

Nearly 24% Population In J&K Own A Car: NFHS Survey

Auqib Javeed

Nearly 24 percent of the population in Jammu and Kashmir own a car—highest in North India, the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) for 2019-21 has revealed.

Most of these private cars have been financed by different banks across the J&K, as per an official from Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir.

“Over 60 percent of private cars are financed by banks, many have cleared the loans,” said the official, wishing not to be named as he wasn’t

authorised to speak to the media.

As per the NFHS report, Jammu and Kashmir ranks third in India having the highest population with a car. Goa tops this list with 45.2 percent followed by Kerala at 24.2 percent.

The report further reveals that in Punjab 21.9 percent own private vehicles, while in Delhi and Haryana 19.4 and 15.3 percent population own personal cars.

An official from Jammu and Kashmir Bank said that the car loan cases have increased from the last ten years.



“The car business has indeed flourished in the Kashmir Valley. There is not a single day when we don’t provide car

WE NEED WIDER ROADS. We need flyovers. We need to make public transport attractive for commuters. And we need better traffic management. It’s not a tall order, provided you have a responsive and performing govt.”

loans,” said the official.

He further said that most popular cars in demand range from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 6 lakh.

Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) Srinagar Arif Parvez told Kashmir Observer Srinagar registered over 9000 cars in 2021. In 2020 the number of private cars registered

was only 6000.

According to reports over 24 lakh vehicles have been registered in J&K in the year 2022.

The official said that the commercial and private vehicle numbers had increased to 24 lakh in 2022 from 12 lakh in 2014-15. The official added | [More on P6](#)

Army Proposes Housing Colony For Serving, Retired Soldiers In Jammu

Criteria For Applicants In Line With New Domicile Laws Of Jammu And Kashmir

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Indian Army has proposed a housing colony in Jammu city for the serving, retired and widows & parents of deceased soldiers meeting the requirements on the lines of new domicile laws of Jammu and Kashmir introduced after the abrogation of special status in August 2019.

The proposal for creating a housing colony in the winter capital has been mooted by the Army Welfare Housing Organisation (AWHO), a registered trust functioning on No Profit No Loss basis.

The organisation on Saturday started a demand survey for Jammu City for group housing to ascertain the demand from serving /retired Army personnel, widows & parents of deceased Army personnel who are in receipt of family pension. The housing colony will have 2 BHK/ 3 BHK/ 4 BHK and 5BHK flats.

The survey will conclude on April, 30 this year. According to the notification uploaded on official website [www.ahosena.in](#), the desirous soldiers, serving



or retired, besides their families, have been asked to submit their applications with a demand draft of Rs 25,000.

However, the organisation has listed pre-conditions for participation in the demand survey.

“The applicant should be domiciles of the UT of Jammu & Kashmir,” reads the notification.

Divulging more details of the criteria, the notification says that the personnel who have resided for a period of 15 years in J&K, those who have studied in the UT for a period of seven years and appeared in Class 10th / 12th examination

in any educational institutions located in J&K and the Defence personnel who have served in the J&K for 15 years and above are also eligible to apply.

The housing colony project, the AWHO said, will be planned based on the response received from the environment.

The notification further says that applicants will be given preference for allotment as per the seniority list of Demand Survey which will be based on the date of Demand Draft of Application Money.

It also adds that the money will be adjusted against the

Registration amount at the time of conversion from Demand Survey to Annual Registration.

“If for some reasons the project does not take off within one year, the Application Money will be refunded without any deductions and simple interest will be paid on Application Money (interest will be calculated after one year from the date of receipt of application),” reads the notification.

“In case of premature withdrawal by an applicant, ie before launch of the scheme or before a period of one year, the Application Money will be refunded after deduction of 5% handling charges and no interest will be paid,” it adds.

Pertinently, prior to the nullification of Article 370 and Article 35A of the Constitution, only state subjects were allowed to buy land and apply for government jobs in Jammu and Kashmir.

However, a year after abrogation of J&K’s semi-autonomous status, the government of India notified the Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules, 2020, on May 18 and | [More on P6](#)

Flight Ops Resume, Highway Opens Post Snowfall



Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The Kashmir Valley’s connectivity with the rest of the country was restored on Saturday with the Srinagar-Jammu national highway reopening for traffic and flight operations

also resuming here a day after a snowfall, officials said.

Air traffic to and from the Kashmir Valley was restored after the airport was cleared of snow and visibility improved. However, several morning flights were delayed and | [More on P6](#)

Avalanches Hit Gurez, Sonmarg; 12 Districts On Alert

Three avalanches hit Ganderbal and Bandipora districts of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, but there was no loss of life, officials said. They said avalanche warnings have been issued for 12 districts of the Union Territory following moderate to heavy snowfall on Friday. Two | [More on P6](#)

THE SNOW FROM THE RUNWAY, taxiway and apron has been cleared and the visibility has improved up to 3,000 metres. Flight operations have resumed.”

Security Agencies Effectively Controlled Violence In J&K: Army

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Security agencies have effectively controlled violence in Jammu and Kashmir and are giving a befitting reply to those who are trying to fulfil their “political goals” through proxy war, a top army commander said on Saturday.

At a Veterans Day rally in Rajouri, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi also announced that the board of governors of the Army Welfare Housing Organization has approved a housing project for the veterans and requested them to make it successful.

“Rajouri is the land of heroes and has never allowed the conspiracies and nefarious plans of the neighbouring nation to succeed. Security



agencies have effectively controlled violence and a befitting reply is being given to those who are trying to fulfil their political goals with the help of this proxy war,” he said.

Greeting the participants for the seventh Veterans Day rally in Rajouri, Lt Gen Dwivedi said its main objective is to find out the problems of ex-servicemen living in the Union Territory and to solve those as soon as possible | [More on P6](#)

Doda Admin Seeks Details Of Tenants From Landlords

Business Establishments Directed To Install CCTV Cameras In 15 Days Or Face Action

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A day after Union Home Minister, Amit Shah assured to make the security grid in Jammu ‘impenetrable’ within next three months, the administration in Doda on Saturday sought details of tenants from landlords and businessmen, besides ordering mandatory installation of CCTV cameras in all shops across the district.

In an order issued under Section 144 CrPc, District Magistrate Doda, Vishesh Paul Mahajan sought details from landlords, property owners, vehicle owners, shop and commercial business establishment owners, attorney holders, and persons in charge of properties in any capacity located within



the jurisdiction of the district to submit detailed particulars of their tenants to the concerned police station within 7 days.

“The order has been issued with the aim of ensuring public safety and preventing anti-national and anti-social elements from seeking | [More on P6](#)

‘DISASTER IN WAITING’

Experts Red Flag Smartphone Addiction Among Kashmiri Children

Agencies

Srinagar: In today’s digital world, it seems normal to see our children addicted to their phones, searching for various forms of entertainment and information online. While parents seem to be least bothered about the growing trend, the child experts believe it is equally important for children and adolescents to manage their screen time appropriately before developing smartphone addiction which may affect the mental



health of children.

The experts in the valley underline a series of the adverse effects of mobile addiction and screen-based technology on

SED Suggests Counselling For Drug Addict Students

Agencies

Srinagar: The School Education Department has asked the Head of Institutions of all schools to identify the students involved in cigarette smoking and other drug addiction activities for counselling to eradicate the menace.

The official documents state that the Chief Education Officer (CEO) had said this in a communique to principals, Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs) and Headmasters.

The officer has accordingly directed the conduct of Survey and mapping of shops within periphery of 100 yards selling cigarettes or drugs and identifying the students thereof.

“It is our moral obligation to educate the students and society about the adverse effect of drug menace,” the CEO said.

He said that, “If we take the message to the students and society in time we will succeed to grow them into civilised adults.”

The officer has also said that since the teacher is a social activist and has a great role in shaping the civilised society and therefore we should put in our best efforts to free the society from this evil.

In this connection, the CEO advised to conduct | [More on P6](#)

Man Dies In Rajouri, 3 Cops Suspended

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: A 23-year-old man died under mysterious circumstances in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Saturday, adding three cops were suspended in connection with the case.

Sher Singh, a resident of Dagal village of Kalakote sub-division in Rajouri district, used to work in Sunderbani as a labourer and was reported missing while returning to his home on Thursday to celebrate Lohri festival, the official said.

However, they said he was later found dead and his body was handed over to his family for last rites.

His family refused to perform his last rites and instead blocked the road at Solko Morh, demanding an inquiry into the circumstances leading to his death and action against the policemen.

“On Friday, we came to know that he was lying in a drunken state at Siot and instead of shifting him to hospital, | [More on P6](#)

Youth Held With Pistol Magazine

A youth was arrested on Saturday with narcotics and a pistol magazine in North Kashmir’s Kupwara district, police said. Acting on specific information regarding presence of narcotic substance, arms & ammunition in the possession of Sajid Khan & Majid Khan, sons of Saif Ali Khan of Cheterkote, a joint search operation was launched by Police, Army’s 6-JAKRIF along with tracker dog from 27Bn BSF, a police spokesperson said Saturday. During the search operation, he said, incriminating materials including 500 grams of Heroin like substance, 1 pistol magazine, Rs 107,000 cash, 12 syringes and 1 small size weighing scale were recovered | [More on P6](#)

Cardiac Arrest Kills Cop

A policeman died after suffering a cardiac arrest at a training centre in North Kashmir’s Baramulla district, police said on Saturday. Constable Fayaz Ahmed Bhat, a resident of Narigund Kaith area of Khan Sahib, Budgam fell unconscious at Sheeri training centre, a police official said. Bhat, he said, was taken to a nearby hospital, however, he was declared dead on arrival. Cardiac arrest is believed to have caused Bhat’s death. Bhat was undergoing training at PTC Sheeri in Baramulla. Necessary arrangements are being made to send the body to his native village for his burial, the officer added. | [More on P6](#)

Govt Shifts Two SPs In City



Jammu and Kashmir Home Department on Saturday ordered transfer and posting of two IPS officers in Srinagar district. According to an order, the officers have been posted for South and East Srinagar. As per the order Gaurav Sikarwar has been posted as Incharge Superintendent of Police, South Srinagar against an available vacancy. While Shree Ram has been posted as Incharge | [More on P6](#)

Jammu Fireman Falls To Death

A fireman died after falling from a four-storey building in Prem Nagar locality here during an operation, an official said on Saturday. Fire tenders were rushed to the commercial-cum-residential building to douse the blaze that broke out late Friday night, they said. During the fire-fighting operation, selection grade fireman Satish Raina, posted at Shaheedi chowk fire station, slipped from the first floor of the building, they said. He was rushed to Government Medical College (GMC) hospital where he was declared brought dead by the doctors, the officials said. Director General of Fire and Emergency Services Alok Kumar joined mourners to bid | [More on P6](#)

NC Youth Leader Joins BJP

Youth wing leader of the National Conference (NC) Jagbir Dass joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) here on Saturday, a spokesperson of the saffron party said. Dass, the NC’s youth wing president for Ramban district and a member of the District Development Council, was welcomed into the BJP-fold by senior leaders, including secretary (organisation) Ashok Koul and former MLA Devender Singh Rana, at the party headquarters, the spokesperson said. Asserting that the BJP is the only hope for peace and political stability in Jammu and Kashmir, Koul exuded confidence that the saffron party will achieve its target | [More on P6](#)

Rajnath Inaugurates Shaurya Sthal

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday inaugurated the Shaurya Sthal, a war memorial dedicated to martyred soldiers from Uttarakhand at Cheer Bagh here. Accompanied by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and CDS Gen Anil Chauhan, the defence minister laid a wreath at the war memorial to pay tribute to the brave soldiers of the state martyred in the service of the nation. Former Rajya Sabha MP Tarun Vijay, who was instrumental in the launch of the project, Tehri MP Rajya Lakshmi Shah and Cabinet minister Ganesh Joshi were also present on the occasion. The war memorial consists of seven pillars on which the names of 1,400 | [More on P6](#)

S H O R T T A K E S



Inflation Bites: How Rising Food Costs Affect Nutrition And Health

The Conversation

Food for thought: rising grocery prices affect food choices and nutrition, and ultimately health, and even the health-care system.

