

## 'It's a Wake-up Call': Budgam Bride's Brutal Murder Stuns Kashmir

Augib Javeed

SOIBUGH, Budgam — The girl's family is bitterly breaking down in each other's arms, as villagers vainly try to console them. Wailing women faint and fall on the ground, slapping their forehead in shock. Some even scratch soil with nails to mourn the chilling crime. Small children on the sidelines sob watching their adults crying their hearts out.

Amid this agonized atmosphere, the family screams—“How'll we bury you, O' our beautiful bride, in parts!”

The pain of the gruesome murder has numbed the whole village — reverberating with the “hang the murderer” cries.

The dreadful demise of a diligent daughter is also making the majority in this central Kashmir village wonder about the “deteriorating social fabric”. “We're not offering this



funeral to a poor soul today,” says a cleric, as young and old men cry like children,

**WE CAN'T LEAVE EVERYTHING TO THE POLICE.** We need to identify these monsters among us and take them to task for the sake of our family's safety and security.”

“we're offering it to our dead conscience.”

Among the grievors is young Umar — a cousin of the 30-year-old Budgam girl butchered in a barbaric manner.

He recalls the day, March 7,

when she routinely left home, at around 10:30 am, for computer classes in her hometown.

After completing her Masters recently, the girl was now pursuing a one-year diploma in computer applications and used to

come back home till afternoon.

But that day, Umar recalls, her cousin didn't turn up even by evening—forcing her family members to call on her cell-phone number, which was not reachable.

“Without wasting any time,” the cousin recalls, “her brother along with some relatives went out to search for his sibling. But they couldn't locate her.”

The girl's brother then approached the police post,

Soibugh and registered a missing report. And soon, the investigation was launched in one of the rattling crime cases of Kashmir.

“We gathered all our technical inputs and then summoned many suspects for questioning,” SSP Al-Tahir Gilani, Budgam Police Chief, told Kashmir Observer.

Among the suspects was an unassuming mason from Mohandpora, Budgam. His name was **More on P6**

## Govt Opens Door For Feedback On Property Tax

People Asked To Mail Suggestions, Comments On H&UDD Website Within 10 Days



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Facing sharp criticism over imposition of property tax in Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Territory administration on Sunday sought time bound feedback from the public over its decision to impose tax from next month on residential and commercial properties.

“The UT of Jammu and Kashmir is imposing levy of property tax on residential houses/apartments, commercial establishments, within the municipal areas from April 01, 2023 in terms of two notifications issued by the government vide S.O 86 dated 21 February, 2023 and S.O 87 dated 21 February, 2023, respectively,” reads a notification issued by the Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD)

“Any suggestions/ comments in this regard are welcome and may be sent to the Housing & Urban Development Department at the email address housin-gudd9@gmail.com within 10 days,” it adds.

The notice issued by the H&UDD comes a day after Lieutenant

Governor Manoj Sinha said that people's interest remains his top priority and the doors of his administration are open for dialogue over property tax.

“The people of J&K are wise and intelligent. They understand the situation very well,” the LG had said.

Last month, the J&K administration notified the imposition of property tax in municipal areas from April 1. The tax rates were fixed five per cent of taxable annual value for residential properties and six per cent for commercial properties.

The order, however, exempted all the properties owned by Central and UT Government from payment of property tax. Only service charge at the rate 3% of the taxable annual value has to be paid to the Municipality in respect of such properties.

Similarly, all the properties of the Municipality and all places of worship, including temples, mosques, gurdwaras, churches, shrines, etc and cremation and burial grounds were exempted from payment of property tax.

Pertinently, the **More on P6**

## FM To Unveil J&K Budget In Parliament Today

Top Officials Of UT's Finance Department Camping In New Delhi

Agencies

Srinagar: Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman would unveil the Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory's budget for the next fiscal in the Parliament on Monday.

This would be the fourth budget of J&K UT in the Parliament after reorganization of the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir in August 2019.

As per list of Lok Sabha's business scheduled for tomorrow, the Union Finance Minister will present a statement showing the demands for grants in respect of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for the year 2022-23. She will also present a



statement showing the supplementary demands for grants-second batch for 2022-23.

The budget is being presented in the Parliament as law-making powers of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory are vested with it in absence of an

elected government in the UT.

This would be the fourth consecutive budget of J&K UT in the Parliament. The budgets of UT for 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 were unveiled in the Parliament by Union Finance Minister Nirmala **More on P6**

## Violence In Kashmir Coming Down: HM Shah



Press Trust Of India

**Hyderabad:** Asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi government's policy of zero-tolerance towards terrorism will continue, the Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday that violence is coming down substantially in Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking at the **More on P6**

## Villagers Lock Govt School After Teacher Found Drunk

Press Trust Of India

**Jammu:** The residents of a village in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda locked down a government primary school after a teacher was found in an inebriated condition during working hours.

A video of the incident that happened in Chanti village on Saturday surfaced on social media, prompting authorities to initiate an inquiry against the accused.

According to the villagers, the accused teacher Bikram Singh had asked some students to get a glass for him to have alcohol inside the school.



Singh, in an inebriated condition, created a ruckus on being confronted by the villagers, village head Gajoth Panchayat Devinder Kotwal said. A few more bottles of alcohol were recovered from the teacher, he said.

Kotwal said the teacher has done this several times in the past and has also been warned by the

education department.

“The teacher is an alcoholic and needs to be dealt with sternly to safeguard the future of the students,” Kotwal said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Bhaderwah, Dilmir Chowdhary said being drunk and carrying liquor at a workplace is against the ideal behaviour of a government official, especially for a teacher.

Police have taken cognizance of the matter after receiving a written complaint from the villagers.

“We have received a complaint about the matter and action under the rule will **More on P6**



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### Militant Hideout Busted In Kupwara

A militant hideout was unearthed and arms and ammunition recovered in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Sunday. A search was conducted by police in the Shalnar Hangnikoot area of Handwara in the north Kashmir district on Saturday, a police official said. During the search of the area, an old dump of arms and ammunition was unearthed which included an AK 47 rifle with two magazines and 75 rounds, 10 grenades, 26 UBGL grenades, eight UBGL boosters, two flame throwers, five rocket shells and **More on P6**

### Weapons, Narcotics Seized Near LoC

Army on Sunday said a major tragedy was averted with the timely recovery of some arms and narcotics near the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir. Based on intelligence inputs, the Army conducted operations near the LoC at Jhangar in Nowshera sector on Saturday, leading to recovery of two sophisticated pistols, two kg narcotics and a two kg Improvised Explosive Device (IED), a defence spokesperson said. “The operation has averted a major incident which could have been initiated by perpetrators **More on P6**

### 'Notorious' Woman Drug Peddler Held

Police on Sunday claimed to have arrested two drug peddlers, including a woman from Baramulla district of North Kashmir. A notorious woman drug peddler (name withheld) and Haroon Rashid Bhat were arrested by a team of cops from police station Chandoosa at a checkpoint established at Shumlaran, a police spokesperson said Sunday. During the search, he said, 70 grams of charas was recovered from their possession. “Pertinently, the arrested lady is a notorious drug peddler and involved in selling contraband **More on P6**





# Practicable Superconducting Material Created In Lab: Study

Press Trust Of India

Researchers have created a superconducting material at both a temperature and pressure low enough for practical applications.

In a paper in the journal Nature, the researchers from University of Rochester, US, describe a nitrogen-doped lutetium hydride (NDLH) that exhibits superconductivity at 69 degrees Fahrenheit, or 20.6 degrees Celsius, and 10 kilobars, or 145,000 pounds per square inch, or psi, of pressure.

Although 145,000 psi might still seem extraordinarily high - pressure at sea level is about 15 psi, or 1 bar - strain engineering techniques routinely used in chip manufacturing, for example, incorporate materials held together by internal chemical pressures that are even higher, the study said.

"With this material, the dawn of ambient superconductivity and applied technologies has arrived," according to a team led by Ranga Dias, an assistant professor of mechanical engineering and of physics.

Scientists have been pursuing this breakthrough in condensed matter physics for more than a century.

Superconducting materials have two key properties: electrical resistance vanishes, and the magnetic fields that are expelled pass around the superconducting material. Such materials could enable: 1. Power grids that transmit electricity without the loss of up to 200 million megawatt hours (MWh) of the energy that now occurs due to resistance in the wires 2. Frictionless, levitating high-speed trains 3. More affordable medical imaging and scanning techniques such as MRI and magneto-cardiography 4. Faster, more efficient electronics for digital logic and memory device technology Given the importance of the new discovery, Dias and his team went to unusual lengths to document their research and head off criticism that developed in the wake of the previous Nature paper, which led to a retraction by the journal's editors, the study said.

That previous paper has been resubmitted to Nature with new data that validates the earlier work, according to Dias.

The new data was collected outside the lab, at the Argonne and Brookhaven National Laboratories, US, in front of an audience of scientists who saw the superconducting transition live.

A similar approach has been taken with the new paper.



"Everyone in the group was involved in doing the experiments," Dias says. "It was truly a collective effort." Hydrides created by combining rare earth metals with hydrogen, then adding nitrogen or carbon, have provided researchers a tantalizing "working recipe" for creating superconducting materials in recent years.

In technical terms, rare earth metal hydrides form clathrate-like cage structures, where the rare earth metal ions act as carrier donors, providing sufficient electrons that would enhance the dissociation of the

H2 molecules. Nitrogen and carbon help stabilize materials.

Bottom line: less pressure is required for superconductivity to occur.

In addition to yttrium, researchers have used other rare earth metals. However, the resulting compounds become superconductive at temperatures or pressures that are still not practical for applications.

So, this time, Dias looked elsewhere along the periodic table. Lutetium looked like "a good candidate to try," said Dias.

It has highly localized fully-filled 14 electrons in its f-orbital configuration that suppress the phonon (a quantum of acoustic energy) softening and provide enhancement to the electron-phonon coupling needed for superconductivity to take place at ambient temperatures, he said.

"The key question was, how are we going to stabilize this to lower the required pressure? And that's where nitrogen came into the picture," said Dias.

Nitrogen, like carbon, has a rigid atomic structure that can be used to create a more stable, cage-like lattice within a material and it hardens the low-frequency optical phonons, according to Dias.

This structure provides the stability for superconductivity to occur at lower pressure, the study said.

Dias's team created a gas mixture of 99 per cent hydrogen and one per cent nitrogen, placed it in a reaction chamber with a pure sample of lutetium, and let the components react for two to three days at 392 degrees Fahrenheit, or 200 degrees Celsius.

