

## Rage To Rare: Is Kashmir's Primetime Pitch Fading?

Rhys Gonsalves

Kashmir has ceased to be a 'hot pursuit' for the mainland media amid the new confrontations and corporate crunches in the Indian subcontinent from the last two years.

While the change has apparently alleviated anxiety in the living rooms of the valley, it has put limelight on the newsroom tone and tenor.

This sweeping media change is being noted, among others, by Vipin Pubby, a former Resident Editor of Indian Express.



Unlike the pre-Article 370 abrogation days, Pubby says, Kashmir is no longer a prime-time debate for the news channels of Noida — the address of

the contemporary media corp in India.

"The obsession of Kashmir is becoming lesser in the country now," says Pubby, a

**KASHMIR HAS BECOME LESS OF A TOPIC OF DISCUSSION** in the last two years as the situation on the ground has improved. I rarely see debates on Kashmir now, except when there's a targeted killing or something similar."

veteran with over four decades in journalism.

"But some Kashmir discussions are still being fuelled by the region's protracted problem, but they aren't as belligerent broadcasts as they used to be."

Unlike the earlier "right-wing ruckus", creating the comment-war on social media, the contemporary debates don't seem to accommodate Kashmir much.

Many media watchers from

Delhi to Srinagar call it a shifted strategy.

"But more than a strategy, it's about a situation," says Majid Hyderi, one of the regular primetime faces from Kashmir.

"Kashmir has become less of a topic of discussion in the last two years as the situation on the ground has improved. I rarely see debates on Kashmir now, except when there's a targeted killing or something similar."

Previously, the scribe-cum-analyst says, there used to be a debate on Kashmir every evening, but that has **More on P6**

## India To Buy Military Hardware For Rs 70,584 Cr

Press Trust Of India

**New Delhi:** India on Thursday approved capital acquisition of a plethora of indigenously-developed military hardware including indigenous BrahMos missiles, marine diesel engine, artillery gun system, electronic warfare suits and utility helicopters at a cost of Rs 70,584 crore as part of a mega procurement plan.

Out of the total acquisition plan, the Indian Navy's proposals constitute more than Rs 56,000 crore, which largely included Shakti Electronic Warfare (EW) systems, maritime helicopters and other key equipment, officials said.

All the platforms and weapons systems are being procured from domestic sources.

The other key military hardware which are being procured included long range stand-off weapon (LRSOW), K-9 Vajra-T gun system, 155mm/52 caliber advanced towed artillery gun system (ATAGS) and gun towing vehicles (GTVs) for the Indian Army.

The approval to the procurement proposals has been accorded by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, an official statement said.

The approval for a medium speed marine diesel engine is seen as a significant step as for the first time, India is venturing into the development and manufacturing of such engines indigenously.

The go ahead to the fresh procurement proposals came amid the nearly three-year standoff along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh with China.

The DAC accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for capital acquisition amounting to Rs 70,584 crore and all the procurement will be made under the Buy (Indian-IDDM) category.

The total approval granted for capital acquisition in the financial year 2022-23 now stands at Rs 2,71,538 crore, **More on P6**

## J&K Politicians Meet CEC, Seek Early Polls

ECI Assured Us That They Will Do Something Soon On Polls: Farooq Abdullah

Agencies

**New Delhi:** A delegation of Opposition leaders from Jammu and Kashmir led by veteran politician and Lok Sabha member Farooq Abdullah met Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar on Thursday and pressed for holding early assembly polls in the Union Territory for reviving the democratic process there.

After consulting almost all national and regional parties, the

National Conference (NC) president along with leaders from Congress, CPI (M), Dogra Sabha, Panther's Party, PDP and Awami National Conference, met Kumar and other members of the Election Commission (EC) here and submitted a memorandum demanding early polls.

The two-page memorandum has as its signatories NCP leader Sharad Pawar, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, CPI(M) general secretary **More on P6**



A girl walks under the blooming almond trees inside the majestic Badamwari garden in Srinagar on a bright sunny morning. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

## 'VIP' Gujarati Man Turns Out To Be Conman

Kiran Bhai Patel Poses As Top PMO Official, Enjoys Security Cover; 5-Star Hotel Accommodation Before Cops Nab Him

Majid Nabi

**Srinagar:** In what seems to be like a script of a Bollywood blockbuster, a man from Gujarat posed as a senior official in the Prime Minister's office (PMO) and enjoyed security cover and five-star hotel stay in Kashmir before the cops lifted his cover and arrested him.

Kiran Bhai Patel from Gujarat was arrested by police earlier this month for masquerading as Additional Director (Strategy & Campaigns) at the Prime Minister's Office, New Delhi and resorting to cheating, forgery and impersonation to dupe gullible people by promising them government jobs, a police official said Thursday.

Patel, who was on his third visit to the valley, was



arrested on March 3, a day after an FIR was registered against him at the police station Nishat.

"He was immediately arrested and detained at Nishat police station. During investigation, it came to fore that the accused has cheated many people in J&K and outside. A formal case has been

registered in this regard and investigation set into motion," the official said.

When asked about the number of people cheated by the conman during his stay in Valley, the official said the investigation into the case is ongoing and any revelation at this stage might 'hamper' the same. Patel had **More on P6**

## Panthyal 'Ghost Tamed' New Tunnel Opens For Traffic Along Banihal Highway



Press Trust Of India

**Jammu:** The T5 tunnel that bypasses the landslide-prone Panthyal stretch on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was opened for traffic on Thursday, officials said.

Work on the twin-tube 880-metre tunnel, part of the highway realignment project, started in February 2020. Its completion has put an end to the threat of shooting stones which have consumed numerous human lives, they said.

Over the past couple of years, a temporary iron and steel

tunnel at the crucial stretch provided some relief to the people travelling on the highway. But the rolling stones continued to cause frequent disruptions in the smooth movement of traffic.

"The T5 tunnel at Panthyal was opened for two-way traffic which will now move smoothly without the fear of disruption from falling rocks," Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Mussarat Islam told PTI.

The four-laning project of the 270-km highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, was started by the **More on P6**

### Dangri Killings

## DGP Calls For More Efforts To Track Down Culprits

Observer News Service

**Jammu:** The Director General of Police, Dilbag Singh on Thursday called upon police, army and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to put in more efforts to track down the culprits involved in the killing of seven people in Dangri village of Rajouri district.

Singh passed these directions while chairing a joint meeting of officers of police, Army during his visit to the

border district of Rajouri, a police spokesperson said

The DGP, who was accompanied by ADGP Jammu Zone, Mukesh Singh, also reviewed the security scenario of Rajouri-Poonch Range.

Seven people were killed and 14 injured as militants attacked Dhangri on January 1, this year. While five people, including two brothers, were killed in the firing by the militants, two children died when an improvised explosive device **More on P6**

### Corps Commander Meets Troops At Siachen

**Siachen,** the world's highest battle ground, was the first port of call of Lt General Rashim Bali who took over as the corps commander of the strategically based XIV Corps of the Army earlier this week. During his visit to the Siachen Glacier on Thursday, Lt Gen Bali interacted with the troops and commended them for their zeal and enthusiasm in the harsh terrain and inclement weather. Lt Gen Bali took over the reins of XIV Corps, also known as the Fire and Fury Corps, from Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta. Lt Gen Bali was earlier posted as **More on P6**

### Two CRPF Men Injured In Misfire

**Two** personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), including a Sub-Inspector, were injured Thursday in accidental firing in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said. Constable Navjot Rai was on patrolling duty near Degree College Poonch when his service rifle went off accidentally, resulting in bullet injuries to himself and Sub-Inspector Rajini Kanta, the officials said. They said both the personnel were immediately shifted to a nearby district hospital in Poonch by their colleagues. After first aid, the injured were referred to the **More on P6**

### Rs 7 Cr Worth Drugs Recovered Near LoC

**Security** forces recovered narcotics worth about Rs 7 crore near the Line of Control (LoC) in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Thursday. "On March 15, while on a routine area domination patrol, troops of Dagger Division found a suspicious package just a few metres away from the LoC in Uri sector," a police official said. He said a search operation by the security forces led to the recovery of approximately one kilogram of narcotics worth about Rs 7 crore from the general area of Churunda. A case has been **More on P6**

### 2 Army Officers Killed In Chopper Crash

**A** cheetah helicopter of the Indian Army, with two pilots on board, crashed near Mandala in West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday morning, a defence spokesperson said. The chopper, carrying a lieutenant and a major, had taken off from Sange village in the district at 9 am and was headed for Missamari in Assam's Sonitpur district. The helicopter, which was flying an operational sortie, lost contact with Air Traffic Control (ATC) around 9.15 am, Lt Colonel Mahendra Rawat said. "It crashed near Mandala, west of Bomdila. Search **More on P6**

### Entire Staff Of PHC Found Absent

**Almost** the entire staff of the Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Ashtingo in Bandipora district was found absent from their duties and have been put on notice by the Block Medical Officer Bandipora. Ten out of 12 staff members including two medical officers (MO), two pharmacists, three nurses, one BHW, one driver and one sweeper were found absent during a surprise inspection at PHC by the BMO Dr Masarat Iqbal on 13 March. A show-cause notice has been served to the employees asking them to explain their position before action shall **More on P6**

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

### Leh Highway Reopens For Traffic

**The** 434-km strategic Srinagar-Leh national highway was reopened for vehicular traffic on Thursday in a record time of 68 days after its closure in January this year following heavy snowfall, officials said. A trial movement was conducted successfully and the decision to reopen the road for civilian traffic will be taken after a joint inspection by the civil administrations of the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir. The highway was thrown open for traffic at the Zojila Pass, situated at an altitude of 11,650 feet, by **More on P6**









## UIDAI Makes Online Aadhaar Updation Free Till June 14

DC Srinagar Appeals People To Avail Free Service

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has made the online Aadhaar document updation process free of cost, a move that is expected to benefit millions of residents.

A people-centric move, has been taken as part of the Digital India initiative where the users can avail the free document update facility on 'myAadhaar' portal for the next three months upto June 14 ,2023 starting from March 15, 2023.

