



# JINDRAH IMAGES

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## Tribals are angry with Congress: PM

AGENCIES  
JAIPUR, APR 21

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused the Congress party of ignoring the welfare of tribals, saying it could not find a single person from the Adivasi community who could be the President of the country during its 60-year rule.

"Were the tribals not capable? Just see the Congress' mindset. But in 2014, you blessed us..., and now a tribal daughter is the country's president. This is real participation. This is the spirit of the Constitution given by Babasaheb," Modi said addressing a public meeting in Banswara in support of BJP's Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya.

Modi said that the BJP is committed towards the welfare of the poor and works honestly, but the Congress sells "fear, hunger and corruption in its shop".

He alleged that the Congress



has always instilled fear among the Dalits, tribals and minorities and is now spreading lies about democracy, the Constitution and reservation to scare them.

"But the country is no longer in the grip of fear. That is why their lies are no longer working. In the states with considerable tribal popula-

tion, the Congress is ousted from power or has been relegated to the third or fourth position... There is anger among the tribal population and there are concrete reasons for it," Modi said.

He said a tribal welfare ministry was formed only under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.

"From among crores of tribal sons and daughters, the Congress could not a single person in 60 years who could become the President of the country," Modi said, adding the Congress and the INDIA bloc even opposed the candidature of the current President who is from the tribal community.

## Army progressing Rs 6800 Cr desi shoulder-fired missile projects for China, Pakistan borders

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, APR 21

Amid shortages in the inventory of shoulder-fired missiles to tackle aerial threats on borders with China and Pakistan, the Indian Army is progressing two cases worth over Rs 6,800 crore for developing Very Short Range Air Defence Systems indigenously.

The Army has plans of developing and buying over 500 launchers and around 3000 missiles from indigenous routes.

At the same time, the Indian Army along with the other stakeholders is looking at the possibility of an old tender scrapped earlier in which the Russian Iгла-S was selected in view of the delays for finding replacement for the old Iгла-IM missiles.

Defence Ministry officials said the current VSHORAD missiles in the inventory of the Indian Army and Indian Air Force are all with IR homing guidance systems and the Iгла IM VSHORAD missile system was inducted in 1989 and was planned for de-induction in



2013.

"At present, there is a Rs 4800 crore project in which a public sector unit headquartered in Hyderabad and a private sector Pune-based firm have been engaged for developing a laser beam riding VSHORADS which would be used by the forces to protect the borders to provide protection from enemy drones, fighter aircraft and choppers," defence forces' officials said.

The project would be for developing 200 launchers and 1200 missiles for supplying to the Indian Army and Air Force and the lead in the project is

the Indian Army which is the biggest user of these missiles, they said.

Of the 1200 missiles planned to be inducted in the project, it is likely to get 700 while the remaining would be for the IAF.

The two firms have to produce the prototype of the system under the Indian Designed, Developed and Manufactured clause of the Defence Acquisition Procedure, they said.

However, industry sources informed that the progress made in this programme

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## Traffic disrupted for several hours on Jmu-Sgr NH

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

The traffic on Jammu-Srinagar national highway was disrupted for several hours on Sunday to repair some cracks that were found in the middle of the road near Banihal, officials said.

The vehicular movement

on the 270-km highway - the only all weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country - was stopped from both sides around 11.30 am after "some cracks developed in the middle of the road at Hingni in Ramban district," officials of the traffic department said.

After over five-hours of res-

toration work, the stranded traffic on the highway was restored, they said.

The highway is witnessing frequent disruptions over the past five days owing to heavy rains that triggered landslides, mudslides and shooting stones from the hillocks at several places including Mehad, Gangroo, Kishtwari Pather and

Dalwas between Nashri and Banihal Tunnels - the most problematic stretch of the arterial road.

The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), however, managed to keep the highway open by ensuring timely clearance of landslide debris.

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## Days of Congress are numbered, will be wiped out soon: Jugal

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

Stating that the graph of BJP has touched all-time high and it will come out to be more stronger in 2024 general elections, Jugal Kishore Sharma, party candidate from Jammu-Reasi constituency, said that the days of Congress are numbered and it will be completely wiped out soon in coming days. Addressing public meetings and interacting with the people during day-long road shows in Chowadi, Janipur, Sainik Colony, Purmandal Morh, Nai Basti, Ajit Nagar, Raipur Satwari, Roi Morh, Miran Sahib, Simbal and R.S.Pura, Jugal blamed Congress for discriminating with different sections of the society in Jammu and Kashmir and toying line of the votaries of autonomy and self-rule. He said that while Congress was in power at the centre for more than six decades and here in JK too, it headed state govern-



ments for decades but unfortunately, it had different yardsticks for different sections and never treated all equally. He was accompanied by BJP vice president Surjeet Singh Salathia, former minister Chand-er Prakash Ganga, former MLC Ch Vikram Randhawa, DDC Vice-Chairperson Suraj Singh, constituency incharge Balwant Singh Mankotia, Former Deputy Mayor Baldev Billawaria, District Prabhari Ayodhya Gupta, District President Rekha Mahajan, OBC Morcha

National secretary Rashpal Verma, Advocate Ravinder Gupta, Ex corporator Sunita Gupta, Pawan Singh.

Jugal Kishore Sharma said that gone are the days when Congress could garner public support on false and misleading slogans. The people repeatedly voted for Congress with high hopes, which never came true. He said that the people have now developed faith in the working of the BJP-led

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## Govt teacher nabbed with hand grenades, Pak made pistol in Poonch

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APRIL 21

In a major crackdown ahead of upcoming election in the area, police have arrested one government teacher with grenades and a Pakistan made pistol in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Police here on Sunday said that acting of specific information, a joint operation was launched by army, police and special operation group team from Poonch in Hari Budha area.

"A registered Over-Ground Worker (OGW) named Qamar-ud-Din, who is the headmaster in school was taken into custody with a Pak-made

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AGENCIES  
KATHIHAR, APRIL 21

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday charged the Congress-led opposition with being soft on terror and indifferent towards the uplift of deprived castes, and alleged that their return to power could cause "riots, atrocities



and poverty".

Addressing an election rally in the Kathihar Lok Sabha constituency of Bihar, the former BJP president also credited his party with having given the nation, in Narendra Modi, its "first OBC prime minister" who has "put an end" to dynasty politics. "Modi wiped

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## Emraan Hashmi shooting for 'Ground Zero' in Jammu and Kashmir

JNEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, APR 21

Actor Emraan Hashmi is currently busy shooting for his film 'Ground Zero' in Jammu and Kashmir. Several videos and images from the set location circulated online in which we can see a slew of fans in Baramulla getting excited seeing Emraan. Emraan could be seen donning an Indian army uniform.

Directed by Tejas Vijay Deoskar, known for Marathi films such as Ajinkya and Bucket List, 'Ground Zero' features Emraan as Indian army



officer. Ground Zero is backed by Excel Entertainment, the production banner of actor-filmmaker Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani.

In 2022, reports of Emraan being injured in a stone pelting incident in Pahalgam, Kashmir, went viral on

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## 8 IEDs, 2 Wireless sets seized from Terrorist Hideout in Rajouri

JNEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI/JAMMU, APR 21

Security forces on Sunday busted a terrorist hideout in a village in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, leading to the recovery of eight Improvised Explosive Devices, or IEDs, two wireless sets, and some ammunition, officials said.

The recovered material was in a highly rusted condition, indicating that the hideout was in use when terrorists were operating in the district before it was freed of militancy over two decades ago, officials said. They said police assisted by



the Army launched a search operation at Azmatatabad village in Thannamandi area, 30 kms from Rajouri town, and unearthed the hideout.

While one of the IEDs weighed 1 kg, the rest seven

were half a kg each, the officials said.

Three magazines of AK-47 rifle, 102 rounds of ammunition, one charger, and two wireless sets were the other items seized.

## Boy from J&K's Bharot Village secures AIR-388 in UPSC after cracking NEET and JKAS exams

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

Ghulam Maya Din, hailing from Bharot, a remote hilly area of Pirpanjal of Thanamandi tehsil, Rajouri district in Jammu and Kashmir, has secured an AIR 388 in the recently announced UPSC CSE 2023.

Earlier, he had cracked the NEET and studied medicine at Government Medical College Jammu before clearing the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) examinations.

Expressing happiness, Ghulam Maya Din, said, "People are happy with my



success and giving blessings. Many people see my achievement as their own. They are celebrating and becoming a part of my success. I am very thankful to all of them."

He also advised UPSC aspirants to avoid distractions and remain focused on their goals.

Ghulam Din said, "Students

should avoid distractions, make smart use of social media, and maintain focus and curiosity. If you can keep your distractions aside and try to be focused, then you can excel UPSC CSE exam, which is considered one of the toughest exams in the country."

Speaking about his UPSC journey, Din said, "In my initial days, I was not interested in this exam. I didn't know how to read newspapers... I had a little knowledge of humanities or general knowledge. So, it took me some time. I believe 1.5-2 years of preparation is necessary to gain

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## Lord Ram belongs to everyone, not only Hindus: Farooq

AGENCIES  
RANCHI, APR 21

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah said on Sunday that Lord Ram belongs to everyone, not only Hindus. Abdullah was addressing the opposition INDIA bloc's 'Ulgulan Naya Maharally' in Ranchi.

Without naming any party, he said, "They are selling Lord Ram, claiming that they brought him. They do not know Lord Ram. He does not belong to Hindus alone but to the world. Ram is for everyone. But they have made Ram their own,

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Mian Deedo 244th Birth Anniversary Celebrations

## No compromise with Jammu's honour, Dogra pride : Rana

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAGTI, APRIL 21

Describing Mian Deedo, Daata Ranpat, and Bawa Jitto as pillars of inspiration for generations, Senior BJP leader Mr Devender Singh Rana today said their legacies are deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness of brave Dogras, shaping values and aspirations.

Speaking at a function held to celebrate 244th birth anniversary of Mian Deedo at his memorial Devsthan at Jagti, Mr Devender Rana said these historical icons continue to embody ideals that resonate with society's core principles. He reiterated the enduring significance of preserving the pride & honor of Jammu and the glorious Dogra culture and said adding that the essence of our heritage, deeply intertwined with our rich history, vibrant culture, and cherished traditions, serves as the bedrock of our identity and Jammu's honour and Dogra pride will never be compromised.

