

Good Morning Kashmir

15th Year Of Publication

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

SRINAGAR: Properties of seven Pakistan-based handlers were attached in North Kashmir's Baramulla district, police said on Tuesday.

"After obtaining an attachment order passed by the additional sessions court in Baramulla, 13 kanals of land worth lakhs of rupees belonging to terror handlers based in Pakistan were attached," a police spokesman said.

He identified the handlers as Shabir •P-06

LeT Commander Among 2 Terrorists Killed In Kulgam Encounter



UMAISER GULGANIE

KULGAM: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir zone, V K Bhirdi Tuesday said the top Lashkar-e-Toiba (TRF) commander Basit Dar and a hybrid terrorist-cum over ground worker (OGW) were killed in an encounter with security forces at Redwani Payeen in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Tuesday.

Talking to reporters at the encounter site at Redwani Payeen in southern district of Kulgam, the IGP Kashmir, as per news agency—Kashmir

POLICE ALONG with other security forces laid a cordon.

News Observer (KNO), said that on Monday afternoon, police received a tip-off about the presence of terrorists in the area. "Police along with other security forces laid a cordon. Today morning, an intense encounter broke out between terrorists and security forces that lasted till afternoon," the IGP said. He said that in the ensuing encounter, two terrorists were killed including the top commander of Lashkar-e-Toiba (TRF) outfit Basit Dar of Redwani, Kulgam.

"He was an A category terrorist carrying a bounty of Rs 10 lakh on his head from the NIA with separate reward from the Police. Basit was active since 2021. He was involved in over 18 cases including attacks on security forces and minority members in Srinagar and South Kashmir," the IGP said. Later talking to KNO, IGP identified second terrorist as Faheem, a hybrid terrorist cum Over Ground Worker (OGW). •P-06

Dereliction Of Duty

3 SPOs Dismissed From Service In Samba

JAMMU: Three Special Police Officers (SPOs) were on Tuesday dismissed from service for dereliction of duty and involvement in the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, officials said.

The SPOs -- Daljeet Singh, Bali Ram and Deepak Singh -- have been disengaged from service while disposing off two separate •P-06

Hajj 2024

First Flight With 320 Pilgrims To Take Off From Srinagar Airport On May 9

MUBASHIR ALAM WANI

SRINAGAR: A total of 7008 Hajj pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir will be embarking on a holy journey to Mecca and Madina this year, with the first flight scheduled to leave Srinagar International Airport on 9th May 2024, officials said.

Dr. Shujhat Quershi, Executive Officer (EO) of J&K Haj Committee reiterated the committee's dedication to ensuring a seamless experience for the pilgrims, affirming the exhaustive arrangements to facilitate the holy journey for pilgrims.

He said that a total of 7008 Hajj pilgrims were intending holy pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina, of which around 6800 are going through Srinagar embarkation and over 500 through Delhi embarkation.

"6,852 pilgrims will be embarking from Srinagar, inclusive of those from Ladakh, while 541 pilgrims will depart from other airports, primarily Delhi airport. The departure of Haj pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir will commence from 9 May 2024 and in the first batch there will be 320 Haj pilgrims," he said.

In response to the flight schedule status of pilgrims, he said that for 9 & 10 May they have already updated the flight status for pilgrims and that for the 11th May they will update it by today evening on the website of Haj Committee of India.

"On 9 and 10 May, a total of four flights will leave from Srinagar



Jammu and Kashmir will commence from 9 May 2024 and in the first batch there will be 320 Haj pilgrims," he said.

He said that the pilgrims can check their flight status on the website of Haj Committee of India under the enquiry section by entering their cover number.

Dr. Quershi said that 37 female pilgrims will also undertake the sacred journey without a Mahram, with the majority embarking from Srinagar, and that the boarding passes to

Airport with two flights each day comprising 320 pilgrims," he said.

He said that the pilgrims can check their flight status on the website of Haj Committee of India under the enquiry section by entering their cover number.

Dr. Quershi said that 37 female pilgrims will also undertake the sacred journey without a Mahram, with the majority embarking from Srinagar, and that the boarding passes to

custom clearance have been meticulously coordinated to ensure a hassle-free experience for the pilgrims and their families.

He said that the Haj House will serve as a focal point for all formalities, streamlining the process for the pilgrims' convenience.

Dr. Quershi said that collaborative efforts across various departments, including health, security, and emergency services, will be •P-06

6,852 PILGRIMS WILL BE EMBARKING FROM SRINAGAR, INCLUSIVE OF those from Ladakh, while 541 pilgrims will depart from other airports, primarily Delhi airport. The departure of Haj pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir will commence from 9 May 2024 and in the first batch there will be 320 Haj pilgrims,"

LG Chairs Review Meeting Of Science And Tech Deptt



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday chaired a review meeting of the Science and Technology Department.

The meeting was attended by Sh. Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Sh. Santosh D

Historic Moment

Visually-Impaired Person, 100-Yr-Old Cast First Home-Vote In Srinagar

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

SRINAGAR: The recent introduction of the home voting facility by the Election Commission of India (ECI) for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections has marked a milestone in the electoral process, particularly for those facing physical challenges, even as a visually impaired voter from Dara, Hazratbal in Srinagar became the first home voter in the city to exercise his franchise.

In another historic moment, a 100-year-old man in the Meer Behreen area of Zadibal constituency in Srinagar also cast a



home vote for the first time. As per the details obtained,

the initiative was led under the guidance of the District Election Officer of 02-Srinagar. The inaugural home vote was cast and sealed in the ballot box at Dara and Zadibal Dal Lake.

The home voting facility provides a convenient option for voters who may face challenges in physically reaching the polling stations, thereby promoting greater voter turnout and engagement.

Ali Mohammad Rather, despite being visually impaired, has demonstrated the power of civic participation, inspiring citizens across the region. •P-06

CS Inaugurates 'SBI e-Corner' Inside Civil Sectt Campus



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Tuesday inaugurated State Bank of India (SBI) developed e-Corner outside legislative assembly complex inside the campus housing it along with Civil Secretariat here.

The corner is a smart space housing the Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) of the bank besides having the facility to extend different

products like credit cards, opening of bank accounts and others offered by this largest public sector bank of the country.

Dulloo called it a very welcome step towards provisioning financial services under one roof by the country's largest and trusted bank. He anticipated that many more features of digital banking would get added to this point of contact in future.

This point of •P-06

Med Tourism Crossing Pre-Pandemic Levels

Stakeholders Optimistic About Kashmir's Potential As Medical Tourism Hub

MUBASHIR AALAM WANI

SRINAGAR: As India's medical tourism industry gears up to surpass pre-pandemic levels, stakeholders in Kashmir are optimistic about the region's potential to emerge as a prominent destination in the sector.

With its serene landscapes and upcoming healthcare investments, Kashmir is poised to attract medical tourists seeking high-quality treatment coupled with a therapeutic environment.

Medical tourism in India is set to get a boost with projections indicating that the number of medical tourists will exceed pre-pandemic levels.

According to data released by credit rating agency Crisil, the number of medical tourists visiting India is projected to be around 7.3 million in calendar year (CY) 2024, up from 6.1 million estimated in CY 2023.

The last time these figures touched 7 million was in



CY2019, before crashing due to Covid-19 induced lockdowns.

Amid this resurgence, stakeholders in Kashmir believe Kashmir's significant role in the medical tourism landscape.

With its picturesque locales, temperate climate, and improving healthcare facilities, the stakeholders claimed that Kashmir possesses the necessary ingredients to emerge as a preferred destination for medi-

473 Postal Ballots Of KP Voters Sent To RO Srinagar



AMIR TANTRAY

JAMMU: With just six days left in formal polling for the Srinagar parliamentary constituency, the authorities Tuesday sent 473 postal ballots of Kashmiri Pandit voters to Returning Officer (RO) in Srinagar.

These postal ballots belong to Kashmiri Pandits living in different parts of the country and who had already registered as voters to exercise the franchise through postal ballots.






Casting votes through the postal ballots is exclusively for Kashmiri Pandit voters who have been living their life in exile and Election Commission of India (ECI) has kept a special provision for them to vote through postal ballots.

Giving details, an official associated with the electioneering process told •P-06

INOX CINEMA
SHIVPORA SRINAGAR

WEDNESDAY 08 May

MOVIES Schedule

 <p>THE FALL GUY (ENGLISH) 12:00PM, 02:45PM (U/A)</p>	 <p>BADE MIYAN CHOTE MIYAN 3D (HINDI) 03:30PM (U/A)</p>	 <p>GODZILLA X KONG - 3D (ENG) 12:40PM (U/A)</p>
 <p>GHOSTBUSTERS (ENG) 11:40AM (U/A)</p>	 <p>MAIDAAN (HINDI) 05:15PM (U/A)</p>	 <p>CREW (HINDI) 02:15PM, 06:00PM (U/A)</p>

Lok Sabha Elections

CEO visits Pulwama, participates in multiple activities

GMK NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA: Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu and Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole, Tuesday participated in multiple activities during his visit to Pulwama conducted to oversee district's preparedness for the Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

The CEO conducted a comprehensive review of poll preparedness and security arrangements being put in place for the general elections. He asked the Nodal Officers to ensure meticulous execution of election plans, emphasizing the importance of strict adherence to the prescribed electoral protocols.

Reviewing the status of commissioning of EVMs and training of designated staff, the CEO stressed on ensuring comprehensive hands on training aimed at familiarizing the poll staff with the operation and maintenance of EVMs. He also asked the AROs to ensure proper uploading of data on EMS.

The CEO directed for wide publicity of election related activities including SVEEP awareness events for encouragement of general public to vote and register highest voter turnout in the district. He urged upon everyone to exercise



their voting right at the nearest polling station, emphasizing the pivotal role of every vote in shaping the democratic set up in a nation. He reiterated the significance of voter participation in strengthening democracy.