According to the UIDAI, no fee will be charged from the residents for online updation of the Proof of Identity and Proof of Address in Aadhaar during the limited period. The Residents who have not updated their Aadhaar in the last 8-10 years are required to upload their

Proof of Identity and Proof of Address documents.

Much to the relief of the residents, UIDAI has waived off the charges for the online Aadhaar document update service for a limited period of 3 months and Aadhaar On-line services can be availed from the myAadhaar portal (myaadhaar.uidai.gov.in) and through myAadhaar app where also the list of documents acceptable as Proof of Identity and Proof of Address, is available.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar has appealed to the general public of the District to take maximum benefit from this free window opportunity and keep their Aadhaar updated. He also asked the residents to keep their mobile numbers updated in Aadhaar in order to avail hassle free online services.

## RTO To Streamline All Routes In Srinagar With Numbers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Authorities on Thursday said the process integration of all routes for minibus operators in Srinagar as well as the allocation of route numbers will be started in the next ten days. Three routes have already been integrated to "streamline" the minibus service.

Syed Shahnawaz Bukhari, the Regional Transport Officer (RTO) for Kashmir, said after integrating three routes in Srinagar, they received positive feedback from commuters and minibus operators and now they plan to integrate the entire minibus service in the city with route numbers within the next ten days.

"With this process, the people will no longer change buses to reach their destinations," Bukhari said.

He, however, said that for the time being, eight to nine routes won't be covered un-

der the plan as modalities for their integration are under discussion.

RTO Kashmir said Srinagar city has a fleet of around 1,200 minibuses operating on various routes in and around the district. "There will be around nine routes in Srinagar and their number allocation is likely to be from 1-9," he informed, adding, "We expect the process to hit the roads by the next ten days."

For the integration of all routes in Srinagar, a review meeting was conducted in which Additional Transport Commissioner Reyaz Ahmad and a detailed discussion was held with stakeholders from minibus associations of the city, Bukhari said.

Earlier this week, RTO authorities, on a trial basis, started the integrated minibus service on three routes which according to them covered most of Srinagar City.



## Attack On Woman By Unknown Assailant Creates Panic In Shalimar

Police Begins Probe, Recover Weapon Of Offense

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: An elderly woman had a narrow escape, after an unknown person allegedly tried to attack her with a knife at her home in Shalimar area of Srinagar on Thursday. However the victim raised a hue and cry, prompting the assailant to escape.

The incident took place a few hours after a non-local female beggar was arrested by the police for kidnapping a 4-years-old boy in central Kashmir's Budgam district this morning.

Panic gripped the entire Kandar Mohalla locality in Shalimar area after an unknown person allegedly tried to attack and snatch earrings of an elderly woman, who was preparing for Zuhar prayers.

"Barely few minutes after finishing lunch, I went to perform ablution for (Zuhar) afternoon prayers. As soon as I opened the door, an unknown person appeared in front of me, trapped me, pulled out a knife and put it on my throat," Raja, victim, told Kashmir Observer.

The lady claimed that the unidentified attacker then at-

tempted to snatch her earrings, before she screamed for help from her family and neighbors. "I was completely shocked and could not see his face. I raised a hue and cry to grab the attention of my family and neighbors. When I screamed out loud, he tried to strangle me, however a knife fell out of the attacker's hands and he ran

away, till my family members arrived," she added.

Bashir Ahmad Sofi, husband of the victim, said the people from his locality ran after the attacker, who however managed to flee from the scene.

"This is a wakeup call for everyone; I think we are not even safe in our homes too. Police must identify these unknown assailants who make their entry into residential houses and carry out burglaries. This incident has left us shocked; how an unknown person could barge into someone's house and then try to steal valuables," Sofi told Kashmir Observer.

Meanwhile police have taken cognizance of the incident and set investigation into motion.

A senior police official at Harwan police station said the knife used in commission of crime has been taken into possession and investigation set into motion.

"Weapon of offense (knife) has been taken into possession and investigation has been started. Police are investigating the case from all angles and efforts are on to trace the attacker," he said.

## National Apprenticeship Awareness Workshop Held In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to promote apprenticeship training and create awareness among Youth/Establishments about Apprenticeship Scheme, the Regional Directorate of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, J&K, Ladakh, H.P., in collaboration with Directorate of Skill Development J&K organized a daylong "Na-

tional Apprenticeship Awareness Workshop" here on Thursday.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aljaz Asad was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

While, Regional Director/Regional Central Apprenticeship Advisor, J&K and Ladakh, S. Santhimananalan, Director, Apprenticeship, Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entre-

preneurship, General Manager DIC, Hamida Akhtar, Joint Director Skill Development, Farooq Ahmad Khan, Chief Planning Officer, Mohammad Yaseen Lone, Principal ITI, Bagh-i-Dilawar Khan, Anisa Parvaiz, Principal ITI, Bemina, Bilal Wani MGN Fellow Syed Jasirah and other concerned were present in the National Apprenticeship Awareness Workshop.

### Office Of The Principal Hassan Khoyihami Memorial Degree College Bandipora-193502

Kashmir J& K

Website: www.gdcbandipora.net, e-mail degreecollegebpr@gmail.com

No.HKM/GDCB/22-23/1540-43

Dated: 03/03/2023

#### Tender Notice

Sealed tenders affixed with a revenue stamp for Rs.5 and accompanied by CDR pledged to Principal Hassan Khoyihami Memorial (HKM) Degree College for Rs 500/- are invited from registered canteen contractors for providing the canteen services to the College during the academic session 2023-24. The tenders should be submitted to the office of undersigned within Seven days from the date of publication of this notice. Further information can be obtained from the office of the undersigned during all working days from 10 AM to 4 PM. Or the detailed tender notice can also be downloaded from the college website www.gdcbandinora.net All terms and conditions shall remain same as envisaged in DOPT administrative instructions on departmental canteens. E&OE.

DIPK-18446/22  
dated: 16-03-2023

Principal  
HKM Govt. Degree College Bandipora (Accounts)

## Executive Engineer Landscaping Division PWD (R&B) Engineering Complex Rajbagh Srinagar.

### CORRIGENDUM

Subject:- Supply of water through water tanker for watering of developed landscape areas Jammu city for the year 2022-23(Part II).

Reference: NIT No.e-54/2022-23/LSD/Srinagar, Dated: 04-03.2023 issued under Endorsement No.LD/5487-14 Dated:-04-03-2023.

Please read Bid submission end date 10.03.2023 instead of 09.03.2023 and Date & time of opening of Bids (Online) 11.03.2023 instead of 10.03.2023. All the terms and conditions are remain same.

No.LD/ 5415-25

DIPK-18436/22

Dated:-16.03.2023

sd/= Executive Engineer  
(R&B) PWD Landscaping Division Kashmir

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

#### AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



#### RAILWAYS

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



#### HIGHWAY STATUS



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



#### PRAYERS

FAJR	5:17
ZUHR	12:40
ASR	4:58
Magrib	6:43
ISHA	8:02

### This Day In History

- 1776 - British forces evacuate Boston to Nova Scotia during Revolutionary War
- 1861 - Italy is unified into a single kingdom under Victor Emmanuel II following the campaigns led by Giuseppe Garibaldi.
- 1894 - US & China sign treaty preventing Chinese laborers from entering US
- 1905 - Albert Einstein finishes his scientific paper detailing his Quantum Theory of Light, one of the foundations of modern physics
- 1921 - Lenin proclaims New Economic Politics
- 1924 - Netherlands & USSR begin talks over USSR recognition
- 1924 - Sweden & USSR exchange diplomats
- 1926 - Spain & Brazil prevent Germany joining League of Nations
- 1927 - US government doesn't sign League of Nations disarmament treaty
- 1932 - German police raid Adolf Hitler's Nazi headquarters
- 1934 - Dollfuss, Mussolini & Gombos sign Donau Pact (protocols of Rome)
- 1938 - The Italian Air Force, in support of Francisco Franco, bombs Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War
- 1939 - Battle of Nanchang between the Kuomintang and the Japanese breaks out (Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945)
- 1943 - Physician Willem J Kolff performs the world's first 'hemodialysis' using his artificial kidney machine, however the treatment is unsuccessful and the patient dies, in the Netherlands
- 1945 - Allied ships bomb North-Sumatra
- 1955 - After Maurice Richard is suspended for the remainder of the season, riots break out in Montreal. 37 people are injured and over 100 are arrested. The following morning, Richard goes on the radio to ask citizens to stop vandalizing
- 1957 - Presidential plane crashes on Mt. Manunggal in Cebu, Philippines killing 25 including Filipino President Ramon Magsaysay

*From KO Archives*

## Govt To Punish Dull Teachers

Observer News Service

JAMMU - Government is strictly gauging the performance of teachers in various government schools and 'punitive action, which may include premature retirement, demotion to the next lower post, withholding of increment, etc. is being taken against the teachers whose result performance remains repeatedly unsatisfactory.

This was stated by Minister for Education Harshdev Singh in reply to a question in the House today. He said government have taken several measures for promoting the Equality of education in the state, which include introduction of Kindergarten system, for the first time in the government schools. He said minimum age limit for admission in government schools has been reduced from 6 to 4 years and English language introduced as a compulsory subject from first primary. He said school curriculum at secondary and senior secondary levels have been revised so as to catch up with the contemporary needs besides trying to bring it at par with the CBSE syllabi. Some text books upto class 8th have been revised so as to get them in tune with National curriculum framework. Other measures taken up by the government to improve education standard include introduction of new subjects like Biotechnology Bio-chemistry. Environment science, functional English. Islamic studies, Vedic studies besides introduction of vocational subjects at the +2 stage. The Minister said that the slate institute of education is projected to be upgraded to the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) while the State Institute of Educational Management and training is also being set up.

(Kashmir Observer, 17 March, 2005)



KASHMIR OBSERVER  
Friday | 17-03-2023

Push For  
J&K Elections

A delegation of political leaders led by National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah met the Election Commission of India on Thursday, seeking early elections in the Union Territory. The delegation requested the ECI to hold elections as soon as possible now that the delimitation process had been completed. The political leaders also submitted a memorandum to the ECI, in which they called for the restoration of the democratic process in the UT. The memorandum also mentioned that union home minister Ami Shah has stated many times that the government is ready to facilitate assembly elections, but final call has to be taken by the Commission.