"They embody the spirit of the Dogras' struggle for various rights—rights of the farmers, equality, social justice, and freedom of thought and identity—all through acts of immense valour", Mr Rana said, adding that as we commemorate the 244th birth anniversary of Mian Deedo



Ji, his legacy reminds us of the importance of standing up for what is right, even in the face of adversity.

The function was attended by Yudhvir Sethi, Zorawar Singh, Yuva Rajput Sabha President Vikram Singh, Somnath Khajuria, Rajan Singh, Padam Shri Mohan Singh, Sumant Singh among others. "Mian Deedo's life embodies the timeless virtues of courage, compassion, and wisdom and his tales of bravery, recounted in folklore and literature, serve as a beacon of hope and resilience, transcending time and geography", he said, adding that his unwavering commitment to justice and righteousness, Mian Dido's exemplary life serves as a guiding light for humanity and to our younger generation.

Rana said the Dogra heritage is not merely a collection of artefacts or stories; it is a living legacy that connects us to our

roots, reminding us of the sacrifices and triumphs of our forefathers.

He said Jammu, with its distinctive ethos and dynamic spirit, stands as a testament to the resilience and valour of its people, particularly the Dogras, whose legacy is etched in the annals of time. The principles of integrity, dignity, and respect form the cornerstone of our community's ethos, guiding us through the ages with unwavering resolve and as custodians of this invaluable legacy, it is incumbent upon us to safeguard these principles from compromise or erosion. We must remain vigilant in upholding the values that define us, ensuring they endure as a beacon of inspiration for generations, he said.

Rana asserted that as the custodians of this invaluable heritage, which is a treasure trove of traditions, art, language and valour deserves not just our admiration but it is

our collective responsibility to ensure its preservation and propagation for future generations.

Rana said Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's unwavering commitment to preserving and promoting the diverse cultural tapestry of India encompasses the cherished heritage of the Dogra community. Recognizing the invaluable contributions of Dogra culture to the cultural mosaic of the nation, Prime Minister Modi has championed initiatives aimed at safeguarding and celebrating this rich legacy, he added.

"As we stand at this juncture of time, let us all pledge to uphold Dogra heritage with pride and dedication. It is not just a gift we must nurture and bequeath to posterity with a sense of pride", said Mr Rana, adding that together let us preserve, promote and raise our Dogra heritage to new heights.

## Modi govt empowered women: Prabhat, Sanjita

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

J&K BJP Treasurer Prabhat Singh Jamwal and Mahila Morcha President Sanjita Dogra addressed a meeting of women at Ward 39, in Toph to seek votes for BJP's MP candidate Jugal Kishore Sharma.

Updesh Andotra, senior leader of BJP Mahila Morcha, Rita Kotwal and Rita Jamwal also addressed the gathering.

Prabhat Singh Jamwal, while addressing the gathering said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led union government has empowered the women



of this nation, through its sturdy policies, initiatives, and schemes at the ground level. He said that none other than the Modi government has done so much for the upliftment and welfare of women and asked the women to strengthen

the Modi government by voting in favour of Jugal Kishore Sharma. Sanjita Dogra, in her address, attacked the earlier governments in Jammu & Kashmir for butchering the rights of women for several decades. She said

that Congress, NC, and PDP utterly neglected this 50 per cent population and took the decisions that favoured their own families only while pushing the future of other women of J&K into darkness. She said that Modi ji took bold decisions to undo the injustice and empowered the women in the J&K along with the whole of nation.

Updesh Andotra appealed to them to vote in favour of Jugal Kishore Sharma to boost the development and to continue the decisions that have saved the lives of women in J&K.

## India has become Vishwa Guru in unemployed youth under Modi regime: Tony

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

Taranjit Singh Tony, General Secretary of J&K Pradesh Congress Committee and DDC Suchetgarh, asserted that India, once celebrated for its potential as a global leader, has regrettably assumed the unenviable title of "Vishwa Guru" in youth unemployment under Modi's regime.

Speaking at the public meeting held here at Chatha Kulliyian today, the senior Congress said that the nation grapples with staggering unemployment figures, particularly among its youth population. He highlighted the stark disparity between the fake promises made by Prime Minister Modi, particularly the pledge to create two crore jobs annually, and the harsh reality of escalating unemployment plaguing the nation. Despite these grand Guarantees, unemployment rates have soared to unprecedented levels, reaching a peak that threatens the livelihoods and aspirations of countless individuals and families across the country.



He reaffirmed the undeniable truth that all Modi Guarantees are proved mere "jumlas," as evidenced by the stark realities faced by the people of India. He highlighted the promises made in 2014 and reasserted in 2019, emphasizing how each pledge has ultimately unraveled as empty rhetoric, failing to translate into tangible improvements for the populace.

Tony drew attention to the country's dismal performance in key indices such as the Happiness Index. He lamented that, in stark contrast to the lofty title of "Vishwa Guru," India finds itself lagging behind even its neighbors like Pakistan

and Bangladesh, highlighting a grim picture of the nation's reality, where hunger and unemployment have become defining features of daily life.

The senior Congress leader underscored that, in the face of the current economic crisis and the failure of the incumbent government to deliver on its promises, the Indian National Congress-led INDI Alliance emerges as the sole viable option for the people of the country. He emphasized the Alliance's commitment to inclusive growth, job creation, and social justice, positioning it as a beacon of hope and change in these turbulent times. He urged people to unite under the INDI

Alliance banner, rallying together to forge a brighter and more prosperous future for all Indians.

Tony appealed to the people of India, particularly those in Jammu and Kashmir, to exercise caution and skepticism when confronted with Modi's assurances, warning that history is bound to repeat itself. He called upon people to critically evaluate the performance and promises of the current government, holding them accountable for their actions and their impact on the nation's well-being. He urged voters to exercise their democratic right in support of Congress candidate in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls aiming to safeguard the country's future.

The meeting was organized by Mohinder Singh, Transport Chairman in which Jasbir Singh, Bal Krishan, Shanty Singh and Teja Singh. Prominent among those who were present include Aaya Singh, Ashraf, Daljeet Kaur, Sonia Kaur, Sunita Devi, Rajneesh Sharma, Vice President JKPC and Satish Sharma, General Secretary JKPC.

## Congress campaign gains momentum in Jammu

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APRIL 20

Continuing campaign for the congress candidate Shri Raman Bhalla, JKPC General Secretary (Org) Narinder Gupta along with Michael Wazir PCC Secretary, Parshotam Mehra Senior OBC leader and Ricky Dalotra HQ incharge PYC held public meeting at Old Rehari Jammu. The meeting was organized by Mr. Camres David Babloo, Senior Congress leader and was attended by large number of local residents of Old Rehari and adjoining areas.

While addressing the gathering Mr. Narinder Gupta said that people of Jammu and Kashmir are fed up with the wrong policies of BJP led Govt. and is going to teach lesson to the BJP. He also said that Congress will sweep both the Lok Sabha seats in the upcoming parliament



elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Gupta enumerated the several benefits schemes launched by the Congress party during UPA-I and UPA II, like Right to work (MGNREGA), Right to food, Right to education, Right to information etc. but BJP after coming to power in 2014, has snatched people's rights and brought all type of miseries to the common man by imposing heavy taxes, price rise and unemployment. In this election Congress has come out with its Nyay Pattar for youth, women, farmers and workers, he added.

Camres David Babloo while addressing said that people of J&K are worst sufferers of the Modi led government's policies as our rights snatched and lands, jobs not secure while our status downgraded. We the people of J&K are facing worst kind of situation since 2014 & youths frustrated. He said that farmers, youth, traders, daily wagers, Anganwari, Asha workers all are passing through difficult phase, it is the right time to vote against BJP and bring back congress to rule the country in order to establish peace and prosperity in the country

and especially in Jammu and Kashmir.

Thomas Khokhar- General Secretary PCC asked the party workers to remain active and present at the grass root level 24x7 and intensify the effort to strengthen the congress party and ensure the victory of Jammu Reasi seat.

Michael Wazir PCC Secretary said the present Govt. has failed to address the public issues and as a result the miseries of the people multiplied. He said that people are being fleeced in the name of anti people and anti youth government which needs to be thrown out.

Other who spoke in the meeting include Pardeep Bhagat, Nek Mohd, Feastus Sotra, Suraj, Thomas Paul, Polus Gill, Raju Masih, Sogadar

## Support INDI Alliance Candidate to safeguard J&K from BJP's divisive policies: Vijay Lochan

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

Vijay Lochan, Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference SC Cell, urged people of Jammu to rally behind the INDI Alliance candidate in the ensuing Lok Sabha polls with an aim to safeguard the democratic fabric of India and also to uphold the principles of justice and equality.

Today, a meeting was convened at Village Makhayala in Marh constituency to galvanize support for Raman Bhalla, INDI alliance Candidate for Jammu Lok Sabha seat.

The meeting was organized by Desh Raj Sangral in which Vijay Lochan, Chairman of JKNC SC Cell, was the Chief Guest. On the occasion, Ram Lal District President SC Cell, Som Nath Retd. Principal, Baldev Raj Retd Master, Bua Ditta Retd Master, Lambardar Raj Kumar, Capt. Harbans Lal, Bodh Raj Retd Inspector, Milki Ram, B.D Thappa, Jia Lal and Baljeet Kumar were also present in the meeting. During the meeting, Vijay Lochan asserted that the people belonging to OBC community are reeling under depressed conditions as the present dispensation in J&K has utterly failed to provide justice to this under-



privileged section of the society. He raised serious concern over the increasing plight of the people, exacerbated by the prevailing situation.

Highlighting the urgent need for concerted action, Vijay Lochan urged the people to rally behind the INDI Alliance candidate, emphasizing the pivotal role they must play in safeguarding the nation from the BJP's divisive agenda. He observed that the resounding wave of support in favor of the INDI Alliance signals a groundswell of resistance against the forces threatening the nation's democratic ethos.

"The time has come for us, as responsible citizens, to unite in defense of our democratic values. The

BJP's divisive politics and authoritarian tendencies threaten the very essence of our pluralistic society. It is imperative that we join forces and elect leaders who prioritize the interests of the people above all else," he added.