P K Pole also participated in the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program held at the Government Women's Degree College in Pulwama. He inaugurated various sports activities during the programme including badminton, carrom, tug of war, kho kho, chess and a

polling station attendance, the CEO emphasized the need for widespread publicity regarding the home voting options so that no eligible voter is deprived of his democratic right.

The CEO took stock of arrangements in place in the designated polling stations at Pinglena, Kakapora, and Pampore, with a focus on ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PwD).

Earlier, District Election Officer (DEO), Dr Basharat Qayoom, through a Power-Point Presentation, presented the district profile and overall arrangements in place for free, fair and smooth conduct of elections in the district. He said that all ECI guidelines are being implemented in letter and spirit in the district and efforts are being made to ensure maximum participation of voters in the festival of democracy. He also briefed about the functioning of MCMC, deployment of SST, FST, VVT and teams, arrangements for senior citizens and PwDs voters in the district.

SSPs of Pulwama and Awantipora, briefed about overall security arrangements being put in place for smooth conduct of elections in the district.

DEO Sgr flags-off polling teams for 'Vote from Home' facilitation of senior citizens

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Ahead of Polling for Srinagar Lok Sabha Seat, the District Election Officer (DEO) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, who is also the Returning Officer (RO) for 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency Tuesday flagged-off Polling Teams for 'Vote from Home' facilitation of senior citizens and PwDs of Srinagar District from the DC Office Complex, here.

Nodal Officer, SVEEP (J&K), Athar Hussain Qazi; Deputy District Election Officer, Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz ul Aziz; Nodal Officer SVEEP, A.H Fani and other Senior Officials of District Administration and District Election Authority were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the DEO Srinagar briefed that the Polling teams will facilitate Vote from Home (VfH) for the eligible Elderly Voters and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in connection with the upcoming Lok Sabha Election-2024 in respect of all Eight (08) Assembly Segments in 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency. He added that alto-



gether about 292 eligible willing voters of the District including 202 Senior Citizens who are above 85 years and 90 Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) will exercise their franchise using postal ballots at their respective homes/places.

The DEO further said that the Election Commission of India (ECI)

has taken a historic initiative which is a major step towards promoting inclusive and accessible elections by extending the Vote from Home facility to senior citizens above 85 years and PwDs.

He underlined that Home Voting facility has provided an opportunity for several senior citizens

and PwDs to exercise their right to vote through postal ballots in Lok Sabha Election-2024 minimizing their difficulties of travelling to the Polling Stations.

The DEO said that the facility has helped in promoting equal opportunities for all and ensuring that no one is left behind in the electoral process.

He further added that Eighteen (18) Polling teams each consisting of one Polling Officer, one polling official, a Micro-observer, a videographer and a team of security personnel began visiting the houses of the willing Voters (who have given consent to the District Election Officer) since today morning and has been scheduled for 7th, 08th and 9th May, 2024.

He instructed the polling teams to take utmost care to ensure free and fair voting adhering strictly to the instructions and guidelines of the Election Commission of India.

Earlier, the DEO held a meeting cum interaction session with all the eighteen (18) Polling teams in the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex and flagged-off the teams for Vote from Home facilitation in Srinagar District.

SVEEP

YS&S Anantnag organizes Cycling event to promote Voter Awareness

GMK NEWS NETWORK



ANANTNAG: In a spirited effort to foster voter awareness and active civic participation, the Youth Services and Sports (YS&S) in collaboration with the Nodal Officer SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) Anantnag, orchestrated an exhilarating cycle race in the picturesque locale of Anantnag.

The event, held under the auspices of the SVEEP, exemplifies a unique convergence of sportsmanship and civic duty.

Against the backdrop of the breath-taking scenery of Anantnag, enthusiastic participants from across the region fervently pedaled through the verdant

landscapes, not only competing for victory but also amplifying the clarion call for informed and active citizenship.

The collaborative effort between the Youth Services and Sports and the Nodal Officer SVEEP Anantnag underscores the importance of synergizing diverse sectors in the pursuit of a more engaged and participative electorate. By leveraging the universal appeal of sports, we endeavor to catalyze meaningful dialogues and inspire collective action towards building a stronger, more inclusive democracy.

Together, let us continue to pedal towards a future where every voice is heard, and every vote counts.

DLSA Budgam promotes Voter Education under SVEEP Campaign

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: In order to promote, encourage voter literacy and participation of voters in the electoral process, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam under the aegis of JKLSA Tuesday organized awareness programme at ADR Center Budgam under SVEEP (Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation) initiative.

The programme was organized by District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) under the guidance of Khalil Ahmad Choudhary, Chairman DLSA Budgam and under the supervision of Jehangir Ahmad Bakshi, Secretary DLSA

Budgam. The programme witnessed the participation of Jehangir Ahmad Bakshi Secretary DLSA; Shahrqoq Ahmad Bhat, Deputy LADC; Adv. Zafer Mehdal, Feroz Ahmad Mir trained Mediator, Rouf Ahmad Assistant LADC, Adv Aarizo, Adv Mohammad Iqbal Wani, members of bar, Panel Lawyers, staff members of DLSA Budgam, and PLVs of DLSA Budgam.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary DLSA Budgam highlighted the importance of Right to Vote in a democracy. He also explained precautions and necessary steps to be followed by the voters while casting their vote.

MVD B'pora organises Counselling programme for Drivers

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Bandipora on Monday organized multiple awareness programmes regarding ill effects of drug abuse and road safety at various Sumo stands of Sumbal Sub-Division including Sumo Stand Hajin, Chinar

Sumo Stand Sumbal and Sheikh ul Aalam Sumo Stand Sumbal.

During the awareness programmes, ARTO Bandipora, Anis Ahmed sensitized drivers about ill effects of drug abuse, and also provided awareness to the drivers about road safety and the need to implement road safety measures.

Lok Sabha Elections

Postal Ballot Voting begins in Budgam segments under Srinagar PC

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: The process of postal ballot voting began Tuesday at Budgam, marking an important step in ensuring that all eligible voters, especially employees in essential services who may not be able to attend polling stations on election day, have the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights.

To oversee the smooth execution of the postal ballot voting at Boys Higher Secondary School Budgam, the District Election Officer Budgam, Akshay Labroo visited the facilitation centre for postal ballot.

The DEO underscored the commitment to ensuring a free and fair voting process for all eligible voters.

He said, the facilitation centre is well-organized, providing a streamlined process for employees on essential duty to cast their votes and to strengthen democracy.

As per the guidelines of ECI, the District Administration has worked diligently to assist voters to cast their vote via postal ballot while maintaining the required guidelines of the postal ballot system, he added.

He said the initiation of postal ballot voting in Budgam demonstrates inclusive participation of all in the electoral process.

The DEO said that as the voting period at the Postal Voting Centre continues for three consecutive days for the segments falling under Srinagar PC i.e., 7th, 8th and 9th of May, District Administration Budgam will maintain its efforts.

Gandhi College organizes Annual Cross Country Run for Girls

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Gandhi College Tuesday hosted its Annual Cross Country Run for female students.

The 5-kilometer race was flagged-off by the Principal of the College, Prof A. Wahid Makhdoomi at 7.07AM from Duck Park foreshore road.

Over 60 girl students lined up at the starting line, ready to test their endurance and skills. The course took runners through the foreshore road, winding along the edge of the Dal Lake.

Second-Semester student Umaira Jan finished in first place, completing the course in an impressive time of 25 minutes and 22 seconds. Umaira, an accomplished long-distance runner, pulled ahead of the pack early on and maintained a steady pace to secure the victory.

"I'm thrilled to have won the cross country run," said Umaira. "The training has really paid off, and

I am proud to represent Gandhi College. This is just the start - I'm looking forward to more competitions in the future," she added.

Second and third place went to Muskaan Rehman and Huriya Nazir of 2nd and 4th Semesters respectively. The top finishers received trophies and certificates in recognition of their achievements. Two consolation prizes were bagged by Soliha Tariq and Mewish Showla respectively.

Speaking on the occasion, the Principal of the College lauded the role of the faculty and the supporting staff of the college for making the event a great success.

Further, he said that the event showcased the talent and athleticism of Gandhi College's female student body and the annual cross country run continues to be an important tradition that promotes fitness, College spirit, and healthy competition.

DLSA conducts awareness programme on Electoral Literacy in Kulan

GMK NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL: In order to spread electoral literacy amongst the voters, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Ganderbal in collaboration with the Education Department, Ganderbal Tuesday organized an awareness program at Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School, Kulan, Gund.

The event was held under the aegis of J&K Legal Services Authority and also under the insightful directions and overall supervision of Ritesh Kumar Dubey, Chairman DLSA Ganderbal and Secretary DLSA Ganderbal, Nusrat Ali Hakak.

Speaking on the occasion, Nusrat Ali Hakak, Senior Judge/Secretary DLSA Ganderbal, in her presidential address said that the aim of the program is to spread awareness among the masses about the importance of exercising their constitutional right to vote.

She also informed participants to raise further awareness regarding their right to vote as guaranteed under Indian constitution. She said that the age to cast votes has been decreased from 21 years to 18 years so that more and more people participate for the changes they want to see in their country for its betterment.

Chief Education Officer, Ganderbal, Surjeet Kumar Sharma informed the participants about the various initiatives taken by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to increase voter turnout and insisted one and all for their participation.

District Nodal officer, SVEEP, Romysa Sangeen highlighted the importance of SVEEP activities in creating awareness about electoral participation and educated students about the importance of voting and their role in the democratic process and asked all particularly females to participate.