The resulting lutetium-nitrogen-hydrogen compound was initially a "lustrous bluish colour," the paper states.

When the compound was then compressed in a diamond anvil cell, a "startling visual transformation" occurred: from blue to pink at the onset of superconductivity, and then to a bright red non-superconducting metallic state, the study said.

"It was a very bright red," Dias said. "I was shocked to see colors of this intensity. We humorously suggested a code name for the material at this state - 'reddmatter' - after a material that Spock created in the popular 2009 Star Trek movie." The code name stuck.

The 145,000 psi of pressure required to induce superconductivity is nearly two orders of magnitude lower than the previous low pressure created in Dias's lab.

## Silicon, Gold And Copper Could Help Fight Covid: Study

Press Trust of India

The spike proteins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus become trapped when they come in contact with silicon, gold and copper, according to a study which also found that electric fields can be used to destroy these proteins, likely killing the virus. The spike protein is used by the SARS-CoV-2 virus to enter and infect human cells.

The study, published in the journal Chemical Science, found that the spike proteins of coronaviruses attached and became stuck to certain types of surfaces.

"Coronaviruses have spike proteins on their periphery that allows them to penetrate host cells and cause infection and we have found these proteins become stuck to the surface of silicon, gold and copper through a reaction that forms a strong chemical bond," said study lead researcher Nadim Darwish, from Curtin University in Australia.

"We believe these materials can be used to capture coronaviruses by being used in air filters, as a coating for benches, tables and walls or in the fabric of wipe cloths and face masks," Darwish said.

Capturing coronavirus in this way would prevent it from reaching and infecting more people, the researchers said.

The study also found the coronavirus could be detected and destroyed using electrical pulses.

"We discovered that electric current can pass through the spike protein and because of this, the protein can be electrically detected," said study co-author

Essam Dief, a PhD candidate at Curtin University.

"In the future, this finding can be translated to involve applying the solution to a mouth or nose swab and testing it in

a tiny electronic device able to electrically detect the proteins of the virus. This would provide instant, more sensitive and accurate COVID testing," Dief said. By applying electrical pulses,



**We discovered that electric current can pass through the spike protein and because of this, the protein can be electrically detected**

the researchers found the spike protein's structure is changed and at a certain magnitude of the pulses, the protein is destroyed, thereby potentially deactivating coronaviruses.

"So, by incorporating materials such as copper or silicon in air filters, we can potentially capture and consequently stop the spread of the virus," Dief said.

"Also importantly, by incorporating electric fields through air filters, for example, we also expect this to deactivate the virus," the scientist added.

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## 10-Day Aajeevika Mela To Be Organized In Srinagar

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: A 10-day "woman-led" food and cultural fair will be organized in Srinagar from March 15 to showcase diverse cuisines and unique indigenous products from across the country, an official said on Saturday.

The 'SARAS Aajeevika Mela' would provide a platform for the participants to sell and promote their hand-made products and create marketing linkages with various selling platforms, Mission Director, Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM) Indu Kanwal Chib said.

A national food and cultural fair was successfully held at Bagh-e-Bahu in the winter capital Jammu from February 4 to February 14, he said.

"In total, 70 stalls, including 15 dealing with food, shall be put on display in the women-led mela which is unique in the sense that we are bringing different cultures from across the country to Kashmir for the first time," Chib told PTI.

She said women's self-help groups (SHGs) will display handicrafts, handloom, and natural food items from different rural areas across the country at the stalls.

Chib said some of the handloom products that will be displayed at the fair include cotton and silk sarees

from Bihar, Phulkari garment products from Punjab, bamboo craft and decorative items from Uttar Pradesh, zari sarees from Telangana, and leather slippers from Maharashtra.

"This fair will have stalls that will showcase calico painting, jute bags from Samba, Lac bangles from Bihar, Basohli paintings of Kathua, Sozni shawls from Budgam, Saffron from Pampore, Paper Mache items from Bandipora and Pahloo, black cumin from Gurez, and many more," she said.

She said Odisha, Punjab, West Bengal, Telangana, and Meghalaya are among the other states which have confirmed their participation in the fair.

"A children's activity area would also be set up at the venue where young ones would be made to understand their ancient culture, rituals, food, art and crafts, and heritage through some activities like on-the-spot pottery making," the Mission director, JKRLM said.

She said another key feature of the national fair would be "mesmerising" cultural events depicting the legacy of Jammu and Kashmir.

"To facilitate the customers and the mela enthusiasts, the facility of cashless transactions will be made available at the venue," she said.



Picture taken from pedestrian overpass depicts mesmerizing view of River Jhelum near Abiguzar in Srinagar

## Sustained Peace Imperative For 'Wellbeing' Of People, UT Dev: Bukhari

### Addresses Party Convention At Karpura Nishat

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Apni Party President, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Sunday said that sustained peace is of utmost importance for the wellbeing of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and speedy development of the Union Territory.

He was addressing a party convention at Karpura Nishat area of Srinagar.

Emphasizing on peace and tranquility in J&K, Bukhari said, "A sustained peace is of utmost importance for the development of Jammu and Kashmir, and the wellbeing of its people."

He added, "New Delhi may or may not require a peaceful environment here, but we des-



perately do need it because the future of our youth is at stake due to the protracted uncertainty and turmoil. Only a peaceful environment can pave a way for a better Jammu and Kashmir."

The Apni Party leader said that a long phase of violence and turmoil has left JK incapable of maintaining a sustainable developmental pace.

He said, "Look at the pa-

thetic condition of Srinagar in terms of its developmental deficit. Once upon a time, it was considered one of the most beautiful cities in the world, but we could not maintain the required pace for its development, over the years, due to the prevailing uncertainty."

He promised that once the Apni Party gets mandated to form a government in J&K, it will ensure equivalent and speedy development across the region.

He said, "Our key agenda is to work for Jammu and Kashmir's development and prosperity, thus, we will ensure a rapid pace of modern infrastructure development here, once we are elected to form a government."

### CURTAIN-RAISER

## KU To Hold Intl Conference On 'Recent Advances in Biz, Mgmt, Data Analytics'

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The University of Kashmir is set to hold a two-day international conference on 'Recent Advances in Business, Management and Data Analytics' on March 15-16, 2023.

Organized by the Department of Management Studies, the mega event brings together academics, researchers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, policy-planners, scientists, students, civil society members and change-makers on a single platform to share their experiences, ideas, perspectives and new knowledge on a range of issues concerning the main theme.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Nilofer Khan will inaugurate the conference as chief guest and Prof Javaid Akhter from the Department of Business Administration, Aligarh Muslim University, will deliver the keynote address. Dr Poonam Sinha, Director, National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), Ministry of Skill Develop-

ment and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, will be the guest of honor.

"The event provides an opportunity to identify and deliberate upon emerging socio-economic issues and business game-changers' headway towards inclusive growth, self-reliance, sustainable development and equitable society," said Prof Iqbal Hakim, Head, Department of Management Studies KU and Patron of the Conference.

"Post-pandemic business is undergoing unprecedented changes not only due to stress caused by the global health emergency but more due to the fast-paced innovations and advancements in breakthrough technologies, data processing technologies, ICT, socio-economic and environmental concerns never witnessed before," he said, adding that in this changing business scenario, the traditional wisdom needs to be blended with the emerging knowledge to cater to the novel challenges to create a better, safer and healthier world.

## 12 Day Workshop On Acting, Direction Begins In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A 12-day long workshop for honing acting and direction skills of theatre artists began here. The workshop also marks the formal inauguration of NSD Centre in Srinagar.

The workshop has been organized by the Theatre-in-Education Centre of National School of Drama (NSD) in collaboration with J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

The inaugural session was led by eminent theatre faculty of the National School of Drama comprising Prof. Santanu Bose, Dipankar Paul, Yeshraj Jhadav, and Sandeep Bhattacharya.

According to NSD of-

ficials, the initiative is aimed at giving exposure to theatre artists in the Kashmir Valley to industry standards on acting and direction skills.

Diverse range of topics dwelling on various aspects of acting and direction will be covered during the workshop by theatre persons. The workshop is being monitored by NSD's Centre I/c, Prof. Santanu Bose.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Bose said that the workshop would help the artists of Kashmir to get breakthrough roles on different stages and platforms.

The theatre workshop is being coordinated by NSD's Srinagar coordinator, Gulzar Ganai. Around 30 students from various parts of Kashmir valley are participating in it.



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FAJR	5 :22
ZUHR	12:41
ASR	4:55
Magrib	6:39
ISHA	8: 00

## This Day In History

- 1567 - Battle at Oosterweel: Spanish troops destroy Geuzenleger
- 1569 - Battle of Jarnac, Count of Anjou defeats Huguenots
- 1591 - Battle at Tondibi: Moroccan army under Judar defeats Sultan Askia Ishaq II of Songhai
- 1865 - Confederate President Jefferson Davis signs bill authorizing use of slaves as soldiers (US Civil War)
- 1881 - Alexander II of Russia is assassinated by members of far-left terror group 'People's Will' who throw a bomb at him in the city of St. Petersburg
- 1884 - Siege of Khartoum, Sudan begins by Mahdist forces, lasts 10 months
- 1900 - British troops occupy Bloemfontein, capital of the Orange Free State (Boer War)
- 1911 - The Colonial-Born and Settlers Indian Association is formed at a meeting in Durban, South Africa, and has at its aim to fight the infamous 3 poll tax
- 1912 - Bulgaria and Serbia conclude an alliance pact ostensibly against Austria, but it secretly provides for a possible war against Turkey
- 1918 - Trotsky gains control of the Red Army
- 1920 - After the German government is forced to cut its army to 10,000 men, military groups plot an unsuccessful coup - a revolt ended by a general strike
- 1921 - Mongolia (formerly Outer Mongolia) declares independence from China
- 1922 - George Bernard Shaw's "Back to Methusaleh V" premieres in NYC
- 1935 - Driving tests introduced in Great Britain
- 1938 - In a process known as Anschluss, Austria is annexed into Nazi Germany
- 1938 - World News Roundup is broadcast for the first time on CBS Radio in the United States.
- 1943 - Failed assassin attempt on Hitler during Smolensk-Rastenburg flight
- 1963 - Indonesia & Netherlands reinstate diplomatic relations
- 1964 - Turkey threatens Cyprus with armed attack
- 1969 - Apollo 9 returns to Earth
- 1970 - Digital Equipment Corp introduces PDP-11 minicomputer
- 1973 - Syria adopts constitution
- 1986 - Soyuz T-15 carries 2 cosmonauts to Soviet space station Mir
- 1986 - Microsoft has its Initial public offering.
- 1989 - 27th shuttle, Discovery 8, launched, 1st woman to do the countdown
- 1989 - FDA orders recall of all Chilean fruit in US
- 1991 - Saudi Arabia and Iran say OPEC oil production cuts will take effect April 1
- 1992 - An earthquake registering 6.8 on the Richter scale kills over 500 in Erzincan, eastern Turkey.
- 1995 - Anti-fascist Kazakhstan anti-parliament forms
- 1997 - India's Missionaries of Charity chooses Sister Nirmala to succeed Mother Teresa as its leader
- 1997 - Phoenix lights seen at night over Phoenix, Arizona by hundreds of people, and by millions on television. Now a hotly debated controversy.

