

13TH
YEAR OF
PUBLICATION



HEADLINES TODAY

Voice To The Voiceless

Bengal's Next Chief
Minister From BJP, Mamata
Banerjee Can...
Amit Shah

P/4



24th
Ramadan
Sehri
04:33 AM
Iftaar
07:05 PM

Juma-tul-Wida observed across Kashmir with religious fervor



■ [HT News Network](#)

SRINAGAR, APR 14: Juma-tul-Wida was observed with religious fervor across the Kashmir valley. The largest gathering was witnessed at Hazratbal Srinagar, where eighty thousand faithful offered Juma prayers.

Except for Jamia Masjid prayers were held in rest of Kashmir to mark Jummat-ul-Wida with religious fervor and gaiety.

At Hazratbal shrine, thousands of devotees joined the congregational Friday prayers. The J&K Wakf Board, which controls the shrine management, had made arrangements for the devotees who were seen thronging the religious place since early Friday morning.

The congregational prayers
Turn.....Juma-tul-wida.....Pg 02



Jumma-ul-Wada at Makka-ul-Mukkarama

Record number of Muslims Perform Umrah Tawaaf at Holy Kaaba before Offering Friday Prayers on Last Friday of Holy Ramadan.

HT PHOTO BY - ABU HASNAIN FROM MECCA SAUDI ARABIA

NEWS BRIEF

Two gamblers held in Khrew, stake money seized

SRINAGAR, APR 14: Acting tough against social crimes, Police have arrested 02 gamblers and seized stake money from their possession in Khrew area of South Kashmir.

A Police spokesperson said that acting on specific information about gambling activities in Khar Check Shar Shali Khrew, a police party of Police Station Khrew headed by SHO PS

Turn.....Two gamblers held.....Pg 02

28 Mumbai tourists caught with fake Gandola tickets in Gulmarg

SRINAGAR, APR 14: 28 passengers with fake edited tickets were found at Gulmarg Gondola Project on Friday.

An official told Kashmir Scroll that today on 14th of April-2023 at 9:30 am the ticket scanning team of Gulmarg Gondola Project got hold of a group

Turn.....28 Mumbai tourists.....Pg 02

FMPHW without salaries for last 4 months

KULGAM, APR 14: Female Multi-purpose Health Workers (FMPHW) working in different blocks of South Kashmir's Kulgam district Friday appealed to the government to release their withheld salaries.

President FMPHW Association Kulgam, Naseema Akhter told news agency Kashmir News Trust that they are facing hardship as the authorities have not released their salaries

Turn.....FMPHW without.....Pg 02

Massive rallies held in Central Kashmir on 'Quds Day'

BUDGAM, APR 14: Massive rallies were held in parts of Central Kashmir on 'Yum-e-Qudas' in which thousands of people participated and expressed solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.

After Friday congregational prayers, people carried out a massive protest rally in Central Kashmir's Budgam. It was later joined by thousands of

Turn.....Massive rallies.....Pg 02

62 Injured In Footbridge Collapse During Baisakhi Celebrations In Udhampur

■ [MS Nazki](#)

JAMMU, APR 14: Sixty two people, including several children, were injured on Friday when a footbridge collapsed in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district, officials said.

The incident took place at Beni Sangam in the Bain village of Chenani block during Baisakhi celebrations, they said.

People in large numbers were on the bridge when it collapsed, the officials said.



"Meri Bhi Sun Lo": Girl From Kathua Voices Wish To PM Modi

■ [HT News Network](#)

JAMMU, APR 14: Little Seerat Naaz is not happy that she has to sit on an unclean floor, along with friends, at her school and wants the holder of the country's most powerful office to do something about it.

In a video now viral on Facebook, the little girl from the Lohai-Malhar village in Kathua district of Jammu

voices an adorable wish to Prime Minister Narendra Modi — "Please Modi-ji, ek achhi si school banwa do na (Please Modi-ji, build a nice school for us)".

She opens the clip, which has a runtime of fewer than 5 minutes, by introducing herself as a student of the local government high school.

She then cuts herself out of the
Turn.....Girl From Kathua.....Pg 02

Kashmir highly vulnerable from fire safety point of view: Jt Dir F&ES

■ [HT News Network](#)

SRINAGAR, APR 14: Joint Director Fire & Emergency Services Kashmir Range, Bashir Ahmad Shah on Friday said that Kashmir is highly vulnerable from a fire safety point of view and that the department has been making efforts to reduce the number of such cases.

Talking to the news agency—Kashmir News
Turn.....Kashmir highly vulnerable.....Pg 02

Baisakhi Celebrated In Kashmir Valley, Devotees Offered Prayers In Gurudwaras

■ [HT News Network](#)

SRINAGAR, APR 14: Baisakhi, marking the beginning of the Sikh New Year, was on Friday celebrated with religious fervour and gaiety in the Kashmir valley, with the devotees thronging different gurudwaras to offer prayers.

The main function was held at Gurudwara Chati Patshahi in the Rainawari area of the city, which was attended by a huge
Turn.....Baisakhi Celebrated.....Pg 02



In Kashmir's largest seminary, 600 muslims perform Itikaaf

■ [HT News Network](#)

BANDIPORA, APR 14: In a display of spiritual devotion, at least 600 Muslims from both inside and outside the Kashmir Valley have gathered for 10 days at Itikaaf at Darul Uloom Raheemiya, the biggest Islamic seminary of Kashmir located in Bandipora district.

Notably, the Itikaf takes place during the last 10 days of Ramadan when worshippers seclude themselves and devote their time to prayer, supplication, and reading the Quran. It starts from the sunset of the 20th day of Ramadan
Turn.....In Kashmir's largest.....Pg 02

HC Refuses To Quash Case Against College Professor Over WhatsApp Status On Abrogation Of Art 370

■ [HT News Network](#)

MUMBAI, APR 14: Any critical or dissenting views in sensitive matters that stir up emotions of different groups of people must be expressed only after proper analysis of the situation and backed with reasoning, the Bombay High Court has said while refusing to quash an FIR against a professor for putting a WhatsApp status on Article 370.

A division bench of Justices S B Shukre and M M Sathaye in its order of April 10 said it prima facie finds that the professor has in a very casual manner posted the status



message about the abrogation of Article 370, which ended the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

Turn.....HC Refuses To.....Pg 02

Spray fungicide before rains to avoid scab: Experts to Orchardists

■ [HT News Network](#)

SRINAGAR, APR 14: In view of the rains predicted across Kashmir from 17th of April, the experts have advised orchardists to spray fungicide before rains to avoid scab-like diseases.

Experts told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that it is usually best to apply a fungicide before it
Turn.....Spray fungicide.....Pg 02



and lightning, officials said.
Meteorological department forecast of mainly Dry weather today and tomorrow
Turn.....J&K Likely To.....Pg 02



SHRI AMARNATHJI YATRA 2023

62-Day Holy Pilgrimage To Commence On 1st July

● Registration through offline & online modes to start from 17th April ● Govt is committed to ensure smooth, hassle-free pilgrimage: Lt Governor ● We will provide best-in-class healthcare and other essential facilities to all the visiting devotees and service providers: LG ● Telecom services to be made operational prior to the commencement of Pilgrimage: LG

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 14: The 62-day long Shri Amarnathji Yatra will commence on 1st July this year and it will culminate on 31st August 2023.

Further, the registration through online & offline modes for Shri Amarnathji Yatra will start from 17th April.

The Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha while announcing the dates for holy pilgrimage and registration today said the administration is committed to ensure smooth and hassle free pilgrimage.

“Hassle-free pilgrimage is top priority of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji and Hon’ble Home Minister Shri Amit Shah ji. The administration will provide best-in-class healthcare and other essential facilities to all the visiting devotees and service providers. Telecom



services will be made operational prior to the commencement of Pilgrimage. All the stakeholder departments

are working in coordination to ensure facilities for lodging, power, water, security and other arrangements for the

smooth conduct of Yatra,” the Lt Governor said. The Yatra would commence simultaneously from both the

routes – the Pahalgam track in Anantnag district and Baltal in Ganderbal district.

The Lt Governor also directed the officials to ensure high levels of cleanliness and to take necessary intervention for sanitation and waste management.

Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) will also enable live telecast of morning and evening Aarti (Prayers) for devotees across the globe. Shri Amarnathji Yatra’s App has been made available on the Google play store to get real time information about the Yatra, weather and for availing several services online.

During the 44th meeting of SASB chaired by the Lt Governor, the members and officials had reviewed various aspects of Shri Amarnathji Yatra-2023, including registration, provision of helicopter services, service providers, camps, langars and insurance cover for Yatris.

Class 10 student from Anantnag publishes maiden poetry book

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, APR 14: A 14-year-old girl from Anantnag district has published her maiden poetry book.

Sania Farooq, a resident of Bangedar area of Anantnag a student of class 10th at EFF EMM School Anantnag published her book titled “Akas-



e-Hayat” in which she has talked about different issues of society.

Sania told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that she was interested in writing since her childhood and started writing when she was in class 8.

“I got inspired by the poetry of Dr Iqbal.

Akaash-e-Hayat consists of around 100 pages with dozens of poems in which different issues of the society, especially the issues and challenges that a woman faces have been talked about, Sania said.

“My aim in life is to become an IAS officer. My family has been very supportive and one of my teachers, Azhar sahib has supported me in compiling this book,” she said.

Unidentified female body recovered in Kulgam

■ HT News Network

KULGAM, APR 14: The body of an unidentified woman was recovered from Nallah at Gurwatan area of Damhal Hajipora in South Kashmir’s Kulgam district on Friday, officials said.

Police sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that some passerby noticed a female body lying in Veshow Nallah near a bridge and informed the police.

On getting information, a police team rushed to the spot and retrieved the body from the nallah, they said.

They said the body was shifted to hospital for medico and legal formalities while identification is being ascertained.

6 drug peddlers arrested in Kashmir: Police

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 14: Jammu and Kashmir police on Friday claimed to have arrested six drug peddlers in Baramulla, Kulgam & Awantipora and recovered contraband substances from their possession.

A Police party under the supervision of SDPO Tangmarg Imtiyaz Ahmad, assisted by Incharge Police Post Babareshi during routine patrolling at Shranz Crossing Tangmarg arrested a drug peddler namely Mohd Ashraf Malla son of Gh Qadir resident of Dodbugh, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

During search, 50 grams of contraband charas and cash amount of Rs 27300 (believed to be proceeds of narcotic crime) was recovered from his possession. He has been shifted to police station where he remains in custody, police said.

Meanwhile, a Police party led by Incharge Police Post Palhallan under the supervision of SDPO Pattan Mohd Nawaz at a checkpoint established at Hamrey Pattan arrested a drug peddler namely Mohd Yaqoob Dar son of Ghulam Rasool Dar resident of Renji Pattan. During search, 96 Tablets of SpasmoProxyvon Plus & 10 Syrups of Codeine Phosphate was recovered from his possession. He has been shifted to police station where he remains in custody, police said.

Similarly, a police party under the supervision of SDPO Uri Shokat Ali assisted by DySP Prob. Kubra Nazir, SHO Police Station Boniyar at a checkpoint established near Ijara Crossing Bridge Boniyar intercepted a suspicious person who tried to flee from the spot but was apprehended tactfully.

During the search, 90grams of Charas, 800grams of dry cannabis leaves and cash amount of Rs 41355 (believed to be proceeds of narcotic crime) were recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Mohd Amin Sheikh son of Ghulam Mohd Sheikh resident of Ijara Boniyar. He has been arrested and shifted to police station where he remains in custody, police said.

Moreover, a police party led by Incharge Police Post Delina under the supervision of DySP Hqrs Baramulla Sajjad Bukhari at a checkpoint established at Rawathpora Delina intercepted a vehicle (Swift) bearing registration number HP40D-3856. During search, 10grams of Brown Sugar was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Zahid Hussain Wani son of Ghulam Hassan Wani resident of Hardushiva Sopore. He has been arrested and shifted to police station where he remains in custody. Vehicle used in the commission of crime has also been seized, police said.

In Kulgam, a special police team led by Incharge Police Post Mirbazar under the supervision of SSP Kulgam at a checkpoint established near Zadoora Crossing on NH-44 intercepted a suspicious person carrying a bag. During search, 6 sticks of charas like substance weighing around 100 grams was recovered from the said bag from his possession. He has been identified as Safer Ahmad Dar son of Khalil Mohammad Dar resident of Nowpora. He has been arrested and shifted to police station where he remains in custody, police said.

Tral's Zardihad village lacks basic facilities, locals demand potable water supply, road connectivity

■ HT News Network

PULWAMA, APR 14: Residents of Zardihad village in Tral have demanded basic facilities in their area.

They alleged that the Jal Shakti Department has been unable to provide them with a drinking water facility in their area.

Locals told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that a pipeline

was removed in the area to construct a road but since then years have passed but a new supply line is yet to be laid.

Irshad Khan, a local resident, said that they are forced to drink contaminated water as there is no other option before them.

“We have to go for kilometres to fetch drinking water which is contaminated and it takes our women folk hours together to fetch the water,” he said.

Locals said that besides the water crisis, unscheduled power cuts are prevalent and lack of paved road hampers their movement.

They said that they approached the concerned authorities several times for want of basic facilities to the village to no avail

They said that construction work on the road is going at snail’s pace and authorities must take note of it.

Aab-e-Rawan provides free Sehri, Iftaar meals to patients’ attendants in Srinagar hospitals

‘Our aim is to spread happiness and positivity among those going through tough times’

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 14: An NGO based in Srinagar’s downtown has been spreading joy and positivity among the attendants of patients in city hospitals by providing free Sehri and Iftaar meals to them.

The holy month of Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection and religious observance, and this initiative by Aab-e-Rawan is helping to make it more meaningful for the attendants, especially those from far-flung areas, who may be struggling with the challenges of arranging Sehri and Iftaar meals for them while caring for their loved ones.

