

## Significant Improvement In J&K Situation: MoS Home In RS

Says 3 Kashmiri Pandits Among 14 Minorities Killed In Jammu & Kashmir In 2022

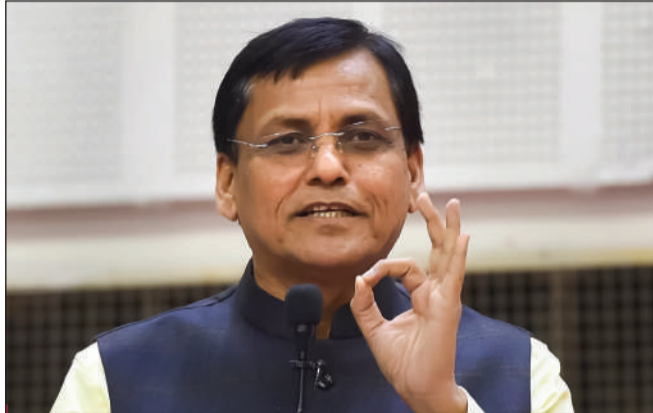
Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** The Government has a policy of zero tolerance against terrorism and the security situation has improved significantly in Jammu and Kashmir with a substantial decline in terrorist attacks from 417 in 2018 to 229 in 2021, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said Wednesday.

Rai said 180 terrorists, 31 security personnel and 31 civilians were also killed in J&K in 123 terrorist incidents this year so far.

"14 persons belonging to minorities including three Kashmiri Pandits have been killed in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir since January, 2022 till November 30, 2022," he said replying to a written question.

Rai said there were certain media reports of Kashmiri



Pandit Sangharsh Samiti highlighting their security concerns and various measures have been taken by the government to protect the lives of minorities which include group security in the form of static guards, day and night area domination, round the

clock 'nakas' at strategic points among others.

"Various measures have been taken by the Government to protect the lives of minorities which include, group security in the form of static guards, day and night area domination, round the

### Threatened Journalists Will Be Protected: MHA

**E**ight journalists working in Kashmir have received threats from militants online and four of them have reportedly resigned from their jobs, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. Rai said a case has been registered at the Shergari police station in Srinagar in this regard. "As reported, eight journalists working for Srinagar-based local newspapers received threat through terror blog 'Kashmir Fight'. Four media persons have reportedly resigned. The media persons who resigned belong to the media house 'Rising Kashmir'," he said **More on P6**

## Study Leaves Being Sanctioned In Violation Of Rules: Govt

Agencies

**Srinagar:** The Jammu and Kashmir government on Wednesday said that the Administrative Departments either sanction study leave in violation of Leave Rules at their own level or recommend cases to the General Administration Department without adhering to the other relevant parameters.

The government also directed that the study leave shall not ordinarily be granted to a government servant who has rendered less than five years' service under the Government.

As per a circular issued by the government under 49-JK(GAD) of 2022, dated 07-12-2022, the government has said that "In terms of J&K Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1979 (SRO-44 of 1979 dated 18.01.1979, issued by Finance Department), as amended from time to time, grant of study leave in respect of an employee of the

Government is governed by some conditions, which, inter-alia include certifying exigencies of public service, direct and close connection with sphere of his/her duty."

The study tour has to be of definite advantage to the Government from the point of view of public interest etc. The grant of study leave does not affect regular work or cause cadre difficulties owing to his/her absence on leave, the circular reads.

It further said that there is dearth of such technical qualified officers/officials in the Department and that Study leave shall not ordinarily be granted to a Government servant who has rendered less than five years' service under the Government.

"Notwithstanding, the above mentioned provisions governing the issue, it has been observed that the Administrative Departments either sanction study leave in violation of **More on P6**

## Police Attaches House For 'Harbouring' Militants In Khrew

**Srinagar:** Police on Wednesday attached a house for allegedly harbouring militants in Khrew area in outskirts of Srinagar.

"On 19/20 August 2021, Police in Awantipora received an information through reliable sources regarding presence of a group of (militants) in the house of Ghulam Ahmad Najar son of Ghulam Mohammad Najar of Danak Mohala Khrew who are conspiring to carry out (militant) act in the area," a police spokesperson said in a statement to GNS.

Accordingly, police said, a joint cordon and search operation was launched along with Army 50RR and CRPF's 185 battalion. "When the cordon was being laid, the hiding (militants) fired indiscriminately upon the operational party with the intent to kill the Police and Security forces," he said. The fire was effectively retaliated, leading to an encounter, he said.

During the gun battle, he said, the militants by taking advantage of darkness managed to shift into the house of Ghulam Nabi Najar son of Ghulam Mohammad in the vicinity. Subsequently, he said, the militants were zeroed down and again the fire fight erupted and two hiding militants were killed. They were later identified as Musabiq Ahmad Bhat son of Musabiq Ahmad Bhat and Muzamil Ahmad Rather son of Nazir Ahmad Rather of Chakoora Pulwama.

Consequent upon this case FIR No. 57/2021 U/S 307-IPC 7/27 A. Act 16,18,20 & 38 UA(P) Act was registered in Police Station Khrew and investigation was taken up, he said.

"During the course of investigation, involvement of Nizamud-Din Najar son of Ghulam Ahmad Najar resident of Danik Mohalla Khrew (son of House owner) came to fore for providing of intentional harbouring and logistic support to the neutralized (militants) and was accordingly arrested in the instant case on 21 August 2021, for the commission of offences punishable U/Ss 19 and 39 UA(P) Act which were invoked in the instant case."

Accordingly process under section 25 UA(P) Act for attachment of the house for "intentional harbouring of accused was initiated and submitted to DGP J&K for accord of prior approval and was **More on P6**

## Kashmir Freezes; Pahalgam At Minus 5.6°C

Snowfall Forecast On Dec 9-10, 12-13 And Dry Weather Thereafter Till Dec 18

Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** Cold wave conditions in Kashmir intensified on Wednesday as the mercury continued its southward journey at most places, officials said.

At minus 5.6 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam was the coldest recorded place in the Union Territory, they said.

