

On City And Cultural Heritage: Conversation With Conservation Architect

Aashiq Hussain Andrabi

As Srinagar is getting 'smart' in a massive face lifting exercise at the moment, the safeguard measures of the city's historic environment has prompted experts to alert authorities about the remodeling work being executed on war-footing.

Architect Saima Iqbal, who carried out the exhaustive cultural resource mapping of Srinagar city in 2004, said that the city's cultural heritage is

already sensitive due to dents caused by the catastrophic quake of 2005 and the devastating floods of 2014.

"Natural hazards and changing climatic patterns and geophysical activities are already causing immeasurable damage to our collective heritage," Saima, who's Principal Conservation Architect, INTACH, Kashmir Chapter, said.

Apart from natural disasters, she said, lack of ownership and awareness, vandalism, conflict and potential collateral



damage resulting from an escalated event is an everyday challenge or threat to cultural heritage.

"The heritage conservation becomes important as a new sector called cultural heritage tourism is growing very rapidly," Saima, who handled the camel bridge renovation project in Dal Lake, said.

"Cultural heritage can be a major economic driver for a place to increase tourism footfall and periods of stay. This has to be tackled very sensitively

as large tourist influx can also endanger a historic place."

In an interview with Kashmir Observer, the young conservation architect lists some of the pressing challenges of the industry today and her future research understanding Srinagar's historic resilience and its relevance today.

Talk us through your journey as a conservation architect in Kashmir?

Right from the word go, I drew inspiration from the grandeur, the detail and technique

and yet the vulnerability of historic buildings. A series of experiences and working opportunities eventually directed me to be a full-time heritage conservation practitioner.

I did my architecture degree from Bijapur - a place dotted with historical buildings of the Deccan Sultanate - famously called the Palmyra of the Indian Subcontinent. Spending five years of my life in this sleepy but spectacular town had an indelible impact on me.

Coming back **More on P6**

Soon, Jammu-Srinagar Distance To Be Covered In 3 Hrs: Gadkari

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: There will be a four-fold rise in the footfall of tourists in Kashmir after the completion of the Delhi-Jammu-Srinagar highway, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has said.

The minister for road, highways and transport on Tuesday inspected a 924-metre-long Banihal-Qazigund tunnel, which will bypass a nearly three-km landslide and accident-prone area in Ramban district, and various road projects in the Union territory.

The completion of the tunnel will bring much relief to travellers by bypassing a nearly three-km landslide and accident-prone area in the Ramban district.

Flanked by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Union ministers Jitendra Singh and Gen VK Singh, Gadkari also conducted a breakthrough of Sita Rama Passi Maroog via virtual mode through a controlled blast in the tunnel.

"After completion of this road in the next two years, the tourist arrival (in Jammu and Kashmir) will increase over 4 times. That will increase the number of resorts and restaurants 9 in the Union territory," Gadkari told reporters after an inspection of the tunnel.



The minister expressed confidence that after the completion of road projects, there will be a huge development, people will get employment and poverty will be eradicated in the Union territory.

"The lifeline (highway) will have socio-economic benefits to Jammu and Kashmir. In Jammu and Kashmir, we are constructing road projects at a cost of Rs 1.25 lakh crore. There are 20 to 22 proposals of ropeways and cable cars worth Rs 25,000-30,000 crore that we are doing. It will have a 4-fold increase in the tourism

of Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir will be self-reliant and prosperous," he said.

Referring to the work on the highways, he said there will be three roads being constructed between Jammu and Srinagar.

"...One of five tunnels with a length of 45 kilometres has been inaugurated today. The other three tunnels will be open by next year. One tunnel given to TATA will take some time for completion."

Referring to the express highway, he said that a tunnel project has been given to TATA.

"It will take some time. After

completion, the distance will be restricted to three hours. From Katra, it will be direct travel to Delhi. The travel time from Delhi to Srinagar will be 8 hours and six hours travel time from Delhi to Katra. From Delhi to Mumbai, the travel time will be 12 hours," the minister said.

Responding to the locals' demands for employment, he said, "We are building a resort, where we can put handloom and handicrafts products of locals for display. It will give employment to 500 to 600 people."

He also said that 99 per cent of the tunnel staff has been employed locally.

"We will keep trying that local youth get jobs in other tunnels too, and Jammu and Kashmir becomes self-reliant in terms of economic growth," he added.

Gadkari also said that he always mentions the former American president's remark -- "America is rich because American roads are good".

Gadkari inspected highways, the Banihal bypass and the Peera-Chanderkote tunnel.

"Every tunnel saves time. Today this tunnel was completed...another tunnel will be completed soon. Within two months it will also be started," he said.

The tunnel is part of the ongoing four-laning of **More on P6**

BJP Will Win Over 300 Seats In Next LS Polls: Shah

Press Trust Of India

Dibrugarh (Assam): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday asserted that the BJP will win more than 300 Lok Sabha seats across the country in next year's general elections and return to power for the third consecutive term with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helm.