Ramadan is a time when Muslims around the world fast from sunrise to sunset, abstaining from food and drink during the day. They break their fast at sunset with a meal known as Iftaar, and before the fast begins, they have a pre-dawn meal called Sehri. For the attendants of patients in hospitals, observing the holy month can be a challenge, especially if they are far away from their homes and families.

To ease the burden for these attendants, Aab-e-Rawan has been doing this service for the last two years, and it has become a tradition that the attendants

look forward to every year.

The menu has been curated with the help of the valley’s renowned chef, Yaseen Reshi (Chef Yaseen) and downtown’s prominent Waaza, Manzoor Ahmad Bhat. To facilitate the attendants’ fasting, the menu is purely designed to provide them with a nutritious meal.

Talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Muneeb Masoodi, the Co-founder of Aab-e-Rawan said, “Our aim is to spread happiness and positivity among those who are going through tough times. We want to make sure that they feel loved and cared for, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. We hope that our small initiative will bring a smile to their faces and ease their burden.”

“Our initiative has been well-received by the hospital staff and the attendants of patients alike. It has not only helped them to keep their fast with a nutritious meal but also provided them with a sense of community and belonging during the holy month. Our volunteers visit the hospitals in the evening every day and take the data from the wards mentioning the number of attendants on each bed. We take around 250 to 300 meals per day which are then distributed during the Sehri time



without any chaos.”

The entire preparation and distribution process for Sehri takes around 4 to 5 hours, starting at 1:30 am and ending at 4:15

am, said another Co-founder Khalid Bukhari.

Aab-e-Rawan is a nonprofit organisation working holistically towards the development of soci-

ety via an ecosystem approach targeting cultural, health, educational, and environmental domains. Under the AR Charity, Aab-e-Rawan not only distributes free Sehri and Iftar but also provides over 200 ration kits to needy single mothers every year, along with other charitable activities.

“Aab-e-Rawan’s free Sehri and Iftaar initiative is a testament to the power of community and compassion. It shows that even a small gesture can go a long way in making someone’s day a little brighter,” Muneeb said, adding that the NGO’s efforts serve as an inspiration for others to do their part in making the world a better place.

Burhan Nazir, a volunteer with the NGO, said, “I am proud to be a part of Aab-e-Rawan and to be able to contribute to such a noble cause. Serving free Sehri and Iftaar meals to attendants of patients in hospitals during the holy month of Ramadan is not only a way to help ease their burden but also a way to spread happiness and positivity in their lives. Seeing the smiles on their faces is the biggest reward for our efforts.”

“It is heartening to see how a small act of kindness can make such a big difference in someone’s life. I feel blessed to be a volunteer for such an amazing organization that is making a positive impact on society,” Burhan added.

Chairman DDC Budgam distributes solar lights in Beerwah DDC Segment

HT News Network

BUDGAM, APRIL 14: Chairperson of the District Development Council (DDC) in Budgam, Nazir Ahmad Khan, has distributed solar lights to residents of the Beerwah segment in Budgam. The distribution program concluded in the first week of April and was aimed at providing affordable and sustainable lighting solutions to the people of the area.

Nazir Ahmad Khan stated that the distribution of solar lights is a part of the district development council's efforts to promote renewable energy and reduce carbon emissions. The solar lights are equipped with the latest technology and are designed to provide bright and reliable lighting even in remote areas with-



out access to electricity.

The distribution program was well-received by the residents of the Beerwah segment, who expressed their gratitude towards Nazir Ahmad Khan and the district administration for providing them with a sustainable lighting solution.

The solar lights will not only improve the quality of life of the residents but will also help in reducing their

energy bills.

Nazir Ahmad Khan also urged the residents of the area to use the solar lights responsibly and take care of them to ensure their longevity. He emphasized the need to conserve energy and protect the environment for the benefit of future generations.

The distribution of solar lights in the Beerwah segment is just one of the many

initiatives undertaken by the Chairman DDC Budgam to promote sustainable development in the region. The district administration is committed to providing basic amenities and infrastructure to all residents of the area and will continue to work towards their welfare. The distribution program was well-received by the residents of the Beerwah segment, who expressed their gratitude towards Nazir Ahmad Khan and the district administration for providing them with a sustainable lighting solution. The solar lights will not only improve the quality of life of the residents but will also help in reducing their energy bills. Nazir Ahmad Khan also urged the residents of the area to use the solar lights responsibly and take care of them.

Baisakhi marks beginning of Harvesting of Wheat crop in Jammu Plains

Dir Agri Kick starts mechanized harvesting at SM Farm Chinore

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 14: The festival of Baisakhi in Jammu is celebrated in the month of Vaisakh (April-May) with the name of Vaisakhi. The festival marks the start of the harvest season in the Jammu region like other parts of Northern India.

To commemorate the significance of this auspicious day, Director Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare Jammu, K. K. Sharma kick started the mechanized harvesting of Wheat crop at Seed multiplication Farm, Chinore, here today.

Congratulating the farmers of Jammu Division on the occasion, the Director Agriculture said that when crop is ready in fields, the farmers start singing hap-

pily, this joy is celebrated as Baishaki and it marks the start of harvesting of Rabi crop in plains of Jammu. Praying for the country's happiness, greenery and prosperity, farmers express their happiness as nature bestows them with a rich harvest after a season's hard work, he added.

The Director underscored that the Department is working hard for the welfare of the Farming Community adding "We are all set to achieve new heights under able guidance and overall supervision of Additional Chief Secretary (Financial Commissioner) Agriculture Production Department, J&K UT, Atal Dulloo."

He informed that the Department is working on war footing for grounding of 29 projects under "Holis-

tic Agriculture Development Plan" which were proposed by the Apex committee constituted by the UT Government, headed by Mangla Rai, Former DG-ICAR. The HADP is set to be a turning point in the Agri-economy of the UT whereby Rs 5013 crore shall be infused over next 5 years through 29 interventions/projects. Besides, the 29 interventions are set to create around 19000 new enterprises in agriculture sector and an additional 2.8 lakh job. This will ultimately increase GDP of the UT significantly by next 5 years.

The Director Agriculture informed that considering the excellent weather conditions during the Rabi season a bumper harvest of Wheat is expected. He informed that the Depart-

ment is working on war footing for grounding of 29 projects under "Holistic Agriculture Development Plan" which were proposed by the Apex committee constituted by the UT Government, headed by Mangla Rai, Former DG-ICAR. The HADP is set to be a turning point in the Agri-economy of the UT whereby Rs 5013 crore shall be infused over next 5 years through 29 interventions/projects. Besides, the 29 interventions are set to create around 19000 new enterprises in agriculture sector and an additional 2.8 lakh job. This will ultimately increase GDP of the UT significantly by next 5 years.

The Director Agriculture informed that considering the excellent weather conditions during the Rabi season a bumper harvest.

ADDC Kulgam visits Palpora, took stock of arrangements for smooth celebrations of Baisakhi festival

Farooq Rather

KULGAM, APRIL 14: To review arrangements put in place



for conduct of smooth celebrations of Baisakhi festival ADDC Kulgam Showkat Ahmad Rather today visited Palpora area and greeted people on eve of Baisakhi festival besides took stock of arrangements which were put in place by various departments.

He was accompanied by ACD Kulgam Mohammad Imran and other officials.

During his visit people and members of Gurdwara Prabhndhak Committee Palpora

also apprised him about various developmental issues pertaining to RDD, R&B and PDD and put forth their demands which were listened for early redressal.

CUK holds webinar on 'Life and Contributions of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar'

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 14: Department of Students Welfare (DSW) in association with the Department of Politics and Governance, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Multidisciplinary Research Centre for Law, Public Policy and Social Action, SC/ST/PwD cell of the Central University of Kashmir (CUK) organised a webinar on "Life and Contributions of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar" to celebrate the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar today. In his message, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, said, Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar focused on mainstreaming the untouchables into Indian society and fought for social, economic and political equality as well as equal opportunity to all. "Dr. Ambedkar demanded justice to untouchables and other weaker sections of the society via making provisions in the Indian Constitution. Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is a Source of inspiration and motivation for many socially suppressed classes in general and first generation students in specific. He was a man with reformative ideas and greater deeds. He not only served as Chairman, Drafting Committee of Indian Constitution but played pivotal role in formation of Reserve Bank of India. We the teaching fraternity feel proud that he served to Head as Principal for Government Law College." The Vice Chancellor appreciated the organiser for arranging a very impressive online programme at short notice. Addressing the participants, Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Shahid Rasool, said Dr. B. R. Ambedkar left an indelible mark on the history of India, and also at International level, despite coming from a humble background. "He gave the country a robust constitution, which is guiding the Indian democracy and saw its growth and development and is protecting the freedom of individuals." Prof. Shahid Rasool said uniqueness of Dr. Ambedkar personality is that all, irrespective of ideologies, take ownership of Baba Sahab. He asked the participants to follow the principles of Dr. Ambedkar and take his teachings to all sections of society to realise his dreams of equality and build a stronger nation. In his speech, I/c Dean School of Social Sciences and Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, described Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar as one of the tallest figures in Indian history and said that his teachings are still holding good during contemporary times also.

Director Agriculture Kashmir visits Kanidajan, Pakharpora areas of Budgam

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 14: The Director Agriculture Kashmir Chowdhury Mohammad Iqbal today visited Kanidajan, Dunkulpathri, Darwan & Pakharpora areas and took stock of various agriculture activities and Potato Cultivation in the district.

While speaking to the farmer gatherings at different places, director agriculture said that department

is working on a robust agriculture marketing policy wherein all the efforts are made to ensure that a wide range of marketing options are available to the farmers so that they could fetch maximum returns for their produce.

Director Agriculture expressed satisfaction and said that "Kashmir based Agriculture produce, commodities are now available at national and international markets. Besides, our agriculture produce is find-



ing its place in new national and international mar-

kets and this is very encouraging."

Director Agriculture highlighted the importance of organic cultivation during his visit to the different areas.

Director Agriculture said that "Our climate is our opportunity and under the holistic development of agriculture special focus has been shifted to explore the climatic opportunities of the region.

Interacting with the farmers director agriculture

said that department is committed to provide seedling of different agriculture crops to the farmers of the valley round the year. He marked the importance of hi-tech polyhouses in the overall development of agriculture sector.

Regarding cultivation of potatoes in the district, he said potato is an important crop and amid prevailing agro economic conditions we are trying to bring more acreage of land under its cultivation.

Chairperson DDC Udhampur inaugurates 3-day Historic Devika Baisakhi Mela

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 14: Chairperson District Development Council, Udhampur, Lal Chand today inaugurated the 3-day Historic Baisakhi Mela here on the bank of holy Devika rivulet in Udhampur town.

Vice Chairperson DDC Juhni Manhas Pathania; DDC member, Udhampur-1, Puran Chand; DDC member, Majalta, Amit Sharma; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Joginder Singh Jasrotia; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Rafiq Ahmed Jaral; Mela Officer, GM DIC, Pankaj Anand; Deputy DEO, Gurdev Kumar; District Information Officer, Rajinder Digra and other officers, Councillors, Representatives of Beopar Mandal and prominent citizens were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairperson DDC extended his warm wishes to the people on the auspicious Baisakhi day and

hoped that the festival will bring peace, prosperity and harmony in the UT. He added that the historic Mela on the sacred Devika Ghat has its own significance in which people from all walks of life are curious to visit and take holy bath in the sacred Devika rivulet during the mela.

The DDC Chairperson reiterated that such melas bring people of different religions, races and regions closer which would help to maintain harmony amongst all the sections of the society. The District administration has made elaborate arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Mela like uninterrupted power, drinking water, sanitation, medicare, Joint Control Room, assistance booth and security besides various departments have put up their departmental stalls. A number of temporary sweet shops, toy shops and other eatables corners set up by the local and outside vendors were the main attraction for the general public visiting the mela site.

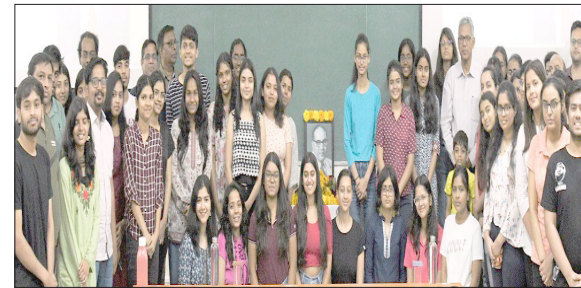
Ambedkar Jayanti observed at IIM Jammu with patriotic fervor

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 14: IIM Jammu today observed Ambedkar Jayanti with patriotic fervor marking the 132nd birth anniversary of the Father of the Indian Constitution, Dr. Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar.

Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director IIM Jammu; Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Academics; Cmdr. Kesavan Baskaran; Chief Administrative Officer, Shri Shailesh Lohiya; Librarian, faculty, officers, staff, and students of IIM Jammu offered floral tributes to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his 132nd birth anniversary.

Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu termed Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the real



architect of the Indian Constitution. He reiterated that Baba Saheb was the epitome of social equality who worked for welfare of all sections of society. "He led millions of the oppressed to a life of self-respect, dignity, and responsibility and showed them a path that not only led to their development but also the development of India" he added.

Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Aca-

demics mentioned Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a great statesman and a unifying force for being the head of the constitution drafting committee. He also stressed that Dr. Ambedkar is a great inspiration for all of us as he teaches us how to live for the people and how to dedicate life to the upliftment of the underprivileged and stay committed to unity in society.

Illegal extraction and transportation of minerals; Police arrests 11 persons, seizes 13 vehicles in Budgam & Awantipora

HT News Network

Awantipora, Budgam April 14: Acting tough against the persons involved in illegal extraction and transportation of minerals, Police have arrested 11 persons and seized 13 vehicles in Budgam & Awantipora.