Pr. Govt. Boys Hr. Second-



ary School, Kulan, Mohammad Maqbool Dar, deliberated on the importance of every single vote.

The students actively participated in the programme and also pledged to become active voters and encourage others to do the same.

Students of various Schools

also spoke on the occasion and threw light on the right to vote, in which Ifshana Salam of Govt. Boys Hr. Secondary School, Kulan, Asim Malik of Govt. Boys High Secondary School, Gagnigair and Rabia of Govt. Girls High School, Sonamarg were adjudged first, second and

third, respectively. A painting competition under Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) was also held, as many as 11 students participated in the painting competition in which Faizan Ahmad of Govt. Boys Hr. Secondary School,

Kulan, Tasleema Khatoun, of Govt. Boys Hr. Secondary School, Kulan and Amina Bano of Middle School, Balti Kulan, were adjudged first, second and third respectively.

Apart from Painting and debate Competition, voter awareness rally under SVEEP

campaign was also held and was flagged-off by Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal along with Chief Education Officer, Ganderbal and District Nodal officer, SVEEP.

The Faculty members, along with hundreds of students of school and local women participated in the rally, which began from School premises and culminated at Zirpora Kulan.

The students of the School and local women raised Electoral Literacy related slogans. The objective of the awareness rally was to encourage the general public to vote in upcoming Lok Sabha Elections in large numbers, motivate the young voters to participate in the electoral process without any hesitation and ensure maximum voter turnout to help in strengthening the core values of Indian democracy.

The programme was also attended by CDPO, Kangan, Shahzada, Faculty members of School, Anganwadi and Aaya Workers, Students, Local women, etc.

POLLS AHEAD

Massive rallies, road shows mark election fervor in Sgr PC

NAVEED UL HAQ

BUDGAM: With the parliamentary election in Srinagar Parliament seat just around the corner, the election fervor reaches new heights as the political parties particularly National Conference (NC), People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Jammu Kashmir Apni Party lead the charge with massive rallies and road shows across the parliamentary constituency.

Against the backdrop of colorful banners and enthusiastic supporters, the voter's of Budgam echo a unified sentiment – a vote for development, quality education, and an end to unemployment.

Local residents of Budgam district have made their priorities clear, emphasizing the critical need for initiatives that foster growth and prosperity.

"We want leaders who will prioritize development projects, ensure access to quality education for our children, and address the pressing issue of unemployment," states Danish, a first time voter from Budgam.

As candidates vie for



attention and support, the voters remain steadfast in their demand for tangible solutions to the challenges facing their communities.

The electorate of Budgam stands poised to make their voices heard. As political parties intensify their efforts to win over voters, the focus remains squarely on the issues that matter most to the people.

During the campaigning, National Conference's candidate has been claiming that they are contesting elections with the aim

of mobilizing the political space, which was not provided in the last five years while PDP's Waheed Parra emphasized the need to overcome fear and mobilize citizens to vote for change.

In the last couple of days, Budgam has witnessed a flurry of campaigning activities as candidates make their final appeals to the electorate.

In the ongoing race, both the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party are leading the charge with rallies and

road shows. Additionally, the Apni Party, DPAP, and various independent candidates have been observed canvassing for votes.

"The outcome of this election will not only determine the representation of Budgam in the Parliament but also shape the trajectory of development and progress in district for years to come; everyone should participate actively in voting and vote wisely so that the best candidate can reach to the parliament," said Abdul Rashid, a local resident.

SUBJECT TO FAVOURABLE WEATHER

Only Bemina bypass flyover to be completed by May-end



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

SRINAGAR: One of the three under-construction flyovers on the busiest Pantha Chowk-Parimpora highway in Srinagar is all set to be completed by May end, said an official from R&B department.

The work on the three flyovers which is expected to ease traffic congestion on the busy intersections of Bemina, Sanat Nagar and Nowgam is going on for the last few years.

The official said the Bemina Bypass flyover will be the first to be completed by the end of May.

"Despite challenges including inclement weather and logistical hurdles, progress on the bypass bridge has been steady, raising hopes for a timely inauguration that will alleviate congestion and streamline traffic flow in the area," he said.

"If weather remains favorable, the bridge is to

be completed by May end, and the earth filling has been completed. If it rains, the earth filling has to be stopped and can be continued after three days," said an official.

He said the rains disrupted work in April and only three working shifts was carried out as earth filling was stopped. Subject to favourable weather, the bridge will be completed in due course of time," he added.

The Nowgam project is slated for completion by June while Sanath Nagar bridge construction will be completed by late December 2024 or January 2025.

"Despite facing various challenges including terrain difficulties and weather constraints, efforts are underway to ensure the timely delivery of all three essential infrastructure projects," said an official from R&B heading the inspection work of the Bridges—(KNO)

DECADE ON

Zaffran colony-Pampore road in dilapidated condition



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

SRINAGAR: Residents of Zaffran Colony, Srinagar have voiced their concerns over the deteriorating condition of the road connecting their neighbourhood to Pampore town alleging that the road is in shambles since the past over a decade now causing huge inconvenience to residents.

The road, which has been neglected for a long time, has reached a critical state of disrepair, prompting urgent calls for immediate action from local authorities.

The aggrieved locals said the condition of the road has become a matter of grave concern for them. Haji Abdul Gaffar Rather, a community leader

and numberdar said it's not just about inconvenience but safety of commuters. "We fear for the well-being of commuters, especially during adverse weather conditions," he added.

Echoing these sentiments, Masjid President Muhammad Ismail highlighted the inconvenience caused by the dilapidated road.

We rely heavily on this road for our daily commute and transportation needs. But the condition of the road poses a significant risk to us all," he said.

The locals urged the Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar and other relevant authorities to prioritise the repair of Zaffran Colony to Pampore Road—(KNO)

Killing of IAF corporal: Search operation intensified in Jammu



AGENCIES

JAMMU: Security forces have intensified the search operations in the twin-border districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu region to track down the terrorists responsible for attacking an IAF convoy that claimed the life of a corporal rank personnel, officials said on Tuesday.

The agencies have also expanded the scope of operation to various areas of Doda, Udhampur, and Kathua districts to track down two groups of terrorists involved in the killing of a village defence guard (VDG) in the Basangarh area on April 28.

Terrorists targeted an Indian Air Force (IAF) convoy in the Shaistar area of Poonch district, resulting in the killing of an IAF corporal and injuries to four others on Saturday.

Armed with surveillance equipment, including

drones and sniffer dogs, the search operation, which entered the fourth day on Tuesday, has been intensified in Shahsitar, Gursai, Sanai, Lasana, and Sheendara top in the Surankote belt and adjoining areas in Poonch district, officials said.

While some dense forest areas have been scanned and routes towards Kashmir have been plugged, there has been no trace of the terrorists involved in the attacks so far, they added.

Twenty-two people have been detained for questioning and the authorities are reviewing some CCTV footage for leads, they said.

Posters offering a cash reward of Rs 20 lakh for any information leading to the arrest of the two individuals, believed to be the prime suspects, have been put up in Surankote, they said.

In Rajouri, security

forces have launched a fresh search operation and put troops on alert following reports of suspected movement of two people in Sada and Kandi areas that have been cordoned off.

Security measures have been tightened with increased checking of vehicles on busy roads, especially on the Jammu Rajouri-Poonch national highway, which is vital for the twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch -- part of the Anantnag parliamentary constituency going to polls on May 25, they said.

On April 28, a village defence guard (VDG) was killed in a brief encounter with terrorists in the remote Panara village in Udhampur district.

Security agencies have expanded the scope of the search operation to various areas of Doda, Udhampur, and Kathua districts to track down the terrorists.

The ongoing search

operation, which entered its 10th day on Tuesday, has been extended to the Bhalessa areas of Doda district, while operations continue in Basantgarh, Dudu, Bani, and Seoj areas of Udhampur and Kathua districts, officials said.

However, there has been no breakthrough in the search so far, they said.

Additional Director General of Police (Jammu zone) Anand Jain had earlier said that the two groups of terrorists are believed to be present in the area after recently infiltrating from across the border, with each group consisting of four and six members, respectively.

The twin districts have witnessed several major terrorist attacks in the past two years, indicating a resurgence of terror activities in the region, which was once declared terrorism-free and remained peaceful between 2003 and 2021.

Looting people in Bollywood-style

Jammu police arrests main accused from Trikuta Nagar



AGENCIES

JAMMU: Jammu police have arrested a person allegedly involved in looting common people in the name of giving them lift and then looting their money by threatening to kill them.

The accused person has been identified as Arjun Sharma, alias Glotu, son of Vinod Sharma, a resident of Rajinder Bazar, Jammu and was arrested from Trikuta Nagar.

According to the police, he along with his wife and another accused was involved in several acts of loot and was wanted in around 18 FIRs in different police stations of Jammu district.

Acting on these complaints, Station House Officer (SHO) Bus Stand police station, Vikas Dogra arrested Arjun Sharma from Trikuta Nagar area of Jammu. "There were around 18 cases registered

against Sharma and finally he was arrested from Trikuta Nagar," SHO said.

Giving details, police said that during the course of investigation it was found that Sharma was parking his car on B.C. Road Jammu and was looking for potential people who were travelling out of Jammu towards Udhampur and beyond," the police said.

"The modus operandi was that Arjun Sharma was telling people that he is travelling towards Patnitop and will provide the lift to the person. After convincing the person, he was taking the vehicle towards Narwal side in the name of picking his wife, namely Priya. After that Glotu with the help of his wife and another person namely Pumma used to loot the person by threatening to kill with the sharp edged weapons which they were carrying," the police added—(KNO)

PENDING TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

Spl magistrate Traffic to hold Lok Adalat on May 11

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

SRINAGAR: As a concerted effort to tackle the mounting issue of pending traffic violations, the Special Mobile Magistrate Traffic Court Kashmir has announced Lok Adalat for May 11.

