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## LG Moots Several Ideas To Boost Tourism Industry In Kashmir

• Tented Colonies, Ropeways To Come Up At Major Tourist Places • Tourism Dept Directed To Raise Capacities Of Home-Stays To 25,000 Beds By Dec 31

Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** Buoyed over record tourist influx in Jammu and Kashmir in the last six months, the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Thursday directed the tourism department to identify major tourist attractions for developing tented colonies in partnership with private entrepreneurs, besides enhancing the capacities of home-stays to 25,000 beds by December 31.

These directions were passed by the LG while chairing a high-level meeting at Raj Bhawan here to review the new initiatives of Tourism Department, an official spokesperson said.



Sinha, he said, sought a detailed report on home-stays, setting up of tented accommodation at major tourist attractions, adventure activities, new trekking routes identified, Border

Tourism, Capacity Building Programme at various levels.

While reviewing the measures being taken to promote home-stays in the UT, the spokesperson said that the chair was informed that around 800 home-stays are registered with the Tourism Department.

The LG, he said, directed Secretary Tourism, Sarmad Hafeez to submit a report on the number of tourists staying at these home-stays, and set the target of enhancing the capacities of home-stays to 25,000 beds by 31st December.

He further said that the tourism department was instructed to identify major tourist

attractions where tented accommodation can be developed through public-private partnership.

"Since home-stays and tented accommodations are becoming popular among the domestic and foreign tourists as well as backpackers, J&K UT government is making efforts to promote tent stay at scenic locations that will deliver rapid growth to the tourism industry," Sinha said.

According to the spokesperson, the meeting was informed that around 30 locations were already identified and the department was directed to make the tented colonies functional

at these locations in the next three months.

Emphasizing the need for making the tourist places more accessible, besides adding major attraction for the tourists, the LG, he said, directed the tourism department to identify such tourist destinations where ropeways can also be developed.

As per the spokesperson, Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary to the Government, Tourism Department gave a detailed presentation on the activity plan for 75 offbeat destinations identified by the Tourism Department, which are being developed with proper infrastructure and **More on P6**

## Wall Collapse Kills 3 Migrant Labourers

Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** Three migrant labourers were killed on Thursday after a brick kiln caved in a village in South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Lukman Khan, Raj Dev and Kalbi Khan, all residents of Uttar Pradesh were carrying out their routine work at a brick kiln at Ukhoo when a wall collapsed and trapped them under the debris on Thursday afternoon, officials said.

The other workers, they said, rescued the trio from the debris and shifted them to a nearby hospital for treatment. However, the doctors there declared them dead.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident and started investigations in this regard.

## 100's Of Vehicles Stranded On Banihal Highway

Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** The Jammu-Srinagar national highway was closed for traffic due to landslides triggered by heavy rains at several places in Ramban district on Thursday leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded, officials said.

Nearly 1000 vehicles, including a convoy carrying Amarnath pilgrims, are stranded at different points of the highway, they said.

The 270-km highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, was blocked by shooting stones, landslides at four places in Ramban district.

The highway is closed at Cafeteria Moore Ramban since Wednesday night due to shooting of stones. **More on P6**

## Murmu Becomes India's First Tribal President

Press Trust Of India

**New Delhi:** Droupadi Murmu scripted history on Thursday by becoming India's first tribal President in the one-sided contest, defeating Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha.

Murmu, 64, won by an overwhelming margin against Sinha after receiving over 64 per cent valid votes in a day-long counting of ballots of MPs and MLAs, comprising the electoral college, to succeed Ram Nath Kovind to become the country's 15th president.

After the end of the counting process that continued for more than 10 hours, returning officer P C Mody declared Murmu as the winner and said that she got 6,76,803 votes against Sinha's 3,80,177 votes.

She will be the first President to be born after independence and is the youngest to occupy the top post. She is also the second woman to become the President.

Her victory was sealed after the third round itself when the Returning officer announced that Murmu had already received over 53 per cent of the total valid votes even as Ballots from 10



states and Union territories are still being counted.

Conceding defeat after the third round of counting, Sinha congratulated Murmu and said every Indian hope that as the 15th President she functions as the "custodian of the Constitution" without fear or favour.

In a statement, Sinha thanked the leaders of the Opposition parties for choosing him as their consensus candidate in this election.

"I also thank all members of the Electoral College who voted for me. I accepted the offer of Opposition parties solely guided by the philosophy of Karma Yoga preached by **More on P6**



A group of women carrying firewood pass through soldiers outside a military camp in Sonmarg area of Ganderbal district. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

## CORONA COMEBACK

### 505 More Test Positive As Cases Shoot Up

Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** The daily Coronavirus cases continue to shoot up in Jammu and Kashmir as 505 more people tested positive for the virus, the highest ever single-day spike in over five months, even as no fresh fatality was reported from the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

Of the new cases, officials said, 228 were registered in Kashmir Valley and 277 from Jammu division, thus taking the number of people infected since the onset of the pandemic in J&K to 458,456.

In Valley, Srinagar, the capital city reported the highest 144 new cases of virus, followed by Baramulla with 38,



Kupwara 23, Budgam six, Bandipora five, Kulgam four, Anantnag three, Pulwama and Ganderbal two each and Shopian one, officials said.

