

Good Morning Kashmir

15th Year Of Publication

Office of LG J&K @OfficeOfLGJandK

Hearty greetings and best wishes to the people of Gujarat and Maharashtra on their Statehood Day. May the two states scale new heights of progress in the times to come. I pray for the happiness & prosperity of all citizens.

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Jmu-Sgr NH Reopens For Light Vehicles After 2 Days



JAMMU: The Jammu-Srinagar national highway was on Wednesday reopened for light motor vehicles (LMVs) after remaining closed for the past two days following multiple landslides triggered by heavy rains in Ramban district, officials said. •P-06

Search Operation To Track Down Terrorists Extends To Kathua



JAMMU: Security agencies have widened the ambit of the search operation to Kathua district to track down two groups of terrorists involved in the killing of a village defence guard in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district. A village defence guard (VDG) was killed. •P-06

Rainfall Fallout Several Bridges, Roads Damaged In Kashmir



JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: Following incessant rains over the past few days, numerous roads, bridges and structures across Kashmir have suffered damage. According to an official statement provided, floods have wreaked havoc on key infrastructure assets in various districts. Among the affected structures are the Shumryal Bridge, Khumryal Bridge (side walls), Shatmuqam Bridge, Sohpora-Hayhama Bridge, Farkyan Bridge, two RDD buildings in Kupwara, and the AD Handicrafts office building. The Shumryal-Gundajhanger road has been severed due to scouring and a breach in the Doban Kachama dam. The adverse weather conditions have also caused damage in Uri, Baramulla and Pulwama. In Uri, several structures and roads, including Baramulla-Babreshi and Pakhwara-Tangmulla at Rafiabad, have been affected. Pulwama has witnessed partial damage to two roads and one orchard due to landslides, along with reports of a damaged boundary wall at a school. Flood spill channels at various locations have also been compromised. Waterlogging has emerged as a major issue across several districts, affecting schools, offices and roads. Moreover, breaches in embankments at various points have resulted in water entering residential structures, compounding the damage. **WE DO NOT have any holistic sewerage project even in Srinagar,** he said. "They said that if Article 370 is abrogated, then the country will break and there would be rivers of blood... But this is Modi. Now Article 370 is abrogated and the Tricolour is hoisted at the Lal Chowk with full glory," PM Modi added. PM Modi also lashed out at the Congress for not pursuing terrorists when they were in power. He also accused the Congress of vote bank politics by not stopping the practice of Triple Talaq. "Our Muslim sisters were the biggest victims of vote bank politics... You (Congress) did not provide security to the Muslim sisters even after Supreme Court's verdict... The abolition of Triple Talaq provided security to families, not just the women... They (Congress) did not stop the practice of Triple Talaq for the vote bank... I did not worry about vote bank. I don't work for winning the elections. I wanted to make the lives of Muslim women easier and we made Triple Talaq illegal..." PM Modi added. He also targeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. "The Shehzada (referring to Rahul Gandhi) of Congress gets a fever when I do all of this... He is saying that if Modi becomes PM for the third time, there would be fire in the country. The fact is, the dreams of the Congress have burnt and turned to ashes..." PM Modi said. Polling for the first phase and the second phase was held on April 19 and April 26, respectively. The next round of voting will be held on May 7. The counting and results will be declared on June 4. (ANI)

No Dossiers, 'Aatank Ke Aaka' Get Dose In New India: PM Modi

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Wednesday that earlier when terrorists attacked, the weak government used to send dossiers, but the New India today gives a dose to terrorists. He said that the Tricolour was hoisted at the Lal Chowk with full glory after the abrogation of Article 370. Addressing a public rally in Sabarkantha's Himatnagar, PM Modi said, "The Congress used to scare people that if the Ram Mandir is constructed, then there would be chaos in the country... There was no chaos in the country but there is chaos in the heart of the Congress. "They said that if Article 370 is abrogated, then the country will break and there would be rivers of blood... But this is Modi. Now Article 370 is abrogated and the Tricolour is hoisted at the Lal Chowk with full glory," PM Modi added. PM Modi also lashed out at the Congress for not pursuing terrorists when



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Properties Of 7 Terror Pak Based Handlers Attached In B'la

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday said to have attached the properties in Baramulla worth lakhs belonging to seven terror handlers based in Pakistan. "Police in Baramulla after obtaining attachment order passed by Hon'ble Additional Sessions Court Baramulla attached properties (8 Kanals, 6 Marlas & 2 Sersai) land worth lacs belonging to terror handlers based in Pakistan namely Sajad Ahmad Bhat son of Gh Mohammad resident of Bardan, Irshad Ahmad Khan son of Abdul Aziz resident of Pringal, Gulla Mochi son of Gama Mochi resident of Limber, Mohd Aslam Khan son of Shah Zaman resident of Pringal, Mohd Beigh son of Abdul Gani resident of Ijara, Khalid Mir son of Ayoub Mir resident of Hiller Peerniyar & Rafiq Ahmad Bakerwal son of Shamus Din resident of Limber," a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). The action was taken under sections of 88 CrPc & are linked with case FIR No. 02/2008 u/s 2/3. •P-06