A police party of Police Station Budgam during patrolling at Mirgund Crossing arrested 04 persons and seized 06 vehicles (tippers) involved in illegal extraction and transportation of minerals. The arrested drivers were subsequently identified as Mohd Ayoub Dar son of Ghulam Hassan Dar & Nazir Ahmad Dar son of Ghulam Ahmad Dar residents of Patwah Budgam, Adil Ahmad Lone son of Bashir Ahmad Lone resident of Hurroo Budgam & Firdous Ahmad Pal son of Bashir Ahmad Pal resident of Sheikhpora Budgam.



In Awantipora, a Police party headed by SHO Police Station Awantipora under the supervision of SDPO Awantipora Shri Mumtaz Ali Bhatti-JKPS have arrested 05 persons and seized five vehicles (tippers) involved in illegal extraction of sand at Aghanjipora and Hatiwara. Similarly, a Police party headed by Incharge Police Post Reshipora have arrested 02 persons and seized two vehicles (01 Loader, 01 tipper) involved in illegal extrac-

tion of sand at Datpora Dogripora. Accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered in respective police stations and further investigation has been initiated. Persons found indulging in illegal mining activities shall be dealt as per law. Community members are requested to share information regarding the crimes in their neighbourhood with their concerned police units. In Awantipora, a

Class 10 student from Anantnag publishes maiden poetry book

HT News Network

Anantnag, Apr 14 (KNO): A 14-year-old girl from Anantnag district has published her maiden poetry book.

Sania Farooq, a resident of Bangedar area of Anantnag a student of class 10th at EFF EMM School Anantnag published her book titled "Akas-e-Hayat" in which she has talked about different issues of society.

Sania told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that she was interested in writing since her childhood and started writing when she was in class 8.

"I got inspired by the poetry of Dr. Iqbal.

Akaash-e-Hayat consists of around 100 pages with dozens of poems in which different issues of the society, especially the issues and challenges that a woman faces have been talked about, Sania said.

"My aim in life is to become an IAS officer. My family has been very supportive and one of my teachers, Azhar sahib has supported me in compiling this book," she said "I got inspired by the poetry of Dr. Iqbal.

Akaash-e-Hayat consists of around 100 pages with dozens of poems in which different issues of the society, especially the issues and challenges that a woman faces have been talked about, Sania said.

"My aim in life is to become an IAS officer. My family has been very supportive and one of my teachers, Azhar sahib has supported me in compiling this book," she said—(KNO)

Rajouri honours Martyrs with inauguration of Balidan Stambh

HT News Network

RAJOURI, APRIL 14: In a moving ceremony, Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal today inaugurated the Balidan Stambh dedicated to the memory of all those who made the supreme sacrifice for the liberation of Rajouri. The monument stands as a symbol of the undying spirit and valour of the brave-hearts who laid down their lives to defend the honour and dignity of the land.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by eminent dignitaries and representatives of the local community, including President MC Rajouri, Mohammad Arif, Ex MLC Vibodh Gupta, , Former Municipal Council president Rajinder Gupta, Senior Coun-

cillor, Pushpinder Gupta, Councillor, Mamta Dutt, Councillor Yogesh Sharma, Councillor, Kuldeep Raj, Balidan Stambh Committee President, Ashok Gupta, political leader, Dinesh Sharma, besides prominent persons, Nishi Kant Saraf, Hardev Verma, Sarpanch Yogesh Sharma, Sardar Narman Singh, Naseer Ahmed, members of Martyrs' Families and social workers further added to the solemnity of the occasion.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, the Deputy Commissioner praised the sacrifices of the brave hearts who gave their lives for the liberation of Rajouri. He emphasized that the Balidan Stambh would not only serve as a symbol of their bravery but also as a reminder of the importance of valuing and protecting the freedom of the people.



He further added that the monument would inspire people to emulate the courage and selflessness of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the greater good. He also urged everyone to work towards building a stron-

ger, more united Rajouri that upholds the values of peace, harmony and inclusiveness.

President MC Rajouri, Mohammad Arif, emphasized the importance of remembering the sacrifices made by the brave-hearts who fought for the liberation of Rajouri. He said that the monument would inspire future generations to uphold the values of freedom, democracy, and human dignity.

He also stressed the need to preserve the memory of the martyrs who gave their lives for the cause of Rajouri's liberation. He further stated that this monument is open for all, anyone who wishes to pay respects to our heroes are welcome. He said that MC Rajouri is committed to the welfare of the citizens. The inaugural ceremony was attended by eminent dignitaries and

representatives of the local community, including President MC Rajouri, Mohammad Arif, Ex MLC Vibodh Gupta, , Former Municipal Council president Rajinder Gupta, Senior Councillor, Pushpinder Gupta, Councillor, Mamta Dutt, Councillor Yogesh Sharma, Councillor, Kuldeep Raj, Balidan Stambh Committee President, Ashok Gupta, political leader, Dinesh Sharma, besides prominent persons, Nishi Kant Saraf, Hardev Verma, Sarpanch Yogesh Sharma, Sardar Narman Singh, Naseer Ahmed, members of Martyrs' Families and social workers further added to the solemnity of the occasion.

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CMO Doda meets volunteers of District Red Cross Society

HT News Network



DODA, APRIL 14: Chief Medical Officer Doda, Dr Ab Hamid Zargar today chaired a meeting of the office bearers and volunteers of District Red Cross Society Doda here in his office chamber. At the outset, Dr Zargar welcomed the participants and acknowledged the significant role played by District Red Cross Society and lauded the volunteers for their selflessness and dedicated services towards the public. The CMO informed participants that the meeting has been convened with the aim to strengthen the existing mechanism and to further spread the chain of its volunteers. He stressed upon the need to further intensify the membership drive to rope in the maximum number of people to contribute towards DRSC Doda. During the meeting, the volunteers raised several queries and grievances besides putting forth their suggestions. The CMO assured that all the issues/suggestions raised in the meeting would be presented for Chairman DRSC for further necessary action. The meeting was attended by RTD CMO Doda Dr M I Zargar, Akhtar Hussain (Dealing Asstt Red Cross), Nisar Ahmed Sheikh (Red Cross Office Bearer) and other volunteers of DRSC Doda.

Slathia pays glowing tributes to Dr B R Ambedkar

SAMBA APRIL 14- Former minister and Vice President Pradesh BJP Mr Surjeet Singh Slathia today paid glowing tributes to Father of Indian Constitution, Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, saying India will always remain indebted to his contribution in laying sound foundations of democracy and working towards carving out a society based on human values and social justice. Speaking at a function, held to commemorate the birth anniversary of Babasaheb at BJP District Headquarters here, Mr Slathia said the visionary legal luminary will continue to inspire generations, as his tireless efforts to strengthen amity and working towards realisation of the dream of just society have yielded positive results.

NC pays rich tributes to Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Baba Saheb worked tirelessly to foster egalitarian society, end discrimination: Gupta

HT News Network

JAMMU APRIL 14TH : Paying glowing tributes to Baba Saheb Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, National Conference Provincial President Mr Rattan Lal Gupta today described the architect of the Constitution of India as a great visionary, saying the legendary leader worked tirelessly to foster egalitarian society and shed caste discrimination across the country.

"The people will always remember Baba Saheb for giving the country best constitution of the world," Mr Gupta said while leading the party leaders and workers in paying tributes to Baba Saheb on his 132 birth anniversary at a function held at Sher-e- Kashmir Bhawan here this morning.

Mr Gupta said that Dr Ambedkar was a great reformer who dedicated his entire life for the welfare of weaker sections and his contribution in that regard

was exceptional." There is greater need for collectively working for welfare of weaker sections of the society so that social inequality could be minimized," he maintained. On this occasion Mr Rattan Lal Gupta has greeted the people on the eve of Baisakhi. He said that the harvest festival of Baisakhi is a celebration of hard work of our farmers and marks a new beginning for the future.

Sheikh Bashir Ahmed Provincial Secretary Jammu said the best tribute to the great leader would be to imbibe the spirit oneness which alone can lead the nation towards peace, progress and prosperity. Dr. B.R Ambedkar, describing him as Messiah of millions who shaped the destiny of millions of people across the country.

Speaking on the occasion, former minister and Zone President Udhampur Reasi Mr Abdul Gani Malik also recalled the struggle and contribution of Baba Sahib in evolution of democracy and fram-



ing up of Indian Constitution.

Paying tributes former minister and Central Zone President Babu Rampaul urged the people to emulate the spirit of togetherness and shun the tendencies of hatred and intolerance for making India a better place to live. He called for sincere and earnest efforts to pass on the message of Dr Ambedkar to posterity by upholding the principles he stood for all his life.

Throwing light on various fac-

ets of the life and struggle of Dr. B.R Ambedkar, Mr Lochan said his unflinching commitment towards social justice brought about a revolutionary transformation in Indian social order and helped in carving a society based on equality, justice and opportunities for all. The best tribute to Baba Saheb would be to work for carving out a society where opportunities of progress are available to all irrespective of

caste, creed, and colour, he added.

The function was organized by Provincial President SC Cell Vijay Lochan.

The Provincial President and the senior party leaders profusely garlanded the portrait of Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb.

Prominent among those present on the occasion included: Qazi Jalal Ud Din, Jugal Mahajan, Dr. Chaman Lal Bhagat, Satwant Kour Dogra, Deepinder Kour, Pardeep Bali, Ankush Abrol, Nar Singh, Ragbir Singh Manhas, Sudagar Chand Gupta, Ashok Kumar, Attri, Harshvardan Singh, Rakesh Singh Raka, Dr. Vikas, Waris Gill, Rashida Begum, S. Tejinder Singh, Nitish Gowsami, Rajeshwar Singh, S. Nirmal Singh, Reyaz Ahmed Hakla, Devi Dayal Jogi, Som Raj Taroch, Subash Chander, Janak Raj, Krishan Datt, Sat Pal, Rtd Master Baldev Raj, Ramesh Kumar, Jagga Ram, Ashwani Kumar, Satpaul, Ashu, Geeta, Prem Ji, Lal Chand others.

Deeraj Gupta inspects development works in Jambu Zoo

HT News Network



JAMMU, APRIL 14: Principal Secretary, Forest, Ecology and Environment, Deeraj Gupta, today inspected development works being executed in Jambu Zoo which is expected to be dedicated to the general public soon. Suresh Kumar Gupta, Chief Wildlife Warden, briefed about various ongoing works in the Zoo. He apprised the Principal Secretary of the status of critical Zoo infrastructures such as animal enclosures, power supply, amphitheatre, animal kitchen, animal hospital, staff quarters, main entrance gate, orientation centre, ticketing counters, Souvenir shop, kiosk, cafeteria, view points, Jammu Di Dhakki toilets and other public amenities. Deeraj Gupta, while noticing significant progress achieved, directed the department to expedite balance work on parking area, roads, Sulabh shauchalaya, Nature Interpretation Centre, shelter sheds, herbivore pathway

and related works by deploying additional manpower and machineries. He instructed the officers to carry out site cleaning, plantation, greening, enrichment and beautification activities simultaneously, in and around whole zoo infrastructure. Principal Secretary asked the officers to detail the "in-house" animal shifting plan of Manda Mini Zoo animals to the New Jambu Zoo based on the evaluation carried out by Central Zoo Authority (CZA) experts. He asked for expediting clearances' from CZA and Ministry of Defense respectively for water supply right of way passing through defense area.

Kathua Admin conducts doorstep campaign under SVEEP to promote Voter Registration, Participation

HT News Network

KATHUA, APRIL 14: The District Administration Kathua, in collaboration with the District Election Office organised a series of activities under SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) in different parts of the district, here today.

These programmes were organised with an aim to promote voter education and awareness especially among young voters and the general public.

The Election staff including BLOs, Supervisors conducted Door to door campaigns for up-dating of



electoral rolls by filling on the spot registration forms for new eligible voters, besides filling forms for correction and deletion of names which have been provisioned under Special Summary Revision-2023.

Meanwhile, SVEEP Van-the dedicated vehicle, continued the tour of remote areas of the district and visited Khokhyal, Jarai,

Nagri, Bigwan, Muthi and Jakhbar areas to educate voters about the importance of their Right to Franchise and to promote democratic values and principles.

The District Election Office is also distributing Pamphlets to encourage prospective voters to register themselves as voters in order to exercise their right to vote in elections.

The campaign was also targeting and engaging youth to be an ambassador and spread the word about the importance of participating in the democratic process of election and contributing to the development of our nation.

Ambedkar Welfare Trust celebrates 132nd birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 14: Ambedkar Welfare Trust, Udhampur, today celebrated 132nd birth anniversary of Bharat Ratana Baba Saheb Dr.B.R. Ambedkar.

Thousands of people belonging to different areas of Udhampur district, senior citizens, various organizations and civil society participated in the event. DIG Udhampur Reasi Range, Mohammad Suleman Chowdhary was the chief guest on the occasion while Subhash Deputy Director Information Chander Dogra was the guest of honor. Suleman Chowdhary, in his presidential address, said that Baba Saheb Ambedkar had gifted us with an apt and uniquely written constitution that



embodies the principles of achieving oneness among people followers of distantly related philosophies and bringing unity in diversity assuring equality among all. India has been

recognized as one of the most vibrant democracies of the world because of its largest written constitution, he added. Among others who presented their views on different aspects related to the life, education, struggle, achievements and contribution of Dr Ambedkar in engineering India as modern democracy included Hazi Zakkar, President Gujjar Sabha Udhampur, Ram Lal Bhagat, President Kabir Sabha Udhampur, Mulkhi Raj Bhamagi, Chairman International Human Rights Society Udhampur, Ashok Kumar Master and Tara Nath Retd ZEO. On the occasion, various cultural items including skits and songs depicting life struggle of Baba Sahib were also presented by the students of SRKC School of Education and Shiv Vidyalya Lansi.