Significantly, the signatories of the memorandum included Abdullah, Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge, CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, NCP chief Sharad Pawar and other senior leaders of national political parties. Other signatories were DMK, TMC, CPIM, RJD, SP, AAP. They have also decided to visit Srinagar in May to assure people of their support. This is the first such attempt by leaders from Jammu and Kashmir to seek support from opposition parties from across the country for the restoration of statehood and democracy in the region. And this initiative has followed immediately after Abdullah rallied opposition leaders from Jammu division last week who they decided to jointly approach the poll panel.

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

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

OTHER OPINION

Climate injustice

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), when it was established in 1992, urged developed-countries to "take all practicable steps to promote, facilitate and finance the transfer of, or access to, climate technologies to other Parties, particularly to developing countries." Indeed, the UNFCCC states that developing nations' implementation of climate commitments "will depend on the effective implementation" of developed countries' commitments "related to financial resources and transfer of technology". The fact that, 23 years later (in 2015), the Paris Agreement was still talking of a "vision of fully realising technology transfer" is quite telling of how the developed world has dragged its feet. An intent to profit from intellectual property rights continues to impede any significant transfer. Researchers at the Institute of Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam/University of Erfurt, as per a report in Science Daily, say that the Global North's patents on low-carbon technologies give it significant competitive advantage. Thus, for much of the developing world, tech transfers remain "critically insufficient". As a consequence, many such nations could get "locked into high-emission energy systems."

It is not just knowledge transfer, the developed world's reluctance to fund meaningful climate action is well known. Against an initial commitment of \$100 billion annually in climate finance for developing nations by 2020, a total of just \$83.3 billion was claimed to have been mobilised. The Green Climate Fund, has received commitments of just \$10.3 billion so far. Even the \$100 billion per year target is grossly inadequate. While India and other developing nations point at how rich nations exhausted a large chunk of the carbon budget for keeping the planet to a 1.5oC-warming pathway, developed nations continue to shrug off historical responsibility. Indeed, many experts have pointed out that their announcements of net zero target are hardly ambitious—deadlines that allowed for the developing world to catch up with them would have been much more meaningful. The developed nations must listen to Yadav and act in the interest of the planet, not just theirs.

Financial Express

Foreign Devils On The  
Road To Afghanistan

M. K. BHADRAKUMAR

On March 7, the western powers huddled together in Paris for a restricted meeting on Taliban and the Afghanistan situation. It was an exclusive meeting of the Special Representatives and Envoys for Afghanistan of Australia, Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The random pick was striking — on a need-to-know basis — Turkiye out, Norway in. Presumably, the West won't trust the Turks to keep secrets. But Norway makes itself indispensable as a European country with a first-rate intelligence apparatus that has served western interests.

Curiously, Australia and Canada took part, but then, they belong to the Five Eyes. And the Five Eyes goes wherever an agenda to destabilise Russia or China is mooted. Washington decides such things.

The Paris meeting rings alarm bells. On March 7, the UN Security Council also held a meeting on women and peace at UN headquarters in New York, where, interestingly, the US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield bracketed the "the violence and oppression of women and girls" in Afghanistan, Iran and "areas of Ukraine occupied by Russia."

France's excessive interest in hosting the meeting comes as no surprise. France is mentoring the so-called National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRFA) headed by the Panjshiris loyal to Ahmad Massoud, eldest son of anti-Soviet military leader Ahmad Shah Massoud.

President Emmanuel Macron took a hands-on role to woo Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon to lend his country as the sanctuary for NRFA to stage an armed insurrection against the Taliban government in Kabul with western help.

Macron has a chip on his shoulder that Russia's Wagner Group replaced the French troops in the Sahel region in north Africa, which used to be France's playpen since the deployment of troops in 2015 to Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger to set up military bases, ostensibly to fight 'jihadists'.

But the French presence became increasingly unpopular in the region and the Islamist threat only spread while France dabbled in local politics in its former colonies, and eventually, Macron's motives became suspect in the African eyes and the perception grew that the French expeditionary force was acting more like an occupation force.

As the African states began replacing the French contingents with Russia's Wagner Group, Macron announced in November the end of his celebrated 'Operation Barkhane'.

Macron is looking for opportunities to hit back at Russia in its own backyard in the Caucasus and Central Asia. But he's punching way above his weight. Nonetheless, the Paris meeting on Tuesday expressed "grave concern about the increasing threat of terrorist groups in Afghanistan, including ISKP, Al Qaeda, Tehrik-i-Taliban-Pakistan and others, which deeply affects security and stability inside the country, in the region and beyond, and called on the Taliban to uphold Afghanistan's obligation to deny these groups safe haven." The joint statement is carefully drafted — an alibi for western intervention is available now. [Emphasis added.]

The Taliban has actually had considerable success on the ground in stabilising its rule against heavy odds. But the Western powers are furious that the Taliban is no longer bending over backward to seek engagement. The West's sponsorship of NRFA antagonised the Taliban. Taliban sees NRFA as presaging the return of warlords bankrolled by the West.

The NRFA has failed to get traction. Macron's personal diplomacy with Rahmon notwithstanding, the latter cannot afford to annoy Moscow — and the Kremlin's top priority is to somehow stabilise the Afghan security situation. The Russians and the Chinese are willing to work with the Taliban and make them stakeholders in the security and stabil-

ity of their country.

Indeed, on the same day the western powers ganged up in Paris, Delhi announced that it was shipping another consignment of 20,000 tons of wheat to Afghanistan via the Chabahar route as humanitarian assistance. The Russian Ambassador in Kabul Dmitry Zhirnov also spoke about Russia's deepening engagement with the Taliban, focused on economic ties. (Interestingly, the ambassador disclosed that Moscow may repair and reopen the hugely strategic Salang Tunnel — a Soviet legacy — connecting Kabul with northern Afghanistan and Central Asia.)

China recently signed a \$540 million oil-and-gas deal reached an agreement to extract oil in the Amu Darya basin in northern Afghanistan. One of the first phone calls the new Foreign

tour, first by a senior Biden Administration official to the region, to be "a fool's errand that merely exposed the futility of U.S. efforts to practice dual containment against Russia and China... All five Central Asian countries refused to support the United States in last month's UN resolution calling for Russia to withdraw its troops from Ukraine and to recognise Ukraine's full sovereignty over its territory. All five Central Asian countries will need support from Russia or China if faced with internal opposition in their own countries."

The neutral stance of the Central Asian states is consistent with their independent position alike on the breakaway ex-Soviet regions of Abkhazia, Ossetia, Crimea, Lugansk, Donetsk, Zaporozhya and Kherson. The sa-



Russia is very keen to work with India regarding Afghanistan. China shares Russian concerns in Afghanistan's security and stability. On the contrary, the US and EU visualise that Russia's preoccupations in the Ukraine conflict is an opportune time to stir up the Central Asian pot. But that is a simplistic, self-serving assumption

Minister Qin Gang made after his appointment was to call up the Taliban counterpart in Kabul to stress the security concerns in Afghanistan. No doubt, similar concerns were reflected in the meeting in the Kremlin between Russian President Vladimir Putin India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval recently.

Russia is very keen to work with India regarding Afghanistan. China shares Russian concerns in Afghanistan's security and stability. On the contrary, the US and EU visualise that Russia's preoccupations in the Ukraine conflict is an opportune time to stir up the Central Asian pot. But that is a simplistic, self-serving assumption.

The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken who toured Central Asia last month learnt to his dismay that the regional states are simply not interested in getting entangled in Washington's zero sum games. The joint statement issued after Blinken's meeting with his Central Asian counterparts steered clear of any references critical of Russia (or China.)

Prof. Melvin Goodman at Johns Hopkins and noted author who used to be a CIA analyst, has described Blinken's Central Asian

lience is: Moscow never threatened the Central Asians that 'Either you're with us, or are against us.'

The Central Asians witnessed the retreat of the Western alliance from Afghanistan and will not regard them as dependable providers of security. They are also wary of the West's dalliance with extremist groups. The widely held belief in Central Asia is that the Islamic State is an American creation. Above all, the western countries pursue mercantilist foreign policies eyeing the region's mineral resources but take no interest in the region's development. On the other hand, they are intrusive and prescriptive.

At the Paris meeting, behind closed doors, the American input would have been that the Central Asian states will not support a regime change project in Afghanistan. Even Tajikistan, which has ethnic affinities with the Tajik population of Afghanistan, will mark distance from the NRFA lest it got sucked into an Afghan civil war. Macron fancies himself to be a born charmer, but Rahmon is a hardcore realist.

Looking ahead, the real danger is that, having failed to get the Taliban to bend while also unable to build an anti-Taliban resistance movement or incite the Central Asian states to decouple from Moscow and Beijing, the US and its allies may now be left with the only remaining option, which is to create anarchical conditions in Afghanistan where there are no winners.

The ascendance of the Islamic State and its open threats to the Russian, Pakistani, Chinese, Iranian and Indian embassies functioning in Kabul are signposts. The Paris meeting of western spies and 'diplomats' was an exercise in stocktaking.

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 India Punchline



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Women are Unsafe Online

COVID-19 has pushed people to the digital universe, now, more than ever. This, however, does not mean that this proliferation has been entirely positive. With more people on the internet, it has also become a vulnerable space. It is especially true for women.

Women face a number of issues online. Stalking, trolling, harassment

and blackmailing — to name a few.

Trolling, out of all these, is often brushed under the carpet and is trivialised. This trivialisation of trolling helps no one and is absolutely unacceptable. In a country like India, there is every chance that digital abuse can translate into physical harm. Women are already in danger here and add to that the access that

internet gives to possible offenders.

Therefore, we must find ways to collaboratively call out abusive handles and ensure the safety of women on the internet. Additionally, vocal women need to be supported and protected because they're always at the receiving end of hate. Moreover, those who aren't aware of how to use internet safely, should

also be educated.