From KO Archives

## Musharraf Accepts Cricket Invitation

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has accepted an offer to travel to India to watch the cricket series between the two countries.

A Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman said Gen Musharraf had yet to decide which matches he would be attending.

It will be his first trip to India since a tense summit meeting between the two countries in Agra in 2001.

"We are looking at the schedule of the president," foreign office spokesman Jilil Abbas Jilani told foreign news agency.

"It depends on the convenience of the president," he added.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told parliament he hoped the president and his family would enjoy their visit.

(Kashmir Observer, 13 March, 2005)



THE tests of the times are such that it has become increasingly difficult to see our beliefs as they are instead of how they've been interpreted or perceived. Whether it is the worldover Islamophobic demonization of muslim women's choices or the policing within their own communities; women have found it extremely difficult to form an untainted opinion of their own choices as Muslims. There's been so much said about the oppressed state of women in Islam that one would think it true. One would think that Islam has only set limitations and boundaries upon women. Infact, in some cases, within our own communities too, these biases often keep us from realizing the true benefits of the rights given to women by Islam.

For a religion which is labelled "backward", in its own time, Islam bothered contemporaries for being "too progressive". A reason for this was the Prophet's fight for the rights of women.

The Prophet's phenomenal success in his mission has always intrigued scholars and laymen alike. As Muslims, we believe that his success was due in no small measure to his outstanding qualities as a leader and divine support. Thanks to the Prophet's extraordinary leadership skills, he inspired people to join his cause and commit wholeheartedly to it. He encouraged both men and women, young and old, of various levels and ranks. Many A adith are related to women's status, role, and societal position. Abdullah ibn Amr reports that the Messenger of Allah said, "The world is the provision, and the best provision is a righteous woman." [Shahih Muslim: 1467].

Abu Huraira reports that the Messenger of Allah , said, "I enjoin you to treat women well, for the women were created from a rib and the most cursed part of the rib is its uppermost part. If you try to straighten it, you will break it, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain curved. Thus, I enjoy you to be good to women". [Shahih Bukhari- 3153].

Before the advent of Islam, women were often treated worse than animals. The prophet wanted to stop all cruelties against women. He preached kindness towards them. He told the Muslims: "Fear Allah in respect of women"; "The best of you are they who behave best to their wives"; "A Muslim must not hate his wife, and if he is displeased with one bad quality in her, let him be pleased with one that is good"; and "the more civil and kind a Muslim is to his wife, the more perfect in faith he is."

The Prophet was most emphatic in enjoining Muslims to be kind to their women when he delivered his famous Khutbah on the occasion of Hajj al Wada (Farewell pilgrimage) and said: "Fear Allah regarding women. Verily you have married them with the trust of Allah and made their bodies lawful with the word of Allah. You have got (rights) over them, and they have got (rights) over you in respect of their food and clothing according to your means."

The first person to believe in Allah as the lord and Muhammad as the Messenger and prophet, was his wife, Khadija. She was the first person to support the messenger of Allah . She strengthened him, assured him, and consoled him. She received the prophet and his message with her big heart. After her, many women embraced Islam, not in compliance with their husbands' will, out of tribal solidarity, or in obedience to their father's command. Instead,

# For the Women

Neelofar Rafeeq



these women, in most cases, embraced Islam independently, out of conviction, and in demonstration of their right of choice.

Khadijah [R.A], the prophet's wife, was undoubtedly the first person to embrace Islam. It is worth remembering that she was attracted to the prophet by his trustworthiness and noble character. A successful entrepreneur of immense wealth, she rejected proposals for marriage from several men of high status. However, she was the one who proposed marriage to the prophet. Khadija [R.A] was not only the first to embrace Isla, but was also the first to place all her wealth at the service of Islam. When the Quraish taunted the prophet, saying that he was the poorest man in Makkah, she went out to the courtyard of the Haram where the Quraish had gathered and declared that she had gifted all of her wealth to Muhammad! Khadija stood by the prophet like a firm pillar of support until the end-sacrificing everything for the cause of Islam.

Khadija [R.A] was not alone in giving up everything for the cause of Islam. Another pioneer was Sumayyah, the mother of Ammar, Who is reported to be the seventh person to choose Islam. Her master unleashed a torrent of punishments upon her as soon as she decided on Islam. She was offered the choice of renouncing Islam or suffering ordeals. She preferred the latter, ultimately surrendering her life. She thus became the first martyr in Islam. The examples set by Sumayyah [R.A] were followed by women from all walks of life under varying circumstances. The sister of Umar [R.A] stood up to her brother, a notorious and relentless

**If there are men companions, there are also women companions. If there are 'men around the messenger,' there are also 'women around the messenger.' Each of these women played their role in the best and noblest way in the arena of faith and sincerity**

persecutor of Muslims, before his conversion to Islam. Umm Salamah and others were among the first batch of emigrants sent by the prophet to Abyssinia. She provided us with the narrative of their encounter with the emperor and the story of their experience in Abyssinia. The prophet's hijrah to Madinah was planned and executed with utmost finesse and skill. It was not a men's affair; women also played a crucial

role. A highly guarded secret, it was entrusted to both Asma [R.A] and Aisha [R.A]. They were in charge of arranging provisions for the journey. Even though Asma was in an advanced stage of pregnancy, she would deliver requirements by climbing mountains considered challenging for the toughest of men. Both refused to disclose the prophet's whereabouts and his companion despite threats from Abu jahal, described as the women did not lag behind men in any of the decisive events, which were always at the forefront alongside men.

If there are men companions, there are also women companions. If there are 'men around the messenger,' there are also 'women around the messenger.' Each of these women played their role in the best and noblest way in the arena of faith and sincerity. These women excellently maintained a necessary balance between the two segments of humanity: male and female. They stand out as outstanding models in the history of humanity in a way that made them unrivaled in the history of nations from the time of Adam until Allah inherited the earth and all that is on it. This essential and critical aspect in the life of Allah's Messenger, the message that he was carrying, the journey of Islam in its first step, and the appearance of the dawn of Islam after the stark darkness in which the entire humanity was living then needs to be written down in many reasons.

Allah's Messenger [S.A.W] imparted teaching to the women companions making these allowances and emphasizing them. There was a proper arrangement for women's education in the prophet's times. They did not come to the prophet's classes as men did, but other methods were adopted to teach them. The sahabah [R.A] taught their women and children the Quran at home. When the prophet said Knowledge of religion would disappear, Ziyad ibn Labid Ansari [R.A] submitted (How can Knowledge disappear from us when we recite the Quran, and by Allah, we will recite it and teach it to our women and our children). [Musnad Ahmad 4/160, Tirmidhi 3653].

The Prophet used to go to the exclusive gatherings of women companions to educate, encourage them. Syed Asma bint Yazid ibn sakan Ansariyah [R.A] was a knowledgeable and religious woman companion. The other women companions (sahabiyat) sent her as their envoy to the Prophet. She said to him, "I have come to you as an envoy of the wives of Muslims who say...and I say too- that Allah has sent you to men and women. We, women, have believed you, and we obey you. We are behind the veil and stay indoors in our homes. We fulfill every wish of our men and raise their children while men offer Salah with the congregation, participate in the funeral and jihad, and earn rewards and excellence. When they go to battle, we look after their property and children. These are evidence that the sahabiyat were very eager to acquire Knowledge. The prophet encouraged them.

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer*  
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# How Inclusive Is Indian Digitalisation?

TV Ramachandran

With 5G rolling out rapidly, there is massive euphoria about the pace of digitalisation in India and the fact that we have the highest data usage per subscriber. We have grown over fifteen-fold in data usage per subscriber per month from 2016 to 2022. However, one is also hearing persistent voices of doubt that make us pause and reflect.

Per Oxfam India's Report in December, there is an increasing divide visible in the digital space in the country. While 61% of men owned mobile phones in 2021, in the case of women, it was just 31%. It is also disturbing to note that digital technologies appear to remain the preserve of the urban, upper-caste, and upper-class individuals. While 3% of the rural population owned a computer before the pandemic, the number has dropped to just 1% after it. The digital divide is reflected more sharply in the areas of education and healthcare—82% of parents face difficulties in ensuring their children access to digital education, with signal and internet speed becoming the biggest issues in school. Meanwhile, 84% of government school teachers also face challenges for delivery through digital medium due to lack of devices and internet.

Per World Economic Forum, digital inequality is one of the largest risks for India in the short and medium term. Further, in the present environment of higher smartphone prices and sharply rising data charges, internet penetration has flattened, and this poses significant challenges for achieving digital inclusivity. It is great that 5G is being rolled out aggressively; however, it must be realised, as pointed out by International Telecommunications Union, that an inescapable fall-out of this would be a worsening digital divide in the first few years.

Both Nokia and Ericsson have reported a steep increase in mobile data traffic in India in



**The speed divide is also a matter of concern. There is a big quality gap between the better-connected urban affluent subscribers and the aam janata, highlighted by the large difference between the median and the mean internet speeds recorded by credible test agencies**

the last five years—they report data usage of over 19 GB per subscriber per month in 2022. However, TRAI's industry value remains around 16 GB per user per month. This is understandable because BSNL doesn't have 4G and Vi has been having major challenges in the marketplace. Airtel and Jio have nearly 70% of the market (in fact, probably 80% of the mobile broadband).

This means that the high data value of 19 GB in a major portion of the market is being sharply pulled down to 16 GB by a minor segment of possibly by around 20-30% users, who are possibly using 10 GB or less data per month. Meanwhile, mobile data tariffs have risen 60% in just three years, and are set to rise further. Additionally, the 5G capex investments have to be also recov-

ered. All this implies further worsening of the data-economy unevenness.