Lochan appealed to the people of the area to support INDI Alliance Candidate in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls with an aim to get rid from the misrule of BJP government at the Centre. Rakesh Singh Raka, Central Zone Vice President of Youth Wing, highlighted the detrimental impact of the BJP regime on the youth, stressing the urgent need for transformative change. He emphasized the youth's pivotal role in shaping the

nation's future and called for their active participation in driving positive reforms.

Sham Lal Basson and Rishpal Singh, former Corporators, highlighted the problems being faced by the weaker sections of society under the present dispensation. They emphasized the imperative of championing their rights and advocated for inclusive policies that uplift the marginalized. They underscored the pressing need for social justice and equitable opportunities for all, resonating deeply with the attendees and galvanizing further support for the INDI Alliance candidate, Raman Bhalla in the ensuing Lok Sabha polls.

## Continuity in Excellence: Prof. B.S. Sahay Reappointed as Director, IIM Jammu for Second Term

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu is pleased to announce the reappointment of Professor B. S. Sahay as the Director, IIM Jammu for a second term. Prof. B.S. Sahay's reappointment comes as a testament to his visionary leadership, dedication, and contributions to the growth and success of IIM Jammu during his initial tenure. The appointment of Prof. B.S. Sahay is done as per IIM Act amended in 2023.

Having served with distinction in his first term, Prof. B.S. Sahay has demonstrated exemplary vision, managerial acumen, and a deep com-



mitment to advancing the institute's academic and research agenda. Under his guidance, IIM Jammu has achieved significant milestones and scaled new heights of excellence.

Prof. B. S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, expressed his profound gratitude, stating, "I am happy to be entrusted with the privilege of serving as the Director of IIM Jammu for a second term. I am deeply committed to leveraging

our past successes as a foundation, propelling our institution to even greater heights of excellence and distinction in the years ahead. I extend my sincere gratitude to the Board of Governor, IIM Jammu for their trust and confidence in me. Their guidance and leadership have been instrumental in shaping the strategic direction of our institute, and I look forward to our continued collaboration in achieving our shared goals. At this juncture, I would like to extend my thanks to the IIM Jammu fraternity for their steadfast support and co-operation. It is through our collective efforts and shared vision that we will continue to advance the frontiers of management

education and research to make it a world-class Institute."

The Board of Governors and IIM Jammu fraternity congratulate Prof. B. S. Sahay on his reappointment as Director, IIM Jammu.

# Azad launches election campaign from Ancestral village in south Kashmir

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, APRIL 21

Chairman DPAP Ghulam Nabi Azad launched his election campaign for the Anantnag-Rajouri-Poonch seat from his ancestral village Nagam, Kokernag. Reflecting on the importance of roots, Azad emphasized the significance of never forgetting where we come from. He expressed joy in visiting Nagam, noting that many years ago, most of the people who now reside in the Chenab Valley migrated from South Kashmir. Despite the distance, they have retained a strong connection to their roots. He highlighted the resilience of our shared culture, where love and affection continue to thrive despite the geographical divide. Azad pledged that, once elected Chief Minister, he would prioritize constructing a tunnel to bridge the gap and improve connectivity between the Chenab Valley and South Kashmir,



ensuring easier access for both regions. He said, "People of our Chenab Valley maintain a strong bond with South Kashmir, as many migrated from there. However, our roots remain firmly planted here. We are committed to developing both regions and fostering connectivity between them."

Azad slammed both the parties NC & PDP for perpetuating division and exploiting the people with empty slogans. Azad emphasized the urgent need to shift the political discourse towards tan-

gible progress and unity. "Enough is enough," declared Azad, "We cannot allow ourselves to be divided and deceived any longer. Both parties have prioritized their own agendas over the needs of the people, manipulating sentiments for personal gain." He outlined a clear vision, stating, "My agenda is straightforward: development, employment, and peace. These are not mere slogans but the pillars upon which a prosperous society is built. It's time to move beyond rhetoric and focus on real solutions

that uplift every citizen." Together, we can reject the politics of division and embrace a path of progress that benefits every individual, regardless of background or affiliation. He slammed political leaders for seeking votes in South Kashmir while failing to deliver tangible benefits to the people. He questioned their track record of governance and highlighted his own efforts in the region, including the establishment of a medical college, construction of roads, schools, and hospitals. "It's time to hold

our leaders accountable," asserted Azad. "Many are vying for votes in South Kashmir, but what have they truly accomplished for the people? I've personally invested in this region, establishing vital infrastructure and institutions that directly benefit the people." "Actions speak louder than words," he remarked. "While some leaders merely exploit voters with empty promises, I've delivered concrete results that improve the quality of life for residents in South Kashmir." Azad reaffirmed his dedication to addressing the pressing issues facing the region. "My record speaks for itself," he declared. "I stand for transparent governance, inclusive development, and empowering every citizen to thrive." Among others who were present there include, Gen Secretary Ch Haroon Khatana, Spokesperson Adv Saleem Parray and Salman Nizami Chief Spokesperson.

# People fed-up with BJP's misrule, craving for change: Uday Chib



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

Uday Bhanu Chib, National General Secretary of Indian Youth Congress, today said that people of Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere are fed-up with lies-riddle policies and misrule of BJP and longing for a change.

Addressing the meeting organized by Karan Sharma, President Youth Congress at Ward No 36 in Jammu North Assembly segment, the senior Congress leader said that the BJP leadership is only proficient in selling lies which it did very well in J&K also. He said that problems which the people of trouble-torn J&K were facing since long, have been increased manifold under the BJP Government with no respite coming to sight in near future.

He said that his sole aim is to accomplish the mission set in by the Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi in providing succor to masses by way of rendering selfless service and highlighting the misdeeds of ruling party at the Centre. He said issues which the common man is confronting right now are mainly due to BJP's thoughtless push to directionless policies.

"Unprecedented hike in fuel prices, ruthless farm bills, inflation touching new heights, democratic institutions facing threat, and what not", he said is the gift of BJP to people, adding that it was Rahul Gandhi who raised these issues vociferously and forced ruling party to go on back foot many times.

Uday asserted that not only J&K but other States across the country are also yearning for the change as BJP has done nothing on ground except crafting new 'Jumlas' on all the issues which concern common man. He emphasized that Congress being a party of principles is all

set to shine in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls and will form Government at the Centre.

Among those who were present include Harjeet Singh Bagi, Vice President DCC Jammu Urban, Surinder Kumar Vice Chairman SC Cell JKPC, Deepanshu IYC National Spokesperson, Rushu President Ward 37, Madan Singh Chib, Tarun Vaid and others.

Karan Sharma, recently appointed President of Ward 36, expressed heartfelt gratitude to senior Youth Congress leaders Jagdev Gaga, Uday Bhanu Chib, Amit Pathania, Akash Bharat, Vankul Jamba, Harjeet Singh Bagi, and Surinder for entrusting him with the responsibility to serve. He acknowledged their confidence in him and pledged to fulfill his duties with dedication and integrity, striving to make positive contributions to the community.

# NC pays glowing tributes to Bodhraj Bali on his 21st death anniversary

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APRIL 21

Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on Sunday paid glowing tributes to former minister and senior party leader Mr Bodh Raj Bali on his 21st death anniversary, describing him as a leader par excellence who devoted all his life in service of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.



Leading the party cadre in paying floral tributes to Mr Bali, at a function held at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan here this morning, Provincial Secretary Jammu Sheikh Bashir Ahmed highlighted the immense contribution of the veteran leader in the development and progress of Jammu and Kashmir.

Paying tributes to Mr Bali, Sheikh Bashir Ahmed Provincial Secretary Jammu said that the departed leader worked with a sense of commitment.

Sheikh Bashir Ahmed said that Mr Bali worked tirelessly for the upliftment of the poor and down-trodden in differ-

ent capacities. His contribution in strengthening National Conference at the gross root level in the Jammu Province remains a high point of his political career, he said, adding that the veteran leader made a distinct mark by serving the people, which will serve as a source of inspiration for the coming generations. Sheikh Bashir further said that Mr Bali worked for strengthening the fabric of secularism and brotherhood in the state of J&K.

Paying tributes to Mr Bali, former minister and Central Zone President Jammu Babu Rampaul said the towering leader left an indelible mark on

the National Conference cadre by dint of his determination and hard-work besides strengthening the party at gross root level. He said the best tribute would be to strengthen the party at gross root level and make it a vibrant force to satiate the urges and aspirations of the people. He said that the late leader will be remembered for his high political caliber and having passion for serving the people, especially poor and down-trodden.

Several senior leaders, including Pardeep Bali, Ayub Malik Provincial Secretaries Jammu, Bushan Lal Bhat former MLC, Vijay Lochan Chairman SC Cell, Abdul Gani

Teli Chairman OBC Cell, Ankush Abrol Joint Secretary Jammu Province, Vijay Laxmi Datta Senior leader, Pyare Lal Sharma, G. H Malik, Rita Gupta Vice President Central Zone, Rakesh Singh Raka Vice President Central Zone, Dr. Vikas Sharma Secretary Jammu Province, S. Tejinder Singh Aman District President Jammu Urban YNC, Ashok Dogra Vice President District Jammu Urban, Master Aslam Secretary Central Zone, Ashwani Charak Block President Jammu East, Nitish Gowsami Provincial Secretary Jammu Province YNC, Som Raj Taroch, Ajay Kumar, Sewak Singh and others.

# Police hosts drug prevention awareness programme in Budgam

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
BUDGAM, APR 21

Continuing its steadfast motive towards a drug free society, Police in Budgam have organised a DRUG Prevention Awareness Programme at Higher Secondary School Soibugh. The event was attended by over 100 students and staff members.

The program was focused on educating the participants about the ill effects of substance abuse thereby preventing their usage.

During the programme an informative lecture, addressing the early signs of substance abuse, methods of detection and identification of potential abusers was delivered by Ms. Insha-Incharge drug-de addiction centre DPL Budgam.

Moreover, the treatments that are available for the drug addicts were also discussed in detail. The event also emphasized on the crucial role that teachers play in the prevention of substance abuse.

This program also included an intra school debate competition and the winners were distributed with certificates from Budgam Police.

