

Good Morning Kashmir

15th Year Of Publication

Office of LG J&K
@OfficeOfLGJandK



Chaired a review meeting of Dept of Industries & Commerce and Dept of Geology & Mining today to discuss on industrial investment, various ongoing projects & schemes, self-employment ventures and the issues related to time bound operationalization of minor mineral blocks.

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IGP Chairs Security Review Meeting At PCR



GMK NEWS NETWORK

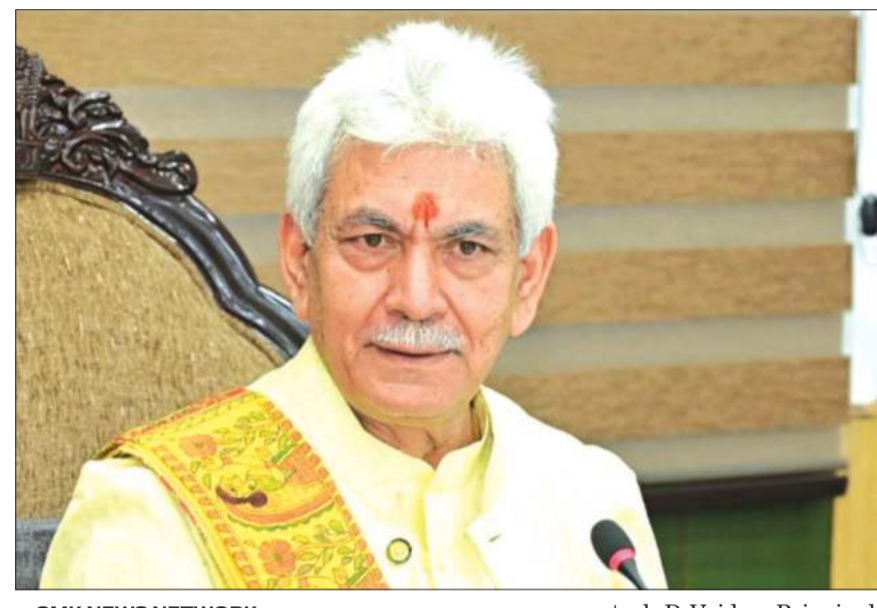
SRINAGAR: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Zone V K Birdi-IPS chaired a meeting at Police Control Room Kashmir to review the necessary security arrangements put in place for the smooth & successful conduct of upcoming elections. The meeting was ●P-06

Indian Crew Member Returns Home From Iran



NEW DELHI: Deck cadet Ann Tessa Joseph, one of the 17 Indian crew members on board a cargo ship seized by Iran, returned home on Thursday with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar insisting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guarantee works not just within the country but also outside. Joseph, who is ●P-06

LG Discusses Investment Proposals With Officials



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SINHA directed senior officials to hold regular meetings with investors and industry bodies to address crucial issues, the official said.

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha on Thursday discussed investment proposals received by his administration at a meeting here with officials and directed them to hold regular meetings with industry bodies to address crucial issues.

Chairing a joint meeting of the Department of Industries and Commerce and Department of Geology and Mining here, the LG stressed on the promotion of start-ups in the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Principal Secretary (Finance) San-

1,623,195 Voters To Exercise Their Franchise Today

Stage Set For 'Fight' As Udhampur LS Seat Goes To Polls Today

AMIR TANTRAY

JAMMU: The most awaited seven-phase Parliamentary election 2024 will begin today (Friday) with two Rajputs locking horns on Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency of Jammu and Kashmir making the battle a unique one across the country.

The Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held in first five phases beginning tomorrow till May 20.

There is a direct fight between Bharatiya Janta Party's (BJP) Dr. Jitendra Singh and Congress party's Choudhary Lal Singh on Udhampur seat.

Both of them are fighting the battle of nerves to make it to the Lok Sabha for third term. One thing is common about these candidates that they had won their first parliamentary election by defeating a sitting union minister.

In 2004, Choudhary Lal Singh had defeated BJP's Chaman Lal Gupta, who was a union minister in



Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government whereas in 2014 Dr. Jitendra Singh emerged as a giant killer when he won against the then union minister for health and family welfare Ghulam Nabi Azad.

In 2009, Choudhary Lal Singh made it to Lok Sabha by winning against BJP's Nirmal Singh whereas in 2019, Dr. Jitendra Singh won with a huge margin of 357,252 votes. ●P-06

THE CAMPAIGNING ALSO witnessed ugly war of words between Azad and Omar Abdullah and none backed out from their positions.

First Phase Of LS Polls In 102 Seats

NEW DELHI- The 2024 Lok Sabha polls will kick off today with polling for the first phase scheduled in 102 seats spread across 21 states and Union territories and among those in the fray are Union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Sarbananda Sonowal and Bhupendra Yadav, Gaurav Gogoi of Congress, DMK's Kanimozhi and K Annamalai of BJP. Simultaneously, assembly elections in Arunachal Pradesh (60 seats) and Sikkim (32 seats) will also be held.

Voting will begin at 7 AM and end at 6 PM. The Election Commission has deployed over 18 lakh polling personnel across 1.87 lakh polling stations where over 16.63 crore voters will ●P-06

2-Day Wet Spell Begins As Rains Lash Kashmir Parts

OWAIS GUL

SRINAGAR: The two-day wet spell forecasted by the weatherman here began on Thursday after fresh rainfall lashed the plains of Kashmir, prompting the district administration to issue a fresh advisory, asking people not to venture around the water bodies. Several areas of Kash-

'Srinagar Boat Tragedy Day 3' Search Continues For Missing Persons

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

SRINAGAR: The search operation to retrieve the bodies of three missing persons, including a father-son duo and a fifth-grade student, has entered its third day, with multiple rescue agencies continuing their efforts.

Despite the concerted efforts of teams from various departments, including the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Indian Army's MARCOS, and others, no traces of the bodies have been found yet.

Officials informed that the search operation has been ongoing since April 16, when the tragic incident occurred in the Gandabal area of Srinagar. He said teams are tirelessly scour-



ing the waters of Jehlum, from Gandabal to Rajbagh Srinagar, leaving no area unchecked. Two teams have been dispatched to the Chattabal Veer area to expand the search efforts, the official added.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, hundreds of locals from various parts of the Kashmir Valley, along with religious clerics, visited Gandabal to offer ●P-06

World Heritage Day CS Flags Off Heritage Walk From SRS Library To Mubarak Mandi

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: On the occasion of World Heritage Day, Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Thursday morning flagged off a heritage walk from Shri Ranbir Singh (SRS) Library, Kachi Chawni to Mubarak Mandi Heritage Complex here.

The walk, organized by the Culture Department in association with district administration, was joined by various civil servants including Principal Secretary, Culture, Suresh Gupta, Executive Director, Mubarak Mandi Heritage Society, Deepika Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Sachin Kumar Vaishya besides civil society members, hundreds of students and other citizens of Jammu city. ●P-06

Kashmir Willow Cricket Bat Makes Debut In Women's Int'l Cricket

MUBASHIR AALAM WANI

SRINAGAR: After T20 and One Day Internationals (ODI), the Kashmir willow cricket bat is finally debuting in Women's International Cricket.

Valley based sports company, GR8 Sports said its cricket bats and equipment will be used by about half a dozen International cricketers of West Indies women's team against Pakistan during their Pakistan tour.

"This achievement is a testament to the relentless hard work, expertise, and craftsmanship combined with the utilization of AI based cutting-edge technology at GR8 Sports. We have always believed in pushing boundaries and setting new standards in cricket equipment manufacturing," Fawzul Kabir, Managing Director of GR8 Sports said.

Beginning today, the West Indies team will play three ODIs and 5 T20 Internationals against Pakistan.

"The debut of our Kashmir willow bat in Women's International Cricket not only underscores its superior performance but also serves as a myth buster in the cricketing world. It disproves the misconception that Kashmir willow bats are heavier or inferior to English willow bats, highlighting our commitment to excellence, he added.

Expressing satisfaction, Kabir said his motive is to end the monopoly of English willow over Kashmir willow in international cricket. "We want to make Kashmir willow cricket bats very common in international cricket. We have seen that our cricket bats were used by the cricket players in both ODI and T20 format so far and our cricket bat hit the longest six in T20 World Cup 2022," he said. ●P-06

New Delhi Backs Those Representing People's Dreams: Bukhari

AGENCIES



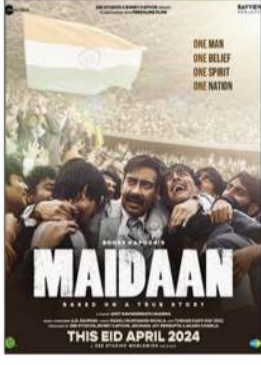



SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party President Altaf Bukhari on Thursday said that New Delhi Backs those who represent aspirations of the people. He was quick to add that peace in Jammu and Kashmir is because of central Government.

Talking to reporters at Party office Srinagar, Bukhari said that New Delhi stands with those who advocate for the interest of people. He stated that there is no room in India for those who fail to represent the aspirations of the people.

Bukhari said that when he floated the Apni Party in 2020, he faced criticism and abuse from various quarters. He noted that even the media was embarrassed by the negativity and criticism directed towards the Apni Party on social ●P-06

INOX CINEMA SHIVPORA SRINAGAR

Friday 19 April **MOVIES Schedule**

 CIVIL WAR (ENGLISH) 01:35PM, 07:30PM (A)	 BADE MIYAN CHOTE MIYAN 3D (HINDI) 06:00 PM (U/A)	 MAIDAAN (HINDI) 05:35PM (U/A)
 DUNE PART TWO (ENG) 04:05PM (U/A)	 CREW (HINDI) 02:50PM (U/A)	 GODZILLA X KONG - 3D (ENG) 03:25PM (U/A)

LOK SABHA POLLS

DEO B'la reviews arrangements at Counting Center

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: The District Election Officer (DEO), Baramulla, Minga Sherpa Thursday visited designated counting center for 1-Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency at Indoor Sports Stadium, Baramulla to take stock of the arrangements in place for the counting process during Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

During the visit, the DEO thoroughly reviewed the arrangements in place at all the 18 counters set for all the 18-assembly segments of 1-Baramulla PC ensuring that all necessary measures were in place and functioning effectively to facilitate the smooth and efficient processing of electoral activities.

Minga Sherpa further conducted a thorough inspection to ensure the robust security measures, CCTVs, availability of power supply, implemen-



tation of fire-safety measures and other facilities all aimed at ensuring a smooth counting process with no hassle.

These measures were meticulously assessed to guarantee a smooth counting process without any disruptions, in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

The DEO emphasized

the importance of adhering to the ECI guidelines and ensuring that all arrangements are in place at the counting centers to uphold the integrity and efficiency of the electoral process, providing voters and stakeholders with confidence in the democratic process.

Pertinently, the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 are scheduled to be held in

1-Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency on 20th of May 2024 while filing of nomination papers for the same will commence from 26th of April.

The DEO was accompanied by the Dy District Election Officer, Ab Rehman Bhat; ARO, Baramulla, Arshad Ahmad Khan and Executive Engineer R&B Baramulla, Rayees Ahmad.

DEO Kupwara reviews preparations for SVEEP activities

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA: In order to review the progress of preparations being put in place with regard to SVEEP activities and mega plantation drive on April 20 and 21 across all polling stations of the district, a meeting was Thursday held under the chairpersonship of the District Election Officer (DEO) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan at DC Office Complex Kupwara.

The DEO took a detailed appraisal from all DFOs about the arrangements being made regarding mega plantation drive and SVEEP activities across 607 Polling stations of the three forest divisions of the district on April 20 and 21 (Saturday and Sunday).

On the occasion, Ayushi stressed upon DFOs and Nodal Officer SVEEP to formulate a comprehensive action plan for mega plantation drive in consultation



with concerned AROs and ensure arrangement of requisite plant saplings.

The DEO directed the Nodal Officer SVEEP/CEO Kupwara to collaborate with DFOs regarding mega plantation drives and activate VAFs (village level awareness groups and BAGs (Booth level awareness groups) preferably Teachers, AWWs, ASHAs to encourage sustainable prac-

tics of forest conservation and ecological balance.

She also directed DFOs to organize trekking camps for students at various locations of Kupwara district in consultation with concerned AROs and Nodal Officer, SVEEP to motivate young voters for maximum voting turnout in the district.

The DEO directed all the concerned to work

with utmost coordination to make mega plantation drive and SVEEP activities successful and impactful.

On the occasion, DEO was apprised that six polling stations of 6 different assembly segments of the district including 36-Teetwal (Government Higher Secondary School Teetwal), 33-Dardehara (Government Higher Secondary School Lone Harai, 64-Salkote (Government Boys Middle School Salkote), 83-Margi Diver-A (Govt. Girls Middle School Margi Diver), 100-Wadipora-A (Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School Wadipora) and 138-Monbal (Govt. Upper Primary School Monbal) have been designated as green Polling stations.

The meeting was attended by Nodal Officer, SVEEP, Dy. DEO, DFO Langate, DFO Kamraj, DFO Kehmil, besides other concerned.

Football Match for first-time voters organized in Bandipora

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: In a unique initiative to encourage voter education and electoral participation, a football match was Thursday organized as part of the ongoing Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative.

The football match organized at Higher Secondary School Nadihal brought together senior football players and first-time voters, besides a large gathering of public was also present on the occasion.

The purpose of organizing the football match under the SVEEP initiative was to raise awareness about the upcoming elections and the importance of voting by combining the spirit of sports with a message of civic responsibility and to develop a culture of active participation in the electoral process.

While interacting with

participants, the District Election Officer (DEO) Bandipora, Shakeel Ul Rehman highlighted the importance of empowering all citizens, especially first-time voters with the knowledge and confidence they need to actively participate in the democratic process.

He also emphasized the importance of every citizen's voice in shaping the future of our democracy.

The participants expressed gratitude to the DEO and the SVEEP team Bandipora for engaging citizens and promoting democratic values and providing them opportunity to raise voter awareness by means of sports.