Students should be taught provisions under law for digital offences from the school level itself. It is imperative to have an all-hands-on-deck approach to ensure that we give a safe internet to women.

Ameera Shah



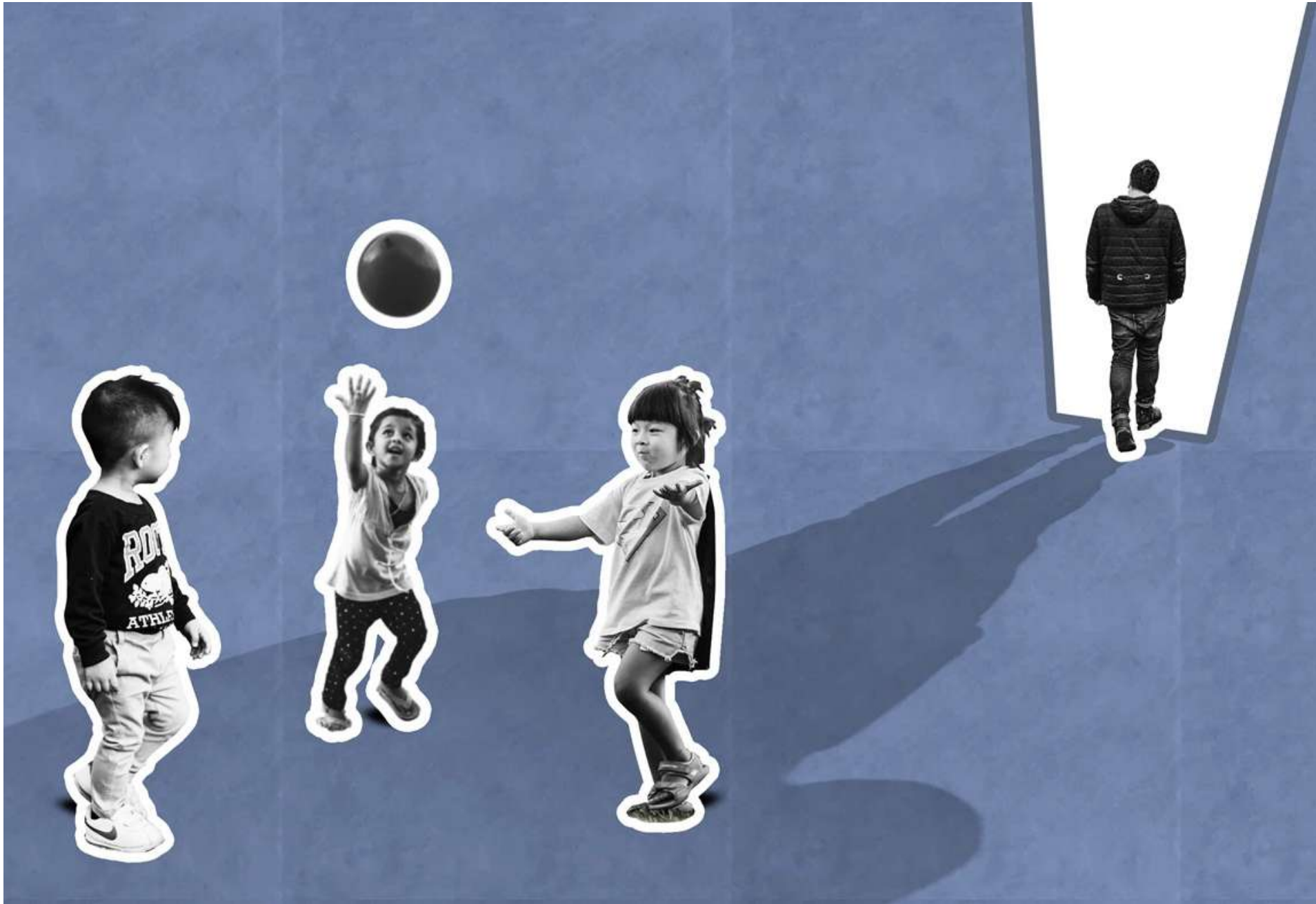
Mindful Fridays

# Finding Hope and Happiness Beyond Childlessness

Navigating Emotional Turmoil and Exploring New Paths to Parenthood



**A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND MEANING IN LIFE THAT EXTENDS BEYOND THE DESIRE FOR CHILDREN IS PROVIDED BY ONE'S BELIEFS FOR MANY RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL PEOPLE.** Even if they are unable to have children, this might still make them feel pleased and fulfilled. It can provide a feeling of meaning, belonging, acceptance, and hope. Yet not all religious or spiritual convictions are beneficial, and some people might not find comfort in their religious societies



Wasim Kakroo

*"And He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females, and He renders whom He wills barren. Indeed, He is Knowing and Competent."* (Quran 42:49-50)

In our region of the world, a childless couple is a married couple who were unable to conceive or who opted not to have children. They might have tried to become parents through a variety of techniques, such as natural conception or artificial insemination but were unsuccessful.

For couples who want children but are unable to conceive or carry a pregnancy to term, childlessness can be a substantial source of emotional and psychological suffering. A couple's quality of life and overall wellbeing may be significantly impacted by the distress, which can take many different forms.

Here are some common types of emotional and psychological distress experienced by childless couples:

- 1. Depression:** The experience of childlessness can cause sadness, despair, and feelings of inadequacy for some people who desire children but are unable to have them. This may be especially true for people who struggle with infertility or who have had numerous miscarriages. It's important to note, though, that not everyone who is childless feels this way, and that some people may choose to lead childfree lives for a variety of reasons.
- 2. Anxiety:** The fear of never having children can result in anxiety, which can show itself as physical symptoms like headaches, palpitations, and sweating. Moreover, anxiety might cause negative thoughts and inadequacies.
- 3. Guilt:** Being childless can lead to feelings of guilt, especially for women who may feel that they are disappointing their husbands or falling short of cultural expectations of parenthood.
- 4. Shame:** For couples who believe they are not living up to societal expectations or their parental responsibilities, being childless can be a cause of shame.
- 5. Grief:** Couples who are childless may feel a sense of loss because they miss

the life they imagined with kids. Many emotions, such as anger, sadness, and denial, can appear as a result of this grieving.

**What are the various factors that contribute to emotional and psychological distress in childless couples?**

- 1. Infertility:** The inability to conceive or carry a pregnancy to term can be a significant source of emotional distress.
- 2. Societal pressure:** The societal expectation of parenthood can create additional pressure and stress for couples who are struggling with childlessness.
- 3. Relationship strain:** The stress of infertility can lead to relationship strain, as couples may experience communication breakdowns, feelings of blame, and decreased intimacy.
- 4. Financial strain:** Fertility treatments and adoption can be costly, and the financial burden can be a significant source of stress for couples.
- 5. Stigma:** Childlessness can be stigmatised, and couples may feel like they are being judged or looked down upon by others.

**WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS COPING STRATEGIES FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES?**

For couples who are having trouble becoming pregnant, being childless can be an emotionally taxing experience. Nonetheless, there are a variety of coping mechanisms that can aid childless couples in navigating this situation and discovering happiness and fulfilment in their lives. Here are some coping strategies for childless couples:

**Seek support from religion and/or spirituality:** A sense of purpose and meaning in life that extends beyond the desire for children is provided by one's beliefs for many religious or spiritual people. Even if they are unable to have children, this might still make them feel pleased and fulfilled. It can provide a feeling of meaning, belonging, acceptance, and hope. Yet not all religious or spiritual convictions are beneficial, and some people might not find comfort in their religious societies. For those who practise it, religion or spirituality can be a helpful source of encouragement and fortitude in overcoming the difficulties of childlessness.

**Consult with friends and family for support:** Family and friends can be a

source of solace and strength. Talk about your thoughts and feelings with those who care about you.

**Locate a community that is encouraging:** Being a part of a group of individuals who are experiencing the same thing as you can make you feel less alone. Find online forums or support groups for childless couples.

**Get professional assistance:** To assist you in coping with your circumstances and processing your feelings, think about seeking counselling or therapy.

**Keep a positive outlook:** Try to keep a positive attitude on life and put your attention on the things that make you happy and fulfilled.

**Take part in activities that make you happy and fulfilled:** Look into hobbies, volunteer work, and travel that will enrich your life.

**Embrace alternative paths to parenthood:** Consider alternative paths to parenthood, such as adoption, surrogacy, or fostering.

Keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way to deal with childlessness. Find-

couples to assume the role of parents and offer a caring environment to a child who may be lacking a suitable home.

- 2. Foster care:** Foster care is a short-term solution in which a child is placed with a family that is not their own, with the aim of creating a secure and supportive environment for the child while their parents or guardians work on resolving their problems. Foster care offers the opportunity for individuals or couples to become parents, and some children who are in foster care can be adopted.
- 3. Surrogacy:** Surrogacy refers to a situation in which a woman agrees to carry a baby on behalf of another individual or couple. This process can be quite intricate and may entail various legal and medical factors that need to be taken into account.
- 4. Choosing to remain childless:** There are people who decide not to become parents, either as an individual or a couple, for different reasons. It may be a decision based on personal prefer-

Here are some tips for addressing negative attitudes and stereotypes towards childless couples and dealing with pressure from family, friends, and society to have children:

- 1. Educate yourself and others:** To combat negative societal attitudes and preconceptions towards those who opt not to have children, educating oneself and others about the various reasons why couples may make this choice is a powerful strategy. By openly discussing one's own experiences and rationale for their decision, one can foster greater understanding and appreciation for the diverse ways in which people find fulfilment in life.
- 2. Find a support system:** Having a supportive circle of family and friends who comprehend and appreciate your decision is crucial. Look for individuals who have comparable values and beliefs, and join a support group for people without children to connect with others and exchange experiences.
- 3. Establish Limits:** It is crucial to set boundaries with loved ones who urge you to have kids. Express your decision clearly and politely, informing them that their comments or behaviour are unhelpful. Be resolute in your choice and don't allow others to influence you.
- 4. Take Care of Yourself:** Overcoming societal pressure and negative attitudes can take an emotional toll. It's important to prioritise self-care activities that aid in stress management, such as exercising, meditating, or engaging in enjoyable hobbies. Taking care of your mental and physical health can help you withstand the impact of harmful stereotypes and attitudes.
- 5. Consult a Professional:** If you're struggling with negative emotions connected to childlessness, consider seeking assistance from a trained clinical psychologist. A mental health professional can offer a secure environment to process your emotions and devise coping techniques.