# Illegal mining and transportation of minerals: Police seizes 4 tractors in Baramulla

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
BARAMULLA, APR 21

Cracking a whip on illegal mining of minerals at Wagoora & Delina Baramulla, Police seized four tractors and arrested their drivers.

The Police initiated the action under the supervision of DySP Hqrs Baramulla, SDPO Kreeeri assisted by IC PP Delina & IC PP Wagoora. The drivers have been identified as Showkat Ahmad Bhat son of Gh Mohammad resident Palpora Palhullan, Mohammad Umar Chopan son of Mohd Sultan resident of Mirangund, Shabir Ahmad Bhat son of Gh Rasool resident of Wagoora & Khurshid Ahmad Dar son of Gh Nabi resident of Delina Ghat.

# Vibodh urges support for Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

In a bid to ramp up direct people contact, BJP J&K General Secretary and former MLC Vibodh Gupta led a day-long extensive door-to-door election campaign in Nanak Nagar, Digana, and Janipur in support of BJP's candidate Shri Jugal Kishore Sharma from the Jammu-Reasi parliamentary seat. During the door-to-door campaign, the BJP leader popularized the achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, especially in the Union Territory of J&K. While addressing the gathering,

Vibodh Gupta said that the NDA government, under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi, has fast-tracked economic growth, strengthened rural infrastructure, and launched schemes for the empowerment of all in Jammu and Kashmir. He maintained that the INDI

alliance is a regrouping of the same political parties that were accused of perpetrating scam after scam and had been voted out by the people in 2014 and 2019. Stating that India is lucky to have Narendra Modi Ji as Prime Minister, who is close to the heart of the masses, Vibodh said that by voting for BJP in parliamentary elections, people would not just elect a government but also actively participate and contribute to Modi Ji's vision of a Viksit Vishwa Guru Bharat.

Vibodh strongly asserted that Modi Ji had done away with the Congress culture of "appeasement and caste polarization" and ushered in transformative "politics of development, performance, accountability, and reforms." He affirmed that people are determined to give Prime Minister Narendra Modi a third term to reinforce their role in combating corruption and

dynastic politics. Former MLC Charanjeet Singh Khalsa stated that every segment of society has experienced significant relief under the Modi Government, as their longstanding genuine demands were met. He emphasized the Modi Government's commitment to its vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, and Sabka Prayas," attributing this progress to the abrogation of Article 370, which had hindered the progressive development of Jammu and Kashmir. Mandal president bharat Bhushan praised the Modi government for not only promising but also delivering good governance, development, and transparency at the grassroots level. He urged the people to overwhelmingly support the BJP, which stood for the development and empowerment of all sections of society in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

# Sat, Keshav, Neelam commences Door to door Campaign at Talab Tillo

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

Former Minister Sat Sharma CA, along with Mandal President BJP Talab Tillo Keshav Chopra, Ex Councillor Neelam Nargotra, District General Secretary Adv Rajesh Gupta and other leaders commenced Door to door campaign for BJP's candidate Jugal Kishore Sharma in Ward No 40 of Talab Tillo Mandal.

During the Campaign, Sat Sharma met with residents and highlighted the welfare schemes and programmes initiated by Modi's government. Sat Sharma said that the door-to-door campaign aims to communicate with the voters and inform them about the development works done by the Modi govt during its 10 years. The PM's welfare schemes for the poor are realizing



the goal of making Jammu Kashmir a developed UT. These schemes are working to change and raise people's standard of living Sat further added.

Keshav Chopra while speaking highlighted the pace of development in the country under PM Modi's Government, Keshav said under Prime

Minister Modi JKUT has achieved many milestones. IIT, IIM, AIIMS and lots are live examples of the development. Keshav also urged the voters to cast their vote in favour of Jugal Kishore Sharma.

Neelam Nargotra, while speaking claimed that the third term for Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister

is the mood of the nation and added that whatever has been done in the last 10 years is unmatched.

Abhishek Sharma, Nitish Kumar, Karan Banotra, Vikas Kumar, Rajesh Langar, Ravi Kumar, Shobhit Sharma, Ashok Kumar, Goglu, Pradeep, Subhash Sharma and others were present.

# Missing Girl Traced out and reunited with legal heirs by Police Post Rehari, Jammu

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

That on 20-12-2023, one missing girl (name withheld)R/o jammu .\*was lodged Vide DDR No. 15 Dated 18-04-2024

in Police Post Rehari Jammu on a written complaint.

Acting upon this, a Police team led by SHO Police Station Pacca Danga & IC PP Rehari did strenuous efforts and

with the help of technical assistance, said missing girl, was got traced by the police team, and after completing all legal formalities, she has been handed over to his legal heirs.



## Congress, NC, PDP looted resources, ditched J&K residents: Ravinder Raina

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

Ravinder Raina, President, Bharatiya Janata Party, Jammu & Kashmir, was addressing a public meeting at Bhatindi.

MP (Rajya Sabha) Ghulam Ali Khatana, former Deputy CM Kavinder Gupta, former MLA Devender Singh Rana, Vinay Gupta, Ankush Gupta, Ashraf, Wani, Khajuria, Jamwal, Pappu, Pushpinder, Rafiq, Liaqat, Noor Alam, Mohd Alam and others were also present on the occasion.

A large number of prominent persons joined the BJP on the occasion.

Ravinder Raina, while addressing the public meeting, said that as we have already entered the election mode for the parliamentary elections 2024, the people have already gone through the development works and the policies of the Modi government and are massively



supporting the BJP's candidate in these polls. He further asked the people to ask others also to vote for the development and elect BJP's candidate, Jugal Kishore Sharma.

Raina said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has presented an example of how a political party should work for the welfare of the people. He said that the Modi government has worked on the

principle of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas" during the last 10 years and India is seen progressing on a fast pace. He said that PM Modi considered the whole nation as his family and sincerely worked for the welfare of every section in every area.

Ravinder Raina said that the Modi government belongs to everyone, it has initiated schemes like political reservation,

inter-district recruitment issue, vehicles for the transportation of animals, and other such steps for the STs.

He also recalled the time under the leadership of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, when the resurgence started and the nation progressed with the brotherhood in society.

He said that the party believes in taking all the

persons on board in the 'development journey' and this is only possible in BJP's leadership.

Raina attacked the Congress, NC, and PDP for looting the resources of the state and ditching the innocent residents of the erstwhile J&K state. He said that these parties did nothing for the empowerment and the welfare of the needy communities like Gujjars, Bakerwals and other sections. Modi government has worked for the welfare of needy and neglected people representing every region and every religion.

Ravinder Raina appealed to the people to vote for the Modi government, which has worked for the welfare of people in every need. He said that it is the Modi government that took care of the needs of the Gujar-Bakerwals along with other communities and empowered them socially, economically and politically.

## BJP gave political reservation to STs, fulfilled promise with community: Ashok Koul in a ST rally



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
KALAKOT, APR 21

Ashok Koul, General Secretary (organization), J&K BJP, said that the Modi government has fulfilled its promises made with the STs and other communities and gave a call of 'vote for Modi, vote for development' to the massive gathering of people belonging to the ST community during a public rally at Kalakot.

Ashok Koul, accompanied by Sanjay Baru, district prabhar, District President Neena Sharma, senior leader Sardari Lal, mandal president Vikram, BJYM leaders Yuvraj Singh, Wasim Kohli addressed a massive ST rally organized by former Minister Abdul Gani Kohli at Sial Sue in Kalakot-Sunderbani assembly constituency.

Ashok Koul, while addressing the rally, said that the Modi government is the only government since independence that has understood the core

issues faced by the people belonging to different communities and sincerely worked to resolve them on priority. He said that the last 10 years of the Modi government have been marked by numerous such decisions that have transformed the lives of people belonging to these communities.

He said that the Gujar-Bakerwal community is a nationalist community that faced the wrath of the previous governments owing to their simplicity and straightforwardness. He insisted that the previous governments led by parties like NC, Congress and PDP used the community as a vote bank only according to their choice and harmed their interests at every step. But the Modi government took substantial steps for their empowerment politically, socially and economically, gave them political reservations and took other steps for their welfare and asked them to vote mas-

sively in favour of the Modi government to continue the spree.

Abdul Ghani Kohli, in his address, said that the Modi government has changed their lives in multiple ways. He asked the ST people present in the rally to tell the others how the earlier ruling parties deliberately kept them away from the development, but now, under the Modi government, the development has reached them in even the far-flung areas.

Sanjay Baru asked them to vote and support Jugal Kishore Sharma to support the development works in the area and also to strengthen the hands of PM Modi by ensuring the Modi government for the third time.

Neena Sharma stressed that the people in this area have full faith in the Modi government and have made up their minds to vote for the BJP candidate Jugal Kishore Sharma.

Wasim Kohli presented the note of thanks.

## BJP OBC Morcha holds Nukkad Meeting in Jammu Border, Initiates door to door campaign in Nougrah Panchayat, Jammu Border

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

Sunil Prajapati, State President BJP OBC Morcha said that people have been eagerly waiting to make Narendra Modi Prime Minister once again for the 3rd consecutive term as the 'Modi Wave' has become more intense this time after repealing of Art 370, construction of Ram Temple and BJP's crusade against corruption.

While intensifying door to door campaign in the Jammu Border constituency here, Prajapati maintained that he has observed during his recent public interactions and rallies about people enthusiastically waiting for the polling days to exercise their right to franchise and bring back



their favourite leader Narendra Modi to power.

Sunil Prajapati said that the Modi Wave has turned stronger than the last two elections after PM Modi paved the way for the repealing of Art 370, construction of the Ram Temple and carried out a

decisive war against the rampant corruption prevailing under the patronage of parties which ruled the country before BJP came to power in 2014. He however said that the scenario in J&K is crystal clear because massive crowds and gatherings are follow-

ing the party leadership whether it is nomination filing event or public rallies; the situation is foretelling devastating defeats of the opposition parties in both Jammu and Kashmir regions.

The senior BJP leader reiterated that people

have decided to offer clean sweep conditions for the BJP as Congress and other regional parties in J&K seem to have conceded defeat before the largest political party in the world as their workers have gone into hibernation with complete absence of zeal and zest.

"The affection for Modi ji has become so much that leaders of opposition parties must have been fearing that their workers might ditch them by voting in favour of BJP", he added.