Chief Education Officer (Nodal Officer Manpower and training) Dr. G. M. Pujoo, Principal Higher Secondary School Kaloosa (Nodal Officer SVEEP) Ab. Rashid Lone, SVEEP team Bandipora, and other concerned were also present on the occasion.

DEO B'pora chairs interactive meeting with female poll staff

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: In the run up to Lok Sabha Election 2024, District Election Officer (DEO), Shakeel ul Rehman and was attended by Dy DEO, Mohammad Rafeeq Bhat; Nodal Officer Manpower and trainings, Dr. G. M Pujoo; Nodal officers for pink polling stations, Master trainers, female poll staff and other concerned.

DEO on the occasion emphasized Specialized Training sessions to Equip Female Polling Staff for Election Duties besides directing the concerned to take all necessary measures in advance to facili-

tate poll staff and voters at designated pink polling stations.

He also directed to conduct mock drills and comprehensive training sessions in order to prepare female poll staff to effectively execute their election related duties.

DEO emphasized well-preparedness of poll staff so that they can carry out their duties with competence and integrity, ensuring that every eligible voter can cast their vote freely and securely.

On the occasion, discussions were held to enhance understanding of election procedures and to ensure a fair and transparent voting experience for all.

Later, practical demonstration for handling EVM, VVPAT, and various other Poll day procedures was held to equip female polling staff for their vital roles in the elections so that they can contribute effectively to the electoral process.

DEO Samba briefs media about election preparedness

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SAMBA: District Election Officer (DEO) Samba, Abhishek Sharma Thursday briefed the media about preparedness for Lok Sabha Elections-2024 scheduled in the district on 26th April 2024.

Speaking at a press conference here in Mini Secretariat, the DEO said that necessary circulars detailing the enforcement of Model Code of Conduct to maintain the sanctity of electoral process have been issued.

The DEO informed that as many as 2,59,000 voters including 132861 males, 126336 females and one transgender voter spanning across three assembly constituencies are poised to exercise their right to

tute for home voting at different locations.

"To facilitate the level playing field for all political parties as per ECI guidelines, online permission facility is available through Encore App and 60 permissions have been issued to different political parties till date," he added and said three meetings were held with political parties to brief them about MCC and other guidelines.

The DEO also highlighted the use of Election related IT platforms, including cVIGIL, ENCORE, SUVIDHA, ERONET, NGRS portal, etc.

In addition to this, 9 each FSTs and SSTs have been deployed to ensure free, fair and transparent elections. Out of 365 polling stations, the web cast-

MD Mission Vatsalya inspects facilities in CCIs at Ramban

GMK NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN: Mission Director, Mission Vatsalya, Harvinder Kour Thursday visited a district Ramban to inspect facilities available at various Child Care Institutions (CCI) like CCI Boys (Palaash), CCI Girls (Parisha) and Specialized Adoption Agency (Phulwadi) here.

The Mission Director inspected facilities like Medical facilities, libraries, counselling room facilities, recreational facilities as well as other facilities vital for grooming the overall personality of children residing in CCIs.

She gave explicit directions for continuously upgrading facilities at CCIs to make them more Child friendly.

The MD was accompanied by District Child Protection Officer, Ramban, Rahul Gupta who briefed the MD about various facilities provided in CCIs, role of management committee, child committee and also steps taken for more specific approach regarding education and health of Children.

The DCPO Ramban briefed that the education card and health card of all children are updated on



regular basis and all types of facilities which a child is expected to get in an ideal CCI are being provided.

Later, the MD also interacted with children in CCIs and inquired upon any problem they are facing in CCIs.

The MD also inspected the records of Child Welfare Committee, Ramban as well as Juvenile Justice Board Ramban.

During the inspection, a brief powerpoint presentation about Juvenile Justice Act and rules as well as their execution on the field was also given.

Officers and officials from office of Mission Director, Mission Vatsalya as well as Parisha, Palaash and Phulwadi including superintendents and Coordinators was also present on the occasion.

Training programme organized for Presiding Officers in Shopian

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: As part of the training schedule to equip employees with necessary skills to carry out election duties efficiently, the District Election Officer, Shopian Thursday organized two training sessions for the Presiding Officers (POs) in the Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex, here.

The training was imparted by the Master Trainers, Irfan Ahmed and Bilal Ahmed.

Speaking on the occasion, Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone briefed the Presiding Officers thoroughly about the responsibilities during the forthcoming Lok Sabha

elections, 2024 and urged them to put forth every effort to conduct Lok Sabha elections smoothly in a free and fair manner.

The Presiding Officers were acquainted with essential skills and knowledge to ensure the smooth conduct of the electoral process. Participants actively engaged in interactive sessions and practical demonstrations to enhance their understanding and proficiency in handling diverse scenarios.

The Training session was attended by the Nodal officer, Trainings, Manzor Ahmed and Presiding Officers.

Similarly training sessions were held at GDC Shopian and DIET Shopian also for other polling staff including P1, P2 & P3.

Election teams reach all 529 Polling Stations across Doda

GMK NEWS NETWORK

DODA: Election teams have landed across all Polling stations in mountainous Doda district, part of Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency, going for polls today.

The district has 529 polling stations with 18 flagged as critical and 10 as shadow polling stations.

The dispatching of polling parties took off from three designated centers namely Government Degree College Doda, Tehsil Office Doda, and Government Higher Secondary School Boys Bhaderwah.

Comprehensive arrangements were made for departure of polling parties, encompassing

vehicles, seating arrangements, refreshments, and security measures.

District Election Officer, Harvinder Singh, accompanied by SSP Javaid Iqbal, conducted visits to all centers.

They interacted with polling parties, urging them to adhere to Election Commission guidelines diligently and execute their assigned tasks with dedication and integrity.

The deployment of polling parties marks a crucial step in the electoral process, ensuring that the democratic exercise proceeds smoothly and efficiently.

With meticulous planning and coordination, the authorities aim to uphold the principles of free and fair elections in the district.

franchise on the Polling Day.

Giving details regarding Model Polling Stations, the DEO said 3 pink and 3 PwD polling stations have been established in district Samba apart from green and youth polling stations. In addition to this, special camps were conducted during special summary revision, and new voters were added.

He also highlighted that a home voting facility for 514 voters including 169 PwD voters and 345 elderly voters (85+), has been arranged. He said that 49 teams have been consti-

tution facility has been made functional in 203 polling stations as per guidelines of ECI.

SSP Samba, Vinay Kumar briefed that necessary security arrangements have been put in place to ensure free, fair and transparent elections. Around 1335 licensed weapons have been deposited and 9 persons have been detained under PSA and 2 persons under NDPS Act till date.

Moreover, Rs 5.50 lacs cash, 3 pistols, 16 kg poppy straw, 18 kg charas and 13 kg heroin have been seized till date during enforcement activities.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir, DIRECTORATE OF SHEEP HUSBANDRY, KASHMIR
E-mail- kashmirmerino.sheep@gmail.com

CANCELLATION NOTICE.

No-Dshk/Acctts/24-25/582 Dt- 16.04.2024

Reference-1. E-Procurement Notice for sale of wool issued vide no. e-Nit No:-DShK/ACCTTS/23-24/1137(E) Dt- 19.01.2024.

The e-NIT for sale of wool issued vide no. e-Nit No:-DShK/ACCTTS/23-24/1137(E) Dt- 19.01.2024 is hereby cancelled.

Sd/- Chairman
Divisional Level Purchase Committee
Sheep Husbandry Department
Kashmir.

DIPK-125-23
DT: 18/04/2024

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, ELECTRIC DIVISION- GANDERBAL.
Email: Edgbl123@gmail.com Tel No. 0194-2416237 Fax No. 0194-2416237

e-TENDER ABBREVIATED NOTICE
e-NIT No. EDV/19 of 2024-25, dt:15.04.2024

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Electric Division-Ganderbal invites online e-bids from registered A-Class Electrical Contractors/firms for as under:

S.No	Particulars	Estimated Cost (In Lacs)
1	Construction of TIN Roof Housing with Angle Iron Truss for 2x125KVA DG Sets at Baital	12.60

The complete tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidder/tenderers may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below. Bidding Documents contain Detailed Criteria for Bidders, Specifications, Bill of Materials, Terms and Conditions of Contract and other details.

i)	Date and Time of downloading/ Sale (Start) of Tender Document	15.04.2024; 16:00 Hrs
ii)	Date & Time of Download/ Sale (End) of Tender Document	15.04.2024; 16:00 Hrs
iii)	Date and time of bidding queries/clarifications	15.04.2024; 16:00 Hrs to 29.04.2024; 16:00 Hrs
iv)	Date & Time of Bid Uploading (Start/End)	15.04.2024; 16:00 Hrs to 29.04.2024; 16:00 Hrs
v)	Commercial/Technical Bid Opening Date & Time	30.04.2024 at 13:00 Hrs
vi)	Financial Bid Opening	Shall be declared later on for the technically qualified bidders
vii)	Venue of Commercial/ Technical Bid Opening	Electronically on J&K Government e-Procurement System website http://jktenders.gov.in
viii)	Cost of e-Bid document	Rs.1000.00 (Rupees One Thousand Only) (Non-refundable) [Treasury Receipt/Demand Draft]
ix)	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit	Rs.25200/= (Rupees Twenty Five Thousand Two Hundred only)

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Electric Division Ganderbal

DIPK-NB-55-24
DT: 18/04/2024

DC G'bal chairs DCDC Meeting

GMK NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL: The Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Shyambir, who also serves as the Chairman of the District Cooperative Development Committee (DCDC), convened a meeting Thursday aimed at enhancing the cooperative movement within the district.

The meeting focused on the implementation of

various schemes designed to bolster the cooperative sector and empower local communities.

The DC was briefed on several initiatives including the establishment of Common Service Centers (CSCs) and Kisan Sampada Kendras (KSKs). These initiatives aim to diversify the business activities of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) and trans-

form them into dynamic economic entities.

It was highlighted that all 13 PACS registered in the district have embraced Model Byelaws and set up CSCs and KSKs, demonstrating a commitment to progress and development. The DC urged all committee members to collaborate closely to realize the objectives.

He emphasized the importance of strengthen-

ing the cooperative ecosystem and assured unwavering support from the District Administration to achieve the outlined targets.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Mushtaq Ahmad Simnani; ACP, CAHO, CAO, CHO, AD Handicrafts & Handloom, District Development Manager, NABARD and other concerned.

LS Polls - PHASE I

16.23 lakh voters eligible to vote in 4-Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: 4-Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency is all set to go to polls in the first phase of Lok Sabha elections, being held today April 19, with a total of 16.23 lakh voters including 8.45 lakh male and 7.77 lakh female electorates eligible to vote and participate in the electoral process.

"The total electorates included around 23637 persons with disability besides 403 persons above 100 years of age who have been enrolled to participate in the electoral process".

According to a communication received here today by the office of Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, around 2,637 polling stations are completely ready for first phase of the general elections being held across five districts of Kathua, Udhampur, Kishtwar, Doda and Ramban. Out of these, 136 polling stations are P-2 while 31 polling stations belong to P-7 to P-3 category. Among the districts, Kathua has 25 polling stations along the international border. In total, more than 11000 polling staff including reserve will be deployed on duty.

The communication read that the polling will be held from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm before

which there will be mock poll in presence of the polling agents. The voting will continue even after 6.00 pm, in case there will be the voters still waiting for their turn in the polling station premises.

Every polling station will be provided with Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) besides wheel chairs will also be provided to the needy. The ballot units will have list of contesting candidates in brail script. Where ever required there will be separate que for senior citizens and specially abled persons facilitating them for early voting. Additionally, there will be voter help desk, manned by concerned Booth Level Officer (BLO) to extend necessary help to the needy.

There will be 19 polling booths manned by women (also called as pink polling stations), 14 polling booths manned by specially abled persons and 17 will be looked after by youths. Also in order to spread message about environmental concern, there will be 20 green polling stations.

Aimed to facilitate voters in identification and increase voter turnout, all voters have been provided with voter information slip with all requisite details like Polling Station



name, date and time of poll, serial number of voter in the list, his full name, QR code but not the photograph of the voter. Hence, Voter Information Slips will not be allowed as proof of the identity of voters. The concerned BLOs have already distributed voter information slips among all the electorates. Also, the citizens can view details of the Polling Station, Parliamentary Constituency, and get the contact details of the Booth Level Officer, Electoral Registration Officer among other services, through Voter Helpline

App (VHA). This mobile app is available on the Google Play store and Apple App Store.

In addition to Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC), 12 types of documents will also be allowed to verify a voter and allow him for voting as EPIC card is not mandatory for voting. These documents included Aadhaar Card, MGNREGA Job Card, Passbooks with photograph issued by Bank/Post Office, Health Insurance Smart Card issued under scheme of Ministry of Labour, Driving License, PAN Card, Smart Card issued

by RGI under NPR, Indian Passport, Pension document with photograph, Service Identity Cards with photograph issued to employees by Central/State Govt/PSUs/Public Limited Companies, Official identity cards issued to MPs/MLAs/MLCs and Unique Disability ID (UDID) Card, issued by Union Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment.

The Voter Turnout App will be used to display estimated provisional voter turnout details of each Parliamentary Constituency entered by the

RO. The media can also use the same application to capture estimated voter turnout data. Approximate voter turnout data of each phase of the elections will be displayed through this app. There will be two hourly reporting of voting percentage from 9.00 am to the end of poll. The concerned ARO and RO will share the data with media accordingly. Even the updated figures will be placed in voter turnout app.

Around 1440 polling stations in phase I will have CCTV camera for live webcasting to control rooms established at District and CEO office. Besides, 200 polling stations will have two cameras, for inside and outside surveillance. Around 2100 vehicles of polling parties and sector officers will be equipped with GPS system so as to locate the vehicle and monitor movement. Also, Satellite Phones, Wireless sets and Special Runners have been put in place for about 95 polling stations which are in communication shadow areas.

In the entire Union Territory, from the date of announcement of election to till date material/cash of around Rs 5.34 crore has been seized by various enforcing departments.