Addressing a rally in Dibrugarh, where he laid the foundation stone for the Upper Assam zonal BJP office, Shah exuded confidence that the saffron party will win 12 out of the 14 Lok Sabha seats in the northeastern state.

"Narendra Modi will become the prime minister for the third consecutive term with the party winning over 300 seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections," he said.

There are 543 seats in the lower house of the Parliament.

Launching a scathing attack on the Congress, the senior BJP leader said, "Northeast was once considered a fortress of the Congress but despite Rahul Gandhi's yatra (Bharat Jodo Yatra), the party failed to perform well in the recent assembly elections in three states in the region."

Assembly elections were recently held in Meghalaya, Tripura and Nagaland. The



BJP formed the government in Tripura, and came in power as alliance partners in the other two states.

Shah thanked the people of Assam, which was the first state in the Northeast to give mandate to the BJP.

Alluding to Rahul Gandhi's controversial remarks during his visit to United Kingdom, Shah, who arrived here from neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh, said, "He (Gandhi) insulted India from foreign soil. If he continues defaming the country and the government by peddling lies, Congress will be white-washed from the entire country just like the party was shown the door in the Northeast."

"There is no point in abusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi as every Indian is praying for his good health. The more they (Congress) bad-mouth our PM, the more lotus (BJP's **More on P6**

AFTER COMPLETION, THE DISTANCE WILL BE RESTRICTED to three hours. From Katra, it will be direct travel to Delhi. The travel time from Delhi to Srinagar will be 8 hours and six hours travel time from Delhi to Katra. From Delhi to Mumbai, the travel time will be 12 hours,"

G-20 SUMMIT

Govt Sets 10-Day Deadline To Complete Works

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Taking a strong note of the slow pace of work on the ongoing construction projects under G-20 Summit, the Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri on Tuesday served 10-day deadline to the officials and contractors to complete the work of face action for negligence.

Chairing a high-level meeting here to take review of works completed, and ongoing works under G-20 Summit, Bidhuri set a 10-day deadline to finish most of most of the works, including concrete works, footpaths, tiling works,

drainage, underground works, landscaping and turfing, besides blacktopping of roads and installation of signages.

The Div Com gave a deadline of upto Eid to complete the blacktopping works in the city. Reprimanding some of the officers and contractors for slow pace of work, Bidhuri cautioned them against proceeding with such. He made it clear that action shall follow against negligent ones.

He also directed them to start parallel works to ensure timely completion of all works.

The Div Com said that the works are for the people and should be **More on P6**

Tourists Throng Kashmir To Enjoy Snow, Sunshine

Press Trust Of India

Sonamarg: A large number of tourists are visiting Kashmir to enjoy the heady mix of snow-clad mountains and bright sunshine in the union territory, away from the summer heat in the other parts of the country.

"I had imagined the beauty of Kashmir from my childhood ... And this place is certainly more beautiful than I imagined," Balarata Patra, a Kolkata resident, told PTI here, 85 kilometres from Srinagar on the highway to Ladakh.

Patra said while she is enjoying her time in the "Paradise on Earth", she is anxious how she will cope with the weather



back home.

"It is so pleasant here. I wonder how I will cope when we return home. I have been sending photographs of snow to my friends in Kolkata and all they wish is that I could send some to them to beat

the heat," she added.

The introduction of various amusement forms for tourists like snow scooter rides and sledge rides has created memorable moments for the visitors.

"I have captured **More on P6**

Not A Single Youth Has Joined Militancy In 8-Months: Bukhari

Says Situation In J&K Normal, Waiting For EC To Announce Polls

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Asserting that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is as normal as in any other part of the country, Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari on Tuesday credited the youth for choosing peace over violence.

The former minister said his party is ready for assembly elections and is waiting for an announcement by the Election Commission.

He claimed that not a single



youth has joined militancy in the Union Territory over the past eight months.

"J-K is as normal as any other place in the country. Over the past eight months, not a single local youth joined militancy and we congratulate the people and the **More on P6**

S H O R T T A K E S

J&K Clocks 97 New Corona Cases

Jammu and Kashmir reported 97 fresh covid-19 cases while there was no death due to the virus during the last 24 hours, officials said on Tuesday. They said that 49 cases were reported from Jammu division and 48 from Kashmir Valley, taking the overall tally to 480230. Among the cases, 174353 are from Jammu division and 305967 from Kashmir Valley. Providing district wise details of the cases, they said, 28 cases were reported Jammu, 14 from Srinagar, **More on P6**

Woman OGW Among Two Held: Police

Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested two militant associates, including a woman from North Kashmir's Baramulla district. The two militant associates of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were arrested by a team of police, army's 29RR and SSB (2ndBn) on the basis of specific information regarding movement of militant associates in Pattan area of the district, a police spokesperson said Tuesday. He identified them as Farooq Ahmad Parra of Pattan and Saima Bashir of Sopore. "They have been **More on P6**