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 14: Aimed at raising awareness among the public regarding fire prevention and precautionary measures, the Fire and Emergency Services department is observing Fire Service Week with launch of several programmes throughout the week. The day is also being observed to commemorate those gallant Firemen who laid their lives for safe guarding life and property of masses during rescue and fire-fighting operations. The main Commemoration Parade was



held at Gandhinagar Jammu besides at provincial and district level during which high tributes were paid to martyrs. In this regard, the main function was held at Fire and Emergency Headquarters Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, in which Director,

Fire and Emergency Services, Alok Kumar was the chief guest. Following commemoration parade, two minute silence was observed in memory of Martyrs and also wreaths were laid on the memorial by Alok Kumar and other

senior officers and Jawans of the department. While speaking on the occasion, Director paid homage to the firemen who laid down their lives for noble cause "We Serve to Save" and highlighted the significance of observing 14th April as Fire Services Week. Emphasizing the role of Fire & Emergency Services, he discussed the devastation caused due to fires and natural calamity. He emphasized upon the officers to constitute special teams for giving demonstrations during the week regarding fire safety measures in Industrial.

EDITORIAL

Let's Reflect in Ramadan... The Pious Last 10 Days

As we approach the last 10 days of Ramadan, it's important to reflect on the significance of this time period and how we can make the most of it. For Muslims, these last 10 days are particularly special as they are believed to be the most blessed days of the holy month.

One of the key practices during this time is the observance of 'Aitikaf'. Aitikaf is a spiritual retreat that involves secluding oneself in a mosque or a designated space for a specific period of time, typically the last 10 days of Ramadan. During this period, Muslims focus on deepening their connection with Allah through prayer, reading the Quran, and reflecting on their faith and spirituality.

Aitikaf is an opportunity to disconnect from the distractions of daily life and to focus on spiritual purification. By dedicating themselves to prayer and reflection, Muslims hope to draw closer to Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins. This is particularly significant during Ramadan, which is known as the month of forgiveness.

In Islam, forgiveness is a key theme throughout the Quran. Muslims believe that Allah is merciful and forgiving, and that seeking forgiveness is an essential part of the faith. During Ramadan, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, and it is believed that this act of self-discipline and devotion can help to purify the soul and seek forgiveness.

The last 10 days of Ramadan are a time of heightened spirituality and reflection, and it's important to make the most of this time. Muslims are encouraged to increase their acts of worship, including prayer, reading the Quran, and giving to charity. It's also a time to focus on personal reflection and self-improvement, and to seek forgiveness for past mistakes.

As we approach the end of Ramadan, it's important to remember that the month is not just about abstaining from food and drink during the day. Ramadan is a time of spiritual renewal and reflection, and the last 10 days are a particularly powerful opportunity to connect with Allah and seek forgiveness.

In a world that can often feel chaotic and overwhelming, Ramadan provides a sense of calm and clarity. It's a time to prioritize our spiritual well-being and to focus on the things that truly matter in life. As we enter the last 10 days of Ramadan, let us all take a moment to reflect on our faith and our relationship with Allah. Let us seek forgiveness for our sins and commit ourselves to a path of spiritual growth and personal development.

In conclusion, the last 10 days of Ramadan are a precious time for Muslims around the world. It's a time to focus on spiritual purification and to seek forgiveness for past mistakes. By dedicating ourselves to acts of worship and reflection, we can deepen our connection with Allah and draw closer to our faith. As we approach the end of Ramadan, let us all strive to make the most of this special time and to emerge as better, more spiritually connected individuals.



VIJAY GARG



The economic progress, as well as the overall progress of any nation, is strongly linked with the quality of education that is being imparted with the values. Education is something that determines overall progress as well as the standard of a particular region, state or country. Education today has become one of the most important tools that determine the success of a person. Education these days has become an essential part of human growth. One of the greatest aspects of the education is technical education. Though it is very important to have general moral education also, technical education plays an equally important role in the developmental process of a nation. Higher education generally falls, into two categories, either training in the fine arts, the humanities, cultural patterns and behaviour that aims to develop a man's overall personality. On the other hand, technical education aims primarily at equipping a man for work in the practical sense of getting him fit for a job.

Liberal education, in origin, has its roots in our society is older than technical education and obviously, it is more popular than technical education in our country. But the need of the hour is to build up a strong base in technical education too, that would help our country to stand at par with other powerful countries of the world. It was only with the advancement of industrialization that the people came to realize the importance of technical education. The Industrial Revolution brought about a great change in the outlook of men regarding education. After the industrial revolution, technical education was seen as a scope for the future and a lot of emphases was put on the topic at various education levels and an even separate council was also set up to ensure proper technical literacy. The increasing use of machinery was the major reason that compelled us to feel the necessity of technical education as a major need. All the developed, as well as developing countries of the world, have started to impart specialized training to their youths in order to maintain their supremacy in the field of the industrial revolution.

Technical education is something related very closely to the economic stability of a country too, good technical skills can effect some new technological innovations as well as also helpful in getting good jobs at national as well as international level. It, therefore, becomes very important for our technical education to undertake periodic review of the curriculum and subject content of the technical programmes to ensure that they are up to date and are effectively fulfilling the technological requirements of the country at par with international standards.

Development of Technical Education in India

Education scenario in our country has not been fair enough, before the advent of industrialization, education in India was the privilege of the upper class, and there were no major opportunities for others to gain some quality education. With the popularisation of Technical education in India, it has given a new dignity as well as status to the labour class and lower class in the country. The old myth that mental work is superior to physical work has been replaced by the new concept of education and physical work has gained a lot of respect as well as its due benefits and is looked upon as field of careers these days. Technical education makes a man capable of diving deep into the realities of life and presents before him a true picture of life.

India is gaining pace in the terms of technical education since the attainment of freedom the progress made in the field of technical education in the country is not bad, but in view of the tremendous need and the present circumstances, the pace of progress is not quite satisfactory and need some more reforms.

The beginning of formal Technical Education in India started way back to the mid of 19th Century. The major policy initiatives in the pre-independence period included appointment of the Indian Universities Commission in 1902,

Technical Education in India

issue of the Indian Education policy resolution in 1904 and the Governor General's policy statement. A major step was the formation of Indian Society for Technical Education (ISTE) that was founded in the year 1967 with a mission to advance for the cause of education in general and all its function which pertain to engineering and allied branches of engineering and technology, architecture and town planning, pharmacy, management, process of teaching and learning, research, extension services and public relations in particular. The main goal was to serve as a common agency for stimulating and guiding its members to formulate the general goals and responsibilities of technical education for the service of mankind and the advancement of general welfare.

Another major initiative in the terms of technical education was taken in the year 1987, with the development of AICTE that was the giving of statutory status by an Act of Parliament. AICTE is the All India Council for Technical Education, which was first established in 1945 and later given statutory status by the parliament in the year 1945.

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

To ensure proper technical education in the country, at par with international standards an advisory board was established. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is the statutory body and a national-level council for technical education, under Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. It can be seen way back in the year 1945 that an advisory board was established and later on in 1987 it was given statutory status by an Act of Parliament. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is responsible for proper planning and coordinated development of the technical education and management education system in India which is aimed to constantly improve the level of technical education in the country. The AICTE accredits postgraduate and graduate programs under specific categories at Indian institutions as per its charter, and is controlling body that approves all the technical institutes as well as colleges in the country.

AICTE is not working alone in the field of technical education and is assisted by 10 Statutory Boards of Studies, namely, UG Studies in Eng. & Tech., PG and Research in Eng. and Tech., Management Studies, Vocational Education, Technical Education, Pharmaceutical Education, Architecture, Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Information Technology, Town and Country Planning. The AICTE has its headquarters in 7th Floor, Chanderlok Building, Janpath, New Delhi, which has the offices of the chairman, vice-chairman and the member secretary, plus it has regional offices at Kolkata, Chennai, Kanpur, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Guwahati, Bhopal, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Gurgaon.

There is a need for a governmental body that oversees all the aspect of the technical education in the country and makes sure everything is carried out in the field of technical education, as per the standards. This need was fulfilled by the AICTE, that is the statutory authority for planning, formulation and maintenance of norms and standards, quality assurance through school accreditation, funding in priority areas, monitoring and evaluation, maintaining parity of certification and awards and ensuring coordinated and integrated development and management of technical education in the country as part of the AICTE Act No. 52 of 1987.

Technical Education and Liberal Education

There is no doubt that at present there are very few good technical institutions in the country that are catering to the needs of the technically trained individual according to the international levels. Most of our young men have some preconceptions against all types of manual labour and mostly prefer a job in some office to doing work with their hands. Today everyone wants a white-collar job; as a result,

the manual labour is degrading. Unemployment, on the other hand, is also a major concern and hence stares at the youth of the country in the face. The jobs of clerks in offices too are limited. All educated young minds cannot be absorbed in this vocation. Hence need today is to have a high knowledge level in order to have a good job.

Technical education these days is only likely to succeed when a large part of the nation has become sufficiently literate. Technical education is not only limited to doing an engineering course or some high fees for designing course. It is an excellent thing to train an electrician's son in the latest development of his trade, but it is really absurd to expect him to become a first-class electrical engineer unless he has gone through a primary course with proper education. It is, therefore, not wise to put liberal and technical educations in water-tight compartments and there is a vast difference. The proper policy would be to stress liberal education in the early stage and then commence with the main course of technical education basing on the student's choice of scientific research on aptitude and inclination.

Challenges in the Field of Technical Education

Globalization has resulted in many new challenges in the field of the technical education system not only in our country but also around the world. With the growing modernization, the demand for trained technical workers is also increasing day by day. Also with the demand is rising the hunt for the quality. This scenario has also led to a lot of challenges in the field of technical education in our country. Till recently technologies were mostly imported to our country and the training needed for these technologies were generally carried abroad. Globalization has opened the economy to global players in the industry and service sectors as a result of which, new products and services are being introduced continuously with improved quality and customer focus. The most important factor in the success of this new brand of industries and service units is only by meeting them with a group of highly motivated and meticulously trained forces in the field of technical education. The knowledge and technical skills of this workforce have to be regularly updated. The engineer coming out of our institution should be capable of meeting the challenges of the modern industry and the question is what are we really capable of this?

There is no doubt that India is rich in mineral resources but it is also a fact that most of them have not yet been explored. The government is committed to utilizing this wealth, but the problem is that we do not have sufficient level to explore these resources by ourselves, with the present level of our technical literacy. More and more technical institutions are, therefore, being opened with a vision to raise the level of technical education in the country. A large number of technical hands are pouring out of our universities every year. It is a happy sign of the times but unfortunately, our industries are still mediocre and the number of jobs is less. It would be harsh to say that we are lacking far behind, but the fact is that we are a developing nation still struggling to reach out some unexplored resources. Our quest to achieve is the main driving force towards the success, and we need to capitalize the fact.

Conclusion

No nation could generate the progress unless it promotes technical aspects in its fields. The technical education produces technicians for all type of industries and it is true that the progress of a country much depends upon its Industrialization without which a handsome economy would not be possible, so need today is to formulate a technical education system that not only caters to the needs of the present, but also prepare us for the future.

Vijay GarG Retired Principal Educational Columnist Malout Punjab

Penning a Bright Future: A Conversation with Rising Star Writer FAHEEM UL ISLAM on Creativity, Passion and Finding success at a Young Age

Q: Can you tell us a little about your background and upbringing?

A: I was born and raised in Achan a village of district pulwama and I come from a middle class family. Growing up, I was always interested in public speaking, writing, but it wasn't until later in life that I discovered my passion for writing. I completed my initial school from MPS school Achan and then moved to Jamia Sirajuloom imamsahib shopian till my high school level. Afterwards I qualified the entrance examination of Aligarh Muslim and completed my secondary classes from science and bachelor's level program in Political science. Presently I'm pursuing masters in international politics from Department of Strategic and Security Studies Aligarh Muslim University.

When did you first realize you wanted to be a writer?

A: I've loved writing ever since I was a child. I remember scribbling stories in my notebook during class and daydreaming about characters and plotlines. But it wasn't until I read an article about the degradation of morality among youth due to impact of different menace and substance abuse in our valley that I realized writing could be more than just a hobby. I wanted to create stories that could transport readers the way that article transported me. For this all journey my Father has been my mentor and torch bearer to be a best version of myself for the society.

Q: What has been your biggest achievement as a writer so far?

A: I would say that publishing my books namely THE MIDNIGHT SILENCE and BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES and 20 plus co-authored books has been my biggest achievements so far. It was a goal that I had been working towards for a long time, and it felt incredible to finally achieve it.

Some of them are:

- INDIAN BOOK OF RECORDS 2020
- INDIAN EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR BOOK
- INDIAN HUMANITARIAN AWARD FOR SOCIAL SERVICE THROUGH WRITINGS DURING COVID-19
- Rashtra Prerna Award 2020 FOR BEING THE BEST MULTIDIMENSIONAL WRITER FROM JAMMU AND KASHMIR.
- YOUNG AUTHOR AWARD From JAMMU AND KASHMIR INNOVATIVE FOUNDATION FOR TRANSFORMING SOCIETY
- BEST ANCHOR AWARD AT TAGORE



HALL AUDITORIUM SRINAGAR BY ANGEL'S CULTURAL ACADEMY SRINAGAR J&K

- BEST ANCHOR AWARD BY DIVISIONAL COMMISSIONER KASHMIR
- 1ST POSITION IN SELF COMPOSED POETRY COMPETITION ORGANISED BY THE WINGS OF DESIRE NGO
- BEST SPEAKER OF THE 2021 DISTRICT DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP ORGANISED BY SKLCWS SRINAGAR.
- CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION AS AN ANCHOR AT DRUG DE-ADDICTION

PROGRAM HELD AT HISTORICAL AUDITORIUM TAGORE HALL SRINAGAR BY DIVISIONAL ADMINISTRATION KASHMIR.