In the winter capital, they said, Jammu detected a maximum of 200 new cases of Coronavirus, Udhampur 25, Kathua 14, Kishtwar 11,

Poonch eight, Samba six, Rajouri and Doda five each and Reasi three.

Also, the officials said that the death toll remained unchanged at 4761 in J&K—2336 in Jammu and 2425 in Kashmir, as no fresh fatality was reported during the last 24 hours in the **More on P6**

## J&K HC Disposes Off Petition Seeking Protection Of Minorities

Auqib Javeed

**Srinagar:** The High Court of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh on Friday disposed of a writ petition filed by Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti (KPSS) seeking directions to the Union Territory administration to protect lives of the religious minorities, following a series of targeted attacks.

In the representation, Sanjay Tickoo, president of KPSS had prayed before the Chief Justice of the J&K High Court to pass an order directing the administration to protect the lives of the religious minorities, following a series of targeted attacks on minorities in the month of May 2022.

While disposing of the writ petition, the court left it on the Tickoo to submit a fresh representation highlighting its grievances before

the Secretary, Home, Union Territory of J&K "in a comprehensive manner".

"Once such a memorandum/representation is submitted, the Secretary, Home, will sit with the President of the Samiti or any other nominee of the Samiti so authorized and consider the grievances of the petitioner and after receiving the suggestions, if necessary, may take appropriate remedial steps that may be considered necessary in the overall interest of the Union Territory and the members of the minority community as claimed," reads the court order, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer.

The court refused to intervene into the matter saying that the issue could be resolved at the government level.

"We do not want to enter into the merits **More on P6**



**INDIA SCRIPTS HISTORY.** At a time when 1.3 billion Indians are marking Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a daughter of India hailing from a tribal community born in a remote part of eastern India has been elected our President!"

## SHORT TAKES

### Opposition Unity Is A Bit Of Chimera: Omar

National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Thursday compared the unity among the opposition parties to Greek mythological character Chimera and said ultimately they will do what is in their own interest. His remarks came after the Trinamool Congress -- which had led from the front to unify the opposition for the election to the country's **More on P6**

### House Collapse Kills Man In Rajouri

One person was killed and another injured after a Kacha house collapsed in Rajouri district on Thursday. Official sources said that a Kachha house belonging to Mir Mohammad of Ladhote Rajouri collapsed on Thursday evening resulting in on the spot death of Amjad Hussain. In the incident, another man identified as Mohammad Mahroof sustained injuries. He was shifted to hospital for treatment. **More on P6**

### Two Drug Peddlers Booked Under PSA

Two drug peddlers have been booked under stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) in Central Kashmir's Budgam district, police said on Thursday. "Acting tough against drug abuse and to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Budgam Police booked two notorious drug peddlers under PIT NDPS Act after obtaining formal detention orders from the competent Authority", said a police **More on P6**

### Cash Looted From Shrine's Donation Box

Police have registered a case after unknown burglars' looted cash from a donation box of a shrine in Banihal area of the Ramban district. Police Station Banihal received a complaint from a man identifying himself as Farooq Ahmed Wani about the theft incident. He said that miscreants looted money from the donation box of the Tahir Shah Bhagdadi (RA) shrine at Tethar village of Banihal. Taking cognizance **More on P6**

### Seven Gamblers Held In Baramulla: Police

Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested seven alleged gamblers in a raid in Tangmarg area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district. A team from Police Station Tangmarg raided a gambling site at Drung Park on the basis of specific inputs and apprehended 7 gamblers from the spot, a police spokesperson said Thursday. Besides playing cards, he said, Rs1,32,000 were also **More on P6**

### New Rates For Hair Dressers Fixed

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Thursday notified revised rates for different services offered by hair dressers across the Valley. Accordingly to an order issued here by the Directorate food, civil supplies and consumer affairs Kashmir, the rate for a simple hair cut of an adult or a baby has been fixed Rs 55. For the haircut of a child, Rs 50 has been fixed. Similarly, for simple shave Rs 55, for Khat shave **More on P6**

## Over 70% of Physicians Still Prescribe Unsafe Antibiotics - Which Can Be Deadly

Sci Tech Daily

A study of primary care doctors found that, on the basis of a single positive urine sample, an estimated 70% of them would still recommend antibiotics to treat asymptomatic infections. According to a study recently published in the journal JAMA Network Open, this is despite long-standing medical standards that advise against this practice. Researchers from the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) directed the study.

Medical associations have opposed the regular use of antibiotics for individuals with bacteria found in a urine culture but no signs of a urinary tract infection (UTI), such as burning or frequent urination, since 2005. Overwhelming evidence suggests that the drugs are ineffective for asymptomatic patients and can instead cause side effects such as diarrhea, vomiting, rashes, and yeast infections. In rare instances, antibiotics can even result in death due to an excess of the harmful bacteria *C. difficile* in the colon. The overuse of these medications has also led to an increase in bacterial infections that are difficult to treat and sometimes fatal due to their resistance to antibiotics. In the study, 723 primary care professionals from Texas, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Pacific Northwest were questioned about how they would treat a fictitious patient with asymptomatic bacteriuria, which is when bacteria are detected in the urine of a patient who has no signs of a urinary tract infection. They discovered that, despite doing so going against the recommended guidelines, 392 out of the 551 physicians who responded to the study (71%) would choose to treat such a patient with antibiotics. "Our study suggests that primary care clinicians do not follow widely accepted recommendations against prescribing antibiotics for asymp-

tomatic bacteriuria," said lead author Jonathan Baghdadi, MD, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Epidemiology & Public Health at UMSOM. "Some primary care clinicians may be unaware of these recommendations, but a culture of inappropriate prescribing is also likely a contributing factor."