VDC Member Shoots Himself Dead

A member of Village Defence Committee (VDC) allegedly shot himself dead with his rifle in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, police said on Tuesday. The VDC member was identified as Suresh Kumar Sharma, resident of Bai Nambal village, they said. Sharma died by suicide on Monday night using the weapon issued to him as a VDC member, the police said in a statement. The matter is being investigated, they said. Meanwhile, officials said Sharma shot himself **More on P6**

5 Houses Gutted In Gurez Fire

At least five residential houses were gutted in a massive fire in Tulail Valley of north Kashmir's Bandipora district late last night, officials said on Tuesday. Quoting sub divisional magistrate Gurez, Mudasir Ahmad, news agency KNO reported that five houses were gutted in massive fire in Grat-Nallah village of Tulail. He said that the fire erupted from one of the residential houses and engulfed the surrounding houses within no time. "The cause of the **More on P6**

Temp Increases At Most Places In J&K

Amid forecast for mainly dry weather, the minimum temperature recorded an increase at most places in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday. A meteorological department official here said that no large change was expected in the weather and it was expected to be mainly dry till April 16. Generally cloudy sky with possibility of light rain was likely for three days thereafter, he said. Regarding the temperature, the MeT official said that Srinagar recorded a low of 7.1°C against **More on P6**

5 Members Of Interstate Drug Module Held

Police on Tuesday said they busted a "major interstate" drug module by arresting five persons including a kingpin woman and her boyfriend in multiple cases in Sopore town of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. The contraband substance was also seized. Terming it a big achievement, SSP Sopore Shabir Nawab said that more arrests are likely. Addressing a press conference at Police Station Bomai, SSP Sopore said that police have managed to bust a major drug module by arresting **More on P6**

Police Busts Another Flesh Trade Racket In Nowgam, Kingpin Among Six Held

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Barely a week after a flesh trade racket was unearthed in Bagh-e-Mehtab locality, the police raided another prostitution ring in Nowgam area in uptown Srinagar on Tuesday, leading to the arrest of six people, including a kingpin.

According to the police, investigations into a similar case in the Chanapora area last week, led to the discovery of the flesh trade ring and the subsequent arrests.

A kingpin of the racket was among six persons including a sex worker, who were arrested for running the flesh trade racket in uptown Srinagar.

Police identified the arrestees as Shabir Ahmed Mir, son of Abdul Rahim Mir of Charlipora Nowgam who was the main kingpin of the racket, his wife Shazia Shabir Mir, who was operating this prostitution ring and Adil Gulzar Hazar, son of



Gulzar Ahmed Hazar of Soura Srinagar, co-accused.

A local girl (name withheld), working as a sex worker and 2 Customers identified as Nazir Ahmad Malla, son of Ghulam Qadir Malla of Narbal and Irshad Ahmad Dar, son of Ghulam Nabi Dar of Narbal have also been arrested by the police.

"Investigation in the Chanpura case led to the busting of another

prostitution racket in Nowgam area. 1) Shabir Mir of charlipora nowgam, 2) his wife Shazia Mir & 3) Adil Gulzar Hazar of Soura arrested on spot for operating this racket. 2 customers & a sex worker also detained (all locals)," police said in a tweet.

Pertinent to mention two main accused of Chanapora sex scandal case were booked under stringent Public Safety Act on April 8.

INVESTIGATION IN THE CHANPURA CASE LED TO THE BUSTING OF ANOTHER PROSTITUTION RACKET IN

Nowgam area. 1) Shabir Mir of charlipora nowgam, 2) his wife Shazia Mir & 3) Adil Gulzar Hazar of Soura arrested on spot for operating this racket. 2 customers & a sex worker also detained (all locals)."

"Both the main accused of the Chanapora sex scandal case booked under PSA as well. They are: 1) Mohd Shafi Hajam S/O Abdul Khaliq Hajam R/O Karimabad Pulwama and 2) Arshad Ahmad Bhat S/O Mohd Shaban Bhat R/O Pampore Pulwama" tweets Srinagar police.

Police had on April 3, busted a prostitution racket in Bagh-e-Mehtab area in uptown Srinagar. Two persons were arrested on spot, while further 4 sex workers and 2 customers were also detained.

The whole racket was run

from a rented house owned by one Altaf Hussain Afaki son of Asadullah Afaki of Chanapora. He was arrested under section 3 of Immoral trafficking prevention act 1956 (ITPA).

"Owner of the house used for immoral activities namely: Altaf Hussain Afaki S/o Asadullah Afaki R/o Chanapora arrested under section 3 of Immoral trafficking prevention act 1956 (ITPA). Proceedings started for formal attachment/sealing of house as per section 18 of ITPA," police said in a tweet.

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
BUIBHARA: 01932-228243
PAMPORE: 01933-294132
PATTAN: 01954-293507
QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

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

PRAYERS	
FAJR	4 :38
ZUHR	12:32
ASR	5: 09
Magrib	7:02
ISHA	8: 27

HIJRI CALENDAR
21 RAMAZAN
1444

Auqaf Jamia Announces Prayer Timing

Jumatul-Vida At 2 PM,
Shab-e-Qadr At 10:30 PM,
Eid-ul-Fitr At 10 AM

Observer News Service

Srinagar: An important meeting of the leading members and senior officials of Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid Srinagar was held on Tuesday.