As a result of inflation, the cost of food continues to soar, with data from Statistics Canada reporting the latest price changes of foods purchased from groceries stores and restaurants.

In September, Canada experienced its largest yearly increase in foods purchased from grocery stores or restaurants (10.3 per cent). Food prices rose slightly less in October (10 per cent), but remain elevated, with November's increase coming in at 6.8 per cent.

In response to this rapid inflation, many Canadians took to social media, particularly TikTok, to share how much grocery shopping is costing and what they are getting for their money. Canada's recent lettuce shortage has resulted in price hikes for romaine and iceberg lettuce, with many grocery stores posting signs about the shortage and imposing purchase quantity limits, while restaurants have modified their offerings and altered their menus.

Why are food prices so high?

The COVID-19 pandemic and other global events continue to have worldwide consequences for health and the economy, with food prices being no exception.

Prices are driven up in several ways, including supply chain issues (things like processing, packaging and transportation), changes in consumer spending patterns, and previously mandated business closures forcing the redistribution of foods from restaurants to stores, as well as unfavourable growing weather conditions (things like heat waves, extreme rain/flooding, droughts and freezing).

As health behaviour researchers, we believe that many Canadians will undoubtedly feel the additional financial pressure at the checkout line, and many will eat less nutritious and cheaper food options.

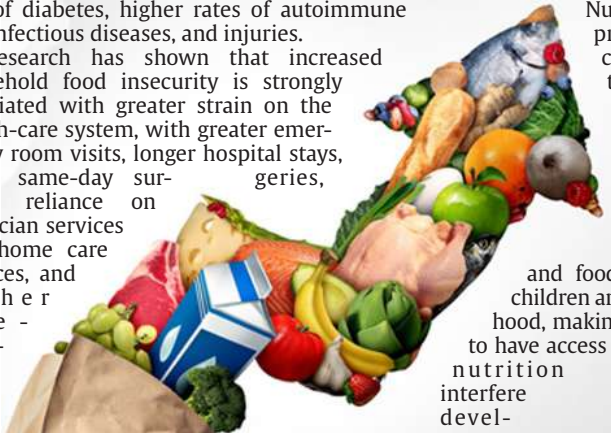
In Ottawa, the cost of eating nutritious food for a single person was estimated at \$392 per month, based on data collected from May to June 2022. For a family of four, the cost jumps to \$1,088 per month.

Undoubtedly, low-income and fixed-income households will feel the biggest pinch (especially in one-person or single-parent households) and the short- and long-term health impact could add to our crippling health-care system.

How do rising food costs impact your health?

With the rising cost of food, many Canadians are experiencing insecure or limited access to food. This can have various effects on health, such as a decrease in mental health, increased risk of diabetes, higher rates of autoimmune and infectious diseases, and injuries.

Research has shown that increased household food insecurity is strongly associated with greater strain on the health-care system, with greater emergency room visits, longer hospital stays, more same-day surgeries, more reliance on physician services and home care services, and higher prescription drug use.



drug use.

Older adults may also have health conditions with specific dietary requirements. With the increase in food prices, meeting these specific dietary needs may not be possible and can lead to additional health complications.

Furthermore, the higher cost of food is putting strain on food banks and school food programs, like the Ontario Student Nutrition Program. School food programs provide support to children by helping ensure their stomachs are full while promoting healthful eating practices.

School food programs have been shown to be beneficial for better academic outcomes and overall health in the short term, choices and behaviours in children are likely to continue into adulthood, making childhood an essential time to have access to healthy foods. Suboptimal during this stage also may with optimal growth and development.

What can you do to save money?

One of the most expensive things about food is food waste. According to Second Harvest, Canada's largest food rescue organization, the annual cost of avoidable food loss and waste in Canada was \$1,766 per household.

Making a meal plan for the week, with a shopping list before you go to the grocery store, is a great way to buy only what you need and ensure you use up what you've purchased. If you are only going to use half the produce for one meal, make sure you have a second recipe for later in the week to use it up.

There are several online applications, such as Flipp or Reebee, that can also help you shop for sales or use coupons. Many food outlets allow price matching with other stores. Using loyalty program points is another option that can help pay for groceries. If you are a student or older adult, your local grocery store or retail drug store may offer discounts for shopping on a specific day of the week.

Lastly, eating with other people is not only associated with better diet quality and psychosocial outcomes but may also reduce food costs, as families are only making one meal for all to enjoy.

Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir.

Scholarship Name 1: TSDPL Silver Jubilee Scholarship Program 2022

Description: Tata Steel Downstream Products Limited (TSDPL) invites applications from students who are domiciles of Jamshedpur, Kalinaganagar, Pantnagar, Faridabad, Pune, Chennai, Tada and Kolkata. The scholarship is meant to support meritorious students from low income families to continue their education.

Eligibility: Open for students who are domiciles of locations such as Jamshedpur, Kalinaganagar, Pantnagar, Faridabad, Pune, Chennai, Tada and Kolkata are eligible to apply. Applicants must be pursuing any year of ITI/diploma, graduation or postgraduation in fields such as Nursing, UG medical courses such as MBBS, BDS, PG medical courses (any specialization), paramedical courses, ITI/diploma subjects such as fitter, electrical, welders, safety, etc. from government-recognized institutes. Must have scored at least 60% marks in their Class 10 and 12 examinations. Annual family income of the applicants must not be more than INR 5,00,000 from all sources.

- Prizes & Rewards: INR 1,00,000 for 1 year
- Last Date to Apply: 31-01-2023
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/TSDPL1

Scholarship Name 2: JN Tata Endowment Loan Scholarship 2023-24

Description: The JN Tata Endowment invites loan scholarship applications from Indian students who wish to pursue overseas higher studies. Students who are selected for the loan scholarship may be recommended for a partial 'Travel Grant' and a 'Gift Award' - which is linked to their academic performance in their overseas studies.

Eligibility: Open for Indian nationals who have completed at least one undergraduate degree OR students who are in the final year of any



undergraduate programme at a recognised university/college/institution in India.

Candidates must be willing to pursue Postgraduate/Doctoral/Postdoctoral studies abroad.

Candidates who are at the end of the 1st year and entering into the second year of their overseas studies (Fall 2023 - Spring 2024) are also eligible to apply. This is applicable only if the minimum duration of the course is 2 years and there is at least one full academic year remaining to complete at the time of award of the loan scholarship, normally by July of any calendar year.

Students must have scored at least 60% marks on average in their undergraduate or postgraduate studies.

Candidates must not be older than 45 years as on June 30, 2023.

- Prizes & Rewards: Loan scholarship of up to INR 10 lakh
- Last Date to Apply: 07-03-2023
- Application mode: Online applications only

- tions only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/JNT6

Scholarship Name 3: Nikon Scholarship Program 2022

Description: Nikon India Private Limited invites scholarship applications from students (Class 12 passed onwards) pursuing photography-related courses. The scholarship program is meant to support students from underprivileged sections of the society.

Eligibility: Open for students (Class 12 passed onwards) pursuing photography courses with duration of 3 months or more. Annual family income should be less than INR 6 lakh.

- Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 1 lakh
- Last Date to Apply: 31-01-2023
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/NSP9

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in passport bearing K3925428 as Waheed Mansoor Dar S/o Mansoor Ahmad Dar while my correct name is Waheed Mansoor S/o Mansoor Ahmad Dar R/o Sherabad Khore Pattan . Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the passport office srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Waheed Mansoor
S/o Mansoor Ahmad Dar
R/o Sherabad Khore Pattan

bmg

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VOX
POP

Syed Mohammad Burhan

While the Srinagar city hasn't been completely snow-free this winter, the flakes have been very few and far between. And that trend doesn't look to end any time soon.

The less precipitation signals to the climate change that has been occurring over the decades. The climate change impact is straightforward. Global temperatures are rising, and warmer weather means less snow.

Apart from climatic changes, the living style in Srinagar city has also changed in the last few decades. We ask people what they think about the winter season in 2023.

In our childhood, the winters were very harsh and there was way less electricity compared to contemporary times. Houses in Srinagar weren't made of concrete and in poor localities houses had thatched roofs. We would receive a good amount of snow in the city as well. People would remove snow from their rooftops on their own. Now, all that has changed. Snowfall has reduced drastically so have peo-

ple's habits. People were comparatively poor and there was a huge infrastructure deficit. A lot of things have changed but those times were different. Good Old Days!

Mohammad Amin
(Retd. Govt Employee)

Some decades back, the clothing was traditional. In our times, the clothing has become complicated and western. Earlier, life was simple and people would not get out of their comfort zone. Nowadays, Life is fast and people tend to enjoy the arrival of the new season and wait for the snowfall. People no more fear the chilling cold, instead they enjoy their lives. Most of the people own vehicles, it is easier for them to commute and life goes on. Life is the same in summers as well as winters.

Shadab Abbas
Businessman

Some city dwellers have given up the use of 'Kangri' and they no longer use the traditional Kashmiri firepot in their households.

When I was very young, our family people gave up the use of Kangri. They had apprehensions about my safety and the things around.

However, it is impossible to stay warm without resorting to other advanced mechanisms to keep yourself warm in Kashmir. But I am still fascinated by Kangris.

Badr-u-Nissa Bhat
Ph.D. Scholar, Kashmir University.

First and foremost our construction style has completely changed. From houses of mud and timber, we have turned to concrete, because of which we feel much cold in winters. It resulted in orthopedic health conditions, especially among the old people.

