - Gandabal River Jhelum crossing.

According to a statement issued, the KCCI mourns the loss of life of 6 persons including School Children.

It appealed the administration to redouble the operation to search the missing persons. It is a tragic and inconceivable loss to the families of the children who were on way to school in the ill fated boat and never returned. No words are enough to grieve over the loss and express condolences to the families of the victims, the statement reads.

KCCI believes that this tragic incident could have been averted had the concerned authorities shown sensitivity to the situation that existed at the spot and

many other dangerous River Crossings, the statement said.

"It is perplexing to note that the process of construction of the bridge had been initiated at the site but abandoned for un-known reasons.

The safety and security of citizens is the foremost duty of any Government but in this and other such cases the safety concerns have been ignored," the statement said.

It would be worthwhile to mention that the KCCI in Srinagar Smart City Project Limited meetings had been pressing to take Developmental / Beautification works beyond the Srinagar Municipal Limits but the suggestion was ignored on the ground that the funds earmarked would have to be spent within the Srinagar Municipal Limits, the statement said.

The KCCI demanded that the work on Batwara - Gandabal Bridge be taken up on war footing, as also on other simi-

larly situated River Crossing bridges/footbridges be taken up and completed on urgent basis to avert similar incidents and loss of more lives.

Meanwhile, CCIK President Tariq Ghani has conveyed his profound sorrow over the devastating incident at Gandabal-Batwara.

Describing the Batwara tragedy as a "unimaginable massacre," CCIK President Tariq ghani emphasized the critical need to hold those responsible for negligence fully accountable. He questioned why the bridge in the area has remained incomplete, and how local authorities could allow an unsafe boat to ferry school children across the river.

"Life jackets should be mandatory for every single person before any boat departs, whether on a lake or river. The administration must strictly enforce this vital safety precaution," he insisted.

Kashmir Trade Alliance (KTA) expressed deep shock and sorrow over the loss of lives in boat capsizing incident.

KTA President Aijaz Shahdhar conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families impacted by the tragic incident. "Our hearts are shattered by this terrible loss of life," Shahdhar said. "To lose innocent young children in such a horrifying manner is an unimaginable tragedy for their families and our entire community."

KTA president called upon government authorities to provide all possible assistance and support to the bereaved families grappling with this profound grief. "In their darkest hour, these families should not have to worry about finances or making arrangements. It is incumbent upon the administration to urgently step in and ensure all their needs are taken care of," Shahdhar stated—(KNO)

# Man killed after being hit by vehicle in Ganderbal

RAJA SYED RATHER

**GANDERBAL:** A man was killed in a road accident at Nunner area of central Kashmir's Ganderbal district on Tuesday afternoon, officials said.

An official said that the man was hit by a vehicle in Nunner area today, leading to his on spot death. The deceased has been identified as Khurshid Ahmad Baba son of Mohd Shafi Baba of Bab Mohalla Buchpora.

"A case under relevant sections of law has been registered and further investigations taken up," he said, adding that driver of the vehicle has been arrested—(KNO)



Good Morning **Kashmir**

EDITORIAL

## Batwara Boat Tragedy

Every eye is wet in Kashmir and tears are rolling down every cheek. Everyone in Kashmir is sad today. A tragedy of unimaginable proportions struck Kashmir as a boat carrying people beyond its capacity capsized in the swelling waters of Jhelum near Batwara in Srinagar. It is believed that about nineteen to twenty people were on that boat and a majority of those aboard were school children. While a few people have been rescued as per latest reports a large number of those aboard are feared dead. It is a tragedy if minor school children have to be aboard such a dangerous boat journey to reach school. Why was not a bridge built at this place which serves as an important point between people of these two areas across two banks of Jhelum River? And most importantly why did the school authorities not declare a holiday for students of this area? Why did the authorities allow this boat service to run when the waters of Jhelum was about to touch danger level? Was no one from the establishment monitoring this? These are serious questions and they demand serious and urgent answers. The least the government can do is that someone has to be held responsible for these deaths. We demand a high-level judicial inquiry in this regard. No stone should be left untouched to bring the culprits to justice. Culprits here are those officials who did not monitor the boat traffic amidst such dangerous levels of waters, that school which did not declare holidays for minor children residing across the other banks of river.

The government must act in professional manner and immediately declare monetary compensation to the next of kin of those killed and bear expenses of medical treatment of those who survived. This tragedy could have been so easily averted by a single notification that due to rise in the water levels of Jhelum all people are hereby ordered to refrain from traveling in a boat in Jhelum till further orders. This order should then have been implemented by the Jammu and Kashmir police. This boat should have been moored to the bank with a lock or stamped road of Jammu and Kashmir police. No one did their official duties properly and the results are before our eyes. May the wounds this tragedy gave us heal soon.

## World Hemophilia Day

# Towards A New Paradigm In Treatment For Hemophilia



DR. VIKAS DUA

**H**emophilia meaning love (philia) of blood (hemo) has been referred to as the disease of the kings," as is often described in the descent of Queen Victoria of England. Haemophilia affects 1 in 10000 live births. The disease is of two kinds- Hemophilia A and B. Hemophilia A is more prevalent (80% to 85% of the total hemophilia population) than hemophilia B.

Hemophilia is usually an inherited condition and is caused by the congenital deficiency of clotting factors in the blood. As a result, your blood doesn't clot properly causing prolonged and excessive bleeding after minor trauma or sometimes even spontaneously. Haemophilia A and B are caused by a deficiency of factors 8 and 9 respectively.

The diagnosis combines an index of suspicion due to a family history of bleeding, clinical manifestation, as well as laboratory testing. Your doctor does a simple test of PTT, mixing study and factor assays, and confirms the diagnosis. Hemophilia is diagnosed if the factor activity is less than 40% of normal factor activity. The disease is categorized into mild, moderate, and severe forms by quantification of factors activity done in a good laboratory and interpreted by an expert.

Both haemophilia A and B are inherited via an X-linked recessive pattern which means all the males carrying the affected gene will have the disease and 100% of females born from affected



fathers will be carriers. Affected men have affected sons and carrier daughters. Carrier females have a 50% chance of affected sons and a 50% chance of carrier daughters. Up to a third of haemophilia cases happen sporadically which means that there is no evidence of the in family history

The hemophiliac kid can present at varying stages based on their severity as joint swelling (knee, elbow, ankles commonly), oral bleeding, skin bleeds, prolonged bleeding following tooth extraction or tonsillectomy or post-surgery and major bleeds such as brain bleeds, and abdominal bleeds. Repeated bleeding affects the day-to-day quality of life and causes arthropathy or destroys the joints permanently and should be dealt with as a matter of importance.

While performing pain management, one should avoid aspirin and take pain-

killers with doctors' guidance as chances of bleeding may increase. All vaccinations to be given intramuscularly should be given by experts or avoided. The hematologist's advice is PRICE therapy in case of a bleeding episode known acronym for Protect the joint, Rest, ice application, compression, and elevation. Immobilization of painful joints, early initiation of physical therapy and exercise program, maintaining strength, and preventing further injury by gait training patients go hand-in-hand. The treatment is fulfilling the deficiency that nature has bestowed i.e. urgent factor replacement. These are intravenous drugs given as a replacement basis and when required or prophylactic to avoid joint bleeds. There are also newer subcutaneous once-a-month injections available, Emicizumab that has changed the life of hemophiliac kids.

Overall, hemophilia is an inherited condition. The median life expectancy with care and prophylaxis is reaching normal values. Adequate counseling, genetics opinion, and hematologist consultation are needed. In case of family history, be alert for testing during pregnancy. If your child is hemophilia consult an expert hematologist, always carry factor backups for emergencies with adequate storage, have appropriate peri-procedural consultation, screening for "inhibitors", and adequate and planned follow-ups. Gene therapy for hemophilia has progressed remarkably and could soon become a reality.

Author is Principal Director & Head - Pediatric Hematology, Oncology & Bone Marrow Transplant, Fortis Hospital Gurugram

## Misinformation In The Digital Age

BHABANI SHANKAR NAYAK

**I**n this era of an Artificial Intelligence-fueled digital revolution, misinformation has emerged as a potent weapon wielded by both ruling and non-ruling elites. Their aim is often to undermine truth, dismantle democracy, sow division among people, and exert control over various aspects of life and resources on the planet. The reach of Deep Fakes extends far beyond celebrities, politicians, and industrialists; they now infiltrate everyday services and commodities that are consumed by the masses. This pervasive spread of deceptive information threatens not only public figures but also the trust and reliability of the information we rely on in our daily lives. As technology continues to advance, the challenge lies in distinguishing fact from fiction and ensuring that our digital landscape and society remain a trustworthy source of information for everyone.