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**To combat negative societal attitudes and preconceptions towards those who opt not to have children, educating oneself and others about the various reasons why couples may make this choice is a powerful strategy. By openly discussing one's own experiences and rationale for their decision, one can foster greater understanding and appreciation for the diverse ways in which people find fulfilment in life**

ing what works best for you and your spouse and allowing ourselves space to grieve and recover are crucial. Childless couples are capable of leading happy and fulfilling lives with the correct amount of time, support, and coping mechanisms.

**WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS ALTERNATIVE PATHS TO PARENTHOOD?**

- 1. Adoption:** Adoption refers to a legal procedure of placing a child with a new family on a permanent basis. It serves as a means for individuals or

ences, or it could be due to situations such as medical or financial limitations. Opting to be childless is a legitimate choice and can provide an opportunity for individuals or couples to concentrate on other areas of their lives.

**HOW CAN CHILDLESS COUPLES OVERCOME STIGMA AND SOCIETAL PRESSURE?**

It may be difficult to conquer the stigma and social expectations regarding being childless, but it can be achieved by adopting suitable approaches and a positive outlook.



# Kohinoor To Be Cast As Symbol Of Conquest' In New Tower Of London Display

Agenceis

London: The controversial colonial-era Kohinoor diamond claimed by India is to be cast as a "symbol of conquest" as part of a new display of Britain's Crown Jewels at the Tower of London set to open to the public in May.

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP), the charity that manages Britain's palaces, said this week that the new Jewel House exhibition will explore the history of the Kohinoor also known as Koh-i-Noor through a combination of objects and visual projections.

The infamous diamond, which is set within the Crown of the mother of the late Queen Elizabeth II, remains within the Tower after Camilla in a diplomatic move chose not to use this traditional crown for her coronation with King Charles II on May 6.

"The history of the Koh-i-Noor, which is set within the Crown of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, will be explored," HRP said, with reference to the new planned display.

"A combination of objects and visual projections will explain the stone's story as a symbol of conquest, with many previous owners, including Mughal Emperors, Shahs of Iran,

Emirs of Afghanistan, and Sikh Maharajas," it said.

Kohinoor, which means mountain of light in Persian, came into Queen Victoria's possession from the treasury of Maharaja Ranjit Singh a few years before she was to be crowned empress of India and has played a starring role in British coronations of the past.

It will now take centre-stage at the new post-Coronation exhibition at the Tower of London.

"We look forward to expanding the stories we are telling about the Crown Jewels, and to showcasing this remarkable collection for millions of visitors from around the world to enjoy," said Andrew Jackson, Resident Governor of the Tower of London and Keeper of the Jewel House.

"We are delighted to unveil our brand-new Jewel House display from May 26, offering visitors a richer understanding of this magnificent collection. As the home of the Crown Jewels, we are delighted that the Tower of London will continue to play its part during this historic Coronation year," he said.

The new exhibition will open just weeks after the Coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla, who will be crowned with the Queen Mary Crown. It marks the first major change to

the Jewel House at the Tower of London for over a decade, which has been home to Britain's Crown Jewels for nearly 400 years.

"The Crown Jewels are the most powerful symbols of the British monarchy and hold deep religious, historic, and cultural significance. From their fascinating origins to their use during the Coronation ceremony, the new Jewel House transformation will present the rich history of this magnificent collection with more depth and detail than ever before," said Charles Farris, Public Historian for the History of the Monarchy at HRP.

Among some of the other changes, the story of the famous Cullinan diamond will also feature, with the hammer and knife used to make the first cuts to the huge diamond going on display in the Jewel House for the first time.

Discovered in South Africa in 1905, the diamond is the largest gem-quality uncut diamond ever found at 3,106 carats. It was split into nine major stones and 96 smaller brilliants, with the largest two stones featuring in the British Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross and the Imperial State Crown.

At the heart of the new display will be a room dedicated to the spectacle, pageantry and

community of the Coronation Procession.

The display will present Coronation Processions throughout history, celebrating the contributions of the many people who take part in these unique events.

On display will be a series of objects from the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection, including an exquisite court suit worn at the Coronation of George IV and a herald's tabard which would have been worn during royal processions.

The display will culminate in the Treasury, the vault that protects most of the Crown Jewels collection, comprising over 100 objects in total. Among the spectacular items on display in the Treasury is St Edward's Crown of 1661, which is used at the moment of crowning and is the most important and sacred crown within the collection.

The Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross and the Sovereign's Orb, which are presented to the monarch during the moment of investiture, are also on display in the Treasury.

New lighting will allow visitors to experience the world-famous collection like never before, HRP claimed of the representation which is the culmination of a major four-year project.

# Pak PM Sharif Calls For National Unity Among Political Leadership; Imran Says Ready To 'Talk To Anyone'

Agenceis

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday called for national unity among the political leadership to address the cash-strapped country's challenges, a day after he extended an olive branch to ousted premier Imran Khan for a dialogue to resolve the ongoing political and economic crises.

Speaking in the Senate during a session to mark its golden jubilee celebration, Sharif said economic stability could not be achieved without political stability.

He said that the coalition government led by him had sacrificed their politics for the country's sake by taking up the mantle during tough economic times.

"The fact of the matter is that when we took over, our economy was facing very difficult challenges. We had negotiated and signed the agreement with the IMF but we did not adhere to it. We didn't respect the terms and conditions [and] flouted them which damaged Pakistan's image, trust and confidence," he said.

Sharif added that a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was expected soon.

Underlining that Pakistan was facing serious political and economic challenges, he said that all parties needed to align their goals for a better Pakistan.

"Let us brighten the future of Pakistan. We should strive, not conspire, remove hurdles instead of creating the [and] unite the nation instead of creating division," the prime minister was quoted as saying by Dawn newspaper.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Khan also struck a reconciliatory tone, saying he was ready to "talk to anyone" and "render any sacrifice" for the sake of the country's uplift, interest and democracy.

"I will not refrain from any sacrifice for the sake of Pakistan's uplift, interest and democracy," 70-year-old Khan tweeted on Thursday. "I am willing to talk to anyone and take every step towards it."

Khan also expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the people of Pakistan who joined him "in the struggle for true freedom and to our workers from all over Pakistan, including Lahore."

A day earlier, Prime Minister Sharif said that all political forces will have to sit for dialogue to rid the country of the ongoing

political and economic crises.

"All political forces will have to sit together to take the country forward," he said while talking to a delegation of the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors.

However, he lamented that he had invited PTI for talks on two occasions in the recent past, but the party did not turn up. "Though politicians always resort to dialogue, PTI has a history of not responding positively in this regard," he noted.

Khan has been facing a slew of cases since his ouster in April last year through a no-trust vote. He claims that he has been facing about 80 cases.

He has been in the cross-hairs for buying gifts, including an expensive Graff wristwatch he had received as the premier at a discounted price from the state depository called Toshakhana and selling them for profit.

He was disqualified by the Election Commission of Pakistan in October last year for not sharing details of the sales. The election body later filed a complaint with the district court to punish him under criminal laws for selling the gifts he had received as prime minister of the country.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Rage To Rare

stopped now.

"Since the situation has improved in terms of violence," Hyderi says, "there isn't much to debate now."

Unlike Hyderi who links the change with the 'improved' ground situation, many analysts believe that Kashmir's primetime fading comes from a new political posturing.

"For BJP and allied parties," says a senior Kashmiri analyst, "the pugnacious TV debates suit as long as they serve their political objectives. With Article 370 dusted and the regional political camp disempowered, the TV talks on Kashmir have lost their relevance for the ruling camp and their mouthpieces. At the same time, the pressing governance issues, be it on bulldozers, property tax or jobs, hardly qualify for the primetime discussion."

While there might be a furtive factor behind the change, Peer Viqar Ul Aslam says, the lost primetime slot is directly connected with the fractured political landscape of the valley.

"Otherwise anything associated with Kashmir is of utmost importance to the Indian public," says Viqar, another primetime debater from Kashmir. "The media exploits this to gain support for the government and momentum, but it isn't happening in case of Kashmir at the moment."

But as a hot topic, Akhter Bhatt says, Kashmir will always be played up by the 'political media' to outdo each other in the TRP race.

"Forget the contemporary coverage curtainment, there's always this link between political parties and media outlets for agenda setting," says Bhatt, a political activist.

"Both the media and political parties use the fact that the majority in India aren't a media-literate audience. While they won't talk about how the situation is affecting normal life in Kashmir, they will surely amplify the political problem and label the entire community."

Way Forward

But beyond this primetime issue, Pubby says, media channels should refrain from inviting polemic party spokespersons in debates to restore some sanity in living rooms across the country.

"They should include people who understand the valley's issues in depth and detail," he says. "Rather than drama, the experts should be engaged in well-meaning discussions."

At the same time, says Vikar, there should be more alternative sustainable news outlets in India that cover the news without bias. "On the larger platform," he says, "an alternate voice is required."

And to keep the primetime din in check and balance, Bhatt says, the media must serve as mediators and maintain a balanced approach on a sensitive subject like Kashmir.

### India To Buy

out of which 98.9 per cent of the procurement will be sourced from the Indian industries, the officials said.

"Such quantum of indigenous procurement will not only galvanize the Indian industries towards achieving the goal of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) but also reduce India's dependency on foreign vendors to a large extent," Singh's office tweeted.

About Navy's proposals, the defence ministry said the additional procurement of BrahMos missile system will enhance the maritime strike capabilities and anti-surface warfare operation, the addition of utility helicopters will multiply the operational readiness of the force.

Similarly, Shakti systems will equip and modernise the frontline Naval ships to counter any Naval operations by the adversaries, it said.