Southern Gujarat Chamber Of Commerce & Industry Delegation Calls On LG Sinha

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Ramesh Nathalal Vagharia, President, The Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce & Industry along with office bearers of SGCCI met the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan Wednesday. The meeting discussed several interventions for promotion of trade and industry sector in the UT of J&K. The Lt Governor assured the delegation of necessary support and handholding from the UT Administration to the potential investors for their business ventures in Jammu Kashmir. Sh Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary, I&C Department J&K; and members of SGCCI including Sh Nikhil Khimchand Madrasi, Honorary Secretary; Sh Kirankumar N. Thummar, Honorary Treasurer; Sh Sanjay Panjabi, Coordinator and Sh Arvind •P-06

CS Reviews Progress On Implementation Of Reforms In Transport Department

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Wednesday reviewed implementation of different reforms in the Transport Department. Besides Secretary Transport and IG Traffic, the review meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Finance; Secretary PWD; MD RTC; Director Motor Garage; Joint Transport Commissioner; Regional Transport Officers and other concerned officers in person and virtually. The Chief Secretary sought a precise brief about the progress achieved, so far, on different initiatives being taken up by the department from time to time to streamline its overall functioning. He asked about the •P-06

Sluggish Demand, Seller Surplus Challenges Mount For Kashmir Real Estate

MUBASHIR AALAM WANI

SRINAGAR: Real estate sector in Kashmir is facing a challenging period marked by sluggish demand. Brokers and property developers are finding themselves in a predicament as they encounter a growing number of sellers but a dwindling pool of buyers. As per the real estate firms, the percentage of the property buyers in Kashmir has been dwindling, which they cite as a reason for stress in other sectors. "Real estate market is down in Kashmir right now. People don't have enough money to invest in real estate. Very less turn to buy properties in the form of plots now," said Zuhair Ahmad Bhat, owner of Valley Real Estate. He said the firms encounter an unusual situation as the number of sellers are more compared to the buyers. "I will give you an example that today I received as many as 10 queries out of which six were sellers. People are now selling properties with a meager proportion willing to buy them," Bhat said. The sluggish demand in the real estate sector has also exerted downward pressure on property prices across various segments. "The rates of property has come down. For example, if a seller has a property worth Rs 1 crore, he gets customers with an offer of only Rs 70 lakhs. The purchasing power has come down for the last few months," he said. Nayeem Ahmad, another real estate agent, claimed the market has come down by more than 30 per cent. "Several economic factors have contributed to the current state of the real estate market in Kashmir. Potential buyers, deterred by economic uncertainties and a cautious approach towards investments, are adopting a wait-and-see approach, leading to a mismatch in supply and demand," he said. The property developers hope for the revival in the sector. "Since it is the season of elections, we hope for the revival of the sector. •P-06

LS Polls—2024 Sajad Lone Files Nomination Papers



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Setting the stage for a high-stakes electoral battle, Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Conference president Sajad Lone on Wednesday filed his nomination papers for Baramulla Lok Sabha segment. Accompanied by the party's top leaders, Lone filed his nomination papers before returning officer for Baramulla Lok Sabha seat, Minga Sherpa. Lone filed his nomination paper in a low-key manner. Sources in Peoples Conference said that Lone had directed the party workers to desist from holding any rally or gathering in Baramulla town today in view of the floods in north Kashmir. Lone would be locked in a direct contest with former Chief Minister and National Conference vice— •P-06

INOX CINEMA SHIVPORA SRINAGAR

Thursday 02 May MOVIES Schedule

<p>GHOSTBUSTERS (ENG) 04:40PM (U/A)</p>	<p>BADE MIYAN CHOTE MIYAN 3D (HINDI) 05:00PM (U/A)</p>	<p>GODZILLA X KONG - 3D (ENG) 02:00PM (U/A)</p>
<p>RUSLAAN (HINDI) 02:30PM (U/A)</p>	<p>CREW (HINDI) 01:45PM, 05:45PM (U/A)</p>	

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Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Food Adulteration

The European Union's food safety authorities have flagged the presence of cancer-causing chemicals in 527 food products. This is truly a tragedy for brands in proportions unmanageable and has the potential to severely dent the 'Make in India' mass manufacturing campaign being run by the present dispensation.

The issue which shocked the whole world came into the spotlight when renowned Indian spice brands were scrutinized for allegedly containing traces of ethylene oxide, a chemical, above the permissible levels. This has led to a ban on these products in Hong Kong and Singapore, and now the European Union has followed suit, highlighting the widespread nature of this contamination. This news came as a rude shock to almost every household as these brands are first choice for any kitchen in India. A common man on the streets is wondering if the export qualities of these spice companies is this bad then what to make of the quality they serve to domestic consumers.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) conducted tests on various food items between September 2020 and April 2024. The products tested included a wide range of categories, with the majority being nuts and sesame seeds (313), herbs and spices (60), dietetic foods (48), and other miscellaneous food products (34). The tests revealed that a significant number of these products contained ethylene oxide beyond the permissible limits, prompting the EU to take action. Even though the government has sprung into action and triggered a series of quality tests for these brands, one wonders why it took red flagging by a foreign investigative agency to set alarm bells ringing. Why were our officials not proactive in this regard? Why were the requisite quality tests not conducted in time? And most importantly who will compensate for the dent that brand India received after this news?

Somebody has to share the responsibility. These brands should be heavily penalised for violating the norms and at the same time heads should start rolling in the agencies meant to monitor quality control of exported items from India. At a time when India is about to become 'Vishwa Guru' in human resources, space technology, and manufacturing this news has taken the dreams of taking over to others as the new manufacturing hub.