Prominent among those who were present during the campaigning include Ashok Verma (Secretary OBC Morcha), Kuldeep Sodi (General Secretary OBC Morcha Jammu Border) and other local BJP Leaders.

## Simriti, Shiv Clinch Bhaderkashi Chess Association DISTRICT Doda Titles in Sr. Category

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, APR 21

Simriti swept BCADD Chess Titles in U-15, U-17, U-19 & Open categories in Girls section. While Shiv won in Open category, Shivang Kotwal Junior category title. Total 51 players participated in three day Chess trials. The tournament was inaugurated by Principal Adarsh Vidya Mandir Bhaderwah and lauded the efforts of BCADD in promoting the game of Chess in the remote areas of Doda District.

First day 34 players participated in different categories, 2nd day 28 players participated in different cat-



and lauded the efforts of BCADD for smooth conclusion of the trials in a transparent manner.

Smt Priya Kohli, Principal Bhartiya Vidhya Mandir Bhaderwah was the Chief guest in the Validictory function on 11-04-2024 and distributed the certificates and Medals to the winners. All other players were given certificates. No entry

was charged from the players for participation in trials and all players were given refreshment during all three days. 6 players were provided transportation facility also during all three days.

## Proud to stand among 99% oppressed Kashmiris against NC's brutal legacy: Sajad Lone

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
BARAMULLAH, APR 21

J&K Peoples Conference President Sajad Lone today said that he stands proud among the 99% of Kashmiris who have borne the brunt of NC's misrule rather than aligning with the 1% who perpetrated atrocities. Lone made these remarks while addressing a mammoth gathering of dedicated workers in Nihalpora, Pattan which was organised by PC Senior General Secretary Imran Reza Ansari. The gathering, attended by thousands of dedicated workers, witnessed a significant moment as senior political leader Riyaz Ahmad Sheikh from Singapore, Pattan and prominent social activist Irshad Pandit from Sariwarpora, officially embraced the party, fortifying its grassroots support.

In his address to the assembled gathering, Lone asserted that the overwhelming majority, comprising 99% of Kashmiris, have been the victims of brutality, subjected to imprisonment, torture, unjust detentions under the PSA, and even extrajudicial executions at the hands of a powerful 1% minority of the National Conference. While denouncing the



NC's decades-long reign of oppression, he said that, "They have contributed to creating martyrs' graveyards in almost every village and town. They have been at the helm of regimes which killed thousands of innocent Kashmiris, implemented oppressive laws such as the POTA and PSA, along with the law for mandatory police verifications aimed

at pushing the people to the wall. Yet, shamelessly, NC leaders are now seeking to portray this majority of Victims as agents of Delhi."

Making a scathing critique of the National Conference's tenure, Lone questioned their accountability for the hardships endured by the local populace, despite their historical dominance in North

Kashmir, clinching victory in LS elections nine out of ten times.

"They must answer for their 50-year rule post-1975, characterized by developmental stagnation, oppression of Kashmiris, incarcerations and their shameful complicity during the abrogation of Article-370. If they can address these issues convincingly, we shall extend

our sincerest apologies," he declared.

Lone further lambasted Omar Abdullah's attempts to portray himself as a paragon of virtue, recalling his tacit endorsement of human rights violations during his tenure under the Vajpayee government, amidst growing unrest in Kashmir.

"The same government expressed its desire to abolish Article 370, on record, if it had enough parliamentary support. It was the same dispensation that discarded the proposal for autonomy in J&K but Mr. Omar still remained clung to power. You lack moral authority to label the majority of the local populace, given your lack of ideological disagreement with the BJP. It's puzzling how you can even show your face here," he remarked.

Lone also underscored the upcoming Lok Sabha elections as pivotal, following the watershed events of 2019. He earnestly implored the people to rally behind PC, amplifying their long-muted voices to the highest legislative echelons, the Parliament.

"I pledge to represent the people's grievances and aspirations in the Parliament with unwavering courage and conviction," he asserted.

## Scientific temperament instillation workshop for students was conducted at BHSS Hatmulla

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, APR 21

BHSS Hatmulla, in collaboration with sarvodya foundation and MTG Publications, hosted a counseling session in the conference hall of BHSS Hatmulla. More than forty experts from various science disciplines participated in the session.

Principal Mr. Nazir Ahmad Khan motivational speaker delivered a thought-provoking lecture on the importance of smart work. Dr. Reyaz Ahad Mir, lecturer in botany, led a discussion on nurturing scientific temperament among young learners from an early age.

Sameer of sarvodya foundation underscored the vast opportunities beyond NEET and JEE exams, advocating for guidance to explore new



fields and areas.

The principal of the institution and Nodal Officer of the Astrophysics labs Mr. Shah Mohd Iqbal highlighted the imminent transformation of job markets, emphasizing the need to equip students

for future challenges. He stressed the integration of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning techniques into the curriculum to enhance skill sets and meet the evolving demands of the job market.

## EDITORIAL

## Unfolding political drama in Kashmir!

The current exchange of words between former Chief Minister and NC Vice-President Omar Abdullah and his political rival, PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti, has added an extra layer of complexity to the already intriguing political landscape of Kashmir. Mehbooba's announcement that her party would contest all three Lok Sabha seats in the Kashmir Valley comes close on the heels of Omar Abdullah's claim that the PDP had not shown any inclination to field candidates. This brewing confrontation between the two stalwarts of Kashmiri politics has injected further drama into an already heated electoral contest. Both the PDP and the National Conference, as significant political entities in Kashmir, hold considerable sway over the region's political dynamics. Their recent decision to contest against each other on all three seats of the Kashmir Valley highlights the intensifying competition for electoral dominance. Despite their participation as allies in the INDIA bloc, recent events have showcased a breakdown in communication and cooperation between the two parties, leading to a divergence in their electoral strategies. Mehbooba's assertion that the PDP was compelled to field candidates due to the unilateral decision-making of the National Conference has underscored the tensions simmering beneath the surface. This rift between the two parties, once seen as potential allies, has not only fractured their political alliance but has also created a sense of uncertainty within Kashmir's political landscape. As both parties gear up for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, speculations abound regarding potential candidates and electoral strategies. Mehbooba Mufti is rumored to be eyeing the prestigious Anantnag-Rajouri seat, while Omar Abdullah is speculated to contest from the Srinagar-Pulwama constituency. These developments not only reflect the strategic calculations of the parties but also highlight the personal ambitions of their respective leaders. The entry of Ghulam Nabi Azad, the chief of the Democratic Progress Azad Party (DPAP), into the electoral fray for the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat has added another more spice to the contest. Azad's decision to contest from this seat, rather than his stronghold in the Chenab region, has raised eyebrows and sparked speculation about his political motives. Amidst these developments, the Congress party finds itself in a precarious position, torn between its alliances with the PDP and the National Conference. The party's leadership is grappling with the dilemma of extending support to either of the two regional heavyweights, as it navigates the shifting sands of Kashmiri politics. As Kashmir braces itself for a fiercely contested electoral battle, the unfolding drama between the PDP and the National Conference serves as a reminder of the fluidity and unpredictability of politics in the region. The outcome of these elections will not only shape the representation of Kashmir in the Lok Sabha but will also have far-reaching implications for the region's political future. In this high-stakes game of power and ambition, only time will tell which party emerges victorious and what it means for the destiny of Kashmir.

## Human-elephant conflict: The way out

BKP SINHA/ ARVIND JHA

India's rich biodiversity includes a significant population of Asian elephants, which are not only an integral part of the country's wildlife heritage but also hold cultural and religious significance. However, the increasing instances of human-elephant conflict (HEC) have become a pressing concern for both conservationists and those living near elephant habitats.

The root causes of HEC are multifaceted, primarily stemming from habitat loss and fragmentation due to human activities. As India's population expands, so does the need for land for agricultural and developmental activities. This expansion often leads to encroachment into elephant territories, resulting in the destruction or fragmentation of their natural habitats. Consequently, elephants are forced to venture closer to human habitations in search of food and space. Mining activities, in particular, lead to deforestation and habitat degradation, disrupting elephant migratory routes and undermining the scope and health of elephant habitats. Similarly, urbanisation and infrastructure development often intersect with elephant corridors, pushing these gentle giants into unfamiliar and potentially dangerous territories. Climate change is another significant factor in this conflict. Changes in climate patterns can affect the availability and distribution of food and water sources in elephant habitats. Extreme weather events like droughts, floods and high temperatures can force elephants to migrate in search of these resources, often bringing them into conflict with humans.

The current State of HEC in India is alarming. Over 500 humans are killed annually in encounters with elephants and more than 100 elephants lose their lives due to human-related activities, including poaching for ivory, poisoning, electrocution and collisions with trains. Train collisions are the second-highest cause of unnatural

elephant deaths in the country, following accidental electrocution. Over the past decade, train collisions have claimed the lives of more than 200 elephants.

As mega-herbivores, elephants consume up to 150 kilograms of forage and drink up to 190 litres of water per day. This necessitates a large foraging area, typically spanning 100-1,000 km<sup>2</sup> for a family herd, to provide a diverse diet of grasses, shrubs and fruits. However, navigating large areas to find sufficient food and water becomes a challenge when these areas overlap with human activities. This often results in crop raiding, property damage, and, in some tragic instances, human casualties. These incidents, unfortunately, lead to retaliatory actions from humans that can be fatal for these majestic creatures, further intensifying their fear and mistrust of humans. Farmers, particularly those with limited resources struggle to cope with crop losses. This hardship breeds resentment towards elephants, undermining conservation efforts and trapping both humans and elephants in a cycle of violence.

Since 2019, there have been over 1500 human fatalities reported due to elephant attacks. In 2023-24 alone, Odisha reported 149 elephant deaths due to HEC. Mineral-rich districts like Dhenkanal, Angul, Keonjhar and Sundargarh have been hit the hardest, with Dhenkanal alone witnessing 130 elephants and 227 human deaths over the last decade.

In August 2023, three elephants were electrocuted at the Rani Tea Estate near Guwahati due to low-voltage high-voltage wires. This was not an isolated incident; back in October 2021, sagging power lines near the Dihing-Patkai National Park claimed the lives of another three elephants. The situation worsened in October 2022, when within a single week, 11 elephants across Assam lost their lives to human-related hazards including electrocution, crop poisoning and train collisions.