A closer examination of the challan data has shown thousands of individuals have been asked to address their pending challans. These infractions encompass a wide spectrum of offences with fines ranging from a nominal Rs. 100 to Rs 10,000 and beyond per person.

Further, the data showed some individuals find themselves with as many as 12, 10 or 9 outstanding challans, signifying recurrent violations of traffic laws. The cumulative sum of fines accrued

by these offenders is estimated to run into lakhs.

The Lok Adalat serves as the final recourse for individuals burdened with multiple pending traffic challans. "Failure to appear on the specified date could result in the drastic measure of recommending the cancellation of vehicle registration certificates (RCs) for the violators," reads an official public notice, issued by Traffic Police Rural Kashmir.

"In emphasizing the paramount importance of adhering to traffic regulations, the court underscores the critical role of motorists in maintaining road safety. All summoned individuals are urged to ensure their presence on the designated date to resolve their pending challans," it reads further—(KNO)

Inter-school Zonal Level Competitions continues across G'bal

GMK NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL: In continuation to organising inter-school Zonal level competition, vibrant sporting events were held across the district in which talented young athletes showcased their skills and passion on the field.

Zone Ganderbal took the lead by organizing a dynamic zonal level Football competition for boys under-14 category.

The event, which took place for the second consecutive day, witnessed 91 students from Zone Ganderbal exhibit their prowess and dedication in the game.

Meanwhile, in Zone Kangan, another exhilarating inter-school Zonal level football competition unfolded, attracting approximately 176 young athletes from across the zone.

These competitions serve as crucial platforms to nur-

ture and develop talent, gearing up participants for future district-level competitions where all zones will converge in friendly yet competitive matches.

In parallel, Zone Tullamulla played host to an enthralling inter school Zonal level Handball competition at GHSS Tullamulla and Football competition at MS Guzghama and GMS Kurag.

The events garnered a significant turnout of enthusiastic student participants, highlighting the growing interest and enthusiasm for sports in the district.

District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSSO) Ganderbal expressed his appreciation for all stakeholders involved, acknowledging their relentless efforts and unwavering commitment to fostering a culture of sports among the youth.

Ganderbal Villagers aghast over choked irrigation canal

RAJA SYED RATHER

GANDERBAL: The residents of Tehlipora area of Harran in Ganderbal have expressed resentment over the choking of a vital irrigation canal in the area.

The inhabitants said that the irrigation canal, which passes near their houses, has been choked due to

dumping of garbage. "We make a fervent appeal to the Irrigation and Flood Control department to direct the concerned officials to undertake restoration to undertake restoration of the canal," they said.

A local resident said that they many a times approached the concerned officials but no steps were taken to clean and

restore the irrigation canal.

"We request the concerned department to take necessary action of cleaning and desilting of this canal so that it is preserved and the fields get proper irrigation," he said.

When contacted, AEE I&FC SA Qadri, said, "We don't have adequate funds avail-

able, EC bags have been put for safety. The convergence, desilting work has to be taken by the Block Development Department; they have started work at some places."

Despite repeated attempts the concerned BDO couldn't be contacted for the comments as he didn't respond to the phone calls from this reporter—(KNO)

Man booked for using VPN in Rajouri, third such case in 2 days

AGENCIES

JAMMU: A man in Rajouri district was booked on Tuesday for using virtual private network (VPN) which was banned last month by the district administration, officials said. This was the third such instance when a case was registered against a man in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district for using VPN in the last two days.

In an order issued on April 24, Additional District Magistrate of Rajouri Rajeev Kumar Khajuria ordered immediate suspension of VPN services in the district as a

preventive measure to protect all information related to the ongoing Lok Sabha elections and other sensitive data from cyber attacks.

Officials said a police team was on patroling duty on Tuesday when during routine frisking in Dharamsal area, a man was found to be using banned VPN on his mobile phone.

During investigation, it was found that Mohammed Dishan of Brehvi area of Kalakote tehsil had downloaded and installed three VPN softwares on his phone, thus violating the district magistrate's order, they said.

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Peak Summer Tourism

The Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir must be wholeheartedly appreciated for putting in relentless efforts to uplift the tourism sector in Kashmir valley as well as in the Jammu region. Every year the footfall of tourists breaks the record of last year's tourism footfall. This is heartening and can easily attract a lot of investment in the tourism sector in Kashmir.

At the peak of summer in the plains of India the hotels in Kashmir are witnessing full bookings till June end. This is great news for the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the administration led by LG Manoj Sinha deserves due accolades for that.

However, a few concerns remain. One is obviously about the high-priced tickets which goofs up the local citizens of Kashmir working outside and prevents them from visiting home on important religious festivals. This high rise in airfare has also goofed up the prospective upstart middle-class traveler from the Indian plains. This overloading by airlines has the potential to single-handedly divert this footfall to other regions of the country or even to some foreign destinations - airfares to a lot of foreign destinations is cheaper as compared to airfare to Srinagar from the main Indian cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru.

The second main concern is about the lesser number of foreign tourists. Ladakh still gets many times more number of foreign tourists as compared to Kashmir. The administration needs to be put in serious efforts to divert that tourist rush towards Kashmir. It is very much doable and the establishment has to generate a proactive innovative strategy to this end without antagonizing the tourism players in the Ladakh region.

One must again thank LG Manoj Sinha for uplifting the tourism scenario in the Kashmir valley but as stated above there is still a lot of ground to cover before we will have thousands of foreign prospective tourists prioritising Kashmir as their number one go-to place in south Asia.

Indira Gandhi's Tyranny

The Psychosis Behind India's Darkest Emergency



PROF. JASIM MOHAMMAD

It has been five decades since the imposition of Internal Emergency in India by the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This period, spanning from June 25th, 1975 to March 21st, 1977, is often remembered as one of the darkest chapters in independent India's history. During the entire 21 months period, democracy was suspended, and over 100,000 citizens were arrested and detained without due cause or trial. Civil rights were suspended, and freedom of speech and expression were severely curtailed. The imposition of Emergency was akin to the murder of democracy. Democracy thrives on the principles of transparency, accountability, and the rule of law. By suspending civil liberties, muzzling dissent, and centralizing power under her regime, Indira Gandhi undermined these fundamental tenets of democracy. The suspension of habeas corpus meant that citizens could be detained without trial, depriving them of their basic right to due process. Freedom of speech and expression were stifled, with censorship imposed on the press and political opponents silenced through intimidation and imprisonment. Such actions infringed upon the rights of individuals and also eroded the very essence of democracy.

Many more faced intimidation and harassment from both police and extrajudicial actors acting in the government's interest. The severe infringement of civil liberties and human rights during the Emergency, wherein several individuals from various backgrounds were subjected to intimidation and torture merely for their ideological beliefs or perceived affiliations. Hon'ble Governor of Haryana, Shri Bandaru Dattatraya shared a trust, quoting him, "In jail, I met people of different ideologies and even Naxalites, who had been arrested under the MISA. Former Union Ministers Bangaru Laxman, A Narendra, N Narasimha Reddy, former Labour Minister of Telangana, Mohammad Abdul Aziz, chief of Andhra Pradesh unit of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Cherabanda Raju and Varavara Rao were also in our jail. There were many others as well belonging to different ideologies and outfits including Anand Marg but all united in protesting against the Emergency."

"The police were not ready to give up in my case. They continued questioning and torturing me, disclosing my identity and sharing information about others. Police wanted to know: How many more friends were in my group? Where were their hideouts? Where is your printing press? What is the source of finances? What is your communication network? These were the questions the police were putting to me quite often. For



three days, I did not share anything with them." Shri Bandaru Dattatraya mentioned in his trust.

"I used to wear kurta and pyjamas but had to go to pant, shirt, coat and tie. I did not go for any haircut. Being a full-time worker of the RSS, I was very particular about my dress code but adopted the western dress out of sheer compulsion. I changed my name to Dharmendra and went underground and kept mobilizing the people for agitation against the Emergency. That time all newspapers were censored and only government news was published. People were not able to know what was happening outside. So, we started a bulletin with facts and distributed them among the people secretly," he mentioned

The government heavily censored and controlled the national press, while also exerted substantial influence over foreign media outlets. The primary tool for enforcing this totalitarian control was information and communication technologies (ICTs), including radio, television, cinema, and public notices. With government ownership of radio and television, these platforms were utilized to propagate the government's narrative efficiently. Other forms of media, such as cinema and popular music, were either restricted, co-opted, or coerced into serving as instruments of government propaganda. The government leveraged these technologies to disseminate official propaganda, often accompanied by thinly veiled threats to ensure compliance. Dissent was swiftly suppressed, sometimes through violent means. New laws and amendments further augmented government control over the media, enabling surveillance, censorship, and the dissemination of government-approved viewpoints. By monopolizing radio waves, cinema, and telecommunication media, the government rapidly transformed a democratic state into a totalitarian regime.

The culmination of events leading to the declaration of the Emergency began on June 12, 1975, when the Allahabad High Court found Prime Minister Indira Gandhi guilty of electoral malpractices

during the 1971 elections. In response, opposition parties and the media demanded her resignation. However, Mrs. Gandhi appealed the verdict in the Supreme Court, which granted a conditional stay, allowing her to retain her position as Prime Minister but barring her from voting in Parliament until the case concluded. Following this ruling, Indira Gandhi and her close advisors swiftly devised plans to ensure her continued hold on power. On June 18, members of the Congress party pledged unwavering loyalty to Mrs. Gandhi's leadership, with party president D.K. Barooah famously proclaiming, "India is India and Indira is Indira," reminiscent of totalitarian declarations from history. Siddhartha Shankar Ray, a key member of Mrs. Gandhi's inner circle and Chief Minister of West Bengal, circulated detailed strategies for declaring an "Internal Emergency."