Revolutionizing Spinal Care With Endoscopic Spinal Surgery

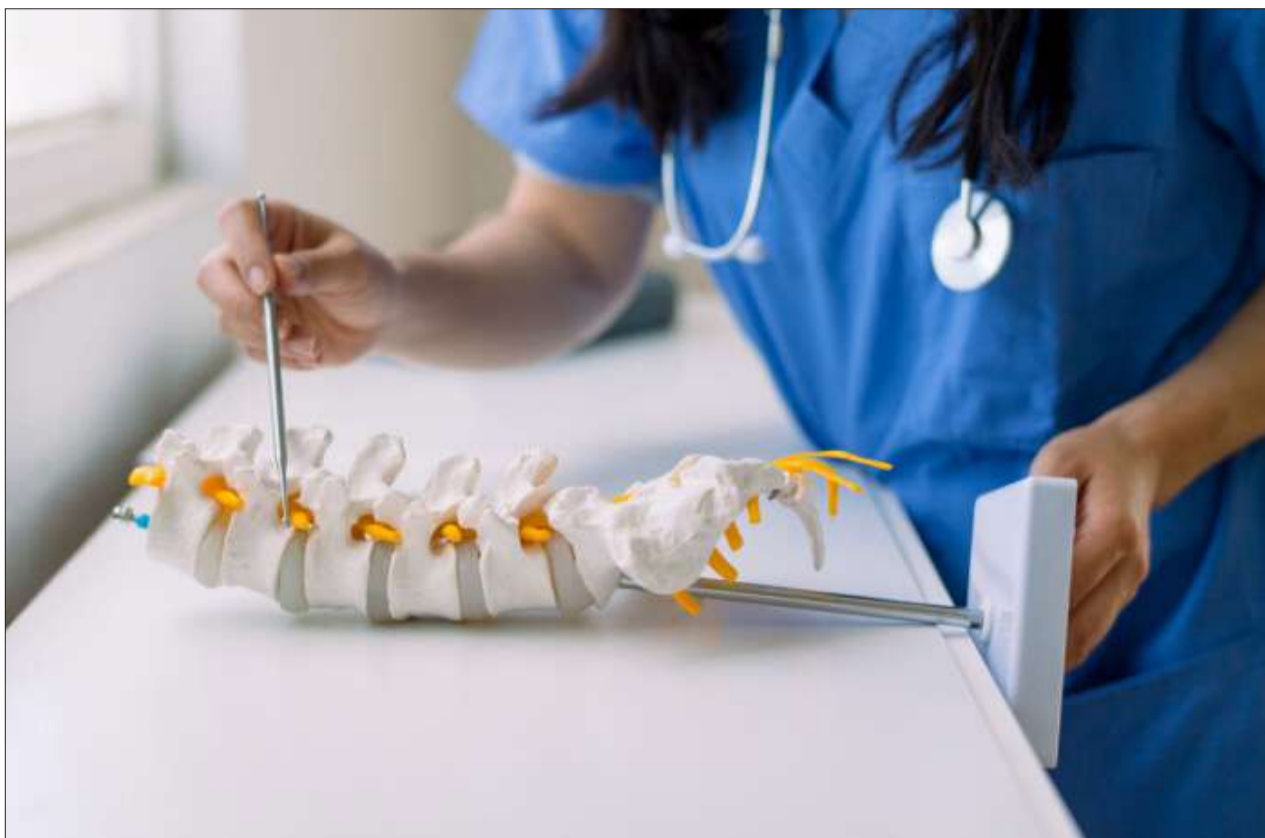


DR SUMIT GOYAL

In recent years, a groundbreaking method called Endoscopic Spinal Surgery has become a ray of hope for people dealing with spine problems. This modern technique uses a slim tool called an endoscope, which has a camera and light, to explore the spine through small cuts. Unlike traditional surgeries where big cuts are made, Endoscopic Spinal Surgery relies on tiny openings, usually less than an inch wide, causing minimal disturbance to the surrounding area.

The Surgery may be performed on an outpatient basis, meaning patients can return home on the same day as their surgery, in contrast to traditional surgeries, which necessitate longer hospital stays.

The endoscope gives surgeons a clear and close-up view of the spine's



troubled area, helping them precisely tackle issues like herniated discs or spinal stenosis. By reducing the need to disturb nearby tissues, the surgery aims to keep healthy parts of the spine safe and lowers the chances of complications related to tissue damage.

Endoscopic Spinal Surgery is tailored for each patient, this means that surgeons customize the surgery to suit the specific needs of every individual, making it more effective and improving the results. Additionally, because the cuts are smaller, patients end up with less scarring compared to traditional surgeries, which is a boon for appearance.

The Surgery may be performed on an outpatient basis, meaning patients can return home on the same day as their surgery, in contrast to traditional surgeries, which necessitate longer hospital stays. This is not only beneficial for the patients but also results in a reduced burden on healthcare services.

As spinal care continues to improve, Endoscopic Spinal Surgery is becoming a go-to option for many. It's effective and gentle on the body, making it a top choice for those in need. Scientists and doctors are always working on ways to improve surgery, finding new techniques, and using advanced technology to

enhance safety, accuracy, and effectiveness.

Endoscopic Spinal Surgery has become a game-changer in spine care. It's bringing hope to many who once felt stuck with spine issues. With ongoing improvements and collaborations, this surgery will continue to lead the way in providing effective and safe treatment for spine problems. The advancements in Endoscopic Spinal Surgery benefit patients and contribute to the overall progress of medical science.