The meeting reviewed the arrangements for providing all possible facilities to the worshippers and devotees through the historic Jama Masjid on Jumma-tul-Vida, Shab-e-Qadr and Eid-ul-Fitr, a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

It was stated in the meeting that according to the schedule, Jumma-tul-Vida prayer will be offered at 02:00 pm and Shab-e-Qadr at 10:30 pm at the Jama Masjid while the Eid-ul-Fitr prayer will be held at the historic Eidgah, Srinagar at 10:00 am, as per past practice In Sha Allah. However, in case of inclement weather, the Eid prayer will be held at the Jama

Masjid Srinagar at the same time.

During the meeting, the members expressed deep concern over the nearly four-year-long illegal and arbitrary detention of the Anjuman Chairman Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Dr Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq and urged the authorities to release him in view of the important and blessed occasions of Shab-e-Qadr, Jumma-tul-Vida and Eid-ul-Fitr so that he can fulfill his religious responsibilities the institution of Mirwaiz enjoins upon him.

It was clarified in the statement that during these two great occasions, thousands of Muslims from all over the valley flock to the historic Central Jama Masjid Srinagar not only for the night and Friday prayers but also for collective repentance and supplication before Allah Almighty. They also benefit from the advice and sermons of Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir who however continues to be under house arrest since 5 August 2019 while all his peaceful activities remain suspended since then.



A MAN OFFERING MAGHRIB (EVENING PRAYERS) at central Jama Masjid in the old city on Tuesday, KO Photo, Syed Mohammad Burhan

Traffic Police Counsels Stunt Bikers, Those Repeat Practice Will Be Booked

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Traffic Police Srinagar after identifying the boys involved in stunt biking through social media counseled them in presence of their parents on Tuesday.

A senior traffic police official said that a productive counseling session was held for the youth involved in stunt biking, in

presence of their parents, who he said appreciated the initiative.

During the session, the boys were briefed about the adverse aftermath of the incidents arising out of the stunt biking, the official said.

In a tweet, city traffic police wrote, "Traffic city Srinagar acting against stunt bikers held counseling sessions with violators and their parents. Who appreciated the initiative. Any

information regarding stunt biking may be reported on 103 number."

He said the department has issued a number 103 for the general public where they can report any occurrence of stunt biking happening in Srinagar.

"As of now, we are counseling them but those found involved again will be booked under the relevant laws," he said.

JTA Discusses Issues Confronting Traders With Div Com

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Joint Traders Association (JTA), an umbrella of 13 markets from Mughal Darbar to Lalchowk here on Tuesday called on Divisional Commissioner V.K.Bidhuri to discuss trade and commerce related issues.

The JTA was led by its Chairman Farhan Kitab and General Secretary Feroz Baba.

Pertinently, multiple issues raised by the trade community were

discussed. The absence of street lights in all important Lambert lane, the smog and dust hitting business activity in the heart of Srinagar Lalchowk due to smart city projects, diversions causing traffic mess, lack of washrooms in Abi Guzar and other areas like burning issues were raised, a statement said.

All important issues of providing roadside parking for customers to increase their footfall during the current festive season were also

From The Office Of Uzair Khan
License no. 502/2018

In the case of
1 Tauseef Ah Lone S/o Abdul Khaliq lone , R/o Aquilmir Khanyar
2 Lateef Ahmad Lone S/o Ab Khaliq lone
R/o: Aquilmir khanyar Srinagar proprietor of Eatout Resturant and Hotel Mark Court Road Amira Kadal Lal Chowk Srinagar
3. Ubaid Ashraf Khan S/O Mohammad Ashraf Khan
R/o Sanat Nagar Srinagar

Versus
Public at large (NON-CAVEATOS)

In the Matter of Caveat Petition in terms of Section 48-A
The Caveator has reason to believe that Non-Caveators may file any Application, Petition, Appeal, Suit or any other type of proceeding before the Hon'ble Court and on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story and may seek in obtaining some relief/order at their back /in exparte against the caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put in irreparable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveator be given an opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble court before passing any order.
Sd/advocate

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
AWANTIPORA, KASHMIR.
Tel: 01933-247954/247955 Website: www.iust.ac.in

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NOTES:
- Date of availability of online application forms: 18-04-2023.
- Last date of submission of online application forms: 27-04-2023 (EOD PM).
- The hardcopy of the application form along with a detailed CV containing all the qualifications made by the candidate, High lighting his/her achievements during the last five years shall have to be submitted in the office of Registrar by or before 01-05-2023.
- Age must be less than 60 years, preferably less than 55 years.
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This Day In History