Western Maharashtra, a region

not traditionally known for elephant habitation, saw a significant change in 2002 when elephants migrated from Karnataka. This movement was largely attributed to their displacement from the Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary, a place they had inhabited comfortably until 1990. The construction of the Kali hydroelectric project is believed to have been the catalyst for their relocation to the districts of Kolhapur and Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, leading to notable incidents of crop raiding. A similar pattern emerged in 2022 when a herd of 22 elephants trekked from Chhattisgarh to Maharashtra, settling in the lush forests along the Wain-Ganga, Pranhita and Dina river basins. This migration has been linked to increased human encroachment, the construction of two canals in Odisha and mining disturbances in their traditional corridors.

The Wayanad region, a vital watershed for Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, is currently facing a multitude of environmental challenges such as deforestation, irresponsible tourism and unscientific development. Such activities are posing a significant threat to the ecological balance of the region, endangering the lives of both humans and wildlife. Wayanad plays a critical role in maintaining regional biodiversity. However, ongoing habitat degradation in this region could potentially intensify the water crisis in the Kaveri basin and escalate the HEC, which has tragically led to 41 fatalities already. Similarly, in the northeastern States of Assam and West Bengal, expanding tea plantations and human settlements have encroached on elephants' traditional grounds, leading to frequent HEC incidents.

Addressing HEC requires a multi-pronged approach that balances the needs of wildlife conservation with the socio-economic realities of human populations living near elephant habitats. This includes securing and restoring elephant corridors to ensure safe passage for elephants between dif-

ferent habitats, thereby reducing the likelihood of them entering human-dominated landscapes. Recognising this need, the Indian Government has launched an ambitious initiative known as Project Elephant. This program focuses on enhancing elephant habitats by creating a network of reserves, corridors and protected areas. To address the common issue of crop raiding in human-elephant interactions, the project employs innovative technologies such as early warning systems and elephant-proof barriers. It also implements various strategies like durable and solar-powered electric fences and biological deterrents including bio-fencing with cacti, beehive fences and chilli smoke to deter elephants.

Enhancing the natural food supply within forests is another essential strategy for preventing elephants from entering human territories. This involves improving water conservation, regenerating forests by replanting and nurturing native trees and plants, implementing fire protection and removing invasive species. Programs focused on eco-tourism and livelihood diversification not only engage local communities in conservation but also provide them with sustainable economic alternatives. Success stories from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong landscape underscore the effectiveness of community-led conservation endeavours, strategic land-use planning, trans-border collaboration and habitat restoration in diminishing conflict incidents. Kerala has also taken a bold initiative to relocate people from forest regions and reforest agricultural lands, despite the central Government's refusal to fund this Rs. 620 crore project. The State's declaration of HEC as a State-specific disaster and the involvement of the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority in conflict management, are significant steps towards addressing this complex issue.

Statutory support is fundamental in the conservation efforts

addressing the HEC. Elephants, listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List, are protected under the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Recent amendments to the Forest Conservation Act of 1980 have raised concerns regarding their impact on elephant reserves and corridors, particularly within the 100 km strip of India's boundary where the majority of these reserves and corridors are located. These changes could potentially worsen the fragmentation and degradation of these vital habitats, thereby intensifying the HEC. The Forest Rights Act of 2006, while well-intentioned in empowering forest-dwelling communities, has also had unintended consequences. Its implementation has sometimes resulted in further encroachments and habitat fragmentation, which can force elephants to venture into new areas in search of refuge and resources, increasing the likelihood and severity of conflicts. Post-project monitoring, particularly in the mining industry, is often insufficient, leading to a neglect of wildlife protection measures that were stipulated during the project's approval. This oversight can result in significant harm to elephant populations and their habitats, undermining conservation efforts.

As we move forward, let us remember that our fates are intertwined with those of the elephants and all wildlife. Their survival is our survival. Their well-being reflects the health of our planet and their continued existence enriches our world in ways that cannot be quantified. It's high time we recognise our role and act responsibly, ensuring a future where humans and wildlife coexist harmoniously, each playing their part in maintaining the balance of our shared ecosystem.

**(The writers are former principal chief conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra; views are personal)**

## Mind, the key to Hidden Fortune

RAVIVALLURI

Once upon a time lived a woman. She was struck with an unexpected tragedy as her husband passed away untimely. The lady was now left with only one son and precious jewellery. Since she was hounded by creditors to repay the debts accrued by her husband, she conjured a trick to hide the wealth.

In sheer desperation to keep the jewellery safe from creditors, the lady wrapped the precious wealth in a piece of cloth and hid it under a tree. The mother and son lived in an impoverished State. Her mind was always disturbed by the fact that she did not share this piece of vital information with her only son. As it turned out, she

carried this secret to the grave.

Consequently, the son inherited plenty of debt, a barren hut and a cot. The son had to work hard for sustenance and to repay the ever-rising liabilities. He toiled hard to survive and regretted his misfortune. 'Property is not the sacred right. When a rich man becomes poor it is a misfortune, it is not a moral evil. When a poor man becomes destitute, it is a moral evil, teeming with consequences and is injurious to society and morality,' opined Lord Acton. Indeed, the impoverishment of the poor is heart-wrenching.

One day while cutting the branches of a tree, he stumbled upon the jewellery. Dumbfounded and stupefied, the strapping youngster hid the bijouterie in a pit he dug in the hut, petrified

that the creditors would appropriate the wealth. He too committed the cardinal mistake of not sharing the secret with his wife and carried it to his grave. The mother and son were not mindful and wakeful enough to be in the Present Moment and remained prisoners of their past and future.

Two Buddhist monks were once discussing a flag flapping in the wind. While one felt it was the wind moving, the other conjectured it was the flag fluttering. The imbroglio could not be resolved and they sought the intervention of a Zen Master. The master impassively said, 'It is the MIND that moves, neither the flag nor the wind.'

Humans need freedom from their past and future to be in the present. And being in the NOW

or present is true enlightenment and mindfulness. The past is full of sorrows and regrets while the future brims with anxieties and worries and humans are caged in that mindset, thereby postponing their happiness quotient. To appreciate true happiness and joy, the human mind should not vacillate between the past and the future but remain in the PRESENT.

A young monk was once travelling in pursuit of happiness and truth. During his travels, he encountered a massive river that he could not cross. A short while later, he saw a senior monk on the other side of the river. He hailed him and sought assistance to cross the river to reach the other side. The senior monk pondered and replied, 'You are already on the other side'.

This fact can be appreciated only when the mind is centred. Breathing techniques such as Sudarshan Kriya, Pranayama, Yoga, Meditation and Vipassana all help in dissolving the mind so that it becomes centred. 'True happiness is not possible without freedom. We have to learn the habit of being free. We do not allow our past, the future, our projects, or our fear to get hold of us. We are free. Every step is free. Every step is nourishment. Every step is healing. Every step is joy,' says Thich Nhat Hanh.

**(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)**

## Rahul Gandhi holds on to Wayanad despite speculation

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Even as the Indian National Congress was burning midnight oil about the Lok Sabha constituency from where Rahul Gandhi would contest this time, The Pioneer has reported that the scion of the Nehru-Gandhi clan would not leave Wayanad from where he was elected with a mammoth majority of four lakh votes in the 2019 edition of the General Election. The report was prepared after speaking to a cross-section of the electorate in the Wayanad constituency who were unanimous in their opinion that Rahul Gandhi should contest from Wayanad itself.

Those who reacted to the queries posed to them included hardcore CPI(M) members and activists who made it known that Rahul should register a much bigger majority than that of the 2019 poll because the opponent happened

to be Annie Raja of the CPI and K Surendran of the BJP. Annie, the spouse of D Raja, CPI's national general secretary, had rubbed Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in the wrong way and the CPI(M) cadres consider it as a cardinal sin. Raja too had publicly questioned the capability of Vijayan and this made the CPI(M) activists furious. Had the Congress or BJP leaders criticized Vijayan, they would not have bothered but the CPI had crossed the Lakshman Rekha (it could be Stalinist Rekha since the comrades do not accept Ramayana). The CPI(M) comrades would certainly teach Annie Raja a lesson or two in the art of politics. The truth is that the CPI(M) leaders wanted Rahul Gandhi to contest from Wayanad so that the CPI would lose one seat for sure.

The decision to field Surendran, the Kerala State president of the BJP, was made much later. Surendran himself knows that he would lose by a big margin but he has to kowtow to party line. The information coming out of the BJP office is that he may be given a gubernatorial position even if he loses the security deposit. There are no suitable candidates in Kerala BJP to challenge the supremacy of Rahul Gandhi and the Congress. The question being asked by Wayand voters is that how many people remember the names of the 2019 challengers to Rahul Gandhi.

What is interesting is that the animosity between the CPI(M) and Congress has come down drastically with Gandhi filing the nomination from Wayanad. Though the Congress leaders lambast the CPI(M), it is just a façade to convince the hardcore members of these parties that there is no alliance between them. But what the people of the State see in TV channels and newspapers is the video images

and pictures of Sitaram Yechury and D Raja hugging and kissing Rahul Gandhi while in Tripura former CPI(M) Chief Minister Manik Sarkar openly campaigning for the Congress party's candidates. Kerala is the only State where they act as if they are rivals and enemies. By the next election, one can see the Congress and the CPI(M) fighting it together in Kerala against the BJP-led front (provided the Hindutva party leadership throws out all the rotten eggs from its basket). There is no difference between the Congress and the CPI(M) as of date.

Political pundits have been asking both parties to officially legalize the ties so that the entire secular parties could be arrayed under the flag of the Congress across the country against the "communal and fascist" forces. The secular parties include the Muslim League! In Marxist

parlance, they say that whoever aligns with the CPI(M) is secular while the BJP is "communal and fascist". The CPI(M) does not have any issues in accepting the former NDA constituents as allies once they call off the marriage of convenience with the BJP. Telugu Desam of Andhra Pradesh, BJD of Orissa, BSP and JD(U) are some of the major political outfits whose secularist credentials depend on their ties with the BJP.