Srinagar, which had recorded the coldest night of the season at minus 3.4 degrees Celsius on Sunday, witnessed a low of minus 3 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, slightly down from minus 2.2 degrees Celsius on Monday, an official of the Met department here said.

The night temperature was lower at the ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, which recorded a low of minus 4 degrees Celsius, a slight drop from minus 3.5 degrees Celsius recorded on Tuesday.

Pahalgam, in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, which serves as the base camp for the annual Amarnath yatra, was the coldest recorded place in the valley at minus 5.6 degrees Celsius, down from minus 3.8 degrees Celsius.

Qazigund, the gateway town to the Valley, recorded a minimum of minus 3.6 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag registered a low of minus 1.9 degrees Celsius. Kupwara in north Kashmir recorded minus 3.1 degrees Celsius.

The meteorological department has forecast dry weather but haze till December 8.

MeT department has already forecast light to moderate snowfall in Kashmir from the evening of December 9 to 10.

"A fresh Western Disturbance is likely to affect J&K and adjoining areas from December 9. Under the influence of the system, there is a possibility of **More on P6**



Illuminated Shikaras row inside Srinagar's Dal Lake on the beginning of two-day houseboat festival that started on Wednesday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat



KO Photo | Abid Bhat

**A FRESH WESTERN DISTURBANCE IS LIKELY TO AFFECT J&K AND ADJOINING AREAS** from December 9. Under the influence of the system, there is a possibility of light snow over plains and lower reaches, light to moderate snow over middle and higher reaches during 9th December (evening) to 10th December (evening) particularly over north, northwestern, central parts of Kashmir and South Kashmir,"

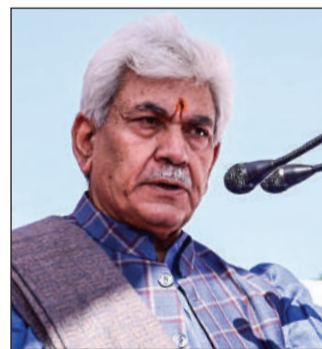
## Under-Utilised Assets Can Generate Jobs: LG

'Improving Quality Of Life Of Every Citizen Is Prime Objective Of The Administration'

Observer News Service

**Jammu:** Asserting that the prime objective of his administration is to improve quality of life of every citizen, the Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said Wednesday that many under-utilised assets can generate employment, business opportunities with engagement of local community.

Sinha made these remarks while inaugurating a Multi-Level Parking Facility at Panjtirthi here



on Wednesday.

Dedicating the new parking facility to the people of Jammu, the LG said that the project under AMRUT-Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation is part of the smart parking **More on P6**

## Salutes Courage Of Soldiers On 'Flag Day'

Observer News Service

**L**ieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Wednesday that the Flag Day is an opportunity to express gratitude and solidarity with brave armed forces personnel and urged the citizens to contribute generously to Armed Forces Flag Day fund and serve the noble cause of welfare of **More on P6**

## Man Fakes Death Twice To Draw Rs 56L Insurance

Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** In what seems to be a script of a Bollywood blockbuster, a man from North Kashmir's Kupwara district faked his death twice in separate road accidents to draw a whopping Rs 56 lac insurance from a private firm.

According to the Economic Offence Wing of Crime Branch Kashmir, Taveen Ahmad Shah of village Gundi Syedain in Kupwara had opted for life insurance policies twice with ICICI Prudential Life Insurance and had fraudulently extracted the huge amount by showing himself as dead, an EOW

spokesperson said.

He said that the fraud came to fore after Jatinder Pal Singh, Area Manager, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India, Jammu, filed a written complaint in year 2008.

Accordingly, he said, a case FIR No. 15/2008 was registered and investigation into the matter set in motion.

During the course of investigation, the spokesperson said, it surfaced that the accused had hatched a criminal conspiracy in league with his mother and father and misrepresented the actual facts before the ICICI insurance **More on P6**

### S H O R T T A K E S

#### 'Blast-Like' Sound Prompts Probe

**P**olice have launched an investigation after a "blast-like" sound was heard near a checkpoint on a vital bridge here, officials said on Wednesday. The sound was heard late Tuesday night near a bridge over the Tawi river, the officials said. There was no report of any casualty or damage in the "blast", they said. Jammu Senior Superintendent of Police Chandan Kohli said "a blast-like sound was heard near Sidhra bridge checking point. A thorough search is being carried on the spot to verify the matter". Officials said police reinforcements including Special Operations Group **More on P6**

#### 3.0 Magnitude Earthquake Hits Kathua

**A**n earthquake of magnitude 3.0 on Richter scale was reported from Kathua district on Wednesday morning, according to meteorological department here. While no loss of life or damage to property was reported, the earthquake struck at 9:15 a.m. at a depth of 10 km from the surface. Its coordinates are latitude 32.71 degrees and longitude 75.65 degrees, the officials said, as per news agency GNS. According to local reports, the jolt was felt momentarily and there was hardly any panic among the people.

#### Omar Picks Shahmiri As Political Advisor

**N**ational Conference Vice-President and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday appointed Mudassar Shahmiri as his political advisor. "JKNC Vice-President Omar Abdullah appointed Mudassar Shahmiri as his political advisor. The vice-president thanked the outgoing political advisor Tanvir Sadiq for his services and wished him luck for his new assigned roles," the National Conference said in a tweet. Sadiq was appointed the party's chief **More on P6**

#### Minor Girl Drowns To Death

**A** minor girl died on Wednesday after drowning in river Jhelum in Banyari village of north Kashmir's Bandipora district. 4-year-old Zeerish Tariq drowned in the river Jhelum in her native village Jadalpora Banyari of the district on Wednesday morning, reports said. Her body was retrieved and handed over to the family for last **More on P6**

#### Two JKAS Officers Among 3 Shifted

**T**he Union Territory government on Wednesday ordered transfer of officers, two of them Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) in the interest of administration. According to a government order, Ms. Monica Thappa, Jr. Scale JKAS, Tehsildar, Jammu Development Authority, has been transferred and posted as Administrative Officer, Government Medical College, Jammu, vice Rajinder Kumar, who has been asked to await further orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department. Rohit Kumar, Jr. Scale JKAS, awaiting orders **More on P6**

#### Gunfight Rages On In Shopian

**A**n encounter broke out between militants and security forces in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, police said. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in the Watho area of Shopian following information about the presence of militants there, a **More on P6**



## Unidentified Body Recovered Near Budshah Bridge

### Agencies

Srinagar: An unidentified body was recovered on the banks of river Jhelum near Budshah Bridge in Lalchowk area of Srinagar last evening, reports said here on Wednesday.