The speed divide is also a matter of concern. There is a big quality gap between the better-connected urban affluent subscribers and the aam janata, highlighted by the large difference between the median and the mean internet speeds recorded by credible test agencies. With 5G having been launched in several cities and towns, speed tests are picking up some of these values, and hence, the mean speed test results are tending to be deceptively higher. We need to assess realistically since 4G would continue to be the mainstay for a bit longer.

As of December 2022, there were 832 million broadband connections in India. Due to factors like multiple SIM ownership and difference between VLR and HLR, the number of unique broadband subscribers is estimated to be only around 500 million (a unique subscriber density of less than 40%). As cautioned by ITU, with 5G, in the near term, the 'haves' are likely to get more and more, while the 'have nots' will languish with inadequate connectivity. The NDGP 2018 targets of 55% unique mobile subscriber density by 2020 and 65% by 2022 are far away.

Several other hurdles are to be crossed to bridge the digital divide. These include inadequate digital literacy (only 38% households are digitally literate with urban at 61% and rural at only 25%), ICT devices for persons with disabilities, and internet affordability (India ranks 47 on internet affordability among 110 countries). Truly, we have miles to go on the highway of digital inclusion.

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



# Reading Can Save Your Life

Wafa Unus

As I sat at home, listening to the Baroque station on my Echo and reading a book against a backslash of mismatched antique books and current bestsellers, I looked at my hipster husband, who was lounging in his “reading chair” devouring a book of his own, and thought, “Are we bougie now?”

At the start of 2017, we decided to “change” our lifestyle. Cliché, I know, but we are no strangers to change. We shamelessly (and shamefully, to some who must deal with us) shape-shift, trying out new ways and styles of living, some traditional, others, not so much.

We had previously morphed into pseudo-hipsterdom when we left our mid-twenties and the East Coast behind. We ventured out West and took up residence in a small downtown with a burgeoning art scene and countless shops that boasted of artisanal, gourmet, craft or otherwise overly expensive items with vintage-style labels. The husband exchanged his slacks for dark-wash Levi’s, and I embraced a lifestyle that meshed downtown-chic with Wild West wanderlust.

All this to say, we’ve gone through our phases and “lifestyles,” carefully pulling what we like from each and wearing it like a Girl Scout, hap-hazardly stitching it onto a removable sash that we quickly hide in the event that someone cool comes around.

So, when we decided at the start of the year to embrace a true “reader’s” lifestyle, we went all in.

We’re avid readers as is. In fact, some of our favorite and most treasured possessions are books. We spend at least part of every weekend at the bookstore, and almost every vacation in between the bookshelves of some small dusty bookstore. Still, we realized we just weren’t reading enough.

We set independent goals for how many books we were going to read in the year. I decided to go for one a week. We carved out time every day to read. No excuses. We made lists of books we wanted to read, starting with ones on our bookshelf that we hadn’t gotten to. This was not an exercise in just reading on occasion or finishing a book or two. We had committed to establishing a home where a book in hand was an expectation.

It’s one thing, I realized, to read avidly, and another thing entirely to “be a reader.” I read incessantly for

academic purposes, but I wasn’t living as a reader. I was reading for a purposeful end, looking for some information to serve me in some way or another.

Now, I was reading differently. It wasn’t a matter of “reading for pleasure” either. I was reading to read. Reading was not a means of relaxation; it was quickly becoming a necessity, done as part of my daily routine, like eating or sleeping. A day without reading a portion of a book was a day incomplete.

This changed my life.

My entire day began to revolve around the idea of maximizing the opportunities for knowledge acquisition and this inherently meant that I would have to minimize the amount of wasted time. I took breaks during work to read, not for relaxing or escape, but because the result of reading was always a reenergizing of my ability to communicate and analyze information. It was as though I was plugging myself in and recharging my brain.

I started to wonder what exactly was happening. So, in the process of writing this piece, I researched and read numerous academic articles on the various factors that affect one’s ability to read and comprehend. There is no shortage of articles in the hard sciences talking about reading and cognition, or reading and brain development. However, I found it harder to find studies that provided some sort of comprehensive analysis of what reading can do for one’s brain and by extension, for one’s life. I assumed, and wrongfully so,



that the positive benefits from reading largely came from the increase in knowledge acquisition from the content of the text, or at the very least, with the relaxing properties of the experience of escapism or disconnectedness that reading affords.

This was a reductive assumption at best. The benefits of reading are far greater than simple knowledge acquisition. In fact, they are scientifically rooted in the increased

ability of a reader to interact with the outside world and manage one’s personal life in ways that are more productive.

As it turns out, studies have shown that individuals who read regularly have an easier time relating to individuals who are not like them, and coping with situations that are difficult or challenging. They are also better able to make decisions, prioritize tasks and plan. Readers have also been found to have lower levels of feelings of stress and depression than nonreaders. In fact, some studies have shown that readers are more likely to have a higher satisfaction with their lives than those who do not read.

Scientists at Emory University discovered that reading an exciting book changes the way brain circuits connect, and that the heightened connectivity lasts up to five days after the reading takes place.

This explained a lot. I felt smarter, not because I had retained everything that I had read, but because, scientifically, my brain was functioning at a higher or heightened

capacity.

As a writer, it proved to be an invaluable decision. Reading increased my ability to write and reenergized my ability (and willingness) to problem solve. Constant and unrelenting exposure to new thoughts, new styles of writing, new opinions, conversations and narratives enhanced the spectrum by which I was able to express my own.

It wasn’t about the information or practical exposure to the written word, but rather the cognitive and neurological reaction to the routine practice of reading.

Apparently, this type of exercising of the brain not only helps me now, but may also protect my brain as I get older. According to a study published in the journal of the American Academy of Neurology, a lifetime of reading resulted in slower memory decline. Among nonreaders with infrequent mental activity, the rate of decline was 48% faster than average. However, a study published in the journal of Social Science and Medicine found that of individuals who were ages 50 and older, those who read books lived almost two years longer than those who did not read books.

So, what if I just stuck to reading articles? I have certainly read my share in my professional and academic lives. Is all this book-reading necessary?

According to three Yale scientists, it kind of is.

“We found that reading books provided a greater benefit than reading newspapers or magazines. We uncovered that this effect is likely because books engage the reader’s mind more — providing more cognitive benefit, and therefore increasing the lifespan,” Avni Bavishi wrote in The Guardian.

The researchers discovered two distinct cognitive processes in their study. Books create a “survival advantage.” Not only do books encourage an immersive process but they also encourage cognitive engagement when the reader connects information from the book with real-world application and further questions the material ascertained in the reading. Additionally, reading books encourages the development of empathy and emotional intelligence as well as improving social perception. These cognitive tools have the potential to increase survival advantage. According to their study, the same effects do not occur through the reading of newspapers or magazines.

The immediate benefits of committing to a reader’s lifestyle are enough motivation for me to continue. However, considering the scientific research, should I need a little greater boost in motivation, I’ll simply remind myself that if I stop reading, it could actually kill me. That’s what the scientists said, right? That argument will work very well the next time I’m interrupted from a comfortable engagement in some captivating text.

If you need an excuse to read, consider that it is potentially instantly boosting your brain power (and charging it for almost a full week, like you’re some sort of cyborg), and adding years to your life.

At the start of the year and my new “reader’s lifestyle,” I began keeping track of all the books I have read. While that had been a great and rewarding exercise in itself, I am beginning to think that the true measure of this change is in the things I have accomplished while not reading. I understand now that the time and energy I have spent reading has not simply transported me somewhere else for a few moments of each day, but has transformed me in every moment of every day. The lifestyle is not defined by the act of reading, but by its impact.

The article was originally published by Islamic Monthly



IT’S ONE THING, I REALIZED, TO READ AVIDLY, AND ANOTHER THING ENTIRELY TO “BE A READER.” I read incessantly for academic purposes, but I wasn’t living as a reader. I was reading for a purposeful end, looking for some information to serve me in some way or another

## How 3 Years With No Sugar Changed My Life

Sarah Wilson

When I first quit sugar, I treated it as an invitation to try out a new way of living, just to – you know – see how it went (It went well, thanks!).

My physical and mental health were transformed in a matter of weeks. I then shared how I did it with an eight-week detox program, and a stack of people joined me at the party. Three years later and I’m still asked, almost hourly, “So you quit... and how do you feel?”

Before I share, let me also say this: Quitting sugar is not a diet. It’s not about crazy draconian rules and restrictive one-off weight-loss stunts. Indeed, it can be distilled into two supremely sensible concepts I reckon we all just get, intuitively:

**1. Quitting sugar is a way of living without processed food.** When you steer yourself away from sugar, it – by necessity – cuts out pretty much everything that comes in a packet or box. When people balk at my no-sugar status, I calmly point out that I simply don’t eat garbage. It’s that elegant.

**2. Quitting sugar is about eating like our great-grandparents used to, before the additives.** This – again by necessity – sees us eating whole, unmucked with foods that were commonplace before the advent of modern metabolic diseases. One hundred years ago we ate eggs for breakfast, meat at lunch, vegetables prepared simply, fruit as a treat and drank our milk whole. One hundred years ago



type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart disease and cholesterol issues were a much less significant problem.

So, back to the question. I quit sugar, and how do I feel?

My answer is this: Great.

So great I’ve just kept going and going.

Over time, I’ve let these principles

that guide my eating – of experimenting, crowding out poor choices with better options and being gentle – unfurl a little further. And they began to inform the way I exercise, shop, make decisions (from what dental floss to buy to which city I’ll live in next) and the way I keep my life balanced and meaningful.

**HOW QUITTING SUGAR IMPROVED MY HEALTH**

**1. My skin cleared and my wrinkles disappeared.**

I believe that sugar reacts with proteins in our bodies, changing their structure to form toxic advanced glycation end-products (AGEs), which accelerate the aging

process. Sugar makes collagen and elastin less supple, radiant, elastic and resilient, and more susceptible to sun damage. My skin changed dramatically when I quit, within weeks. I have fewer wrinkles now that I did five years ago. Many other quitters report the same.

**2. I lost weight.**

I put on weight from my thyroid disease a few years back and hadn’t been able to shift it. In eight weeks I lost quite a bit of that – not too much – but visibly I looked less puffy and I feel like I’m the right weight for my age and height and food-quantity choices. I now have a flat stomach – no more bloating or fluid retention. Seriously. I just don’t get it any more.