Justification for this drastic measure centered on alleged threats to India's national security and destabilization efforts by external and internal adversaries. Lists were compiled identifying opposition leaders, union activists, and media personnel for potential arrest at short notice. Detailed plans for media censorship were meticulously crafted, with loyalists of Mrs. Gandhi's party and state chief ministers being summoned to meetings in New Delhi to inform them of forthcoming actions under the guise of national security. By June 25, arrangements for the mass arrests of political figures and others deemed as threats to stability were finalized, with final discussions taking place at Mrs. Gandhi's aide, R.K. Dhawan's office. On the night of June 25, Mrs. Gandhi, accompanied by Siddhartha Shankar Ray, met with President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and urged him to declare an "Internal Emergency," citing supposed threats to India's national security and stability. President Ahmed, who owed his position to Mrs. Gandhi's influence, consented and signed the proclamation of internal emergency under Article 352(1) of the Constitution around 11:45 PM, June 25, 1975.

This period witnessed a sharp deviation from democratic norms. The fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution were suspended, and existing laws were amended to consolidate control within a small circle loyal to Indira Gandhi, suppressing dissent. Media and communication technologies were exploited to perpetuate the Emergency, mirroring strategies utilized by authoritarian regimes worldwide. The democratic system, which had operated relatively successfully for more than 25 years, was eclipsed. India faced two unprecedented political crises: one marked by deterioration and another concerning democracy. The initial crisis was temporarily halted by the events that triggered the subsequent crisis focused on democratic values.

The scars left by the suspension of democracy ran deep, prompting a collective introspection on the fragility of democratic institutions and the importance of safeguarding civil liberties. Indira Gandhi's ruthless suspension of democracy was nothing short of a betrayal of the very ideals that the nation was built upon. The Indian populace suffered under the iron fist of a regime that cared little for human rights, civil liberties, or basic decency. Dissent was crushed, opposition silenced, and the voices of the people were drowned out by the roar of government propaganda. Under the guise of national security, Indira Gandhi and her cronies trampled over the Constitution, dismantled democratic institutions, and turned India into a totalitarian state. The arrest and torture of countless individuals, the suppression of free speech, and the manipulation of the media were all tactics employed to maintain an oppressive grip on power. Lives were destroyed, families torn apart, and the very soul of the nation was bruised and battered.

The youth of India are eager to understand whether the imposition of the Emergency in 1975 was justified or not. To enlighten the younger generation, including college and university students, it is imperative to organize seminars and conferences where individuals who experienced the effects of the Emergency can share their experiences and insights. These events will help raise awareness, much like the Center for Narendra Modi Studies, a think tank for global research that will host a national conclave on the 50th anniversary of the Dark Emergency in India on June 26, 2024 at India International Centre, New Delhi. Overall, imposing an emergency was not a noble act; rather, Indira Gandhi's motives were driven by self-interest rather than the welfare of the nation. She prioritized her own power over the rights and freedoms of the Indian people. This entire period of Emergency is a dark stain in the history of India and every time reminding us of the dangers of unchecked power and the erosion of democratic principles.

Author is Professor in Comparative Literature and the Chairman of Centre for Narendra Modi Studies (CNMS). He can be mailed at profjasimmd@gmail.com

Family - The Source Of Strength



DR. REYAZ AHMAD

Life is an exhilarating adventure full of joys and difficulties, successes, and failures. The tests and challenges that life throws at people are some of the hardest moments for them. Family comfort and support are crucial during such times. Family may provide a safety net of love, understanding, and support, which is why the proverb "In the time of the test, family is the best" still holds today. This article will look at the applicability of this proverb, its benefits, and drawbacks, and why the family unit is still so valuable.

What "AT the Time of the Test, Family Is the Best" Means Today: The adage is extremely applicable in today's quick-paced and rather impersonal environment. People frequently feel vulnerable and need emotional assistance during trying times. Family members offer much-needed emotional support and a sense of belonging in these situations.

The presence of family may be a guiding light during the darkest of times, whether one is dealing with health problems, financial difficulties,



personal disappointments, or any other obstacle. They provide support, understanding, and the confidence that one is not struggling alone.

The concept of the family also includes non-blood relatives, close friends, and even chosen families in addition to the nuclear family. The ties formed over time build a deep understanding of one another, which increases the effectiveness of the support system during tough times. People can withstand storms and come out stronger thanks to the strength of their family ties.

Acceptance and Love without Conditions: Family members are more inclined to love and support one another unconditionally and embrace each other without holding any judgment. This creates a

safe space for vulnerable and honest emotional expression.

Emotional needs: Family members are the best people to comprehend and empathize with one another's emotional needs. In trying times, they can offer a shoulder to cry on and offer solace.

Shared experiences and values: Families frequently have comparable shared experiences and values, which provide a foundation for productive problem-solving and communication.

Practical Assistance: Families can offer practical assistance in difficult circumstances, such as financial support, childcare, or help with everyday chores.

Long-term Commitment: Family relationships are typically permanent, ensuring

ongoing support even in the face of persistent challenges.

The Drawbacks of Depending on Family for Tests: Family Dysfunction: Not all families have harmonious dynamics, and depending on family during trying times may sometimes make existing tensions or emotional problems worse.

Family emotion: Family members may be emotionally invested, which may cause them to give biased advice or be unable to provide unbiased solutions.

Dependency: Relying too much on the family to solve every issue might impede personal development and the emergence of self-reliance.

Geographical Distinction: Families may be dispersed throughout different areas in today's globalized society,

reducing physical proximity and face-to-face support.

In conclusion, the phrase "At the time of the test, family is the best" perfectly captures the spirit of interpersonal relationships and the value of having a solid support network during trying times. This proverb's meaning is ageless since it emphasizes the value of relying on our loved ones when difficulties in life become too much to bear.

It is impossible to overstate the benefits of leaning on family during trials, such as unwavering affection, emotional support, and shared experiences. Family ties provide a cozy haven where people can find courage and consolation in the face of tragedy.

It's important to recognize the disadvantages as well, such as poor family relationships or excessive dependency. Although family support is priceless, there are times when it may be important to seek outside opinions or professional assistance.

In the end, the proverb serves as a gentle reminder that family is still a crucial source of stability in our lives. The love and connection within a family may be a guiding light, helping us get through life's storms and come out stronger, wiser, and more resilient, whether through shared laughter or shared sorrow.

The author is a faculty member at Faculty of Mathematics, Department of General Education, SUC Sharjah, UAE

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goodmorningkashmir@gmail.com

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No More Noise

Unveiling Authentic Social Media Influencers



IMRAN MAQBOOL WANI

Don't use Social Media to impress people, use it to impact people.

— Davis Willis

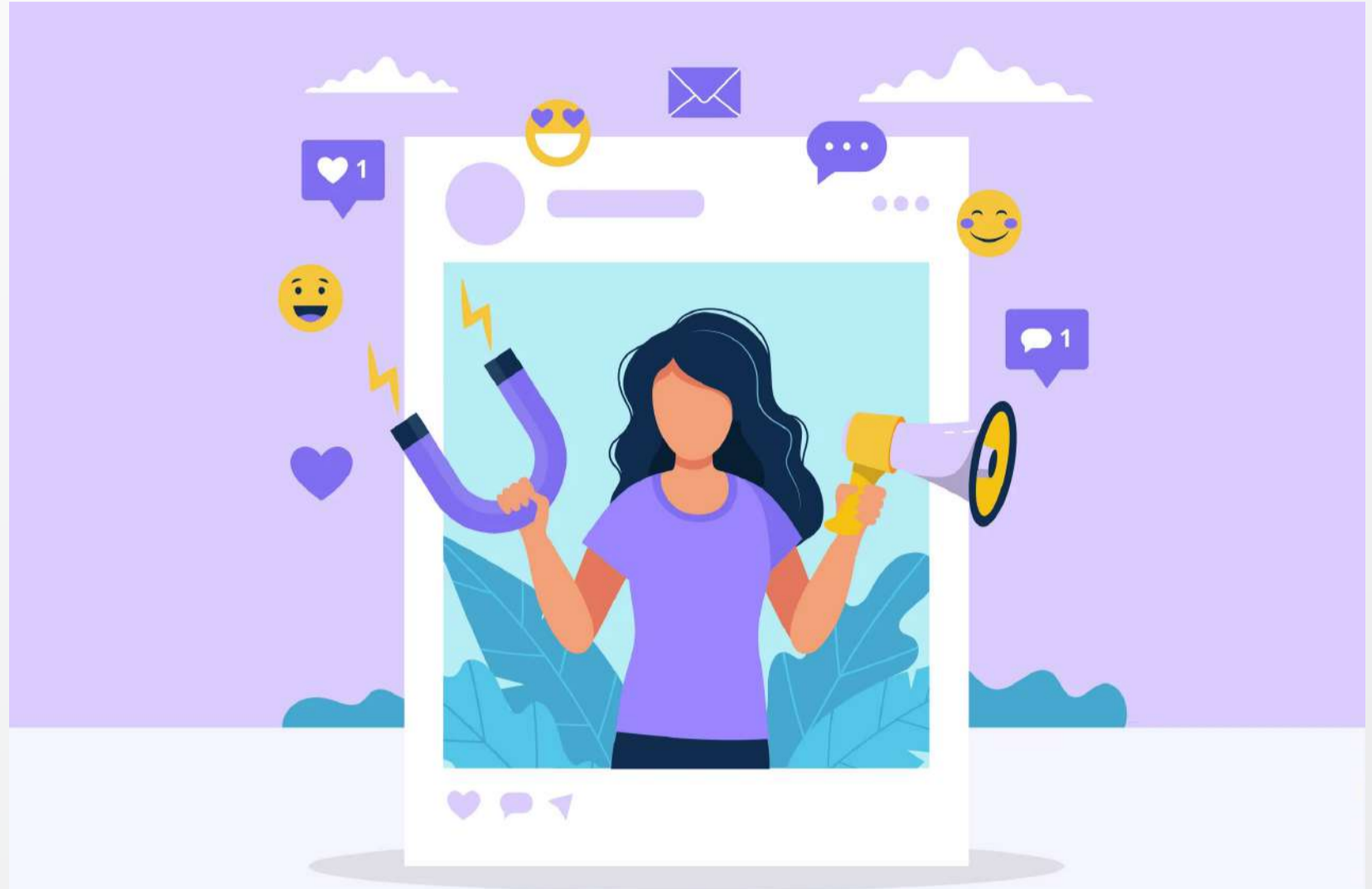
With the development of social media, genuinely encouraging the audience or showing their daily life is the most important thing. They may all seem similar on the surface, but to navigate through the subtle differences, it is important to know the nuances of both. But who are those people who actively make a positive impact on society?