Reports said that locals spotted the unidentified semi-

decomposed body lying on the banks of river Jhelum near Budshah Bridge.

They said the locals subsequently informed the local police and the body was later recovered.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident. (KNO)

## Armed Forces Flag Day Celebrated In City

### Observer News Service

Srinagar: In connection with the celebrations of Armed Forces Flag Day, a Programme was held at Zilla Sainik Bhawan, Srinagar to honour the war martyrs and men in uniform who fought to safeguard the country's integrity and sovereignty.

Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Mohammad Alijaz Asad, who is also President Zilla Sainik Board, Srinagar was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the role of Sainiks and called them guardians of the Nation who protect its citizens. He said Flag Day brings to the forefront our commitment of looking after our veer naris, disabled soldiers and families of martyrs.

During the interaction with the veterans, the DC Srinagar assured all support from the civil administration

towards welfare of Ex-Servicemen and their families.

Meanwhile, Ex-Servicemen community thanked Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar for the initiatives taken by District Administration



Srinagar for the welfare of ex-servicemen community.

Pertinent to mention that senior Officers of the District Administration Srinagar recently visited the homes of war veterans and Veer Naris and met their family members and enquired about their well being and issues confronting them.

## Install Transformer In Our Area, Noorbagh Locals Appeal Admin.

### Agencies

Srinagar: 'Al-Falah' Committee of Bagh-e-Lala Pandit locality in the Noor Bagh area of Srinagar city Wednesday appealed to the Power Development Department to install a 400 KVA transformer in their area.

The Committee said that a 250 KVA transformer had been installed in the area 10 years ago for 30 households but that number has grown to 150.

"Every alternate day this 250 KVA transformer develops a snag as a result the area reels under darkness. A couple of days ago, it was repaired but again was damaged due to overloading," the Committee members told news agency Kashmir News Trust.

The 'Al-Falah' Committee made a fervent appeal to authorities to install 400 KVA transformers in the area. [KNT]

## Training On 'Referral Services For Substance Abuse' Concludes At KU

### Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Department of Social Work, University of Kashmir, organised a two-day training programme for college teachers on 'Identification and Referral Services for Substance Abuse'.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Nilofer Khan, who

This way, the VC said, the workshop will become a continuous outcome-based activity.

"Let the department come up with a proposal in this regard. The University administration will provide all necessary support to this outreach activity," she said.

Dr Deebea Khan, Dep-

cial evils like drug abuse by leading the related awareness campaigns.

Dr Adil Bashir, workshop coordinator, earlier spelt out the objectives of the two-day event.

On the occasion, a drug addiction survivor narrated his "horrific experience" while being involved in drug abuse previously. Saying that he had lost both his health and happiness, the survivor said that substance abuse had damaged 55% of his liver, besides impacting his kidneys and lungs.

"I was shattered emotionally and financially. I appeal to all youth involved in drug abuse to come out of it," he said. The survivor was felicitated by the Vice-Chancellor with a memento for coming out of the dark phase.

Director North Campus Prof Bashir Ahmad Ganai and Dr Majid Shafi, Nodal Officer, Addiction Treatment Facility, also shared their views.

Dr Sarfaraz conducted proceedings of the inaugural session and presented a vote of thanks.

The event concluded Wednesday with experts from diverse fields delivering talks on a range of issues related to the workshop theme.



had inaugurated the programme Tuesday, said a collective effort is needed to eliminate the "scourge" of drug abuse from society.

She urged the Department of Social Work to choose trainers from amongst the workshop participants to utilise their services for further training of school teachers in different districts of Kashmir.

uty Director, J&K Health Services, said at least 70,000 people in J&K are involved in drug abuse and most of them are aged below 30 years, as per an official survey. She advocated a three-pronged 'Prevention-Treatment-Rehabilitation' strategy to effectively deal with the "burning problem".

Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir highlighted the role of teachers in curbing so-



Shikaras illuminated with LED lights on the eve of Houseboat Festival at Dal Lake. KO Photo Abid Bhat.

## Boon Ties Up With SSC To Monitor Water Quality In Dal Lake

### Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Boon, a global water-tech startup, has teamed up with Srinagar Smart City Limited to keep an eye on quality of water in the famous Dal Lake in Jammu and Kashmir, the company said on Wednesday.

"Boon will use its proprietary and patented drinking water Internet-of-Things platform (Clairvoyant) to detect irregularities in the water of the Dal Lake and send timely alerts to the concerned authorities for quick remedial action," a spokesperson of the company said.

In order to restore the glory of the lake, Srinagar Smart City Limited will deploy Clairvoyant at a cost of Rs 1.28 crore to run historical data models using AI and compare them with current data samples to find variances over time, informing authorities of remedial action

as an essential hub for water plant harvesting and fishing, providing food and water to nearby villages.

"Lately, increased commercialization of the place has led to high pollution levels in the water, making it unfit for drinking and domestic activities. According to a report in 2017, approximately 50 million litres of sewage flow into the lake every day and close to 80,000 tonnes of silt is deposited yearly," the spokesperson said.

as an essential hub for water plant harvesting and fishing, providing food and water to nearby villages.

if the water quality is beyond the prescribed limit.

"In recent years, the quality of water has become a subject of discussion around the country owing to high levels of pollutants. At Boon, we aim to address this by empowering hotels, schools, metro stations, and other institutions to adopt a healthy and sustainable drinking water solution," Vibha Tripathi, MD of Boon, said.

"Our partnership with Srinagar Smart City Limited further bolsters this initiative and intends to check and keep the water clean in Dal Lake. Live screens will also make it easier for authorities to continue monitoring the water quality in the lake and take remedial action," she added

## Court Grants Bail To UP Resident Accused Of Duping Aspirants

### Agencies

Srinagar: A court here has granted the bail to a man accused of duping MBBS aspirants of lakhs of rupees on the pretext of arranging medical seats for them in private colleges over the past 15 years.