- BEST YOUNGEST ORATOR OF DISTRICT PULWAMA BY KADAM SOCIETY (NGO) PULWAMA.
- SPECIAL APPRECIATION AWARD FROM HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL OF INDIA 2023.

Q: How do you handle criticism or negative feedback about your writing?

A: It can be tough to receive criticism or negative feedback, but I try to take it in stride and use it as an opportunity to learn and grow. I also remind myself that not everyone will like my writing, and that's okay. The most important thing is to stay true to myself and my vision as a writer.

Q: How has your faith influenced your writing?

A: My faith is the cornerstone of my writing. It guides everything from the themes I explore to the language I use. I

believe that writing is a powerful tool for spreading the message of truth and promoting understanding and unity among people of different faiths.

Q: Who are some of your biggest influences as a writer?

A: There are so many great Islamic writers that have influenced me, but some of my favorites are [author names]. I admire the way they [describe their writing style/what you admire about them], and I think they do an excellent job of conveying the beauty and complexity of Islam in their writing.

Q: What's your writing process like?

A: I usually start with a concept or idea that I want to explore. Then I do research and spend time reflecting on how I can approach the topic from an Islamic and modern perspectives. Once I have a clear idea of what I want to say, I start writing, trying to strike a balance between conveying my message and engaging the reader.

Q: What do you hope readers take away from your writing?

A: I hope that my writing inspires readers to learn more about Islam and modern challenges, see it in a positive light. I also hope that it encourages readers to think more deeply about issues related to faith, morality, societal issues and social justice.

Q: What challenges have you faced as a writer?

A: One of the biggest challenges I've faced is dealing with stereotypes and misconceptions about Islam. Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation out there, and some people are quick to make assumptions about what Islam represents. But I see this as an opportunity to educate and inform people, and I believe that my writing can play an important role in promoting understanding and tolerance.

Q: What advice would you give to other aspiring writers?

A: My advice would be to write from the heart and stay true to your values. Don't be afraid to tackle difficult topics or challenge conventional wisdom. And most importantly, remember that your writing can make a difference in the world. By sharing your perspective and insights, you have the power to inspire, educate, and bring about positive change. Writing can be a tough and lonely road at times, but it's also incredibly rewarding. Believe in yourself and your ability to tell stories, and keep working hard to hone your craft.

Puffin' and pantin' on the Roald Dahl beach

THE TEXTUAL CHANGES IN DAHL'S WORK ADD UP TO A MASSIVE ACT OF CENSORSHIP. AND THIS IS CARRIED OUT NOT BY THE STATE, NOT THE SOCIAL MEDIA MOBS OF THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT, BUT BY A PUBLISHING HOUSE



CP SURENDRAN

Roald Dahl has been dead for over 30 years. Never was he more in trouble than now. Dahl was a Royal Air force pilot. In 1940, his plane crashed in Libya and he was severely injured in the spine and head. Months later, he recovered. When the war was over, he took up writing seriously, and we discovered he was a genius. It is possible that the brush with death—the broken spine and the cracked skull—touched off new nerves; pain and trauma are potentially regenerative.

A fortnight ago, Puffin, the children's publishing wing of Penguin, brought out a revised edition of Dahl's short stories for kids, not only with the help of virtuous editors but also with the active aid of censors. They hired Sensitivity Readers to go over Dahl's texts, as reported by The Guardian, which, like many other newspapers, has carried a series of articles condemning the Puffin effort to make a good man of Dahl.

An aside. The Guardian has been a leader of the liberal banners of the universe to make the planet a better place. Indian media, often brave when the government in power is soft, has followed suit. Well, they seem to have completely forgotten that they did everything in their power to "appear good" and "progressive" at every opportunity and that they contributed to the cancel culture whose latest victim is Dahl.

To generalise on Dahl's plane crash and pains. True writing is not possible without experience, which is why an imitative software like ChatGPT must fail. The prescriptive society we are at pains to evolve revolts against the idea of experience, and, therefore, against art. You must fall to rise. "To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life!" Joyce said. Well, if Joyce resurfaced in our midst, he is not likely to be published for reasons of misogyny, racism, and obscenity. Great writing is not against Man. It is against all that is imperfect in the human condition. By critiquing the present, the written word sets a higher standard for the future.

In varying degrees, the cancel culture has affected the standing of writers like Nabokov, Heming-



way, Enid Blyton, Peter Handke, and J K Rowling. In keeping with the re-emergence of the visual culture—a kind of return to the primitive civilisation—as opposed to the written culture, it is the word that is taking the brunt of the reformist zeal of the virtuous, not the abstract arts like painting or music. Naturally, there are more writers paying the price than other artists.

Dahl's short stories are like miniature explosions. In one of his early stories, Madame Rosette, for example, a couple of young RAF pilots based in Cairo during the war get hilariously drunk and plan to save ("It is the chivalry of the army", a sentence repeatedly uttered by one of the cheerfully inebriated characters) a bunch of women from the hands of Madame Rosette who runs a brothel. She is described in

all the banned words of today: "short, fat, greasy"; "a large mud-colored face"; "a small fish mouth..."; "a trace of black mustache". All these play to a type so that the "chivalry of the army" comes through.

Without the misogyny—which to my mind is as congenital a condition as might be obesity or queerness—the saving of the girls will never be romantic and comic enough. The story was written in the early 1940s. It is good to ask: why should Penguin (which brought out the short stories of Dahl and profited) not edit these offending descriptions, so the parents of Puffin readers, too, are reformed?

The Sensitivity Readers that Puffin hired earned their keep by removing/adding words and sentences and changing the tone and mood of the stories, so kids do not grow up toxic. No matter that the same kids watch

porn on the internet and are addicted to violent games.

That Puffin's convent idea of literature brings into question the legacies and intellectual property rights of authors is part of the problem. The equally important part is the puffery at the heart of the liberal enterprise.

For instance, in the story Matilda, a sentence that previously read "crazy with frustration" now says "wild with frustration". In Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, the description of the boy, Augustus Gloop, has changed from "enormously fat" to just "enormous". The Cloud Men characters in James and the Giant Peach are now Cloud People.

In what way is this different from the Victorian idea of good behavior that would encourage women to refer to a man's legs as "understandings"? The textual changes in Dahl's work add up to a massive act of censorship. And this is carried out not by the State, not the social media mobs of the Left and the Right, but by a publishing house.

At this rate, it is safe to assume that Shakespeare's Get Thee To A Nunnery passage (Hamlet admonishing a frozen, waxen Ophelia) will be soon dropped from college texts.

When institutions preach ethics, one can safely assume potent individual revolts are being preempted.

When a whole society is caught in a reformist frenzy, witch-hunting and lynching become hard to distinguish from a collective compulsive mental disorder to be seen as samaritans.

The latest development in the Dahl story is that Puffin will go back to restoring the prodigal writer to his original text. It will, however, offer both versions—original and rewritten—for readers to choose from. This follows the public outcry, led by the likes of Philip Pullman and Salman Rushdie. Too late. Puffin remains exposed: at heart, it is not a publisher, but a policeman.

When the government of the day comes down on free speech, at least the binary of the situation is clear. But what is one to do when publishing houses take the initiative to virtually silence an author? A four-letter word comes to mind, and it is not love, as Sensitivity Readers might like to think.

Poet, novelist, and screenplay writer. His latest novel is One Love and the Many Lives of Osip B (cpsurendran@gmail.com)

India, Mozambique ready to take ties to next level: EAM in Maputo

HT News Network

New Delhi/Maputo, Apr 14 (UNI) External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is on a visit to Mozambique, said the time-tested and historic relationship with Mozambique is expanding and both sides are ready to take it to the next level.

He also virtually inaugurated the India-made Buzi Bridge and said it is a practical example of the bilateral solidarity and friendship.

On his meeting with the Indian diaspora at the reception hosted by Indian High Commissioner in Maputo Ankan Banerjee on Thursday evening, he said in tweets:

"Pleased to meet community representatives and friends of India at the reception hosted by High Commissioner in Maputo this evening.

"Underlined the significance of our time-tested and historic relationship that is expanding. And we are ready to take it to the next level.

"Highlighted that India today does not speak only for itself, but for the Global South.



"Transformational changes are happening in an Atmanirbhar Bharat that is putting us on a different trajectory.

"We will keep following PM@narendramodi's Kam-pala principles and will be guided by priorities and interests of our partners in their quest for growth and development.

"Thanked the Indian community for shaping the image of our nation abroad," he said.

On the inauguration of the bridge, the Indian High Commissioner said in a tweet:

"Thank EAM @drsjais-hankar for virtually inaugurating the Buzi Bridge constructed as part of 132 km Tica-Buzi-Nova-Sofala

Road project. Another step in strengthening India-Mozambique ties."

EAM retweeting the tweet, posted: "A practical example of our solidarity and friendship. Will make a difference to so many in Mozambique."

The 670 metre long bridge over the Buzi river is part of the 132 km Tica-Buzi-Nova-Sofala Road project. Work on the project has been underway since 2018 at a cost of US\$118 million and financed by the Exim-Bank of India.

It is being executed by Indian contractor AFLONS under the supervision of WAPCOS. The project has got delayed following the tropical cyclones Idai, Cha-

lane and Eloise. These phenomena forced the elevation of the platform quota and an increase in components unforeseen in the initial sketch.

Covid-19 also caused a setback in the works, especially in the import of materials from India

The project, including the bridge, will provide the coastal district of Búzi greater socio-economic development, boost trade and the free movement of people and goods.

Búzi has potential in agriculture, livestock, fishing, guano in the Estaquina caves, oilseed, and tourism in the Mwenhe-Mukuro Sanctuary, in the administrative post of Nova-Sofala, a report said.

EAM Jaishankar is visiting Mozambique, on the south-east coast of Africa, from April 13-15. This is the first-ever visit by an External Affairs Minister of India to the Republic of Mozambique.

EAM is to call on the top leadership and also co-chair the 5th Session of the Joint Commission Meeting with Mozambican Foreign Minister Veronica Macamo.

"BJP Carrying Out Fake Encounters With Eye On Polls": Akhilesh Yadav's Claim

HT News Network

Mhow: The Bharatiya Janata Party government in Uttar Pradesh was carrying out encounters with an eye on polls, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said on Friday a day after gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad's son Asad and an associate were killed by an STF team in Jhansi there.

Ahmad, his son and several others are accused in the Umesh Pal murder case in UP, the fallout of which made Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath swear in the Assembly that he would wipe out the mafia there.

Speaking to reporters after paying tribute to eminent jurist and social reformer Babasaheb Ambedkar at his birthplace Mhow on his birth anniversary, Mr Yadav said the Constitution, of which the former was the chief architect, was under threat.

"Institutions are being finished one after the other and (Bharatiya Janata Party) governments (at the Centre and UP) are working to destroy the Constitution Babasaheb gave us," Mr Yadav said.

Queried about Thursday's encounter, Mr Yadav said,



"From the very first day, (the Uttar Pradesh) BJP government is indulging in fake encounters with an eye on polls." However, on being asked about allegations that Atiq Ahmad had connections to Pakistani elements, Mr Yadav just said "what can I say about the connections he has and with whom".

He slammed the BJP government in UP for action against a mother-daughter duo in Kanpur, during which their houses were bulldozed and burnt down, leading to both losing their lives.

Mr Yadav also alleged a promising student leader was killed in Ballia by those belonging to the "caste of the (UP) chief minister". "Is it an India where you can kill a weaker person? Is it an India where we won't get our Constitutional rights,"

the SP chief questioned.

He asked why UP has received the maximum number of notices from the National Human Rights Commission (for police action like encounters), adding that the northern state also leads in the number of custodial deaths.

Umesh Pal, a key witness in the 2005 murder case of then BSP MLA Raju Pal, and his two police security guards were shot dead outside his home in Prayagraj's Dhoomanganj area on February 24 this year.

Based on a complaint lodged by Umesh Pal's wife Jaya Pal, a case was registered on February 25 against Atiq Ahmad, his brother Ashraf, son Asad, Ghulam and others. As per UP police, Asad and Ghulam were shot dead after they opened fire at a Special Task Force team

that had encircled them in Jhansi on Thursday. Ahmad, his son and several others are accused in the Umesh Pal murder case in UP, the fallout of which made Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath swear in the Assembly that he would wipe out the mafia there.

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Arvind Kejriwal Summoned By CBI In Delhi Liquor Policy Case On Sunday: Sources

HT News Network

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has been summoned by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for questioning over alleged corruption in the capital's now-scrapped alcohol sales policy that led to the arrest of his deputy Manish Sisodia in February, sources have told NDTV. The CBI has asked Mr Kejriwal to appear for questioning on Sunday, sources said, making it the first instance in recent memory where a Chief Minister has been summoned by the central agency in an investigation. The CBI is investigating allegations that the liquor policy implemented by the Delhi government last year, which ended government control over the sale of liquor in the capital, gave undue advantages to private retailers. Alleging the involvement of the "highest levels" of Mr Kejriwal's government in the swindle, the agency has claimed crores in kickbacks were paid for favours in the policy and funnelled into his Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) election campaign in Goa last year.

"A Dangerous Plot": Congress Leader On Proposal For New Term For Widows

HT News Network



Mumbai: Former Maharashtra minister and Congress leader Yashomati Thakur on Friday said the state government's proposal to refer to widows as 'Ganga Bhagirathi' was a "dangerous plot" and conspiracy, and alleged that "Manuwadi" forces were constantly trying to restrain women and other sections of the society. Even today, widows face difficulties at many levels and giving new labels to these women will not change their condition, she said, adding that the government should instead strive to streamline the implementation of schemes for their benefit. Earlier this week, Women and Child Development Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha sent a letter to the administration in which he proposed the use of the term 'Ganga Bhagirathi' to refer to widows in a bid to offer them respect.