- 1648 - University of Harderwijk Neth solemn opens
- 1654 - Ordinance of Union between England and Scotland passed by the Council of State
- 1713 - Dutch State-Gen signs peace with France: Netherlands loses Orange Princedom
- 1770 - British parliament repeals the Townshend Revenue Acts, which had fueled op position to British rule in colonial America
- 1776 - Halifax resolution for independence adopted by North Carolina/1787 - Philadel phia's Free African Society forms
- 1783 - Tippu Sahib drives out British from Bednore, India
- 1869 - Hudson Bay Company cedes its territory to Canada
- 1811 - 1st US colonists on Pacific coast arrive at Cape Disappointment, Washington
- 1820 - Alexander Ypsilantis is declared leader of Filiki Eteria, a secret organization to overthrow Ottoman rule over Greece.
- 1826 - Weber's opera "Oberon" premieres in London
- 1844 - Texan envoys sign Treaty of Annexation with the United States
- 1857 - Gustave Flaubert's "Madame Bovary" published
- 1858 - 1st US billiards championship, Michael J Phelan wins in Detroit
- 1859 -Hibernia Savings & Loan Society of San Francisco incorporates
- 1861 -Fort Sumter in South Carolina is attacked by the Confederacy, beginning the American Civil War
- 1862 - James Andrews steals Confederate train (General) at Kennesaw, Georgia
- 1862 - Union troops occupy Fort Pulaski, Georgia
- 1863 -14] Gunboat battle at Bayou Teche, Louisiana
- 1928 - Turkey passes separation of church & state
- 1940 - Germany invades Norway & Denmark during WW II (Denmark surrenders).
- 1942 - Battle of Bataan; US-Filipino forces overwhelmed by Japanese at Bataan.
- 1945 - World War II: The Battle of Königsberg, East Prussia, ends.
- 1949 - UN Intl Court of Justice held Albania responsible for incidents in Corfu Channel & awards Britain damages
- 1957 -Suez Canal cleared for all shipping
- 1959 - NASA names 1st 7 astronauts for Project Mercury.

From KO Archives

Sumo-Borne Men Abduct, Beat Cop

Observer News Service

S RINAGAR: A traffic police constable was admitted in the hospital in a critical condition after being dropped half dead by some unidentified abductors outside the Batwara gate of the army headquarters in Badamiyach cantonment here this afternoon.

According to reports, Ghulam Muhammad (belt No 1556), a constable in the traffic control department deployed in the Regal chowk to enforce one way movement stopped a white Sumo from proceeding in the wrong direction. At this, the unidentified persons pounced on the constable and beat him.

Watching the scuffle, some shopkeepers tried to rescue the policeman. But, the Sumo-borne men putted him in and fled away. The incident took place in broad day light at 3:45 p.m. At about 6:30 p.m. the army authorities informed the police about the constable lying at the mail gate of the BB Cantt almost half dead. However, the police refused to pick up the injured constable and instead demanded the in-spector general of police or any other senior officer to go to the spot for the purpose. Eventually, it was the superintendent of police traffic, Riyaz Ahmad Bedar, who went to the BB Cantt gate and removed the constable to the SMHS hospital where the doctors attending on him said, late in the evening, that his condition was stable

Kashmir Observer, 12 April, 2000

KASHMIR OBSERVERTM

Tuesday | 11-04-2023

Gadkari's Kashmir 'roadmap'

In a renewed push to complete the Zojila tunnel, Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari inspected the ongoing work at the tunnel in Baltal on Tuesday. Gadkari later tweeted that tourism in Jammu and Kashmir will increase by 2-3 times after the construction of the tunnel. He said that the government was determined to achieve the connectivity between Kashmir to Kaniyakumari in the true sense. He revealed that as many as 19 tunnels are being constructed in Jammu and Kashmir at a cost of Rs 25 thousand crore. The union minister gave more details: The two-lane tunnel, he said, is a 7.57 meter high horse-shoe-shaped single tube that will pass under the Zojila Pass in the Himalayas between Ganderbal in Kashmir and Drass town in Kargil district of Ladakh. The project includes a smart tunnel system, constructed using the New Austrian Tunneling Method. It is also equipped with facilities such as CCTV, radio control, uninterrupted power supply, ventilation. "The Government of India has also saved Rs 5000 crore by the use of modern technology in this project," the minister said.

Once complete, the tunnel will usher in an all-weather connectivity between Kashmir Valley and Ladakh. Earlier, Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited (MEIL), which is executing the tunnel, said that the project is likely to be completed by December 2026.

The work on the showpiece infrastructure project had halted in 2018 after IL&FS, the big-time infrastructure lender, went bust. Now the government is making an effort to complete the tunnel at the earliest. The tunnel will reduce the distance from Baltal to Minamarg to 13 km from the current 40 km and the travel time will be cut by an hour and a half. Also, at 14.15 km, the Zojila tunnel will be India's longest road tunnel, and Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel. There is one more tunnel close to Zojila: the 6.5 km long Z-Morh which will connect Gagangir with Shetkari. The tunnels between them will ensure that Ladakh no longer will remain an inaccessible, remote region cut off from the rest of the world for six months through winter.

