

Murmu 'missed' call before Prez nomination: Book

NEW DELHI, June 25:

Droupadi Murmu was not a frequent mobile phone user and probably "missed the most important call of her life" - that from the Prime Minister's Office to inform her about her nomination as the official NDA candidate for the president's post, claims a new book.

But her former officer on special duty in Jharkhand, Bikash Chandra Mohanto, came running to Murmu's house with his phone in hand, saying he had received a call apparently from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and was asked to connect with her.

This incident of June 21, 2022 finds mention in the biographical work "Droupadi Murmu: From Tribal Hinterlands to Raisina Hill" by journalist Kasturi Ray, published recently by Rupa.

Through interviews and analysis, Ray tracks Murmu's life, following her through school and college, from being a teacher to social worker, councillor to minister, from taking charge as the governor of Jharkhand to becoming India's first tribal president.

On that day in June last year, Murmu was in Odisha's Rairangpur, 14 km from her native village Uparbeda and nearly 275 km from capital Bhubaneswar. The BJP was to announce the NDA's presidential candidate. All were waiting for an official announcement.

Secretary Advisory Board for Development of Pahari Speaking People conducts Poonch tour

Excelsior Correspondent

POONCH, June 25: The Secretary Advisory Board for Development of Pahari Speaking People, Sapna Kotwal conducted an extensive tour of District Poonch to review the functioning of the Boys and Girls Pahari Hostels.

The Secretary's visit was warmly welcomed by the District Social Welfare Officer, Mohinder Paul, who was holding the charge of the Warden Boys Hostel. The staff of the Boys Pahari Hostel, and Shahnaz Bano Warden girls hostel Poonch and their staff also extended a warm welcome to Kotwal.

During her visit, she inspected the facilities being provided to the residents and directed the staff to ensure proper cleanliness and better infrastructure.

She emphasized the need for maintaining cleanliness in and around the institutions and serving healthy food to the residents as per the menu.

She also chaired a meeting with the concerned wardens to review the status of various upcoming projects, including

5 drug peddlers arrested with charas, psychotropic drugs

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, June 25: Police today arrested 5 drug peddlers in Baramulla and Budgam and recovered contraband as well as psychotropic substances from their possession.

In Baramulla, a police party under the supervision of SDPO Tangmarg Intiaz Ahmed, assisted by SHO PS Tangmarg at a checkpoint established at Zeeran Tangmarg arrested 2 drug smugglers after they intercepted a vehicle (Baleno) bearing registration number JK05H-6058.

During the search, police said, 80 grams of Charas-like substance were recovered from their possession and have been identified as Waheed Ahmad Wani son of Nazir Ahmad resident of Kreeeri & Bashir Ahmad son of Mohd Yousuf Sheikh resident of Palpora Pattan.

"During questioning, they revealed that they have purchased the contraband substance from one person namely Ferooz Ahmad Mir son of Gh Mohiuddin resident of Zaspura Tangmarg," police said.

Accordingly, the police party along with the Magistrate raided the house of Ferooz Ahmad Mir and during the search 220 grams

Man held, vehicles seized for illegal mining

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, June 25: Acting tough against the persons involved in the illegal extraction and transportation of minerals, police today arrested a person and seized 2 vehicles in Baramulla.

A police party under the supervision of DySP Hqrs Baramulla Altaf Ahmad assisted by SHO PS Baramulla seized 2 Tractor and arrested a driver named Nadeem Ahmad Lone son of Mushtaq Ahmad Lone resident of Chakloo

"Unfortunately, Murmu and her family were not able to watch the news because of a power cut. Yet the indications were apparent. The sense of serendipity was palpable," the book says.

A little later, television channels started broadcasting the news.

"As people gathered, she invited everyone in, met them and spoke to them. Not a frequent mobile phone user, she had kept hers away and probably missed many calls, including the most important one of her life. But as her daughter Itishree's phone was constantly ringing, Murmu managed to respond to a few," the book says. But the official confirmation was still awaited.

"The hour of reckoning finally came when her former officer on special duty for a brief stint at Jharkhand and currently a medicine store owner in Rairangpur, Bikash Chandra Mohanto, came running to Murmu's house with his phone in hand.

"He had apparently received a call from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and was asked to connect with Murmu. Taken by surprise and unable to fathom the urgency, he lowered his store's shutter and rushed to Murmu's house to connect her to the PMO," the book says.

"She had not realised by then that she had missed the most important call of her life on her phone. Mohanto handed

over his phone to Murmu with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the other end - they spoke," Ray writes in the book.

"She knew she was the NDA's choice as the presidential candidate. At a loss for words, Murmu expressed her doubt if she would be able to shoulder the responsibility as expected and Modi assured her that she could," she writes.