"I am Yashomati. Why should I mention Ganga Bhagirathi before my name? I am not Ganga Bhagirathi, nor will I ever mention this before my name. As we commemorate Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's birth anniversary, I want to emphasise that we must not allow such a decision in this state," Ms Thakur, a former women and child development minister, said in a statement.

"I lost my husband and raised my children single-handedly after his sudden demise. Thanks to the Constitution of this country, I have earned the right to equality and education. Today, I am recognised as a free individual. The Constitution has granted freedom to all Dalits, exploited, deprived and women from the chains of slavery.

"All Ready, Will Talk To Each Other": Nitish Kumar On Opposition Unity Push

HT News Network

Patna: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, tasked with bringing together Opposition parties that have no love lost for the Congress to forge a grand alliance against the BJP, today said that he has spoken to all parties and "they are ready". Mr Kumar said he still needs to speak to some parties, and they will all "talk to each other".

"Very soon, most parties will come together. I have spoken to Congress party leaders in detail, and everyone has agreed. We are now doing it (uniting against the BJP) will everyone's agreement. I spoke to the CPI too yesterday... This is my mission, that all parties sit together and decide what to do (for the 2024 look Sabha elections)," he said while addressing JD(U) workers.

The renewed attempt at Opposition unity, after NCP boss Sharad Pawar in an interview with NDTV exposed the fault lines in the alliance, picked pace with the meeting between Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, and Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav on Wednesday.

Sources say that Nitish Kumar has agreed to speak to parties who remain equidistant from the BJP and the Congress. He has already met with Arvind Kejriwal. "I am



completely with him. It is extremely necessary that the entire opposition and the country come together and change the government at the Centre," Mr Kejriwal said after the meeting.

He may meet K Chandrashekar Rao of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi and Mamata Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress -- Congress is their direct rival in Bengal and Telangana respectively -- soon.

Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal United (JDU) has proposed what they call the "Nitish formula" of opposition unity, sources say. "The only way to win against Narendra Modi is to follow a one-against-one policy in 2024, which means one seat, one candidate from the opposition against the BJP candidate," said senior Janata Dal-United leader KC Tyagi.

Bengal's Next Chief Minister From BJP, Mamata Banerjee Can...: Amit Shah

HT News Network

Suri: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday appealed to the people to ensure BJP's victory in 35 seats out of the 42 in West Bengal in the next Lok Sabha polls, saying that the Trinamool government would not survive beyond 2025 if the target is achieved.

While lashing out at the Mamata Banerjee government for running a "Hitler-like regime", Amit Shah said if the BJP returns to power in 2024 by winning more than 35 seats in the state, "no one would dare to attack Ram Navami rallies in the state".

Violence broke out in various places of the state during the Ram Navami celebrations earlier this month.

"Let me say it clearly that Narendra Modi will be the country's Prime Minister again. In 2024 Lok Sabha polls, give us more than 35 seats from West Bengal, and I can assure you that the Mamata Banerjee government won't survive beyond 2025," Amit Shah said while addressing a rally here in Birbhum district.

The Mamata Banerjee government is scheduled to complete its third term in 2026.



"Mamata Banerjee might dream of making her nephew the next Chief Minister, but the next Chief Minister of West Bengal will be from the BJP. Only the BJP can fight and defeat the corrupt TMC," he said. Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek is TMC's national general secretary and an MP.

The BJP won 18 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal in the 2019 elections. Amit Shah's comments drew sharp reactions from the TMC, which termed it as "undemocratic and unconstitutional".

Assam: PM Modi to attend Bihu celebration; lay foundation of projects worth Rs 14,300 cr

HT News Network

Guwahati, April 14 (UNI) Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the celebration of the Bihu festival in Assam and will lay the foundation of projects worth Rs 14,300 crore on Friday.

The mega show is being organised by the state government where over 11,000 girls and boys will participate.

PM Modi will also witness this historical moment. During his visit to the state PM, Modi would lay the foundation stone, inaugurate and dedicate several projects.

At around noon, the Prime Minister will reach AIIMS Guwahati and inspect its newly built campus.

At a public function subsequently, he will dedicate AIIMS Guwahati and three other Medical colleges to the nation. He will also lay the foundation stone of Assam Advanced Health Care Innovation Institute



(AAHII) and launch 'Aapke Dwar Ayushman' campaign by distributing Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) cards to eligible beneficiaries.

At around 2:15 pm, Prime Minister will attend the programme marking the platinum Jubilee Celebrations of Guwahati High Court at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra, Guwahati.

At 5 pm, Prime Minister will reach Sarusajai Stadium, Guwahati to preside over a public function, where he will witness a colourful Bihu programme

performed by more than 10,000 Bihu dancers.

During the programme, Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone and dedicate to the Nation various development projects including commissioning of a 500 TPD Menthol Plant in Namrup; laying of the foundation stone of bridge on the Brahmaputra River connecting Palashbari and Sualkuchi; foundation stone laying for beautification of Rang Ghar, Sivasagar; and dedication to five railway projects to the nation.

Rongali Bihu will be celebrated in Assam on Friday. Observed in the first week

of the month Bohag (mid-April) every year, Rongali or Bohag Bihu heralds the Assamese New Year and is widely celebrated among the community.

The Assamese celebrate Bihu thrice a year, which signifies the distinct cycles of farming - Bhogali or Magh Bihu in January, Bohag or Rongali Bihu in April, and Kongali Bihu in October. During the programme, Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone and dedicate to the Nation various development projects including commissioning of a 500 TPD Menthol Plant in Namrup; laying of the foundation stone of bridge on the Brahmaputra River connecting Palashbari and Sualkuchi; foundation stone laying for beautification of Rang Ghar, Sivasagar; and dedication to five railway projects to the nation.

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Aryans pharmacy students visit North India's 14th largest Pharma and Lab Expo at Sector 17, Chandigarh

HT News Network



Aryans students of B. Pharma and D. Pharma with Dr. Krishan Kumar, Principal and Kalindi Madaan HoD visited over 250 pharmaceutical company stalls and learned latest trends and technologies in the pharmaceuticals, drugs, and formulations.

The expo was inaugurated by Sh. Lalit Jain, IAS, Director, Department of Environment Science & Technology, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh. Later he addressed all on Synergistic Growth of Pharma Industry- Development & Challenges.

Experts from pharma companies shared their knowledge with all and the students interacted enthusiastically. Students explored pharma manufacturing equipment, packaging, quality analytics, tablet coating, compression machines, lab equipment and analytical tools. Experts from pharma companies shared their knowledge with all and the students interacted enthusiastically. Students explored pharma manufacturing equipment, packaging, quality analytics,

Biden urges Britain to protect peace in Northern Ireland

■ HT News Network

DUBLIN: US President Joe Biden on Thursday declared "I'm home" as he was feted on a visit to his ancestral homeland Ireland, whose story he said proved the triumph of hope over despair.

Gearing up for a potential election rematch against Donald Trump, the Irish-American Democrat dwelt on the success of Irish emigres in carving out a new life far from home.

The United States and Ireland were joined in "not just the hope but the conviction that better days lie ahead", he said in a speech to the Irish parliament, after his motorcade was cheered by large crowds in Dublin.

Seeming to draw a firm contrast to some US Republicans' dystopian vision for the future of America, Biden added: "We have the power to build a better future."

But, following a testy visit to Belfast prior to Dublin, Biden also issued a pointed warning that the UK "should be working closer with Ireland" to protect a 25-year-old peace deal in Northern Ireland.

"Political violence must never



again be allowed to take hold in this island," he said to warm applause from the Irish audience, which included veteran nationalist leader Gerry Adams.

Adams, still a hate figure for many pro-UK unionists in Northern Ireland, hugged Biden after the speech, likely adding fuel to the unionists' fire after their former leader Arlene Foster said that

Biden "hates the United Kingdom".

The White House strongly pushed back at that, and Irish Taoiseach (prime minister) Leo Varadkar said after meeting Biden in Dublin that the president was "keen to be supportive in any way that he can" to uphold the peace in Northern Ireland.

Biden backed efforts by the UK and Irish governments to end a

unionist boycott of the devolved Belfast legislature, "but doesn't want to be overbearing or interfering either", Varadkar said.

Biden, who is only the second Catholic president in US history, earlier met Irish head of state Michael Higgins at his official residence. Watched by fellow octogenarian Higgins, Biden tapped into his Irish roots for his message

in the official guest book. "As the Irish saying goes, your feet will bring you to where your heart is," he said he wrote, joking that he was going to stay in Ireland.

In parliament, he switched briefly from English to Irish, telling lawmakers and dignitaries: "I'm home." Biden also took the opportunity to correct a gaffe that has gone viral, this time congratulating Ireland's rugby team on beating New Zealand's all-conquering All Blacks last year.

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Extradited Pakistani man charged with police officer's killing in UK

■ HT News Network

A 74-year-old man who was extradited from Pakistan appeared in court in London on Thursday, charged with murdering a UK police officer nearly 18 years ago. Piran Ditta Khan is accused of killing Sharon Beshenivsky, who was shot as she tried to foil a robbery at a travel agency in November 2005.

Beshenivsky's female colleague was also injured in the incident in Bradford, northern England. Neither officer was armed.

The rare fatal shooting of a police officer on duty in Britain triggered widespread shock and revived calls for police to routinely carry guns.

Beshenivsky, 38, had three children and two step-children. She had been an officer with West Yorkshire Police for only nine months before her death.

Khan, who was arrested in Pakistan in January 2020, was extradited to the UK on Tuesday, the Crown Prosecution Service said late on Wednesday.

As well as murder, he is also facing a single charge of robbery, two counts of possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life and two counts of possession of a prohibited weapon.

Charges against him were authorised in 2006, the CPS, which is responsible for prosecutions in England and Wales, said. Khan appeared before a magistrate in central London and was remanded in custody until a further hearing on Monday. No pleas were entered.

Six men have previously been jailed in connection with the shooting, including a Somali national who was sentenced to a minimum of 35 years in jail.

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Qatar and Bahrain re-establish relations

■ HT News Network



Qatar and Bahrain announced late on Wednesday that they had agreed to end a long-running diplomatic feud and re-establish relations. Bahrain in 2017 joined Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt in imposing a diplomatic blockade on Qatar. The countries' rivalry goes back even further, however, and Bahrain is the last to renew ties. Agreement on the reconciliation was reached in talks at the Gulf Cooperation Council headquarters in Saudi Arabia, Qatar's foreign ministry said.

The neighbours "decided to restore diplomatic relations between the two countries according to the principles of the United Nations charter", said a foreign ministry statement. "The two sides affirmed that this step stems from the mutual desire to develop bilateral relations and enhance Gulf unity and integration," it added. Bahrain's foreign ministry released a similar statement, the country's state news agency reported.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt imposed a blockade in 2017, accusing Qatar of supporting extremist organisations in the region and becoming too close to Iran. The four countries banned Qatari planes and ships from using their airspace and territorial waters.

'Patience, reciprocity' needed in dealing with Kabul: Khar

■ HT News Network

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan once again warned the international community against abandoning Afghanistan, which is currently facing a humanitarian crisis and needs urgent assistance to survive.

Speaking at the Ministerial Meeting of the Neighbours of Afghanistan in Samarkand on Thursday, Minister of State Hina Rabbani Khar called for 'patience' and 'reciprocity', saying that the international community should continue to engage with the interim Afghan government. "We need to be flexible. This process should be appropriately incentivised," she suggested.

She said Pakistan firmly believed that humanitarian support should remain delinked from any political considerations.

She mentioned Kabul's decision to suspend education for women and girls and to prevent female staff members from working for national and international NGOs. Says Pakistan believes aid should be delinked from political considerations.

The minister regretted that some of the policies and actions of the interim Afghan government didn't provide an incentive for engagement.

Ms Khar said people were questioning the utility of engaging with the interim Afghan government as she called these approaches "misplaced and need to be re-assessed".

"The international community currently finds itself at a standstill with Afghanistan. The cascade of unmet expect-



tations has meant that critical support needed by Afghanistan to stave off a grave humanitarian crisis, prevent an economic meltdown and combat terrorism has been withheld", she said.

"We cannot talk of the Afghan people without talking to them. Constructive engagement with the Interim Afghan Government remains imperative. As friends and neighbours, we don't have the luxury to disengage with Afghanistan", she said.

Noting that connectivity has remained a pipe dream for far too long, Ms Khar advocated for turning this 'constraint' into a conduit for regional peace and prosperity. Connectivity projects such as CASA-1000, Trans-Afghan Railways, TAPI and others, were not merely economic undertakings, they were strategic investments for a shared future, the minister noted. On the sidelines of the conference, Ms Khar met with the foreign ministers of China, Russia and Iran.

IMF chief urges world to avoid a 'second Cold War'

■ HT News Network

WASHINGTON: Countries must do more to avert the costly consequences of growing global trade fragmentation, and help avert a "second Cold War," the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) managing director said on Thursday.

"I am among those who know what are the consequences of a Cold War: it is loss of talent and contribution to the world," Kristalina Georgieva said during a press conference at the official start of the World Bank and IMF's spring meetings.

"I don't want to see that repeating," she said, adding that the world should "rationally accept there will be some cost, there will be some fragmentation, but keep these costs low." Georgieva was born and raised in Bulgaria, a former Soviet satellite state.

Multilateral institutions like the World Bank and IMF have an important role to play in preventing the world from splintering into different blocs with severe economic consequences, she said.

An IMF report earlier this week predicted that growing trade fragmentation resulting from events like Brexit, the US-China trade war and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, could make the global economy as much as seven per cent smaller than it otherwise would have been.

Policy makers had a crucial role to play to "defend the interests" of their citizens, Georgieva said. "If we fail to be more rational, then people everywhere will be worse off," she said.

Progress has been made on a number of



key issues for the World Bank and IMF, the Bank's outgoing president, David Malpass, said earlier on Thursday at an event marking the official start of the spring meetings.

Member states agreed on a number of steps to boost the World Bank's financial capacity, he said, freeing it up to lend "as much as \$50 billion of new financing" over the next decade.