Secondly, eating habits have also changed. We would sip 'kehwa' and consume other energetic and dried vegetables. We have shifted from high protein energetic diets to ordinary foods. People consume junk food a lot.

The clothing pattern has also changed. Now, more than a cloth Pheran has become a fashion statement. People mostly wear jeans, which does not help us in keeping ourselves warm. Our furnishing style has also changed. Our furnishing trends do not suit the winter conditions.

Ilyas Rizvi
Oral Historian

Parameters Of District Employment Plan Reviewed

'Employment plan to spur entrepreneurship, align youth with self-employment goals'

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to evaluate the skill gaps and formulate a District Employment Plan to provide self-employment to educated youth of the District, a meeting of Officers was held under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad here on Saturday at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex.

Chief Planning Officer, Principal Government Polytechnic College Gogji Bagh, Principal Women's Polytechnic Bemina, Assistant Director Handicrafts, Assistant Director Fisheries, officers of Animal husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Industries and other concerned officers were present in the meeting.

The meeting discussed the various aspects related to the devising a comprehensive District Employment Plan to enhance the employment and employability to provide opportunities to skilled human resource to earn sustainable livelihood.

On the occasion, the Dep-

uty Commissioner directed the concerned officers to work on identification of the new trades to be incorporated in existing courses at polytechnic and ITI levels to enhance the self-employment opportunities in the District.

The DC also stressed on working out a mechanism for upgrading the skill sets at ITI and Poly-technique levels by introducing latest Information Technology courses as per current market needs so that maximum local youth are provided self-employment.

The DC said an IT innovation Team will be formulated in the District to meet the requirements related to IT enabled interventions as day to day governance is switching over to Information Technology based services.

The DC directed the concerned departments to work in unison to synergise the efforts to spur entrepreneurship and effective outcomes regarding self-employment and employability in the District.

DC Reviews Implementation Of Social Welfare Schemes

Over Rs 70 cr disbursed among 61300 beneficiaries under ISSS, NASP schemes

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to review the implementation of welfare measures for under privileged, vulnerable, down trodden and weaker sections of society and process of extension of benefits of various Government schemes by the Social Welfare Department, the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Saturday chaired an Officers meeting here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

Additional District Development Commissioner Srinagar, Zahoor Ahmad Mir, Chief planning Officer, Mohammad Yaseen Lone, District Social Welfare Officer, Mukhtar Ahmad, besides other senior Officers and Officials of Social Welfare Department were present in the meeting.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner took a comprehensive review of beneficiary oriented schemes. On the occasion, the District Social Welfare Officer gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation and apprised the Deputy Commissioner about the functioning of the Department and implementation of schemes including providing of Scholarships, National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Integrated Social Security Scheme (ISSS), Marriage Assistance Scheme (SMAS), Saksham/SASCM, Prosthetic Aid, progress of survey for identification of eligible beneficiaries under ISSS/NSAP/NFBS/RMV, Bal Ashram & Nari Niketan, besides disbursement of pension through different Social Welfare schemes also came into discussion.



On the occasion, the DC was apprised that the amount to the tune of over Rs 70 crore disbursed among 61300 beneficiaries (pension cases) in Srinagar District under Integrated Social Assistance Scheme (ISSS) and National Social Assistance Programme (NASP).

Giving details the DC was informed that under Integrated Social Security Scheme (ISSS), a total of 55296 beneficiaries are covered in the District and monthly pension of Rs 1000 is given to beneficiaries of three categories viz OAP for old age BPL persons, having age of 60 years for men and 55 years for women, PCP for disabled persons having disability 40% or more, WID for widows, divorcees and destitute having meagre source of income. It was given out that payments have been made up to December 2022 and case pendency is Nil and all new beneficiaries can apply online on "Jansugam Portal" with no waiting period.

Similarly, as many as 6091

beneficiaries are registered under National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) who are given monthly pension of Rs 1000 under three Components viz, IGNOAPS for old age BPL Persons for 60 years or more age, IGNDPS for disabled persons having 80% or more disability and IGNWPS for poor widows having age 40 years or more.

With regard to implementation of State Marriage Assistance Scheme under which, every household girl of marriageable age belonging to PHH/AAY category is eligible to receive marriage assistance of RS 50000/= after fulfilling eligibility conditions, the DC was informed that a total of 1023 applications were received by the Department and after proper scrutiny and verification of cases an amount to the tune of Rs 3.90 crore has been disbursed in favour of 780 unmarried household eligible girls while 233 cases/applications were rejected as found fake cases.

- 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 - (Closed)
Srinagar- Leh - (Closed)



**HIJRI
CALENDAR**
22 Jumad al-Sani
1444

PRAYERS

FAJR	6:08
ZUHR	12:38
ASR	4:07
Magrib	5:48
ISHA	7:12

This Day In History

- 1943 - World's largest office building, the Pentagon is completed
- 1943 - 1,000 workers complete air conditioning system for Pentagon
- 1943 - World War II: The Soviets begin a counter-offensive at Voronezh
- 1944 - European Advisory Commission decides to divide Germany
- 1955 - USSR ends state of war with German Federal Republic
- 1962 - Dutch & Indonesian navy encounter in Etna Bay New Guinea
- 1965 - Soviet underground nuclear test creates the atomic lake Chagan, Kazakhstan
- 1969 - Nuclear test at Pacific Ocean
- 1969 - Soyuz 5 launched by Soviet Union
- 1970 - Nigerian civil war officially ends after 2 1/2 years of fighting when the Republic of Biafra disbands and joins Nigeria
- 1970 - Muammar Gaddafi is proclaimed premier of Libya
- 1973 - US President Richard Nixon suspends all US offensive action in N Vietnam
- 1974 - Expert panel reports 18½ minute gap in Watergate tape, 5 separate erasures
- 1975 - Portugal signs accord for Angola's independence
- 1975 - Space Mountain opens at Disneyland
- 1976 - US-German Helios B solar probe launched into solar orbit
- 1976 USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalitinck USSR
- 1983 - Javed Miandad & Mudassar Nazar make 451 stand v India
- 1991 - Australia beat NZ 2-0 to win cricket's World Series Cup
- 1991 - UN's deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait (they don't)

From KO Archives

I Don't Want To Fill Jails: Farooq

'My Orders To The Police; Wherever You Find A Militant, Kill Him'

NAFA

Srinagar: The chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdul-lah, today said that his government would give militants no quarter and hinted 'extra-ordinary security measures' to be undertaken in the state very soon.

Speaking today at a gathering at the residence of former minister and National Conference MLA, Muhammad Dilawar Mir, whose brother was gunned down by unidentified gunmen at Rohama in Rafiabab yesterday, he said, "I don't want to fill jails. My orders to the police are; wherever you find a militant, dispatch him."

According to Dr. Abdullah, militants were killing innocent people and therefore deserved to be paid in the same coin.

Referring to a meeting he had had with prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he said that he had told him that militants had not stopped killing innocents despite the prime minister's talk of peace. "Make one final push and finish the matter off, I told the prime minister,"

He said that he had presented his formula long ago: Kashmir is an integral part of India; Pakistan should be given the territory under its control and the LoC converted into an international border; the Rawalpindi road should be opened; Kashmiris should be given internal autonomy - and the Kashmir issue will dissolve automatically.

"India will never give up Kashmir even if all Kashmiris perish." Desisting from his customary tirade against the Hurriyat, he said the APHC leader's visit to Pakistan would not alter the LoC. "I want to see how the Pakistanis react." Later, talking to NAFA, Dr. Abdullah said that he would be talking to the PM and the HM soon, and extraordinary security measures would be put in place after that. "We will not allow our campaign against militants to be slackened," he said.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 15 January, 2001)

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**
AZADI Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

No. CPM/GSU/Amrit Bharat/23 Dated. 13/01/2023

To provide Technical Consultancy and Architectural Consultancy for Improvement of Railway Stations, Service Buildings, Railway Hospital, Rest House, Circulating Area, Roof Plaza and other Railway Buildings of Firozpur Division Under Ministry of Railway policy named "Amrit Bharat Station Scheme". Expression of Interest has been invited from willing and experienced Technical and architectural consultants. Interested technical and Architectural consultants may send their applications through email to dycgfszr@gmail.com or hard copy addressed to CPM, Gati Shakti Unit Office, Firozpur, Northern Railway, DRM Office Railway Station Road Cantonment Area, Firozpur, Punjab, PIN-152001. Last dated for submission of application is 27.01.2023 by 11.00 hrs by addressed post. For more information, you can go to the above email or Mobile No. 7087109979 and you can collect the documents on the website <https://nr.indianrailways.gov.in/ticker/>.

Dy. CE/GSU/FZR,
DRM Office, Firozpur

147/23

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



Sahitya Akademi Archives/Sahitya Akademi YouTube

Our Greatest Poet We Didn't Celebrate

In his lifetime, Rahi did not receive the adoration and respect he deserved, which is a sad reflection on us as a community

RIYAZ WANI

“
As a creative being,
he couldn't be bound
by the unconscious
grouphink that
pervades so much of our
everyday conversation.
He couldn't take a
mundane public stance
circumscribed by the
ephemeral political
correctness of the day.
This, however, didn't
mean Rahi abdicated
his responsibility

For all his stature as the greatest modern Kashmiri poet, Rehman Rahi died largely unnoticed. He also had a very modest funeral, otherwise a hallmark of a deceased person's social standing in our part of the world. As is generally the case with our cultural icons, he had long disappeared from our public discourse. People were barely conscious of his existence. Apart from a very small circle of connoisseurs of Kashmiri literature, his poetry wasn't read or even known to a predominant majority of Kashmiris. In his lifetime, he did not receive the adoration and respect he deserved, which is a sad reflection on us as a community.

But his death has caused a deep sadness and a sudden recognition of his beautiful and profound poetry which addressed our condition as a people caught in an intractable situation. In our social media age, his videos and poetry are being circulated online and shared on WhatsApp. In some of the videos being shared, Rahi recites his own poetry. This has made our new generation aware of him. One such poem is 'Karav Kya' which can be roughly translated as 'There's nothing that we can do.' Every word, rhyme and rhythm of the poem speaks to our predicament.

*Kathi zan assini vaar, karav kya
Veterin vaenij baar, karav kya
(What if we are powerless to speak, is there anything we can do)
(What if heart succumbs to the strain of grief, is there anything we can do)*

But as with any great literary figure, Rahi will not die with his physical demise. His exquisite poetry will live on. A poetry that not only articulates the condition of his people - their sadness, loss, pain and lack of hope - but also goes beyond it to deal with broader human condition. Witness to an extended span of Kashmir's troubled history, right from

the early twentieth century, Rahi crafted a whole new poetic idiom for Kashmir. One, which embraces in its aesthetic sweep not only the mysticism and folksiness of traditional Kashmiri poetry but also the larger spiritual and philosophical questions giving his work a universal appeal. Rahi was himself conscious of his achievement. Kashmiri poetry, he said in an interview, has always been rich in mystic elements, but it lacks intellectual content and modern sensibility. And he lent it that.