Compared to other specialties, family medicine doctors were more likely to give unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions. Physicians in residency or living in the Pacific Northwest were less likely to administer antibiotics.



"We found other factors also played a role in prescribing like whether a physician had a stronger preference in favor of over-treating a condition and fear of missing a diagnosis; that person was more likely to favor prescribing antibiotics compared to a physician who felt more comfortable with uncertainty in practicing medicine," said study leader Daniel Morgan, MD, MS, Professor of Epidemiology & Public Health at UMSOM.

One strategy to change practice could be an education program targeting physicians who place a high priority on treating just to make sure they do not miss a possible infection, the researchers said in the conclusion section of the article. For example,

reframing "unnecessary treatment" with antibiotics as "potentially harmful" treatment with antibiotics could help curb the tendency toward over-prescribing.

UMSOM faculty and staff Lisa Pineles, MA, Alison Lydecker, MPH, Larry Magder, Ph.D., and Deborah Stevens, LCSW-C, MPH, were study co-authors. Researchers from the University of Colorado School of Medicine and the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center also contributed to this study.

The research was funded by the New Innovator Award from the National Institutes of Health and the University of Maryland, Baltimore Institute for Clinical & Translational Research/Clinical and Translational Science Award.

"This is an important finding that points to the importance of continuing medical education to help change lingering attitudes towards antibiotics that are out of date with the current guidelines," said E. Albert Reece, MD, Ph.D., MBA, Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs, UM Baltimore, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine. "Physicians are taught to first do no harm, and now we know that overtreatment with antibiotics could lead to real harm."

Reference: "Exploration of Primary Care Clinician Attitudes and Cognitive Characteristics Associated With Prescribing Antibiotics for Asymptomatic Bacteriuria" by Jonathan D. Baghdadi, MD, Ph.D., Deborah Korenstein, MD, Lisa Pineles, MA, Laura D. Scherer, Ph.D., Alison D. Lydecker, MPH, Larry Magder, Ph.D., Deborah N. Stevens, LCSW-C, MPH and Daniel J. Morgan, MD, MS, 27 May 2022, JAMA Network Open.

## Here's How to Keep Your Liver Healthy

Lisa Mulcahy | Parade

What looks like a half-deflated football but performs more than 500 of the essential tasks that keep your body healthy? If you guessed the liver, you'd be right. "Your liver is a silent powerhouse," says Tamar Hamosh Taddei, MD, associate professor of medicine, digestive diseases, at Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut. Tucked under your right rib cage, this 3-pound organ cleans toxins from your blood; produces bile to help you digest what you eat and drink, turning that food and drink into nutrients; maintains your blood's clotting function so you don't bleed to death; and gives you physical energy. Because your liver is such a crucial multitasker, you need to keep it healthy—yet unfortunately, 30 million Americans currently have some form of liver disease, according to the American Liver Foundation. Some of the most common liver conditions include:

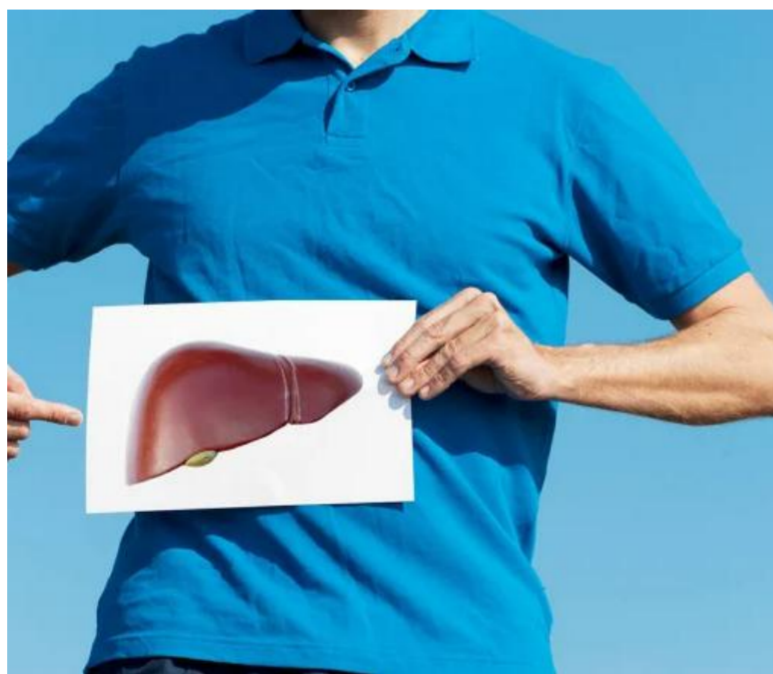
- Fatty liver disease, characterized by a buildup of fat in your liver cells
  - Bile duct disease, which stops bile from moving to your small intestines
  - Hemochromatosis and Wilson disease, genetic conditions that cause a buildup of minerals (iron and copper, respectively) in the liver.
  - Hepatitis C, caused by a virus that can be transmitted by blood or through sexual activity
  - Cirrhosis, or scarring of the liver, typically as a result of years of untreated liver disease
- One of the most important things you can do to prevent and manage chronic liver conditions is to be open and honest with your doctor when discussing your risk factors. "Talk about a family history of liver disease and your habits—such as drinking too much, drug use and sexual history," Taddei says.