**3. I eat better.**

No deprivation, ever. I eat abundantly and freely. I replace sugar with fat to satiate, fuel and provide me with fun foods to eat and I don’t ever feel as though I’m missing out. The ultimate aim of quitting sugar is to return to our natural appetite, like when we were young kids. Now that I have quit, I let my body choose what it wants, confident that now that it’s not addicted to sugar, it will naturally choose what’s best.

**4. I have more self-control.**

A study published by the American Psychological Association found self-control is a limited resource we need to manage through our day so that it doesn’t get worn out too early. The scientists advise limiting

the number of restrictive mandates in our lives to save our self-control muscle for the stuff that really matters. So: don’t diet. Save your muscle for matters of love, career and travel, and who you want to be in life. I have regained my natural appetite and the freedom that that allows... Golly, it is magic.

**5. I healed my thyroid.**

My Hashimoto’s thyroiditis (an autoimmune disease affecting the thyroid gland) is what got me to quit sugar in the first place. It pretty much crippled me a few years ago, some side effects of which included: whacked-out blood sugar, screwed-up hormones, a predisposition to diabetes and high cholesterol, mood fluctuations, weakness to the point of not being able to work or walk for nine months, weight gain and much more. All of the above are now stable or overcome. I will have to manage my disease for the rest of my life. But I can do this now and live a long, well life, something others with my disease, including my uncle and grandmother, were not able to do. I’ve wiped out my antibody markers, something my doctors find astounding. I believe quitting sugar did this.

I’m not alone in feeling a drastic improvement after quitting sugar. Many of the 250,000+ people who have completed my 8-Week Program have had similar results. Have you quit sugar? What results did you see?

The article was originally published by Everyday Health



# Saudi Arabia's Golf Case Threatens To Spill Kingdom Secrets

Press Trust of India

**Washington:** Officials who oversee Saudi Arabia's tens of billions of dollars in U.S. investments haven't been shy about flaunting their ties with top American business and political figures, down to wearing MAGA caps as they swing golf clubs alongside former President Donald Trump. But they've been silent about many of the details of these relationships.

That's changing as a result of a federal lawsuit in California pitting the Saudi-owned golf tour upstart LIV against the PGA Tour. A judge, citing what she described as the kingdom's hands-on management of LIV, found that when it came to the new golf league, Saudi officials and the Saudi government aren't shielded from U.S. courts the way sovereign nations usually are.

While Saudi Arabia is fighting the decision, insisting U.S. courts have no jurisdiction over its high officials, the ruling means lawyers for the PGA Tour would be able to question top officials about business secrets that the Saudis have held close, such as details of deal-making involving

2024 presidential candidate Trump and others.

U.S. District Judge Beth Labson Freeman found that the Saudis had smacked up against a commercial exception to U.S. laws on sovereign immunity.

Yasir al Rumayyan, appointed under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to manage the oil-rich Saudi government's

600 billion-plus stockpile of wealth, is "up to his eyeballs" in managing the golf tour, Labson Freeman declared.

The finding follows PGA Tour claims that al Rumayyan himself recruited LIV players, approved LIV contracts and was otherwise the golf league's decision-maker and manager. Lawyers for Saudi Arabia counter that Rumayyan's actions were those of an eager investor, not of someone actually running a business.

The case matters beyond the world of golf. Saudi Arabia has been assertive in U.S. business investments and political relationships and could now face court demands for greater transparency and accountability.

The insistence by Saudi officials that U.S. courts have little or no say over their actions is

especially sensitive. Last year, the kingdom, with legal backing from the Biden administration, successfully argued that American courts had no authority to try the prince in a lawsuit over the 2018 killing of U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi. U.S. intelligence officials had concluded that aides and other Saudi officials sent by the prince killed Khashoggi. The slaying has opened a lasting rift between the Biden administration and Prince Mohammed, Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler.

Longstanding international law generally protects the leaders and government of one country from being hauled into another country's courts. Congress carved out commercial activity as an exception to that sovereign immunity in 1976.

The PGA Tour argued in a filing Friday that Saudi Arabia and its sovereign wealth fund under the prince have a record of flip-flopping on insisting upon sovereign immunity, depending on whether doing so works to their advantage in various business deals and lawsuits.

Saudi Arabia's critics and independent legal experts and

analysts say the kingdom may be in a tough spot legally.

"It seemed to me very clear that it wasn't immune" from U.S. courts when it came to operating the LIV golf tour and tournaments, said Donald Baker, a lawyer and a former head in the Justice Department's antitrust division who is not involved in the case.

Baker projected the case could lead to California's Northern District federal court seeking depositions from Saudi royals. Any decisions on whether other Saudi government business deals in the United States have similarly lost their immunity from U.S. courts would have to be made on a case-by-case basis, he said.

Sarah Leah Whitson, who runs the Democracy for the Arab World Now rights group founded by Khashoggi, said that "if they want to have sovereign immunity from their business transactions, it means they can sue people, they can demand that the judicial system enforces contracts and the laws governing contracts, but nobody can impose that against them. Nobody can hold them accountable."

The Saudi-funded professional golf tour, now in its second season

and with a slogan of "Golf, but louder," is known for its blaring music, record multimillion-dollar purses, ties with Trump and unfriendly rivalry with the PGA Tour. Trump courses this year will host three LIV tournaments, in deals whose financial terms have not been publicly disclosed.

Saudi Arabia's immunity problem comes in an antitrust lawsuit that was initially brought by LIV players against the long-established PGA Tour. The case already has revealed that the Saudi government's sovereign wealth fund owns 93% of LIV.

A lawyer for Saudi Arabia's side of the case did not respond to an email from The Associated Press seeking comment. A LIV spokeswoman referred questions to the Saudi sovereign wealth fund, which also did not respond to requests for comment.

Under the now eight-year rule of Saudi Arabia's king, Salman, his son Prince Mohammed has made the kingdom's sovereign wealth fund a primary tool of Saudi investment at home and abroad. The prince is the fund's chairman. Saudi officials say the aim is to diversify the kingdom's oil-funded economy.

CHIRAG DELHI FLYOVER CLOSURE

## South Delhi Commuters Brace For Traffic Woes Again

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: IT professional Perna Singh breathed a sigh of relief when the Ashram flyover reopened last week after being shut for close to 100 days. Residing in Vasant Kunj and travelling to Noida every day, the 24-year-old was among thousands of south Delhi residents who had to overcome traffic snarls to reach her workplace during this period.

Now, she is bracing to contend with another months-long round of snarls.

Traffic will be affected on certain routes in south Delhi for repair work on one of the carriageways of the Chirag Delhi flyover on Outer Ring Road. The flyover will remain closed for 25 days from Sunday for the first round of repair works, officials said.

"I live in Vasant Kunj and have to travel to Noida every day. This will be a headache for me. First, we had to suffer because of construction on the Ashram flyover and now (the authorities are closing the flyover at) Chirag Delhi.

"It will create a delay of at least an hour in my journey. I can't take the metro as I work

late. The alternative routes will only be longer. I wish the work is done quickly," Singh said.

For some, the feeling of deja vu began on Sunday itself as traffic snarls gripped parts of south Delhi.

"I came from Noida to my office on Press Enclave Marg. The sudden closure of a flyover carriageway has led to traffic jams and that too on a Sunday," said Shashank Singh, who works for a law firm.

"I had to take a turn towards Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg but was stuck in a traffic jam for 40 minutes," he added.

Commuters rued that their journeys would be prolonged because of the carriageway closure. Uday Bhardwaj, a private sector employee, said, "With the closure of a flyover carriageway, I will face a lot of problems in reaching my office at Panchsheel Park.

"I live in Noida and it usually took me 40 minutes to reach but now I will have to take a longer route that might be overcrowded due to diversions. There should be a systematic way to repair (these flyovers) and one should not stop their functioning anytime they want."

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### 'It's a Wake-up Call

Shabir Wani, a 45-year-old married man with two children.

"After sustained questioning," SSP said, "Shabir confessed his crime."

But what was even shocking for cops was the manner in which this crime was committed.

The mason had first murdered the girl before chopping her body into pieces and disposing of them at two locations: Railway bridge Ompora and Sebden area of Budgam.

Later, a battery of cops would visit the crime spot and retrieve the girl's severed head and other body parts.

"This was a blind murder but we managed to crack it within the shortest possible time," an investigating officer told Kashmir Observer. "The accused had chopped-off the body to conceal his crime."

At Soibugh, these crime details are now making many restless. Some are beating their chest in pain, while others are exhorting to make an example of such "monsters" committing these heinous crimes.

"It's a wake-up call for all of us," says Zubair Khan, a young villager. "We can't leave everything to the police. We need to identify these monsters among us and take them to task for the sake of our family's safety and security."

Meanwhile, police handed over the body parts to the family for last rites after conducting all the medico-legal formalities.

"She was the eldest among three siblings and recently engaged to a man in a neighboring village," Umar continues. "She was scheduled to get married in August this year."

Amid the family agony and account, the investigating officer quoted above said that the police caught the mason after checking the woman's call details.

"Initial investigations," he said, "have revealed that the accused and the slain might've developed some strain relation leading to the gruesome crime."

But SSP Budgam said the case is still a work in progress. "We're investigating all possible angles," he said. "The postmortem has been completed and we're collecting scientific evidence for the investigation."

However, many still wonder that if the accused and the girl were living in two different villages, how did the crime happen?

"Shabir used to visit my cousin's home as he was working in her area only," Umar says. "However, there wasn't any sort of relationship between them. But who knows he might've been blackmailing her."

### Govt Opens

J&K was the only state in the country which was exempted from property tax. However,

post abrogation of Article 370, the central laws were extended to the newly created UT and all the laws became applicable automatically.

It may be noted that in October 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) empowered the J&K administration to impose property taxes through the municipal corporations, municipal councils and municipal committees in the Union Territory. However the move was strongly opposed by the regional political parties prompting the government to keep the proposal on hold.

### FM To Unveil

Sitharaman.

In June 2018, the Jammu & Kashmir came under Governor's rule after BJP withdrew support to Mehbooba Mufti-led government citing deteriorating security situation in the state. The budget for 2019-20 was approved by the Governor-led State Administrative Council in December 2018 days before the erstwhile state came under President's rule under Article 356 of the Constitution of India.

In the run-up to the budget, top officials of J&K's Finance department have been stationed in New Delhi over the past three days.