Rahi's distinction lies in that he single-handedly honed Kashmiri, a language with a modest intellectual pedigree, into an authentic medium

obliged him to take a political stand. And perhaps, rightly so. As a creative being, he couldn't be bound by the unconscious grouphink that pervades so much of our everyday conversation. He couldn't take a mundane public stance circumscribed by the ephemeral political correctness of the day. This, however, didn't mean Rahi abdicated his responsibility. He stayed first and foremost a poet and expressed himself through his poetry. And much more powerfully and profoundly so than a routine statement would ever do.

Rahi's panacea for our conflicted present was to return to our neglected mother tongue. Language, he once told me, represented a community's basic identity rather than a political ideology

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Rahi's panacea for our conflicted present was to
return to our neglected mother tongue. Language, he
once told me, represented a community's basic identity
rather than a political ideology

of aesthetic and philosophical expression. He not only composed great poetry but in the process nurtured and developed a language. He salvaged Kashmiri from the shadow of Persian and Urdu, which otherwise dominated the Valley's literary scene.

Rahi was the youngest in India to receive Sahitya Academy award in 1961. He went on to win Jnanpith award, India's highest literary prize, the first Kashmiri to do so. However, his acceptance of the awards—more specifically, that of the latter—was viewed as a contentious political act that at the time alienated many of his admirers in the Valley. But Rahi was a far bigger poet than his awards, and he wore his greatness lightly. Eventually awards became extraneous to his overarching literary persona.

A perennial grouse of a section of our society against Rahi was that he scrupulously steered clear of commenting on the prevailing turmoil in the Valley. But the criticism never

me, represented a community's basic identity rather than a political ideology.

"It (language) is the wellspring of a people's unique outlook, sensibility and cultural orientation," he said while lamenting the squeezing space for Kashmiri in our society. "The mother tongue is the storehouse of the collective memory, which connects a community to its roots and helps it define itself."

Unfortunately, not many of us have read his poetry. Let us hope that his death prompts us to recognise his greatness and claim him as our poet, a principal voice of Kashmiri sensibility. And, of course, may his passing also get us around to reading him.

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
The author is the Political Editor of Kashmir Observer*

NOT THE WINTER WONDERLAND



HOW ARE WE, IN THIS DAY AND AGE, USING MEDIAEVAL ANSWERS TO A CHALLENGING WINTER IN A FAST-PACED WORLD? Adapting to preparedness will also better our behaviours, and our psyches will accept the change if and when resources and logistics are available

Najam Sakib

Winters are not exclusive to Kashmir. More than half of the world's population witnesses snowfall. Our very own Ladakh is an example where winter is harsher due to its distinct geography with prolonged freezing temperatures for geographical and demographic reasons. Similarly, winters are probably more brutal compared to Kashmir in North America, Europe, and North Asian territories. However, Kashmiris tend to believe that winter is written only in their fate. We only prepare individually to face winter. Our only job seems

to start collecting charcoal, Kangris, and other things. It is absolutely fine to do that. But that is all we think of. We have been conditioned to think like that. Even in the third decade of the twenty-first century, we do not have substantial collective efforts on the ground to tackle the challenges we face during winter. As the editorial mentioned at the beginning suggests, we do not have enough electricity to keep our spaces warm and our homes out of the darkness. It is ironic because most of the electricity produced in Kashmir lights up most of the North Indian states instead. The concerned power corridors should be serious about bringing

a change. It would not only make things less challenging but would make our time more productive. For almost four months, we sit and do nothing productive, and we only wait to see winter pass away. As mentioned before, winters with snowfalls are almost everywhere in the world, but they are far ahead of us. It is because they do not waste time to see winters pass but instead make winters easy and suitable to work. Any argument that there is no money to bring such change is just living in a fool's paradise. We have enough money to get a tangible change along the same lines. We have young human resources

who want to work instead of staying inside homes. We will accept any change on the ground, however little that may be. Let us start by making resources available to help continue economic activities in winter. Electricity is one. Technically, it will push other sectors to help boost the local economy and will not bring unemployment down that skyrocketed during winter months. Therefore, it is evident that there is not a tinge of doubt about winters putting up a challenge, but to perceive it as inherently harsh may not be fair. However, human callousness is the primary factor that worsens things. Kashmiris accept when na-

ture feels slow and when life seems to slow down. How are we, in this day and age, using mediaeval answers to a challenging winter in a fast-paced world? Adapting to preparedness will also better our behaviours, and our psyches will accept the change if and when resources and logistics are available. Our overtly sedentary lifestyle needs to go. We are hard-working people; only the intent is missing at the top. However, there is a section of people who apparently enjoy winters. Their day starts with capturing the winter landscapes and night passes by uploading reels of the same on Instagram.



Delivery Agents in Snow: Dedication or Exploitation?

Sahil Khan

Every year, whether it is linemen on electric poles or delivery agents walking over snow covered slippery roads, we see all being glorified through pictures and videos online. One such video made it online where the employer of a courier service proudly shared a video of their delivery executive with a heavy goods carrying bag, walking over a stretch of road covered with snow. The video was supposed to act as a positive PR for their services but it backfired as soon as it was posted.

Labour laws and work place rules are safeguards to protect employees. However, sometimes, some situations are not addressed specifically. Perhaps, the weather condition is one such factor. Nevertheless, it's the employer's duty to keep a defined temperature/amount of snowfall metric to determine whether or not employees can be asked to work. The employer should ideally have a policy to allow a voluntary day-off in case of heavy snowfall. Additionally, incase the employee decides to work, the employer must ensure the employee's safety and security. Adequate snow gear especially snow shoes must be provided.

It's also the employer's responsibility to ensure that the roads are clear. If they haven't been cleared, then these routes should not be considered feasible or accessible for delivery.

If companies aim to fulfil daily targets and Kew the show going, it must not be done at the cost of employees.

ChatGPT, DALL-E 2 And The Collapse Of The Creative Process

Nir Eisikovits
Alec Stubbs

In 2022, OpenAI – one of the world's leading artificial intelligence research laboratories – released the text generator ChatGPT and the image generator DALL-E 2. While both programs represent monumental leaps in natural language processing and image generation, they've also been met with apprehension.

Some critics have eulogized the college essay, while others have even proclaimed the death of art.

But to what extent does this technology really interfere with creativity?

After all, for the technology to generate an image or essay, a human still has to describe the task to be completed. The better that description – the more accurate, the more detailed – the better the results.

After a result is generated, some further human tweaking and feedback may be needed – touching up the art, editing the text or asking the technology to create a new draft in response to revised specifications. Even the DALL-E 2 art piece that recently won first prize in the Colorado State Fair's digital arts competition required a great deal of human "help" – approximately 80 hours' worth of tweaking and refining the descriptive task needed to produce the desired result.

It could be argued that by being freed from the tedious execution of our ideas – by focusing on just having ideas and describing them well to a machine – people can let the technology do the dirty work and can spend more time inventing.

But in our work as philosophers at the Applied Ethics Center at University of Massachusetts Boston, we have written about the effects of AI on our everyday decision-making, the future of work and worker attitudes toward automation.

Leaving aside the very real rami-

fications of robots displacing artists who are already underpaid, we believe that AI art devalues the act of artistic creation for both the artist and the public.

SKILL AND PRACTICE BECOME SUPERFLUOUS

In our view, the desire to close the gap between ideation and execution is a chimera: There's no separating ideas and execution.

It is the work of making something real and working through its details that carries value, not simply that moment of imagining it. Artistic works are lauded not merely for the finished product, but for the struggle, the playful interaction and the skillful engagement with the artistic task, all of which carry the artist from the moment of inception to the end result.

The focus on the idea and the framing of the artistic task amounts to the fetishization of the creative moment.

Novelists write and rewrite the chapters of their manuscripts. Comedians "write on stage" in response to the laughs and groans of their audience. Musicians tweak their work in response to a discordant melody as they compose a piece.

In fact, the process of execution is a gift, allowing artists to become fully immersed in a task and a practice. It allows them to enter what some psychologists call the "flow" state, where they are wholly attuned to something that they are doing, unaware of the passage of time and momentarily freed from the boredom or anxieties of everyday life.

This playful state is something that would be a shame to miss out on. Play tends to be understood as an autotelic activity – a term derived from the Greek words auto, meaning "self," and telos meaning "goal" or "end." As an autotelic activity, play is done for itself – it is self-contained and requires no external validation. For the artist, the process of artis-



tic creation is an integral part, may be even the greatest part, of their vocation.

But there is no flow state, no playfulness, without engaging in skill and practice. And the point of ChatGPT and DALL-E is to make this stage superfluous.

A CHEAPENED EXPERIENCE FOR THE VIEWER

But what about the perspective of those experiencing the art? Does it really matter how the art is produced if the finished product elicits delight?

We think that it does matter, particularly because the process of creation adds to the value of art for the people experiencing it as much as it does for the artists themselves.

Part of the experience of art is knowing that human effort and labor has gone into the work. Flow states and playfulness notwithstanding, art is the result of skillful and rigorous expression of human capabilities.

Recall the famous scene from the 1997 film "Gattaca," in which a pianist plays a haunting piece. At the

conclusion of his performance, he throws his gloves into the admiring audience, which sees that the pianist has 12 fingers. They now understand that he was genetically engineered to play the transcendent piece they just heard – and that he could not play it with the 10 fingers of a mere mortal.

Does that realization retroactively change the experience of listening? Does it take away any of the awe?

As the philosopher Michael Sandel notes: Part of what gives art and athletic achievement its power is the process of witnessing natural gifts playing out. People enjoy and celebrate this talent because, in a fundamental way, it represents the paragon of human achievement – the amalgam of talent and work, human gifts and human sweat.

IS IT ALL DOOM AND GLOOM?

Might ChatGPT and DALL-E be worth keeping around?

Perhaps. These technologies could serve as catalysts for creativity. It's possible that the link between ideation and execution can be sustained

if these AI applications are simply viewed as mechanisms for creative imagining – what OpenAI calls "extending creativity." They can generate stimuli that allow artists to engage in more imaginative thinking about their own process of conceiving an art piece.

Put differently, if ChatGPT and DALL-E are the end results of the artistic process, something meaningful will be lost. But if they are merely tools for fomenting creative thinking, this might be less of a concern.

For example, a game designer could ask DALL-E to provide some images about what a Renaissance town with a steampunk twist might look like. A writer might ask about descriptors that capture how a restrained, shy person expresses surprise. Both creators could then incorporate these suggestions into their work.

But in order for what they are doing to still count as art – in order for it to feel like art to the artists and to those taking in what they have made – the artists would still have to do the bulk of the artistic work themselves.

Art requires makers to keep making.