Here are a few other ways to help your liver do its best work.

### Get the right tests.

Your doctor will usually order liver function tests as part of a routine blood screen for your annual physical or follow-up visits after you're prescribed medication. If you have symptoms of liver disease, more specialized tests may be needed. Here's what common liver tests determine: A liver function test is a blood screening that checks protein and liver en-

zyme levels and detects the possible presence of any liver disease. ALT (alanine transaminase), AST (aspartate transaminase), ALP (alkaline phosphatase) and GGT (gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase) tests look for these high levels. Abilirubin test checks for the presence of this orange-yellow fluid, which your liver may leak if it is damaged.



A liver biopsy can test for both cancer and infection.

**Watch for signs and symptoms.** Unexplained fatigue can indicate liver problems, as can dark urine. "Yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes indicates jaundice," says Taddei. "Abdominal swelling, where fluid is building up in your belly or legs, can be a sign of heart failure, or can occur as a result of liver disease. If you have this symptom, it's important to see a doctor. Changes in your mental state can occur if liver disease is undiagnosed, too."

### Go easy on over-the-counter meds.

Too much acetaminophen, the active ingredient in Tylenol, can cause acute liver failure, so ask your doctor how much is safe for you to take. Acetaminophen is often contained in allergy and cold medications—sometimes listed as "APAP" or "acetam"—so check labels to make sure you're not doubling up on the medication if you take several remedies. Researchers from the University of

California at San Diego also found that proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs), often taken to reduce acid reflux, can increase the gut bacteria *Enterococcus*. This bacteria can cause inflammation that could lead to chronic liver disease, so if you're concerned, talk to your doctor about whether discontinuing PPIs or lowering your dose is right for you.

### Eat (and drink) smart.

"Your food should ideally be fresh, meaning it doesn't come out of a package," Taddei says. Processed foods that are packed with sugar and saturated fat can up your risk of diabetes, which adversely affects your liver function.

You probably know to limit alcohol for optimal liver health. The good news is that coffee may actually have protective effects. A study from the Erasmus University Medical Center in Rotterdam, Netherlands, found that three cups per day can potentially prevent hardening of the liver and stop the progression of advanced liver disease, likely thanks to coffee's antioxidants.

### Stay active.

Research shows that both aerobic and resistance exercises improve insulin resistance and help the fatty acids in your system oxidize, both powerful tools in fighting fatty liver disease. Walk, run, do Pilates—whatever activity you love best, and keep at it for 30 minutes five times a week.

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The last date for receiving Technical & Financial Proposals from interested parties is 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2022 (1800 hrs IST).

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- Domicile Proof.
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- Those doctors who have already completed their tenure/working as Registrar/Tutor/Demonstrator after their Post Graduation in the discipline in any institution as recognised/approved by Dental Council of India within or outside the UT need not apply and their application forms shall not be considered. However, this restriction shall not be applicable in respect of such doctors who have done their Registrarship /Tutorship/Demonstratorship in the discipline prior to the passing of their post-graduation.
- The applicants who have earlier been appointed as Registrar/ Demonstrator/Tutor in any discipline in the institution as recognised/ approved by Dental Council of India, but have not completed their tenure for one reason or the other shall not be considered.
- The candidates shall abide by all the instructions issued by the Administrative Department as well as Dental Council of India from time to time in this regard.
- No TA/DA will be admissible for appearing in the interview.

**DIPK-6355/22**

Sd/-  
[Prof. (Dr.) Riyaz Farooq]  
Principal/Dean



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K O V I E W

## Killings in Kashmir

As many as 128 security personnel and 118 civilians, including 21 Hindus, among them five Kashmiri Pandits, have been killed in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, the Union government told Parliament on Wednesday. Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, however, informed the House that there has been a substantial decline in terrorist attacks in the last three years. On a positive note, the union minister said that around 5,502 Kashmiri Pandits have been provided jobs in different departments of the J&K government in the valley and no Kashmiri Pandit has migrated from the valley since August 2019. This is contrary to reports that many Kashmiri Pandits, including the employees, fled the Valley in the wake of the recent killings.

In the recent past, the killings of civilians and Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley generated an outcry across the country. Many Pandits who had returned to Kashmir to take up jobs under the Prime Minister's Package temporarily left the Valley, putting the central government's project to resettle them in their homeland in jeopardy. However, Kashmiri Pandits have not been the only ones who have been attacked: Kashmiri Muslim civilians, Jammu and Kashmir Police personnel, migrant labourers, and also Hindus from Jammu and other parts of India have also lost lives.

And the efforts of the security forces have proved unsuccessful in stopping the killing spree. And understandably so. It will not be easy for them to secure each and every member of the minority community in the Valley. Or for that matter, even the civilians from the majority community, although they are trying their best to create a sense of confidence among people.