The J&K Election office is

implementing Model Code of Conduct in letter and spirit by facilitating the general masses to exercise their right to vote in a free and fair manner. The public campaigning in areas of Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency has concluded on 17th April evening, allowing the voters a peaceful break from being influenced by the election campaigns. Till date, 75 grievances have been received on C-VIGIL app and more than 50 % resolved in time while others are under resolution. For filing Model Code of Conduct Violation cases by the citizens, C-VIGIL app provides time stamped evidentiary proof of the Model Code of Conduct/Expenditure Violation by empowering every citizen to click a photo or video using his or her smartphone.

Likewise, to monitor various election related activities and check model code of conduct compliance, a 24*7 working Command and Control Room has been established at CEO office, Jammu and similar mini control rooms have been set up at every DEO office. Apart from looking for MCC violations, the Control room also has live feed of more than 55 % polling stations and all vehicles being used for poll parties movement.

Mehbooba, Mian, Zafar submit nomination papers for Anantnag-Rajouri seat

JAHANGEER GANAIE

ANANTNAG: Former Chief Minister and People's Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti, National Conference (NC) candidate Mian Altaf and Apni Party candidate Zaffar Manhas submitted their nomination papers for the Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary seats on Thursday.

Mehbooba accompanied by hundreds of party workers and leaders filed her nomination papers after paying homage at her father's grave in Bijbehara.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Mufti said the upcoming election transcends basic amenities like road, water, and electricity. Instead, she termed it as a crucial battle for the preservation of Kashmiri identity, land and resources, particularly in the wake of the abrogation of Article 370.

Mehbooba criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for attempting to silence Kashmiri voices and alleged their agenda of subjugating Kashmiris into servitude to exploit resources and erode identity.

NC candidate Mian Altaf was accompanied by party's vice president



Omar Abdullah and senior Congress leader G A Mir. Omar expressed hope for Mian's victory. He thanked Mir who had come from Delhi to express support.

"The National Conference has been the worst victim of violence as this party has lost more than 4,000 workers," Abdullah said, adding, "Everybody knows very well where the gun culture came from."

When asked about the BJP not fielding its candidate yet, Omar said, "There is some time left and who knows they might do it."

Mir on the occasion said this election is a direct contest between the INDIA bloc and NDA. "The people of J&K are politically mature," he said, adding, "The people of Jammu are very angry with the BJP and we see both seats going

to Congress."

Mir said the people will vote for the guarantees of the INDIA bloc and Rahul Gandhi, not to those of Prime Minister Narendra Modi which he said will "expire" on June 04 – the day the results will be announced.

Meanwhile, Apni Party candidate Zaffar Manhas, along with a few independent candidates, also submitted their nomination papers, adding further diversity to the electoral fray.

The Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary seat, comprising 18 assembly segments, is poised for a riveting contest in the upcoming elections. With prominent contenders from the National Conference (NC), the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and the Apni Party vying for victory, the elec-

toral dynamics promise an intriguing triangular battle.

BJP is yet to announce its candidate, while the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP), which had earlier announced its chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad as the candidate, has now fielded advocate Saleem Parry as the party candidate from this seat.

Mian Altaf, representing the National Conference, commands significant influence among the Gujar community, while Zaffar Manhas of the Apni Party is expected to garner support from the Pahari community. Meanwhile, Mehbooba Mufti, leading the PDP, seeks to capitalise on her party's foothold in certain assembly segments like Bijbehara, Devsar, Dooru, and Zainapora.

Political analysts believe that the non-residency status of both Mian and Manhas might tilt the scales slightly in favour of the PDP. However, the NC's formidable lineup of former MLAs and MLCs, including Dr Bashir Ahmad Veeri, Altaf Kaloo and others, is poised to mobilise support in their respective constituencies, bolstering Mian's prospects.

The Congress's influ-

ence, particularly in segments like Dooru, could prove advantageous for the NC, as the party extends its support and campaign efforts. The Apni Party, led by leaders like Rafi Ahmed Mir and Ab Raheem Rather, faces a significant test as they endeavour to consolidate support in their newly aligned constituencies.

The potential entry of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) into the fray could alter the landscape, especially considering the substantial Pahari vote bloc energised by recent government initiatives. However, the BJP's candidate announcement is pending, leaving room for speculation regarding their impact on the electoral calculus.

The Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat boasts a formidable electorate of 1,925,450 votes, with significant representation from South Kashmir and Rajouri-Poonch districts.

With the nomination process underway, scrutiny of nomination papers is scheduled for April 20, 2024, and the deadline for withdrawal of candidature is April 22, 2024. If contested, polling is set to take place on May 7, 2024, from 07:00 am to 06:00 pm—(KNO)

"Not shocking..."

Omar Abdullah on Azad not contesting the Lok Sabha Elections

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah on Thursday said that Ghulam Nabi Azad not contesting the Lok Sabha Elections was not "shocking" to him adding that he was already aware of it.

The Democratic Progressive Azad Party announced that former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and DPAP chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad will not contest the Lok Sabha elections from the Anantnag-Rajouri seat.

"It is not shocking; we already knew that he would not contest elections. I think he has fielded a candidate from his party but let us see if people will support his party," Omar Abdullah told reporters on Thursday.

National Conference Candidate Mian Altaf Ahmad filed his nomination from Anantnag-Rajouri.

"Today, the NC candidate for the Anantnag-Rajouri seat, Mian Altaf Ahmad, has filed his nomination. He will represent all parties of the INDIA bloc. We hope that Mian Altaf will win this election. On behalf of Feroq Abdullah, I would like to thank Mian Altaf for coming

here all the way from Delhi," he said.

Advocate Saleem Parry will be a candidate from the Azad's Democratic Progressive Azad Party for the Anantnag-Rajouri seat.

DPAP leader, Advocate Mohammad Saleem Paray, confirmed the development and said the people of Jammu and Kashmir want to see Azad as the Chief Minister.

"Ghulam Nabi Azad had a meeting with the leaders of south Kashmir. Deliberations were held on a lot of things. Finally, my name was proposed and I am thankful to Ghulam Nabi Azad that he trusted me. I will try my level best to meet all the expectations. Replacement is not a proper word. He is being a good leader. There is no replacement. I wanted Ghulam Nabi Azad to contest from here but as a political worker, I am connected to people. People of the state want Ghulam Nabi Azad to take charge of Jammu and Kashmir; they want to see him as the Chief Minister," he added.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti will fight from Anantnag-Rajouri and the National Conference has fielded Mian Altaf for the Lok Sabha polls.

Earlier in 2022, Azad had left the Congress, ending his five-decade-long association with the party, and floated the DPAP.

In the 2014 elections, Jitendra Singh from the BJP gathered 46.8 per cent of votes on the Udhampur seat, while Ghulam Nabi Azad, who fought on the Congress ticket, gathered 40.9 per cent.

Voting in Udhampur will be held on April 19, in Jammu on April 26, in Anantnag-Rajouri on May 7, in Srinagar on May 13, and in Baramulla on May 20.

Earlier, there were six seats for J-K, including Ladakh. But, following the abrogation of Article 370 by the Parliament, Ladakh does not have a Lok Sabha constituency. In the 2019 elections, the BJP won three seats, while the National Conference won the other three seats.

This is the first election after the Supreme Court ruling last year, which upheld the Parliament's decision to abrogate Article 370 and bifurcate the state into two union territories. The apex court also asked the Election Commission of India to hold the next assembly elections in J&K before September 30, 2024. (ANI)

Braving all odds, polling parties reach their destinations

AMIR TANTRAY

DESSA: Braving all odds including heavy downpour and tough terrain, polling parties along with security forces moved towards polling stations established in remote and far off areas of Udhampur-Doda parliamentary constituency.

This correspondent trekked alongside few polling parties in the far off Dessa area of district Doda amid heavy rain in the area due to which the trek became slippery.

To conduct smooth and free and fair elections, Election Commission of India (ECI) has established 2637 polling stations across the constituency, of which 2,457 are situated in rural areas and 180 in urban areas, ensuring accessibility and convenience for voters from all corners of the constituency.

This constituency is

spread in five districts of Kathua, Udhampur, Ramban, Doda and Kishtwar districts and consists of 18 Assembly segments including Udhampur West, Udhampur East, Chenani and Ramnagar (SC) of Udhampur, Bani, Billawar, Basohli, Jastrota, Kathua (SC) and Hiranagar of Kathua, Inderwal, Kishtwar and Padder-Nagseni of Kishtwar, Bhadarwah, Doda and Doda West of Doda and Ramban and Banihal of Ramban.

There are 16,23,195 registered voters in Udhampur Lok Sabha seat including 8,45,283 male, 7,77,899 female and 13 transgender electors.

In hilly districts of Doda, Ramban, Kishtwar, parts of Udhampur and Kathua districts, polling parties have to trek a few kilometers to reach their destination. Most of the polling stations are near the road side but some are far away and it took three

to five hours for these polling parties to reach there.

In the Dessa area, district electoral office Doda had provided mules and horses to the polling staff to ferry Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and other election related material whereas at few places polling parties had to lift the election material on their heads to reach their destination.

Talking to KNO, Tehsildar Bhagwah, Babu Ram Choudhary, who was looking after the arrangement here, said, "We have deputed 11 polling parties to upper reaches of Dessa which are five to six kilometers from Gai, the nearest road link, and provided one horse to each polling party. As it was raining today, we have covered EVMs and VVPATs to ensure that they don't face any technical issue and polling is held smoothly tomorrow."

Boat Tragedy

Eerie calm in classrooms as empty chairs haunt teachers, students at KV School

RIYAZ BHAT

SRINAGAR: It was nothing like previous school days—the usual hugging and shaking hands during the morning assembly with friends and classmates replaced cries and sobs.

The sun has come out but the clouds of gloom have taken over the valley. The scenes at Kendriya Vidyalaya in Srinagar are nothing different; the death of three children of the institution has left students and teachers in shock.

On Thursday, Anayah—a 5th standard student of Kendriya Vidyalaya in Srinagar for the first time had to attend 'but to not' the morning assembly without her three friends and classmates who had lost their lives in a boat capsizing incident on Tuesday in which six persons were killed, ten were rescued while three

others are still missing.

Sitting lost in the morning assembly—Anayah said that every time she looks at the bench where her late classmates Tanvir Fayaz and Mudasar Fayaz used to sit, she feels panicked and all alone.

Not only Tanvir Fayaz and Mudasar Fayaz, Anayah had lost her another classmate Faziq Showkat in a boat capsizing incident on Tuesday.

"I can never forget how we (Tanvir and Mudasar) used to share our lunch on the same bench, play together and decorate the classrooms," she said.

Anayah said that she will miss everything that she was sharing with Tanvir, Mudasar and Faziq.

Recalling some of the moments, Anayah said that Tanvir and Mudasar were the most active students in the school and used to take

every responsibility which ever was being thrust to. "They used to be with us all the time. They were helping us to decorate the classroom."

The classmates of the duo further said that both of them used to play a lot of games, especially football.

Tanvir and Mudasar's other friend at KV school Manav said that they used to beat the drums in the school during morning assembly.

"In today's morning assembly, there was no drummer in our school. But, I pledge to keep their hobby alive. I will reverberate the drums in the school," Manav said. He said, "No one in the school can replace their presence in school. Today, I feel this school is more like a castle wherein no one makes us laugh in the classroom. Everyone was so sad and numb in the morning assembly."—(KNO)

Congress maligning ECI by spreading canard about EVMs: Chugh

GMK NEWS NETWORK

CHANDIGARH: BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh Thursday said the Opposition,



particularly the Congress, was deliberately spreading a disinformation campaign against the EVM's to mislead and hoodwink the people of the country.

Chugh said since the Congress and the other Opposition parties are facing an overwhelming

defeat in the coming Lok Sabha election they are trying to digress the mind of the people to flimsy issues.

Chugh said the opposition parties are not only trying to fool people but are also trying to insult the constitutional office of the Election Commission of India. He said it was a blatant effort of the Congress to malign the office of the ECI without realising that same EVMs have won the Congress win in Karnataka, Telangana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and other states, besides AAP winning in Delhi.

The promises and the achievements highlighted in the "sankalp patra" released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi have rattled them and now they are floating jittery expressions.

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Eve Teasing Incidents

The laws have been made tough. Even ogling at a woman without reason for too long can incur a jail term. Calling women names, teasing them, pushing them around, singing a non-veg song in their company all come under the ambit of eve teasing and incur jail terms. A woman deserves to be addressed with a proper name and not with names like Jaanu, Dilbar, etc. We often see in offices that hard-working women are not called by their first name but rather with nicknames which is highly deplorable. According to the law of the land of a woman is required to work beyond 10 pm the office has to mandatorily provide her a cab. But this law is bypassed in a lot of cases and woman have to go to their homes in private cabs leading to a lot of unfortunate incidents. In overcrowded buses especially the women have to face hell. The men with bad intentions touch their bodies and due to their lack of courage, the women never report such incidents. In a lot of offices, the bosses take undue advantage of hire and fire policy and try their level best to sexually exploit the girls. Fearing the loss of a job such events are hardly reported in the media. Even though the laws have been made tough but the long implementation time and complex judicial process discourage a lot of women from taking the legal route. In a lot of places, the perpetrator is a close relative of the victim, and thus other relatives put unbearable pressure on the girl to prevent her from reporting the incident. Even though with the women's helpline number things have gone slightly better but still in places like Delhi, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana things need a lot of improvement. Women's security is an issue that needs the immediate attention of planners and the timely compliance of the legal process. Free legal access can go a long way also in encouraging women to report such cases. Let us make South Asia the safest place for our women.

Summer Fruit

The Benefits Of Watermelon

SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

With a lip-smacking taste and distinct juicy, sweet, and refreshing quality to it, watermelons are synonymous with summertime. Watermelons and Indian summers are made for each other. High in water content and low in calories, watermelon is a cool option on a scorching afternoon. A slice of juicy watermelon is one of summer's most delicious seasonal treats. Its refreshing sweetness makes it a versatile ingredient for all dishes, from salads to salsas to smoothies.

Nothing beats a big, juicy wedge of watermelon on a hot summer day, whether it's berries, mango, peaches, or litchi. It is rich in salt, potassium, and electrolytes, all of which are essential for maintaining your body's strength. Watermelon is also loaded with the healthy vitamins A, B, and C, as well as the antioxidant lycopene.