THE WARPED INCENTIVES OF THE INTERNET

Even if AI systems are used as catalysts for creative imagining, we believe that people should be skeptical of what these systems are drawing from. It's important to pay close attention to the incentives that underpin and reward artistic creation, particularly online.

Consider the generation of AI art. These works draw on images and video that already exist online. But the AI is not sophisticated enough – nor is it incentivized – to consider whether works evoke a sense of wonder, sadness, anxiety and so on. They are not capable of factoring in aesthetic considerations of novelty and cross-cultural influence.

Rather, training ChatGPT and DALL-E on preexisting measurements of artistic success online will tend to replicate the dominant incentives of the internet's largest platforms: grabbing and retaining attention for the sake of data collection and user engagement. The catalyst for creative imagining therefore can easily become subject to an addictiveness and attention-seeking imperative rather than more transcendent artistic values.

It's possible that artificial intelligence is at a precipice, one that evokes a sense of "moral vertigo" – the uneasy dizziness people feel when scientific and technological developments outpace moral understanding. Such vertigo can lead to apathy and detachment from creative expression.

If human labor is removed from the process, what value does creative expression hold? Or perhaps, having opened Pandora's box, this is an indispensable opportunity for humanity to reassert the value of art – and to push back against a technology that may prevent many real human artists from thriving.

Cong MP Santokh Chaudhary Dies Of Cardiac Arrest During Bharat Jodo Yatra, March Halted For 24 Hours

Press Trust of India

Chandigarh: Congress' Jalandhar MP Santokh Singh Chaudhary died on Saturday after suffering a cardiac arrest during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Punjab's Phillaur, following which the march was halted for 24 hours. He was 76.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who visited the grieving family, expressed shock over his death and described him as a hardworking leader and strong pillar of the party.

Chaudhary, a two-time MP, was walking with Rahul Gandhi during the yatra in Phillaur in Jalandhar when he fainted, according to senior party leader Partap Singh Bajwa, who was also marching with other participants.

Chaudhary was rushed to a private hospital in Phagwara in an ambulance where he was declared brought dead. Later, his body was shifted to his residence in Jalandhar.

Chaudhary had joined the yatra in Phillaur Saturday morning and after some time, he felt uneasiness and fainted.

Jothimani, Congress MP from Tamil Nadu's Karur, who was also part of the yatra, said before collapsing, Chaudhary asked her "how are you Jothi".

"Still I couldn't get out of the shock. While we were walking, he stepped back and asked me with his trademark smile 'how are you Jothi, this is my constituency' and just got collapsed. It's heart breaking to see that he is no more," tweeted Jothimani.

The Gandhi-led yatra resumed from Ladhawal in Ludhiana on Saturday morning as part of its Punjab leg.

Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring told reporters that Chaudhary earlier raised slogans 'Jodo Jodo, Bharat Jodo' to welcome Gandhi.

He said Chaudhary was very excited about the yatra as it was passing through his area. "The Chaudhary family has been associated with the Congress for a very long time."

Warring further said the family has decided to conduct the cremation at his native place at 11 am on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Congress

general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh said the yatra has been suspended for 24 hours following Chaudhary's demise. It will now start from Jalandhar on Sunday afternoon.

"Bharat Jodo Yatra will be suspended for 24 hours as a mark of respect for Santokh Singh Chaudhary, Congress MP from Jalandhar who passed away this morning. The Yatra will resume tomorrow afternoon from Khalsa College Ground, Jalandhar," Ramesh said in a tweet.

He further said Gandhi's press conference which was scheduled to take place at Jalandhar on January 15 will now be held in Hoshiarpur on January 17.

Chaudhary, a Dalit leader, belonged to a family of politicians. His father Master Gurbanta Singh was a Dalit stalwart, an educationist and a former Punjab agriculture minister.

Chaudhary's elder brother Chaudhary Jagjit Singh was a local bodies minister. Chaudhary's son Vikramjit Singh is a Congress MLA from the Phillaur assembly seat.

Chaudhary was elected to the

Lok Sabha in 2014 and 2019. He had been MLA twice in 1992 and 2002 and was also minister in the Congress government.

The Congress MP's native village is Dhaliwal near Kartarpur in Jalandhar district.

Later, Gandhi visited the residence of Chaudhary and consoled his family members.

"Shocked by the sudden demise of Shri Santokh Singh Chaudhary. He was a down-to-earth and hardworking leader, a good person and a strong pillar of the Congress family, who dedicated his life to public service from the Youth Congress to Member of Parliament. I express my condolences to the bereaved family," he said in a tweet.

Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit expressed his grief over the demise of the Jalandhar MP.

"I am shocked at the sudden, untimely demise of Chaudhary ji. He was a dedicated and hardworking leader. May his soul rest in peace," said the governor.

Several Congress leaders visited the residence of Chaudhary in Jalandhar.

Punjab Congress chief

Warring said, "Deeply saddened to inform you about the passing away of @INCPunjab MP Santokh Chaudhary ji. My deepest condolences to his family, colleagues, friends and supporters. I am in shock but Chaudhary Saab's resolve will always be a source of inspiration to me."

Several political leaders including those from rival parties expressed grief over the death of the Congress MP.

"I am deeply saddened at the untimely death of Congress Member of Parliament from Jalandhar, Santokh Singh Chaudhary," AAP leader and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said in a tweet in Punjabi. Former chief minister and former Congress leader Amarinder Singh also condoled Chaudhary's death.

"Extremely saddened to hear about the sudden demise of MP Santokh Singh Chaudhary ji due to a heart attack today. My heartfelt condolences are with his entire family in their time of grief. May Waheguru Ji grant eternal peace to the departed soul," said Singh in his tweet.

Role Of Regional Parties To Be Important For 2024 LS Polls: Amartya Sen

Kolkata: Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen asserted that it "would be a mistake" to think that the 2024 Lok Sabha election would be a one-horse race in favour of the BJP, and felt that the role of a number of regional parties would be "clearly important" for the upcoming general election.

The 90-year-old economist also said that though Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee has the ability to be India's next Prime Minister, it is yet to be established whether the West Bengal Chief Minister could be able to pull the forces of public dismay against the BJP.

"I think a number of regional parties are clearly important. I think the DMK is an important party, the TMC is certainly important and the Samajwadi Party has some standing but whether that could be extended I do not know."

"I think it would be a mistake to take the dismissive view that there is no other party that can take the place of BJP since it has established itself as a party with a vision that is inclined in the direction of Hindus over the rest of the country," he told PTI in an exclusive interview here.

Leaders of several

parties including the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Janata Dal (United) have called for a new alliance including the Congress for the Lok Sabha polls in 2024. They have emphasised that a bipolar contest will ensure the BJP's defeat.

"The BJP has substantially reduced the vision of India. It has narrowed the understanding of India as just Hindu India and as a Hindi-speaking India in such a strong way that it would be sad if there is no alternative to the BJP in India today."

"If the BJP looks strong and powerful, it has a good deal of weakness too. So, I think other political parties will be able to come to a debate if they really try. I do not know enough to be able to dismiss the anti-BJP parties together," he said.

On whether Banerjee could be the country's next PM, Sen said she has the ability.

"It's not that she does not have the ability to do it. She clearly has the ability. On the other hand, it's yet not established that Mamata can pull the forces of public dismay against the BJP in an integrated way to make it possible for her to have the leadership to put an end to the fractionalisation in India," the economist said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Nearly 24% Population

that the number of two-wheelers have also increased manifold since the last five years.

The increasing number of vehicles have led to a spike in accidents across J&K.

An official from the traffic department noted that the banks have made it easy for people to get personal cars.

"It is true that the roads are the same and the traffic has increased but who is responsible for it? Any one can get a car loan from the bank," the official said, wishing not to be named.

Earlier, Chief Engineer, R&B, Rafiq Ahmad Rafiq told Kashmir Observer that the capacity of the roads in the city can't accommodate the current volume of traffic.

The people complain that the roads in the city remain the same as they were five decades ago while the traffic volume has increased manifold. This often leads to a chaotic situation on the roads affecting the smooth commuting and taking toll on the time of people.

Status symbol or a necessity

It's both in the case of Kashmir at least. Typically, people tend to buy a car before they buy a house, as a house is a bigger, more serious expense. Over 76 percent households in Jammu and Kashmir have their own houses, according to the NFHS survey. So with that sense of belonging the car is the next natural choice. More so when Kashmir lacks a robust public transport system.

"Lack of public transport, rather absence of it after dusk, is a major factor pushing people in J&K to go for personal vehicles", tweeted a senior editor after the survey was out.

Senior journalist, Altaf Hussain argues that Kashmir needs wider roads and the government should make public transport attractive for commuters in order to arrest the trend.

"We need wider roads. We need flyovers. We need to make public transport attractive for commuters. And we need better traffic management. It's not a tall order, provided you have a responsive and performing govt," he commented on twitter.

Like Altaf former SSP, Riyaz Bedar attributes the increase in the number of private cars to a "very bad public transport policy" besides very liberal bank financing options. Besides, he says, "We are a consumer state only unlike Maharashtra".

SED Suggests

surveys and mapping of shops in the periphery of 100 yards of Education institutions. "Send the list of shops selling cigarettes and other ill effective substances to this office within five days positively."

"It is impressed upon all the Head of Institutions (Hols) to identify the students involved in cigarette smoking and other drug addiction so that they may be counselled in time and the menace shall automatically get eradicated," the CEO said. (KNO)

Man Dies In

the policemen took him to the police station," a relative of the deceased said.

On the assurance of fair investigation and legal action by Kalakote Additional Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal and Nowshera Sub Divisional Police Officer Tusif Ahmed, the officials said the body was shifted to community health centre Kalakote for postmortem on Saturday evening.

Rajouri Senior Superintendent of Police Mohammad Aslam said three police personnel deployed at police naka Bakhar falling under Dharamsal police station have been placed under suspension for not taking the man to hospital.

"The inquest proceedings have been initiated in the case," the officer said.

Flight Ops Resume

some were cancelled.

"The snow from the runway, taxiway and apron has been cleared and the visibility has improved up to 3,000 metres. Flight operations have resumed," an official said.

The Srinagar-Jammu national highway -- the only all-weather road connecting the Valley with the rest of the country -- has been reopened for traffic after the snow was shovelled off, officials said.

While the higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir experienced moderate to heavy snowfall on Friday, many other areas, including Srinagar, received light snow.

Meanwhile, night temperatures settled below the freezing point across the Valley. Srinagar recorded a low of minus 0.1 degrees Celsius on Friday night, down from 1 degree Celsius the night before.

Qazigund, the gateway to the Valley, registered a minimum temperature of minus 0.4 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag in south Kashmir recorded a low of minus 1.2 degrees Celsius.