Misinformation is not merely an accidental mistake; it is a meticulously crafted strategy designed to exploit the masses. This deliberate dissemination of false information serves to divert attention from the harsh material realities of capitalism, steering people towards a culture fuelled by emotion and falsehoods. In such an environment, it becomes increasingly challenging to engage with fact-based information that has a tangible impact on everyday human lives. This shift towards an emotional and misleading narrative undermines the foundation of informed decision-making, making it crucial for individuals to be vigilant and discerning in their consumption of information. As we navigate this complex landscape, the importance of promoting critical thinking and media literacy cannot be overstated, empowering individuals to distinguish between reliable information and deliberate deception.

Misinformation is disseminated widely across all mediums of communication, intentionally blurring the



lines between fact and fraud. This strategy serves to amplify deception, foster misgovernance, and create a climate where accountability is sidelined. The pervasive nature of this misinformation campaign contributes to shaping a narrative where individuals are constantly confronted with false challenges and distorted realities. By muddying the waters of truth, those behind these campaigns aim to sow confusion, manipulate public opinion, and undermine the foundations of a well-informed society. This deliberate strategy to disengage with accountability not only erodes trust in institutions but also hampers the ability of individuals to make informed decisions that affect their lives. It fosters a culture where misinformation thrives, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish between genuine information and deliberate falsehoods.

In such a deceptive environment, tobacco companies exploit the narrative of smoking being associated with smartness, while alcohol companies promote the supposed health benefits of drinking. Similarly, pharmaceutical companies market numerous unnecessary drugs under the guise of securing a healthy life.

This false propaganda follows in the tradition of Goebbels, who famously stated, "if you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it." The fraudulent and misinformation campaigns orchestrated by these industries have little regard for truth; their primary objective is to weaken the foundation of truth and undermine the realities of life. By perpetuating falsehoods and manipulating public perception, these entities prioritize profit over the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. This insidious manipulation not only distorts public understanding but also erodes trust in legitimate sources of information. As a result, it becomes increasingly challenging for individuals to make informed choices about their health, contributing to a cycle of misinformation and exploitation.

This deliberate spread of false information serves the interests of both ruling and non-ruling elites, enabling them to govern the masses without facing democratic accountability. In this context, misinformation acts as an escape route for the elites, allowing them to manipulate public opinion and maintain control over societal narra-

tives. By controlling the flow of information and shaping public perception through misinformation, these elites can influence elections, suppress dissent, and consolidate power without the checks and balances that a well-informed citizenry would demand. This erosion of democratic principles and practices poses a significant threat to the fabric of democratic societies, as it undermines the fundamental rights of citizens to make informed decisions and hold their leaders accountable. So, combating misinformation is not just a matter of correcting false information; it is a crucial step in safeguarding democracy and ensuring that governance remains transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs and wishes of the people. By promoting media literacy, fostering critical thinking, and holding purveyors of misinformation accountable, people can work towards creating a more informed and resilient democratic society.

Misinformation serves as a tool for demagogues and dictators alike, exploiting the trust of ordinary people who often lack the means to verify the authenticity of information shared on digital platforms. In an age where information

is readily accessible but not always reliable, the hardworking masses find themselves at the mercy of false narratives propagated by those with ulterior motives. Meanwhile, some intellectuals lazily label this era as one of "post-truth," suggesting that truth and realities have become obsolete concepts. However, post-truth has little to do with truth; instead, it is a deliberate strategy employed by both governing and non-governing elites to shape public opinion and delegitimize factual information. By manipulating the narrative and spreading misinformation, these elites seek to maintain their grip on power without facing scrutiny or accountability.

This deliberate distortion of truth not only undermines the public's ability to make informed decisions but also erodes the foundations of democratic society. It is essential to recognize the dangers posed by the deliberate spread of false information and to actively work towards promoting a culture of transparency, accountability, and factual integrity. By doing so, we can help safeguard democracy and ensure that the voices of ordinary people are not drowned out by the cacophony of falsehoods propagated by those who seek to manipulate public opinion for their interests. The power of misinformation campaigns based on fake news is undeniably potent in today's digital age, capable of undermining both life and truth. However, it's crucial to remember that this influence is not insurmountable nor permanent. While misinformation and fake news may obscure the truth, they cannot ultimately destroy it.

History stands as a silent yet steadfast witness to the ebb and flow of power and the enduring nature of truth. Time and again, the inherent resilience of truth has prevailed over deception, and the efforts of those who sought to manipulate public opinion have been exposed and defeated. (Counter Currents)

Bhabani Shankar Nayak, University of Glasgow, UK



## Ecofeminism And Earth

# Practical Implications And Beyond



DR. RAJKUMAR SINGH

**E**cofeminism is a philosophical and political movement that emerged in the 1970s, combining ecological concerns with feminist ones. It explores the interconnectedness between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature, arguing that both are rooted in systems of domination, patriarchy, and capitalism. At the core of ecofeminist thought is the belief that there are strong parallels between the subjugation of women and the degradation

of the environment. This perspective suggests that patriarchal societies tend to view both women and nature as resources to be exploited for profit and power. Ecofeminism critiques traditional Western dualisms such as male/female, culture/nature, and mind/body, arguing that they reflect and reinforce hierarchical relationships. It also highlights the importance of intersectionality, recognizing that various forms of oppression (based on gender, race, class, etc.) intersect and compound each other. In terms of practical implications, ecofeminism advocates for environmental justice, sustainable practices, and social change that challenges existing power structures. It promotes eco-centric worldviews that prioritize harmony and balance with nature rather than domination and exploitation.

The relationship between ecofeminism and the Earth is fundamental. Ecofeminists argue that the Earth is often depicted as feminine and has been historically exploited and dominated, much like women. Thus, they advocate for a more respectful and reciprocal relationship with the Earth, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life and the need for environmental stewardship. Overall, ecofeminism offers a holistic approach to addressing social and environmental issues, recognizing the intrinsic value of both human and non-human life and advocating for more equitable and sustainable ways of living.

Background of feminism: There are some key backgrounds and influences that contributed to the development of ecofeminism: a. Feminist Thought: Ecofeminism builds upon the insights and critiques of feminist theory, which has been exploring the social, political, and economic oppression of women. Feminist thinkers highlighted the ways in which patriarchal societies exploit and marginalize women, laying the groundwork for ecofeminist analysis of the connections between gender oppression and environmental degradation. b. Environmentalism: The environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s, with its focus on ecological sustainability and conservation, provided a context for ecofeminist thought to develop. Environmental activists raised awareness about issues such as pollution, deforestation, and species extinction, prompting critical reflections on humanity's relationship with nature.

Liberation Movements: Ecofeminism draws inspiration from various liberation movements, including civil rights, anti-colonial struggles, and indigenous rights movements. These movements highlighted the intersecting forms of oppression faced by marginalized communities and emphasized the importance of solidarity and collective action in challenging systems of domination. e. Spiritual and Cultural Traditions: Ecofeminism also draws on spiritual and cultural traditions that prioritize the interconnectedness of all life and advocate for sustainable ways of living. Indigenous worldviews, Eastern philosophies, and eco-centric religious traditions have influenced ecofeminist perspectives, providing alternative frameworks for understanding humanity's relationship with the Earth.

Benefits of ecofeminism: Ecofeminism offers numerous benefits and contributions to both theory and practice, as well as to broader social



and environmental movements. Some of these benefits include: Intersectional Analysis: Ecofeminism provides an intersectional analysis of oppression,

recognizing the interconnected nature of systems of domination based on gender, race, class, sexuality, and other axes of identity. By examining the intersections between patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, and environmental exploitation, ecofeminism offers a more comprehensive understanding of social and environmental injustice.

Holistic Worldview: Ecofeminism promotes a holistic worldview that recognizes the interconnectedness of all life and emphasizes the intrinsic value of both human and non-human beings. This holistic perspective challenges anthropocentrism and encourages a deeper appreciation for the diversity and complexity of ecosystems, fostering a sense of interconnectedness and interdependence. c. Sustainable Practices: Ecofeminism promotes sustainable practices and lifestyles that prioritize harmony and balance with nature over exploitation and domination.

By advocating for ecologically sustainable alternatives to conventional modes of production and consumption, ecofeminism offers practical solutions for mitigating environmental harm and building resilient communities. d.