Author is Neurosurgeon and Neurointerventionist, Yatharth Hospital, Greater Noida

The Crumbling State Of TV Debates



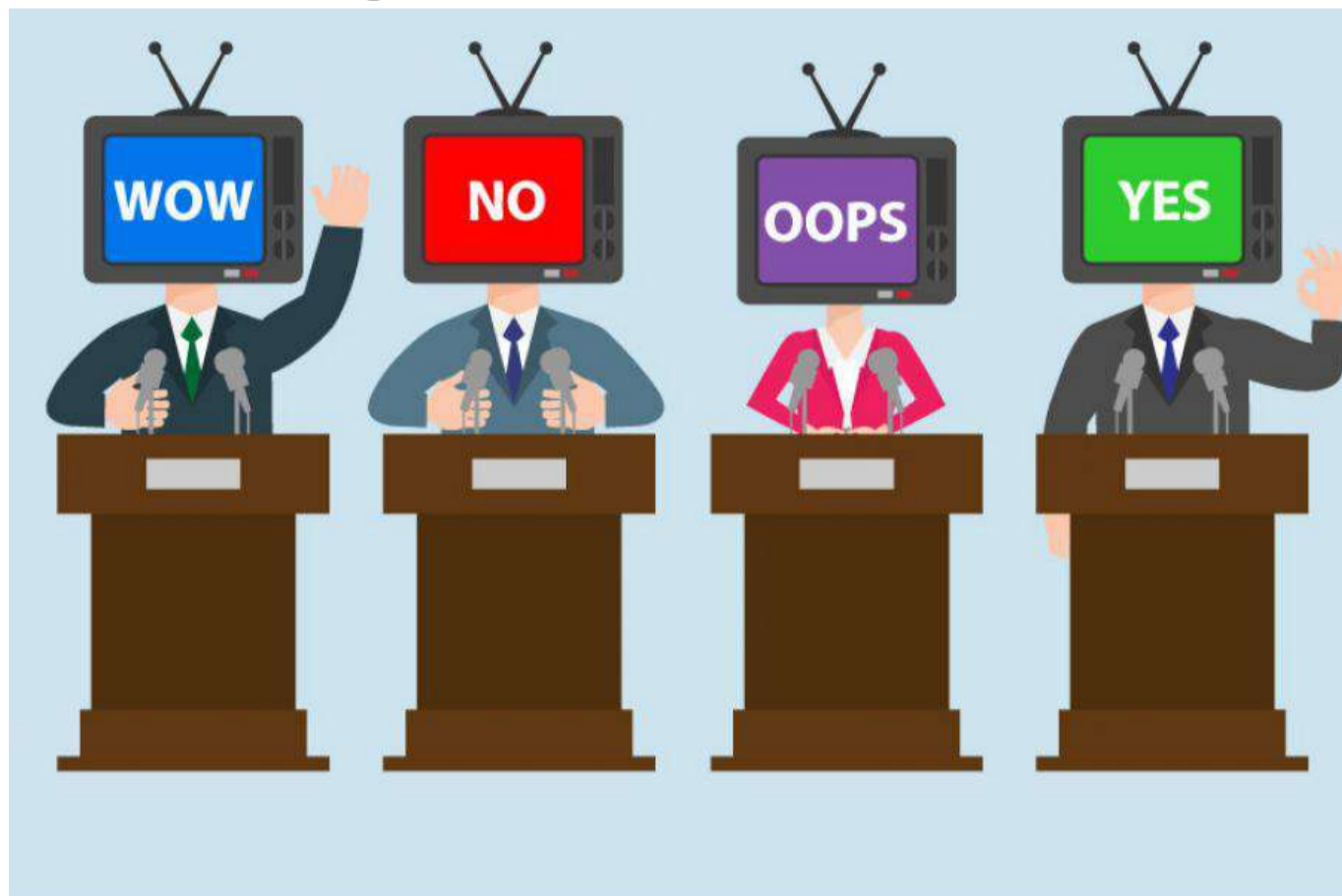
DR. SHIBEN KRISHEN RAINA

In the modern media landscape, political debates should serve as a vital forum for exchanging ideas, analyzing policies, and fostering substantive civic discourse. However, a concerning trend has emerged in recent years - the alarming deterioration in the quality and integrity of these televised debates. From perpetual interruptions to a blatant disregard for core issues, the state of political discourse on television has plunged to depths that threaten the very foundations of democratic dialogue.

One of the most glaring symptoms of this decline is the prevalence of participants incessantly talking over each other. Instead of engaging in respectful and thoughtful exchanges, panelists frequently devolve into loud shouting competitions, rendering meaningful conversation a near impossibility to listen to. This not only diminishes the value and purpose of the debate itself but also actively alienates viewers from seeking informed and constructive discourse.

Furthermore, a troubling tendency has taken root - the tendency of participants to stray from the central topic or issue at hand. Whether motivated by a desire to deflect criticism or a lack of adequate preparation, speakers habitually turn off from the main issue and thus leave the audience frustrated and disengaged. This consistent deviation from the core themes undermines the very purpose of political debates and erodes public trust in the media's ability to facilitate informed discussions.

Another troubling phenomenon plaguing modern political debates on TV is



the pervasive expression of anger, hostility, and personal attacks by the participants creating a problematic and helpless situation for the anchor. Rather than presenting well-reasoned arguments and engaging in civil discourse, some panelists resort to inflammatory rhetoric and worthless assaults. This not only detracts from the substantive merits of the debate but also sets a dangerous precedent for civil discourse in society at large.