The minimum in Kupwara, a frontier district, settled at minus 3.6 degrees Celsius. Pahalgam in Anantnag district, which also serves as a base camp for the annual Amarnath Yatra, registered a low of minus 5.9 degrees Celsius down from minus 2.4 degrees Celsius a night earlier.

The minimum temperature at Gulmarg in Baramulla district went down over 10 notches from minus 0.6 degrees Celsius to settle at minus 11 degrees Celsius making it the coldest recorded place in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meteorological office said the weather will remain partly cloudy with moderate to dense fog over the plains of Jammu on Saturday.

Fresh feeble western disturbances are likely to affect Jammu and Kashmir from January 19 to 25. Light to moderate rain or snow is likely around January 23 and 24t, it said.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chillai Kalan', the 40-day harshest weather period when the chances of snowfall are maximum and most frequent. Chillai Kalan begins on December 21 and ends on January 30. The cold wave continues even after that with a 20-day-long 'Chillai Khurd' and a 10-day-long 'Chillai Bachha' respectively.

Avalanches Hit

simultaneous avalanches hit the Sarbal area of Sonamarg, in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, while another hit Gurez, in north Kashmir's Bandipora, the officials said. The avalanches at Sarbal hit an area where the Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited (MEIL) -- which is constructing the Zojila Tunnel -- has a workshop.

On Thursday, two labourers were killed when an avalanche hit the Sarbal area. The labourers were working for MEIL.

An avalanche hit Jurniyal village in Gurez on Saturday, the officials said, adding there was no loss of life.

The State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) issued a 'high danger' avalanche warning for Kupwara district in north Kashmir and a 'medium danger' warning for Bandipora, Baramulla, Doda, Ganderbal, Kishtwar, Poonch, Ramban and Reasi districts.

"Avalanche with high danger level is likely to occur above 2,000 metres of Kupwara district in the next 24 hours. Avalanche with medium danger level is likely to occur above 2,000 metres over Bandipora, Baramulla, Doda, Ganderbal, Kishtwar, Poonch, Ramban and Reasi districts in the next 24 hours," it said.

The SDMA said avalanches of low danger level are likely to occur above 2,000 metres over Anantnag, Kulgam, and Rajouri districts in the next 24 hours.

People are advised to take precautions and avoid venturing into avalanche-prone areas, it said.

Army Proposes

allowed different categories of non-locals, including government employees, to register for domicile certificates.

According to the new domicile law, non-permanent residents who have residency proof of at least 15 years in Jammu and Kashmir are entitled to get domicile certificates in the Union Territory.

Security Agencies

with the help of the administration.

"AWHO Board of Governors, Jammu, has approved a housing project and conducted a demand survey advertisement, fulfilling the long-standing demand of our Jammu and Kashmir veterans. You can apply for this project with your domicile certificate from January 15 to February 15," he said.

Land acquisition will be done based on the response received and the project will start soon, the army commander said.

He said a hostel for children of the heroes and ex-servicemen in Srinagar is in the tender stage and it is targeted to be completed at the earliest in the financial year 2023-24. The Jammu and Kashmir administration has appointed nodal police officers of DSP rank to redress the grievances of ex-servicemen in all 20 districts of the Union Territory, Lt Gen Dwivedi said.

He said the Centre had approved an amendment in the scheme of One Rank One Pension on December 23 last year, including the security personnel who retired after July 1, 2014.

"It is a matter of great pleasure that the Jammu and Kashmir administration has accepted the long-pending demand of increasing the ex gratia of our fallen heroes in the Union Territory from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 25 lakh," Lt Gen Dwivedi said.

Referring to Operation Sadbhavana of the Army for the welfare of the public, he said, "We have implemented 60 projects of school and education infrastructure, 75 projects related to sports, 39 health schemes in the area of 16 Corps for Rs 14.2 crores, which has benefited about 60,000 youth and other people."

"I also assure you that the Government of India and the Northern Command are always committed to the service of our veterans. I expect you to cooperate fully in the welfare schemes run by the Army and the government and make these schemes successful," he said.

Doda Admin

hideouts in residential areas under the guise of tenants and domestic helpers," an official spokesperson said.

He said that the landlords and property owners, along with the tenants, have been made accountable under the order.

"It also clarifies that arrangements such as paying guest and subletting are also covered under the order, and owners who have allowed jhuggies on their land are also required to disclose the details as per the declaration form. The SHO concerned will maintain a separate register for the purpose," he added.

The declaration form, the spokesperson, can be found on the district website, as individual notice cannot be served.

The DC also warned punishable action under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code against any person found contravening his order.

"DM Doda has taken this step to ensure public safety and keep a check on anti-national and anti-social elements, who might seek hideout in residential areas in the guise of tenants/domestic helpers. This move is expected to help the law enforcement agencies in maintaining peace and order in the district," the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, the DC has also ordered mandatory installation of CCTV cameras in all shops, establishments, restaurants, hotels, garages, and scrap dealers on National Highway, as well as in main markets and other important roads within the jurisdiction of the district.

"Owners have been given 15 days to comply with the order, failure to do so will be punishable under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code. The Senior Superintendent of Police has been tasked with ensuring the implementation of this order," the spokesperson said.

The back to back orders issued by DC Doda come a day after the Home Minister chaired a top brass security meeting in Jammu and took stock of the prevailing situation in the Union Territory.

Shah said that all security agencies are fighting a decisive battle against terrorism.

"Within three months the security grid in every area of Jammu would be made

impenetrable by further strengthening it," Shah had said.

He had also assured the people that security agencies will be ready to protect Jammu regardless of the intention of the terrorist organizations.

Experts Red Flag

Child expert Muzzafar Ahmed, Danishwar Rasool Dar, and Dr. Rameez state that the invention of the Mobile Phones, and the peculiar ways in which people are utilising the technology had prompted questions about whether improper usage of it could lead to addiction.

Nearly three years into the COVID-19 pandemic, screen usage has increased exponentially, especially among children, and as per a recent study published in JAMA Paediatrics, the average amount of time children spend staring at screens has risen 52 percent since the beginning of the pandemic.

According to a study conducted by the Kashmiri trio, some of the addictive characteristics in children is excessive permission given by some parents to their children for gaming in order to have some mental peace for a short period of time, and in single child cases, families who do not have anyone to play outdoor games with are showing more interest in mobile gaming to overcome their loneliness.

"Busy parents or Emotional Dependency: In today's world, most parents are too preoccupied with their jobs and businesses to provide their children with adequate emotional support. Here children are taking emotional support from mobile gaming and becoming dependent," the study reads.

"The addictiveness of smartphones, immersion and role-playing in many games allow players to create their own character, leading them often in a fantasy world that can be heavily influenced by their actions within it."

It reads: "Players can get highly attached to these characters and the world they live in. Sadly, becoming over-attached to these fantasy worlds can lead to negligence towards real-world responsibilities."

Dr Muzzafar Ahmed, consultant clinical psychologist at Composite Regional Centre (CRC) Bemina, Srinagar while speaking about the side effects of mobile gaming said that from a psychological perspective, it was found that depression and anxiety are associated with gaming addiction in children, and same findings are reported regarding adults. "Anxiety can be triggered gradually in heavy users when their smart phones are unavailable."

The study further states that communication problems or a lack of social engagement, attention and concentration problems, behavioural problems, Avoidance of developmental tasks, negative role model issues, habits and disinterest in other aspects of life, and physical problems are all listed as side effects of mobile gaming and fallout of phone addictiveness.

Prof. Dr. Reyaz Malik, a prominent paediatrician in the valley, while expressing concern over the mobile addiction among children said that excessive usage of mobile screens affects the brain development of the child.

"There is a considerable increase in mobile addiction, not just among children but also among adults, but these smartphones usually leave negative mental health aspects in children because their brains are in developing phase," Dr. Malik said.

He said there are some signs which parent should be aware which indicate that their children are addicted towards smartphones and on the higher side are improper timing of sleep, being anxious, expressing anger or exhibiting aggressive behavior or prefer isolation.

Urging the parents, Dr. Malik said that parents should set an example by spending time with their families and children after they finish their day's work.

"Parents should keep their phones away and keep a family time wherein they will speak and be with their kids rather than being on phone, no screen time should be given space during family time. And even if the screen time is

permitted, the exposure should be age-based and calculated," he added.

The study, while mentioning the prevention measures, states that parents should spend a lot of time with their children and always be there for them emotionally, and not let them play video games when they're with you.

"Make other physical activities or outdoor sports a part of the child's life as well. If children show some aggressive behaviour, as a parent, you must set boundaries and explain that this kind of behaviour is unacceptable. Be firm and demonstrate that such behavior carries consequences like time-out or being kept away from a favourite activity for the day," the study reads.

It states that parents should teach their children alternative ways to express their feelings--ways that are socially acceptable and should encourage them to pursue other hobbies and interests, particularly sports and other physical activities--(KNO)

Youth Held

from their house in presence of Executive magistrate 1st class Tanghdar.

While Sajid Khan has been arrested, the spokesperson said, his brother Majid Khan is yet to be arrested

"Accordingly, a case FIR No. 08/2022 under relevant sections of law stands registered and investigation in the matter is in progress," he added.

Govt Shifts

Superintendent of Police, East Srinagar against an available vacancy.

Jammu Fireman

adieu to the fireman at Jagti township on the outskirts of Jammu this afternoon.

He lauded Raina's valour and said that the fireman laid down his life while performing his duties.

The swift action by the fire and emergency services restricted the fire to a single room on the ground floor where it has originated due to a short circuit, thus averting a major tragedy, officials said.

NC Youth

of heralding a new era of inclusive development with equal opportunities to all, irrespective of region, religion or caste.

"A massive thrust has already been given to ensure overall growth by way of massive investments and implementation of various schemes and programmes, designed in accordance with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a 'naya' (new) Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

"A collective effort alone can put Jammu and Kashmir on a faster track of development," Koul said, adding that the day is not far when the region will be a part of the country's enviable growth story.

Rana described the BJP as a force to reckon with, saying the last about nine years in particular have shown how a new dimension could be given to nation-building with visionary policies and a sense of devotion and dedication.

Rajnath Inaugurates

martyrs from Uttarakhand have been carved. Addressing the armed forces, veterans and war widows on the occasion of Veterans Day, Singh said the country's borders are safe and it can stand with pride today because of them.

"Your contribution to the country's socio-economic development is very big. We can stand with pride today because of you. Words are not enough to praise your valour," Singh said.

The defence minister said he does not want to talk about the steps taken by the government for their welfare because it is the government's foremost duty.

"It is just a small bit that we can do to reciprocate the great sacrifices you make for the country," he said.

The entire country owes a debt of gratitude to the war veterans," he said.

NC Targets HM For 'Ignoring' Demands Of Protesting Youths

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Senior National Conference leader Ajay K Sadhotra on Saturday criticised Union Home Minister Amit Shah for "ignoring the demands" of protesting youths as well as employees who fled Kashmir in the aftermath of the targeted killings last year.