Gender Equity: Ecofeminism challenges traditional gender roles and hierarchies, advocating for gender equity and empowering women as agents of environmental and social change. By recognizing the contributions of women to environmental stewardship, conservation, and community resilience, ecofeminism promotes gender-inclusive approaches to environmental activism and governance. Ecofeminism first emerged in North American and European academic circles

in the 1970s as an offshoot of the feminist movement, and specifically linked the subjugation of women to humanity's oppressive relationship with nature. It was employed as a theoretical framework to better understand how hierarchical and dualist definitions of gender could explain humanity's dominating role in its relationship with the environment.

Cultural and Spiritual Renewal: Ecofeminism draws on diverse cultural and spiritual traditions that prioritize reverence for nature and promote sustainable ways of living. By reclaiming indigenous wisdom, earth-centred spirituality, and ecocentric ethics, ecofeminism fosters cultural and spiritual renewal, inspiring transformative shifts in consciousness and values.

Solidarity and Coalition Building: Ecofeminism fosters solidarity and coalition building across diverse social and environmental movements, recognizing the interconnectedness of struggles for justice and sustainability. By building alliances with other marginalized communities and

including those based on race, class, sexuality, and ability. As ecofeminist theory becomes more inclusive and intersectional, it gains greater relevance and resonance with diverse communities, contributing to broader social justice movements.

Ecofeminist Economics: There is growing interest in ecofeminist approaches to economics, which challenge conventional capitalist models and prioritize sustainability, care work, and community well-being. Ecofeminist economists are exploring alternative economic frameworks that value the contributions of women, indigenous peoples, and nature, laying the groundwork for more just and sustainable economic systems.

Environmental Policy and Governance: Ecofeminism is increasingly influencing environmental policy and governance at local, national, and international levels. Ecofeminist perspectives on issues such as climate change, biodiversity conservation, and environmental justice are being incorporated into policy debates and decision-making processes, contributing to more holistic and gender-responsive approaches to environmental management.

Ecofeminist Activism and Solidarity: Ecofeminist

justice movements, ecofeminism strengthens collective resistance to systems of oppression and fosters more inclusive and intersectional forms of activism.

Expansion and prospect: The expansion and prospects of ecofeminism are closely tied to ongoing social, political, and environmental developments: a. Intersectionality: Ecofeminism continues to embrace intersectionality, recognizing the interconnected nature of various forms of oppression,

activism is expanding and diversifying, with grassroots movements worldwide mobilizing for environmental and social justice. Ecofeminist activists are building alliances with other movements, including indigenous rights, labor rights, and LGBTQ+ rights, to confront intersecting forms of oppression and advance collective struggles for a more just and sustainable world.

What Exactly is Ecofeminism?: Ecofeminism seeks to reexamine both the feminist and environmen-

talist movements and augment each of their arguments. The framework examines how gender and nature intersect, specifically how binary definitions falsely categorise opposing groups, assigning disproportionate value to one grouping and encouraging hierarchical thinking. Today, the relevance and use value of ecofeminism has largely faded from activist and intellectual circles. However, the concepts behind the framework can still be applied to understand why elevating women can intersect with achieving equitable sustainability targets, and have such a measurable effect on mitigating environmental impacts. Currently, the world's population is around 7.8 billion. By 2050, the UN estimates that this will balloon to between 9.4 and 10.1 billion. Climate change solutions are tied to population; when a population increases, more food and energy need to be produced. Additionally, as populations in developing countries grow, so does their economic capacity, as more and more people are able to escape poverty and accumulate wealth. Population growth accompanying economic expansion in developing countries is neither unnatural nor undesirable, although it will inevitably lead to higher individual carbon footprints and rises in nations' overall emissions. To mitigate the environmental impact of population growth, states can pursue social initiatives that promise equal access to healthcare and education opportunities regardless of gender.

Education and Research: Ecofeminism is gaining recognition within academic and educational settings, with growing interest in ecofeminist research and scholarship. Universities and research institutions increasingly offer courses and programs focused on ecofeminist theory, practice, and activism, fostering critical thinking and interdisciplinary dialogue on gender, environment, and social justice. In conclusion, the expansion and prospects of ecofeminism are shaped by ongoing efforts to address the intertwined challenges of gender oppression, environmental degradation, and social injustice. By building alliances, advocating for systemic change, and promoting alternative ways of living and relating to the Earth, ecofeminism offers hope for a more sustainable, equitable, and compassionate future.

Author is a youth motivator and former Head of the University Department of Political Science, B.N. Mandal University





## Six Including Minors

painful to see people drowning. "I could see kids drowning with their school bags floating on the water. A woman was somehow able to wave her hand for some time, but after around ten minutes, she vanished too," he said. The videos of dead floating on the river Jehlum took the social media by storm plunging entire Kashmir in a state of shock and despair.

Locals of Gandabal blamed the incomplete bridge for the tragedy. "There has been a long delay in completion of the bridge. Had there been a proper bridge, these young kids would have perhaps been alive," they said.

Among the dead were a woman and her two twin kids, who were off to school. "Their mother would always accompany them to the school. She would drop them at the school and come back when school was off for the day," a weeping woman said.

As per locals, SDRF and other rescue teams allegedly took time to reach the spot to start their operations. The SDRF later retrieved the bodies of six people that include the woman identified as Firdousa, wife of Fayaz Ahmed Malik, and her twin children— Tanvir Fayaz and Mudasir Fayaz, a father-son duo and the boatman. Later, police recovered four school bags, belonging to the deceased kids, from river Jehlum at Chattabal Vier.

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat said that 15 people including seven minors and eight adults were on board the boat. "Six people including two kids and their mother died. Three are still missing and the rest were rescued," he said.

IGP Kashmir V K Bhirdi told reporters late this evening, said that initial inquiry suggested that six people died in the incident and three are still missing. "Rest were rescued. We have alerted the police stations across Srinagar to keep a watch on the Jehlum river while SDRF, NDRF and even MARCOS have been pressed into service to trace the three-missing people," he said.

Thousands attend funeral of Six deceased: Amid tears and sobs, thousands of people offered funeral prayers of six individuals including mother, her two kids, who drowned to death after a boat capsized in Srinagar's Gandabal area of Srinagar. The funeral was jointly offered for five deceased including a woman and later for another individual as well. The funeral was led by religious cleric Abdul Lateef Alqandi with moist eyes—(KNO)

## LG, Div Com, 3

My thoughts are with the bereaved families & I pray to the Almighty to give them strength to withstand this immense loss. Team of SDRF, Army & other agencies are carrying out relief & rescue work."

"Administration is providing all possible help to the bereaved families who have lost their near and dear ones and medical facilities to those who have been injured. Marcos teams have also been alerted. I am constantly monitoring the situation and guiding the team on the ground," LG said.

Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri also expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of lives in an unfortunate incident at Gandabal, Batwara.

He also expressed heartfelt condolences with the bereaving families.

Beside, the former chief ministers of erst-while Jammu & Kashmir State and other political leaders across the Union Territory mourned the death of six persons.

NC Vice President Omar Abdullah expressed concern over the incident. "Deeply concerned by the reports of a boat capsizing on the river Jehlum at Gandabal, Batwara near Srinagar. I hope & pray that all on board this boat are rescued safely & swiftly," Omar wrote on X.

PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti expressed shock over the incident. "Deeply shocked about the tragedy in Gundbal today. Request @manojnsinha\_ji to initiate an enquiry at the earliest to ascertain reasons for the inordinate delay in completion of a footbridge here," Mehbooba Mufti wrote on X.

DPAP Chairman, Ghulam Nabi Azad expressed grief over the loss of lives.

"Deeply saddened by the tragic news of 6 dead and 10 missing after a boat overturns in Srinagar. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Thoughts and prayers for the safe recovery of those missing!," Azad wrote.

Peoples Conference (PC) President Sajad Gani Lone extended his heartfelt condolences to the families affected by the devastating boat capsizing incident in Gandbal-Batwara on Tuesday morning.

Expressing deep distress over the tragic news, he particularly empathised with the loss of numerous minors in the incident. "It is such distressing news. My heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives. So many minors have lost their lives. My prayers and thoughts are with the parents during this unimaginably difficult time," stated Lone.

Furthermore, he called upon the administration and SDRF teams to expedite rescue operations and ensure the survivors receive prompt and best possible medical care. He also urged the authorities to provide all possible help to the bereaved families during this difficult time.

Apni Party President, Syed Atlat Bikhari also expressed grief over the loss of lives.

"Devastated to hear of the tragic capsizing of a boat carrying several persons, including children, in the River Jehlum near Batwara, Srinagar. The loss of precious lives is heart-breaking. My thoughts and prayers are with the families affected by this terrible accident. Urging the administration to swiftly extend support to those in need," Bukhari said.