Making things further difficult for the J&K government is that there are around 5000 Pandit employees recruited under a special package and all of them are on the brink of a fresh exodus. Similarly, nearly 8,000 employees from different districts of the Jammu division are working in Kashmir under an inter-district transfer policy and a predominant majority of them are non-Muslims. Though the government has given them assurances, they find little reason to trust it. Many Pandit employees now want the government to revoke the bond that obliges them to stay permanently in the Valley during their employment. They want the post to be made transferable.

The rise in minority killings has galvanized the union government to take steps to reassure Kashmiri Pandits and Hindu employees in the Valley. The union home minister, Amit Shah held a high-level meeting on May 17 which was attended by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla and the heads of intelligence and security agencies to take stock of the preparedness for the ongoing situation in the Valley and the ongoing Amarnath yatra. The situation over the last two months has improved a lot. Here's hoping it stays that way.

OTHER OPINION

## Chiding the Young

There is no justification for the alleged actions of officials under the National Testing Agency (NTA) at an examination centre in Kollam, Kerala. On Thursday, according to an FIR filed by a parent, several young women were forced to remove their innerwear by officials as they sought to appear for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admissions to MBBS and BDS programmes. The current episode is not the first such instance: In 2017, "overzealous" teachers at a Kerala school were suspended for asking a girl to remove her innerwear before entering a NEET exam centre.

To humiliate students for an article of clothing — or, as the "rules" would have it, "any ornaments/ metallic items" — is unconscionable and symptomatic of a deep suspicion of aspirants on the part of the NTA. How can an earring, or a hook on an item of clothing lead to cheating? And exactly how many candidates smuggled cheat sheets in these wires? Yet, the NTA's list of prohibited items — which includes shoes, jewellery and all metallic objects — only empowers the person on the ground to police the bodies of aspirants. Bureaucratic "rules" too must aspire to common sense. As a governance reform in the healthcare and education sector, the NEET has much to recommend it. Like the Joint Entrance Exam for engineering, the NEET has the potential to ensure uniformity in admission standards across states and objectivity and transparency in candidate selection. What is common here is an assumption of guilt — of "cheating" — and the impunity arising from the vaguely-worded rules used to humiliate students.

The local police has filed an FIR in the matter and the NTA has sent a team to Kerala to conduct its own investigation. The offending officials must be brought to book. But a wider conversation on reforming the guidelines and powers of the NTA is also needed. The guiding principle of such reform must place the dignity of students and aspirants front and centre; it must ease their burdens while ensuring that exams are conducted fairly. Mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that those conducting tests — whether NEET, JEE or any other such examination — are sensitised to their role as enablers for the youth, who are already under tremendous pressure. To strip-search a candidate to protect a test means there's something terribly wrong with the test — not the candidate.

The Indian Express



Anti-government protester in Sri Lanka participating in protests demanding the resignation of the government over its handling of the economy. AFP via Getty Images

# Why Sri Lanka Imploded

KAUSHIK BASU

Even if the Rajapaksas do not regain control by proxy, there are other risks. The IMF cannot offer a rescue program until there is a viable government with which to negotiate. But both the Fund and the Paris Club of sovereign creditors also will need to be proactive, suspending some of their bureaucratic rules to help Sri Lanka through this acute phase of the crisis

HAMBURG — As Sri Lanka's economy unravels before our eyes, one must ask how this could happen in a country that is historically known for its high standard of living and stable economy. Sri Lanka's achievements go back decades, giving it a per capita GDP that is 70% higher than India's, and a life expectancy at birth of 77 years, compared to 73, 70, and 67, in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, respectively.

When Sri Lanka's Rajapaksa family returned to power in 2019, it was riding a wave of support that it sought to sustain with popular but ill-advised economic handouts. By definition, unsustainable policies eventually run into a wall.

But now, Sri Lanka's economy is in free fall. The proximate causes of the crisis are clear enough. Problems stemming from international factors such as COVID-19 and Russia's war in Ukraine were exacerbated by Sri Lanka's own policy mistakes. In 2019, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa (who has now fled the country) announced a round of mindless tax cuts, depriving the state of sorely needed revenue. Then, in 2021, his government abruptly banned imports of chemical fertilizer and pesticides. While the aim of the policy was to stall foreign-exchange outflows, the main result was a dramatic reduction in domestic food production, leading to acute food shortages this year.

The coup de grace was the government's ongoing effort to keep the Sri Lankan rupee artificially strong. Technically, Sri Lanka uses a "soft peg": Rather than being fixed by government diktat, the rupee-to-dollar exchange rate is allowed to float, albeit with occasional interventions by the central bank (buying and selling dollars) to prevent excessive fluctuations.

But charting the rupee-to-dollar exchange rate shows that the country's soft peg is a misnomer. For years, the exchange rate remained flat, roughly between 175 to 200 rupees to the dollar because, as economist Noah Smith explains, the Sri Lankan central bank was regularly selling dollars to prop up the rupee's value. Eventually, this longstanding inter-

vention ended the only way that it could: starting around April of this year, the rupee began depreciating sharply. Within months, the exchange rate had fallen to 350 rupees to the dollar, and the central bank's dollar reserves had all but vanished.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its foreign debt in May. We now know that, rather than turning to the International Monetary Fund, whose rescue programs are conditional on tough policy reforms, it approached China for a fresh loan when its coffers were approaching empty. But this merely increased its debt by another \$3 billion and ensured that its inevitable crisis would be even bigger when it eventually arrived.