Terming the visit of Shah to Jammu on Friday as a "total failure", he said creating hype was different than fulfilling the aspirations of the people.

"It is unfortunate that Jammu, the holy city of temples, has turned into a city of dharas and protests by the BJP double-engine government. The Centre being the custodian of the interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, in the absence of a democratically-elected government, cannot shirk its legitimate responsibilities," Sadhotra said in a statement here.

He said the protesting youths and reserved categories' employees working in Kashmir, Prime Minister Package employees, Rehbar-e-Khel workers and daily-rated and contractual segment of employees find themselves pushed to the wall with the home minister not speaking a word about them and ignoring their demands contemptuously.

He said denial of rights, especially withholding the salaries, is a gross human rights violation and its enormity becomes se-

vere as the youths have been agitating for several months now.

Sadhotra said the visit of the home minister had raised many expectations and generated hope among the protestors but "true to the character of the BJP they find themselves in lurch, as the ruling dispensation believes in not keeping its promises".

The NC leader cautioned the government against "testing the patience" of the striking workers and sought an immediate end to the ongoing dharas by engaging them in talks and taking appropriate action on their demands.

Sadhotra also assailed the Centre and the J-K administration for failing in instilling a sense of security among the people in general and those living in the border areas in particular.

Referring to the recent twin terror attacks in Dhangri village of Rajouri that left seven people dead and 14 others injured, he said the two lives of the young children who died in an IED explosion after the initial attack could have been saved had the agencies concerned sanitised the site of carnage after the brutal killings.

"Nothing is being heard about the action taken against those responsible for the security lapse despite tall claims made by responsible people at the helm of affairs," the NC leader said, adding this has further aggravated the despondency among the people about their safety and security.

SNOWFALL AFTERMATH

DC Kulgam Conducts Extensive Tour Of Remote Areas



Observer News Service

KULGAM: To take first hand appraisal of the situation arising due to Snowfall and restoration of essential services, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat on Saturday conducted extensive tour of Aharbal, D. H. Pora, Watoo, Manzgam and other areas in the district.

During the visit, the DC interacted with the people and listened to their issues for redressal.

He also visited Sub District Hospital at D.H.Pora and took stock of patient care services and also interacted with the staff and patients here.

He directed the hospital officials to ensure round the clock availability of medical personnel.

The DC also instructed to lift Snow expeditiously to

facilitate smooth and hassle-free movement.

The DC also visited several wards and also took stock of availability of essential medicines.

BMO D.H.Pora briefed the DC about the services being provided to the patients at the hospital.

With regard to Snow clearance, the concerned officers informed the DC that near about 95 percent roads stand cleared and are through in the district.

The DC instructed the concerned to clear rest of roads and ensure people do not face any inconvenience across the district.

The DC was accompanied by ADDC Showkat Ahmad Rather, ACR Mir Imtiyaz-ul-Aziz, ACD Muhammad Imran Khan, SDM Noorabad Bashir Ul Hassan, CMO, Tehsildar, AEEs from PDD, R&B and other officers.



A BOATMAN LIFTS SNOW from his Shikara inside Srinagar's Dal Lake on Saturday.

KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

J&K Political Parties Invited To ECI Meet In Delhi

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Election Commission of India has invited all political parties across the country to participate in a meeting in New Delhi.

Quoting an official, Srinagar based news agency KDC reported that the Election Commission of India (ECI) has invited all major political parties in India including JK PDP and JKNC to participate in a meeting at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 16 January.

He said "The Election Commission of India (ECI) has developed a prototype to enable remote voting for migrant workers and students and called an all-party meeting on January 16 to demonstrate the technology designed to address low voter turnout and to seek feedback."

The purpose is demonstration of EVMs & VVPATs being organised in New Delhi by ECI, he added.

NC's Shami Oberoi To Attend ECI Meet On Jan 16

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) has chosen party's Treasurer Shami Oberoi to attend the meeting called by Election Commission of India (ECI) on January 16 at in Vigyan Bhawan in Delhi while Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leaders have said that decision in this regard will be taken tomorrow.

The ECI has invited all the political parties across the country to participate in a meeting on January 16.

The meeting has been called to discuss improvisation in voter participation of domestic migrants using remote voting. The meeting will start at 11:00AM.

Talking to a local news agency KNO, National Conference (NC) spokesman, Imran Nabi Dar, said that the party has chosen its Treasurer Shami Oberoi to attend the meeting on January 16.

However, PDP leaders when contacted said that the decision in this regard has not been taken yet. They said that decision will be taken tomorrow.

Azad Cautions DAP Leaders Against Groupism

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Democratic Azad Party (DAP) chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad on Saturday cautioned the leaders against groupism and said the party's "agenda of peace and development" must reach to every person in Jammu and Kashmir.

Azad, a former J-K chief minister, was addressing the first meeting of the newly appointed office bearers and executive committee members of the party, which he floated in September last year after ending his five-decade-long association with the Congress.

"We cannot have groupism in our party like the Congress. We need to promote the culture of merit, appreciation and teamwork," he said.

Stressing for the coordination among the partymen, he said, "Nepotism, favouritism and culture of groupism is not acceptable."

Azad directed the members to promote the core agenda of the party and reach out to the public at the grassroots.

"Our agenda of peace and development must reach every



person of Union Territory. We need to engage with the people at ground level and make our workers understand about our ideology and agenda, and also highlight their problems" he said.

Azad, however, said land, jobs and the restoration of statehood are the primary issues that the DAP is focussing on.

"Statehood, jobs and land rights are the issues that we shall fight on primary basis and it is the duty of our newly elected office bearers to make the general public aware of it and subsequently take them on board in this political fight," he told the office bearers.

A party leader said the issue of the administration order regarding vacating of the state land allotted under the Roshi

Act and Kanchari land was also discussed.

In a circular issued on January 9, Commissioner Secretary, Revenue Department, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri directed all deputy commissioners to ensure 100 percent removal of encroachments from state land including Roshni and Kahcharai by the end of January.

Termining the order as "unfortunate", Azad said he had provided the land under the Roshni scheme as the chief minister to the poor, needy and landless for building houses and cultivation but now the prevailing regime is snatching it back that too in harsh weather conditions.

He said the people of Jammu Kashmir are the first beneficiaries of its resources.

"Be it jobs or land, the people of Jammu and Kashmir have first rights over it. The government must understand it and spare the poor and landless people," Azad said.

Meanwhile, the National Conference also condemned the "draconian order" and appealed to the administration for its immediate rollback in the larger interests of the public.

Dr Farooq Seeks Immediate Resumption Of Road Connectivity In Snow-Bound Areas

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: National Conference President Farooq Abdullah

on Saturday sought immediate resumption of road connectivity across Jammu and Kashmir's snow-bound areas that have been cut off following moderate to heavy snowfall in the Valley.

In a statement, Abdullah expressed concern over the difficulties faced by people in the remote hamlets and the upper reaches of north, south and central Kashmir and said the major arterial roads connecting Dawar, Kanzalwun, Keran, Karan, Gurez, Jumbund and many far-flung areas to their district headquarters had not yet been cleared of snow.

People living in those areas are going through immense difficulties. The situation is no different across the upper reaches of south and central Kashmir and districts in the Chenab region, he said.

The National Conference

chief said students, elderly and patients were at the receiving end in particular due to the blockage of roads connecting

these far-flung areas to the district headquarters.

"The situation is no different in the snow-bound regions of Chenab where access to all upper hamlets is yet to be restored," he said.

The Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar also urged the divisional administrations in Jammu and Kashmir to ensure that flying squads were placed on the ground to check price rise.

The situation has become more precarious in the absence of public representatives, he said.

The resumption of connectivity is the main issue that has to be tackled on a priority, Abdullah said.

He impressed upon the divisional administration to reach out to people from the tribal communities caught in the snow blitz in Sonamarg with relief and rehabilitation.



Department Conducts Training On Wildlife Crime Control

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Department of Wildlife Protection conducted a training program for wildlife crime control at NIC, Manda, Jammu.

While inaugurating the training, Suresh Kumar Gupta, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)/Chief Wildlife Warden, Jammu & Kashmir, mentioned that illegal trade in wildlife contraband is next to narcotics in the illegal international market. He stated that the department is regularly monitoring such activities and action is taken under law whenever such incidents are reported. He called upon trainees to take maximum benefit of the program and have free interaction with resource persons.

The trainees comprised of field staff of the Department of Wildlife Protection from various Wildlife Divisions of

Jammu Region. The technical sessions were conducted by Dr. Kumar MK, Conservator of Forests, Dr. Vinita from Central University of Jammu, and Dr Vipin Sharma, Director of Research, Wildlife Analytical Laboratories.

The training program also had a mock crime scene, collection of evidence, and framing of the case. The participants were apprised about various parts and products in illegal wildlife trade, as well as the procedure for collection of samples. The trainees were made aware about DNA Forensics and the latest amendments in the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

During the discussions, Vijay Kumar, Wildlife Warden, Kathua, Mushtaq Ahmad, Wildlife Warden, Poonch-Rajouri, and Amit Sharma, Wildlife Warden also participated. The program was moderated by Anil Kumar Atri, Wildlife Warden, Jammu.

EPFO Staff In Jammu Get Bicycles To Cut Carbon

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: In a eco-friendly initiative to help in making Jammu a carbon-neutral city, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has decided to give bicycles to its staff for local commuting.

The initiative was led by 50-year old Provident Fund Commissioner Rizwan-ud-din, a passionate cyclist himself.

The EPFO in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh has taken a lead among various government departments and private organisations with this eco-friendly initiative to decrease the use of harmful fuel and help in making the city become carbon-neutral.

"The decision was made by the Staff-Welfare Committee unanimously after considering factors such as staff welfare, traffic congestion and environ-

mental concerns," said Rizwan-ud-din who uses bicycle to commute between office and home daily.

"We received an award for being the 'Best Remote office' and used the award money of Rs 5 Lakh for purchasing these cycles," he said.

He added, "A city becomes smart when its citizens become smart. There is a need to include a cycle lane in the smart city plans so we can have a more eco-friendly city."

A total of 30 cycles have been procured for distribution among staff for their daily commuting to and from office.

Jagpreet Singh, Enforcement Officer, EPFO, said, "We are proud to say that we are not only working on government activities and providing services but also working towards the health of the staff."

Union Minister e-Distributes Appliances Among PwDs

Observer News Service

DODA: Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr. Virendra Kumar on Saturday e-inaugurated camp for distribution of free of cost aid and appliances among the Divyangjans under ADIP scheme.

Dhananter Singh Kotwal, Chairman, District Development Council, Doda, was also present on the occasion.