Watermelon the 'summer's blessing' contains 90% water by weight and is packed with vitamins and nutrients, especially lycopene, ascorbic acid, and citrulline. Watermelons are tasty, hydrating, and negative-calorie food, which helps in burning calories. When you're incredibly thirsty and need to replenish fluids in your body, watermelon is the ideal summer go-to. Since 90 percent of watermelon is just water, it helps in nourishing the skin and makes it more radiant. This luscious summer fruit is not only a delicious summer snack, but it also has several advantages for the skin. From keeping you cool to maintaining your skin health, let us look at some of the benefits of consuming watermelons in summer.

Benefits of Watermelon for skin

Whether you apply a watermelon face mask or consume a fresh slice, it greatly influences keeping your skin hydrated. From acne-prone to sensitive, dry to combination, it's a one-fruit-fits-all kind of thing. If you have sensitive, acne-prone skin, the strong anti-inflammatory properties in watermelon can help calm skin irritation, redness, and inflammation. Vitamin A, B6, and Vitamin C in Watermelon help in collagen production, which improves skin texture and suppleness, makes the skin brighter and fades spots and blemishes. Lycopene content in watermelons has a sun-protection effect, so you are less likely to get sunburnt. The vitamin A in watermelon keeps your eyes sparkly and healthy too and can prevent macular degeneration. At home, you may make your own moisturizing facemask using watermelon and honey. Honey is a humectant that replenishes moisture and works quickly to give you smooth, bright skin. It hydrates and cures dry skin.

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

Benefits of Watermelon Juice

- 90% water
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin A
- Potassium
- Magnesium
- Amino acids
- Plant compounds
- Fiber (if made with a blender and not a juicer)

BHG

the best results, do this once a week. Additionally, watermelon juice helps to calm and lessen the redness of the skin that is prone to acne.

Prevent oily skin

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

Mix one tablespoon of watermelon pulp and one tablespoon of banana pulp in a bowl with a spatula and apply to the face and neck. Allow 20 to 25 minutes for the face pack to dry. After that, wash it with warm water. This is the finest watermelon face mask for those who suffer from acne and pigmentation. A mixture of mashed watermelon and tomato pulp can be used by those with oily skin to smoothen the skin. The malic acid in watermelon and lycopene in tomato act as natural exfoliators and soothe the skin. A natural skin toner - Watermelon juice is a natural toner that is as good as rose water for your skin because of its natural extracts. Vitamin C and antioxidants present in watermelon help regenerate skin cells and protect them from injury. These nutrients prevent free radical damage and also protect your skin from any further disruption. To tone your skin, gently apply fresh watermelon juice to it and rinse it off.

Watermelon seeds are a good source

of magnesium which lowers cortisol levels that help reduce acne and also balances out your hormones. They also contain protein, fatty acids, and ceramides that help in locking the moisture in your skin. Natural Exfoliator-- The grainy particles present in the fruit helps gently exfoliate the skin. Watermelon is rich in vitamin C, which brightens your skin quickly. The gritty particles in the fruit assist in gently exfoliating the skin while also moisturizing it. To naturally scrub off dead skin cells, apply a teaspoon of mashed watermelon to your skin.

To remove dead skin cells, rub watermelon and tomato pulp across the face or body in circular motions. The malic acid in watermelon and the enzymes in tomato help break down the glue that holds the dead skin cells together. Combining mashed watermelon with yogurt and honey and then leaving the paste on the face for 10-15 minutes can be beneficial. The antioxidants in honey and watermelon can reduce inflammation, while yogurt can exfoliate the skin.

An Anti-Ager

Watermelons are enriched with antioxidants and vitamins, which all involve offering you glowing skin. Antioxidants help combat free radical damage and enhance suppleness, which reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles and makes skin appear tighter. Vitamins brighten dull skin and take off that layer that makes it look tired and overworked. Mix watermelon pulp, milk, and honey. Make a paste and apply it to your face. Wash it with running or lukewarm water. Watermelon has

potent antioxidants that fight free radicals to prevent premature aging. Milk, on the other hand, is a natural cleanser that deep cleanses the skin and removes dead skin cells.

Cure sunburn

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

Mix a spoonful of cucumber pulp with watermelon juice to make the face mask. Apply the pack evenly to your face and leave it on for 15-20 minutes before washing it off. The best time to eat watermelons is in the morning between 10 am to 12 pm, as breakfast or between breakfast and lunch. You can also have it as an evening snack, before 5 pm. Do not consume it at night or with your meals.

It must be avoided by diabetics and everyone with digestive issues. Have it in moderation and never too much, otherwise, it sure can make you feel bloated, and gassy and even give you a stomach ache. It's totally safe, to use it for skin care. The only people who can't use it are those who are allergic to watermelon.

The author is an international fame beauty expert



BHARAT DOGRA

Europe is widely and generally seen by people all over the world as a region of high levels of education, scholarship, and democracy. Certainly, many reputed scholars and prestigious centers of learning are based here.

In keeping with these valuable assets and also the very difficult and troubling times through which the world is passing, there is a very important role for Europe that will best serve its interests as well as of the entire world at the same time. Briefly stated, Europe should strive to fulfill an unbiased and independent role as a promoter of world peace. This should be taken up to such an extent that this becomes its defining identity. This will bring safety and peace to Europe, this will also help to bring safety and peace to the entire world.

USA is without doubt the biggest power of the world today, and so it is understandable that many in Europe are reluctant to disturb the special relationship that the USA has



Briefly stated, Europe should strive to fulfill an unbiased and independent role as a promoter of world peace.

with Europe. This is supposed to be protective to Europe. However keeping in view the many wars and conflicts in which the USA keeps getting involved, a tendency that is increasingly questioned within the USA by senior statespersons and peace activists, Europe should ask whether it is not unnecessarily getting involved along with the USA in too many conflicts. In the case of conflicts with lesser powers, this involves so much avoidable death, disruption, and destruction in these countries, as seen in recent times in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, and other countries. In the case of possible confrontation with big powers, the safety of Europe itself is unduly threatened. So Europe must question this kind of relationship.

On the other hand, Europe can seek a close and more

genuinely mutually beneficial relationship with the USA in such a way that instead of the USA pushing Europe towards involvement in conflicts, Europe increasingly pushes the USA towards world peace. This is the real challenge for the senior statespersons and diplomats of Europe, known for their brilliance, as well as the peace movement of Europe. This is a historically important task and challenge, as only Europe has the kind of cultural and political links with the USA as to be able to move it more and more in the direction of peace. The soft power of European scholars, diplomats, and people's movements, supported and strengthened by governments, acting in collaboration with their US counterparts, can achieve this. Of course in order to achieve

this and more for world peace, the forces of peace and justice in Europe need to be much stronger than they are at present. It appears that recent times have been times of great confusion and uncertainty in Europe, resulting in a situation in which even progressive forces have not been able to give their best and have sometimes acted in disappointing ways. Some of those who appeared to be in the process of creating a fine balance of justice, peace, and environmental protection, something which can be very helpful for the entire world, have not quite been able to live up to their promise and potential. This is something which is more likely to happen in times of uncertainty and confusion. However the longer the uncertainty and confusion persist, there is also increasing possi-

bility of regressive forces using this to spread their influence, and this too has been seen in recent times.

Hence it is important for Europe to find its real purpose, the most relevant purpose, which can bring peace and safety to the people of Europe as well as to the entire world.

This role of peace would be a historically important role. From the 16th century onwards Europe got involved deeply in colonial exploitation and wars which brought unprecedented destruction, culminating in two world wars of the 20th century which brought this unprecedented destruction to Europe as well. Instead of pursuing a somewhat similar future, Europe can seek a historically most important role of promoting world peace, and disarmament and contributing a lot to avoiding the possibility of a destroy-all third world war. This should be the destiny of Europe. Once Europe clearly commits itself to such a great future, it's confusion and moral crisis will go away and its highly capable people will be able to contribute to the best of their potential, leading to the many-sided true progress of Europe which will not be at the cost of other parts of the world but which will also help to uplift other parts of the world. (C-Counter Currents)

Bharat Dogra is Honorary Convener, Campaign to Save Earth Now.

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The Ultimate Twosome – Nukes And Climate Change In 2024

TOM ENGELHARDT

Honestly, what strange creatures we are. Nothing stops us when it comes to destruction, does it? I mean, give us credit as the new year begins. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about humanity isn't our literature, our theater, our movies, the remarkable food we cook, the cities we've built, or the endless other things we've created. To my mind, it's the fact that, in our relatively brief time as rulers of this planet, amid a chaos of never-ending wars and conflicts, we've come up with not just one but two different ways of doing ourselves (and much of the rest of our world) in.

And that, to my mind, is no small achievement. Go back a couple of centuries and, even amid humanity's wars and other conflicts, someone suggesting such a possible future would undoubtedly have been laughed out of the room. It took science fiction — especially H.G. Wells imagining the arrival of murderous Martians — to begin to conceive of such all-too-modern, all-too-apocalyptic world-ending possibilities.

Now, however, there's no need for fiction at all. There can be no question that, in its "wisdom" (and yes, that definitely needs to be in quotation marks), humanity has indeed come up with two different ways of utterly destroying this planet as a livable habitat.

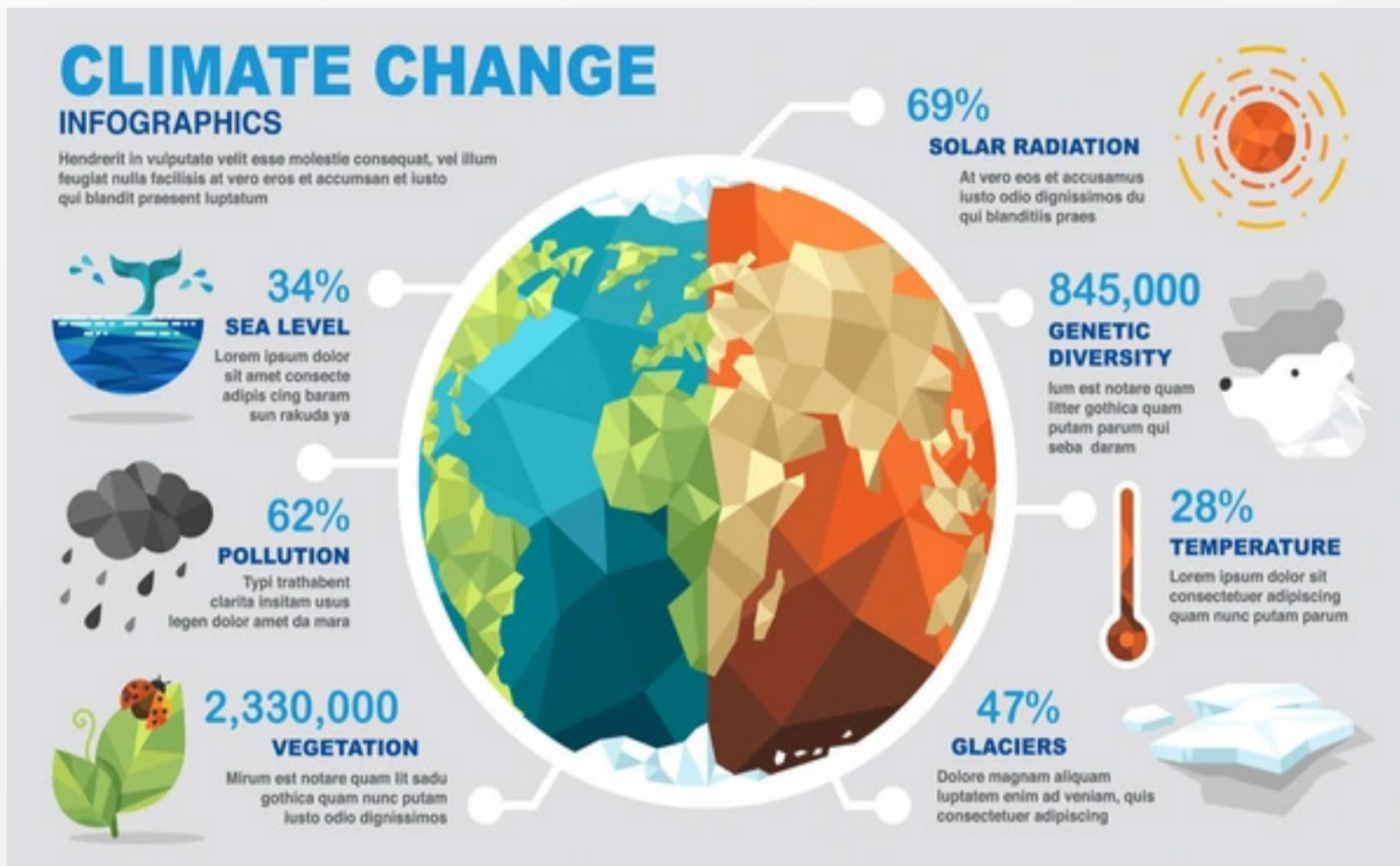
And there's no mystery here, either. One is, of course, atomic weaponry. First tested out in the New Mexican desert in July 1945, atomic bombs were then dropped on two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that August with devastating effect. Ever since, such weaponry has been held in what might be thought of as an ultimate reserve of potential total destructiveness. Yes, in its two times in use, such weaponry lit up the skies in a blinding fashion, destroying much of those two Japanese cities and slaughtering hundreds of thousands of human beings, both in the moment and in the years that followed from the long-term effects of radiation.

And yet, to put that in perspective, those A-bombs, "Little Boy" and "Fat Man" as their American creators dubbed them, used on August 6 and 9, 1945, would today be considered the most modest of "tactical" or "low-yield" nuclear weapons. The major weapons now in the American and Russian arsenals, hydrogen bombs, are — perhaps the best word might be — blindingly more powerful. As the Union of Concerned Scientists explains, "The warheads on just one U.S. nuclear-armed submarine have seven times the destructive power of all the bombs dropped during World War II, including the two atomic bombs dropped on Japan. And the United States usually has ten of those submarines at sea."