Moreover, the habit of indiscriminately talking about prepared talking points repeatedly has become rampant in political debates. Instead of offering genuine insights or engaging with opposing viewpoints in a meaningful way, participants too often resort to parroting pre-scripted narratives, resulting in a shallow and unproductive exchange devoid of reliable discourse.

As viewers witness this landscape of much-too-

This not only detracts from the substantive merits of the debate but also sets a dangerous precedent for civil discourse in society at large.

stale and hackneyed political debates, the temptation to simply switch off the

television altogether or seek refuge in entertainment programming grows increasingly. Succumbing to this urge is indicative of the vicious cycle of declining discourse and further diminishes the media's vital role as a catalyst for informed civic engagement. It is incumbent upon all stakeholders in the media industry to take proactive and decisive steps to address this crisis and restore integrity to political debates. This may involve implementing stricter guidelines for participant conduct, fostering a culture of accountability, and prioritizing substantive dialogue over sensationalism and spectacle.

Crucially, viewers themselves bear a profound responsibility to demand better from the media and hold broadcasters accountable for the quality of their programming. By actively engaging with content that upholds the principles of

respectful discourse and meaningful exchanges, and by vocalizing dissatisfaction with standard offerings, audiences can drive positive change and reclaim the integrity of political discourse.

In the end, the crumbling state of political debates on television represents a crisis of civic discourse that demands immediate attention and strenuous action. Only by recognizing the root causes of this decline and taking decisive steps to address them can we hope to reclaim the integrity of political discourse and ensure that television remains a platform for informed civic engagement, democratic participation, and the robust exchange of ideas that represent a healthy democratic society.

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Whither Social Justice And Decent Work For Women?



SHOBHA SHUKLA

As we celebrate the Labour Day let us celebrate the women of the world, because it is the women who are holding this world together..." so said Betty Ogwaro, Member of Parliament and former Agriculture Minister of South Sudan, while speaking at a special session of Gender Equality Talks, focussing on "invisible labour at home: the unpaid care work." Women shoulder the hardest of labour (paid and unpaid, visible and invisible) but seldom get recognition, rights, and justice.

International Labour Day is observed on May 1 every year, to recognise the contributions of workers, advocate for their rights, and promote a fairer and more sustainable future of work for all. This year, the focus is on "Social Justice and Decent Work for All".

Every day is an unpaid Labour Day for most women

But where is this social justice for women? Every day is an unpaid labour day for a vast majority of them. As per current

Policy efforts that promote the growth of more flexible job arrangements and provide resources for self-employed women, such as access to financing and business development services, can mitigate demand-side failures.

estimates, over 75% of the world's total unpaid care work is done by women. Unpaid care work refers to all unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including routine housework, child care, care of the elderly and other household members'.

Gender disparities in unpaid care work are observed globally, with women spending two to ten times more hours than men on unpaid caregiving and domestic work on physically strenuous and emotionally exhausting unpaid household chores like cooking, cleaning, child rearing, caring for family members, etc.

Citing the plight of rural women, Betty says that as agriculture is the mainstay in South Sudan, the day to day life of rural women revolves around farming. "They do all the work- till the land, plant the seeds, weed and harvest the crop, store it. But once it becomes a 'product', it is the husband, and not the woman, who controls it. If the produce is sold the money belongs to the man and not to her." Also if they want to expand their agricultural activities, women cannot borrow money from the bank because they do not own any property -neither land nor house- in their name to use as collateral.

The principle of "one who tills the land, owns the land" is far from truth for most of women farmers.

However, be it the rural women or the urban women, regardless of the hours of the day women put into them, these strenuous and



unpaid activities are often dismissed as a set of mundane daily chores which they are expected to perform by virtue of being a woman- daughter, wife, mother, or a female relative. Deep rooted patriarchal societies have always ignored women working in households and taken their vital, yet unpaid and invisible labour at home for granted.

Since decades, gender gaps in education have narrowed across Global South countries, but these gains have not translated to comparable improvements for women in the labour market. Women continue to be employed at significantly lower rates than men and are concentrated in paying jobs with limited job protection.

Despite their significant contribution to the agriculture sector, women typically find themselves

every hour of their unpaid labor, they would contribute about \$10.8 trillion to the global economy annually.

A study done in India, corroborates the fact that a greater proportion of women's time is devoted to fulfilling domestic responsibilities, irrespective of their employment status. So, for women in employment, this often results in a 'second shift'. Add to this the hours of emotional labour that goes into holding families together and putting up with patriarchal constructs of what women should do or not do.

Recently, an Indian politician mentioned in one of his election speeches about how women remain, unpaid labourers, as they do myriad household chores, but never get paid for it.

Our male-dominated society has always ignored women working in

households and taken them for granted. We need more men (including our leaders) to deliberate seriously on this issue, for women's unpaid domestic labour to be acknowledged, redistributed and rewarded.

The root cause of gender inequality is patriarchy, and one manifestation of it is in the form of harmful gender norms and prejudices that are socially accepted and wrongly normalize and justify gender inequality.

Women are expected to be meek, submissive, docile and 'good' mothers and wives. Men are expected to be bold, aggressive, breadwinners, and 'primary decision-makers' and not engage in the so called feminine activities like childrearing or housework.

Idolising the 'homemaker' and 'motherhood' role of women, gives a social sanction to thrusting the majority of burden of unpaid household and other care work on them, while giving an escape to men from child-rearing and household chores, and undue 'power' to hold women to account. Gender inequality fosters unpaid care work and also sets the underlying tone for violence against women and girls.