With social media platforms pervading the online space, a major shift in the digital landscape has taken place, and now many of us are inclined towards being seen or identified through a social media platform. On the positive side, it is a distraction from the underlying problems. On the negative side, it has led to a line blurring between genuine influence and the superficial. In the Kashmir region, the scenario is very common with many self-proclaimed influencers emerging, followed by much of their content lacking both weight and relevance. Hence, it is vitally essential to different categories with ones who move people for the better and with others who look for compliments through likes and followers.

Nowadays the phenomenon of age ceases to be associated with the notion of social media users who accumulate followers with their offline activities such as showing what they do and what lifestyle they have. However, these metrics and content are the most visible indicators of true influence and are not what defines an influential blogger or brand. Authentic leverage does not only involve achieving a job well done but also goes beyond that to offer a platform for influencing society and making positive changes in communities.

Today, digital media have saturated the public mind with the word "influencer" as a label for any noteworthy individual, mostly for their self-aggrandizement over shallow content and materialism. Above all, there is an increasing influence of unboxing content, paid content, and lifestyle posting on social media, which is rather a distortion of its true potency as a tool for the empowerment of the marginalized and for social change. In this light, it has become imperative to elevate the voices of those who mean well and truly desire to be the agents of enhancement in our societies through social media channels. The world today has moved itself to social media where the influencers who are authentic are those who voice out their platform by calling for the right social issues, knowledge spreading, and unity of people and love among people. They determine others to serve to lead interesting and meaningful lives, they dare to change established norms and they initiate campaigns for the right forgotten things. They are nothing but the characters of social media as the web-based mechanism for social good.

The increasing use of social media in Kashmir has resulted in the emergence of a new kind of influencer. Their uniqueness comes out of the fact that they have nothing to do with the common social media influencers who value form over content. Rather, they focus on getting the attention of the public on the pressing matters that affect their community. The influencers through efficient use of their platform can generate motivation and encourage their followers to join in the actions meant to bring positive changes. As social media slowly becomes the primary source



of information and inspiration, the demand for such influencers continues to grow.

Islamic scholars act as models for others by leveraging their positions to spread Islamic teachings, promote tolerant relationships and open-mindedness, and eventually deal with the problems faced by the Muslim community. An outstanding Islamic figure, Respected Mufti Menk, has been the source of immense inspiration to millions of

An influencer poses astounding power to its dedicated audience by involving them in action, encouraging thought, and building bonds in a real way. They activate their spaces to promote causes, enlighten the audience, and reach out to your followers on a deeper level. In contrast, producers are paid to create materials such as videos, images, or written content as they come without necessarily setting any persuasions. However, while both generate mate-

made their opinions and recommendations highly "influential." It can't be undervalued that people follow good content and thus they get to discover important information, various opinions, and good role models. Good content does not just inspire but also makes us aware and takes us far away from our boring way of thinking and instead of that, it motivates us to do or be better. Also, being exposed to good content, will sharpen your critical think-

every one of them introduce themselves as Mass Comm postgraduates without knowing the meaning of the degree.

What is authenticity? How does authenticity relate to online identity, particularly for social media influencers? As a general concept and practice, authenticity is difficult to pin down. It may involve ethical considerations, the alignment of values with behaviors, or transparency in relational exchanges. For the followers of social media influencers, authenticity is associated with the performance of particular interpersonal attributes, communication styles, and digital practices. These include sincerity, trustworthiness, accuracy, originality, spontaneity, and visibility. Trust between influencers and their followers is built over a period of time through interactivity and consistency. If an influencer is shown not to be fully transparent, followers may still regard the influencer as a trusted and reliable source because of their long-term association with the influencer.

It is on social media platforms that many people introduce themselves as influencers or motivational speakers even without having brought about a positive change or influence. The complainant should be revised to be more specific, stating that random comments or visible that lack a deep understanding of the society doesn't mean that that person is an influencer at all. It is of paramount importance for people, in particular, young individuals, to be knowledgeable about the media they have in their hands and the people they are constantly connected with. The real power of influence consists of five very important pillars- authenticity, purpose, and the way society benefits from it. Social media may become a source of power and change the world for the better, yet, it is very important to differentiate who are the authentic leaders who use social media to rate change and the people who seek popularity through superficial posts. One of the important ways through which we can transform society using social media is by highlighting people who strive for substance and relevance. With this in mind, we can use the power of social media to create a society that is more informed, aware, and empathetic.

This article is my perspective devoid of any specific targeting, whether it be an individual or anyone including groups. - It's the only thing that I am attempting to convey here.

The Author is a Professional Social Worker. He can be Mailed at waniimran169@gmail.com



Muslims around the globe as he delivers thought-provoking discourses and writing on Islamic principles and spirituality, urging them to develop their faith and contribute meaningfully to society. That endless flow of shallow and self-serving content amid the constant stream should force individuals to exercise their critical thinking skills and use discernment. Authentic influence is not based on the number of likes one gets or how many followers they have but on their capacity to move, enlighten, and motivate individuals. It is vital to employ your influence to direct attention towards the essential problems, empower the marginalized voices, and initiate the dialogs that promote constructive changes.

To determine whether something is an influencer or not, the purpose and impact should be kept in mind.

rial, it is their originality and their mindset towards the crowd that differs. Influencers primarily focus on having a positive impact, whereas, a content creator more often thinks of aesthetics or entertainment value first. Their triumph or failure is the test of how deeply they are involved in their music, how real their message is, and how strong their mark on their audience.

Influencers get the ability to determine their audience in a spectrum of ways by being authentic, relatable, and trustworthy. They develop a link with their community by the means of sharing personal stories, know-how as well as knowledge from a given field of expertise. Influencers bought trust and reliability by constantly publishing highly relevant materials which allowed them to become "experts in the field" and this

ing and bring deliverance in while making important decisions as well hence delivering you sound judgment and wisdom to navigate the complexities of the digital world. In conclusion, the key lies in good content that will enable us to improve our lives, broaden our learning, and positively change society.

Mushroom growth of fourth estate in Kashmir can be an understatement but it is a fact that there is a free-for-all situation regarding journalism is concerned. From blackmailing contractors, looting, and threatening officials to ruining ethics of journalism. Every story done by reporters working in local dailies, are copied by this bunch of "unprofessional goons". The ever-increasing number of these jourmos most of them being school dropouts or semi-literates is becoming a menace. Surprisingly,

'Those on bail are batting for Muslim reservation': PM Modi



IAN S

BHOPAL: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday tore into Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad Yadav for making a fresh quota pitch for Muslims, saying the INDI Alliance cannot see beyond 'appeasement'.

Addressing a public rally in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar, PM Modi berated the INDI Alliance for Lalu Prasad's 'reservation must for Muslims' statement and said that those who were in jail till some time ago

EXCISE POLICY CASE

Delhi court extends CM Kejriwal's judicial custody till May 20

IAN S

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Tuesday extended Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's judicial custody till May 20, in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

It was a big day for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo, whose plea challenging his arrest by the agency was heard by the Supreme Court on Tuesday. However, the two-judge bench of the top court decided to pronounce their verdict on his interim bail plea on May 9 or in the next week when it will hear his plea again.

Meanwhile, Special Judge Kavari Bawja of the Rouse Avenue Court extended his judicial custody on the expiry of his previously granted 14-day judicial custody.

Earlier, while seeking Kejriwal's judicial custody, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S. V. Raju, for ED, had stated that it reserves the right to request the AAP supremo's further



custody in the future. "... in view of the ruling of the Hon'ble Apex Court in case V. Senthil Balaji Vs. State....., the ED reserves its right to seek further custody remand of the accused," the court had noted.

Raju had submitted that the accused had been evasive and had concealed crucial information during custodial interrogation.

He presented two main grounds for seeking judicial custody -- first, that the accused is highly influential and has the potential to tamper with evidence or influence witnesses if released, which could

GST has benefited the poor, empowered the states: FM Sitharaman

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday that two significant milestones have now been achieved in the larger GST architecture with the appointment of the President of the GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) and gross GST collections crossing the landmark of Rs 2 lakh crore, thanks to heightened economic activity in the country.

In a detailed statement on X, the Finance Minister cited figures to show how GST has benefited the poor by reducing taxes on essential goods, and led to greater finances being made available to the states as part of the objective to promote federalism.

She said that GST, which was first mooted by the erstwhile Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA government, was ultimately implemented under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the necessary consensus was carefully built, and the GST Acts were passed by the Parliament in 2016.

She also said that in 10 years, the UPA was unable to achieve political consensus on GST.

The Finance Minister said that before the implementation of GST, India's indirect tax system was fragmented and complicated, and every state was practically a distinct



market in itself with different rules and tax rates.