Union Minister, while addressing on the occasion, said that under the leadership of Prime Minister, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has done unprecedented work towards welfare of Divyangjan during the past few years. He emphasized the need for conducting such distribution camps on regular basis saying that it will help in spreading awareness about the welfare schemes run by Central Government for Divyangjan. This will also empower the beneficiaries to participate in the main stream.



Dr. Virendra Kumar said that after implementation of Rights to Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, the categories for disability have increased from 7 to 21, reservation for Divyangjan in government jobs has also been raised from 3% to 4% besides increase in reservation in higher education to 5%. "Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities" project is being implemented with a view of creating a National Database for PwDs and issue a Unique Disability Identity Card to each person with disabilities, he added.

Union Minister informed that the UDID scheme has been implemented in all the states

across the country. Persons with Disabilities do not need to make multiple copies of documents as the card will capture all the necessary details and is valid throughout the country. The UDID card will be the single document of identification and verification of the disabled for availing various benefits in the future, he added. About 57 Lakh 95 thousand UDID cards have already been issued.

He further informed that the scheme for implanting cochlear devices for children who are deaf by birth and can't speak has been implemented by the ministry with provision of Rs. 6 lakh

for each such child. He urged upon the public representatives and administration that a list of such needy children in Doda district may be provided to the ministry so that eligible beneficiary may get the benefit.

Elaborating on the initiatives being taken up by the Ministry under Accessible India Campaign, Union Minister informed that 35 International and 55 Domestic Airports, 709 Railway Stations, 10175 Bus Terminals and 683 websites have been covered to provide accessible environment for persons with disabilities. Besides, a total 1459 beneficiaries of Doda have been pre identified with 2220 Assistive Appliances of different category worth Rs. 70.61 Lakh. Such assistive devices will be distributed free of cost under the ADIP scheme among the beneficiaries by organizing a series of distribution camps at block level. He added that identification and registration of Divyangjan/beneficiaries was done in the month of December 2021 by ALIMCO in

association with district administration Doda.

The distribution camp was organized by Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), Mohali (Punjab) Unit, working under the aegis of Department of Empowerment of Person with Disability (DEPWD), Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), in association with district administration.

It was informed that 22 Tricycles, 261 Wheel Chairs, 17 C.P Chairs, 62 Crutches, 797 Walking Sticks, 04 Rollators, 05 Foldable Walkers, 43 Braille Canes, 72 Smart Canes, 07 Smart Phones for visually impaired, 832 Hearing Aids, 21 MSIED Kits for Intellectually Impaired and 76 Artificial Limbs and Calipers have been distributed among the beneficiaries during December and January camps. Earlier, a detailed presentation about the welfare schemes being implemented by the Social Welfare Department in the district was made.



3 Kashmiri Footballers Selected In India U-17 Squad

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Three footballers from Kashmir Valley, Tajamul Islam, Huzafah Ahmad Dar and Faizan Waheed, were on Saturday named in India's Under-17 squad for upcoming international friendlies.

India U-17 head coach Bibiano Fernandes announced the 22-member squad, which has been in camp for over the course of last month. Tajamul, a part of J&K State Sports Council FA, plies his trade as a goalkeeper, while Huzafah and Faizan are both midfielders. Huzafah plays for Real Kashmir FC and Faizan for J&K State Sports Council FA.

Earlier in September, the trio was selected for the Under-17 team for SAFF Championship. In October, they made it to the final squad for the 2023 AFC U-17 Asian Cup qualifiers in Saudi Arabia and helped India qualify for the AFC U-17 Asian Cup.

The under-17 squad is now scheduled to play against UAE Under-20 National Team in Dubai on January 16, 2023. On their return to India, the team will play two friendlies against Uzbekistan on January 22 and 24 in Goa.

The Jammu & Kashmir Football Federation congratulated the three footballers and wished them luck.



5 J&K Judokas Bag Gold, Make It To National Team

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Five deaf judokas of J&K have won five gold medals in the 25th Senior Deaf National Sports Championship held at Emerald International School, Indore, MP, held from 10th to 14th January. The championship also served as a selection camp for the upcoming Asia Pacific Deaf Judo Championship 2023-24 set to be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

The medalist judokas include Rakshinda Mehak above 78kg category, Nabeel Ahmad Dar below 73kg category, Vishal Khajuria below 66kg category, Rakesh Singh below 60 kg category and Shikha Kumari below 48kg category.

Of the ten judokas selected to

represent India in international championship, five judokas are from J&K. All the selected judokas have been trainees of RCC Judo Centre, MA Stadium, Jammu since 2012.

Congratulating the medalists and those earning call to the national team, Secretary J&K Sports Council Nuzhat Gull while speaking to the coach Bhanu Pratap Singh over phone said that "you have made our chests swell with pride."

Secretary Sports Council said that special coaching and training camps shall be conducted this year to train the players and this time around, the focus will be on the mental aspect of the game as well.

Women's U-19 T20 WC: India Crush South Africa



Press Trust of India

BENONI: Opener Shweta Sehrawat smashed an unbeaten 92 after skipper Shafali Verma blazed away to a 16-ball 45 as India crushed South Africa by seven wickets to begin their campaign in the inaugural Women's U-19 T20 World Cup on a rousing note here on Saturday.

Set a challenging target of 167 after South Africa opted to bat first, India were off to a blazing start with the opening duo of Shafali and Sehrawat adding 77 runs in just seven overs at Willowmoore Park.

Shafali, who has already played 51 T20Is, 21 ODIs and two Test matches for the senior team at the international level, looked in excellent touch as she toyed with the South African bowlers and put her side on course for a big win. While Shafali went after the bowlers from the word go, Sehrawat too maintained a very good strike rate throughout her innings, which came off 57 balls and included as many as 20 boundaries.

However, having smashed nine fours and a six in an entertaining stay, Shafali was dismissed by off-spinner Miane Smit at the start of the eighth over. Her strike rate was an incredible 281.25 when

she got out.

This was after the Indian captain also shone with the ball, picking up two wickets to put the brakes on the South African scoring rate. Shafali bowled her full quota of four overs and returned with impressive figures of 2/31.

Unperturbed by the departure of Shafali, Sehrawat carried on in same vein and helped her team cross the line with 21 balls to spare. Sehrawat's previous best was 40 against the same opponents.

Earlier, the South Africans too got a flying start with Simone Lourens (61 off 44 balls) and Elandri Janse van Rensburg (23 off 13) putting on 56 runs in only 4 overs. Left-arm spinner Sonam Yadav gave India their first breakthrough when she had Rensburg caught behind by Richa Ghosh, who is also a senior India player. Shafali, then, got into the act by dismissing her counterpart Oluhle Siyo for duck. Madison Landsman chipped in with 32 off 17 balls, while Karabo Meso and Miane Smit made brisk 19 and 16, respectively.

However, the home team was pegged back after top-scorer Lourens was run out in the 17th over, a crucial juncture, as they settled for 166 for five.

IND vs SL 3rd ODI: India Eye Clean Sweep



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India will lock horns with Sri Lanka in the third and last ODI of the three-match series on Sunday. With a series clean sweep in sight, the Indian team is unlikely to tinker with its batting line-up but could be tempted to look at some of the bowling options.

The men in blue have already clinched the series with contrasting wins a comfortable one while defending in Guwahati and a hard-fought one while chasing in Kolkata. A 3-0 series win before taking on a better-quality opposition in New Zealand in less than 72 hours will keep the team in good stead.

All the top five batters, including all-rounder Hardik Pandya will not mind some more batting time against a decent Sri Lankan attack at the Greenfields Stadium which is known to assist bowlers. Hence the possible changes could happen

in the bowling line-up.

With India playing six 50-over games in a space of 14 days - three against Sri Lanka and as many against New Zealand, Mohammed Shami's workload will be of primary concern for the Indian team management.

In the absence of Jasprit Bumrah, Shami is expected to shoulder the responsibility of leading the Indian attack during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy Tests, so his workload would need the maximum monitoring. He is expected to bowl close to 125 to 130 overs across the four Tests, fitness permitting.

Arshdeep Singh, the left-arm seamer, could be tried out for variations as he also needs some game time after getting the rough end of the stick against the Lankans in one of the T20 games.

Kuldeep Yadav had once again got a Player of the match award and while he replaced an injured Yuzvendra Chahal

(shoulder niggle), it would be interesting to see what Rohit and head coach Rahul Dravid would do if the right-arm wrist spinner gets fit.

Axar Patel, who has been the team's 'go-to' man across formats, will be taking a break for a personal commitment during the New Zealand series.

If the team wants to check out Washington Sundar before the series against Black Caps, the third ODI is an ideal platform.

In the batting department, Shubman Gill, who looked the most comfortable on a tricky Eden Gardens pitch before throwing it away, wouldn't like to let his guard down, knowing that Ishan Kishan is presenting himself as a strong contender for the opener's role.

As far as the Sri Lankan team is concerned, the biggest take-away from the 50-over series would be unearthing a quality talent in opener Nuwanidu Fernando, who hit a fifty on debut.



Rashford Scores Again As Man United Beats Man City 2-1

Agencies

MANCHESTER: Old Trafford rejoiced as the final whistle blew on the 189th Manchester derby.

A win against Manchester City is always something to celebrate. This, however, felt like more for the Manchester United fans.

A come-from-behind 2-1 victory on Saturday was the latest evidence of the team's improvement under manager Erik ten Hag and the potential of an unlikely Premier League title challenge.

"The belief is back and we're in a good direction," Ten Hag said.

Substitute Jack Grealish had put City ahead in the second half, but goals from Bruno Fernandes and Marcus Rashford secured the points for United and went some way toward avenging the humiliating 6-3 loss to its neighbour in October. It was the forward's 16th goal of the season and his eighth in his last seven games.

The win also puts United just one point behind defending champion City and up to third in the standings - six points behind leader Arsenal.

For now Ten Hag is dismissing the idea of United being in contention for a first title since 2013. His team's form, however, tells its own story.

"Fans may dream, but we are not. We have to keep our feet on the ground and face that our game has a lot to improve," the

Dutchman said.

Ten Hag was unhappy with the manner in which United allowed City to take control after having the better chances in the first half.

Fernandes' 78th minute equalizer, meanwhile, was contentious after an initial offside decision was overruled.

Rashford was beyond the last man in the buildup to the goal and even though he did not touch the ball, Pep Guardiola and City's players believed the forward had interfered in the play.

"To be honest, for me the first goal is a joke that it is going to be allowed like this," said City defender Manuel Akanji.

Guardiola suggested the game being played at Old Trafford was a factor in the goal being allowed.

"The decision is they didn't believe Rashford was intervening in this stadium. This is Old Trafford, we have to play much better, like Anfield, we have to do better," he said.

The debate over the goal aside, this was another encouraging performance from United to come from a goal down and end a three-game losing streak against City.

United has already beaten Liverpool, Arsenal and Tottenham this season and has now won nine games in a row.

It has only lost one of 18 games since that derby loss to City in October.



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