Women's education and career takes a backseat while men get a social license to prioritise their education, career and not share domestic work and child rearing. Moreover, with no control over money matters and property/

land rights, women become more vulnerable, even as men gain authority and control over them.

A patriarchal society is an unfair society. It takes for granted that certain tasks within the household- like domestic upkeep, cooking, cleaning and

According to a policy brief by United Nations ESCAP the gendered division of unpaid care work determines the quantity and quality of women's paid employment and is one of the main reasons why women are outside the labour force. In Asia and the Pacific, around 400 million women belonging to the working age population stay out of the labour force and cite unpaid care responsibilities as one of the main reasons for staying out of the labour market.

Financial dependence and inadequate income are key factors contributing to women's vulnerability to domestic violence too. The partner who holds control over resources is more likely to make decisions on spending, and feel entitled to control and dominate the other.

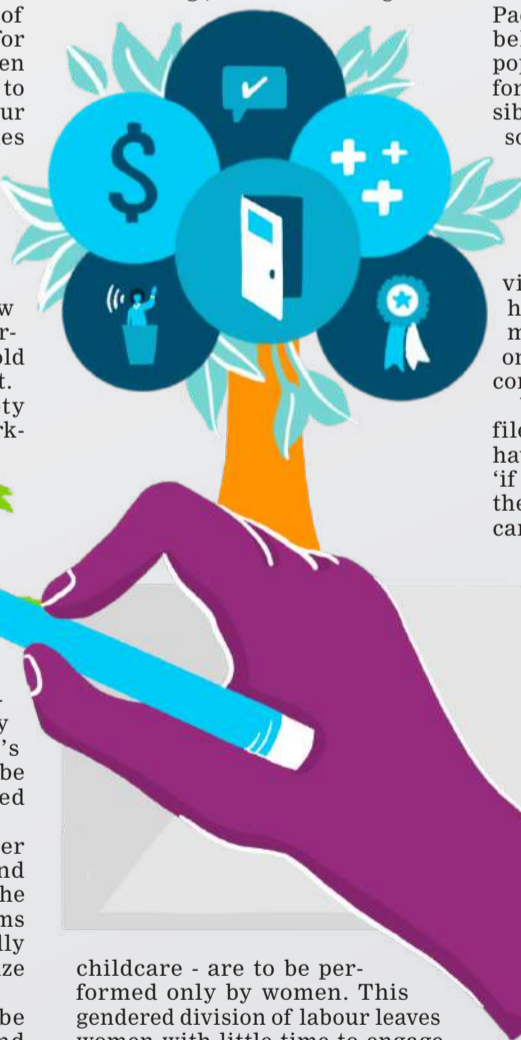
Women applying for high profile jobs are often asked 'if they have any plans for marriage', or 'if they have children' and 'how they will manage office and childcare/ housework'.

Has any man been asked these questions?

The employers fear that a female employee may not be able to manage her office duties well because of her dual responsibility (of managing work as well as household chores). This assumption is based on the socially accepted norm that male employees do not have to manage or take part in any household chores.

It is high time to think differently and put a stop to the exploitation of our women force, whether they live in the cities or in the villages; whether they are part of the paid labour force or are engaged in doing unpaid and invisible domestic chores. Women are not to be treated like machines, but like human beings. On this Labour Day, let us salute them and show our appreciation- not just by words but also by our deeds.

Shobha Shukla is the award-winning founding Managing Editor and Executive Director of Citizen News Service and is a feminist, health and development justice advocate. She is a former senior Physics faculty of the prestigious Loreto Convent College and current Coordinator of Asia Pacific Regional Media Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT Media) and Global AMR Media Alliance (GAMA). Follow her on Twitter @shobha1shukla or read her writings here www.bit.ly/ShobhaShukla



10 Benefits Of Consuming Okra Regularly

Ookra, also known as lady's finger or gumbo, is a flowering plant native to Africa. It is popularly used in various cuisines around the world, including Indian, Middle Eastern, and Southern American cuisine. Okra pods are long and slender, typically green in colour, and contain small edible seeds.

Okra is considered a healthy vegetable due to its rich nutritional profile. It is low in calories, high in fiber, and a good source of vitamins A and C, as well as minerals like potassium and magnesium. It also contains antioxidants, including flavonoids and phenolic compounds, which have potential health benefits. Read on as we share some benefits of consuming okra and tips to help incorporate it into your diet.

10 Benefits of consuming Okra:

- 1. Rich in nutrients**
Okra is packed with essential nutrients like vitamins A and C, magnesium, potassium, and calcium, which support overall health and vitality. Ladyfinger helps in keeping kidney healthy and stones free. Okra can offer you several essential nutrients.
- 2. Supports digestion**
Okra is high in fiber, aiding digestion and preventing constipation. It also supports a healthy gut by promoting the growth of



beneficial bacteria.

3. Lowers cholesterol levels

The fiber content in okra helps reduce cholesterol absorption, lowering the risk of heart disease and improving overall cardiovascular health.

4. Manages blood sugar levels

Okra contains com-

pounds like polyphenols and fiber that help regulate blood sugar levels, making it beneficial for individuals with diabetes or at risk of developing diabetes.

Also read: **Diabetes Diet: Can Okra (Lady Finger) Help You Control Blood Sugar Levels? Here's The Answer**

5. Boosts immune system

Okra is abundant in vitamin C, an antioxidant that strengthens the immune system and helps protect against illnesses and infections.