French president Emmanuel Macron will host a summit in June which will look to extend some of these new rules to other financial institutions and build a "new financial framework," the French finance minister Bruno Le Maire told reporters.

The Bank and IMF's leaders said progress had also been made on replenishing lending facilities for low-income countries which have been depleted by the twin impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Ireland, Saudi Arabia, the UK, Portugal and Japan have all already come forward with "substantial new pledges or contributions" towards replenishing these funds in recent days, Georgieva said.

Yemen prisoner swap starts as truce talks set for second round

■ HT News Network

A major prisoner exchange involving hundreds of captives from Yemen's civil war got underway on Friday after truce talks ended with an agreement to hold a second round.

The first plane departed Sanaa, the rebel-held capital, for government-controlled Aden hours after a Saudi delegation departed without a fresh truce but with plans to meet again.

Both initiatives come a month after Gulf heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Iran, who back opposing sides in the Yemeni conflict, agreed to re-establish ties, prompting a wider rapprochement across the



troubled region.

On Friday, 322 prisoners will fly on International Committee of the Red Cross planes between Sanaa and Aden, on the first day of an operation that will see 887 prisoners released.

"The first flight from Sanaa has left," ICRC media adviser Jessica Moussant told AFP, signalling the start of

the three-day exchange.

Among the prisoners to be released by the Houthis on Friday are Yemen's former defence minister, Major General Mahmud al-Subaihi, and the brother of the ex-president, Major General Nasser Mansur Hadi, officials said.

The biggest prisoner swap since 2020 is taking

place after a delegation from Saudi Arabia, which launched a military intervention in support of the beleaguered government in 2015, held talks with Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis this week in an attempt to end hostilities.

The Saudi delegation, led by Ambassador Mohammed al-Jaber, left Sanaa late on Thursday without a finalised truce but with an agreement to meet again, according to Houthi and Yemeni government sources.

"There is an initial agreement on a truce that should be announced later on if finalised," a Houthi official said on condition of anonymity, in the information that was confirmed by a government source.

US airman arrested over classified leaks

HT News Network

WASHINGTON: FBI agents on Thursday arrested a young national guardsman suspected of being behind a major leak of sensitive US government secrets — including about the Ukraine war. US Attorney General Merrick Garland announced the arrest made "in connection with an investigation into alleged unauthorised removal, retention and transmission of classified national defense information".

Addressing a news briefing, Garland named the suspect as Jack Teixeira — previously identified by US media as a 21-year-old airman, and the apparent leader of an online chat room where the document first emerged.

Garland confirmed that Teixeira is an employee of the United States Air Force National Guard, and said FBI agents took him into custody "without incident".

Jack Teixeira 'leads' an online chat room where document first emerged

News helicopter footage showed the suspect, in red shorts with his hands behind his back, being placed by heavily-armed agents into an unmarked sports utility vehicle, in a forested area in North Dighton, in the northeastern state of Massachusetts. Teixeira was due to make an initial appearance at the US District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

US media began honing in on Teixeira after The Washington Post reported that hundreds of pages of documents had been posted on the social media platform Discord by a man who worked on a US military base.

Glowing tributes paid to Dr B R Ambedkar

Making India Vishwa Guru is best tribute to Babasaheb: Rana

HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 13: The District Development Commissioner (DDC), Kupwara, Dr. Doifode Sagar Dattatray today chaired the meeting of District Level Review Committee (DLRC)/District Consultative Committee (DCC) organised by District Lead Bank Office Kupwara, here.

Addressing the meeting, the DDC who is also Chairman of District Level Review Committee, advised all

the banks and the sponsoring agencies to work with greater cooperation, coordination and cohesion to achieve the goals and targets of development and progress besides generation of employment for unemployed youth of the district. He directed them to reflect and register every improvement and performance on the financial indicators. He also directed all departments and banks to conduct awareness programmes at village/block levels to generate proper awareness about the schemes among the



people. He said employment generation for youth is the top most priority of the Government and urged upon the sponsoring agencies and banks to work with added dedication for the betterment of youth.

Deputy Commissioner asked the concerned officers of agriculture and allied sectors and heads of banking institutions to improve the indicators of agriculture and allied sectors and prioritise the saturation of the financial inclusion schemes of agriculture and allied sectors.

Deputy Commissioner Kupwara emphasised upon the concerned officers to reflect the improvement of indicators and achievements in proper time so that Aspirational District Programme dashboard is timely updated.

DC asked the heads of banking institutions and chief agriculture officer Kupwara to officers of allied sectors to saturate the KCC coverage and pay special attention on double cropping, animal husbandry and Fisheries.

J&K Bank sanctions 3 bank branches, 3 USBs, 2 ATMs, 4 Cash Recyclers for Kupwara

HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 14:

Giving a major relief to the people of different far-flung areas of frontier Kupwara district, J&K Bank authorities have sanctioned 3 new bank branches, 3 USBs, 2 ATMs and 4 Cash Recyclers in different areas of Kupwara district.

These J&K Bank branch expansions were requested by general public in different block Divas and grama sabhas of Back to village programmes and District administration Kupwara had taken the matter with J&K Bank authorities.

J&K Bank Branches sanctioned include JK Bank Branch Warnow Lolab, JK Bank Branch Fruit Man-

di Bumhama, and JK Bank branch Qasba Hyhama.

J&K Bank authorities have also sanctioned 3 USBs (Ultra small business units).

Sanctioned USBs include Thayan Kalaroos, USB for Gabra, and USB for Tangdhar market.

These USBs will have Cash deposit, cash withdrawal, transactions, cheque accept, cheque deposit other than loan and advances facilities.

Besides 2 ATMs (Automated Teller Machine) for Khurhama and Sub District Hospital Sogam have been sanctioned.

In addition to this bank authorities have sanctioned 4 Cash Recyclers (CRs) which include Cash Recycler for SDH Sogam, SDH Kupwara, Kralpora



Market, and Cash Recycler for Handwara market. The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kupwara, Dr. Doifode Sagar Dattatray, has congratulated the people of Kupwara district on

sanctioning of JK bank's new branches and other facilities.

The DC Kupwara while highlighting the importance of bank facilities for hassle free transactions and extending benefits of

social security and self employment schemes to the youth in far-off areas of Kupwara district said that the people would easily avail benefits of various beneficiary-oriented schemes of the Government through these bank branches. Lead District Manager Kupwara, Mehboob Ellahi Khan reiterated the Bank's commitment towards the economic development of people living in far-flung areas of Kupwara district. He said, "J&K Bank authorities have sanctioned these branches for the economic well-being of the people of Kupwara district."

J&K Bank authorities further said that these newly sanctioned branches will start functioning during the financial year 2023-24.

DC Kupwara visits far-flung Achamarg village, inspects developmental works, interacts with People

HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 14: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara Dr. Doifode Sagar Dattatray today visited Achamarg area in Taratpora Tehsil of Kupwara district.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected various ongoing development works. He also interacted with people of Achamarg and heard their day-to-day developmental issues.

On the occasion Deputy Commissioner said that the LG Government is committed to provide equitable development to all areas including far-flung and rural areas. He said Kupwara district is marching towards progress and prosperity as administration is focusing on holistic development in various sectors including Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Handicrafts and Tourism.

He directed the officers to further accelerate the developmental tempo in the district and ensure more field inspections and field visits in their respective jurisdictions and resolve public grievances on priority basis.

IUST to consider CUET (PG) Score for Admissions to Postgraduate Courses

HT News Network

Awantipora, April 13. Islamic University of Science and Technology shall consider CUET (PG) Score for admissions to the different Postgraduate programs at the University from the academic session 2023. Accordingly, the University has advised the PG aspirants to stay in contact with the website of the National Testing Agency (NTA) and IUST for information about the examination.

As per National Testing Agency (NTA), the Common University Entrance Test CUET (PG) will provide a single window opportunity to students seeking admission to different educational institutions across the country. The online submission of the application form for CUET 2023 is open till April 19, 2023.

Baisakhi celebration: Thousands of devotees pay obeisance at Gurdwara Dera Baba Banda Bahadur

HT News Network

REASI, APRIL 14: The two day annual mela on the eve



of Baisakhi concluded today, here at Dera Baba Banda Bahadur Shrine.

Thousands of devotees paid obeisance at the historic Gurdwara of Dera Baba Banda Bahadur Bairagi in Dera village of Reasi district on the second day of the Baisakhi festival.

The 300-year-old Dera Baba Bandha Bahadur Shrine has a historic Gurdwara, with the samadhi of Banda Bahadur. Besides, it has the ashes of Banda Bahadur, an arrow and other weapons, including a huge sword given to him by Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

The devotees hailing from different parts of Jammu province and adjoining States of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi participated with great enthusiasm in the Mela and sought blessings of Dera Baba Bandha Bahadur shrine.

The mela witnessed the display of all the belongings of the Baba. The Gurdwara Management Committee of Dera Baba had made elaborate arrangements for the stay of devotees.

The District Administration has made arrangements of drinking water, power supply and sanitation at the mela site.

CAO Inaugurates Pouni FPO

HT News Network

REASI, APRIL 14: An office of Pouni Farmers Producer Organisation (FPO Pouni) was inaugurated today in main Bazar Pouni by Chief Agriculture Officer, Harbans Singh in the presence of prominent citizens and PRI Members. The CEO Pouni Surinder Sharma presented a detailed work plan with the focus to increase membership drive. Around 105 farmers have registered in the organisation so far.

The Chief Agriculture Officer stressed upon increasing the membership with the active participation of small and marginal farmers of the area so that more equity grant could be realized for effective utilization in its management. He also suggested for establishment of Spices grinding and packing unit under PMFME as a part of ODOP and assured issuing of seed and fertilizer licenses.



Among others, Jaspal Singh sarpanch Bharkh, Suraj Prakash, Sarpanch Kund Khanyari and Bharat Singh Sarpanch Allya also spoke on the occasion.

Later, the CAO visited the Apiculture unit of Dev Raj who is rearing 110 bee colonies. Narinder Sharma i/c Apiculture development Assistant; S. Harmeet Singh AEA accompanied the Chief Agriculture Officer during Tour. Later, the CAO visited the Apiculture unit of Dev Raj who is rearing 110 bee colonies. Narinder Sharma i/c Apiculture development Assistant.

NIT Srinagar observes Ambedkar Jayanti

Ambedkar's contributions are significant and far-reaching: Director

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 14: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Friday observed the 132nd birth anniversary of father of the Indian Constitution, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar at Common Hall and paid rich tributes to the great leader.

The event was presided over by Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Sehgal, as Chief Guest, while Institute's Registrar Prof. Syed Kaiser Bukhari was Guest of Honor on the occasion.

In his key speech, Prof. Sehgal paid tributes to BR Ambedkar on his 132nd birth anniversary. He dedicated his life to the empowerment of the deprived and the exploited sections of society.

Prof. Sehgal said Ambedkar's legacy continues to inspire generations of social activists and political leaders in India and beyond. He is widely regarded as one



of the most important figures in Indian history and a champion of social justice and human rights.

He said Ambedkar's contributions to India are significant and far-reaching. He fought for the rights of marginalized communities and worked towards creating a society that is inclusive, just, and equitable, Prof. Sehgal said.

Institute's Registrar, Prof. Syed Kaiser Bukhari said Ambedkar was a social reformer who worked tirelessly for the upliftment of the oppressed classes in India. He was also a strong advocate of women's rights and gender equality.

He said Dr. Ambedkar

was appointed as the first Law Minister of Free India. On 29th August 1947 the Constituent Assembly appointed him as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee along with six other members to draft the Constitution of India.

"Baba Saheb was the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. A veritable emancipator of Dalits, a great national leader and patriot, philosopher and above he was great himself without any parallel among his contemporaries," he said.

Prof. Bukhari said from the framing of the constitution from its history to its present-day form, it has played a vital role in bring-

ing together 'an idea called India. It united the country and laid the foundation for the largest democracy in the world.

On the occasion, Dr. Kurella Swamy, Assistant Professor of the Chemical Engineering Department highlighted the literary works of Babasaheb, Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

However, apart from his contribution in framing the Constitution, he had inspired Dalit and Buddhist movements in the country and campaigned against social discrimination, he said.

Dr. Swamy said Ambedkar's ideas and teachings continue to inspire people in India and around the world.

At the conclusion of the event, both faculty members and students pay their respects to Dr. BR Ambedkar by offering flowers and lighting candles. Various other programs were organized by students to pay tributes to the Babasaheb.

Traditional fervour, gaiety mark Baisakhi celebration across Kathua

HT News Network

KATHUA, APRIL 14: The Baisakhi festival was today celebrated with traditional fervour and gaiety across Kathua district. The festival, also known as Vaisakhi, marks the beginning of the Sikh New Year and the harvest season. The festivities were held and people from all communities participated with ardency.

The main celebrations were held at the Gurdwara in Jasrota, Kathua, where devotees gathered to offer prayers and seek blessings. The Gurdwara was decorated with lights and flowers and the atmosphere was filled with the reciting of devotional hymns.

Similarly, a large number of people turned up for special prayers at the famous Airwan temple near Nagri to mark this special day.

Baisakhi Mela was also held at Ramlila Ground, Kathua, where local artisans and other vendors put up their stalls including local food and craft to mark successful harvest of Rabi crops.

Apart from religious congregations, a



series of cultural programs and events were also organized across the district to mark the occasion. Traditional folk dances, music performances, and street plays were held in different parts of the district, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the region.

The festival was also an occasion to promote communal harmony and brotherhood among different communities. People of all faiths participated in the celebra-

tions, highlighting the spirit of unity and diversity that is a hallmark of the region.

Speaking on the occasion, DC Kathua Rahul Pandey said, "Baisakhi is a significant festival for the people of our region. It is a time when we come together to celebrate our cultural heritage and promote communal harmony. I am delighted to see people from all communities participating in the festivities with great enthusiasm.