After hearing prosecution and defence counsel advocate Aamir Masoodi, First Additional Sessions Judge Ajay Kumar Gup-

ta granted bail to Uttar Pradesh resident Sheel Kumar Shukla.

"Considering the law and keeping in view the facts of the present case and further that the accused in custody for the past 55 days and presently lodged in judicial custody, the apprehension of the prosecution as to the influencing of prosecution witnesses by the accused can be guarded by imposing suitable conditions but the bail cannot

be withheld only on this count," the court said.

The court observed that the accused has carved out a case at this stage for granting bail in his favour. "Therefore, application is allowed and the accused is granted interim bail till next date of hearing subject to the furnishing of bail bonds by the surety and personal bonds to the tune of Rs one lakh," the court added

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES: 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

### AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

### RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

### HIGHWAY STATUS

- Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar-Leh - (Open)



**HIJRI CALENDAR**

13 Jumad al-Awwal  
**1444**

PRAYERS	
FAJR	5:54
ZUHR	12:22
ASR	3:45
Magrib	5:25
ISHA	6:50

## This Day In History

- 1710 - Battle of Brihuega in the War of the Spanish Succession: British General James Stanhope captured by French & Spanish forces.
- 1863 - 2,500 reported killed as result of fire at Jesuit Church of La Compana, Santiago, Chile.
- 1863 - Abraham Lincoln issues his Amnesty Proclamation and plan for Reconstruction of the South.
- 1869 - Timothy Eaton founds T. Eaton Co. Limited in Toronto, Canada.
- 1881 - Vienna's Ring Theater destroyed by fire, kills between 640-850.
- 1895 - Battle at Amba Alagi: Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II drives Italian General Baratieri out.
- 1921 - Eamon de Valera publicly repudiates Anglo-Irish Treaty.
- 1923 - German-US friendship treaty signed
- 1923 - Salary & price freeze in Germany.
- 1941 - London: Dutch government-in-exile declares war on Japan.
- 1941 - US & Britain declare war on Japan, US enters WW II.
- 1952 - Isak Ben-Zvi elected president of Israel.
- 1953 - Dwight D. Eisenhower gives his "Atoms for Peace" speech at the UN in New York.
- 1962 - 114-day newspaper strike begins in NYC.
- 1963 - Pan Am Flight 214 crashes outside Elkton, Maryland with 81 killed. Only case of lightning causing air crash.
- 1965 - Nikolai Podgorny succeeds Khrushchev as president of USSR.
- 1969 - Greek DC-6B crashes in storm at Athens, 93 killed.
- 1972 - United Airlines crashes at Chicago's Midway Airport killing 45
- 1974 - Soyuz 16 returns to Earth.
- 1982 - Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez receives the Nobel Prize for Literature
- 1983 - 9th Space Shuttle Mission, Columbia 6, lands at Edwards AFB.

## From KO Archives

## 22-Hr Storm On CRPF Camp Ends

### Observer News Service

S RINAGAR: The 22-hr long gun battle raging at the CRPF 61 Batal-ion camp at the defunct Heevan cinema at Ashajipora near Anantnag came to an end this afternoon after the army and the paramilitary forces killed the lone militant and in the process lost seven of their personnel with as many injured. According to reports, it was for the first time after the suspension of combat operations following the uni-lateral Ramadan ceasefire that the army had to be called out to assist paramilitary forces to rescue trapped CRPF personnel after two Lashkar-e-Taiba fighters stormed their camp at 5 p.m. yesterday. The two militants were identified as Abu Israr and Abu Hizbullah.

Three CRPF personnel were killed in the volley of fire when the militants forced their entry into the camp. They were identified as P K Sharma (belt No 971120336), H P Sampat and Rajesh Kumar. One of the militant was killed in the shootout while the other took position within the building.

Late in the night, the exchange of fire stopped at which the security forces thought both the fideyean had died in the gun battle. However the lone surviving militant resumed the firing early this morning killing another four CRPF personnel and wounding six of their men besides an army jawan of 3 RR. While the deceased personnel could not be identified immediately, those injured included Arvind, Partap Singh, P K Loi and Raj Pal. Sources said more bodies of the security personnel could be buried under the debris. Security personnel's who had laid siege around the camp from outside immediately after the militant attack, entered the building where the holed up militant had taken shelter on the top of the multi-storied building restricting movement of CRPF men inside, an official spokesman said.

Police had taken into its custody the Maruti car bearing registration no JK03/3351 used by the fideyean and which was lying at the gate of the camp. Meanwhile, the army foiled another suicide attack in Cherkote area of frontier district Kupwara late last night, shooting dead one of the two Lashkar activists attempting to storm Devar post, a defence spokesman said.

He said troops noticed two militants attempting to sneak into their camp at Devar and challenged them. The two opened fire and in the retaliatory action, one of them was killed while the other escaped, he said. He said troops suffered no casualty in the encounter.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 08 DECEMBER, 2000)

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KASHMIR OBSERVER  
Thursday | 08-12-2022

## Elusive Election

As 2022 draws to a close, there is no sign that J&K is any closer to holding Assembly election. It is still not known whether polls will be held early next year. Many observers in Kashmir are hoping that the elections may take place by April-May. Things on this score, however, are likely to get clearer in the weeks to come. More so, probably after the outcome of the elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh which, as of now, the BJP is expected to win.

Meanwhile, people in Kashmir are eagerly waiting for the elections, as the exercise is expected to lead to restoration of statehood. No less than union home minister Amit Shah has made it clear that the statehood of J&K would be restored only after elections are held and a representative government is formed. There have so far been no signs that the centre is reviewing its policy. Return of statehood also makes eminent sense from the centre's point of view. It seems that the union government wants to first see how the future elected government would look like and what its political and governance priorities would be including its approach to the issue of the revocation of Article 370. Also, it is as yet unclear if the centre would be inclined to restore complete statehood or a truncated one on the pattern of Delhi.