6. Supports weight loss

Okra's high fiber content promotes feelings of fullness, prevents overeating, and aids in weight management.

7. Enhances vision

Okra is rich in vitamin A, which is essential for good vision. Consuming okra regularly may help prevent age-related macular degeneration and maintain healthy eyesight.

Okra can help boost eye sight

8. Anti-inflammatory properties

Okra contains anti-inflammatory compounds that may help reduce inflammation and associated chronic diseases, such as arthritis or heart disease.

9. Supports bone health

The vitamin C, calcium, and magnesium in okra are essential for maintaining strong bones and preventing conditions like osteo-

porosis.

10. Improves skin health
The antioxidants in okra, including vitamins A and C, help combat free radicals, improve skin texture, and promote a healthy complexion. They may also aid in the prevention of premature ageing and wrinkles.

Also read: **Skincare Tips: Should You Add Ghee To Your Skincare Routine? Here's Why & How**

To add okra to your diet, here are a few ways you can prepare and consume it:

Cut the okra into small slices and cook it in a little oil with your choice of spices and seasonings. This method helps retain its nutrients.

Cut the okra lengthwise, toss it in olive oil, sprinkle some salt and pepper, and roast or grill until tender. This method enhances its natural flavours.

Okra works well in curries and stews, adding a unique texture and flavour. It pairs well with various vegetables and proteins.

Okra can be pickled similarly to cucumbers or other vegetables. It can be enjoyed as a tangy and crunchy snack.

Add it to vegetable or meat-based soups to increase their nutritional value.

Remember to cook okra properly to retain its nutritional benefits. Overcooking may make it slimy. Overall, incorporating okra into your diet can be a great way to enjoy a healthy and versatile vegetable.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Several Bridges,

challenges faced by people. Sajad Ahmad Naqeeb, Chief Engineer of R&B Kashmir, said there have been minor damages to bridges in Kupwara, with no major incidents reported elsewhere.

He, however, said that urbanization, unchecked encroachment and the flow of sewage have led to the pollution of the Jhelum River and other water bodies.

Jhelum, which originates from Veerinar in south Kashmir and traverses through Srinagar before entering into Wular Lake in north Kashmir is an important source of irrigation, drinking water and hydro-power in the valley. It is now increasingly contaminated due to the unchecked dumping of garbage, plastic and sewage, officials said.

An official of the Pollution Control Board said that urbanisation and encroachment of the banks of Jhelum have led to tonnes of solid and liquid waste from home toilets into the water body. This not only deteriorates the water quality but also adversely impacts the aquatic life of the river, he lamented.

Another official said that slaughterhouse owners located on the banks of Jhelum are also draining the waste of slaughtered animals into it. "We do not have any holistic sewerage project even in Srinagar," he said.

Soon after the 2014 floods, the Flood Management Plan was announced which was divided into two phases. Phase 1 was funded under the Prime Minister's Development Package with a budget of Rs 399 crore, which included spot dredging as per requirement to increase the capacity of river Jhelum to minimise the damage if there were floods again.

Soon after the 2014 floods, the Government of India constituted a committee to suggest measures to prevent such calamities in the future. The committee in its report had recommended several long-term measures including additional supplementary flood spill channel, creation of storage facilities on tributaries of Jhelum, flood plain zoning and enhancing capacity of Wular Lake.

Officials said that with the completion of phase 1, the capacity of river Jhelum will be taken to 60,000 cusecs, which has already been taken to 40,000. "The deadline to complete Phase 2 is three years and hopefully, it will be completed on time," he said.

The main work in Phase 2 will be the flood spill channel for re-sectioning so that if there will be more water coming, then it will go through these channels, they said, adding that part of it is to work on Hokarsar.

An official said that the resectioning of the flood spill channel, involving widening from 20 to 80 metres with a constant slope from Padshahi Bagh to Wullar, is currently underway, with an estimated cost of Rs 239 crore. This is aimed at enhancing the channel's capacity to mitigate flood risks effectively, he said, adding that efforts at Hokarsar are focused on maintaining wetlands to ensure an uninterrupted habitat for migratory birds, constituting a vital aspect of Phase 2 of the flood mitigation plan.

Regarding infrastructure improve-

ments at Wular Lake, the official said that while the gate width is currently 80 metres, the channel width is only 30 metres, necessitating widening to 80 metres to optimise water flow.

Meanwhile, various works on 21 major tributaries of the Jhelum have already commenced, including crate projection and other necessary measures.

A senior official from the Irrigation & Flood Control Department said the Jhelum River's capacity needs to be enhanced to manage potential floods effectively. He said that Phase 2 of the flood management plan is ongoing, with a primary focus on augmenting the capacity of the Jhelum's tributaries and critical areas. Successful completion of both phases is expected to significantly mitigate flood-related damages in the Kashmir region, he added.

"The completion of Phase 2 will increase the Jhelum River's capacity to 60,000 cusecs, having already reached 40,000 cusecs in Phase 1," he stated. However, this capacity will still not suffice to manage the massive volume of water that breached the Jhelum at multiple locations during the devastating 2014 floods.

"If the Jhelum's capacity remains at 60,000 cusecs, it will not be sufficient to prevent embankment breaches in the event of a 2014-like flood. Although the damages may not be as severe as in 2014 when the Jhelum's capacity was around 30,000 cusecs," the engineer, who works on the Flood Management Plan, explained.