"To keep pace with the emerging technologies and counter the adversaries in the Western and Northern front, the necessity of the new weapons and its integration with the delivery platforms was felt by the government," the ministry said.

"To achieve the same objectives, the DAC

accorded the approval to Indian Air Force's proposal for Long Range Stand-Off Weapon (LRSOW) which will be indigenously designed, developed and integrated on SU-30 MKI aircraft," it said.

"For artillery modernisation, in addition to the ongoing Dhanush Gun System and K-9 Vajra-T Gun System, AoN for procurement of 155mm/52 Caliber Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) along with High Mobility Vehicles (HMTVs) and Gun Towing Vehicles (GTVs) for the Indian Army was accorded by the DAC," it said.

"It (DAC) also accorded AoN for procurement of Advance Light Helicopters (ALH) MK-III from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for the Indian Coast Guard. The helicopter will be able to carry a suite of surveillance sensors which will enhance the surveillance capabilities," the ministry said.

"It will also give full night capability and Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) capability for operations of the Indian Coast Guard," it said.

### J&K Politicians

Sitaram Yechury and AAP leader Sanjay Singh, among others.

Following his meeting with the CEC, Abdullah told reporters that the delegation had a "good meeting" and the CEC "heard us patiently".

"All of us, who are from Kashmir and Jammu and representing people from all sections, favoured early restoration of democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

"We informed them that the work of the Delimitation Commission has also been completed and boundaries of the constituencies has also been completed, so now the polls should be held at the earliest," Abdullah said, adding that "the CEC assured us that the commission would be meeting soon to take stock of the situation".

In the memorandum, the leaders said the EC is under the Constitutional obligation to hold assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

The delegation informed the CEC and other members of the commission that the government has been claiming of restoring normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir and that now the onus is on the EC (to hold assembly elections), the NC leader said.

"So, we asked why was the commission not taking note of the plight of the people of Jammu and Kashmir," Abdullah, a three-time chief minister of the erstwhile state, said.

Abdullah told a local news agency in Srinagar that EC assured the delegation that they will do something soon on their demand. "They assured everyone that they will do something soon," he was quoted as saying.

In 2019, the Centre abrogated Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcated the state into Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The last assembly elections were held in 2014.

In the memorandum, the leaders said "in disregard to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, an unrepresentative and unaccountable bureaucracy is allowed to run the government to the discomfort and inconvenience of the general public".

The delegation said any further "delay in and denial of assembly elections would amount to denial of fundamental and democratic rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and a breach of Constitutional obligations".

The panchayat elections and elections to other public representative institutions cannot be a substitute to legislative assembly elections and the government and for that matter, the EC cannot avoid and delay assembly elections on that ground, the delegation said in the memorandum.

"Had it been so, there would be no need to conduct assembly elections in states, as the EC is with due dispatch and punctuality, as is evident from recently held assembly elections in Meghalaya, Tripura and Nagaland and the elections scheduled to be held in Karnataka," it said.

The opposition leaders said in each case, the argument though, inherently specious, could have been that as panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) were in place there was no need to hold assembly elections.

The Union home minister and other functionaries of the government of India have more than once stated that the government is ready to facilitate conduct of assembly elections and the final call is to be taken by the EC, the leaders claimed.

They said the assembly elections would be the first and important step towards restoration of all the Constitutional rights guaranteed in the Constitution and fulfilment of political aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The leaders urged the CEC to announce assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir without any further delay and notify the election schedule so that the democratic rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and access to democratic institutions is restored.

### ‘VVIP’ Gujarati

claimed he had been given a mandate by the government to identify buyers for apple orchards in south Kashmir and a couple of IAS officers were in awe of him as he had been dropping names of high-ranking bureaucrats and politicians in the national capital.

Police sources said that Patel was arrested on the basis of specific information about his criminal activities within the jurisdiction of police station Nishat and other parts of the Valley and by employing a high degree of forged means.

The conman, sources said, was staying in Room number 1107 of the scenic Lalit Hotel, located on the foothills of Zabarwan forest range and overlooking Dal Lake. He had also managed to avail security cover with Personal Security Officers (PSOs) besides a bullet-proof car using forged means.

He had also visited a number of tourist spots, including the ski-resort of Gulmarg and Doodhpathri with his security detail. At Doodhpathri, Patel was accompanied by an SDM rank officer.

Patel, the sources said, also visited the city centre Lal Chowk a couple of times and clicked pictures in front of Clock Tower.

A formal case has been registered against the accused at police station Nishat under FIR number 19/2023 under sections 420, 467, 471 and 468 CrPC and investigation set into motion, sources said.

Meanwhile, a local court has extended sent the accused to police remand to investigate the case further

### DGP Calls For

(IED) left behind by the attackers went off the next day.

Addressing the officers, the DGP stressed for further strengthening the intelligence network at the grass root level of all forces besides directing for alertness on borders as also in the hinterland.

Singh, he said, enjoined upon the officers to put in more efforts to track down the culprits of Dangri incident and emphasized on using the border SPOs for creating a strong border intelligence network besides utilizing the services of VDGs more efficiently and in an organized way.

"Pakistan is using all methods to involve our youth in the drug menace. Regular seizure of various consignments of narcotics has spoiled their evil intentions. Stern actions and synchronized efforts of all forces will definitely demolish the whole network of drug trade," the DGP said.

He also emphasized on strengthening of Naka points on national highways to keep check on transportation of drugs, weapons and other criminal activities.

During the meeting, the spokesperson said, discussions were held on the infiltration bids of terrorists, supply of weapons and narcotics from across the border besides other issues of

security concerns.

"It was pointed out that Pak agencies are indulging in narcotics and weapon smuggling besides transportation of cash across the LoC for funding terrorist activities. Many of such consignments have been interrupted by JKP and the security forces deployed in the area. The need and means to further augment the border & hinterland security grids were also discussed," he said

At the onset of the meeting, the spokesperson said, the officers of the twin border districts briefed DGP about the present security scenario along the LoC and in the hinterlands besides, they presented detailed briefing about ongoing anti-terror operations and security grid deployed post Dhangri incident.

Besides others, the meeting was attended by GOC 25 Infantry Division Y. S. Ahlawat, GOC Romeo Force Mohit Trivedi, DIG Rajouri Poonch Range Dr Mohammed Haseeb Mughal, SSP Rajouri Mohammad Aslam and SSP Poonch Rohit Baskotra.

### New Tunnel Opens

National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) in 2011.

The work that includes a number of small and major tunnels, bridges and flyovers is likely to be completed by next year after missing several deadlines over the past decade.

The T5 was the fourth tunnel dedicated to the public by the NHAI in the past year, while several other small tunnels and bridges are nearing completion which will bypass other critical spots on the highway, making travel comfortable by the end of July.

"The Ramban flyover which will bypass Ramban Market is expected to be thrown open by April 15, Jaishwal bridge near Karole by March 31 and 873-metre Kunfer tunnel between Peeda and Chanderkote next month as well," Islam said.

The officer said after the completion of these projects, traffic congestion on the highway will get reduced.

### Leh Highway

Director General of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhary.

Zojila is a strategic pass that provides a vital link between Kashmir Valley and Ladakh, and it is key to operational preparedness of the armed forces. It used to remain closed for about six months due to heavy snowfall. However, over the last few years, the BRO has been reopening it in less time. This year, it was cleared off in record time of 68 days.

Speaking to reporters, Lt Gen Chaudhary said the opening of the pass has a lot of significance both from the strategic point of view as well as socio-economic point of view.

"The people of Ladakh used to remain cut off for about five-six months, but the BRO has been opening this route earlier than usual and the people can go to Srinagar for their needs or medical emergencies or even trade and commerce," he said.

He said the reopening of the pass will given an economic push to the region.

"Tourism also opens up because of the opening of this route, and the people of Kargil, Drass and Leh benefit a lot from the opening of this route," he said.

He said the central government also benefits a lot because of its reopening.

"For maintaining our forces deployed in Ladakh, all the supplies have to be sent by air, for which about Rs 7 crore are spent daily. We have done a calculation that we can save Rs 400-450 crore, which otherwise has to be spent for this maintenance, by reopening the road sooner," he said.

The BRO DG said the highway was kept open till January 6 this year, after which it was closed for traffic following heavy snowfall.

"The pass was open till January 6. In February, we took a decision to start clearance work on it, but keeping in mind the safety of the workers. So, we undertook the operation and in a systematic manner, cleared off the snow. Today,

the traffic has started to ply on this. It has now been re-opened in record time. This is a huge achievement," he said.

Earlier, people used to think about reopening the route in the month of May. But over the last few years, the road has been reopened earlier than that. "Next year, we will try to reopen it sooner than this," he added.

Lt Gen Chaudhary said with the reopening of the Zojilla pass, "we can easily move machinery, tanks, guns, etc. if and whenever we need...so that it reaches the forces deployed in Ladakh".

"This is the only route which connects Ladakh with the rest of the country. The Leh-Manali route is not open yet," he said.

The pass will be reopened for civilian traffic in the next few days after assessing the road conditions and the safety issue, he added.

A civilian, Bakir Ali, said the population living on both sides of the pass was happy with its reopening.

"The pass has been thrown open sooner than earlier years. As the holy month of Ramzan is about to start, it is great that this route has been thrown open and will enable the people to take care of their daily needs. We can now bring in fresh fruits, vegetables, etc.," Ali said.

The BRO has been breaking its own records when it comes to the reopening of the pass. The road was thrown open in 110 days in 2021, in 78 days in 2022 and in just 68 days this year.

### Corps Commander

corps commander of the Victor Force comprising Rashtriya Rifles of the Army that looks after the crucial South Kashmir area.

During his earlier tenure, his corps conducted successful operations leading to elimination as well as surrender of terrorists. It also educated parents to wean their children off militancy.

He then moved to the Army headquarters in the national capital and later got promoted to the rank of lieutenant general to head strategic army formations.

### Two CRPF Men

Government Medical College (GMC) hospital Jammu for specialised treatment, the officials said.

### Rs 7 Cr Worth Drugs

registered in this regard, the official said.