There are other important infrastructure projects in progress whose completion will enhance the connectivity in J&K and Ladakh. And once completed, the railway line and the roads will stitch Kashmir together with concrete and asphalt and connect places and people alienated from each other by geography. There is an urgent need to expedite the work on these projects to realize the goal of a truly integrated J&K with its limitless opportunities for trade and travel.

OTHER OPINION

Going Empty

The story of children's hunger is also the story of adults' pain. No parent wants to let their child go hungry; it is acutely painful when a baby is concerned. A recent study in India found 5.9 million 'zero food' children, who are six to 23-month-old infants who have not ingested any substantial calories for 24 hours. Two out of 10 infants within this age group have neither had solid nor liquid food for a whole day; the method followed in the study only identifies the last 24 hours and cannot show how many hours the child went without food earlier. The data were extracted from the National Family Health Surveys for consecutive years since 2016, which showed no marked reduction in food insecurity at this level. The percentage of zero food children increased from 17.2% in 2016 to 17.8% in 2021, which goes against the Centre's earlier inference that the reduction in the percentage of stunted and wasted children approximately in the same period — stunting and wasting being the conventional measures for malnutrition — showed an improvement in nutrition. As the researchers of the recent study have pointed out, indirect measures are obviously not precise enough; they may even be misleading. India's food policies need to be precise and perfectly targeted.

The question of precision is relevant since India does have nutrition and food policies for the younger group. Daily supplements of 500 calories and 12 to 15 grams of protein are provided for children from six months to three years. How can there still be zero food children, and in such huge numbers? Although 20 states have improved their percentage of starving infants, the decline in Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh has neutralised it, while Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Assam are doing badly too. Something is going awry in the system and the supplements are not reaching the families that most need them. It is understandable that the supplements are given to households with six-month-old babies, since they are meant to be breast-fed till then. But are the mothers in these families, possibly anaemic and suffering from malnutrition themselves, able to give their babies fulfilling feeds and the immunity they need? To defeat hunger and malnutrition, food security policies need to make these households, economically worst off and often geographically disadvantaged, their first priority.

Telegraph-India

2024: No Fight Left In Opposition?

There Is Little To Indicate That Prime Minister Narendra Modi Is Any Less Popular, Let Alone Facing An Anti-Incumbency Sentiment

RIYAZ WANI

“To be sure, post-yatra Rahul seems to have developed some gravitas. And if this is his umpteenth relaunch - to borrow the BJP's description of the Congress leader's renewed periodic plunge into politics - then this is the most promising one so far. And if he fails yet again, it may well push him as well as the Congress party towards oblivion



In what could certainly have put some wind back in the sails of Congress, the opinion polls in Karnataka have given the party an edge over the BJP. The poll, conducted by CVoter, projected between 115 and 127 seats for the Congress in the 224-member assembly, with the BJP a distant second at somewhere between 68 and 80 seats. Zee News Opinion Poll, on the other hand, is favourably disposed towards the BJP. But even that doesn't give a cake walk to the BJP, something that should be cause for concern for a party that is perceived to command a majority of support in the country.

A lot rides on the outcome of the polls in Karnataka, more so, as it would set the stage for the 2024 general elections. Around ten assembly elections are scheduled to be held before the national polls. Among them, the elections in Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana will be very consequential. The BJP will hope to win all of them. Should the party suffer reverses in the majority of these states, this may not bode well for its 2024 chances. But despite the reverses, it could still carry the day as happened in 2019 when the saffron party secured a landslide in general elections despite losing state polls in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan.

The elections in these major states represent the last chance for the opposition, especially Congress, to hurdle back into the reckoning. For now, the Congress can take heart from the victory in Himachal.

As things stand, the opposition has failed to stitch together a formal alliance - albeit, there has been a rising chorus from many leaders to form a united front. The unity of the opposition has been inherently hamstrung by the difficulty to rally people around a principal leader or a party. Since 2014, Congress has lost its pole

position in India's politics. And its leader Rahul Gandhi has struggled to match up to prime minister Narendra Modi's overarching political appeal.

Under Rahul's leadership, Congress has lost successive elections, which has further undermined faith in him. This has made the other opposition parties wary of making him the face of opposition unity. Besides, several regional leaders who are powerful in their respective states nurse their personal ambitions. As a result, they wouldn't want to subsume themselves under Congress, let alone Rahul or any other major opposition leader. An alliance would also oblige powerful regional parties to agree to seat-sharing in their states with the other less popular parties. So, there are many hurdles on the path to unity in the opposition, and it won't be easy to surmount them.

Will Rahul's conviction by the Gujarat High Court and his subsequent disqualification help Congress? Or for that matter, would Gandhi's 4000 kilometre foot march reinvigorate the party's support base? Much would depend on how Rahul builds on it. Up until now, he has squandered all opportunities that came his way.

To be sure, post-yatra Rahul seems to have developed some gravitas. And if this is his umpteenth relaunch - to borrow the BJP's description of the Congress leader's renewed periodic plunge into politics - then this is the most promising one so far. And if he fails yet again, it may well push him as well as the Congress party towards oblivion.