CPI (M) senior leader Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami also expressed heartfelt condolences to the victims' families.

"Deeply pained by the boat capsizing tragedy in Batwara. Sending heartfelt condolences to the victims' families. The prolonged construction of a footbridge, lingering for years, highlights a missed opportunity to prevent such tragedies, Tarigami wrote on X—(KNO)

## Decade On, Bridge

entire Kashmir after a boat capsized this

morning. Six persons have died while three as per the government are undergoing treatment as many are still missing.

The locals lamented the absence of a bridge within the locality, saying that work was started almost a decade ago, but unfortunately the work was never completed till now, causing huge inconvenience to the inhabitants here.

"Despite elapsing over a decade, the construction of the bridge is still in the initial stage, which shows the people have been taken for granted so far. We could only show our anger, but the fact is our pleas and requests fell on deaf ears during these years," Ali Muhammad, a local resident said with tears in his eyes, wailing over the loss of precious lives in the locality.

"One cannot imagine the lethargy the concerned authorities have shown so far. Today's mayhem could have been avoided in case the bridge would have been constructed on time," he said, adding that the high and tall claims being made by the administration today would serve no cause, but the construction of the bridge and completing in within the shortest possible time would certainly end the miseries of the people.

Sajad Ahmad Naqeeb, Chief Engineer, Roads and Building (R&B) department when contacted told KNO that the delay in construction was due to some technical issues.

"Some technical issues have led to the delay in construction of the work. Besides, the delay in getting the funds released also played a spoilsport," he said, adding that as soon as the water level recedes, the work will be started again and will be completed by June this year—(KNO)

## Dearth Of

"In a recent Back to Village (B2V) program, people have demanded upgradation of school. The school has the state land available but has not been upgraded."

"The school is being operated from three classrooms wherein only two are being used for teaching purposes and one is being used to serve Mid Day Meals to the students," the official said.

The official also said that the school currently has 87 students and six teachers.

## Valley Unites

People from various parts of the valley, spanning the north, south and central regions of Kashmir, converged in Gandbal to express solidarity with the grieving families.

Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat, accompanied by two friends, travelled from HMT Zainakote to offer heartfelt condolences, leaving behind his shop upon hearing the tragic news.

"There was no way I could continue with work when I heard about this heartbreaking incident. I immediately closed my shop and rushed to the area with my friends," he shared.

Amidst profound sorrow, individuals from different corners of Kashmir made the journey to comfort the affected families, showcasing the universal language of empathy that transcends geographical boundaries and affiliations.

A group of mourners from Sopore, a town in north Kashmir, travelled to Gandbal to pay their respects, demonstrating unity in grief. "This is the first time I have witnessed such a tragedy. I am still unable to come to terms with it. One can only imagine the anguish those innocent kids must have felt while calling for help," said Touseef Ahmad.

He said that despite the distance, they want to symbolise the interconnectedness of Kashmiri society and to share collective sorrow in the aftermath of the tragedy.

Another group of people from the Awantipora area of south Kashmir's district Pulwama told KNO that the convergence of people from diverse backgrounds underscores the inherent resilience and compassion embedded within the Kashmiri culture.

"In times of adversity, the Kashmiri community has been rallying together to offer a comforting embrace to those grappling with loss or sorrow and this is what Kashmiryat is known for," said Fayaz Ahmad.

He said the solidarity, unity and emphatic approach displayed by Kashmiris in the face of tragedy is a testament to the enduring spirit of unity.

As the sun sets to darkness for the day, the families mourn their loved ones, but they find solace in the outpouring of support from neighbours, friends and strangers alike, reaffirming the timeless adage that "even in times of darkness, the light of human kindness shines brightest"—(KNO)

## LG Sinha Greets

dedication and commitment.

May Prabhu Shri Ram shower his blessings on all of us and the festivity of Ram Navami bring joy and happiness to all".

## HM Accuses NC,

mega rally in Paloura area of Jammu, the Union Home Minister Shah said that BJP was not in a hurry to see Lotus bloom in Valley as the party is in process of winning hearts. "We are not going to conquer Kashmir as projected by our adversaries. We want to win every heart of Kashmir," he said.

Launching a tirade against NC, PDP and Congress, the Home Minister Shah said that these parties are responsible for promoting terrorism and handing over guns in the hands of young boys. "I want to aske Dr Farooq Abdullah, in whose tenure most of the fake encounters took place? Wasn't it Dr Farooq Abdullah's government then?," he asked.

The Home Minister said that Assembly elections in J&K will be held on the dates announced by Supreme Court of India. "There will be no delay," he said. The SC had stated that Assembly polls will be held in J&K by September 2024.

Taking a jibe at PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, the Home Minister said she would say that if Article 370 is rolled back, nobody will pick tri-colour. "Today, Article 370 is buried forever and yet Tiranga is flying high with dignity and honour," he said.

He said that today, Dr Shyma Prasad Mukherji's dream of Ek Vi Vidhan, Ek Pradhan, Eik Nishan stands fulfilled. Shah said that today terrorism is on its deathbed, stone pelting, bandh calls and street protests are a history. "PM Narendra Modiji has handed over laps in the hands of youth who were earlier holding stones," Shah said, adding that "this is the change we have brought in Kashmir."

Shah said that he had stated on the floor of the Parliament that he will ensure that without cutting the share of Gujjars and Bakerwals, due reservation will be given to Paharis. "We gave due reservation to all—Gujjars, Bakerwals, Paharis, Valmikis, and OBCs. We gave reservations to women as well," he said.

He said BJP mulls to ensure every border village of Jammu looks like Jammu city. "Today, Jammu is progressing. It was Jammu first, where E-buses started plying. Today, AIMS, IIMS, IITs are in J&K and students from across the country are coming here to study," he said. "We are also committed to convert Suchegarh border like Wagah border." At the end, Home Minister raised slogan: "Jis Kashmir kay liye Mukherji nay diya balidan, wo Kashmir hamara hai."—(KNO)

## 'BJP Believes In

by loving them. We are not in any hurry. Lotus will bloom in the Valley in due course of time," Home Minister Amit Shah said while addressing an election rally in favour of BJP candidate Jugal Kishore Sharma in Jammu.

He said that the National Conference (NC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have only exploited and destroyed the future of our youth. "People should not vote for them in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections," he said.

Reiterating that assembly elections will be held in J&K on time as per the directions of the Supreme Court, he said that every vote cast in favour of the BJP candidates will make Narendra Modi the Prime Minister of the country for the third time.

"Let there be no doubt that assembly elections will be held as per the directions of the Supreme Court," he said.

Amit Shah said that the sacrifice of Sayama Prasad Mukherji has borne fruit through the abrogation of Article 370.

"Sayama Prasad Mukherji said, 'Ek Desh Mein Do Nishan, Do Pradhan aur Do Vidhan Nahein Chalen gay' and today that evil shadow of Article 370 has been removed. J&K has been the biggest beneficiary of Modi's government," he said.

He said that there used to be stone pelting, bomb blasts, firing and Hartals announced by Pakistan in Kashmir.

"Today terrorism and separatism are taking their last breath. Those pelting stones now have laptops in their hands. Nobody has the guts to raise slogans in favour of Pakistan in Kashmir. This has been made possible by Narendra Modi," he said.

He said that former J&K Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah had said that even if Modi becomes Prime Minister ten times even then he (PM Modi) would not be able to remove Article 370.

"Farooq Sahib, Modi has done it just in his second term in office," the Home Minister said.

He said that former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti was saying nobody will ever shoulder Tricolour if Article 370 is removed.

"Mehboobaji, you and me will have to go one day but the tricolour will continue to fly high in J&K," he said.

He said that Farooq Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti and Sonia Gandhi have only worked for their families while people in the Valley can vote for anybody they want but they should not vote for these parties who only care for their families.

"Narendra Modi established peace in J&K and ended violence and separatism after 70 years to open ways and avenues for progress and development. Last year, 2 crore tourists came to Kashmir. Make Modi Prime Minister again and 3 crore tourists will come this year. This is Modi's guarantee," Amit Shah said.

He said that people are getting cooking gas through cylinders and once Modi becomes PM again, people will get cooking gas through pipelines inside their homes.

He said that the BJP gave the reservation to Valmikis, women, OBCs, Gujjars and the Bakarwals and Paharis while NC and PDP were inciting Gujjars and Bakarwals by telling them that the reservations to Paharis would be given at the cost of reservations to Gujjars and Bakarwals.