One thing is clear, though: The J&K statehood seems subordinate to the circumstances thrown up by a future elected UT government. The centre, as appears obvious, doesn't want its decision to undo Article 370 to be in any way challenged by an Assembly dominated by the parties that have a contrary view on the issue.

J&K has not had an elected government since June 2018 when Governor's rule was imposed after the PDP-led coalition government lost its majority following the withdrawal of support by the BJP. The last four years have witnessed a drastic political makeover of the state-turned-union territory, so much so that in many aspects, the current J&K bears little resemblance to what it was pre-August 2019.

For now, we can only hope that the elections, whenever they are held, will pave the way for statehood. It is expected that a government led or influenced by the BJP could lead to statehood than a non-BJP government. But, for now, this is all in the future. All we can hope for now is that the elections are announced earlier than later, and April-May will be an ideal time considering it will be spring.

### OTHER OPINION

## Growing Economic Gap

An economic theory backed by considerable evidence is that incomes of countries and regions tend to converge over time. The underlying logic is that areas with low-hanging fruit tend to attract capital and other resources that allow them to catch up. India's regions might be an exception to this trend. A national survey on incomes by economic thinktank Price shows that the gap between states in southern and western India and many of those in the north, central and east is wide. The worrying part is that it's diverging.

Consider the per capita incomes of Bihar and Karnataka in 1989-90, the eve of economic liberalisation. Karnataka's per capita income at Rs 2,055 a year was almost two times that of Bihar. In 2019-20, the last pre-pandemic year, the gap had widened to over five times with Bihar's annual per capita income at Rs 29,794 and that of Karnataka at Rs 1,55,869. This trend generally holds across states, with the west and south of India pulling away from eastern and central Indian states such as UP and MP. A 2016 paper by IDFC Institute observed that India is the only major economy bucking the trend of subnational convergence.

India's fiscal architecture and related institutions such as finance commission are designed to mitigate the fallout of the gap by allocating the divisible pool of taxes in a manner that brings about a degree of equity between states. However, a combination of economic and fertility divergences makes for an explosive mix. GoI has projected a national population increase of 311 million between 2011 and 2036. Of this increase, only 9% will come from the five southern states, which the Price survey shows currently contribute 30% of national income with 20% of the population.

These trends are playing out in the backdrop of an impending delimitation of political constituencies that can widen fault lines. India's subnational economic divergence is a trend that deserves more study and policy attention. A lopsided economic structure usually has consequences that ripple out into other areas. Convergence is the only answer to it.

The Times of India

# Significant Yet Sidelined

According to a study by Shahida Shafi and Dr. Mamta Chandrashekhar, women participation in voting is almost equal to their male counterparts in J&K but their overall participation and representation in the politics of the erstwhile state is not still "up to the mark" in the state legislative assembly, parliament and decision-making bodies.

Swati Joshi

Kashmiri women first entered the erstwhile Jammu & Kashmir Assembly in 1972. Out of six women contestants, four women won and gave the assembly the highest percentage (5.33 per cent) of women. Even after 50 years, the record is not challenged. Since then the number of women in the now defunct assembly has not surpassed more than 3 per cent.

The maximum number of women contestants (67) was seen in 2008 assembly elections but only three were able to win a seat.

In the last assembly elections of 2014, only two women contenders won out of 28. Later Mehbooba Mufti also got elected in by-polls in 2016.

In the Lok Sabha elections 2019, only four women from J&K filed nominations out of which one woman withdrew her nomination and another woman contestant didn't pay the security deposit. In the end, there were only two women contestants with 61 male contestants. Similarly, in the Legislative Assembly elections 2014, out of 831 contestants only 28 were women.

According to a study by Shahida Shafi and Dr. Mamta Chandrashekhar, women participation in voting is almost equal to their male counterparts in J&K but their overall participation and representation in the politics of the state is not still "up to the mark" in the state legislative assembly, parliament and decision-making bodies.

"Historically," the study notes, "women in the valley have played a significant role, but years of insurgency have ensured that women bear the burden of rebuilding a traumatized society, and their presence in politics, today is almost negligible."

Women in J&K are liberal to join other fields like medical, engineering, media but when it comes to politics there is a stigma, believes Dr. Hina Shafi Bhat, Vice-Chairperson Khadi Village Industries Board. "Politics is a kind of profession in J&K where men are also not spared."

It is not only difficult for women to join politics in J&K but also for men because of the turmoil, adds Bhat. She believes that women are the major sufferers of strife. "As a wife, sister and mother," she says, "women have suffered a lot which has restricted them to participate in political activities."

Kashmir has plenty of half-widows who hardly get an opportunity to express themselves freely, Bhat said. "As we move forward, we think that society is becoming broad-minded, but reality is quite different."

Mehbooba Shadab, an independent politician from the valley, also believes that turmoil has affected the involvement of women in politics. According to her, a majority of women are kept inside the house out of fear and it becomes difficult for women when they venture out of the concrete walls.

Senior National Conference leader Sakina Itoo believes that it is not the militancy that is holding women from joining politics in Kashmir but it is the society. "Even if we look at data before militancy, limited women contested elections," says the former MLA.

Itoo claims to have more female ground workers than men but when it comes to higher positions in politics it is dominated by men. "People in Kashmir are more interested to send their daughters for competitive exams like Kashmir Administrative Services (KAS) and Indian Administrative Services (IAS)," says Itoo.

Safina Baig, a political activist, also believes that militancy has no role to play in less participation of women in politics. She says that politics has been a male dominating profession and the society believes that women cannot handle such challenging roles.

"When it comes to decision making, it is difficult for society to digest that a woman is taking a lead," says Baig. The political parties may have women empowerment in their manifestos but when it comes to including women in decision making, they are quite hesitant, adds the political activist.

Baig suggests that the women reservation bill which reserves 33 percent seats in the Lok Sabha, and all state legislative assemblies for



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women should be passed by the lower house of parliament to provide equal opportunities to women politicians.

#### Role of media

Media provides a crucial platform to politicians for public debates and helps people to form an opinion. A study by Shah Alam on the participation of women in Indian politics and the role of media, states that media should highlight women's achievements so that it encourages more females to be a part of the democratic process.