And while, in 1945, only the United States had such weapons, that was bound to change all too quickly. Today, nine countries have nuclear arsenals and there are, at present, nearly 13,000 nuclear weapons on this planet. In the years to come, it's not likely to end there either, though that would be more than enough weaponry to destroy not just the Earth but untold numbers of other planets. And keep in mind that the major nuclear powers, the United States and Russia, are both in the process of "modernizing" their arsenals, while China is visibly rushing to catch up. The U.S. is, in fact, expected to put up to \$2 trillion (no, that is not a misprint!) into updating its supply of nukes in the decades to come.

A Nuclear Little Ice Age?
On another cheery note, North Korea, which only joined that crew of nine relatively recently, tested its first intercontinental ballistic missile as 2023 ended. (And don't think it's the last country that's going to go nuclear either.) In addition, what nuclear agreements once existed between the great powers are now largely extinct. Worse yet, with both the major and minor nuclear powers still working hard to build up or "modernize" those arsenals into the distant future, the ability to destroy most life on this planet remains mind-numbingly present and, because we've never experienced anything like it, all too hard to grasp.

Among other things, the massive



smoke cloud that even a relatively modest — if such a word can be used in this context — nuclear exchange between, say, India and Pakistan would put into the atmosphere could result in a global "nuclear winter" in which billions of people would starve to death. A larger-scale nuclear conflict might even lead to a "nuclear little ice age" that could last thousands — yes, thousands! — of devastating years.

While it's true that, in the last 78 years, such weaponry has never again been used (except in "peaceful" nuclear tests), it's hard not to imagine that something suicidal lurks in the make-up of humanity. Otherwise, why would nine countries now possess weapons that could all too literally end it for the rest of us? And sadly, there's nothing new about any of this. As the superb Jonathan Schell wrote in his classic book *The Fate of the Earth* in 1982, "Since we have not made a positive decision to exterminate ourselves but instead have chosen to live on the edge of extinction, periodically lunging toward the abyss only to draw back at the last second, our situation is one of uncertainty and nervous insecurity rather than of absolute hopelessness."

More than 40 years after he wrote that, it remains no less accurate. Somehow, despite our eternal conflicts, not one has ever yet tipped over into a nuclear conflagration, but the danger remains. After all, it seems that, among our other traits, we humans are all too incapable of not making war. At this moment, in fact, one side in each of the two major wars on this planet, in Ukraine and Gaza — Russia and Israel — is nuclear armed. Last July, a senior Russian official, Dmitry Medvedev, fearing a coming Ukrainian "counteroffensive," said: "Just imagine that the offensive... in tandem with NATO, succeeded and ended up with part of our land being taken away. Then we would have to use nuclear weapons by virtue of the stipulations of the Russian Presidential Decree. There simply wouldn't be any other solution. Our enemies should pray to our fighters that they do not allow the world to go up in nuclear flames."

Not Noticing the Ultimate Threat to Humanity?
Nor, in truth, is there anything new about the second way we humans have discovered to turn our world into a burning ember. As Schell also noted in 1982, while describing the nuclear horror that we could visit on ourselves and this planet: "Nuclear explosions are far from being the only perturbations in question; a heating of the global atmosphere through an increased greenhouse effect, which could be caused by the injection of vast amounts of carbon dioxide into the air (for instance, from the increased burning of coal), is another notable peril of this kind."

Notable indeed! And it's no less notable, I think, that Schell was aware

of such a second human-induced, planet-destroying possibility so long ago, though most of us have only become aware of climate change later. He was early indeed in his recognition of that reality (though the way greenhouse gases could heat our atmosphere had been known to a few of us from the end of the nineteenth century). And sadly, while humanity's nuclear weapons have been relegated to what might be considered the back burner, that "greenhouse effect" hasn't. Anything but, in fact. Unlike those thousands of devastating weapons, the weather bomb that has now visibly burst over this planet was a creation of the nineteenth-century industrial revolution, launched with the burning of coal and then other fossil fuels. Of course, industrial civilization, as it spread across the planet, began to use those slow-motion equivalents of nuclear weapons ever more widely. In the intervening two centuries, greenhouse gases have grown devastatingly abundant in our atmosphere and the planet has heated by nearly 1.5 degrees Centigrade over pre-industrial days. In fact, in November, we even experienced the first (and second)

2023. My own country had the honor of setting a new single-year record for billion-dollar climate disasters — and that was before the year was even close to over. (It is, by the way, strangely painful to find myself using that word "record" over and over again in this context.)

Last year, during 12 months of — and yes, here I go again! — record heat, each month from June through November set a new average global high. And you know the story all too well (if you've been paying any attention at all). Of course, I could go through it all again — the megafires, the droughts, the ever more powerful and devastating storms, those unbelievable 55 days at 110 degrees or above for Phoenix, Arizona — and that's only to begin down an ever longer list of "records" that, sadly, is unlikely to seem all that long or impressive in the temperate future we face.

Worse yet, in the wake of the global COP28 climate meeting in the petroheart of the Middle East, where the delegates couldn't agree on a goal of "phasing out," or even "phasing down" fossil fuel use, but only on "transitioning" away from it, my own country, the United States, the plan-

victor in this year's election is the man who recently swore, on his first day as "dictator" in the Oval Office in 2025, that, above all else, he will "drill, drill, drill." Or the striking numbers of Americans voting for him who refuse to even believe that the obvious is happening to us. And let's not forget that, though it's seldom mentioned, Donald Trump would also once again be the man in charge of America's nuclear arsenal.

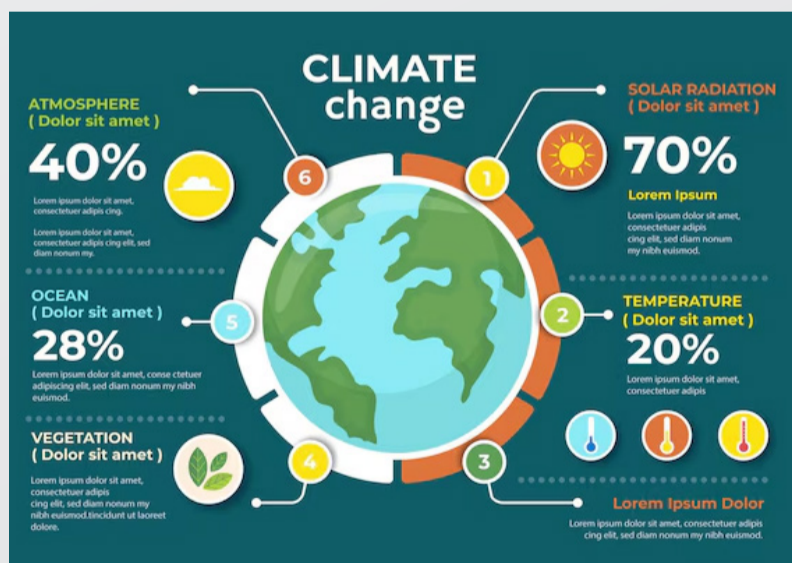
The Blistering of This Planet
Consider climate change, then, a slow-motion version of atomic warfare and, unlike those nukes, greenhouse gases haven't yet faintly been pushed to one side. Yes, there's no question that ever less expensive renewable forms of energy that don't use fossil fuels are on the rise — and a quick rise at that! — but sadly, not quick enough it seems, while the giant fossil-fuel companies simply plough on (as do their profits).

In other words, of the two ways humanity has so far discovered to destroy this planet and everything on it, one is now in something like cold storage (though that could change at any moment), while the other — the slow-motion version of ultimate destruction — isn't faintly so. In a sense, think of us as in a slow-motion process of burning ourselves out of house and home — and, as is already obvious, it's only going to get worse before it has any chance of getting better.

It would, of course, be a remarkable achievement for us to turn our backs on the possible destruction of this planet. Unfortunately, as we humans continue to fight our wars in a blistering fashion (themselves, by the way, significant contributors to the ongoing blistering of this planet), we seem strangely incapable of facing what we're doing in an ultimate sense. Yes, our news programs could in recent months make the war in Gaza — distinctly, a nightmare of the first order — the top news story, day after day after day. But somehow, the news about climate change, the slow-motion but devastating blasting of the planet we live on, never seems to get that kind of attention. Even when the top story of the day or week may be record storms, floods, fires, you name it, the link to the heating of this planet is, if made at all, normally only done so in passing.

And yet that should be the story of all times. We're talking about the end of the world as we've known it. And that should be, but isn't, the news of our time or of any time. (Originally published in *TomDispatch.com*)

Tom Engelhardt created and runs the website TomDispatch.com. He is also a co-founder of the American Empire Project and the author of a highly praised history of American triumphalism in the Cold War, The End of Victory Culture. A fellow of the Type Media Center, his sixth book is A Nation Unmade by War.



days in our planet's recorded history when temperatures averaged more than 2 degrees Centigrade and, in that same month, the global average temperature hit 1.75 degrees above pre-industrial times.

Yes, you and I might not be Jonathan Schell, but today, more than four decades after he wrote that side note in his work on the nuclear dangers we then faced, climate change has become an everyday affair. Last year — the hottest in recorded history and possibly in the last 125,000 years — heat records were regularly broken across the planet, month after month, while climate-change-causing greenhouse gases reached record highs in the atmosphere. Meanwhile, record-shattering heatwaves, wildfires, and floods swept across the planet in

et's largest oil and natural gas producer, set another record year in 2023 as its oil production hit an all-time high. And as Roishetta Ozane and Bill McKibben pointed out recently at the Guardian, "The U.S. Department of Energy must decide whether to stop rubber-stamping the single biggest fossil-fuel expansion on earth, the buildout of natural gas exports from the Gulf of Mexico. So far they have granted every export license anyone has requested, and as a result the U.S. has become the biggest gas exporter on planet earth."

And that's with Joe Biden at the helm in the White House. At least, he's made an effort to invest real money in climate change and labeled it "the ultimate threat to humanity." Just imagine for a moment if the

6 Vegetarian Snacks To Stay Full And Energetic

Snacking is an important part of a diet plan. Your choice of snacks can make or break your healthy eating pattern. Unlike other meals, you are more likely to pick quick and convenient food items while snacking. Such foods are usually nutritionally deprived and loaded with extra calories, preservatives, sodium and added sugar. Therefore, it is essential to pay extra attention and choose the right type and quantity of snacks. To help you snack the right way, here we have a list of vegetarian options that are portable, nutritious, easy to find and prepare and healthy. Keep reading to know more.

1. **Apple with peanut butter**
Apples are highly nutritious. The high fibre content can help manage hunger pangs effectively. Apples when consumed with peanut butter can offer you a balance of nutrients. It is a simple protein-rich snack that can offer you essential nutrients like healthy fats, vitamin E, fibre, potassium and more.

2. **Roasted chana**
This Indian snack is rich in fibre, magnesium and potassium. Snacking on roasted chana can help you maintain weight, manage diabetes, boost heart health and build healthy bones. You can eat a handful of roasted chana as an evening or a pre-lunch snack.

3. **Nuts and seeds**
A trail mix with the goodness of nuts, seeds and dried fruits is a powerhouse of nutrients. A handful of this mixture can keep you full for longer. So, whenever you are hungry, eat a handful of nuts and seeds any-



time, anywhere.
4. **Popcorn**
Not many know that popcorn is a healthy snack. It is nutri-

tious as well as low in calories. Popcorn can offer nutrients like magnesium, zinc, manganese and magnesium. It is perfect for

those trying to lose weight. For some healthy snacking, avoid adding extra calories, fat and sodium to it.



5. **Homemade laddos**
Laddos are usually prepared during the winter season in Indian households. Homemade laddos are loaded with desi ghee, nuts and gond katira. You can also add ingredients like dry coconut, seeds or dates. These laddos are a good source of protein, omega-3 fatty acids, fibre and several other essential nutrients.

6. **Makhana**
Fox nuts or makhana are a good source of carbs, protein, calcium, iron, magnesium and phosphorus. You can roast makhanas and enjoy them when needed. Adding seasonings like salt, oregano and other of your choice to enhance the taste. Try these healthy snacks and make your diet more nutritious.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

LG Discusses

issues, the official said. LG Sinha also reviewed the progress achieved under new central schemes like One District One Product, Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme, PM Vishwakarma etc, the spokesman said.

Stage Set For 'Fight'

He had got 724,311 votes against Congress nominee Vikramaditya Singh's 367,059 votes. The Lok Sabha elections 2024 in J&K will move from south to north as Udhampur constituency goes for poll in the first phase on April 19 followed by Jammu constituency on April 26. Anantnag constituency will go for polls on May 7, Srinagar on May 13 and northern most Baramulla on May 20. The campaigning for first phase elections on Udhampur constituency witnessed rallies of high profile campaigners including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Information Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, BJP Muslim face Shah Nawaz Hussain and other central and state unit leaders.

Congress party also roped in star campaigners like Sachin Pilot, Raj Babbar and Imran Pratapgarhi and their alliance partner National Conference organized road shows of its President Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah. Mostly, Congress party's UT leadership put up their best foot forward to reach out to the people to vote for their candidate.

Former union minister Ghulam Nabi Azad's Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) is also testing waters by fielding its leader Ghulam Muhammad Saroori from this seat. DPAP is banking on Azad's stronghold in Chenab valley and is giving sleepless nights to others especially Congress party.

The campaigning also witnessed ugly war of words between Azad and Omar Abdullah and none backed out from their positions. According to the figures provided by the office of the Returning Officer Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency, there are 1,623,195 registered voters in Udhampur Lok Sabha seat including 845,283 male, 777,899 female and 13 transgender electors. Over 922,783 lakh voters of Kathua and Udhampur district will remain a critical factor in these polls. Beside Choudary Lal Singh no other candidate in fray from Kathua district while out of 12, 6 candidates including former minister G M Saroori are from Chenab Valley.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has set up 2637 polling stations across the constituency, of which 2,457 are situated in rural areas and 180 in urban areas, ensuring accessibility and convenience for voters from all corners of the constituency.