"I had said in the Parliament that not 1 per cent reservation to Gujjars and Bakarwals would be slashed and we have proved this," the Home Minister said.

He said Jammu city is the first city in the country where 75 e-buses are functional.

He said for years, there was a demand for one rank, one pension and Congress slept over this demand while the Modi-led BJP has fulfilled this demand as well.

He said that Jammu has 4 new medical colleges, 14 new nursing colleges, IIT, IIM and an AIIMS is also coming up in Vijaypur while a cancer hospital is coming up in Bakshi Nagar. Roads, floyovers and the world's longest 11 km long tunnel have also been constructed in Jammu.

"25 new degree colleges and 2 new engineering colleges have been constructed in Jammu. Students are now coming from outside to study in Jammu," he said.

He said 18 industrial estates are coming up in Jammu and investment worth crores is coming.

He appealed to the voters that they gave him a Dogri Turban to wear and now it is for them to ensure the honour and dignity of this turban by voting for the BJP.

He said Ram Navami will be celebrated on Wednesday and Lord Ram would celebrate this Ram Navami at his original place in Ayodhya after 500 years.

He ended his speech by raising the slogan, "Jahan Howa Balidan Mukherji Ka, Woh Kashmir Hamara Hai."—(IANS)

## No Discrimination With

religion? Has anyone asked you whether you are a Muslim, Hindu or Sikh when it comes to availing the Central government schemes and

facilities like free ration and free treatment," Thakur said addressing an election rally in Kishtwar district.

Kishtwar is part of the Udhampur parliamentary constituency, which is going to polls on April 19 to decide the fate of BJP candidate and Union Minister Jitendra Singh and 11 others, including his main opponent and INDIA bloc candidate Choudhary Lal Singh.

"Modi government is working with a motto of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas' and dedicated to service, good governance and well-being of the poor which will be further strengthened in the next five years," said Thakur, who reached here for the third time to garner support for BJP candidates.

"The Modi government ensured justice for all including those who were deprived of their rights in Jammu and Kashmir under the garb of Article 370," he added.

Launching a scathing attack on the Congress, the BJP leader said its leaders Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi are claiming that Modi will change the Constitution if he returns to power for the third term.

"The Constitution was given to us by B R Ambedkar whom we are taking in high esteem and honour him. It was the Congress which made amendments in the Constitution 62 times, including 17 during Pandit Nehru's prime ministership and 33 times during Indira Gandhi's rule," Thakur said.

He accused the Congress of making compromises with the national interests by conceding land to Pakistan (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir), China (Aksai Chin) and Sri Lanka (Katchatheevu Island) in the past.

"We give top priority to our national interests and India is first for us unlike the Congress," Thakur said.

The BJP leader said the Indian economy jumped to fifth position in the world and the Modi government is working to make it the third largest economy in the world.

"It is possible if you vote for Modi to make him the prime minister for the third term. Modi is the one who strengthened our borders, equipped our defence forces with modern weapons and fighter planes and a free hand," Thakur said.

"The nation is aware of the surgical strikes in Pakistan and a befitting response to China in Ladakh," he added.

The minister said the terror incidents in Kashmir have shown a decline as was evident from 81 per cent drop in civilian killings and 50 per cent drop in the killing of security personnel.

"Tiranga is our pride but some people in Srinagar used to desecrate it. I took out a march in 2011 from Kolkata to Kashmir against this but was imprisoned by the Omar Abdullah led National Conference government. Today, the atmosphere has altogether changed after the abrogation of Article 370 by the BJP and the tricolor is fluttering high there," he said.

Seeking votes for Jitendra Singh, Thakur said the BJP restored peace in Jammu and Kashmir which is the biggest achievement for the party.

"Terror acts were the major hurdle in attracting tourists to the picturesque region. Last year, over two crore tourists visited J&K and the number is expected to cross three crore this year," he said.

The BJP leader said the assembly elections along with restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir are going to take place in the coming months.

Talking to reporters later, Thakur said India is not in favour of war among any country.

"We are not in favour of war (between Israel and Iran) and always support peace." He criticized the Congress, National Conference and PDP, and said they always worked for their families without caring for the welfare of the masses.

Thakur lauded the sacrifice of the people of Kishtwar who stood with the security forces to defeat terrorism from their soil.

"Those who laid down their lives for the country will always be remembered," he said.

## ACB Arrests

approached ACB with his complaint against the officials and requested for legal action against them," it reads.

It added that as the contents of complaint prima facie disclose the commission of offence punishable under section 7 of the P.C Act 1988 (r/w its amendment Act 2018) and Section 120-B IPC by accused namely Manzoor Ahmad and Patwari Halqa Khawaja Bagh Baramulla, a Case FIR No. 04/2024 under section 7 of the P.C Act 1988 (r/w its amendment Act 2018) and 120-B IPC was registered at Police Station, ACB Baramulla and investigations was taken up.

"During the course of investigations, a trap team was constituted which caught accused Lambardar red handed inside the Tehsil office Baramulla premises while demanding and accepting bribe of Rs 4000 from complainant. The revenue NOCs of the complainant and his father prepared by the Patwari concerned and issued by tehsil office were also recovered from his possession in presence of independent witnesses along with bribe money."

It added that the accused Manzoor Ahmad was immediately taken into custody after completing all legal formalities. "Searches were also conducted at the residence of the accused person. The role of Patwari concerned and other public servants of tehsil office Baramulla is also being investigated who were using accused Lambardar as tout to receive bribe from general public. Further investigations in the case are going on," it reads—(KNO)

## Tulip Garden Welcomes

the site, posing challenges for traffic authorities in managing vehicle flow.

To further encourage visitors, especially schoolchildren, the garden offers a 20 percent discount on entry fees, with the offer extended to accommodate more students.

Overall, the overwhelming response from tourists underscores the tulip garden's role in boosting tourism in the valley and providing visitors with a memorable experience amid nature's beauty—(KNO)



CONSTITUENCY WATCH

# It's BJP's 'stardom' vs Congress' 'royalty' in Himachal's Mandi

VISHAL GULATI

**MANDI:** In a unique electoral showdown in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi parliamentary constituency, the battleground shifts between "royalty" and "stardom", as Congress legislator Vikramaditya Singh, the scion of the erstwhile royal family, challenges Bollywood's queen, Kangana Ranaut.

Amidst the clash of heritage and stardom, the sprawling constituency, one of the toughest and covers almost two-thirds of the state, braces for a riveting electoral spectacle.

This seat is currently represented by Pratibha Singh, the mother of Vikramaditya who belongs to the erstwhile royal family of Keonthal state. She's a three-time MP from Mandi.

She declined to re-enter the fray, saying senior party leaders had proposed Vikramaditya's name as they were of the opinion that "he's young, energetic and a good orator with influence over the youth and will be a good competitor for

Kangana". Political observers told IANS: "Kangana, who too belongs to the hill state, has a slight edge over Vikramaditya, who largely banks on his rich family political legacy, as she started her election campaign much ahead of the main archival. The latter's candidature was cleared on April 13. Before that, there was only a war of words between them that got personal and dirty too -- like 'chotta Pappu' and 'beef eater'."

Two-time legislator Vikramaditya, 35, who describes Kangana, 37, as his "badi behan" (elder sister), is the Public Works Minister in the state government led by Sukhvinder Sukhu, while Kangana is making her political debut.

Mandi is the home district of BJP leader Jai Ram Thakur, the first Himachal Chief Minister from Mandi. In most of the election meetings and during campaigning, he's accompanying Kangana.

"This is a battle of prestige for Jai Ram Thakur as he has



to establish his credibility by ensuring the victory of the BJP candidate, who is a greenhorn and caught in a straight fight with a seasoned politician family which commands respect in the entire state," a political observer told IANS.

Thakur contested the assembly election in 1998 and since then, consecutively won all the six assembly elections with a

huge margin. However, he lost the Mandi parliamentary by-poll to Virbhadra Singh's wife Pratibha Singh by 1.36 lakh votes in 2013. Earlier, the seat was represented by Pratibha Singh's husband, who resigned following his election to the state assembly in December 2012.

Mandi had remained a political battleground for long for Congress veteran and six-time chief minister Virbhadra Singh, the father of Vikramaditya. After making it to the Lok Sabha for the first time by winning the Mahasu parliamentary seat in 1962 and then again in 1967, Virbhadra Singh switched to the Mandi in 1971 and registered a win. He, however, lost the seat in 1977 but was again elected from the constituency in 1980 and later in 2009.

Mandi is also the lone seat where the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is also in the fray.