"Media should recognize women politicians, their voices, their contributions in decision making and highlight women's issues and also appreciate the work done by women to increase their inclination towards the political system," claims the study.

Sadaf, an independent political leader from Habbakadal, says that she got good media coverage during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. "I think media prefer female politicians more," claims Sadaf.

But when Dr. Darakhshan Andrabi, a senior BJP leader, joined politics she said she did not get much coverage from the Kashmir media. "Jammu print and electronic media helped me a lot during my initial days," says Andrabi.

She emphasized that the fourth pillar of democracy has an important role in shaping a politician's life and sometimes female politicians are given less coverage than their counterparts.

#### Independent Political leader

According to Sadaf, it is very important to have a political backing to survive in J&K politics. She had the backing of her uncle who was a part of J&K politics. "Apart from that," she says, "you need money and everything will come in place."

While Sadaf says that she will contest in the next election as an independent leader only, Rashida Mir who contested as an independent leader from Kulgam in 2014 has joined hands with BJP.

Mir believes that it is tough to work as an independent leader as you have to work from ground zero. "Political party provides you members and people are eager to work with you because they already know the party's agenda," says BJP State Secretary of North Kashmir.

Seconding Mir, Khem Lata Wakhlu, senior Congress leader, says that it is very difficult for a novice to join politics in J&K, especially women. "Name of the party during election matters a lot and sometimes it becomes difficult for an individual to get funding to promote her party," adds Wakhlu.

#### What lays ahead?

The political process in Kashmir came to a halt after the abrogation of Article 370. Many political leaders were detained under Public Safety Act (PSA). The environment after the collapse of the PDP-BJP government in 2018 was quite different. The political activities in the valley were present, parties issued statements, organized press conference but after August 5, 2019, a vacuum is created in J&K politics.

While the local unionists are reiterating they would "tirelessly struggle to get back the special status and restore the Constitutional guarantees forcibly are taken away from J&K", Hina Bhat says that India is a democratic country and every regional party has the right to put their point forward.

But it depends what the whole country wants, she continues. "It is said that Kashmir is an integral part of India," she says, "but I will say that India is an integral part of Kashmir."

Speaking about the resentments amongst people post abrogation of Article 370, she says that the wrong leaders have shown wrong dreams to the people of J&K. "People of J&K are not aware of the merits of abrogation of Article 370," adds Bhat.

Itoo, a senior National Conference leader, believes that the Centre does not want political activities to resume in Kashmir. "How can we think of politics when there is no security for us?"

But Baig believes that political process will start in the valley when there is hope amongst people. "There should be a plan layout not only by the government but also by civil societies, lawyers, and businessperson to solve the Kashmir issue."

Author is a former staffer at Kashmir Observer



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## Handle With Care

I'm writing in response to an article published by Kashmir Observer on the World Disability Day. It brought home some shocking reality. The truth remains that a majority of the specially-abled children drop out of schools every year. The social stigma attached to such children prevents them from studying in normal schools. No one

wants to be friends with them. We don't even have the required number of rehabilitators. They even face paucity of transportation facilities.

Government needs to take note of these grey areas and address them. They need to understand that the condition of physically and mentally disabled persons of Kashmir is worse than animals.

Apart from unnatural causes, many kids are born deaf, mute and blind every year, but if given a chance, these students can also excel in different fields. Many prominent psychiatrists from time to time have suggested setting up of special centres for people with disabilities to ensure that they do not get exploited. The rigorous efforts put by vari-

ous organisations have led to positive behavioral changes in many mentally-unstable children. Now people regret saying bad things about these children. They're handling them with more maturity and sensibility.

Ashraf Sahil, Srinagar.  
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# Kashmiri Rugman's Russian Yarn

*Kashmiri carpets, which ruled the world at one point in time, faced decline with the emergence of new techniques, quality crisis and political turmoil inside their state of origins. However, a man from Lalbazar, Srinagar, is fighting hard to bring the glory back to its name.*

Romaan Arora

Umer Hameed came to Delhi as a fledgling and fresh-faced merchant in 1993, when his hometown was caught in a searing strife. He had arrived to secure his late father's legendary legacy in Delhi.

Almost three decades later, and at the age of 52, the Lalbazar man has not only secured his father's legacy, but also rose to become a carpet czar in the capital.

"By 1989, as the situation turned explosive back home, my father became anxious about me and our family business," said Umar while recollecting an era when aged fathers in Kashmir had started shouldering their young sons' dead bodies.

"Being the lone son, I was supposed to address my father's growing concerns about me and our nosedived business."

But it wasn't a walkover for him. Kashmir was changing, so was the idea of normalcy when the young and restless started campaigning for the political resolution. Social hangouts and public places soon came under a lock and key. Migrations and massacres only escalated the crisis. The surplus sorties flown on a war-footing and reinforcement in every nook and cranny of the valley rang war alarms. And in an ensured militant-military combat, big businesses became shut shops.

But before the situation turned tense in Kashmir, Umer's date of destiny had come in that momentous year—1989—of the massive upheaval itself. Then appearing in his MBBS entrance exam, he came out dejected.

"The moment I saw everyone cheating inside the examination hall, I tore my question paper and made my decision to move out," he recalled.

Such curt decisions based on merit would later give him an edge over his contemporaries and competitors in the capital.

"Being ethical and upright was my father's way of doing things," he said. "And as his heir-apparent, I had to demonstrate his DNA in my demeanour."

His father, who had already worked with East India Carpet Company, had attached a great value to his name because of his enterprising and welfare work in Kashmir.

"Even today, whenever I visit the valley, carpet weavers and sellers often tell me: 'While the floor is ours, the roof over it is all because of your father!' The great man touched many lives during

his lifetime with his principled professional conduct."

Umer's father worked for around 50 years and played a crucial role in establishing the carpet industry in Kashmir.

"Even CIE [Cottage Industries Exposition, one of the biggest Kashmiri Carpet brands] used to consult my late father regularly for his expert take and trade tips," the son said.

But unlike his father, the journey to Everest wasn't a fairy-tale for Umer.