Much later, during a meeting of legislators and parliamentarians in Ranchi, Murmu said that the "prime minister told me that the way you groomed Jharkhand while being Governor of the State, I am confident that you will also be able to fulfil this responsibility quite efficiently".

Murmu was in Rairangpur 63rd birthday on June 20. She left for Delhi on the morning of June 22 for the nomination formalities. (PTI)

On July 25, 2022, Murmu was administered the oath of office of the 15th President by the then Chief Justice of India N V Ramana. (PTI)

both are forced to use their creative energies in creating situations and cooking stories just to escape the harassment of their landlord who has not been paid the rent of a dingy room for the last six months.

Both sell him dreams to the extent that the room rented out to them will once become a museum which once hosted the great genius of the world of poetry and painting.

Finding the distance beyond measurement between their dreams and the reality, the landlord refuses to buy their arguments and throws them out of the room to face further rejection and dejection of the society.

Artists who performed in the play were Sheryaara Salaria, Abhimanyu Choudhary, Sumit Bandaral, Chirag Anand and Aadesh Dhar.

Lights were executed by Neeraj Kant who also did the sound. The play was coordinated by Mohd. Yaseen and presentations were done by Gopi Sharma.

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DHSK inspects Yatra healthcare arrangements on Baltal, Pahalgam routes

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, June 25: Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Rather, today conducted a comprehensive inspection of healthcare arrangements along the Pahalgam Amarnath Yatra route and later visited the Baltal Yatra route in preparation for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra.

Accompanied by Nodal Officer Yatra Dr Majid Ahmad, as well as other health department officials, Dr Rather embarked on an extensive tour to review and evaluate the healthcare facilities ahead of the pilgrimage.

The Director and his team traversed various terrains on horseback and visited multiple medical aid centres, including Emergency Aid Centre Mid Pissu, Emergency Aid Centre Mild Zojibal, and Medical Aid Centres at Pissu Top, Zojibal,

Nagakoti, and Base Hospital Sheshnag.

During the inspection, the director thoroughly examined the arrangements made for the yatratis at these centres and engaged with residents.

Dr Rather promptly instructed the concerned officers and officials to expedite any pending tasks before the commencement of the yatra.

He emphasized the need to ensure that all necessary arrangements were in place and urged them to provide basic healthcare facilities to the pilgrims without any negligence.

The director further emphasized the importance of timely preparation and instructed the officers to stock up on required drugs and essential medical equipment to avoid any inconvenience for the devotees.

It is worth mentioning that the DHSK has provided training to doctors and paramedic staff at the Regional Institute of Health & Family Welfare (RIHFV), Dhoobiwan, as part of the 'Training of Trainers' program in High Altitude.

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More than two-thirds of Rs 2,000 notes returned within a month of withdrawal: Das

MUMBAI, June 25:

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that within a month of the recall order, more than two-thirds of the Rs 2,000 currency notes have returned to the system.

In a surprise move, but as part of the clean note policy, the Reserve Bank had on May 19 ordered the recall of the Rs 2,000 banknotes worth around R 3.62 lakh crore.

On June 8, announcing the second monetary policy review of the fiscal, Das had said around Rs 1.8 lakh crore worth of the Rs 2,000 notes have been returned, accounting for approximately 50 per cent of the notes in circulation as of March 31, of which 85 per cent were in deposits and the rest in currency exchanges, he explained.

Though the central bank has set September 30, 2023, as the last day for exchange/deposits, Das said the deadline is not something cast in stone and that, people need not rush to claim their money.

Das also said the note recall will have no impact on the monetary stability but refused to comment on a recent analyst report that claimed that the move would lead to higher consumer spending, which has been under stress for some time, and which in turn would help prop the economy up and grow over the projected 6.5 per cent.

"I don't see any negative impact of the note recall on the economy at all," Das said.

The central bank and the government project the GDP to clip at 6.5 per cent this fiscal, with Q1 printing in at 8.1 per cent and then tapering off in the subsequent quarters.

After issuing the recall order on May 19 and asking banks to open special counters to collect the notes from the public from May 23, the central bank said the existing 2,000 denomination banknotes would continue to be legal tender.

Later, Das said he was not sure

whether he would ask the government to cancel the legal tender status of these notes after the September 30 deadline.

The 2000 banknotes were introduced in November 2016 (under Section 24(1) of the RBI Act, 1934) within days of the November 8 demonetisation wherein the government had withdrawn the legal tender status of all the 500 and 1000 banknotes to meet the currency requirements in an expeditious manner.

About 89 per cent of the 2,000 banknotes were issued prior to March 2017 and are at the end of their estimated life span of four-five years.

The total value of these banknotes in circulation has declined from Rs 6.73 lakh crore at its peak as of March 31, 2018 (37.3 per cent of notes in circulation) to Rs 3.62 lakh crore, constituting only 10.8 per cent of the notes in circulation as of March 31, 2023.