Kangana belongs to Bhabhla village near Hamirpur town, some 200 km from the state capital Shimla. She owns

a cottage in the picturesque tourist resort Manali, which is part of the Mandi parliamentary constituency.

In his election meetings, former Chief Minister Thakur, whose focus is currently to ensure win of the Mandi seat, is often quoted as saying, "Kangana is the daughter of Mandi, which is called Chhoti Kashi. She has brought glory to Himachal and Mandi in the film industry."

For Thakur, who rose from the ranks and is known for his humble and low-profile stature, it is a do-or-die battle to win the Mandi seat and that too with the highest margin in the state, admitted a senior BJP leader, saying "that is why he's devoting most of his time in Mandi in comparison to three other seats to ensure the maximum lead".

Besides the Mandi seat, which includes Kullu, Mandi and some areas of Chamba and Shimla districts, besides the tribal-dominated Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti, the other three constituencies in the state

are Shimla (reserved), Kangra and Hamirpur, which will go to the polls on June 1.

Historically, the Mandi constituency has favoured scions of erstwhile princely states, electing "royals" in 13 out of 19 elections, including two bypolls since 1952.

In the 2021 Mandi by-poll, necessitated by the death of Ram Swaroop Sharma, the BJP had pitted Brigadier Khushal Thakur (retired), a decorated officer who played a crucial role in the 1999 Kargil war, against Pratibha Singh, who won the seat largely in the sympathy wave after the passing away of her husband, Virbhadra Singh.

With the electorate, traditionally in the Lok Sabha polls, favouring the party at the helm in the state, these elections are being seen as a referendum on Himachal Pradesh's 16-month-old Congress government.

The Congress wrested the seat from the BJP in December 2022, winning 40 seats in the 68-member Assembly, reducing the BJP to 25.

## Centre doesn't discriminate between BJP-ruled, Oppn-controlled states: PM Modi

IANS

**KOLKATA:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Tuesday, said that the current Union government led by him does not discriminate between BJP-ruled and opposition-controlled states when it comes to development which the previous Congress-ruled Union government did.

"I have myself witnessed this when I was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. The opposition-controlled states were neglected then by the Congress-ruled Union government. But the current Union government never does that. That is why we are working day and night for the social and economic development of the entire eastern and northeastern India," the Prime Minister said while addressing an election rally at Raiganj in North Dinajpur district of West Bengal.

Speaking on the occasion, he accused the Trinamool Congress-ruled West Bengal of creating hurdles in implementation of several central projects in the state.



"In West Bengal, the TMC government does not even give timely permission for implementation of the infrastructure projects. In Bengal, it is not the legal system which decides who will get permission to implement which project. The authority of giving permission here is with the Trinamool Congress-backed goons and anti-social elements," the Prime Minister said.

According to him, devel-

opment of West Bengal is not the intention of Trinamool Congress. "TMC actually wants to keep poor people poor, since they know very well that they will not be able to keep their shops running if the state tastes development," PM Modi said.

He accused the state government of distributing the benefits under PMAY and MGNREGA to fake beneficiaries. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minis-

ter also launched a scathing attack on Trinamool Congress for creating obstructions in celebrating Hindu religious festivals.

"The goons who throw stones at Ram Navami or Durga Puja processions are actually enjoying the protection of the ruling party. Trinamool Congress tries its best to defend those accused of sexual harassment of women Sandeshkhali," the Prime Minister added.

BENGALURU CAFE BLAST

## Terrorists planned to target IT parks, say sources

IANS

**BENGALURU:** The probe in the Rameshwaram cafe blast case has revealed that the initial plan of the terrorists was to explode a bomb on the premises of an IT park in the tech corridor of Bengaluru city, sources said on Tuesday.

The arrested men have also confessed that because of the high security, they could not plant the bomb on the premises of the IT parks.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested suspected bomber Mussavir Hussain Shazib and mastermind Abdul Matheen Taha recently in Kolkata.

Sources said that the suspected terrorists wanted to target one of the IT parks in the Whitefield IT corridor initially to hit the image of Bengaluru known as the IT capital of the country and draw international attention.

The most prestigious and one of the oldest International Tech Park Bengaluru (ITPB) campus

in Bengaluru is located in Whitefield. Thousands of software professionals work here and it is consid-

Economic Zones (SEZ) of major cities in the country. The suspected terrorists wanted to target techies and

'Ram' in Rameshwaram cafe also drew their attention and was one of the reasons to target the cafe.



ered an icon of India's IT success story.

Many more IT companies and IT parks are located in the region. However, as the safety and vigilance levels are like that of the international level in ITPB and other tech parks, the suspected terrorists could not plant bombs in any of them. The sources said that the suspected terrorists also conducted research to plant bombs in Special

create terror in the mindsets of software professionals. The accused knew that such an incident would dent the image of the country at a global level.

After failing to sneak inside the IT parks, the suspected terrorists worked on a plan to target techies. The Rameshwaram cafe drew their attention as it was located in the tech corridor Brookfield locality in Whitefield. The name

A large number of techies visit the cafe and terrorists decided to plant the bomb there, sources explained.

The suspected terrorist Mussavir had visited the cafe on March 1 and planted the low-intensity Improvised Explosive Device (IED) on the premises. Several staff members were injured, some of them grievously, in the blast, which caused extensive damage to the property.

## Trinamool again conspired to thwart Ram Navami celebrations in Bengal: PM Modi

IANS

**KOLKATA:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday accused the Trinamool Congress-led West Bengal government of making all attempts to prevent Ram Navami celebrations in the state.

Addressing an election rally at Balurghat in West Bengal's South Dinajpur district on Tuesday, the Prime Minister said, "The entire country will celebrate Ram Navami on Wednesday. But this time also, the Trinamool Congress tried to create hurdles for the celebrations in Bengal. However, the court has removed all the obstacles and now Ram Navami will be celebrated in Bengal with lots of enthusiasm."

To recall, violence broke out between two groups when a Ram Navami procession was taken out in Howrah district on March 30 last year, in which vehicles were torched and shops were ransacked, leading to multiple arrests.

On Monday, the Calcutta High Court granted permission to the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) to take out Ram Navami processions in

Howrah under certain conditions after the local police had denied permission for the same.

The Prime Minister also accused the Trinamool of

protecting the illegal immigrants but opposing our attempt to grant citizenship to genuine refugees. But the people of Bengal will no longer be misled by the

depriving the tribal and backward classes in the state.

"Today, a tribal woman has become the President of India. But what is the Trinamool doing? At Balurghat, three tribal women joined the BJP. But the ruling party workers forced them to sit on their knees and apologise. This time, the Trinamool will realise that people from backward classes or tribal backgrounds are not their slaves," PM Modi said.

"The Trinamool has given the state to illegal immigrants and anti-social elements on lease. That is why the ruling party is

falsehood being spread by the Trinamool," the Prime Minister said.

He also alleged that the Trinamool did not allow central funds to reach the genuine beneficiaries in West Bengal.

"The leaders of the ruling party distributed the central funds among themselves. Crores of rupees have been seized from the residences of the Trinamool leaders. But when the central agency officials try to perform their duties, they are attacked. Time has come for the people to give a fitting reply to the Trinamool," the Prime Minister said.

## IMF increases India's growth projection to 6.8 pc for 2024

IANS

**WASHINGTON:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has pegged India's growth projection to 6.8 pc this year, an increase of 0.3 pc over its January 2024 update.

The IMF in its World Economic Outlook (WEO), released on Tuesday, said growth in India is projected to remain strong at 6.8 per cent in 2024 and 6.5 per cent in 2025.

The robustness reflects continuing strength in domestic demand and a rising working-age population, it added.

In its January 2024 update to WEO released in October, the IMF had pro-

jected the Indian Economy to grow at 6.5 per cent each in 2024 and 2025.

India remains the top performer among large economies this year, and the next, with China following at 4.6 pc in 2024 and 4.1 pc in 2025.

Growth of Global Output is expected to maintain a steady rate of 3.2 per cent this year, as well as in 2025, the pace it grew at in 2023.

"The global economy remains remarkably resilient, with growth holding steady as inflation returns to target," the IMF observed.

Despite many gloomy predictions, the world avoided a recession, the banking system proved largely resilient, and major emerging

market economies did not suffer sudden stops, the WEO added.

Futures markets suggest that oil prices will slide by 2.5 per cent year over year to average \$78.60 per barrel in 2024 and will continue to fall to \$67.50 in 2029, the IMF said, commenting on crude prices.