The rug stalwart started his business initially from a rented apartment in Jungpura, before moving to Lajpat Nagar, the place where he now sits comfortably.

"It was harsh winters back then. I came here by road and started selling carpets from my rented accommodation," continued Umer, while recollecting his struggling days in Delhi.

"I didn't have any other alternative apart from moving out. Everything was shattering in the valley back then, and no one wanted to stay there. There was no private sector and the already crumbling public sector had fallen apart."

On the face of it, the carpet man's chronicle of moving out may appear usual to the story of any other struggler. However, the load upon his shoulders was heavier as he had to start a completely new brand from scratch in the national capital.

"And since I was still trying to adjust myself with Delhi's demanding life, it was impossible for me to pay 50 per cent advance to the carpet weavers, which is norm in our line," he said.

But being a resilient rugman, Umer lived up to the expectations.

"The buyers wanted a peaceful environment to buy rich Kashmiri carpets and I provided them the same in Delhi inside this premises of Hannan's Oriental Rugs," he claimed with a reference to his shop.

While building his brand, he was mindful how the carpet industry of Kashmir had seen many challenges and changes over the last 50 years. The industry renowned for its woollen items started producing silk carpets in the late 1970s.

At that time, it was unrivalled across India.

"The least quality of Kashmiri carpets used to have 324 knots per square inch," he informed. "Now, tell me how a carpet from the rest of India, which usually has less than 100 knots, can match the Kashmiri carpets?"

Following the arrival of silk in the 80s, the boom in the entire carpet in-



dustry in Kashmir was so massive that, according to Umer, the weavers in Kashmir used to smoke a hookah of milk instead of water.

Half an hour into the conversation, he went to offer prayers and came back with two cups of tea and a variety of snacks.

"There is a stark difference in the work culture," he resumed the conversation by drawing parallels between Kashmir and Delhi.

"Working in the valley is working at home, in an aesthetic and peaceful environment. Plus, one can go for a routine check-up, like what my dad did."

However, as per Umer, the capital requires a professional workforce, and if you don't apply to that term, you can't sustain the fast-moving nature of the city.

As part of his regimental routine in Delhi, honesty and quality have emerged as his mantra of success. His hard work, as per him, has made him what he is today – The Vice-Chairman of the Carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC).

"I am called the Russian King because most of my buyers are from Russia," he said, while referring to the fame he has earned outside India.

"In one way or the other, I have dominated the Russian market at least to some extent."

Because of his quality experience in dealing with a variety of clientele, his friend—running a multi-storey complex in Kremlin—once offered Umer his showroom.

"My Company is the only one in Kashmiri carpet industry, which brought a revolution of modern designs and created a fusion of traditional with modernism," he said with a pleased look on his face.

"And for that I credit my father's three small, yet vital suggestions: 'Never sell on credit, never get a bank loan, and never do overbuying.'"

The journey to this level, however, was full of hurdles. Umer was hassled at multiple occasions in the very initial years of his career in capital and he still remembers the scratches done all over his car.

"But, Almighty had a different plan for me, and that's why I am talking to you here."

However, as the 'great power comes

with great responsibility', the same seems to be the case with Umer Hameed.

As a trade leader, he has dedicated himself to the renaissance of Kashmiri Carpets and reorganization of the entire industry.

"The moment I became the Vice-Chairman of CEPC, I started battling for establishing a regional office in Srinagar as there was none."

"Also," he added, "because of my initiative, the government reduced GST on carpets from a whopping 18% to a mere 5%. I fought for it and luckily whole of India benefitted."



Nonetheless, it's quite hard to take the Kashmiri Carpets to their days of glory as now the material used in its making is 'the recycled silk' procured from Sari mills in Karnataka.

In his own words, Umer narrated how he told the same to the then Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Irani, when she was planning to promote Kashmiri carpets on a global level.

"All the stakeholders were called by her in the meeting and the moment the union minister mentioned her plan, I intervened and asked her 'what rubbish are you going to promote?' The maximum life of today's Kashmiri carpet is not more than three years. You can't

promote anything nonsense."

Even after tons of such problematic conditions, Umer never bowed to the trouble and is still popular across the region for the finest and premium quality Kashmiri carpets, which is, nowadays, a rare sight to see.

"I have the best carpet in the world right now," said Umer while showing me one piece out of his premium and flagship collection which contains 6,400 knots per square inch, allegedly the highest in the world.

"It took four and a half years to complete it and the woman who made it

gave birth to two kids during that period. It was a once in a lifetime watch and I'm blessed to have the legacy of holding it," he added.

Nevertheless, dedicating all his life to creating a stronghold of royal Kashmiri carpets in Delhi and earning the fame that other dream for, Umer still addresses himself as a tourist intending to go back to his homeland once call for the same is made by his heart.

"The peace of life is missing here," the mountain man said.

"I am enjoying my stay here but it's not permanent. The moment I would realize that my time has come, I'll quietly move back to my Kashmir."







## Bangladesh Beat India In Thriller To Win ODI Series

Agencies

**MIRPUR:** Bangladesh all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz scored an unbeaten 100 from 83 balls and grabbed two wickets to help his side beat India by five runs in their second one-day international in Mirpur on Wednesday, sealing a 2-0 series victory with one game left to play. Chasing 272 to win, India got off to a disappointing start losing openers Virat Kohli and Shikhar Dhawan early before half-centuries by Shreyas Iyer (82) and Axar Patel

nings, and he rode his luck to take India close.

Playing through the pain - and twice dropped - he hit huge sixes off Ebadot Hossain and Mahmudullah in his 28-ball knock to leave India needing 20 off the final over and then 12 from the last two balls, but he was unable to haul his side over the line. Earlier, Bangladesh, who also beat India by one wicket in the first ODI, were in trouble at 69-6 having elected to bat first as Washington Sundar (3-37) and Mohammed Siraj (2-73) ripped through the top



(56) got them back on track.

But India's middle order suffered a collapse and they fell just short in their run chase, ending on 266-9. Indian captain Rohit Sharma (51 not out) came in to bat at number nine after undergoing a scan for a left thumb injury he sustained when he dropped Anamul Haque in the second over of Bangladesh's in-

order before the hosts hit back.