The festival is a time for renewal, and it is heartening to see the community come together to celebrate our traditions and culture." Similarly, a large number of people turned up for special prayers at the famous Airwan temple near Nagri to mark this special day.

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Speaking on the occasion, DC Kathua Rahul Pandey said,

These Hidden Risk Factors Can Make Women More Likely to Develop Heart Disease

Around 60 million women in the US have cardiovascular disease (CVD).

Women from racial and ethnic minority groups are at greater risk of CVD death.

A new American Heart Association (AHA) statement emphasizes that doctors must also consider social determinants of health when screening for CVD.

These include factors such as discrimination, environment, and language barriers.

An estimated 60 million Trusted Source women in the US (equal to 44% of the population) live with some form of cardiovascular disease (CVD).

Additionally, 1 in 5 deaths among women stems from CVD — with those from racial and ethnic minorities at greater risk Trusted Source.

'Traditional' contributing factors, such as obesity, smoking, diabetes, and high cholesterol, are frequently considered by doctors when assessing a patient's CVD risk.

However, a new scientific statement Trusted Source from the American Heart Association (AHA), published in its journal *Circulation*, highlighted that medical professionals must look beyond these when monitoring and treating CVD in women, especially those from underrepresented groups.

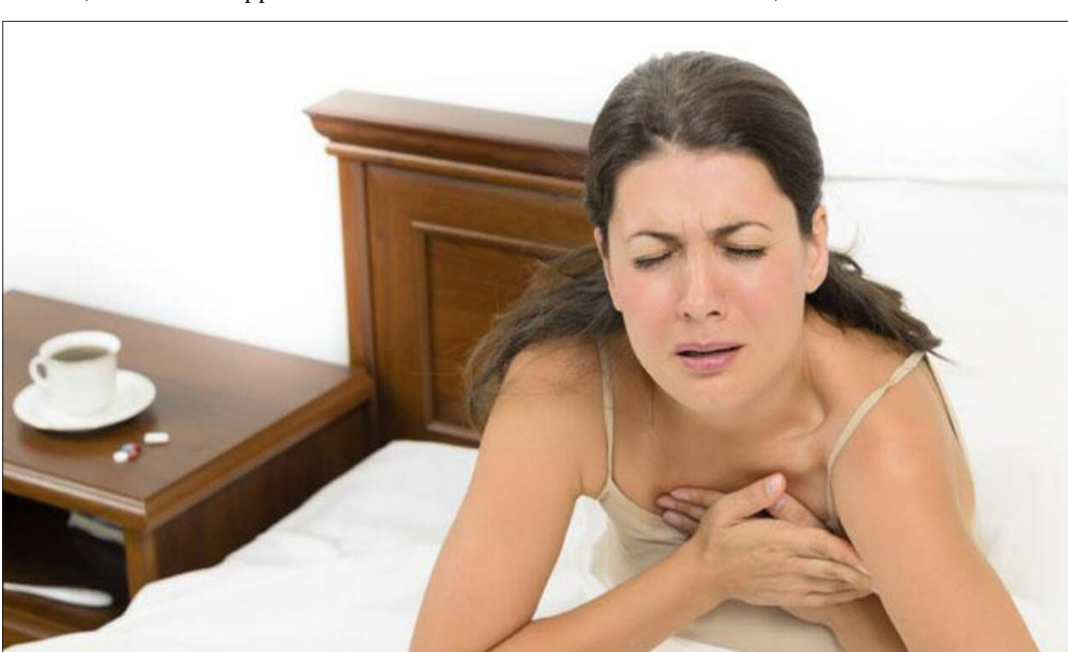
"In comparison to other women, Black women in the US (including African American and Afro Caribbean) have the highest rate of heart disease," stated Dr. Heather M. Johnson, a preventive cardiologist at Boca Raton Regional Hospital, part of Baptist Health South Florida, who was not involved with the report.

The AHA researchers stated that "nontraditional" socio-economic factors — such as discrimination and environment — must be considered if the gap in CVD treatment and survival between whites and racial and ethnic groups is to be reduced.

Many of these are often overlooked but can significantly affect health risks, care, and outcomes.

"Understanding both traditional

and nontraditional risk factors are important to prevent heart disease, but also to support the



early diagnosis and treatment of heart disease in women," Johnson told Healthline.

How bias, discrimination, and racism can affect your health

In the statement, the researchers said: "Behavioral and environmental factors and social determinants of health ... disproportionately affect women of underrepresented races and ethnicities."

"These factors result in a higher prevalence of CVD and significant challenges in the diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular conditions," they added.

Five social determinants of health were emphasized in the AHA's statement. But what are they and how do they influence CVD?

Discrimination

The AHA noted that discriminatory barriers faced by ethnic communities lead to high levels of stress. This, in turn, contributes to CVD issues such as inflammation and hypertension.

Research Trusted Source also highlights that minority groups can encounter racial bias and stereotyping from white healthcare providers — which may lead to

patients having their concerns dismissed or receiving poorer care.

"Studies show this is often due

explained Orom.

Furthermore, she told Healthline, such barriers can hinder the

that often is missed," stated Dr. Yu-Ming Ni, a cardiologist at MemorialCare Heart and Vascular Institute at Orange Coast Medical Center.

For instance, he shared with Healthline that older studies Trusted Source of Japanese individuals showed those who traveled to Hawaii and then to the continental U.S. had higher CVD rates than their peers who stayed in Japan.

Healthcare access

It was noted in the AHA statement that "there is evidence that SDOH factors experienced in youth, such as ... inability to access healthcare or inability to afford care, may affect heart health into adulthood and contribute to CVD risk factors and outcomes in adulthood."

Research shows that Black, Hispanic, Asian-American, and Native individuals are less likely to have health insurance.

But healthcare access isn't only about insurance, said Crabbe. For example, "[it also] includes geographic access to a particular health care service."

Orom concurred, stating there is a typically "lack of high-quality healthcare facilities in neighborhoods where people of color have historically lived."

Other social burdens can limit access, too. For example, United States Census Bureau data shows that ethnic minority groups are generally poorer compared to white populations. Poverty can prevent individuals from purchasing necessary medications, for example.

Finally, Michele Horan, a registered nurse and COO of Healthy Alliance, shared that other daily stressors — such as care responsibilities and the potential of eviction — can reduce the capacity of underserved communities to access healthcare.

"In most cases, these urgent situations are prioritized over one's health and well-being," Horan told Healthline. "Addressing life challenges, in my experience, will almost always surpass healthcare, accessible or not."

NEWS

Lower back pain: Causes and how to manage this common ailment

Lower back pain can be caused by several factors, including poor posture, muscle strain, injury, and underlying medical conditions. One of the leading causes of lower back pain is poor posture, which puts undue stress on the muscles and ligaments in the lower back.



Sitting or standing for prolonged periods with incorrect posture can lead to muscle imbalances and strain, resulting in lower back pain.

Similarly, lifting heavy objects incorrectly or suddenly twisting can strain the muscles and cause discomfort in the lower back.

Muscle strain due to overuse or sudden movements is another common cause of lower back pain. Engaging in strenuous physical activities without proper warm-up or using incorrect techniques while lifting weights can strain the muscles in the lower back, leading to pain and discomfort. Additionally, injuries such as sprains, strains, or herniated discs can also cause severe lower back pain.

Underlying medical conditions can also contribute to lower back pain. Conditions such as degenerative disc disease, arthritis, and sciatica can cause chronic pain in the lower back. In some cases, infections, tumors, or kidney stones may also manifest as lower back pain.

Managing lower back pain requires a multi-faceted approach. Follow these strategies for manage this common ailment:

Improve posture:

Maintaining proper posture while sitting, standing, and lifting can significantly reduce the risk of lower back pain. Sitting with a straight back, keeping the shoulders relaxed, and using an ergonomic chair can alleviate strain on the lower back. When lifting heavy objects, it's essential to use the legs and not the back, and avoid twisting motions.

Exercise regularly:

Engaging in regular physical activity can help strengthen the muscles in the lower back and improve flexibility. Exercises such as walking, swimming, and gentle stretching can be effective in managing lower back pain.

Apply heat and cold therapy:

A hot compress or a warm bath can relax the muscles and improve blood flow to the area, while an ice pack can help numb the area and reduce inflammation.

Practice stress management techniques:

Stress can exacerbate lower back pain, so it's essential to manage stress levels. Practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and yoga can help reduce stress and relieve lower back pain.

Seek professional help:

If the lower back pain persists or worsens, it's essential to seek professional medical advice.

Lower back pain can be caused by various factors, and effective management requires a holistic approach. Seeking professional help when needed is also crucial in managing lower back pain effectively.

6 Signs Your Bloating Could Be Something Serious

New Delhi: Bloating is a condition in which your stomach feels full and tight, mostly when you have gas. There are many reasons for feeling bloated and as the problem relates to a chronic underlying issue, it may cause pain and discomfort as well.

According to doctors, you may feel bloated even when you do not have a distended abdomen. It is a digestive issue, even though hormones and stress can also play a part. However, sometimes there is a serious underlying medical condition like Ovarian cancer also lurking.

Signs of bloating

A few common signs and symptoms of bloating which can be serious are:

Pain

Bloating caused due to ovarian cancer



can be due to a build-up of fluid known as ascites in the tummy which causes pain.

According to a study published in *Frontiers in Oncology*, the fluid is mostly gener-

ated from cancer cells and can block the lymphatic drainage system due to cancer. Need to visit the bathroom often

According to health experts, another sign that bloating is due to ovarian cancer is because of a change in your bathroom behavior. Out-of-the-ordinary bowel or urinary issues can be a sign that there is something wrong.

Doctors say that if there is a tumour, you may need to go to the bathroom more urgently than ever before.

Bloating persists

If your bloating lasts or more than two weeks in a month you should see a doctor for advice.

According to health experts, persistent bloating can be due to a tumour.

Changes in appetite

Like in other cancers, in ovarian cancer also the cancer cells begin to line up along the abdominal cavity. Large masses like tumours take up a lot of space in the abdominal area, leading to changes in appetite, like feeling full very quickly or not feeling like eating.

Some people with bloating due to cancer also experience chronic nausea and vomiting.

Congestive Heart Failure

Congestive heart failure or CHF also results in bloating, not just in the abdomen but with swelling in the legs too. According to the American Heart Association, other symptoms of CHF include fatigue, breathlessness, and heart palpitations.

STI Increase: Syphilis Cases Spike 74% in Four Years

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) like syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea continued to rise in 2021, a new report Trusted Source from U.S. Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC).

Over 2.5 million STIs were reported in the United States in 2021, marking a 7% increase Trusted Source in cases between 2017 and 2021.

Cases of increases in syphilis saw the biggest spike, growing by 32% between 2020 and 2021.

The CDC says the COVID-19 pandemic, which drove many people to forego or delay prevention services like testing, contributed to the spread of STIs.

Even before the pandemic hit, however, STIs were on the rise Trusted Source — a trend that has disproportionately impacted ethnic minority groups, gay and bisexual men, and people younger than age 25.

"Rates of STIs continue to increase

in the U.S. with alarming numbers over the past few years. Changes in sexual behavior with a decrease in condom use, decrease in prevention and testing efforts are likely the major contributors to the increase in STIs in the U.S.," says Dr. Maria Alcaide, an infectious disease specialist with UHealth, University of Miami Health System and a professor of Medicine with the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

What's behind the uptick in STIs?

Between 2017 and 2021 Trusted Source, cases of gonorrhea have increased by about 28%, cases of syphilis have increased by nearly 74%, and cases of congenital syphilis have increased by over 203%.

The report showed that cases of chlamydia dropped by 4%, but the researchers suspect the decline is due to reduced prevention and public health efforts during the pandemic and not an actual decrease in infections.



"The COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to the rising rates of STIs as people may have had less access to education, testing, and treatment," Dr. Alcaide says. But STIs were swiftly rising even before the pandemic hit.

Data Trusted Source suggests barriers to care, discrimination, and the stigma attached to STIs have all contributed to the rise in STIs.

Reduced condom use, a decrease in prevention and screening efforts, and opioid use Trusted Source, which is known to go hand-in-hand with STIs, are believed to have played a role, too.

Why syphilis is spreading the fastest Between 2020 and 2021 alone, syphilis rose by 32%.

"While most of new syphilis cases occur among men who have sex with

men, we are also seeing an increasing number of cases among women, which reflects the increase in congenital syphilis," Alcaide said.

Dr. Irene Stafford, a maternal-fetal medicine physician and an associate professor of OB/GYN with McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston, says syphilis is often a silent infection that presents with no symptoms.

"The rash and lesions of early syphilis can be asymptomatic and after they clear, an infected individual is unaware they are still infected," she says.

People who are infected can then unknowingly spread it to others through skin-to-skin contact or mucosal contact with an infected person.

"Transmission is easier than with other STIs that are transmitted through sexual intercourse," says Alcaide. How to prevent and detect STIs Many STIs can be asymptomatic in certain individuals, however, left untreated, can lead to complication-

Trusted Source like chronic pelvic pain, pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, pregnancy complications, an increased risk of contracting infections like HIV, and infant death.

Syphilis, for example, is more common in reproductive-aged people, including pregnant women, according to Dr. Stafford.

Untreated, the infection can be passed to the fetus and lead to health complications Trusted Source, like speed and liver problems and nerve issues, due to congenital syphilis.

To prevent the spread of STIs, all sexually-active people should get regularly tested once a year.

"If there is a new sexual partner, unprotected sex, recent STIs, or a partner with STIs testing should be done more frequently," says Alcaide.

STI screenings and open conversations should be a part of all routine health care visits, according to Stafford, not just when people have behavioral risk factors.

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"Whoever builds a mosque, desiring thereby Allah's pleasure, Allah builds for him the like of it in paradise." [Bukhari]

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