"Upside price risks could arise from an escalation of the Middle East conflict and attacks on Russian oil infrastructure. Downside risks could arise from a slowdown in Chinese oil demand and strong non-OPEC supply growth, possibly coupled with a rise in OPEC+ oil supply to regain market share," the IMF added.

## UPSC topper Aditya Srivastava's family elated over feat, share their joy

IANS

**NEW DELHI:** Aditya Srivastava, a native of Lucknow, made his family proud by topping the prestigious Civil Services Examinations 2023.

Aditya occupied the All India Rank 1 in the results announced by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Tuesday.

Aditya Srivastava along with Animesh Pradhan and Ananya Reddy secured the top three ranks in civil services examinations.

Aditya's family members are elated and ecstatic over his feat and for topping the country's 'most difficult' examination.

Speaking to IANS, his family said that they are full of joy and happiness over Aditya's achievements and also informed that he worked very hard for this.

Aditya's father told IANS, "I am feeling very happy. He has worked very hard since childhood. Our dreams are fulfilled. We couldn't believe it."

He also said that they didn't expect him to top the examinations and this news took them by com-

plete surprise.

Speaking to IANS, he said, "Aditya called and informed me that the result was unexpected. I thought he ranked within the top 50, but he replied that he was AIR 1."

He also informed that Aditya cleared many national-level competitions including NTS, Kishore Vaigyanik Pratsahan Yojana (KVPY) and Regional Mathematical Olympiad and this made them believe that he would be able to crack the UPSC exam but didn't anticipate him topping the exams.

Aditya's father also said that he was interested in cricket and music apart from studies, however, he stopped all this before the examinations to keep himself focused and not getting distracted.

UPSC topper Aditya Srivastava has also been excellent in academics. He scored 95 per cent marks in Class 12th examinations and then went to study in the IITs. He pursued B Tech and M Tech at IIT Kanpur and also fetched the gold medal, as per the information shared by his family.

## Nayanthara wows fans with her picture in striped saree, choker necklace

IANS

**MUMBAI:** South superstar Nayanthara, who made her Bollywood debut with the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer blockbuster 'Jawan', shared her ethereal pictures on social media.

On Tuesday, the actress took to her Instagram

and shared an array of pictures. In the pictures, she can be seen wearing a striped saree.

She paired her outfit with heavy jewellery. She opted for a pearl choker necklace and matching earrings and tied her hair in a bun.

The colour temperature

of the frame is warm and lends a golden shade to the picture.

She wrote in the caption, "By the one n only @ anuvardhan. You are just the best!"

She used the song, 'In aankho'n ke masti ke' in the background of her Instagram post.



**SRINAGAR BOAT TRAGEDY**

# Thousands join families in mourning over loss of loved ones

**AGENCIES**

**SRINAGAR:** Loud cries echoed near the banks of the Jhelum in Gandabal on the outskirts of Srinagar on Tuesday where a boat capsized cut short six lives, including three of a family, as the bodies were being fished out of the water one after the other.

The boat was ferrying mostly schoolchildren. It collided with a pillar of an under-construction bridge and split into two in the fast-flowing currents of the river already in spate following incessant rainfall in the Kashmir Valley over the last few days.

While the exact number of people on the boat was not clear yet, rescuers dragged 10 people out of the water safely while three are still missing.

The atmosphere slowly turned grim as anxious locals gathered at the embankment and watched the rescue operation but the lull did not last long. Loud wails pierced the air as rescuers began pulling out lifeless bodies from the water, which brought many others to tears.

The administration has pressed marine commandos into the rescue operation to trace those missing. The elite commandos were air-

lifted from their base in the Manasbal area of the Ganderal district.

Amid all the gloom and grief, a heroic effort by a migrant labourer found praise.

Dhoodhnath, who was at his rented accommodation near the banks of the river, saw the boat capsize mid-water and jumped into the river to save lives.

"I saw the boat overturn. The current was strong but I rescued three people," he said later.

A survivor said there were about two dozen people on the boat, most of them children.

"The ropes of the boat snapped and it hit one of the pillars of the under-construction bridge and broke into two. Many people drowned and three of us caught hold of the edges of the boat and somehow managed to save ourselves.

"A woman was also pulled out of the water and the four of us were rescued by another boat," he told reporters.

The man said local people, including children, use the boat service every day to cross the river in the absence of a bridge.

The bridge being built on the river was sanctioned in 2017. Locals said had the bridge been completed by now, the loss of lives could have been avoided. "Had there been a bridge,



this accident could have been avoided. The mourning in so many houses today could have been avoided. We have raised this issue with the authorities several times, but they did not pay attention," a local said.

Former minister and Peoples Democratic Party leader Naem Akhtar, who had laid the foundation stone for the bridge, said the loss was heart-

breaking.

"These deaths are on somebody's hands. Remember the day when I laid the foundation stone of this footbridge and the happy faces around us celebrating the fulfilment of a long-pending demand. It was fully funded. But then the #vikas took over. Heartbreaking loss," Akhtar said in a post on X.

Of the six dead were the wife and two sons of Fayaz Ahmad Malik, a resident of Gandabal.

Funeral prayers for the deceased were offered together. Malik buried all three members of his family in a single grave as thousands looked on. As the Malik family mourned, Showkat Ahmad Sheikh's kin held on to hope. Sheikh and his son Haziq

## Mother's love makes everyone cry at Srinagar's Gandabal

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

**SRINAGAR:** Showkat Ahmad, professionally a Mason, has left home this morning along with his son to drop him at the school, situated on the opposite side of the river Jhelum in Gandabal area of Batwara.

However, the man is yet to reach his home as the boat in which he was crossing the river Jhelum capsized and left the entire valley, especially the locality in shock.

The people, especially the womenfolk could be seen wailing as the incident left six persons dead and the rescue operation was underway throughout the day to trace three missing persons.

The mother of Showkat Ahmad was seen wailing and crying while searching for her son and grandson—Haziq Showkat.

The mother's love towards her son and grandson made everyone cry on the occasion as the woman was seen asking people if they saw her 'Showkat and his son anywhere'. "Is my son at the school? Somebody please let me know," she cried.

Amidst the wailing and emotional scenes, the woman was immediately taken to the home back where dozens of her relatives and family members were waiting for the traces of their beloved, who drowned in river Jhelum during the incident—(KNO)

have been missing since the incident.

A public works department official said when work was started on the project, there was initially poor funding but the delay happened because while it was to be a footbridge, due to public pressure, the plan was changed to build a motorable bridge instead. "When Article 370 was abro-

gated, there was a 'change of scope'. The rules which were not there earlier were implemented. Because of that, its technical sanction took time. We have been working very fast for the last three months," he said.

The official said about 75 per cent of the work has been completed and the bridge would be completed by June this year.

**APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL**

# 'High-density plantation promises early yields, superior quality'

JAHANGEER GANAIE

**SRINAGAR:** High-density plantation holds the promise of early yields and superior quality compared to traditional methods, VC SKAUST said on Tuesday. He urged farmers to adopt modern technologies to boost fruit cultivation productivity.

During the Apple Blossom Festival at SKAUST Shalimar, VC SKAUST Dr Nazir Ahmad Ganaie encouraged farmers to consider high-density orcharding as a viable alternative to pursuing scarce government employment opportunities.

Notably, the Division of Fruit Science at SKAUST-Kashmir inaugurated the highly anticipated Apple Blossom Festival, marking a celebration of innovation and growth in fruit cultivation.

The seven-day festival was ceremoniously opened by the esteemed Vice Chancellor, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganaie, alongside notable figures including Prof Dil Mohd, Makhdoomi, Director Extension SKAUST-Kashmir, Prof M. K. Verma, Director CITH, Prof Shabir



Hussain, Dean Faculty of Horticulture, Heads of various divisions, faculty members, students, and local farmers from districts Srinagar and Gandabal. In his opening address, Vice Chancellor Prof Ganaie underscored the significance of initiatives like this in enlightening orchardists about the benefits of high-density plantations. He encouraged farmers to embrace modern technologies for enhanced fruit cultivation productivity, emphasising the early yields and superior quality promised by high-density orcharding compared to traditional methods.

Addressing undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Division of Fruit Science, Prof Ganaie highlighted the privilege of studying in such a pres-

tigious institute nestled in the lap of nature. He emphasised the importance of data collection from fruit blocks to identify critical factors influencing fruit growth, urging students to actively participate by adopting and maintaining observational records.

Concluding the inaugural session, the Head of the Division of Fruit Science extended gratitude to VC Prof Ganaie, affirming the division's commitment to realizing his vision of positioning the farm university as a national leader. After the ceremony, scientists from the Division of Fruit Science provided invaluable insights to farmers on early, mid-season, and late-season apple varieties, as well as best practices for high-density cultivation.