Mehidy combined with Mahmudullah (77) in a 148-run stand for the seventh wicket as India stepped off the gas, and the 25-year-old reached his century with the last ball of the innings as Bangladesh put on 271-7. The teams meet in the final game in Chattogram on Saturday before playing two tests.

## Injured Rohit Likely To Miss 3rd ODI

Press Trust of India

**MIRPUR:** India skipper Rohit Sharma is likely miss the third ODI against Bangladesh after splitting the webbing between his left thumb and index finger during the second match of the series, here on Wednesday.

Standing at second slip, Rohit was left with a bloodied hand when he dropped Anamul Haque off Mohammed Siraj in

the fourth ball of the second over. He was escorted off the field by the team physio.

He was rushed to a Dhaka hospital for scan and the affected area required multiple stitches during the initial treatment. It is believed some further scans will be required to ascertain if there is a fracture.

The Indian captain could be racing against time to get fit for the first Test against Bangladesh, starting in Chattogram from December 14.

## FIFA World Cup 2022 Quarterfinals: Teams, Schedule & More



Observer News Service

**FIFA World Cup 2022** in Qatar has reached its business end. Eight teams have advanced to the quarterfinals after an electric Round of 16. European giants England and France join South American powerhouses Argentina and Brazil are among the favourites to take the 22nd edition of the FIFA World Cup. The other teams to win their Round of 16 matches include Croatia, Netherlands, Portugal and Morocco. Here is a look at every quarterfinal matchup, where only four teams will progress to the competition's semifinals stage.

### 2022 FIFA World Cup Round of 16 Results & Winners

- Netherlands beat USA 3-1

- Argentina beat Australia 2-1
- France beat Poland 3-1
- England beat Senegal 3-0
- Croatia beat Japan (1-1) 3-1 after penalty shootout
- Brazil beat South Korea 4-1
- Morocco beat Spain (0-0) 3-0 after penalty shootout
- Portugal beat Switzerland 6-1
- 2022 FIFA World Cup Quarterfinal Schedule
- December 9: Croatia vs Brazil at Education City Stadium (8:30 PM IST)
- December 10: Netherlands vs Argentina at Lausail Stadium (12:30 AM IST)
- December 10: Morocco vs Portugal at Al Thumama Stadium (8:30 PM IST)
- December 11: England vs France at Al Bayt Stadium (12:30 AM IST)

## Moroccans Celebrate Historic World Cup Win Against Spain

Agencies

**RABAT:** Exuberant Moroccans poured into the streets of their capital and in cities across Europe on Tuesday, waving flags and honking horns to celebrate their national soccer team's historic victory over Spain at the World Cup.

Morocco defeated Spain in a penalty shootout, making the Atlas Lions the only team from outside Europe or South America to make it to the quarter-

finals in Qatar - and the first Arab team in World Cup history to make it to the last eight.

"We are so proud of our Lions, who fought hard to get us into the quarterfinals," said Niama Meddoun, a Rabat resident. "We are delighted to be Moroccans today, since we are the first Arab country that has reached the quarterfinals."

The King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, praised the national team and sent his "heartfelt congratulations" to the

players, the technical team and administrative personnel, "who gave their all and blazed a trail throughout this great sporting event," according to a statement from the royal palace.

The king said the players represented "hopes and dreams of Moroccans in Morocco, Qatar, and all over the world."

Morocco is the only Arab - and African - nation left in the tournament, the first World Cup held in the Middle East. (AP)

## NIT Srinagar Wins All India Inter-NIT Faculty Tournament

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Wednesday defeated NIT Uttarakhand by 26 runs in the finals of the All India Inter-NIT Faculty and Staff Cricket Tournament at Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology (NIT) Nagpur.

The tournament was hosted by VNIT Nagpur, and 20 NITs from across India participated in the mega event.

Earlier after winning the toss, NIT Uttarakhand decided to field first. On a tough surface, NIT Srinagar started well and scored 125/8 in 20 allotted overs.

Chasing the target, NIT Uttarakhand made a shaky start and lost 5 wickets quickly during the Powerplay and were eventually bundled out for 99 in 18.2 overs.

For NIT Srinagar, Captain Faisal Irshad (Dy Registrar Administration) played a vital knock of 36 and was the top scorer from the side. Sohail Baba scored 22

tain Faisal Irshad (Dy Registrar Administration) was declared the Best Batsman of the tournament, and Dr. Shakeel Waseem was declared the Best Bowler of the tournament.

Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. (Dr) Rakesh Sehgal, congratulated the entire cricket team for winning the prestigious tournament.

He said NIT Srinagar dominated the tournament by remaining unbeaten and reaching the finals, showcasing top-class sporting spirit against strong opposition.

Institute's Registrar, Prof. Syed Kaiser Bukhari, also extended his greetings to NIT Srinagar's cricket team.

Team manager Dr. Abdul Liman congratulated the whole team and thanked Prof M A Tantray for supporting and sponsoring the team kits.

The NIT Srinagar Cricket team was led by Captain Faisal Irshad (Dy Registrar Administration), Dr. Tanveer Rasool, Dr. Pankaj Kumar, Sohail Ahmad Baba, Aqib



runs, while Dr. Majid contributed with a quickfire 17 off 9 balls in the end.

In the bowling department, Mustafa Zargar took 3 wickets in his 4 overs, conceding only 13 runs. Mohsin Shabir and Dr. Shakeel Waseem also chipped in with 2 wickets each.

During the post-match ceremony, Mustaf Zargar was declared man of the match. Cap-

Ahmad (Jr. Asst), Mohammad Hazik (Asst. Registrar Legal and PIO), Tanveer Hussain, Mohammad Asif, Dr. Shakeel Waseem, Dr. Majid Hussain, Dr. Mohsin, Mustafa Zargar, Mushtaq Ahmad and Shabir Mustafa.

While as Prof. Abdul Liman, Dean and Students Welfare (Manager), and Abdul Hamid Dar (Senior Technician) were also travelling with the team.

# Bun Maska



Chai

## Chai Ka Chaska With Bun Maska



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