Of notable mention is the inclusion of 23,637 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) within the electoral roll, encompassing 14,362 males and 9,275 females. The young voters, aged 18-19 years, stand at 45,825 male voters, 38,641 female voters and 2 transgender, totaling 84,468 potential first-time voters. The constituency boasts a considerable elderly population, with 12,020 male voters and 13,612 female voters aged 80 above, totaling 25,632 seasoned voters contributing to the electoral discourse—(KNO)

First Phase Of

exercise their franchise. Voters include 8.4 crore men, 8.23 crore women and 11,371 from third gender. There are as many as 35.67 lakh first time voters, besides 3.51 crore young voters in the age group of 20-29 years. While the BJP-led NDA under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a stronger majority, the constituents of the opposition INDIA bloc are hoping for a rebound after facing reverses in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

Polling will be held in all seats of Tamil Nadu (39), Uttarakhand (5), Arunachal Pradesh (2), Meghalaya (2), Andaman and Nicobar Islands (1), Mizoram (1), Nagaland (1), Puducherry (1), Sikkim (1) and Lakshadweep (1).

Besides, there will be voting in 12 seats in Rajasthan, 8 in Uttar Pradesh, 6 in Madhya Pradesh, 5 seats each in Assam and Maharashtra, 4 in Bihar, 3 in West Bengal, 2 seats in Manipur, and one seat each in Tripura,

Jammu and Kashmir and Chhattisgarh. Campaigning for the first phase ended Wednesday evening.

Besides Gadhari, Sonowal and Yadav, six other Union ministers – Kiren Rijiju, Sanjeev Baliyan, Jitendra Singh, Arjun Ram Meghwal, L Murugan and Nisith Pramanik are among the contestants besides two former chief ministers – Biplab Kumar Deb (Tripura) and Nabam Tuki (Arunachal Pradesh), and former Telangana governor Tamilsai Soundararajan.

In 2019, the UPA had won 45 of these 102 seats and the NDA 41. Six of these seats have been redrawn as part of the delimitation exercise.(Agencies)

IGP Chairs Security

attended by officers of Police, Intelligence agencies, CRPF, SSB, ITBP, Army & BSF including JD IB Srinagar, IG BSF Ftr HQR Srinagar, DIG NKR Baramulla, DIG SSB Srinagar, DIG CKR Srinagar, DIG SKR Anantnag, DIGs of CRPF South Srinagar, North Srinagar, Ops Srinagar Sector & Ops Kashmir Sector, Col. GS (IS) 15 Corps, DC SB Srinagar, All District SsP/PDs, SSP Srinagar, SSP PCR Kashmir, SSP Traffic City Srinagar, SSP Security Kashmir, SSP CID SBK /CIK, SP PC Srinagar and other officers.

The meeting delved into strategies aimed at safeguarding the safety and security of the general public while maintaining the integrity of the electoral process. IGP Kashmir directed the district heads to analyze & reassess the existing strategies to prevent any potential terror incidents. The meeting emphasized the importance of revisiting and reinforcing area domination strategies to address any gap areas.

IGP stressed the need to keep the bad elements and terrorist associates out of circulation & to neutralize their threats effectively. He further maintained strict adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), including guidelines for movement of security personnel across the valley, to ensure operational efficiency and safety. He reiterated to ensure a secure environment for the movement of territorial officers and security personnel to ensure their safety.

Furthermore, the range DIGs were tasked to meticulously monitor respective areas to facilitate safe passage for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) across districts. Coordination with counterpart DIGs of CAPFs for route planning was also discussed. Special emphasis was laid on intensifying cordon and search operations (CASOs) & generating actionable intelligence inputs, particularly in areas near highways, to counter potential threats. The officers were directed to establish high-level checkpoints at entry points to Srinagar and inter-district boundaries adjoining the city to enhance security measures.

The meeting concluded with a collective resolve so as to strengthen anti-terrorist operations and enhanced security measures to ensure peaceful and incident-free elections.

Indian Crew Member

from Kerala's Thrissur, landed safely at the Cochin International Airport on Thursday afternoon and was received by the Regional Passport Officer.

Insisting that her return was made possible due to the concerted efforts made by the Indian Mission in Tehran and the Iranian Government, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that it remains in touch with the authorities in the Iranian capital to ensure the well-being and safe return of remaining crew members of seized container vessel MSC Aries.

"Indian Mission in Tehran remains seized of the matter and is in touch with the remaining 16 Indian crew members of the container vessel. The crew members are in good health and in contact with their family members in India. It is also in touch with the Iranian authorities in ensuring the well-being of the remaining crew members of MSC Aries," the MEA said in a statement.

External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar had spoken to his Iranian counterpart Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian on the matter, earlier this week.

@Great work, @India_in_Iran. Glad that Ms. Ann Tessa Joseph has reached home. #ModiKiGuarantee always delivers, at home or abroad," Jaishankar posted on X after Joseph's return on Thursday.

2-Day Wet Spell

Compared to 22.5 degree Celsius yesterday, Srinagar has recorded a maximum temperature of 17.7 degree Celsius today, an official in the Meteorological department said, adding that Qazigund also recorded a maximum temperature of 15.5 degree Celsius compared to 22.5 degree Celsius yesterday.

In Pahalgam, the mercury settled at 12.5 degree Celsius compared to 19.4 degree Celsius yesterday while 14.5 degree Celsius was recorded in Kupwara compared to yesterday's 22.7 degree Celsius.

However, Director MeT, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad has predicted more light to moderate rains till tomorrow evening.

Generally cloudy with light to moderate rain at most places and light snow over higher reaches with thunder, lightning is expected till tomorrow late evening or night, he said.

He stated that there is a possibility of light rains at scattered places on April 20 while the weather is expected to remain generally dry, adding that the possibility of afternoon thundershower activity at isolated places can't be ruled out.

From April 26-27, the weather would remain generally cloudy while light rain with thunder is expected at many places, he said.

Moreover, the MeT department has issued an advisory, asking the farmers to resume farm operations after April 21st.

Temporary disruption of surface transportation over a few higher reaches during 19th April is also expected, it reads, adding that temporary water logging in few low lying areas may be witnessed as well.

General public are advised not to venture out near streams, Nallahs and other water bodies during the next 2-3 days, the advisory reads, adding that there is a possibility of landslides, mudslides and shooting stones at vulnerable places during 18th and 19th April.

In view of the prevailing weather conditions, the district administration Srinagar has issued an advisory, asking people not to venture around water bodies.

According to the details available, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) in an advisory said that in view of weather forecast, the people living on the left and right side of river Jhelum, its tributaries and Nallahs are advised to refrain from venturing in and around these water bodies and limit their activities till the improvement of weather conditions.

The tourists, Shikarawalas and others too have been asked to take precautions before crossing the Dal Lake—(KNO)

Search Continues

condolences and stand in solidarity with the grieving families. Notable clerics from Sunni, Shia and Ahl-e-Hadith schools, including Moulana Abdul Rashid Dawoodi, Moulana Mushtaq Ahmed Veeri, Aga Syed Hadi Kashmiri, and Moulana Fayaz Rizvi, among others, visited to offer prayers for the deceased individuals.

The tragedy took place when a boat carrying school students, locals, and non-local residents capsized in the waters of Jhelum in Srinagar's Gandabal area on Tuesday morning, resulting in six fatalities and three individuals going missing.

Administration issues advisory in wake of rain forecast

In light of the forecast of rainfall from April 18 to 20 by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) Srinagar Station, the District Administration of Srinagar has advised the public, especially those residing on the Left and Right Banks of River Jhelum, its tributaries and Nallahs, to refrain from venturing near these water bodies and limit their activities until the weather improves.

Tourists, local Shikara wallas, sand miners, and individuals using boat crossing points for travel at Dal Lake and River Jhelum are cautioned against crossing before verifying the condition and situation of these water bodies.

For any information, the general public can contact the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) Srinagar and Police Control Srinagar—(KNO)

CS Flags Off Heritage

The Chief Secretary termed J&K as a

treasure trove of rich heritage and culture saying that such events renews our sensitivity towards protection of this significant aspect of our culture. He said that it takes collective efforts to preserve the heritage and we all have a role to protect it for the posterity.

Dulloo said that many of our sites are also on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list for their overall significance for the world heritage. He maintained that visit to such sites enriches one about the value of these places besides creating awareness about their uniqueness and aesthetics.

He exhorted upon the students to read and visit such places to have better idea about our rich cultural past.

The Principal Secretary raised awareness about the history of cultural assets of SRS Library and Mubarak Mandi Heritage Complex. He also threw light on the importance of preservation and protection of our heritage and called upon all the participants to support such measures taken on part of the department.

Pertinent to mention here that the World Heritage Day is also known as the International Monuments and Sites Day being celebrated across the world in recognition of the work carried out by ICOMOS, International Council on Monuments and Sites. The day aims to increase awareness about the importance of diversity of cultural heritage and preserving it for the generations to come.

New Delhi Backs Those

media. "Despite this, we remained resolute in our commitment to honest and transparent politics."

Responding a question whether there was any political involved behind the militancy in Kashmir Valley, Bukhari said that there indeed was political involvement. He pointed out that even the Home Minister recently commented on this issue, indicating that such involvement is being exposed.

Bukhari said that he will unveil the truth once his government comes into power and will establish a truth commission to investigate and reveal the identities of those responsible for various incidents.

He asserted that while others talk about truth and reconciliation, his party will prioritize uncovering the facts about who perpetrated which actions.

Bukhari said that the Apni Party is gaining widespread support because people recognize that a man has emerged who speaks bluntly but speaks the truth. "Let result come on June 04, those who doubt the Apni party's credibility will be surprised. For the past four years, we have actively been engaged with the people, listening to their concerns, rather than remaining secluded in comfortable spaces."

When asked about Sajad Lone's remarks referring to Omar Abdullah as a "tourist" on contesting elections from North Kashmir, Bukhari refrained from commenting directly. However, he questioned why Omar Abdullah left Srinagar when the people needed him. Bukhari suggested that perhaps Abdullah may have assessed that he couldn't win from Srinagar, but he should have contested from Srinagar.

On being asked if he is indirectly hand in glove with BJP, Bukhari said he directly stands with Prime Minister of India saying it was he who gave the protection of land and jobs. He is the one who abrogated article 370 and he will restore statehood which is in Apni Party's core Agenda.(KNS)

Kashmir Willow Cricket

Kabir said it took them 14 years of Research and Development to craft the Kashmir willow wood into a professional cricket bat.

"Our relentless hardwork and persistent efforts motivated us to make the major breakthrough in this area. We could finally innovate a product that belongs to our indigenous industry that has a huge scope to uplift this entire industry of Kashmir. It will make us self-sufficient and less reliant on the English Willow imports thereby bringing an impetus to the economy of our country," said Kabir.

"With our relentless hard work and research, we have not only made cricket bats lighter ranging from 2.4 lbs to 2.5 lbs but ensured that the ping, balance and stroke is matchless and better than its counterpart," he added—(KNO)

FIRST PHASE OF LS POLLS

Will Modi-Yogi popularity override caste equations in UP?

IANS

LUCKNOW: The wave of Prime Minister Modi's popularity, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's stern dealing with the law & order situation and the euphoria over the Ram temple has started overriding the caste equations in Uttar Pradesh.

The state has always witnessed the caste factor come into play whenever elections are to be held, but now it is the popularity of PM Modi and CM Yogi Adityanath that is overtaking all other issues.

In the first phase of elections in western UP, where normally the voting pattern of Muslims and Dalits decides the fate of candidates, this time there is a palpable difference because all that seems to be working is the Modi and Yogi factor.

The performance of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) candidates in this phase will also decide the party's future.

The BSP has tweaked its strategy when it fielded candidates from castes who, otherwise, are believed to be the core voters of the BJP but apparently, candidates are unable to wear away these votes from the BJP's bag.

For example, in 2014, Muzaffarnagar was won by BJP's Sanjeev Baliyan by a low margin of 6,400 votes, and Meerut was won by BJP's Rajendra Agrawal by a margin of around 4,700 votes.

In Muzaffarnagar, where the Muslims form around 30 per cent of the



electorate, the BSP has fielded Dara Singh Prajapati, an OBC hoping to corner the votes of his community as well as the party's traditional Dalit constituency.

However, the BJP has gained ground in both these constituencies and caste factors have receded into the background.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally in Meerut and Yogi Adityanath's rally in Muzaffarnagar has turned the tide completely in BJP's favour.

In Meerut, the BSP has Deovrat Tyagi, a Brahmin against BJP's Arun Govil, who played Lord Rama in the serial 'Ramayana'. The BSP nominee is eyeing the support of around 50,000 'Tyagi' voters in Meerut, apart from Dalit and Muslim votes, but sources claim that upper castes and Dalits are preparing to vote for BJP this time.

In an interesting development, this time, the Muslim mood towards the BJP has also softened to an extent and even Dalits are veering towards BJP after being disillusioned by Mayawati's indecision. Observers believe that, unlike Assembly elections, the Muslim voters will be more tactful this time. They will not blindly choose between the BSP and the SP-Congress alliance but will weigh the benefits they have received from the BJP governments at the centre and state.

Haji Ikhlak, a trader in Meerut, says, "The BJP is no longer untouchable for us. We have received the benefits of their welfare schemes and there is no reason why we will not vote for them. Muslims are breaking the earlier mindset and the change will be visible in these elections."

In the 2014 Lok Sabha polls and 2017 Assembly

elections, the minority voters supported candidates of both SP and BSP leading to the division of votes. The BJP got the maximum number of 71 Lok Sabha in 2014 and 312 Assembly seats in 2022.

In 2022, the minority vote consolidated towards the Samajwadi Party, but it could not cross the 112-seat mark.

It is only the Jatavs among Dalits in the west UP region who are likely to remain loyal to Mayawati.

In Saharanpur, BJP's Raghav Lakhan Pal, a Brahmin is pitted against Congress-SP alliance candidate Imran Masood and BSP's Majid Ali, one of the richest candidates in the fray.

Imran Masood is facing a tough challenge from BSP, which could make it easier for BJP to sail through to victory.

In Rampur, a lot will depend on how enthusiastic the voters are on the day of voting. There is a clear division of Muslim votes after SP leader Mohd Azam Khan refused to accept the party's official candidate Muhibullah Nadwi. His supporters are throwing their weight behind Zee-shan Khan of BSP.