### 2 Army Officers

parties have been sent to the spot," he said. Rohit Rajbir Singh, the superintendent of police, Special Investigation Cell (SIC), explained that villagers had found the crashed chopper ablaze in Dirang, and informed district officials.

"Villagers from Bangialep at Dirang located the chopper around 12.30 pm. It is still burning," Singh said.

The area has no mobile connectivity and the weather is extremely foggy with visibility as low as five meters, he added.

### Entire Staff Of

be taken against them.

He impressed upon the officers to ensure the punctuality of their subordinate staff to ensure effective service delivery.

"During a surprise visit on 13-03-2023 at around 11:00 Am, the officers /officials of PHC Ashtingoo, who were found late on duty are directed to explain their position and why action under rules shall not be initiated against them," the order said, adding that they shall submit the reply in the office u/sd within a day positively.

"Also their RDA (2 ½ Days salary) will be deducted for the month of March 2023 reads the order," it said.

Meanwhile, in a separate order, the BMO said that in view of the unauthorised absence from his legitimate duties on 15-03-2023, Dr Saboor Sikandar (Medical officer) PHC Ashtingoo is hereby placed under suspension with immediate effect. "He is directed to report to the office of u/sd with immediate effect," the order said—(KNO)



## Rajasthan Woman Arrested For 'Kidnapping' Minor



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday arrested a woman from Rajasthan alleged of kidnapping a minor in Central Kashmir's Budgam district.

"Police Station Khag received information that one lady who was begging in village Dalwash, Khag kidnapped a child age about 04 years namely (name withheld)", reads a statement.

The lady, the statement reads, concealed the child under her scarf and some local women upon developing suspicion, informed police Station Khag.

"A police party of police station Khag rushed to the

spot alongwith lady police personnel and recovered the kidnapped boy from the possession of non-local lady and arrested her on spot", reads the statement.

"The accused lady has been subsequently identified as Chidi Devi wife of Khana Ram resident of Dhannasar, Hanu-mangarh Rajasthan."

"A case FIR number 17/2023 under relevant sections of law stands registered at Police Station Khag and investigation taken up", reads the statement.

"The boy has been handed over to his parents after medico legal formalities", reads the statement further.

## Gurez Road Reopens For Traffic After Two Months

Observer News Service

**BANDIPORA:** After remaining closed for more than two months due to heavy Snowfall in Gurez valley, Bandipora-Gurez road was thrown open for traffic on Thursday.

Lt. General Rajeev Chaudhry, VSM DGBR formally opened the road by flagging-off the first caravan of vehicles. Major General Girish Kalia, VSM GOC 28 Inf Div, Brigadier Pranav Kumar Cdr 109 Inf Bde, Lt. Col. Abhishek Kumar, OC 56 RCC Beacon. ADDC Bandipora Ali Afsar Khan, SDM Gurez Dr Mudasir, DDC member Tulail Raja Aijaz, DDC member Gurez Tasleem and other senior officers of the district were present on the occasion.

The officers invited two female siblings Maryam Mudasir and Fatima Mudasir to formally throw open the road for traffic.

Officials said the traffic on the 85 kilometer road stretch will be allowed in a controlled manner and the decision came as Border Roads Organisation (BRO) completed the Snow clearance operation in a record time this year.

He said the road remained closed for about 58 days at a

stretch due to heavy accumulation of Snow in the Gurez valley, especially at Razdan top. Officials said Snow clearance started soon after the weather improved and was completed in a record time.

Officials said that the first convoy of vehicles was allowed as a trial run towards their destination with proper precautionary measures, including the use of chains at certain places.

ADDC said traffic will be allowed in a restricted and regulated manner and for restricted hours till the weather improves fully and the road is not slippery.

The road remains closed owing to heavy snowfall in Gurez Valley. "The road usually opens in April but this year, the road was opened early."

The ADDC Ali Afsar Khan lauded the efforts of BRO and MED for overtime to ensure early opening of the road.

Earlier, during road closure the District Administration put in helicopter services to different locations of Gurez to ensure evacuation of patients and other emergency situations including airlifting students who had to appear in different exams besides airlifting employees.

## 5.69 Lakh Kanal Land In Kargil Being Notified For Firing Range

UT Administration Invites Objections From People

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The administration of Union Territory Ladakh has proposed to notify 5.69 lakh Kanals of land in Drass area of Kargil district as a field firing range.

In a notification, the UT administration has invited objections, if any, from general public over the proposal of firing range.

"Objections in this regard, if any, may be communicated to Deputy Commissioner, Kargil within a period of two months from the date of issuance of this notice," reads the notification issued by Umang Narula, who is advisor to LG Ladakh and administrative secretary, Home of the Union Territory.

As per the proposal, the administration of UT Ladakh intends to authorize carrying out of the field firing and artillery practice throughout an area measuring 5,69,911 Kanals and



17 Marlas situated at village Matayen Kharu, district Kargil for a period of five years.

The notification has been issued under sub-section (3) of section 9 of the Maneuvers, Field Firing and Artillery Practice Act, 1938.

Under the law, the State/UT administration has to issue notice of intention before no-

tifying an area as a field firing range for its use by forces.

In 2017, the government of erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir had notified an area 4,80,000 Kanals (60,000 acres) situated at Mandalhang, Shyok in Durbuk sub- division, in Leh district as a field firing range for a period of five years—(KNO)

## MeT Forecast Intermittent Rain, Thunderstorms In J&K

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Amid forecast for generally cloudy weather with light rain at isolated to scattered places till March 20, the minimum temperature recorded further rise at most places in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday.

"Intermittent Rain/Thunderstorm accompanied by gusty winds at scattered places is expected From March 17-20," a meteorological department official here said.

He said farmers are advised to postpone spraying of orchards during the period.

Regarding temperature, he said, Srinagar recorded a low of 5.5°C against 5.1°C on the previous night and it was 1.8°C above normal for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 4.2°C against 3.0°C on the previous night and it was 1.9°C above normal for the gateway town of Kashmir.

Pahalgam, he said, recorded a low of 0.8°C, the same on the previous night and it was 2.0°C



above normal for the famous tourist resort in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Kokernag recorded a low of 6.3°C against 5.9°C on the previous night and it was 3.8°C above normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 1.5°C against 1.4°C on the previous night and it was 4.8°C above normal for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said.

In Kupwara town, he said, the mercury settled at 3.2°C against 2.6°C on the previous night and

it was 0.9°C above normal for the north Kashmir area.

Jammu recorded a low of 15.0°C against 15.6°C on the previous night. It was 1.0°C above normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal, he said, recorded a low of 5.6°C (above normal by 1.4°C), Batote 9.5°C (above normal by 2.8°C), Katra 14.2°C (2.5°C above normal) and Bhadarwah 7.4°C (4.4°C above normal).

Ladakh's Leh and Kargil, he said, recorded a low of minus 3.6°C and minus 4.9°C respectively. (GNS)

## Mehbooba Snubs Critics After Performing Ritual Inside Shiv Temple In Poonch

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday defended her recent visit to a Shiv temple in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and performing a ritual there, saying "we live in a country that is home to the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb" and there is no need to discuss the matter further.

A video of the former chief minister offering water to Shivaling inside Navgraha temple, Mandi-Ajote in Poonch on Tuesday has gone viral, drawing criticism from some quarters.

"We are living in a secular country that is home to Ganga-



Jamuni Tehzeeb. The temple was built by Yashpal Sharma (former PDP leader who died last year) and his sons want me to visit the place. I went inside and someone gave me a small vessel filled with water with a lot of belief and love.

"I do not want to break his heart by refusing to pour water (on the Shivaling). He asked for it and I did it (out of respect for him)," Mehbooba Mufti told reporters here.

Asked about some Islamic scholars from Deoband in Uttar Pradesh disliking it, she said she did not want to go into it and whether it is allowed or not in her religion.

"In our country, Hindus and Muslims live together and there are more Hindus offering Chadar" at Muslim shrines than Muslims themselves. This issue is related to myself and there is no need for further discussion over it," she said.

## Azad Suggests Development Push In 'Less Militancy'

Press Trust Of India

**SHOPIAN:** Militancy in Jammu and Kashmir has come down in the past some years and time has come for the Centre to help the Union Territory in development activities, Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) chief Ghulam Nabi Azad said on Thursday.

"There is poverty, unemployment, but it is also a reality that there is a huge difference in militancy sporadic incidents happen, but they happen in the country as well. Militancy has come down," Azad told reporters after a public rally in this south Kashmir district.

He said the central government should take advantage of the reduction in militancy in the Valley.

"Time has come for the Centre to help the state a lot in terms



of development, for projects, roads, for setting up industries. The central government should take advantage of no or less militancy. If they do not do anything, then there is no benefit of ending militancy," the former J and K chief minister said.

Asked that there was talk of conferring Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the Nobel Peace prize, Azad said only those who give such awards know about it.

"Neither you nor me have to confer it," he added.

## Work On Restoration Of Christian Graveyard Starts In Poonch

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** After years of wait, the miniscule Christian community in border district of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch were a relieved lot as their long standing demand for a graveyard saw construction work started on it.

The Christian graveyard spread over an area of eight kanals, or around 500 sqm, at Purani Poonch area in the town was washed away in the flash floods in 2014.

"I put up the demand for restoration of the graveyard on behalf of over 3,000 Christian communities which finally yielded results with the start of its restoration work today (Thursday)," local Municipal Councillor Imtiaz Salaria told PTI.

Salaria along with president of the Christian (Catholic) community Rajesh Kumar inaugurated the renovation work, which included making the vast field clear of stones and laying of flood protection infrastructure.

"This has been a long pend-

ing demand of the Christian community and it is now being fulfilled. We have also forwarded a detailed project report for raising of boundary wall around the Cemetery and installation of a shed," he said, expressing hope that the project will get clearance shortly.

Salaria said his primary responsibility as a public representative was to raise issues pertaining to the general public, particularly the minority community and downtrodden.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi advocates 'Sab Ka Saath, Sab Ka Vikas' and we will keep working for welfare and development of all strata of society irrespective of caste, creed, and religion," he said.