"Director General, Budget MY Itoo and Joint Director Budget Shafat Yahya have already reached New Delhi. More officials are likely to join them tomorrow," a senior official of the Finance department told KNO.

He said the size of J&K budget for next fiscal would be more than 1.15 lakh crore.

For the ongoing fiscal (2022-23), Jammu and Kashmir was granted a budget of Rs 112950 crore.

In the Union budget for next fiscal, J&K has been allocated Rs 35581.44 crore, of which Rs 33,923 crore is central assistance. The central assistance is given mainly to the UT to meet its resource gap—(KNO)

### Atmosphere Of Peace

Participants from across India arrived here amid a beautiful and peaceful atmosphere and they will get a chance to interact with the Kashmir police and people here," Deka said, adding, "I hope they will spread a message of peace and love throughout India.

He also thanked Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh and his team for organizing the football championship, which he claimed is the biggest example of peace having been restored in the valley.

"I want these participants to know the situation of Kashmir and interact with the people. Sports is one of the mediums to spread peace and love. Arrangements were excellent and I am grateful to DG Police and his team for his flawless arrangements. Transportation, accommodation and ground facility for participants

was phenomenal," Deka said.

Heaping praises on J&K police for being resolute in challenging situations, the Director IB said police has always at the forefront to protect the country and its sovereignty

### Attempts On To Wipe

here on Sunday. Singh was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the opening ceremony of the 71st BN Mullik Memorial All India Police Football Championship at the Bakshi Stadium here.

Asked about the targeted killings, especially of minorities, in the Valley, Singh said while some incidents are taking place, violence has largely come down.

"Targeted killings have also come down. Some incidents take place sometimes but we take those seriously and counter measures are being taken. Attempts are on day and night to wipe out the remnants of terror and these will continue," Singh, the Jammu and Kashmir director-general of police, said.

The police chief also expressed happiness that youngsters who used to "play with grenades" are today taking part in sporting activities.

"Today, they have bats and balls and the message of peace rather than grenades in their hands. I want to congratulate my people, my youth for this," he said.

Singh, however, asserted that violence in Jammu and Kashmir has not totally ended.

"We have to remain cautious and alert. While we are moving forward on the path of peace, the enemy is finding it hard. The path of peace is getting stronger but our enemies cannot digest it. Our youth have to remain cautious and not fall prey to Pakistan's lust for violence and think about their families, society and its development," Singh said.

Referring to pro-Pakistan forces and Pakistani agencies, Singh said they have always indulged in violence in Kashmir and do not like peace here.

"I want to appeal to our youth that the time has come to make these evil designs unsuccessful and strengthen peace," he added.

Asked about the chances of infiltration along the Line of Control in the wake of melting snow, the police chief said the odds of infiltration increase whenever the snow melts.

"However, infiltration is in control to a larger extent than before and if there are any such attempts, we will foil those. We have taken all measures," he said.

Singh also accused Pakistani agencies of running narcotics and terror together in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We have seized many such assignments. Both these things (narcotics and ammunition)

are coming together. Even cash, which is being used for militancy.

"In Poonch, we seized cash of about Rs 1.5 crore, weapons, seven kilograms of heroin. This money made from the sale of narcotics is being used for terrorism. Our endeavour is to bust, end all such modules," he said.

Asked about the raids by the State Investigation Agency and the police's Special Investigation Unit into terror funding, he said these agencies and the National Investigation Agency are working together to root out such cartels.

"We have joined the Narcotics Control Bureau as well. Such cartels, which have interstate ramifications or operations, will be destroyed on every level. For that, a joint effort is needed and we are doing that," he added.

On the attachment of properties of those harbouring militants, the senior official said such steps are taken only after investigations.

"It is not a game that is being played. If it is found that the property owner has used his property (for terror) by his own will, then such an action is taken. Otherwise no action is taken.

"We warn people regularly not to use their properties for such acts. If someone is driving (militants) in his car and we seize it, is it wrong? If anyone is allowing them inside his home, and it is used for a terror activity, is it wrong when we attach it? We will not forgive any such act," he said.

Earlier, Intelligence Bureau Director Tapan Kumar Deka, who is also chairman of the All India Police Sports Control Board, and Singh threw open the tournament.

About 1,600 players and support staff from a record 42 teams -- 34 men's and eight women's -- are participating in the nine-day event.

### Violence In Kashmir

54th Raising Day Parade of CISF here, he said separatism, terrorism and anti-national activities in any part of the country will be dealt with firmly.

Highlighting the role of CAPF (Central Armed Police Forces) and state police in the fight against terror, he termed it 'significant' and said it has been demonstrated in the last nine years. Noting that under the leadership of PM Modi, the Centre has successfully tackled several internal security challenges in the last nine years, he affirmed that violence in Kashmir, Northeast and Left Wing Extremism-affected areas is coming down substantially, while the people's confidence is increasing.

The number of people involved in terror related activities is on the decline and many are laying down arms and returning to the mainstream, he said.

Averring that any country can make progress

only if the security of its airports, ports and industrial establishments is assured, Shah praised CISF personnel since its inception for their services to the country.

The security of airports, ports and other establishments of national importance is very important if the target of five trillion dollar economy set by PM Modi is to be realized, he said, expressing confidence that CISF would meet the challenges in the future.

The Union Home Ministry would leave no stone unturned to equip the CISF with the modern technologies to face the challenges of the future to ensure the security of airports, ports and others, he added.

Referring to media reports on the hybrid model adopted by CISF to train private security agencies, he said the CISF's role would increase as the force can act as a consultant in private companies.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, CISF performed duties at several airports and railway stations as first responders.

He paid homage to the CISF personnel who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty since its inception.

CISF Director General (DG) Sheel Vardhan Singh spoke on the occasion.

For the first time, the CISF is holding its annual Raising Day celebrations out of Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) at the CISF National Industrial Security Academy (NISA) at Hakimpet here.

### Villagers Lock

follow," ASP Bhadarwah Kameshwar Puri said.

"If this has been done by a teacher, as is evident from the video on social media, we will investigate and take strict action against him," Chowdhary said.

According to the officials, an inquiry has been ordered into the incident.

### Militant Hideout

three rocket boosters, the official said.

A case has been registered under relevant sections of law and investigation initiated, he added.

### Weapons, Narcotics

using the weapons and the IED, funded by the narco terrorists," the spokesperson said.

### 'Notorious' Woman

among the youth of the area," the spokesperson said.

Accordingly, he said, a case under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Chandoosa and an investigation has been initiated.

Despite being geographically distant from Kashmir how Kashmiris in West maintain cultural, social, and emotional linkages with their homeland. Tune-in to latest KO podcast

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## Asia's Largest Tulip Garden In Kashmir Ready To Welcome Visitors From March 19

Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** The Indira Gandhi Tulip Garden, Asia's largest tulip garden, ensconced between Dal Lake and the Zabarwan hills here is in full bloom and ready to welcome tourists from next week.

"Preparations like gardening, engineering, fungicide treatment, nutrient spraying and minor repair which we do before the tulip show are going on," Inam-ul-Rehman, in-charge of the tulip garden, told PTI.

The garden, a well-known landmark, will be open to the public from March 19.

Besides 1.5 million (15 lakh) tulips of various colours and hues, the garden, also known as Siraj Bagh, will have other spring flowers, such as hyacinths, daffodils, muscari and cyclamens, on display.

"Every year we expand

this garden and new varieties are here. This year we have extended the fountain channel.... It should set an example of gardening professionalism across the globe," Rehman said.

He said there will be a rainbow of tulip colours this year, including yellow, red, crimson, purple and white.

"The shadow of the Zabarwan mountains gives a good ambience to this garden. That is why people like this garden," he added.

Mushtaq Ahmad Mir, the supervisor of the garden, said preparations for the tulip garden are at their peak as it is expected to open next Sunday.

Expecting a heavy footfall of visitors at the garden this season, Mir said, "Work is going on day and night. We have a heavy flow of inquiries from outside Kashmir regarding



the opening of the garden." "Last year, it was a good sea-

son here as we had two lakh visitors and we hope it will be

better this time," he said. Formerly known as Siraj

Bagh, the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden was opened in 2008 by then chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Azad had conceived the idea to bridge the lean tourist arrival period between the winter and summer seasons in the valley.

While the tulip bloom remains from three to five weeks only, it is hard work for the ground staff throughout the year to ensure that the quality of the bulbs is maintained year after year.

"We are busy round the year in preparing the garden for the bloom period in March-April. Then we examine the tulips to check for diseases. In May and June, we start harvesting, which takes three months," Mir said.

Digging up the soil and adding fertilisers is done in October. "In November, we

sow tulip bulbs. Throughout the year the gardeners stay busy with this," Mir added.

Mohammad Maqbool, one of the gardeners, said tulips are very delicate flowers and bloom only at low temperatures.

"Tulips are very delicate flowers. They cannot survive in hot temperatures and bloom only in low temperatures," he said.

Ghulam Hassan, the head gardener, said, "This garden is spread over 1,050 kanals (52.5 hectares). It started with 50,000 tulips, then 3.5 lakh tulips and now, we have 15 lakh flowers," he said.

Hassan wants more and more people to visit the garden.

"We request the people here and outsiders to visit this garden. On March 19, it will be thrown open to the public," he said.

Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Line

## Banihal-Hingni Stretch Likely To Be Completed By June End



Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** Work on a 23-km stretch from Banihal to Hingni on the prestigious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Line (USBRL) project in Jammu and Kashmir is likely to be completed by the end of June, an official said.

The USBRL project is aimed at providing seamless and hassle-free connectivity to Kashmir valley.

Out of the total 272-km USBRL project, 161 km was commissioned in phases with first phase of 118-km Qazigund-Baramulla section commissioned in October 2009 followed by 18-km Banihal-Qazigund in June 2013 and 25-km Udhampur-Katra in July 2014.

According to Northern Railways, 93 percent work on the under-construction 111-km Banihal-Katra section has been completed. This sector has a total of 37 bridges and 35 tunnels with a length of 164 km.

"Banihal-Hingni portion of the USBRL will be ready (for operations) by June 30. The work is going on round-the-clock to achieve the deadline," Project Manager, ABCI Infrastructure, Nadeem Shamas, told PTI.

He said the sector passes through various tunnels and bridges and most of the work has been completed.

"The 765 metre-long cut and cover tunnel near Krawa village is complete in all respects. T 78 tunnel is also almost complete with Ballastless Track (BLT) laying works expected to be completed by April end. The two-km T 77D tunnel, which merges with an old tunnel having over 2.5 km length, is going through lining works and

is likely to be completed next month," he said.