The press meeting addressed by A K Antony, the Bheeshma Pitamah of the Congress on 9 April 2024 at Thiruvananthapuram was an indicator of how political marriages take place in Kerala. While Antony was cursing his son Anil Antony who is contesting from Pathanamthitta as a BJP candidate and asking the electorate to ensure the defeat of his son, he was waxing eloquence on Anto Antony, the Congress candidate who is pitted against

Anil. The former defence minister lambasted the BJP as anti-nationals, communalists and dictators.

But what stood out was his silence on the CPI(M) candidates. Antony's ties with the CPI(M) are infamous as he had sailed with the Marxists for almost two years during 1980-1983.

The CPI(M) and the Congress-led by Antony fought the 1980 general election together and ruled Kerala for almost two years. The Congress faction was pushed out of the LDF by the CPI(M) which demolished the offices of the Congress across the State with the police looking the other way. It is not without any reason political pundits say that politics make strange persons into bedfellows. Do we need more proof than A K Antony?

**(The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)**

## This could be a reason for your late-night chocolate cravings

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

If you have spent nights eating chocolates or ice cream, then 'loneliness' can be the reason behind the binging on sugary items, say researchers.

According to the study published in the journal JAMA Network Open, loneliness can cause an extreme desire for sugary foods.

To conduct the study, the researchers linked brain chemistry from socially isolated individuals to poor mental health, weight gain, cognitive loss, and chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes and obesity.

Senior study author Arpana Gupta, an Associ-



ate Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, said that she wanted to observe the brain pathways associated with obesity, depression, and anxiety, as well as binge eating, which is a coping mechanism against

loneliness. The study included 93 premenopausal participants, and the results indicated that people who experienced loneliness or isolation had a higher body fat percentage. Moreover, they dis-

played poor eating behaviours such as food addiction and uncontrolled eating.

Scientists used MRI scans to monitor the participants' brain activity while they were looking at abstract images of sweet and savoury foods. The results revealed that individuals who experienced isolation had more activity in certain regions of the brain that are responsible for reacting to sugar cravings.

These same participants showed a lower reaction in areas that deal with self-control.

According to Gupta, social isolation can cause food cravings similar to "the cravings for social connections".

## Using dietary treatment, over 70 pc of patients reduced IBS symptoms: Study

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

In a new study a group of researchers found that dietary treatment is more effective than medications in treating irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and by doing so, more than seven out of 10 (70 per cent) patients had significantly reduced symptoms.

In the study, published in the journal The Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology, the researchers compared three treatments - two dietary and one based on the use of medications.

IBS is a common diagnosis that causes abdominal pain, gas & abdominal bloating, diarrhoea, and constipation, in various



combinations and with varying degrees of severity.

According to Sanna Nybacka, researcher and dietician at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, with this study, "we can show that diet plays a central role in the treatment of IBS", however, she noted that there are several alternative treatments that are useful.

The first group was advised to follow a traditional IBS dietary advice, which focused on eating behaviour combined with low intake of fermentable carbohydrates called FODMAPs.

For example, FODMAPs include products with legumes, onions, lactose and grains, which ferment in the colon and can cause pain in IBS.

The second group was given a dietary treatment low in protein and fat. The third group received medication based on their most troublesome IBS symptoms.

About 76 per cent of those who received traditional IBS dietary advice and low FODMAPs content had significantly reduced symptoms.

The proportion was 71 per cent in the group receiving a low-carbohydrate and high-protein and fat diet, and 58 per cent in the medication group.

As per the study, all groups reported significantly better quality of life, less physical complaints, and fewer signs of anxiety and depression.

## World needs better robotics surgeons to improve patient outcomes: Experts

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

As robot-assisted surgeries gain momentum globally, including in India, it is time to train surgeons employing the latest technological advances to improve patient outcomes, experts said on Sunday.

According to Dr Mahendra Bhandari, CEO of US-based Vattikuti Foundation, we should focus on how new robotic technology is being used, capturing data predictive models before, during, and after an operation to improve patient outcomes as well as surgeon didactic and training skills.

"We encourage teams of accomplished surgeons to prepare high-quality, digital submissions showcasing their most extraordinary surgical work employing the latest technological advances," Bhandari said.

Vattikuti Foundation has also announced the 2024 edition of its 'KS International Innovation Awards in Robotic Surgery'.



The scope of the multidisciplinary technology competition has been expanded to cover two distinct tracks - robotic procedure innovation and technological innovation.

According to the foundation, the robotic proce-

dures innovation entries can be from cardiac, general surgery, gynaecology, head and neck, microsurgery, organ transplant, orthopaedics, plastic surgery, paediatrics, urology and other areas.

The entries for Tech-

nological Innovation will cover areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Imaging Modalities, Robotic Systems, Tele Surgery, Training Modalities, Virtual Reality, and others.

The competition, initiated in 2015, is open to robotic surgeons, medical school faculty, and students, presenting an opportunity for a close examination of technologies and procedures being used globally.

The 2023 KS Innovation Awards saw entries from 429 surgeons from 14 countries, submitting in 10 different specialties.

Meanwhile, the Brady Urological Institute at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore has announced its first Brady-Vattikuti Robotic Academy masterclass in Urology under guidance of the accomplished robotic surgeons.

The week-long masterclass beginning May 13 will cover several hours of live case observation, simulation sessions and proctored procedural training with experts, said the foundation.

## Bengaluru doctors treat 63-year-old woman with over 10 cm large hernia

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 20

A team of doctors on Saturday announced the successful treatment of a 63-year-old woman suffering from a large incisional hernia, measuring over 10 cm, as well as other comorbidities.

A hernia is a medical condition where a portion of an organ, typically the intestine, is displaced and protrudes through a weakened area in the abdominal wall.

This protrusion can lead to discomfort, pain, and possible complications if left unaddressed.

The woman presented to Ramakrishna Hospital in Bengaluru had a complicated medical history, encompassing obesity, long-standing asthma, hypertension, and diabetes mellitus.

She also presented with symptoms of pain, vomiting, and bowel dysfunction persisting for two days.

A CT scan revealed that the patient had experienced a significant reduction in abdominal space (loss of domain), with the hernia occupying approximately 40 per cent of the remaining abdominal cavity.

Furthermore, signs of intestinal obstruction were identified, as evidenced by dilated small bowel loops. The hernial orifice was notably large, measuring over 10 cm.

Remarkably, the patient had been aware of the presence of a sizable incisional hernia for nearly a decade, noting its progressive enlargement over time.

"An incisional hernia is characterised by the displacement of part of an organ through a weak point in the abdominal wall, often involving the intestine, at the site of previous surgery. When the hernial defect exceeds 10 centimetres, it is termed a giant or massive hernia. As these hernias enlarge,

other organs may protrude as well, leading to a decrease in the abdominal cavity's size and a condition known as 'loss of domain'," Dr. Rajeev Premnath, Laparoscopic Surgeon and Endoscopist at the Hospital told IANS.

"Loss of domain presents challenges to surgeons due to the associated respiratory distress caused by pressure on the lungs," he added.

Given the complexity and risks involved, a multidisciplinary team opted for surgical intervention following discussions with the patient and her family. "The surgical approach included an open abdominal procedure, incorporating hernia repair with mesh placement alongside abdominoplasty to address excess skin. To mitigate risks linked to general anaesthesia, the surgery was conducted under spinal and epidural anaesthesia," Dr. Premnath said.

Following the surgery,

several interventions were employed, including non-invasive ventilation to manage respiratory distress resulting from the diminished abdominal space.

In addition, physiotherapy was administered to enhance respiratory function and mitigate potential complications such as atelectasis.

The doctors also diligently managed her underlying medical conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, and asthma.

"After a two-week hospitalisation, the woman regained mobility independence and was discharged in satisfactory condition," said the doctor.

"I am thankful for the care and attention provided by the doctor and the team during my hospital stay. The surgery and post-operative care greatly contributed to my improved mobility, and I am satisfied with the outcome," said the patient.

## HK, Singapore food regulators red flag 'cancer-causing' ingredient in certain MDH, Everest spices

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 20

Food regulators in Hong Kong and Singapore have warned people against using four products from two big spice brands - three from MDH and one from Everest - over the presence of ethylene oxide at "levels exceeding the permissible limit".

The International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified ethylene oxide as a 'Group 1 carcinogen'.

In a statement posted on its website on April 5, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS), Hong Kong's food regulatory authority, said that three spice products of MDH - Madras Curry Powder (spice blend for Madras Curry), Sambhar Masala (Mixed Masala Powder), and Curry Powder (Mixed Masala Powder) - along with Everest's Fish Curry Masala contain "a pesticide, ethylene oxide".

Both MDH and Everest Foods were yet to comment on the food regulators' claims.

Under its routine food surveillance programme, the CFS took the products from three retail outlets in



Hong Kong. "The test results showed that the samples contained a pesticide, ethylene oxide," said a CFS spokesperson.

The regulator instructed the vendors "to stop the sale and remove from shelves the affected products".

Recalls have been initiated on the products, it said.

"According to the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM), food for human consumption containing pesticide residue may only be sold if consumption of the food is not dangerous or prejudi-

cial to health. An offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction," the CFS spokesperson said.

The CFS noted that "investigations are ongoing" and "appropriate action" may be initiated in the matter.

Meanwhile, the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) also ordered a recall of Everest's Fish Curry Masala due to the presence of ethylene oxide at levels "exceeding the permissible limit".

The SFA posted a release on its website on April 18 that said it "has directed

the importer, Sp Muthiah & Sons Pte. Ltd., to recall the products. The recall is ongoing."

The SFA noted that ethylene oxide is not fit for consumption, but is "used to fumigate agricultural products to prevent microbial contamination".

However, under Singapore's food regulations, ethylene oxide can be "used in the sterilisation of spices".

While there is no immediate risk to eating foods "with low levels of ethylene oxide, long-term exposure may lead to health issues", said the SFA, noting that exposure to the "substance should be minimised as much as possible".

It also advised people who bought the product to not "consume it", and those who have concerns about their health after consumption must "seek medical advice".

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, "ethylene oxide is a human carcinogen. It causes cancer".

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 20

Ethylene oxide is a cancer-causing agent that can raise the risk of breast cancer, as well as cause damage to the DNA, the brain, and the nervous system in humans.

The carcinogen has been found in four products from two big spice brands in India - three from MDH and one from Everest - at levels exceeding the permissible limit.