The objective gauge of Rahul's progress or otherwise will be the outcome of the upcoming Assembly polls. A victory in some major states can also reinstate Congress as a viable national entity that can hold its own in front of the BJP juggernaut. This can, in turn, earn Rahul the stature to command some respect from the

opposition, even if he is not able to lead them.

But for now, such a prospect remains a long shot. There is little to indicate that prime minister Narendra Modi is any less popular, let alone facing an anti-incumbency sentiment. His name and persona seem now entrenched in the national psyche. He is seen as a leader whose continuation in power people now take for granted. If notebandi, farmers' protests, Chinese incursions, the COVID-19 pandemic and its widespread depredations couldn't dent his image, nothing else can.

At the same time, politics is a dynamic process. Though public sentiment could be manipulated and distracted to a large extent through the control of information flow, it can also change due to factors not controlled by a rigged information order. For example, the economic factor, with unemployment, inflation, etc forcing a critical mass of people to turn away from the government. Or just a sense of fatigue with the current leaders, a certain disaffection with the prevailing state of affairs, which is described as anti-incumbency, and which, so far, Modi government has not allowed to set in. There is a widespread perception that the current political officeholders still face no anti-incumbency. As of now, the situation looks set to go in favour of the BJP only. That is, unless the opposition does something spectacularly different and a set of other factors coalesce in their favour, something that currently looks improbable.

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

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The Needy Dying

Of late, making my way to the mosque, I chanced upon a woman; begging her heart out. Many men snuck past her. And no one bothered to take a look at her. It was as if she was a ghost; waiting there to haunt the people. She lay there; her eyes flitting here and there in hopes of finding a person who could give her a few bucks. But the people acted deaf, dumb, and blind. The scene was so pathetic that it would make your skin crawl.

Yet another tragic incident, a few days back, when a girl took her own life by diving into a river, and the reason again revolved around financial problems. Everyone living in different corners of the world does help the needy. But, when it comes to us, we avert our gaze from one. Even this cold season seems to have no significant impact on our minds as to under what conditions the needy would be living their lives. We have become out-and-out beasts.

That lady and now no-longer-alive

girl aside for a moment, there are so many amputees, divorcees, orphans walking down the street, visiting our homes, mosques; but we almost never direct our gaze at them, or hang on their stories, or provide them with something adequate enough to bring smile to their faces.

We hardly ever make them feel lovable. We rarely are kind enough to them.

Anyways, the question again arises; to where do they go when our blasted presence has dominated this

piece of the planet wholly? Do we want them to break down in tears and invoke the Almighty to curse us or take them?!

If such incidents fail to shake our conscience and make us take concrete steps towards saving the destitute from dying, we are hardly human beings.

Peer Faizan Bashir

From Kaba In Makkah To Mosque In Kufa

Farhan Bokhari

As blood oozed from his forehead, Hazrat Ali (a.s) received his fatal wound with the widely documented statement: Fuztu bi Rabbil Kaaba' (By the grace of the Lord of Kaaba, I have succeeded). And that claim of success remains unchallenged to this day.

So powerful has been the legacy of the fourth caliph of Islam after Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), that Hazrat Ali (a.s) continues to have a widespread impact in more ways than one.

On Monday, the 19th of Ramadan, Muslims across the world will begin observing the three-day martyrdom commemoration of Hazrat Ali (AS) from the day of the attack to the day of his martyrdom on 21st of Ramadan.

The persona of Hazrat Ali (AS) pulls pilgrims to the historic grand mosque at Kufa and his final resting place in Najaf-e-Ashraf in Iraq, a city surrounded by inhabitants whose lives revolve around him. The history of Najaf, barring the 'Wadi us salam' historic cemetery, is built around Hazrat Ali (AS).

Today, from centres of the Islamic scholarly world to businesses catering to the pilgrims, all exist around the shrine of Hazrat Ali (AS). And not too far is Karbala, a captivating centre for pilgrims built around the place of martyrdom of Hazrat Ali's son Imam Hussain (AS) and his followers whose defiance of Yazeed bin Muawiyah in an epic encounter on the 10th day of Muharram continues to inspire Muslims worldwide. In time, these two shrines have become connected, as each year pilgrims during Muharram set out on a 100 kms journey on foot from Kufa to Najaf.

The powerful legacy of Hazrat Ali (AS) has inspired many Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The documentation of the life of Hazrat Ali (AS) ranges from his command of knowledge and philosophy to his unparalleled chivalry on the battlefield.

Titles such 'Asadullah' (the lion of Allah), 'Maalood-e-Kaaba' (One who was born inside the Kaaba), 'Fateh-e-Khyber' (Conqueror of Khyber, the Jewish fort) and 'Baab



ul Madinatul Ilm' (Passage to the city of knowledge), each demonstrate an aspect of the multi-faceted and rich life of Hazrat Ali (a.s).