The BJP candidate Ghanshyam Lodhi stands safe in his position.

Verma, a Jatav, is likely to draw support from the voters of her caste which will dent BSP's base.

In Nagina (SC), Azad Samaj Party chief Chandra Shekhar Azad is likely to make some dent in BSP's vote bank.

"If Chandra Shekhar dents BSP, the victory run for BJP will be much easier," said a local leader.

BJP's Kunwar Sarvesh Singh, in Moradabad, could find it easier to reach the victory post as BSP's Israr Saifi is locked in a crucial battle of Muslims and Dalit votes with SP's Ruchi Veera.

However, in Pilibhit, BSP is not a major factor. In Pilibhit, Lodh Rajputs or Lodhs would be the deciding factor. It is the vote from this community which will decide who will have the last laugh - BJP's Jitin Prasada or SP's Bhagwat Saran Gangwar.

Rajnath Singh takes dig at Cong's 'Rahulyaan', hurls 'migration' charge



NEW DELHI: Union Minister Rajnath Singh, while campaigning for BJP in Kerala's Kottayam district on Thursday, took a dig at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and said that 'Rahulyaan' is neither getting launched nor finding a suitable landing.

Addressing a big public gathering, Rajnath said that the BJP-led government is preparing to launch Gaganyaan and Adityaan is already headed towards the Sun, but sadly, Congress is finding it hard to launch its 'youth leader.'

"Young leader of Congress is not getting launched despite several attempts. Congress party's 'Rahulyaan' is neither getting launched nor landing anywhere," Rajnath said, in a jibe at the party and Gandhi's son.

Rajnath's scathing criticism of the Congress

of the party's ignominious performances in last two general elections (2014 and 2019). Despite projecting Rahul as its top leader, the party failed to mount any challenge to BJP, and is seen lagging behind in the ongoing campaign.

Rajnath also hurled "migration" charge at Rahul over the party's delay and reluctance in launching its candidate from Amethi Lok Sabha constituency, a pocket borough of Gandhi family until 2019.

He said that the party is not able to muster the courage to announce its Amethi nominee, fearing another setback in 2024.

"Rahul Gandhi migrated from Uttar Pradesh to Kerala. Last time, he lost the elections from Lok Sabha constituency. This time, he is not able to gather the courage to fight elections from its bastion," he said. He fur-

find it "easy" in Wayanad either as people have made up their minds not to elect him as their Member of Parliament this time.

As per insiders, Congress is in dilemma over launching its candidates from Amethi and Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha constituencies. Rahul won Amethi seat thrice in 2004, 2009 and 2014 elections, but lost it in 2019 against Smriti Irani, with latter earning the tag of the "giant slayer."

The party is also uncertain about finalising its candidate for Rae Bareilly constituency. Sonia Gandhi represented it many times but after she moved to Rajya Sabha, the party is yet to zero in on a "suitable" candidate.

Meanwhile, the Lok Sabha election in Kottayam is expected to have a triangular contest between two Congress factions and Bharath Dharmra Jana Sena (BDJS).

Congress in Telangana may face rough weather over unfulfilled guarantees

MOHAMMED SHAFEEQ

HYDERABAD: Four months after storming to power in Telangana, the Congress, which seeks to win 12 out of 17 seats in the state in the next month's Lok Sabha elections, may find the going tough as a section of voters feel that it has failed to deliver on several of the six guarantees given in the Assembly polls.

While free bus travel for women was introduced within 48 hours of the Congress government assuming office on December 7, 2023, and the launch of a couple of other schemes created a positive environment for the party, a large number of applicants who were left out are unhappy. Farmers are especially sore as none of the promises made to them were implemented.

A cross-section of voters IANS spoke to were divided in their opinion about the implementation of the guarantees.

While those who benefited from 200 units of free electricity per month and cooking gas cylinders for Rs 500 schemes are happy and said they will vote for Congress again, others who were left out feel let down by the ruling party. They want to support the Bharat Rashtra

Samithi (BRS) as they believe that its government was prompt in delivering the benefits of welfare schemes.

Considering their experience of the last four months, these voters are taking the new guarantees made by the party at the national level with a pinch of salt, and many of them are not ready to trust it again.

While four months is too short a period to judge the performance of any government, the Congress failed to live up to its own word of implementing six guarantees within 100 days.

Many believe that the government rolled out the schemes just for the sake of launching them with their benefits reaching a limited number.

White ration cards (issued to below poverty line families) were the basic criteria for selecting beneficiaries but those who did not possess these were unhappy over being left out. Even many white card holders complain that they were ignored though they had submitted the applications during the government's 'Praja Palana' campaign.

"We have a white ration card. We applied for electricity, gas, pension and other benefits but we have not received



anything," says T. Neelam, a domestic help. Hailing from Wanaparthy district but living in Hyderabad, she had a lot of expectations when the Congress made the promises but is now disappointed.

"The only benefit we availed so far is free travel in the TSRTC buses," she said.

"Why did they promise when they can't deliver? It's clear that the promises were made to win elections but the party has lost people's trust. We have got nothing," said Bhumya Naik, a private firm employee in Hyderabad.

"We now feel that the BRS government was better. We will vote for BRS in the Lok Sabha polls. Whatever may have been the problems earlier, the BRS

government was regularly paying financial assistance under various schemes," he added.

Farmers are the most unhappy as the Congress had raised their hopes with many promises, and are now demanding that the government at least implement the existing schemes launched by the previous BRS regime, like the Rythu Bandhu.

The Congress had promised Rs 15,000 per acre every year under Rythu Bharosa but there are allegations that it failed to pay even Rs 10,000 paid by the previous government.

The party had raised huge expectations by promising to give financial assistance even to the tenant farmers, as well

as annual financial assistance of Rs 12,000 each to agriculture labourers.

The farmers also recall the promise of the Congress that farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh will be waived soon after the new government assumes office on December 9, the birthday of top Congress leader Sonia Gandhi. However, after four months, the promise remains unfulfilled.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has now announced that farm loans will be waived by August 15, claiming this scheme could not be implemented due to the model code of conduct which came into force with the announcement of the poll schedule.

Farmers also did not get the Rs 500 per quintal bonus on paddy with the Chief Minister promising to pay this from the next crop. Withering of crops in parts of the state due to drought-like conditions, the alleged failure to supply irrigation water to farmers, and ensure their 24-hour quality power have also irked them.

The Congress had made 13 promises as part of six guarantees during the Assembly elections held in November 2023. Under six guarantees "Mahal-

akshmi", "Rythu Bharosa", "Gruha Jyothi", "Indiramma Indlu", "Yuva Vikasam" and "Cheyutha", promises for different sections like women, farmers, youth, homeless, and elderly were made. Sonia Gandhi unveiled the guarantees on September 17, 2023, at a public meeting at Tukuguda near Hyderabad.

At the same venue, the Congress released the Telugu version of its national guarantees for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections on April 6 in the presence of former party chief Rahul Gandhi.

On December 9, two days after assuming office, Revanth Reddy-led government launched the Mahalakshmi scheme to provide free travel to women in Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) buses and enhanced coverage under Rajiv Arogyasri (health insurance scheme for poor) from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh.

The rollout of other guarantees was delayed as the government embarked on a massive exercise to receive applications from eligible beneficiaries for five out of six guarantees. Over 1.28 crore applications were received during the Praja Palana programme conducted

across the state from December 28 to January 6, covering a total of 1,11,46,293 households.

Applications were also received from those not having white ration cards.

More than 1.05 crore of these applications were for availing benefits under five guarantees while the remaining applications were for other needs.

On February 27, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy launched two more guarantees - 200 units of free electricity to each household and a cooking gas cylinder for Rs 500. On March 11, he launched Indiramma Indlu, a housing scheme for the poor, under which it will distribute house sites in the name of women and extend financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh for house construction. It has sanctioned 4.50 lakh Indiramma houses at the cost of Rs 22,500 crore.

Households consuming up to 200 units of electricity per month and having white ration cards started receiving 'zero bills' from March. Power distribution companies said over 10 lakh consumers were issued 'zero bills'. However, several applicants complained that despite being eligible, they were denied the benefits under the scheme.

BITCOIN SCAM CASE

ED attaches assets worth over Rs 97 cr of Raj Kundra, Shilpa Shetty

IANS

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached immovable and movable properties worth Rs 97.79 crore belonging to Ripu Sudan Kundra aka Raj Kundra, businessman, and husband of Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty, under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The attached properties include a residential flat in Juhu, which is in the name of Shilpa Shetty, another residential bungalow in Pune and equity shares in Raj Kundra's name.

The financial probe

agency had initiated an investigation based on multiple FIRs registered by Maharashtra Police and Delhi Police against Variable Tech Pte Ltd, Late Amit Bhardwaj, Ajay Bhardwaj, Vivek Bhardwaj, Simpy Bhardwaj, Mahender Bhardwaj and a number of MLM agents.

It has been alleged that they had collected huge amounts of funds in the form of Bitcoins (worth Rs 6,600 crore in 2017 itself) from the public with false promises of a 10 per cent per month return in the form of Bitcoins.

The collected Bitcoins were supposed to be uti-

lised for Bitcoin mining, and investors were to get huge returns in Crypto assets.

"But the promoters cheated the investors and have been concealing the ill-gotten Bitcoins in obscure online wallets. The probe also revealed that Raj Kundra received 285 Bitcoins from the mastermind and promoter of Gain Bitcoin Ponzi Scam, Amit Bhardwaj, for setting up a Bitcoin mining farm in Ukraine," ED said in a statement issued on Thursday.

The said Bitcoins were sourced out of proceeds of crime collected by Amit

Bhardwaj from gullible investors.

"Since the deal didn't materialise, Kundra is still in possession and enjoyment of 285 Bitcoins which are presently valued at more than Rs. 150 Crore," said the ED official.

During the investigation, multiple search operations were carried out in this case and three persons were arrested.

"Simpy Bhardwaj was arrested on December 17, 2023, Nitin Gaur on December 29, 2023, and Nikhil Mahajan on January 16, 2023. All of them are presently in judicial custody as of date," said the official.

Kejriwal eating mangoes, sweets to raise blood sugar level: ED tells Delhi court

IANS

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday said in a Delhi court that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was deliberately eating mangoes and other high-carb food to raise his blood sugar level to build a case for bail.

While arguing the matter before Special Judge Rakesh Syal of Rouse Avenue Court, Special Counsel Zoheb Hossain for Enforcement Directorate (ED) told him that this is a basis to create grounds for bail.

Hossain went on to say that while CM Kejriwal is claiming high sugar levels, he is having mangoes,

sweets, etc., in jail.

On the other hand, CM Kejriwal's advocate, Vivek Jain opposed the federal agency's submission and said that the counsel is playing by the gallery and is making statements for the media.

After a brief hearing, the court sought a medical report from Tihar Jail authorities on the CM's diet and listed the matter for hearing on Friday.

While the ED's allegation on AAP supreme having sweets in jail only came before the court on Thursday, the issue was figured prominently on social media since a day ago.

A post of X read that one of the user's sources in Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

had revealed that CM Kejriwal is taking high-sugar food deliberately to increase his sugar level so that he can use it as a reason to get bail.

"He is not only forcing jail authorities to give him sugar-laden high glycaemic index drinks and food early in the morning but also his family is sending him sugar and carb-laden food so that his blood sugar rises," the post reads.

It is noteworthy that CM Kejriwal's lawyers had gone at length detailing his health earlier, saying he was diabetic when he was sent to custody. Kejriwal's counsel had informed the court that his blood sugar level dropped to 46 and argued that in such cir-

cumstances, he should be allowed to consult his doctor three times a week via video conferencing.

However, Special Public Prosecutor (ED) Simon Benjamin had contended that jail facilities are equipped to provide medical examination, suggesting that CM Kejriwal could be examined there, and expressed his intent to file a reply on the application.

Meanwhile, another user posted: "Every day Kejriwal asks for high sugar food like juice, banana etc. and he gets high carb food! The plan is to show high sugar and get out of jail. This has been told by your top sources. Whether this is true will be known in a few days!"

MAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT

Div Com calls for coordinated efforts to tackle attacks

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In the wake of rising incidents of Man-Animal conflict, the Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri Thursday impressed on orchestrating well-knitted strategy and making coordinated efforts to tackle the attacks by wild animals especially by leopards and bears across the valley.



Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri (left) addressing a meeting on Man-Animal conflict.

In this regard, Div Com convened a meeting which was attended by the Additional Chief Conservator of Forests, Deputy Commissioners, SSPs, Regional Wildlife Warden and Conservators of forests.

While elaborating a slew of measures to address the issue, Div Com emphasized on filtration of information regarding sighting of wild animals to curb rumors and disinformation so the wildlife teams remain focused and the resources do not get overburdened.

It was given that out of total calls received by the wildlife department regarding the presence of leopard or other animals, ninety percent calls were based on rumors.

Stressing on adopting a proactive approach, Div Com exhorted on creat-

ing a centralized helpline number for receiving the first hand information for quick response without wasting time.

He also directed the Wildlife Department for capacity building of staff and augmentation of logistics in all districts besides operation of Control Rooms at District Level.

To ensure that wildlife teams execute their assignments in a professional manner, Div Com asked SSPs to help the teams by providing police personnel when required for crowd management and safety of civilians.

He called for building close coordination between

district administrations, Police, Wildlife Department, Community Leaders, Lumberdars, Chowkidars and shepherds for processing the factual information and capturing the wild animals.

Bidhuri directed concerned officers of Urban Local Bodies to keep the areas clean from litter and dispose-off waste in a proper manner so the stray dogs do not get attracted to the habitations.

It was informed that the leopards prey on stray dogs for food because of which they visit to habitations.

Meanwhile, Div Com asked people not to leave their children alone at pre-

dawn and post-dusk durations and advised them to move in groups in the rural areas where wild animal sitting has been confirmed.

It was informed that the Wildlife Department is using cages to trap wild animals by luring them through baits and is installing camera traps besides conducting drone surveys to catch the wild beasts.