China's strategy vis-à-vis Sri Lanka (and other developing countries, like Ethiopia) echoes the approach taken both by earlier colonial powers and by rural moneylenders in developing countries. As Amit Bhaduri showed in a classic 1977 paper in the Cambridge Journal of Economics, rural informal moneylenders typically do not worry about the borrower defaulting; rather, they worry about the borrower not defaulting, because then they cannot turn a bigger profit by confiscating his collateral (usually his land).

Consider Hambantota Port, the pet project of Mahinda Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka's president between 2005 and 2015 (and Gotabaya Rajapaksa's brother). Funded largely with Chinese money, the port opened in 2010 on Mahinda's birthday. But when Sri Lanka later failed to repay the debt, this "gift" became collateral to be confiscated. China now has a 99-year lease on the port.

How did a country with a longstanding reputation for maturity make so many mistakes? The short answer is that Sri Lanka's politics sowed the seeds for today's economic crisis. The Rajapaksa-led government became increasingly authoritarian after defeating the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and ending Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war in 2009. It eroded the country's democratic institutions, persecuted minorities, and waved away accusations of war crimes.

Although authoritarianism

typically ends up destroying an economy, some authoritarian governments have managed to deliver economic growth and stability. For a short while, it seemed possible that the Rajapaksa government could fall into this category. But as it embraced populism, it soon became clear that crony capitalism would be Sri Lanka's fate.

When the Rajapaksa government returned to power in 2019, it was riding a wave of support that it sought to sustain with ill-advised economic handouts. But the public's patience can be bought for only so long. Eventually, unsustainable policies run into a wall.

If not for its hubris, the latest Rajapaksa government could have corrected course. When it came to power and immediately announced big tax cuts, it met with strong, sensible criticism. On October 30, 2019, for example, former Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera warned, on Twitter, that "Gota's tax plan wants to set Sri Lanka on an express train to bankruptcy." But Rajapaksa doubled down. When the government suddenly banned chemical-fertilizer imports, the implications of the policy were all too predictable.

Where it will end is unclear. Even if the Rajapaksas do not regain control by proxy, there are other risks. The IMF cannot offer a rescue program until there is a viable government with which to negotiate. But both the Fund and the Paris Club of sovereign creditors also will need to be proactive, suspending some of their bureaucratic rules to help Sri Lanka through this acute phase of the crisis. Failing that, a spiraling humanitarian disaster is the likeliest outcome.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by Project Syndicate

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## Employment Despair

Unemployment is a very serious problem for the young people in Kashmir. There are thousands of people who do not have any work to do and are not even able to find work for themselves. Unemployment refers to the situation where a person wants to work but cannot find employment in the labour market, and that is a phenomenon which is widely common in Kashmir. There are so many young dynamic and talented people who deserve to hold good positions but are not being provided with the right opportunities. It is ironic how jobs and

opportunities are still achievable only through sifarish even in the 21st century and it might sound surprising or people

might argue that it is not the case anymore, but truly it is. Besides the lack of jobs, lockdowns to contain the coronavirus for two consecutive years forced many industries to shut down thus increasing unemployment, making the scenario even worse. Also, an unemployed person is more likely to do socially unacceptable work to earn bread. Thus, very often in a society where there are a huge number of unemployed people,

there will be a great proliferation of thieves, snatchers, bank-robbers and much more serious anti-social elements.

Unemployment has aided to the deteriorating mental health condition of the youth, many young people nowadays are committing suicide owing to a spectrum of social deprivations including unemployment. The government needs to pay heed to the plea of qualified young people and find more ways to create jobs. Moreover, people should focus on becoming job creators and not job seekers and they should not lose hope on not

finding a job but rather work towards building their own ways of income so that they overcome unemployment for themselves and for people who would eventually work for them and their venture. The deserving students of Kashmir have been

deprived of the right opportunities for long enough, now it is time for the authorities to stand up and create a productive platform for the talented youth of the valley.

Fazil Mir

MINDFUL FRIDAYS

# Sexual OCD: Taboo, Obsession and Beyond

## Sexual Obsessions Aren't Sexual Fantasies, They're a Treatable Disorder

Wasim Kakroo

A person who refrains from touching others out of concern that it might be sexually inappropriate is less generally known but Obsessive Compulsive Disorder can also manifest itself in this way.

Consider this. A teenage boy might be worried about engaging in unwanted sexual activity. This can be as simple as being worried that since he has accidentally touched a girl in a crowded hallway at school, he has upset her. Or he might constantly be fearful of committing rape. Even though he has no desire to rape somebody, the thought of doing so makes him feel anxious. In order to reduce the possibility of saying and doing something wrong, he might keep his hands in his pockets while walking and maintain a greater distance from people than is customary.

Additionally, those who have sexual obsessions may worry that they harbor forbidden sexual desires like paedophilia or incest. In actuality, they don't have these urges but they are troubled by the fear that they might act on these thoughts. These kids might make every effort to avoid being alone with their families or other kids.

In actuality, these so-called "sexual obsessions" are fairly common component of OCD in teenagers and even young children. Since they feel ashamed of having sexual thoughts that they find difficult to handle, they are especially isolating for the children and adolescents who experience them.

Although a person may have a wide variety of sexual obsessions, there are those that can be viewed as taboo that frequently arise, including bestiality, incest, infidelity, sexual abuse, blasphemy in relation to sexuality and religion—the person may have sexual thoughts about religious figures, sexual servitude, sexual sadism or sexual thoughts about friends.