Kumar said the community faced a lot of problems after their graveyard was washed away nine years ago.

"We are happy with the start of the renovation work and hope that other works including construction of the boundary wall will get sanctioned soon," he said.

## CaratLane Launches Its New Store In Jammu



Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** CaratLane, India's leading Omni-channel jewellery brand, launched its new store in Bahu Plaza, Jammu on Thursday.

This store marks the 172nd store in India and the 56th store in the North region. The store was inaugurated with the tradition of a coal breaking ceremony at the store location, signifying the birth of a new store and prosperous times ahead. The launch was graced by the presence of friends, family and loyal customers of the brand.

The Jammu location has been a strong catchment for the brand and hence was

identified as the location for this store. The brand is focused on making all forms of trial available in every pin code where it has strong customer interest and this store will address the needs of one such catchment. Customers will be able to discover and try designs from CaratLane's iconic collections, like Butterfly and the new and exclusive launch- the Harry Potter collection along with their most popular jewellery segments such as modern mangalsutras, classic studs and bestseller rings. Catering to a wider audience and a variety of occasions, the store will also feature kids jewellery and ample options for everyday.

## Dairy Sector Has Strengthened Rural Economy: LG

Addresses Inauguration Ceremony Of Saran Dairy Producer Co. Ltd At Gopalganj, Bihar

Observer News Service

**BIHAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Thursday highlighted the role of dairy sector in uplifting the rural economy, lives of small and marginal farmers and strengthening the spirit of co-operatives.

"Dairy Sector has strengthened the rural economy and enhanced the economic condition of millions of small and marginal farmers of the country. This sector has empowered the women through Self Help groups and they are playing the key role in delivering social and economic benefits to the rural economy," Sinha said.

He made these remarks while addressing the inauguration ceremony of Saran Dairy Pro-

ducer Co. Ltd at Gopalganj, here on Thursday.

The Lt Governor remembered the valuable contributions of great personalities like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Tribhuvandas and Verghese Kurien in strengthening the Cooperative movement and laying the foundation of Milk Revolution in India.

"After Independence, Gujarat and Bihar witnessed the rise of the Cooperative revolution. Cooperatives have worked as a strong pillar for economic and social development of the poor & marginalized sections, he added.

"Today, the Dairy sector is making enormous social and economic contribution and developing vibrant ecosystem of rural milk producers through



Cooperative Societies & Self-Help Groups to generate significant economic activity & employment," the Lt Governor further added.

The Lt Governor appreciated the endeavour of the Saran Dairy Producer Co. Ltd for bringing together the unorganized rural milk producers under the

structure of Dairy Cooperative Societies, Self-Help Groups and providing them an opportunity to earn a better livelihood.

He further called upon the

women self-help groups to join this noble initiative in large numbers to become socially and financially empowered.

All the stakeholders, Dairy units must come together to support small & marginal farmers, youth and women to create a strong and vibrant force of dairy entrepreneurs in the country, the Lt Governor observed.

It will be a significant step to strengthen the spirit of cooperation. The Prime Minister's mantra of 'Sahkar Se Samridhhi' will guide us on our path to improving the rural economy and protecting the interest of the farmers, said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor called upon the dairy farmers & milk production units to focus on value-addition to meet the increasing

market demand and to make the sector more lucrative.

Total milk production had reached 221 million tonnes in 2022 from 138 million tonnes in 2013 which has also increased the income of the farmers and other stakeholders associated with the sector, he noted.

The growth rate of milk production in India is more than 6% per year which is more than the milk production rate of other countries. There has also been an increase of 6% in the number of total milch animals which is an encouraging sign for the dairy sector, added the Lt Governor.

Kumar Rakesh, Director Saran Dairy Producer Co. Ltd; milk producers, farmers and prominent citizens from all walks of life were present on the occasion.





All India Police C'ship: League Stages End

**Observer News Service**

**SRINAGAR:** The fifth day of the on-going 71st B.N. Mullik Memorial All India Police Football Championship 2023 saw the league stages of the competition come to an end.

Playing at four different venues, 15 matches including 12 men's and three women's matches, took place on Thursday. Hard-fought battles were seen as the teams tried to make enter the pre-quarter stage.

At Bakshi Stadium, three matches of women teams were played. Match between SSB Women defeated Jharkhand Police Women 20-0. In another match, between Assam Rifles women beat J&K Police women 4-0. Tamil Nadu Police Women and Odisha Police women played a goalless draw.

At Polo Ground, match between Goa Police and Haryana Police was won by Haryana Police as they managed to hold their nerve after a strong battle ended 2-1. Arunachal Police defeated Bihar Police 1-0. Tamil Nadu Police defeated Puducherry Police 5-1. Telangana Police was beaten 3-0 by Uttarakhand Police.

At Kashmir University, RPF beat Himachal Pradesh Police 3-2. BSF defeated Delhi Police 2-0. CISF beat ITBP 3-0. The match between Jharkhand Police & Gujarat Police was won by Jharkhand Police 2-0.

At Synthetic Turf TRC, Assam Police beat Manipur Police 3-1. Punjab Police defeated Rajasthan Police 3-2. Kerala Police defeated J&K Police 1-0. While Madhya Pradesh Police lost 6-0 to Mizoram Police.

Madrid Needs Win At Barca To Stay In Title Hunt

**Agencies**

**MADRID:** After brushing aside Liverpool with surprising ease in the Champions League, Real Madrid appears to again be reaching its peak form when titles are on the line.

The 6-2 aggregate victory over the English team put Madrid in the final eight of Europe's elite competition and with the possibility for a treble of titles this season, including the Spanish league.

But that feat hinges on producing another big win at Barcelona on Sunday.

Barcelona leads the Spanish

league and has opened up a nine-point gap on second-place Madrid. A loss at Camp Nou would leave Madrid needing a meltdown by its top rival over the remaining weeks to keep its title, while a victory would confirm that the team is hitting its stride when it counts.

The game will be the second of three "clasicos" played in just over a month. The two Spanish powerhouses will also play on April 5 when Madrid returns to Barcelona in the second game of the Copa del Rey semifinals after the Catalan side won 1-0 in the capital in February.

European Leagues Concerned By FIFA's Tournament Changes



**Agencies**

The European Leagues are concerned by FIFA's decisions to introduce a new 32-team Club World Cup and to extend the 2026 World Cup to 104 matches, they said in a statement on Wednesday. Ahead of its Congress in Kigali, Rwanda, FIFA said on Tuesday that 48 teams will play in the next World Cup and that there will be 32 teams in the Club World Cup to be played every four years from June, 2025.

"European Leagues are concerned about the announcements made yesterday by FIFA Council," said the association which represents more than 1,000 clubs in 37 professional leagues in Europe.

"All these decisions were taken by FIFA in a unilateral way and without any consultation process with many of the football stakeholders and leagues. Unfortunately, this became a habit in recent years."

European Leagues added that they are cooperating with the World Leagues Forum to decide on further steps to take in response to FIFA's decisions.

Spain's LaLiga said on Wednesday that FIFA has shown "complete disregard" for the importance of national competitions and that the world governing body "continues its malpractice of making unilateral decisions regarding the football calendar".

Infantino Re-Elected FIFA Prez

**Agencies**

**KIGALI:** Gianni Infantino was re-elected FIFA president by acclaim on Thursday through 2027, after suggesting the financial results under his leadership would keep an industry CEO in the job for life.

Infantino had no election opponent and won by acclaim instead of a formal vote by the congress of 211 member federations whose basic annual funding from FIFA has risen from \$250,000 to \$2 million since his first win in 2016. FIFA had \$4 billion reserves after the World Cup in Qatar finished in December. It has conservatively forecast record revenue of at least \$11 billion through the men's 2026 World Cup being hosted in North America. (PTI)

'Saudi Won't Sponsor Women's World Cup'

**Agencies**

Visit Saudi will not be a sponsor at the women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand later this year, but FIFA president Gianni Infantino has not ruled out future commercial opportunities for gulf nation in women's football.

The Saudi Arabia tourism board had been touted as a potential sponsor of the expanded 32-team tournament, which drew sharp criticism from a number of quarters, though Infantino says it is all a "storm in a tea cup". Other leading figures in the women's game also criticised the plan, including veteran U.S. forward Alex Morgan, who said it 'morally' did not make sense.

IND v AUS: We Will Try To Be Brave, Says Hardik

**Press Trust of India**

**MUMBAI:** India all-rounder and stand-in captain for the first ODI in Mumbai against Australia, Hardik Pandya said on Thursday that bilateral series are as competitive as ICC tournaments and brooding over failures in past global competitions is an exercise in futility.

India have usually done well in bilateral series -- both home and away -- but have been failing regularly in ICC tournaments for close to a decade now, with the most recent disappointment being the semi-final defeat to England in the T20 World Cup in Australia last year.

Pandya said the team had not tried anything new to change the trend and the focus has been on learning from bilateral fixtures.

"I don't think we have tried anything new. We will be trying

ing for the best things to come," Pandya added.

Pandya, who is also the vice-captain of the Indian side for the three-match series against Australia, said the players are comfortable with workload-related calls made by the management.

"We have to have faith in our strength and conditioning coaches. I am a guy who trusts his team. These calls of workload, who should play when, who should not play, that is completely on the guys who are professionals and it is their call," Pandya said.

"All these guys are confident that if they miss out on some matches, then they miss out. It's okay. That's the confidence we have. If someone misses out because of workload management, this management has shown confidence and trust in the players. I think that's the reason



to be a little brave which I think in the last couple of series we have done quite well," the all-rounder told the media at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

"All these bilaterals are as challenging, they can get as close to the wire as they can. That is the only way we are going to learn and start playing under pressure of knockouts (in ICC tournaments). (But) we don't need to look at that right now, the past is past and we are hoping

players who have gone out have come back with a lot of security," he added. The 29-year-old all-rounder said he is ready to share whatever workload comes along with the other bowlers.

"Whatever the situation requires, I will do it," he said when asked if he was ready to bowl a full quota of 10 overs.

Pandya opined that ODI matches are more settled and give teams a longer duration to execute their plans.

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