What is ethylene oxide? The Spices Board, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, defines ethylene oxide as a "flammable, colourless gas at temperatures above 10.7 Celsius".

It serves as a "disinfectant, fumigant, sterilising agent and insecticide".

It is majorly used to sterilise medical equipment and to reduce microbial contamination in spices.

Besides being produced from natural sources, it can also be generated from water-logged soil, manure, and sewage sludge.

What are the health effects?

The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies



ethylene oxide as a 'Group 1 carcinogen', meaning it has "enough evidence to conclude that it can cause cancer in humans".

Short-term exposure to the carcinogen can affect the human central nervous system, and cause depression and irritation of the eyes and mucous membranes but prolonged exposure can irritate the eyes, skin, nose, throat, and lungs, and damage the brain and nervous system, as per the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The EPA said "ethylene oxide is carcinogenic to

humans by the inhalation route of exposure", and has also been linked to reproductive problems.

"Evidence in humans indicates that exposure to ethylene oxide increases the risk of lymphoid cancer and, for females, breast cancer," it noted.

Further, according to the US National Cancer Institute, ethylene oxide is frequently reported to be associated with lymphoma and leukaemia.

Stomach and breast cancers may also be associated with ethylene oxide exposure, the institute said.

It stated that people can be exposed to ethylene oxide via inhalation and ingestion, which may occur through occupational, consumer, or environmental exposure.

According to the latest estimates of cancer's global burden by the WHO, India has more than 14.1 lakh new cancer cases and over 9.1 lakh deaths in 2022.

The number is projected to go up to 15.7 lakh in 2025, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Cancer Registry Programme (ICMR-NCRP).











## Lok Sabha Elections 2024

## RO 02-Srinagar PC reviews preparations in all 18 Assembly segments

JNEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, APRIL 21

Returning Officer (RO) 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency (PC), Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat on Sunday chaired a meeting of all Assistant Returning Officers (AROs), Deputy District Election Officers (Dy. DEOs), Nodal Officers for Postal Ballot, EDC and ETPBS for the upcoming Parliamentary Elections-2024 in the 2-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency comprising 18 Assembly segments of Ganderbal, Srinagar, Budgam (Partly) and Pulwama and Shopian (Partly) Districts.

The meeting was held at the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex Srinagar to review the preparations made and arrangements put in place for conduct of the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections-2024 in 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency.

At the outset, the RO took a firsthand appraisal from all the AROs, Dy. DEOs and designated Nodal Officers with regard to tasks assigned to them for smooth conduct of Lok Sabha Elections-2024 in the Constituency.

The RO reviewed the preparations being made by all concerned Officers related to key aspects of the Lok Sabha Elections-2024 including AMF/arrangements at Polling Stations, Transportation of Polling Staff/ Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs),



Postal Ballot and Voting by Polling Staff/ EDC, Postal Voting Centre (PVC), implementation of Model Code of Conduct (MCC), Material Management, Training programmes, Welfare measures, SVEEP and other related activities aimed at ensuring smooth, transparent and peaceful General Elections in 02-Srinagar Constituency.

The RO directed all the Officers to work with due diligence and dedication to ensure smooth, free and fair elections.

He expressed confidence in the collective resolve and capability of all the Officers to fulfil their roles effectively and efficiently, thereby contributing to the successful conduct of the Lok Sabha Elections-2024 in 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency.

He stressed all the Officers to work with a proactive approach and execute

allotted tasks on ground and maintain cooperation and coordination with the line departments. He further asked them to go through comprehensive ECI guidelines regarding duties and responsibilities during the election period.

On the occasion, Dr. Bilal informed that as many as 1748091 registered electorates are exercising their franchise in the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections-2024 in Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency including 875865 male 872165 female and about 61 Transgenders.

The RO added that as many as 15431 voters of over 85 years, 11679 PWDs, 56915 Migrants and 960 Service Voters are exercising their franchise in the Parliamentary Constituency on May 13, 2024 for which 2503 Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) have been kept in ready state. The RO also

informed that Model Polling Stations have also been setup at various locations across the Parliamentary Constituency including 36 Mobile Polling Stations, 20 Pink Polling Stations, 18 PWDs Polling Stations, 18 Green Polling Stations and 18 Youth Polling Stations have been established in the Constituency to facilitate the voters on the Poll day and welcome them to experience a festive-like environment.

He added that dedicated facilities for voters including clean drinking water and ramps etc are also meticulously arranged to enhance the voting experience.

Earlier, the RO was briefed by all the AROs and designated Nodal Officers about the preparations made so far for the conduct of upcoming Lok Sabha Elections-2024.

The RO also emphasized encouragement of first-time voters so that they exercise their democratic right and make the poll process more participative.

He said 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency has nearly 2.0 lakh first-time voters in the 18-20 age group eligible to vote in the Lok Sabha Elections on May 13, 2024 in the Constituency.

The RO also stressed on taking welfare measures for Polling Staff on the Poll day so that they do not face any inconvenience while discharging their duties.

## District SVEEP Cell Rajouri hosts Natrang's travelling show series "Lokatantra Ka Asli Mantra" at Sunderbani

JNEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, APRIL 21

District SVEEP Cell Rajouri, under the leadership of District Election Officer, Om Prakash Bhagat, orchestrated Natrang's Travelling Show Series "Lokatantra Ka Asli Mantra" at Bus Stand Sunderbani here today.

The Natrang travelling show, renowned for its impactful presentations, delivered a compelling performance aimed at enlightening the masses about importance of voting.

Penned by Padamshree, Balwant Thakur and skilfully directed by Neeraj Kant, the play captivated audiences with its poignant narrative, emphasizing pivotal role of every citizen in shaping the nation's destiny through active participation in electoral process.

The District SVEEP team Rajouri, headed by Nodal Officer SVEEP, Prof. Mohd Iqbal Raina



in presence of Prof. Ajaz Nazir, Mohammad Ayaz Raina lecturer and Dr. Sajjad Mir lecturer ensured the seamless

coordination of the event. As the curtains drew to close, the audience was left with a resounding call to action by embracing

ing their civic duty and exercise their right to vote, thereby contributing to the vibrant democracy of India.

## Lok Sabha Elections 2024

## SVEEP Cell, Sports Association hosts Rajouri Cup T20 Cricket tournament

JNEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, APRIL 21

SVEEP Cell Rajouri, in collaboration with the Sports Association on Sunday organised Rajouri Cup T20 tournament here under the supervision of District Election officer, Om Parkash Bhagat.

Nodal officer SVEEP, Prof Mohammad Iqbal Raina coordinated the sports event themed "Chunav ka Parv Desh ka Garv".

The tournament was inaugurated by the District Election Officer in presence of President Sports Association Rajouri and SVEEP team of Rajouri.

The DEO emphasized the importance of informed and responsible voting. He urged the participants to spread the message of electoral literacy in the society and encourage people to exercise their democratic right. The tournament featured several teams, providing a platform to young people from across the district to showcase their cricketing skills



while also learning about the electoral process.

Dr. Khalid Rayaz, member of SVEEP team said that this tournament not only promoted the sport of cricket, but it

also provides an excellent opportunity to engage with the youth and raise awareness about electoral literacy. The initiative was widely appreciated by the participants and

local residents, who commended the SVEEP team and organising team of Rajouri Cup T20 tournament for their innovative approach to voter education.

## DHSK, DHS-Kulgam conduct training session on Tobacco Control Measures at Kulgam

JNEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, APRIL 21

In a collaborative endeavor, the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK) together with the District Health Society Kulgam (DHSK) today conduct a comprehensive training session on tobacco control measures at Kulgam.

The training aimed to educate the participants about COTPA Act and aware law enforcers and enforcement squads about the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTPC).

Various stakeholders, including officers and officials from the police, education, health, food and drug administration, municipalities, and other relevant sectors, actively participated in the one-



day training cum workshop.

The training commenced with an insightful overview of the program by District Health Officer (DHO) Kulgam, Dr. Zahoor Ahmad.

After this a detailed presentation on the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) 2003, and vendor licensing protocols was given by Dr. Mir Mushtaq, Nodal Officer of the Tobacco Control Programme at DHSK.

Expert trainers from

the Tobacco Control Programme, including Dr Mohd Naser and Er Zakir Hussain, provided in-depth presentations on topics such as Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions (TOFEI), the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, and the online resources available for the Tobacco Control Programme in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the session, speakers from the District Health Society, including Dr. Arjumand Rasool and

Mussarif Ahmad, shed light on the adverse effects of tobacco products and secondhand smoking, emphasizing the importance of awareness and enforcement.

The event also featured an interactive question-and-answer session moderated by the State Nodal Officer for Tobacco Control Program where experts addressed numerous inquiries related to the Tobacco Control Programme and the COTPA Act.

## SMC conducts Cleanliness Drive in Ward Nos 11 &amp; 17 of Srinagar's Zone North

JNEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, APRIL 21

In a proactive move towards ensuring clean Srinagar City, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation today executed a highly effective cleanliness drive in Zone North Ward No. 11 and 17.

Led by SMC officials, including the Chief Sanitation Officer and Zonal Sanitation Officer, the initiative focused on raising cleanliness standards and promoting hygiene at Sikh Bagh.

The drive concentrated on improving the overall



cleanliness and visual aesthetics of the area by implementing efficient waste collection and disposal practices, as well as clearing unwanted vegetation and grass.

By engaging the community in these activities, the SMC aims to foster a sense of civic responsibility among residents and advocate for sustainable and hygienic practices. These endeavors are aimed at cultivating a cleaner and healthier environment for all residents.

## Lok Sabha Elections 2024: Election Training for micro observers held at Bandipora

JNEWS SERVICE  
BANDIPORA, APRIL 21

The District Election Office Bandipora on Sunday organised a day-long election training for micro observers at Conference Hall Mini Secretariat, Bandipora.

The training sessions was aimed to equip micro observers with the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure the integrity and transparency of the electoral process. Participants received comprehensive instruction on their roles and responsibilities, including moni-



toring voting procedures, observing polling stations, and reporting any irregularities. The training was provided by District Level Master Trainer, M. Iqbal Samoon. Coordinator Manpower and Trainings, Irfan Maqbool, ALMTs and other concerned were also present on the occasion.