Officials said the festi-

val promises a week-long immersive experience, inviting all orchardists to SKAUST-Kashmir to gain valuable knowledge on temperate fruit cultivation.

It is noteworthy that an increasing number of farmers are transitioning to high-density apple farming due to its low input and labour costs, coupled with the superior quality of the apples, which exhibit uniformity in colour and size.

Growers reported that high-density apples are fetching significantly higher prices compared to traditional varieties, with rates almost doubling.

"You don't need to wait for decades to see fruit-bearing; high-density plants start yielding fruits in the very first year, with a bumper crop every year. They also require fewer fertilizers and pesticides," they said.

Varieties such as Jerome, King Root, Gala Scarlet, Red Velox, Scarlet Spur-II, Super Chief, Redlum Gala, and Auvi Fuji are currently cultivated in J&K—(KNO)

# DC Srinagar conducts evening tour to assess rainfall impact on City

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** The Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Monday late evening undertook a whirlwind tour of various City areas to inspect the measures taken to tackle challenges from the prevailing weather situation to prevent any flood like situation in the District.

The DC, who is also the Chairman District Disaster Management Authority, visited various areas of the City including Gauge Stations of Ram Munshibagh, Abiguzar Bund, Airport Road, Humhama, Khanayar, Rainawari and other vulnerable spots to have on the spot assessment of the water level increased due to incessant rainfall from the last couple of days.

On the occasion, the DC directed the concerned officers for immediate compliance with regard to the measures to be taken for avoiding any flood like situation and reaching out to the public to provide them timely assistance. The Officers were also directed to put in place all



requisite men and machinery at vulnerable spots, besides taking measures for water logging of inundated low lying areas.

The DC asked the concerned to ensure that all dewatering and pumping stations are operational particularly at essential installations including hospitals, Power stations, besides in inner habitations, lanes and by-lanes.

With regard to the roads being upgraded under Srinagar Smart City Project, the DC directed the

concerned authorities to expedite the upgradation process of the roads under SCLL particularly in DownTown areas of the City to provide relief to the people. He also directed for taking up macadamization works on these roads at the earliest so that people/commuters do not face any inconveniences.

The DC was apprised that as many as 97 dewatering pumps are operating in the City to combat waterlogging or any exigent situation, if any, caused due to

incessant rains. He was also informed that river Jhelum is flowing below the danger level and the situation is being monitored continuously by the line Departments while Control Centers have been established by the Flood Control Division to keep watch on the situation.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by senior officers from Irrigation & Flood Control, Fire & Emergency Services, City Drainage, R&B, SMC, PDD, UEED and other departments.

**SVEEP**

# Voting Awareness programs held in Kupwara schools

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**KUPWARA:** To encourage citizens, especially first time voters, to exercise their right to vote, the District Administration Kupwara Tuesday organized voter awareness programmes under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative at different places in Kupwara district.

The programmes were aimed to raise awareness about various voting-related activities and promote electoral literacy among citizens, especially first-time voters to achieve good voter turnout for Kupwara district during the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections.

Mega Voter Awareness programmes under the SVEEP initiative were organized at Government Higher Secondary School Kupwara, Girls Higher Secondary School Salkote, BHSS Lone Harrie, BHSS Ashpora, BHS Warpora,

BHSS MH Pora, BHSS Zachaldara and High School Warnow.

The concerned Zonal Education Officers and Principals of the Institutions presided over the Voter Awareness Programmes in their concerned jurisdictions.

The awareness programmes witnessed the active participation of Teachers and students, besides officials from various departments, first time voters, community leaders, local artists and the general public also participated in these programs.

Meanwhile, different activities were carried out during the conduct of these awareness programmes which include Plantation drives, Painting competitions and Essay competitions.

Voter's Pledge was also administered where participants pledged to vote enthusiastically in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

# CEO reviews election preparedness, asks to devise inclusive disaster management plan

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), J&K, Pandurang K. Pole, Tuesday took an extensive virtual review of poll preparedness in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir here at Nirvachan Bhawan, Jammu. The meeting was attended by all the District Election Officers along with the Heads of Departments of PWD, BRO SAMPARK, IMD, PMGSY and NHAI.

The CEO was briefed by the DEOs about the steps being taken up in the districts to ensure smooth conduct of Lok Sabha elections 2024.

The District Election Officers apprised the CEO of the status of AMF, printing of ballot papers, commissioning of EVMs, distribution of voter information slips, Transport plan, webcasting of polling stations, status of model Polling stations and welfare of polling personnel.

It is pertinent to mention here that 5 districts of the UT are going to poll in the first phase of elections scheduled

to take place on 19th April 2024. The DEOs were instructed to strictly comply with the SOPs issued by the Election Commission of India for last 72 hours before the date of poll.

The DEOs of districts going to poll in the phase two were further instructed to ensure 100% distribution of voter information slips among eligible voters before 20th of March. Additionally, the officers were instructed to undertake comprehensive SVEEP exercises to ensure maximum participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

In view of the ongoing weather disturbances, the District Election Officers were directed to prepare and implement an inclusive Disaster Management Plan so as to ensure incident-free elections.

Stressing on the welfare of Polling Personnel, the Chief Electoral Officer instructed the officers to appoint a Nodal officer for Polling welfare and to ensure that the officials are given proper amenities.

# NDA to retain power with thrice the number of seats than INDIA bloc: Opinion Poll

IANS

**NEW DELHI:** The BJP-led NDA is expected to comfortably romp back to power for a third term with over 360 seats, while the INDIA bloc will lag with just one-third of this number, as per an opinion poll conducted by TV9 Bharatvarsh, Polstrat and People's Insights.

As per the poll, conducted between April 7 and 13 with a sample size of 25 lakh respondents, the NDA, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is forecast to end with 362 seats, while the INDIA bloc will garner just 120.

The poll also indicates that the BJP will maintain its primacy in the crucial arena of Uttar Pradesh, winning 64 out of the 80 seats, while the Samajwadi Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party, and the Congress are unlikely to make much headway.

However, the competition in Maharashtra, which with its 48 seats is the second-biggest battleground, looks more evenly poised with the MahaYuti of the BJP, the Shiv Sena, and the NCP likely to bag 28 seats, while the MVA, comprising the Shiv Sena-UBT, the NCP-SP, and the Congress, is likely to win the remaining 20 seats.

**LS POLLS**

# DEO Budgam stresses on smooth facilitation of postal ballots

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**BUDGAM:** The District Election Officer (DEO) Budgam, Akshay Labroo Tuesday chaired a training session on postal ballots held at Conference Hall, Budgam.

SSP Budgam, Al Tahir Gillani and all other officers including all AROs and Nodal Officers were also present on the occasion.

The training session was conducted by National level Master Trainer, Samir Jan for employees to ensure smooth facilitation of postal ballot facility for voters during the

ensuing Lok Sabha Elections-2024.

DEO Budgam said that the district administration as per the Election Commission of India's guidelines shall ensure all logistics, including manpower and transport support to ensure seamless postal ballot facilities for the eligible voters.

The DEO reiterated that the district administration is committed to ensure that all the voters across Budgam are facilitated for a seamless voting experience as per the guidelines of ECI in letter and spirit.

# Deaf, Mute in Doda village to speak up through ballots on Apr 19

AMIR TANTRAY

**DODA:** Dhadkai village, known as the silent village of India, is all set to speak up through ballots on April 19 to elect their representative during the Lok Sabha elections.

Most of Dhadkai's population was deaf and mute, but with the efforts of the government and other agencies, the situation has improved now. At present there are 443

voters in this village and 30 to 35 of them are deaf and dumb including a couple of first time voters.

On one side, political parties and their candidates are moving from pillar to post to seek votes from the people, no candidate has visited this village situated on a hilltop in Gandoh, around 60 kilometers from district headquarters Doda.

People have to travel for 45 minutes from the nearest road to

reach this village. However, the District Electoral Office Doda has been focusing on this village to ensure that each and every one vote is casted in the upcoming elections.

"During the last elections in 2019, the total percentage of this polling station was less than 50 percent but this time, we are ensuring that the percentage improves and most of the voters including deaf and dumb come and vote on April

19," Harvinder Singh, District Electoral Officer (DEO) Doda told KNO.

In this regard, a team of officers accompanied by experts visited this village and gave training to deaf and dumb voters on how to vote through electronic voting machines (EVMs).

With the help of an instructor, who works in the school established by the Army for these special people, gave training on how to vote on April 19.