The central bank's mints had stopped printing the 2,000 notes way back in 2018-19 itself.

The clean note policy seeks to give the public good-quality currency notes and coins with better security features, while soiled notes are withdrawn from circulation. (PTI)

Tawi Welfare Society helps needy families

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, June 25: The Tawi Welfare Society here today organized a function at Apnavan in Sure Chak and gave utensils and ration items like pulses, sugar, salt, rice etc to 100 needy families of the area.

Vivek Kohli, Superintending

Engineer (SE), Hydraulic Circle Jammu was chief guest on this occasion and the Society members welcomed him by presenting a bouquet.

A memento was also presented to the chief guest as

token of love.

Nand Kishore, senior member of the Society in his welcome address briefed about various activities undertaken by the Society for the welfare of underprivileged sections.

He informed that they were working with the motto of 'Nar Sewa Narayan Sewa'.

The chief guest appreciated the works of the Society. Society members thanked the chief guest for fulfilling their long pending demand of protection wall near the house of one Ram Lal.

SE Vivek Kohli assured to do the rest of work at end of the year.

Society members put some fresh demands before him which he also agreed to fulfill shortly.

Kavi Raj, Society president presented vote of thanks.

JKAACL to organize Nukkad Nataks against drug addiction

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, June 25: J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) will raise awareness against drug addiction through 'Nukkad Nataks' across Jammu division.

A handout of JKAACL stat-

drug addiction from the society," the handout stated.

Secretary JKAACL while wishing the participating theatre groups and the artists said that aim of the Academy is not to remain confined with literary, culture and indoor activities only but it has a concern with society too, especially when our youth is indulging in drug addiction.

He said that Nukkad Natak shows will be performed at various public places of Jammu Division to make the people aware about the burning social issues and this will help to create a sense of awareness in society.

Various prominent theatre groups from Poonch, Rajouri, Doda, Reasi, Udhampur, Samba and Jammu will be participating in this mission against anti-drug and illicit trafficking to raise awareness on June 26, 2023.

"Being a social concern, individuals, organizations and educational institutions celebrate this day in their own way to remove the deadly stigma of

Ahmad Marazi son of Sanaullah resident of Narbal, Aijaz Ahmad Rather son of Gh Mohammad Rather resident of Narbal & Sameer Ahmad Tabardar son of Mohammad Subhan Tabardar resident of Narbal," police said.

Police said that they have seized stake money of Rs 18,650 and playing cards from the gamblers. "Accordingly, a case under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Pattan and an investigation has been taken up."

Ahmad Marazi son of Sanaullah resident of Narbal, Aijaz Ahmad Rather son of Gh Mohammad Rather resident of Narbal, Fayaz

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OBC Manch raises concern over reservation issue

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, June 25: Sub Maj (Retd) Madan Lal Dabgotra, Chairman of All Jammu and Kashmir OBC Manch, has contradicted the statement of AIBCU appeared in a section of press on June 24, wherein it has been stated that even after revocation of Article 370 there is no OBC reservation in J&K and has asked to provide 27% reservation to OBC in J&K.

Chairman of the Manch expressed that 27% reservation on account of OBC quota has already been implemented in J&K from very beginning since 1995 under J&K Govt Resolution No 12011/7/95-BCC dated 24-05-1995. However in J&K, OBC castes as identified by Mandal Commission, alone are not the Other Backward Classes but Residents of Backwards Areas (RBA) and Residents of Areas adjoining to Actual Line of Control (ALC) are also declared by the J&K Govt as Backward Classes other than SC and STs as per Rule 2(o) of J&K Reservation Act 2004 and Rule 4 of J&K Reservation Rules 2005, in gross violation of Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution of India and Mandal Commission Recommendation. Hence, the actual OBC castes as identified by Mandal Commission Recommendation are not getting due reservation as per population ratio of present 27 Castes considered as Social Caste (OSC), population of these castes is around 14% after including OBCs amongst West Pakistani Refugees, who become domiciles of J&K after removal of Article 370.

Dabgotra further stated that as per J&K Reservation Act 2004 and Rule 2005, Socially and Educationally Backward Classes in J&K, other than SC and ST Categories i.e. OBCs are: (1) Residents of Backwards Areas (RBA), (2) Residents of areas adjoining to Actual Line of Control (ALC) and (3) Weak and under

Chairman of the Manch appealed to the Union Govt as well as to LG J&K UT that definition of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, as sabotaged by the previous J&K Govt at the time of implementation of OBC reservation in J&K utilising the powers vested vide Constitution of J&K and Article 370, may kindly be replaced in the J&K Reservation Act and Reservation Rules in accordance with Article 15&16 of the Constitution of India, so that long outstanding justice is provided to OBC category in J&K. It was also requested to the Chairman J&K SEBC Commission that RBA and ALC category may be removed from the Backward Classes as declared by the previous Govt.

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