Inputs for Central excise duty, etc., could not be availed, leading to an increased tax burden on the common people, she said.

The GST streamlined 17 taxes and 13 cesses into a five-tier structure, simplifying the tax regime. The turnover threshold for registration rose to Rs 40 lakh for goods and Rs 20 lakh for services (from Rs 5 lakh on average under VAT). The GST also reduced 495 different submissions (challan, forms, declarations, etc) across states to just 12, she explained.

The GST simplified compliances through uniform processes, simple registration, single returns, and a fully IT-driven system with minimal physical interface, she added.

The Quarterly Returns with Monthly Payment (QRMP) scheme, with much lower compliances, has benefited over 44 lakh small taxpayers and MSMEs. As per a Deloitte survey (2023), 88 per cent of MSMEs credit GST for cost reductions along with optimised supply chains.

The GST regime has enhanced MSME financing through tools like e-invoicing, TReDS, and the Account Aggregator framework. The number of registered taxpayers under the GST grew to over 1.4 crore from 65 lakh in 2017, the Finance Minister said.

The E-way bill system

removed inter-state checkpoints, reducing logistics costs. Trucks travelled 44 per cent more daily, and corruption at tax 'nakas' decreased. Consequently, domestic goods' inter-state trade surged to 35 per cent of GDP in FY22, up from 23.5 per cent in FY18, she pointed out.

The Finance Minister said, "Reflecting a pro-poor approach, the effective weighted average GST rate has consistently fallen since 2017. The Revenue Neutral Rate was suggested to be 15.3 per cent but was lower at 14.4 per cent in 2017, and it has come down to 11.6 per cent in 2019."

The GST lowered taxes on many essential items compared to pre-GST rates. Common items like hair oil and soaps saw tax being cut from 28 per cent to 18 per cent.

Electrical appliances are taxed at 12 per cent against 31.5 per cent before. Movie

Union Minister Muraleedharan asks CPI(M) to explain CM Vijayan's private foreign trip

IAN S

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Union Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan on Tuesday asked the Kerala unit of the CPI(M) to explain the three-country 19-day private visit of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his family.

"He (CM Vijayan) is duty-bound to explain whether his private visit is sponsored or from his pocket. If it is a sponsored visit, then it should tell who is the sponsor, if not then he should explain the source of his income," said Muraleedharan and added that the reply to the questions can be given by the CPI(M) state secretary also.

On Monday, CM Vijayan, his wife Kamala, and their grandson left for the UAE, and are also scheduled to visit Indonesia and Singapore before returning on May 21.

CM Vijayan's daughter Veena Vijayan and her husband state PWD and Tourism Minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas reached the UAE early this month and are also going to join the CM.

"It's really strange that when



ED seizes over Rs 35 cr, arrests Jharkhand Minister's personal secretary

IAN S

NEW DELHI: After recovering over Rs 35 crore in cash, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Sanjeev Kumar Lal, the personal secretary (PS) of Jharkhand Minister Alamgir Alam and his servant Jahangir Alam on Tuesday morning, an official said.

Meanwhile, sources said that the financial probe agency is preparing to question Congress Minister Alamgir Alam about this. He will soon be summoned by the agency.

On Monday, the ED conducted a raid at the residences of Alamgir Alam's PS and other close associates. The counting of seized currency notes continued late at night and a total of Rs 35.23 cr has been recovered so far. According to officials, Jahangir Alam admitted in preliminary questioning that he was a caretaker of "commission and bribe-acquired money", for which he received a salary of around Rs 15,000 per month.

"It was Minister Alamgir who had employed Jahangir as a servant at his PS Sanjeev Kumar Lal's residence. Before this, for a few days, he had also worked at the minister's residence," said the sources.

Former Cong leader Radhika Khera and actor Shekhar Suman join BJP



IAN S

NEW DELHI: Former Congress national media co-ordinator Radhika Khera and noted actor Shekhar Suman joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at party headquarters here on Tuesday.

The two eminent personalities joined the BJP in the presence of BJP General Secretary Vinod Tawde, the party's national media in-charge Anil Baluni and other leaders.

Soon after joining the BJP, Radhika Khera slammed the grand old party for abandoning the Gandhian beliefs and said, "Today's Congress is anti-Ram and anti-Hindu." Recalling her insult and

LS polls: PM Modi casts vote in Ahmedabad

IAN S

AHMEDABAD: Prime Minister Narendra Modi exercised his franchise in Ahmedabad soon after voting across 25 Lok Sabha constituencies in Gujarat began on Tuesday morning.

Donning a saffron jacket over a white kurta, the Prime Minister cast his vote at Nishan Vidhyala in Ranip, Ahmedabad.

"I appeal to people to vote. I am in Gujarat and have to go to Madhya Pradesh and Telangana. I congratulate the Election Commission for the successful first two election phases. Earlier, there used to be violence during voting, but now it's not the case. The process is election-friendly. This is an example for all democracies of the world. This is a case study," he said.

As the Prime Minister arrived at the polling booth, the air resonated

Woman ties rakhi to PM Modi as huge crowd gathers outside polling booth in Ahmedabad



IAN S

AHMEDABAD: Enthusiastic crowds greeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he cast his vote at Nishan Vidhyala in Ahmedabad's Ranip on Tuesday.

The atmosphere at the polling booth was charged with anticipation and enthusiasm. Residents, echoing the sentiments of millions across the state, greeted the Prime Minister with chants of 'Jai Shri Ram'.

Home Minister Amit Shah welcomed PM Modi outside the polling station and presented saffron khes to him.

Amidst the throngs of supporters and well-wishers, an old woman tied a rakhi to PM Modi, symbolizing the deep-rooted bonds of respect and affection between Gujaratis and their 'mota bhai' Narendra Modi. The PM in return folded his hands and sought blessings.

PM Modi reciprocated this warmth by engaging with the locals and signing autographs. A local presented a painting to the PM, which he accepted readily.

The PM urged everyone to exercise their right to

J&K parts witness sudden rise in day temperature

OWAIS GUL

SRINAGAR: After frequent wet spells till last week, Jammu and Kashmir parts witnessed sudden rise in the maximum temperature on Tuesday as most stations of the Union territory including the twin capitals have recorded the hottest day of the season.

The maximum temperature has witnessed a sudden rise today.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir recorded the hottest day of season at 29.2 degree Celsius while the winter capital of the Union territory, Jammu, has also recorded the hottest day of the season at 38.5 degree Celsius.

As per the details, all the stations across Kashmir have recorded the hottest day of the season with Qazigund recording 28.2 degree Celsius while Kupwara and Kokernag recorded 27.7 degree Celsius and 26.6 degree Celsius respectively.



Pahalgam also recorded the hottest day of the season at 24.6 degree Celsius. Similar temperature was recorded in Pahalgam yesterday also. Gulmarg, a famous ski resort, has also recorded the hottest day of the season at 19.0 degree Celsius.

In Jammu division also, several places have recorded the hottest day of the season, which include Banihal, Katra and Bhaderwah.

In Banihal, a maximum temperature of 29.0 degree Celsius was recorded today while in Katra and Bhaderwah, the mercury settled at 35.1 degree Celsius and 30.4 degree Celsius.

Moreover, Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the weather is expected to remain generally dry with the possibility of afternoon thundershower till May 10.

On May 11, the MeT

Director stated that there is a forecast of partly to generally cloudy weather with the forecast of light rain, thunder at many places.

He added that on May 12, the weather would remain generally cloudy with light to moderate rain, snow (higher reaches) at many places with thunder activity at few places while on May 13, the weather is expected to remain partly to generally cloudy with light rain at few places—(KNO)

LG addresses Allahabad University Alumni Meet at Raj Bhawan

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday addressed the Allahabad University Alumni Meet at Raj Bhawan.

In his address, the Lt Governor lauded the accomplishment of Alumni who have made their mark in various fields in India and abroad.

“Alumni are the brand ambassador of the institution. Given their links with alma-mater, they are in a unique position to strengthen the image of the institution and provide support to the young generation,” the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor recalled the significant contribution of Allahabad University and its Alumni in important areas of socio-economic development.

Determination and moral values are required to produce path-breaking inventions. Allahabad University Alumni’s accomplishment and advancements in diverse fields is a testimony to values imparted in the reputed



institution, the Lt Governor said.

“We are always very proud to recognise the achievements of Alumni who have excelled in their respective areas. They have over the years, made immense contribution to the field of science, culture, politics and civil services,”

he further added.

The Lt Governor called upon the former students who have won laurels in their profession to dedicate themselves for the larger cause of nation building.

Alumni have an onerous responsibility as the role model for young students to continue pursuit

of excellence in respective fields. Alumni should also help in making India a global research and development hub, he said.

SK Singh, President, Allahabad University Alumni Association and members of the Alumni Association were present on the occasion.

CS I&C interacts with industry stakeholders, discusses rejuvenation measures

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In a significant move to revitalize the industrial landscape of Jammu and Kashmir, the Industries and Commerce Department convened a high level interactive session on Tuesday with representatives from prominent industrial associations under the chairmanship of Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce (I&C), Vikramjeet Singh.

The session witnessed active engagement with representatives from prominent industrial associations, underscoring the government’s commitment to addressing the pressing challenges faced by industrial units in the region.

Prominent industrial bodies, including The Federation of Industries Kashmir (FCIK), The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), The PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI), The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) and The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), seized the opportunity to articulate their concerns and submit memoranda outlining critical issues.

These issues, ranging from the situation of sick units to the need for marketing support and financial assistance, were carefully listened to. Valuable suggestions were also put forth to enhance the industrial ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir by the representatives of Industrial associations.