According to estimates, between 6 and 24 percent of OCD sufferers will have some sort of sexual obsession. Given that most people are unwilling to disclose such thoughts, the number may even be larger. While studies indicate that both sexes with OCD would likely experience sexual obsession at roughly the same rate, people sometimes mistakenly attribute this trait to males only.

Sexual fantasies and obsessions are two different things and should be confused with each other. Sexual obsessions are undesired and upsetting thoughts that are generally linked to fear, guilt, or self-



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loathing, in contrast to sexual fantasies, which are typically tied to pleasure or desire, whether or not it is attainable.

Whether it be an obsession about paedophilia, rape, or sexual violence, people with OCD frequently worry that it will one day cause them to act on their fantasies. A person with OCD will find the preoccupation immoral and feel repulsed at the prospect of acting upon it, in contrast to someone who could be at risk for acting

on similar urges.

A person with OCD may become disproportionately preoccupied with pornography and/or masturbation as a sexual compulsion as "outlets" for their unwelcome sexual thoughts.

Because these thoughts are not representative of the person's own beliefs and morality, those who suffer from sexual obsession find it difficult or terrifying to ignore them. Thoughts in some people

may be so strong that they seem to be true but usually the person is aware that they aren't. It's common for someone to worry that they might act on these unsettling thoughts if they continue to have them or if they become more frequent. Even if a person may be conscious that they won't act on their obsessions, the mere act of thinking about them could be viewed as immoral.

While this problem can make it chal-

Those who have sexual obsessions may worry that they harbor forbidden sexual desires like paedophilia or incest. In actuality, they don't have these urges but they are troubled by the fear that they might act on these thoughts

lenging to talk about, competent mental health professionals reassure people that the condition is treatable and that either not treating the disorder or self-treatment can worsen their disorder. People who believe they may have a sexual obsession or who know someone who does require assistance should get it.

Finding a therapist who is skillful in employing cognition-behavioral therapy (CBT) in treatment of OCD using exposure and response prevention, can help such patients with sexual OCD to navigate their obsessional feelings of stress so that they may develop an acceptance of their feelings and reduce their compulsive actions. A skilled mental health professional will collaborate with a patient to create coping mechanisms for them to handle the physical and emotional upheaval caused by their obsessive thoughts.

Other evidence based therapies that have been found to help patients with sexual OCD include Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Metacognitive therapy, Psychodynamic psychotherapy etc.

In moderate to severe cases of sexual OCD, the patient may get benefitted by taking medications prescribed by a psychiatrist alongside the various tools and strategies taught by a trained therapist in psychotherapy. The chances of relapse in those cases where both psychotherapy and medications are used is lesser than those cases where only medication is used to deal with the severity of sexual OCD.

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## Humble or Not?

TYRONE SGAMBATI

Psychologists have recently linked intellectual humility to a host of benefits: showing more persistence in the face of failure, holding less polarized beliefs and attitudes, and being received as warm and friendly by others. But what does it take to be intellectually humble—and how do you know if you already are?

The old joke about humility—that "it's my greatest quality"—speaks to the difficulty in knowing how humble you actually are. It's a paradox: If you're walking around thinking you're humbler than most people, then chances are good that you're not.

For precisely that reason, a trait like humility presents special problems in measurement for scientists and lay people alike. Even so, there are ways for you to try to understand how intellectually humble you are—and to cultivate this quality within yourself.

**The trouble with measuring humility**

Despite intellectual humility being the subject of intense scientific study in recent years, there remains debate among scientists on how best to measure it. That debate begins with a basic question: What is intellectual humility? Most scientists agree that being aware of your intellectual limitations and the fallibility of your beliefs is an important part of intellectual humility, but beyond that there isn't a clear consensus. Some argue that intellectual humility ends there, while others suggest that things like how we view others' ideas and how we express our beliefs are components of intellectual humility.

Most recently, a study published in the Journal of Personality Assessment reviewed the existing theories and measures of intellectual humility and proposed that there are two key dimensions: the self-directed vs.

other-directed dimension and the internal vs. expressed dimension.

Both internal and expressed intellectual humility can concern either one's own intellect and beliefs (self-directed) or those of others (other-directed), but internal intellectual humility is limited to an individual's thoughts and opinions, whereas expressed intellectual humility captures how they act.

The differences between internal and external intellectual humility have important implications for how we detect humility in ourselves. While expressed intellectual humility, which consists of actions, can be detected by any observer, say a friend or a partner, your own internal humility is only accessible to one person: you!

Which means if you're reading this article because you want to know if you are intellectually humble, you're in a bit of a pickle. You could start by asking yourself one of the questions that researchers ask study participants: Do you "question your own opinions, positions, and viewpoints because they could be wrong?" But now you (and scientists who ask these questions) are faced with a problem: Are individuals really well-equipped to accurately assess their own intellectual humility?

The trouble is that humans are prone to many biases and blind spots that can make accurate self-assessment difficult. In fact, because we show a preference for positive emotions over negative ones, we are motivated to "self-enhance," or view ourselves more favorably than we really are.