He said after completion of the lining works, the BLT work is scheduled to be completed by May 30 and the tunnel will be handed over to Northern Railways.

The 272 km-long USBRL project was declared as a National Project in 2002 and is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

"Of the 111-km, 53 km falls in Ramban district and 87 percent of this length is covered by tunnels. The highest railway tunnel in the country, T-49 is constructed in the district," Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Mussarat Islam said.

The work on the 12.758 km long T-49 tunnel, connecting Khari Aarpinchla and Sumbar, was completed on February 15 last year, surpassing the Pir Panchal tunnel of 11.2 km length constructed by USBRL on the Banihal-Qazigund section.

"Given the pace of work, we are confident that the USBRL will be completed in the set timeline. The district administration has given full support to the execution companies whether it is Northern Railways, IRCON or Konkan railway," Islam said.

He said sometimes there are labour related issues but the administration actively resolves them to ensure that the work is not hampered.

"Additional Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Harbans Lal, who is also collector (for the twin national projects being executed by railways and National Highway Authority of India) are getting regular feedback and keeping a close watch on the works," he said.

## College of Temperate Sericulture Inaugurates Two Training Programmes for Rural Youth

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Two training programmes entitled as "Raw silk technology - a way forward for entrepreneurship development" and "Hands on training on propagation techniques of mulberry" were inaugurated at College of Temperate Sericulture, Mirgund, SKUAST-K, under Skill Training of Rural Youth (STRY), an official said Sunday.

A total of 56 trainees, 28 for each programme registered on the inaugural session. At the onset of programme, Dr. Aabid Khaliq Tantray, Assistant Professor and one of the programme coordinators welcomed the participants and briefed about the programme.

Prof K.A. Sahaf, Head Division of Silk Product Science formally welcomed the guest and trainees. Prof. M.F. Baqal, Associate Dean of the college spoke in detail about the relevance of the programme keeping in view recent advances made in the field of Sericulture and also com-

plemented Dr. Aabid Khaliq Tantray and Dr. Shabir Ahmad Wani, the coordinators of the two training programmes, for organizing skill based training modules for rural youth and desired that all the participants should take advantage of such programmes.

Further, Prof. Baqal expressed the gratitude in absence to Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice-Chancellor SKUAST-Kashmir, Director Extension Prof. Dil Mohammad Makdooimi for supporting the programme whole heartedly.

Earlier, faculty from Govt. Degree College Pattan including Prof. Imtiyaz Ahmad, Prof. Sajad Sarwar and Dr. Tabasum Nazir also spoke on the occasion and wished the programme a grand success.

Besides, scientists of the different divisions of the College attended the inaugural session. At last, Dr. Mushtaq Rasool Mir, Head, Division of Basic Sciences & Humanities, COTS presented vote of thanks.

## Protests Erupt After Lord Shiva's Idol Installed On Jammu Road

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** A group of Hindu activists on Sunday staged a protest against the installation of Lord Shiva's idol on a busy road near Beli Charana chowk here and demanded its immediate relocation to a temple.

The protesters assembled in front of the recently installed idol and raised slogans against the administration for allegedly hurting their sentiments.

Rashtriya Bajrang Dal president Rakesh Bajrang, who was also part of the protest, said the ideal place for installing an idol is a temple and not in the middle of a busy road.

"We are here to protest against the installation of Lord Shiva's idol on such a busy thoroughfare. Our sentiments are hurt by this action as this is not the proper place to place



an idol," an agitated protester said, condemning the action of the administration.

He said rituals are associated with the installation of any idol but the concerned government agency placed the statue like a showpiece which is not acceptable.

Demanding immediate relocation of the idol to a temple,

Bajrang said, "The idol will gather dust from the passing vehicles and there are also chances that any miscreant can desecrate it."

"If they are not interested in doing so, let them build a temple for the idol here," he said, adding that more protests will happen if appropriate action was not taken.

2024 General Elections

## 'Hath Se Hath Jodo' Yatra Aims At Mobilizing Public Support: Cong

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Congress president Vikar Rasool Wani on Sunday said the party's 'Hath se Hath Jodo' yatra is aimed at mobilising public support with an eye on next year's general elections.

Wani, along with Congress working president Raman Bhalla, led the yatra through the Makhanpur Gujran Panchayat and highlighted issues of public concern such as property tax, inflation and unemployment.

"Hath se Hath Jodo yatra is aimed at reaching out to people in the hinterlands ahead of the 2024 general elections...it will strengthen the Congress'



prospects and act as an extension of the Kanyakumari-Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra which concluded in Srinagar," Wani said.

"The aim of the campaign is to apprise the people of the hatred which is seen in society and the prevailing situation in Jammu and Kashmir. We have presented certain facts before the public on inflation,

joblessness and downgrading and bifurcation of J&K into two Union territories," he said.

Bhalla said the campaign has received an overwhelming response like the Bharat Jodo Yatra. "The Congress plays a constructive role and makes strenuous efforts to ensure justice for the people and bring the country back on the path of prosperity and development," he added.

"Under this campaign, by reaching six lakh villages, 2.50 lakh gram panchayats and 10 lakh polling booths, the message of Rahul Gandhi and the chargesheet of the failures of the Modi government would be delivered to every household," Bhalla said.

## Lavender Farmers In J&K Bringing 'Purple Revolution'

Press Trust Of India

**BHADERWAH:** About 2,500 farmers in the hilly Bhaderwah town of Jammu and Kashmir have given up their age-old tradition of growing maize to embrace the profitable lavender farming.

Union minister Jitendra Singh said Bhaderwah has created history by bringing purple revolution in the country by adopting the plantation of this aromatic flower.

According to these farmers of Doda district, who are growing lavender under the Union government's Aroma Mission, the unconventional farming of aromatic plants has helped them become 'atmanirbhar'.

Lavender was introduced to the temperate regions of the Jammu division by the Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM) under the CSIR-Aroma Mission in 2018. The institute initially tried to popularise it in Doda, Kishtwar, and Rajouri districts.

Finding suitable cold climate and favourable growing condi-



tions, a couple of small and marginal farmers of Bhaderwah region took the risk and switched to lavender cultivation in 2017. Until then farming of maize crops was the only agricultural practice for them.

Sensing the scope of increasing their income, the farmers joined the initiative under CSIR-Aroma Mission in a big way and within five years, 2,500 farmers started cultivating lavender in their fields at several villages, including Tipri, Lehrote, Killar, Koundla, Himote, Saringal, Butla, Nalthi and Nakshari.

Singh, the minister of state in the prime minister's office, said,

said things have changed for the good as new generation and entrepreneurs are happily working in lavender fields, which not only provide them an opportunity to increase their income by manifold but they are also generating employment for others.

"The government is providing all assistance including funding, technology and marketing to the farmers associated with lavender so that they do not have to face any problem at any stage," the minister said.

Touqeer Bagban (36), a farmer from Bhaderwah, has come a long way to become an inspiration for many. This Class XI pass-out is known for changing the face of farming in Bhaderwah.

"I followed the same traditional methods of farming as my forefathers. Due to the limited scope of irrigation in the Kandi belts, we were not able to switch over to other crops which could bring us more profit," said Bagban, who represents Udhampur parliamentary constituency which also covers Doda,

lavender farming.

Bagban started lavender cultivation on a small piece of land at Dandi village in 2017 and now he owns a company which manufactures aromatic products. His success story and style of farming does not only follow the usual rags-to-riches plot but he has also modernised farming.

"In 2017, I got in touch with IIIM, Jammu and got motivated to cultivate new crops. They provided me with lavender saplings and the results turned out to be fruitful," Bagban, who has a nursery with 5.5 lakh lavender plants, said.

Farmers come to him not only from J&K but also from other states with similar climates like northeastern states, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh to buy lavender seedlings.

Bagban has also installed the machinery to extract oil from lavender flowers and manufacture aromatic products thereby successfully starting a startup and adding value addition to lavender.

## Kulgam Admin Provides Assistance To Fire Victims

Observer News Service

**KULGAM:** On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, a team headed by SDM Noorabad Bashir Ul Hassani visited Mandguri village and provided interim relief to the fire victims whose residential houses were gutted in the fire, an official spokesperson said Sunday.

He said essential kits con-

taining utensils, blankets and items of immediate requirement were distributed among the affected families.

The fire incident had occurred at Mandguri D.H.Pora Kulgam yesterday evening wherein two residential houses were completely gutted by fire. SDM Noorabad said that the case under SDRF has being prepared for further relief.

The SDM was accompanied by Tehsildar and other officers.

## Principal Secy HED Reviews Functioning Of KD Colleges

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Principal Secretary to Government, Higher Education Department, Alok Kumar chaired a meeting with Principals of Kashmir division colleges to review the academic and administrative functioning of the higher educational institutions.

The meeting was held at Government College for Women, M.A. Road and was also attended by Director Colleges, Prof. (Dr.) Yasmeen Ashai and Nodal Principal Kashmir, Prof. (Dr.) Khurshid Ahmad Khan besides other officials of higher education department.

Kumar impressed on the principals to ensure smooth admission process for the ensuing academic session on the basis of Common University Entrance Test (CUET) in line with the UGC guidelines and implementation of National Education Policy-2020. CUET is being held by the National Testing Agency (NTA) to provide a single-window opportunity to students to seek admission in any of the universities across the country.

It was decided that Islamia College of Science & Commerce shall conduct capacity building workshop for CUET so that different colleges can facilitate students to complete the admission formalities without any hassles and in an error free manner.

It was also decided that print and electronic media shall be used to reach out to the aspirants for providing basic information about the admission process. A brief vid-

eo tutorial shall also be produced for listing the 'Do's and Don'ts' of the procedure. Besides, principals will also proactively engage with the schools in their respective catchment areas to apprise the students about the admission formalities. Pertinently, the last date to apply for CUET UG 2023 has been extended till 30 March.

The meeting was informed that the process for appointing lecturers on academic arrangement basis in the colleges has been expedited and will be completed in coming days.

The meeting also reviewed the status of developmental works at different colleges. The principals shared their inputs regarding some of the factors impeding developmental works. The Principal Secretary called for better coordination between the college principals and the executing agencies to expedite the projects.

The principals briefed the Principal Secretary about the progress made in their respective colleges on academic and administrative fronts. He was also apprised about the progress in resolving the issues pertaining to land acquisition in some colleges.