He said that there is a need to increase the capacity of river Jhelum to 120,000 cusecs for effective flood management—(KNO)

Jmu-Sgr NH

Heavy motor vehicles are not allowed to ply on the highway for the time being as the road clearance and widening operation is still on, a traffic department official said.

He said the LMVs were released on the highway from both sides around 9.30 am after debris were cleared at Mehar, Dalwas and Magerkote.

The opening of the 270-km highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, provided relief to hundreds of people, including tourists, who were stranded in the twin capital cities following its closure.

Multiple landslides, mudslides and shooting stones from the hillocks blocked the highway at nearly a dozen places between Nashri and Banihal tunnels during the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, prompting suspension of the traffic, the officials said.

Meanwhile, the Mughal road -- an alternate road linking Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu region with south Kashmir's Shopian district -- remained closed for the fifth day on Tuesday owing to snowfall in Peer Ki Gali and adjoining areas, they said.

The traffic on the road usually remains closed during winter months due to snow accumulation. The road was recently cleared for one-way traffic but fresh snowfall between Friday and Monday again closed it.

Search Operation

in a brief encounter with terrorists in remote Panara village in Chochru Gala heights early Sunday, following which a hunt was launched jointly by the police, army, and CRPF.

The search operation, which entered the fourth day on Wednesday, is ongoing in Basantgarh, Bani and Seoj areas of Udhampur and Kathua districts, officials said, adding there has been no fresh contact with the fleeing terrorists.

As per sources, the movement of one group has been reported in the upper reaches of Udhampur district while the other group is seen to have moved towards Bani, Daggar and Kindli areas of Kathua district.

The movement of one of the groups was picked up from Allo Top and Seoj high altitude dense forested areas in Udhampur, they said.

More security personnel have deployed in these areas to strengthen the cordon in the large high-altitude forest belt between Udhampur and Kathua, they said.

Apart from the use of choppers, UAVs, and drones for surveillance, additional forces have been moved into these areas to intensify the efforts to track down and neutralise the terrorists, they said.

Several persons have been detained and are being questioned, they said.

On Monday, Additional Director General of Police (Jammu zone) Anand Jain said two groups of terrorists are believed to be present in the area after they recently infiltrated from across the border.

He said the strength of the two groups, as per preliminary investigation, is between four and six and the security forces are working on various inputs to flush them out.

According to official sources, the terrorists had reached Basantgarh from adjoining Kathua district after managing to sneak into this side from across the border and were heading for Chenab Valley when they were confronted by the police and VDG members.

The Bani-Basantgarh route from Kathua used to be a well-defined route for terrorists to Doda and Kashmir after their infiltration along the International Border (IB) until two decades ago.

Properties Of 7 Terror

EIMCO Act, 120 B, 121, 124 RPC, 19 UA (P) Act of PS Boniyar, he said, adding that the property was identified belonging to absconders during the course of investigation/enquiry conducted by Police. The operation reaffirms the commitment of Police to combat the terror activities, police said—(KNO)

Southern Gujarat

Mansukhlal Babawala, Chairman, Industrial Visit Committee were present during the interaction.

CS Reviews Progress

progress made, inter alia, in clearance of backlog driving licenses to be dispatched to the applicants.

Dulloo also asked about the initiatives being taken up by the department towards traffic management on roads. He took note of the action initiated by the officers against repeated offenders of traffic rules and called for stern action against habitual violators, including cancellation of Driving Licenses or Registration Certificates of their vehicles.

The Chief Secretary assessed implementation of Transport Subsidy Scheme and enquired about the response of transporters towards it. He had a detailed discussion on various novel initiatives aiming at reforming and transforming the transport sector in the UT. He enquired from the concerned officers about the progress made in ITMS based bookings meant for bringing respite to commuters, installation of Vehicle Location Tracking Platform (VLTP), ITMS for rural areas, City Surveillance System and Integrated Road Safety Database for marking dark spots leading to accidents on roads.

Regarding framing of different policies for smooth functioning of the department, Dulloo sought status report on formulation of Registered Vehicles Scrapping Policy, Electric Vehicles Policy, Accident Victim Fund, implementation of recommendations of SC Committee on Road Safety and reconstitution of Road Safety Committees.

Reviewing working of JKRTC, the Chief Secretary asked about the impact of inclusion of new bus fleet for the travelling public, especially in unconnected rural areas. He enquired about the cost and earnings of the running JKRTC Buses/Trucks.

Secretary Transport, Neeraj Kumar, in his presentation, threw light on different aspects of working of the department. He informed the meeting about the performance of the department till date besides highlighting different plans in pipeline.

The meeting was also informed about the physical status of Transport Bhawan being raised at Bemina in Srinagar, 95 percent work of which is completed.

Regarding progress on the Institute of Driving, Training & Research (IDTR), Kot Bhalwal, Jammu and Inspection and Certification Centre (ICC) at Samba, it was revealed that the work is going on in full swing and likely to be completed within the stipulated time frame.

The meeting was further informed that the department is going to implement e-challans fully besides clearing pendency with regard to collection of fines. Besides, road safety measures with utilization of AI are also being planned for implementation in the UT.

Sajad Lone Files

president Omar Abdullah, even as other candidates like Fayaz Ahmad Mir (PDP) and Er. Rashid (independent) are in the fray—(KNO)

Challenges Mount For

The rates as well as the demand is likely to go up with the commencement in the near future," Ahmad said—(KNO)