The contact numbers of Control Rooms of Wildlife Department: Budgam & Hokersar area, 9906614750; Control Room Dachigam, 9622518733; Control Room Shar Shali Khrew 9541622620; Control Room Ganderbal (Wayil) 8825088526; Divisional Office near SDH Hospital, Sopore 8899012071; Dragma (Water Khani) Kupwara 9103630305; Tangmarg near Police Station 7006602656, Bazipora Ajas Bandipora 9796171787; Baramulla near Mini-Secretariat 9622455153, Handwara 8899952303, Langate 9797278014; Bijnbehara 9596177461; Srigufwara 7889844194; Salia Aishmuqam 9906538932; Kulgam 9622913391; Achabal 7006979446; Lower Munda 8491842464; Hirpora Shopian 9906967104; Tral 9797112912 and Khangund 8082197452.

Embracing healthy lifestyle helps in managing stress: Justice Tashi

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Continuing its efforts in imparting awareness among the Judicial Officers, Advocates, LADCs, Panel Lawyers, PLVs, staff members and other stakeholders regarding importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle to counter unwanted stress and ailments, the J&K Legal Services Authority today organised an awareness cum sensitization programme on "Lifestyle Strategies and Stress Management" at District Court Complex Jammu.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, who is also Administrative Judge for district Jammu and Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, was the chief guest on the occasion. He was received by Jatinder Singh Jamwal, 3rd Additional District & Sessions Judge, Jammu also holding the charge of Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairman DLSA, Jammu) along with other senior judicial officers, Vikram Sharma, Bar President and his team.

It may be recalled that the J&K Legal Services Authority on the directions of Chief Justice, N. Kotiswar Singh, organised similar programmes in the recent past for the jail staff and inmates of Central Jail Kot Bawal



and District Jail Ambphalla Jammu to ensure overall physical and mental wellbeing of prisoners and those who are guarding them.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, in his address, applauded the efforts of J&K Legal Services Authority in organizing this innovative awareness programmes. He underlined the significance of embracing a healthy lifestyle, not only to boost work efficiency but also to manage stress, prevalent in today's society due to various factors like environmental pollution, adulterated and unhygienic food besides lifestyle diseases. He urged upon all the participants to prioritize their own health and the health of their family members, as this would significantly reduce stress levels.

He highlighted that maintaining a good health and a stress-free state is essential for delivering peak performance in one's professional life. He emphasized that the techniques demonstrated

today by the distinguished Resource Person, if incorporated into one's daily routine, have the potential to lead to a healthier and more serene existence.

In an engaging and informative Audio-Visual presentation, Dr. T. R. Raina, Former Professor and Head of the Department of Blood Transfusion Medicine, as well as Programme Director at the Advanced Yoga Center, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, GMC Jammu, provided an in-depth analysis of the prevalent stress-related challenges faced by individuals in today's fast-paced world. His discourse delved into the innumerable ways in which stress manifests within the human body and psyche, and the consequential impact it has on one's personal and professional life.

Dr. Raina, leveraging his extensive experience and knowledge in both medical science and yogic practices,

elucidated the profound benefits of integrating yoga into daily routines as a holistic approach to combat stress. He expounded on specific yogic techniques that can be adopted by individuals of all ages and professions to foster mental clarity, emotional stability, and physical well-being.

Furthermore, Dr. Raina highlighted the often-overlooked aspect of dietary influences on mental health, drawing attention to the detrimental effects of consuming impure and adulterated food. He emphasized the significance of maintaining a diet rich in natural and unprocessed foods to support a healthy mind and body, thereby reducing stress levels.

Those who were present during the program included Bala Jyoti, Special Judge (CBI) Jammu, Y. P. Bourney, Director, J&K Judicial Academy Jammu, T. K. Raina, Special Judge (Anti-Corruption) Jammu, Rajiv Gupta, Member, J&K Special Tribunal Jammu, Rajinder Sapru, Registrar Rules, Rafiq Chak, Presiding Officer, Sales Tax Tribunal, Amit Kumar Gupta, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority and Rajni Sharma, Joint Registrar Judicial/Protocol, High Court of J&K and Ladakh besides other judicial officers, LADCs, Panel Lawyers, PLVs, Staff of Legal Services Authority and Staff of District Courts.

Dir Agri, Dir Law Enforcement review functioning of law enforcement wing

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal and Director Law Enforcement J&K, Mohammad Ilyas Khateeb Thursday co-chaired a meeting of concerned officers to take stock of the functioning of the enforcement wing of the Department of Agriculture.

Addressing the meeting, Director Agriculture asked the concerned officers to remain in close coordination with the officers of the extension wing of the department in order to get effective results in the overall working of the department.

He highlighted the importance of transparency and accountability in the system to ensure smooth distribution of quality pesticides, fertilizers and seeds to the growers and farmers.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Law Enforcement J&K said

that the primary objective of the law enforcement wing of the department is to ensure the availability of quality inputs to the farming community of the region through proper sale outlets at appropriate time.

He impressed upon the concerned officers to put in all the efforts for online service delivery.

Khateeb said that while functioning in the field, the concerned officers must ensure that all the provisions of the insecticide act, fertilizer control order are implemented in letter and spirit.

The meeting was attended by Joint Director Agriculture Extension, Joint Director Agriculture Inputs, Deputy Director Law Enforcement, Plant Protection Officer Kashmir, District Law Enforcement Officer North, District Law Enforcement Officer South and other senior officers of the Enforcement Wing of Agriculture Department.

RO 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency issues Election Notification

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Returning Officer (RO), 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Thursday issued Election Notification for the upcoming Parliamentary Elections-2024 in the Srinagar Constituency comprising 18 Assembly segments of Ganderbal, Srinagar, Pulwama, Budgam and Shopian Districts.

The Nomination papers can be filed by contesting candidates or their proposers before Returning Officer (Deputy Commissioner) or Assistant Returning Officer (Additional Deputy Commissioner-M) at Deputy Commissioner's Office, Srinagar between 11:00 AM to 03:00 PM on any day (other than public holiday) not later than April 25, 2024 (Thursday). The Scrutiny of the Nomination papers filed by the Candidates will take place on April, 26, 2024 (Friday) at 10:30 AM at Deputy Commissioner's Office Srinagar.

The Candidates have the option to withdraw their candidature by or before

April 29, 2024 (Monday) until 03:00 PM.

The Polling day for the 2-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency is scheduled for May 13, 2024 (Monday) and the Polling will be conducted from 07:00 AM to 06:00 PM.

Later, in a Press Conference addressed in this regard, the Returning Officer (RO) 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat informed that as many as 1743845 registered electorates are exercising their franchise in the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections-2024 in Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency including 873426 male 870368 Female and about 51 Transgenders.

The RO added that, the Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency comprises of 02 Assembly segments of Ganderbal District including 17-Kangan and 18-Ganderbal, 08 Assembly segments of Srinagar viz. 19-Hazratbal, 20-Khanyar, 21-Habbakadal, 22-Lal-Chowk, 23-Chanapora, 24-Zadibal, 25-Eidgah 26-Central Shaleng, 03 Assembly Segments of

Budgam District viz. 29-Khansahib, 30-Char-i-Sharif and 31-Chadoora, 04 Assembly Segments of Pulwama District including 32-Pampore, 33-Tral, 34-Pulwama and 35-Rajpora and 01 Assembly segment of Shopian District viz. 37-Shopian.

Similarly, Returning Officer informed that 2135 Polling Stations have been setup up at 1323 designated location across all 18 Assembly Segments of the 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency including 260 Polling Stations in two Assembly Segments of Ganderbal District, 929 Polling Stations in eight Assembly Segments of Srinagar District, 345 in three Assembly Segments of Budgam District, 479 Polling Stations in 4 Assembly Segments of Pulwama District and 122 Polling Stations in one Assembly Segment of Shopian District.

The RO also informed that Model Polling Stations have also been set up at various locations across the Parliamentary Constituency to facilitate the voters on the Poll day and welcome them to experi-

ence a festive-like environment. He added that dedicated facilities for voters including clean drinking water and ramps for persons with disabilities (PWDs) are also meticulously arranged to enhance the voting experience.

The RO urged all eligible Contesting Candidates and stakeholders to adhere to the guidelines of Election Commission of India and election schedule and procedures outlined in the Election Notification. He also appealed for active participation and cooperation of all concerned parties to ensure a free, fair and transparent election in 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency.

The RO also emphasized encouragement of first-time voters so that they exercise their democratic right and make the poll process more participative. He said in 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency has more than 2.0 lakh first-time voters in the 18-20 age group who are eligible to vote in the Lok Sabha Elections on May 13, 2024 in the Constituency.

24 hours left still, who knows, BJP may field candidates too, says Omar

ALI ASAD

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) Vice President Omar Abdullah questioned the rationale behind Ghulam Nabi Azad's decision to contest from the Anantnag-Rajori seat, stating that if Azad opted out of the Udhampur-Doda constituency, why would he vie for Anantnag? Abdullah expressed little surprise at Azad's electoral abstention, asserting that the NC had anticipated his move.

Accompanying Mian Altaf, the NC candidate, who submitted his nomination papers in Anantnag on Thursday, Omar while speaking to media said "We expected he (Azad) wouldn't contest.

If he's not contesting from Udhampur-Doda, why Anantnag? Now his party has nominated a new candidate. We'll soon gauge his public support."

Regarding the absence of BJP candidates on three Valley seats, Abdullah commented, "There's still 24 hours left. Who knows, they might follow suit."

Responding to Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks on violence in Jammu and Kashmir, Omar noted that the National Conference has suffered greatly from such unrest. "They know where the gun culture originated. No party has suffered more than NC. We've lost over 4,000 senior workers, officials, and former MLAs," Omar said—(KNO)

LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

Pink, Red Polling booths established in Udhampur for women

GMK NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR: In a significant initiative aimed at promoting inclusivity and encouraging women, Youth and PwD participation in the Parliamentary Elections, Udhampur Administration has established Pink, Red & Blue Polling booths here in 4 ACs of the district, which is going to polls today.

District Election Officer, Udhampur Saloni Rai inspected the Pink polling booth in the town. Additional District Development Commissioner Rajinder Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Joginder Singh Jasrotia, Deputy District Election Officer, Dr. Anirudh Rai, District Panchayat Offi-

cer, Dr. Preeti Sharma and other officers accompanied the DEO.

The DEO informed that the Pink Polling Station, adorned with vibrant hues of pink, symbolizes a safe and welcoming space for women voters. She added that it serves as a beacon of empowerment, inspiring women across the district to step forward and exercise their right to vote.

Pertinent to mention here a total 16 Model polling stations have been established in the district with specific colour coding in which pink specify women managed polling station while red, blue green are being managed by PwD and youth polling parties.

Govt employee suspended for violating MCC

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Acting tough against the violations of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) guidelines, an employee was placed under suspension by the authorities in Srinagar on Thursday.

The order issued in this regard reads that "one Government employee namely Javid Ahmad Sofi working in SKICC has been found vio-

lating the MCC guidelines by participating and facilitating the political party meetings". The order further reads that "the said employee has been placed under suspension with immediate effect."

Needful to mention that the Model Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines issued by Election Commission of India to provide a level playing field in favour of all political parties.

Impressive SVEEP activities at Mawar captivates, motivates young voters

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA: To encourage citizens especially first time voters to exercise their right to vote and ensure maximum voter turnout in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the District Administration Kupwara Tuesday organized awareness programmes under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative at different polling booths in the district.

On the occasion, mega voter awareness programmes were organised at Govt. Degree college, Langate, Girls Higher Secondary Langate and at Dand Kadal Mawar, the famous fresh water body which were aligned with 'World Heritage Day' celebrated every year on April 18. The day aims to raise awareness about the diversity of cultural heritage and the efforts required to protect and conserve it for future generations.

Students raised awareness on the banks of famous fresh water body Mawar by organizing different activities including 'My Right My Vote' by arranging boulders.

A plantation drive was also organised to raise awareness regarding maximum voter turnout in the district during upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Impressive Voter awareness events at Langate was presided over by ADC Handwara, Aziz Ahmad Rather and ARO Langate/ ACP Kupwara, Dr. Mudasar Ahmad, other officers, students and staff of different educational institutions of Langate also attended the event.

Meanwhile, mega Voter Awareness rallies under the SVEEP initiative were organized at other polling booths of Kupwara District.

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

Speakers emphasized citizens to use their right to vote, underlining the importance of voting in determining the country's future and safeguarding the democratic system.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Kashmiri Boatmen Intensify Safety Measures post Boat tragedy in Jhelum

MUBASHIR AALAM WANI

SRINAGAR: Following the Jhelum boat capsizing tragedy, Kashmiri boatmen said they have heightened the safety measures to ensure safety of passengers.

On April 16, a boat ferrying 15 persons, including four minor students, capsized in a swollen Jhelum river in Gandbal area of Batwara Srinagar. The incident left six persons dead while three others are still missing.

Following the incident, the administration issued an 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 passengers beyond the capacity of boats by boatmen.



Wali Mohammad Bhat, president of Shikarawala Association, said they have already adopted safety measures for passengers.

"We have been following the safety protocol at Dal Lake. The government issued us life jackets some time ago and we have been giving them to passengers for use. Yesterday, we only got 200 additional life jackets also," he said.

Bhat said they have been conducting the safety audit of their shikaras as well regularly. "Our association doesn't allow any unsafe shikara to ferry tourists or passengers," he said.

Bhat, however, said the boats being used in the river Jhelum majorly don't possess such safety gears for passengers.

"In Jhelum, a different kind of boat ferries pas-

sengers which carry many passengers at one time. They haven't been given such safety gears like life jackets by the government yet. They should also have such safety gears so that such incidents could be prevented," he said.

Post Jhelum boat capsizing incident, netizens voiced for the safety protocols to be followed by the boatmen in Jhelum and Dal Lake.

"We have witnessed boat capsizing incidents in Dal Lake as well. This Jhelum incident is heart-wrenching. The government should make it mandatory for every boatman to have all the safety gears like life jackets so that no loss of life occurs in the future. Further, the water transport should be suspended during the inclement weather," posted Sajad Ahmad on Facebook—(KNO)