For example, decades of research on these kinds of biases demonstrate that individuals robustly and systematically rate themselves as higher than average on desirable traits like "intelligent" and "friendly" and lower than average on undesirable traits like "vain" and "dishonest." Unfortunately, there is no magic

solution to this problem, and scientists themselves primarily use self-report questionnaires to assess intellectual humility. However, there is good news! Several measurement validation studies have shown that in spite of these biases, self-reports of intellectual humility are linked to patterns of behaviors and other attitudes that are consistent with the concept of intellectual humility. That doesn't mean that individuals can perfectly assess their own intellectual humility, but it does suggest that self-reflection is informative.

Just be sure to remain mindful of the human tendency to self-enhance!

**Discovering your own intellectual humility**

Here are four different types of intellectual humility to look for in yourself—and some tips on how you might cultivate each one.

Remember the paper, discussed above, that proposed two dimensions of intellectual humility: internal vs. external and self-directed vs. other-directed? Together, the authors suggest that these dimensions create four types of intellectual humility. You can use them as a framework for assessing your capacity to be intellectually humble.

**1. Internal and self-directed intellectual humility.** This one requires you to inquire, honestly, about yourself. For example, when you have an opinion, are you open to changing it? Do you ever think about whether the reasons you have for a certain belief might be wrong? Do you calibrate the strength of your beliefs to the strength of your evidence? As answers begin to come to mind, make sure to take a moment and examine them for any biased thinking. Did they stand up to the scrutiny or was there some self-enhancement baked into your intuitions?

For readers who want to improve their kind of intellectual humil-

ity, making a habit of awareness is a great first step. Try checking in on your beliefs and opinions periodically, especially those that are important to you. Pay attention to the strength of the evidence supporting those beliefs, whether you ever question them, and how open you are to changing your mind. Just the very act of checking in constitutes intellectual humility, but doing it will also help you recognize where you might be falling short.

**2. Internal and other-directed intellectual humility.** This type of internal intellectual humility concerns thoughts and awareness regarding others. Once again, you'll have to do some self-reflection, and one common place to start is asking yourself whether you recognize the intellectual merit in opinions and beliefs that are different from your own.

Before answering, it's important to acknowledge the breadth of this question. It might be easy to recognize the merit in a friend's opinion about a new movie, but very difficult to see merit in why someone voted for a political candidate you dislike. In fact, research has shown that when we perceive a discussion as a disagreement or when we perceive our discussion partner as immoral, we are less likely to be intellectually humble.

Often, we jump to conclusions about other people and their beliefs, even with incomplete information. We tend to judge books by their proverbial covers. This is exactly where an intellectually humble individual will withhold strong judgments, precisely because evidence is limited as long as you haven't "read" the book. For instance, hearing that someone voted for your least favorite political candidate might elicit a negative knee-jerk reaction. However, you may not know how they arrived at their decision or the quality of evidence that led them there. If you find

yourself in this situation, be curious! Understand the entirety of the picture—both your side and theirs—before making a judgment.

At the end of the day, it's possible that you still disagree with their voting choice—and that's OK. This type of intellectually humility is not about changing your opinion to accommodate others; it's about fairly evaluating others and their beliefs.

**3. Expressed and self-directed intellectual humility.** Expressed and self-directed intellectual humility captures whether you behave in a way that is consistent with internal intellectual humility about your own beliefs and attitudes. Some common examples of this kind of intellectual humility are actively searching for both confirmatory and disconfirmatory evidence and being willing to outwardly admit when you are wrong.

Now, you can of course begin by asking yourself how much you do these things, but for the expressed form of intellectual humility, you can also look to those around you to help determine how humble you are. Doing both, asking yourself and others, will likely give you a more accurate picture of how intellectually humble your actions really are.

Most people have at one point or another realized that they were wrong about something—but then couldn't bring themselves to admit it. Boiled down, this is a disconnect between internal and external intellectual humility. Even armed with the knowledge that you were wrong, you put up a fight to "save face." Although that response might feel instinctual, the research suggests that it's those who are perceived as intellectually humble and admit being wrong who are viewed more favorably by their peers. So, when you are wrong, just admit it!

**4. Expressed and other-directed intellectual humility.** This kind of intellectual humility arises perhaps

most frequently in the midst of conflict, and involves expressions of intellectual humility toward others' beliefs and attitudes. When you and your spouse (or maybe a close friend) disagree, how do you approach their perspective? Are you willing to hear it out in good faith, or do you insist they must have it all wrong?

Even the best of us can get sucked into the latter, but it's a textbook example of intellectual arrogance. This type of intellectual humility can also arise in the context of feedback. It's easy to discount critical feedback on the grounds that you "know better." However, in doing so not only are you suggesting that your ideas are superior to your critic's, but you may also be missing out on valuable insights that lie in your blind spots.

This is the perfect type of intellectual humility to check in with those closest to you about. Ask them if they feel heard in conflict, if you convey yourself in a way that suggests you think your opinions are superior to theirs, and how you receive feedback. If the answer surprises you, that's just one more reason to work on being intellectually humble.

Knowing how intellectually humble you are isn't an easy task, and being intellectually humble itself isn't any easier! At the heart of these difficulties lie human characteristics and biases that we all share: We self-enhance, we're prone to defensiveness in disagreements, we judge books by their covers, and the list goes on. Yet, the science tells us that fostering these four aspects of intellectual humility can help you learn new things, improve your relationships, and create a less divided world.

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