Kumar said the purpose of calling a joint meeting of all principals was to sort out the pending issues in a face-to-face setting rather than relying on the more time consuming letter correspondence. He also assured the principals to look into specific issues of the colleges in separate one-on-one meetings with the concerned principals.





## All India Police C'ship: 6 Matches Played On Day 1

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Six matches were played on the first day of the 71st B.N Mullik Memorial All India Police Football Championship, which was declared open on Sunday by Director General of Police, J&K Shri Dilbag Singh and Director Intelligence Bureau Tapan Kumar Deka at Bakshi Stadium here.

The opening day matches were played at different venues including Polo Ground, Synthetic Turf Ground, Bakshi Stadium and Kashmir University.

At Polo Ground, Delhi Police played a 1-1 draw with Assam

Police in a Group H match. In other match, Chandigarh Police defeated RPF 3-0 in Group B.

At Synthetic Turf TRC, Meghalaya Police was defeated 2-0 by Tamil Nadu Police, while Rajasthan Police beat Uttarakhand Police 1-0.

At Bakshi Stadium, BSF routed Haryana Police 5-0. At Kashmir University, Manipur Police beat Puducherry Police 1-0.

Earlier, the championship began with a colourful ceremony at Bakshi Stadium. At least 42 teams from across the country including 34 men's and eight women's teams are participating in the tournament.

## Bangladesh Secures T20 Series Win Over England



Agencies

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh wrapped up the three-match T20 series against England with a game to spare as Mehidy Hasan claimed a career-best 4-12 and added a crucial 20-run knock to secure a four-wicket victory over the tourists on Sunday.

Bangladesh held England to a lowly 117 in 20 overs, before knocking off the target with seven balls to spare, reaching 120-6. Najmul Hossain, who was instrumental in the six-wicket victory in the first match with a 30-ball 51, was not out on 46, helping the home side stay in the contest despite England bowlers making inroads at regular intervals.

Fast bowler Jofra Archer gave England a flicker of hope, claiming 3-13 but Najmul held his nerve.

Bangladesh lost both openers

— Liton Das and Rony Talukdar — while chasing the moderate target for just 27 runs.

Later, Najmul held one end with confidence but the chase didn't get going in earnest until Mehidy struck two sixes as part of his 16- ball 20.

Archer removed him with a slower delivery and then delivered a ball that clocked 92 mph to rattle the stump of Afif Hossain.

In between, Moeen Ali claimed the wicket of skipper Shakib Al Hasan as Bangladesh was left at 100-6 in the 18th over.

England appeared to be on course to save the game, sensing an unlikely victory, but Najmul and Taskin Ahmed hit three boundaries off Chris Jordan's first over of the day to close out the contest.

Taskin who hit the winning boundary was not out on 8.

The third and final T20 is on Tuesday. (AP)

## Arsenal Regains Lead With 3-0 Win Over Fulham



Agencies

**LONDON:** Arsenal reclaimed its five-point lead in the Premier League by outclassing Fulham in a 3-0 win on Sunday.

Gabriel Magalhães, Gabriel Martinelli and Martin Odegaard scored first-half goals at Craven Cottage to secure a fifth straight victory in the league for Arsenal.

Leandro Trossard provided the assist for all three goals.

Second-place Manchester City had applied pressure on Mikel Arteta's team by winning 1-0 at Crystal Palace on Saturday, briefly reducing the gap to two points.

Arsenal and City have 11 games left.

There was further good news for Arsenal, with Brazil striker Gabriel Jesus coming off the bench in the 77th for his first appearance since undergoing sur-

gery on Dec. 6 on a medial collateral ligament injury sustained during the World Cup.

Arsenal had already had a goal disallowed for offside following a video review by the time Gabriel headed in a left-wing corner from Trossard in the 21st minute.

The Belgium midfielder set up the second goal five minutes later, too, digging out a cross from the left that Martinelli nodded in after beating Fulham defender Antonee Robinson to the ball.

Trossard completed his hat trick of assists in the second minute of first-half stoppage time but the goal owed more to the technical skill of Odegaard, who brought down the cross into the area, cut inside and smashed a shot past Bernd Leno — Fulham's former Arsenal goalkeeper. (AP)

## IND v AUS: Kohli's 186 Helps Set Up Exciting Day 5



Press Trust of India

**AHMEDABAD:** India's batting mainstay Virat Kohli finally ended a near 40-month wait for his 28th Test hundred as his scrappy but brilliantly effective 186 set up a gripping final day of the fourth Test against Australia here on Sunday.

Kohli's epic knock helped India amass 571 in response to Australia's first innings score of 480.

With a lead of 91 runs, India had a go at Australia in the six overs before stumps but visitors managed to keep all wickets intact.

With a lead of 88 at close, India will have to go for the jugular on day five on a track where there is finally some turn and bounce on offer but not something that batters can't tackle.

A draw still looks the most likely result but if any team wins the Test from here, it will be India, who would then go on to win the series 3-1 and directly qualify for the World Test

Championship final, without having to wait on the fate of Sri Lanka's Test series versus New Zealand.

For the 15,000 odd people present at Motera, it was a Sunday to remember as Kohli guided Nathan Lyon towards mid-wicket to complete his first Test hundred since November 2019. The hundred, his 75th in international cricket, came off 241 balls.

The celebrations were muted as there was still some way to go before India would be in driver's seat and hence he didn't want to lose focus by getting elated. There was a smile of satisfaction and a now familiar kiss on his engagement ring.

It was an innings of different character from Kohli. Having had his troubles dealing with deliveries outside the off-stump, he traded caution in exchange of flair and hardly played those beastly cover drives till he reached his hundred.

Kohli showed copious

amount of patience on way to a gritty hundred before changing gears.

A supremely fit athlete, Kohli ran 84 singles, 18 doubles and twice he took three runs, including once when he was batting in his 160s. By sheer volume of running between the wickets, he collected 126 of his 186 runs with 15 hits to the fence.

It was pity that Shreyas Iyer couldn't turn up for batting due to recurring back pain and Kohli was the ninth and last Indian man to be dismissed after his 364 ball knock that spanned over 8 hours and 36 minutes. No one deserved those 14 runs more than him.

He did have some significant partnerships but no better than the 162 that he added for the sixth wicket with an ever-improving Axar Patel (79 off 113 balls).

Australian bowlers though had a good morning session as India managed only 73 in the 32 overs that were sent down.

## NZ To Chase 257 On Final Day Of 1st SL Test



Press Trust of India

**CHRISTCHURCH:** Ageless Angelo Mathews ground out a determined century to steady Sri Lanka, then put it back into a competitive position in a closely-fought match Sunday on the fourth day of the first test against New Zealand.

At 35 and in his 101st test, Mathews produced his 14th century and one of his best. He was at the crease when play began, 20 not out overnight, and was finally out after tea for 115 with Sri Lanka 242 runs in front after trailing by 18 on the first innings.

Sri Lanka eventually was all out for 302, a lead of 284. At stumps, after 17 overs, New Zealand was 28-1, still 256 behind, and the test is set for a thrilling final day. If New Zealand reaches its target, it will be its third-highest successful run chase in tests.

If Sri Lanka wins, it will be only for the third time in New Zealand and it will keep alive its chances of reaching the final of the World Test Championship.

Sri Lanka improved its chances of winning the match and leading the two-match series when it dismissed Devon Conway for 1 in the fifth over. Conway played defensively but with an unusually full follow-through at a ball from Kasun Rajitha which held up at little. The ball flew back to the bowler who took a two-handed catch above his head.

On a day of undulating fortunes when both teams at times felt in charge, Mathews was the most influential figure.

Sri Lanka began the day at 83-3, effectively 65-3 because of New Zealand's narrow first innings lead. The wicket of nightwatchman Prabath Jayasuriya was the only one to fall in a slow morning session after which Mathews was 54 and Sri Lanka was 150-4, leading by 132.

But Mathews became the face of Sri Lanka's resistance, batting on through the first two sessions, even when the ball was bouncing and moving. He picked his shots carefully to minimize risk and built his century in just under 5-1/2 hours from 235 balls with 11 fours.

## BBC Sports Coverage Disrupted For 2nd Day Over Lineker Row

**BBC SPORT**

Agencies

**LONDON:** The BBC's sports coverage faced a second day of disruption on Sunday as several members of its staff refused to work in solidarity with star football host Gary Lineker, who was taken off air over a tweet criticising the British government's migration policy.

In a post on Tuesday on his Twitter account that has 8.7 million followers, 62-year-old Lineker — a former England football captain and now one of the UK's most influential media figures — compared Rishi Sunak government's language about migrants to that used in Nazi Germany.

He has not tweeted or commented since the row erupted but the broadcaster's decision to block him from its flagship "Match of the Day" football show triggered mass walkouts by staff in solidarity.

Regular sport programmes that were due to be on-air have been replaced with previously aired episodes and some fixtures are to be telecast without the regular supporting expert commentary.

Tim Davie, the BBC's director-general, apologised for the disruption and exuded hope that Lineker would be back on air soon.

"We are working very hard to resolve this situation and make sure we get output on air," Davie told the BBC.

"I am in listening mode. I want to make sure that going forward we have a workable solution. To be clear, success for me is: Gary gets back on air," he said.

There is mounting pressure on the top team to resolve the crisis after the BBC, which operates through a taxpayer-funded

licence fee, said it considered Lineker posting such views on social media as a breach of its impartiality guidelines.

UK Chancellor Jeremy Hunt told Sky News that he "profoundly" disagrees with Lineker's comments, but stopped short of demanding an apology.

"If you believe in BBC independence, then it's not for the Chancellor or any other government minister to say how these issues are resolved," said Hunt.

"The central thing that people want to know is that there isn't any kind of political agenda in the way the BBC goes about its business, which I'm not saying there is, but that is the confidence people need to have," he added.

The Conservative government attacked Lineker's Nazi comparison of a planned illegal migrant crackdown as unacceptable, with UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman among the ministers who branded it "offensive".

"I think it is, from a personal point of view, to hear that characterisation is offensive because my husband is Jewish, my children are therefore direct descendants from people who were murdered in gas chambers during the Holocaust," Braverman told the BBC in the wake of the row earlier this week.

This is the latest controversy over the role of the 100-year-old BBC after the broadcaster's neutrality came under recent scrutiny over revelations that its chairman, Richard Sharp — a donor for the governing Conservative Party — was involved in the arrangement of a loan for the then Prime Minister Boris Johnson in 2021, weeks before he was appointed to the BBC post on the government's recommendation.

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