I&C Commissioner Secretary emphasized several key initiatives undertaken by the administration to



support industrial growth and address the challenges faced by industrial units in the region. He highlighted The Raising and Accelerating MSME Productivity (RAMP) program, which is a World Bank supported initiative by the Government of India to help micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) improve their productivity and competitiveness.

The Commissioner Secretary affirmed that the government is actively considering the importance of providing marketing assistance to industrial units, a matter currently under discussion with senior officials. This forthcoming support aims to empower businesses in promoting their products and services, thereby expanding their market reach and bolstering revenue streams, he added.

He underscored the necessity of forging partnerships with additional financial institutions, such as Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), to diversify the financial support available to industrial units. This strategic collaboration with NBFCs will offer industrial units access to a

spectrum of financing solutions, including loans, lines of credit, and bespoke financial products tailored to their unique requirements. The Commissioner Secretary reiterated that the ongoing dialogue between the industrial stakeholders and the government aims to bridge communication gaps and ensure effective implementation of government schemes thereby contributing towards overall economic development of Jammu and Kashmir.

Among others the meeting was attended by Director JKTPD, Khalid Jahangir Managing; Director, Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir, Mehmood Shah; Managing Director SICOP/SIDCO, Inderjeet; Director Industries & Commerce Jammu, Arun Manhas; Director Industries & Commerce Kashmir, Khalid Majeed; Managing Director Handloom and Handicraft Corporation, Atul Sharma; Joint Director Industries & Commerce Kashmir, Zahoor Ahmad Magray; Joint Director Handicraft & Handloom Department Kashmir and Deputy Secretary, I&C and other officials of I&C Department.

LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

General Observer visits Kupwara, oversees election preparedness

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA: General Observer for 01-Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency (PC), Deependra Singh Kushwah Tuesday visited Kupwara district to oversee election preparedness. He undertook a comprehensive inspection of various election installations and made a detailed assessment of the action plan in the district.

On reaching Kupwara, DEO Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan and SSP Kupwara, Shobit Saksena briefed the Observer regarding the election preparedness including enforcement of model code of conduct, expenditure monitoring, security plan, transport and communication plan and the functioning of VSTs and FSTs and coordination

efforts to ensure a successful election process.

The General Observer accompanied by DEO Kupwara and other officers visited the District Election Control Room, Kupwara, where he took stock of election related activities being monitored. He checked the daily reports including, Law and order report, FST, SST report and C-vigil app.

The Observer meticulously inspected the functioning of District MCMC Kupwara where he checked Print, Electronic and Social Media monitoring and took the appraisal of action taken reports.

The General Observer inspected the Distribution and Collection Center established at Government Degree College Sogam and Model Polling station No’s 61 and 62 established at

Government Girls Higher Secondary School Sogam. He took detailed assessment of facilities and arrangements put in place for smooth conduct of Lok Sabha elections.

On the occasion, the Observer instructed the concerned to ensure all safety measures and adherence to the guidelines of Election Commission of India to facilitate smooth and efficient election process.

Earlier, General Observer visited Handwara where he inspected the strong room established at ITI Handwara, Polling stations established at Boys Higher Secondary School Handwara, Girls Higher Secondary School Handwara and Middle School Chotipora. He conducted a comprehensive assessment of infrastructure and amenities at each site.

LG reviews functioning of Cooperative Department



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the functioning of the Cooperative Department.

The Lt Governor took appraisal of the interventions and Schemes in Cooperative Sector including the progress achieved in establishing Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS). He reviewed the functioning of Cooperative Banks, Cooperative Training & Educational Institutions, Societies and Cooperative Super Bazaars.

The Lt Governor appraised measures taken for modernization and upgradation of existing Super Bazaars, with a focus on devising a comprehensive road-map to strengthen these essen-

tial retail hubs. He called for exploring avenues for enhancing the infrastructure, services, and market reach of Super Bazaars to better serve the consumers and promote economic growth. He said the dedication, determination, faith and collective efforts of cooperatives will pave the way to prosperity.

The meeting also reviewed the functioning of Common Service Centers (CSCs). The Lt Governor directed for ensuring CSCs compliance with regulatory standards.

He emphasized the importance of enhancing transparency and accountability in the delivery of services through CSCs, reaffirming the administration’s commitment to citizen-centric governance.

Div Com takes holistic review of SOPs for Kandizal breach

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri Tuesday convened a meeting to take holistic review of flood mitigation plan and SOP for management of breach at Kandizal segment of river Jhelum to save city from massive deluge in future.

The meeting was attended by CEO, SSCL; Deputy Commissioners of Srinagar, Budgam and Pulwama; Directors of School Education department and RDD; Chief

Engineers of I&FC, KPDC, PHE, UEED and MED; MD SRTC, Director Indian Meteorological Department; Nodal Officer SEOC, Kashmir; besides Core Commander BB Cant; SSPs, Officers of NDRF, SDRF, Civil Defense, Fire & Emergency etc.

Addressing the meeting, Div Com directed for establishment of a sophisticated decision making support system to ensure flow of information through proper communication system to stakeholders at the time of flood exigency.

While underscoring the

importance of Kandizal breach to save inundation of urban areas, Div Com stressed on framing SOPs to take the final call when required.

He added that the breach should be the ultimate attempt and the last resort to avert danger to the urban areas of the Srinagar City, wherein the decision should be taken in context to the ground situations.

He said the objective of the breach is to save the more vital infrastructure and areas by inundation of

less vital ones. To tackle the flood situation, he emphasized on building a mechanism for making men and material available to saturate the requirement when need arises.

He also directed for the establishment of an emergency helpline to respond to the crisis during floods.

Besides, he asked for updation of resources on India Disaster Resource Network (IDRN), identification of relief centers and usage of satellite phones.

Earlier, CE, I&FC gave a detailed presentation on

Kandizal breach, impact of breach, parameters to monitor river gauge, previous data and changes in flood plains over years.

CE stated that the location where the river generally breaches is located near village Kandizal in District Pulwama.

The meeting was informed that the area of Kandizal over the past few decades has seen significant changes in the land use and land cover by way of huge urbanization and significant reduction in the once vast and open lands.

Two-day workshop on ‘Wetlands for Life’ begins at MERC

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Kashmir University’s Media Education Research Centre (MERC), in collaboration with the Centre for Media Studies New Delhi, organised a two-day media engagement programme on ‘Wetlands for LIFE’ for media students and scholars. The workshops inaugural session was held on Tuesday.

The workshop aims to equip media academicians with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills in wetlands conservation and environmental journalism. Through a series of engaging sessions, expert presentations, and field visits, participants explored the ecological significance of wetlands, the role of the media in advocating for their conservation, and effective storytelling techniques for environmental reporting.

The inaugural session was

attended by several dignitaries, including Professor Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir; Prof. Sabeha Mufti, HOD MERC, Kunal Bharat, Forestry and Biodiversity Advisor; Annu Anand, Director, CMS, programmes; Professor Aliya Ahmad; Prof. Syeda Afshana; Prof. Malik Zahra; Dr. Afsana Rashid; Dr. Raashid Maqbool, Dr. Irfan Hashim; Dr. Adil Bakshi; and faculty of different departments.

The workshop aims to hold diverse range of sessions, interactive discussions, and hands-on activities led by esteemed experts and practitioners in the fields of environmental conservation and journalism.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Nilofer Khan, talked during her address about the Wetlands of Kashmir and their significance in terms of environmental conservation and said that it is high time to preserve the wetlands that are facing degradation



threats and shrinking issues.

“As academics, we have to start the conservation wetlands campaign on a large scale, from universities to schools, to educate the students about the preservation and conservation efforts of these wetlands,” she added.

Commending MERC and CMS for organising this workshop, she said that such initiatives should be continued in the future so that we can educate the students on how to save our environment, water bodies, and wetlands.

HOD MERC, Professor Sabeha Mufti, while welcoming the guests during the inaugural session, stated that the programme was an opportunity to promote knowledge about the environment and wetlands preservation in Kashmir.

The wetlands in Kashmir, including Wular Lake, Hokar Sar Lake, and Khushal Sar Lake, have been facing the church for the last several years, while the government is doing a tremendous job of preserving and restoring these wetlands.

“In this programme, we aim to discuss the strategy and how to preserve these wetlands, which are facing degradation threats in Kashmir,” she said, adding that the MERC has played a tremendous role in producing a lot of journalists who have covered environmental issues in Kashmir from time to time.

“Through this programme, we have to develop the skills of the students as to how they can cover environmental issues in Kashmir,” the HOD said.

Annu Anand, Director CMS,

shed light on the importance of the wetlands in Kashmir, through which thousands of families are getting livelihoods preserved with each passing day.

About CMS, she said that the centre is working hard on issues pertaining to environmental issues across the country. “Last year we launched a programme on a large scale on sustainable development in which around 500 students took part,” she added, that the centre’s work has been published in several leading newspapers and magazines in the country.

Furthermore, Kunal Bharat, Forestry and Biodiversity Advisor (GLZ), shed light on the programme’s key focus across two days and said that the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WCMA) will collaborate with us on the second day of the workshop, for which we will visit the Wular Shores, where students will be educated practically as to how the

wetlands are being preserved and restored through various efforts.

He also talked about the many workshops and film festivals that were conducted by them across India and shed light on the outcome of these workshops in preserving the wetlands.

The workshop was coordinated by Dr. Afsana Rashid, Assistant Professor MERC, and co-ordinated by Dr. Irfan Hashim, Lecturer MERC.

Meanwhile, Dr. Afsana Rashid, the coordinator of the workshop, presented a vote of thanks, which she expressed to the faculty, scholars, and students.

Besides talking about conservation efforts for wetlands, she talked more about how we aim to inspire and empower the next generation of journalists to become champions of environmental protection and sustainability.