Highlighting the persona of Hazrat Ali (AS) as a unifying individual for Muslims across the board, Shaykh Fadhalla Haeri in his widely acclaimed 'The Sayings and Wisdom of Imam Ali' wrote: "Any attempt to describe the personal qualities of Imam Ali is a challenging task, for he has assumed [to all Muslims alike], an almost legendary status as a paragon of virtue, a fountain of knowledge and a model

of chivalry, widely renowned for his piety, nobility and learning. Indeed it is at times difficult to find the true balance needed to love him without idolizing him".

One of the most widely circulated writings of Hazrat Ali (AS) remains a letter that he wrote to his close follower Malik Ashtar, upon the latter's appointment as governor of Egypt, then a province of the Muslim empire. That letter, among others was publicly commended by the late UN Secretary General Kofi Annan as an ideal model for governance which deserves to be em-

braced by modern-day rulers.

Hazrat Ali wrote: "Be it known to you, O Malik, that I am sending you as Governor to a country which in the past has experienced both just and unjust rule. Men will scrutinise your actions with a searching eye, even as you used to scrutinise the actions of those before you, and speak of you even as you did speak of them. The fact is that the public speaks well of only those who do good. It is they who furnish the proof of your actions. Hence the richest treasure that you may covet would be the treasure of

good deeds".

And in his widely read title 'Ali the Magnificent', Yousuf N Lalljee reflecting upon the quality of statecraft under the administration of Hazrat Ali (a.s) wrote: "It was the cardinal principle of Hazrat Ali's administration that the ruler should adopt a standard of life equal to that of the humblest subject in the realm. He sincerely believed that the real greatness of a ruler did not consist in wearing rich and costly dresses, but in relieving the distress of the suffering subjects. The public treasury was

meant to meet not the extravagant demands of a ruler's vanity but the needs of the downtrodden people, to feed the starving population and to clothe the naked".

One of the most impressive memories from the life of Hazrat Ali (AS) remains his oft-repeated challenge, seeking all those around him to raise questions before he is not amongst them. "Salooni, Salooni, Kabla Ant'alkadoonee" (Ask me, Ask me before you miss me) was his statement repeatedly recorded in history, from his presence on the pulpit. For scholars seeking to track letters and sermons of Hazrat Ali (AS), 'Nahjul Balagha' – a historical text remains a popular and comprehensive starting point.

Barely moments passed after the morning 'fajr' prayer began at the 'Kufa' mosque in southern Iraq that an assassin, Abdul Rehman ibne Muljim, armed with a poison dipped dagger struck at the head of Hazrat Ali (AS), first Imam and the fourth rightly guided caliph of Islam – thus delivering a blow whose impact remains in place almost fourteen centuries later.

Among writers who devoted time and energy to research the life and legacy of Hazrat Ali (AS), George Jordac, the Lebanese Christian scholar remains a memorable figure. In his widely noted title 'Sautul Adaltil Insaniyah' subsequently translated in English as 'The Voice of Human Justice: A Biography of Imam Ali', Jordac wrote: "His (Hazrat Ali) laws were not formulated on account of the exigencies of government and politics, but government and politics were based on those laws. He purposely did not adopt a path which might lead him to rulership, but adopted that which might enable him to make his place in the pure hearts. Justice was a part of his soul and was ingrained in his heart, and it had combined other virtues with itself".

In a crisis-stricken era, Muslim ummah has much to learn from the life and teachings of Hazrat Ali (AS) as his martyrdom is being commemorated today.

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Who Are the 9 People That Allah Loves?

AMALIAH TEAM

Both the Qur'an and Sunnah guide us to seek the love of Allah through the actions He loves as well as striving to be like those who He says He loves in the Qur'an.

Allah tells us that if He loves a person, He calls [angel] Gabriel saying: "Allah loves so and so; O Gabriel, love him." Gabriel would love him, and then Gabriel would make an announcement among the residents of Heaven, "Allah loves so-and-so, therefore, you should love him also." So, all the residents of the Heavens would love him and then he is granted the pleasure of the people of the earth. (Bukhari)

Here are 9 qualities that we can work on implementing in our lives in order to gain Allah's love, as highlighted in the Qur'an and Sunnah:

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1. THOSE WHO ARE GOD-CONSCIOUS (AL-MUTTAQIN)

Allah tells us in the Qur'an that fasting has been prescribed for us so that we can attain Taqwa, making Ramadan a beautiful opportunity to earn His Love. One of the ways Allah says we can achieve true God-consciousness or righteousness is "by giving some of what we cherish" (Qur'an 3:92).

"Righteousness in the sight of God... dwells in one who, despite his love for it, gives of his wealth in charity to close relatives and orphans and to the needy and the wayfarer, and beggars and for the emancipation of slaves." (Qur'an 2:177)

Islamic Relief provides an opportunity to help support orphans through their orphan sponsorship programme. The sponsorship is an effective way of giving that sets up a connection between the donor and a vulnerable orphan. The donor will

receive an annual update on how their support is assisting the sponsored child and their family.

2. THOSE WHO PURIFY THEMSELVES (AL-MUTATAHHIRIN)

Allah says, He loves "those who purify themselves" (Qur'an 2:222). Wudhu is a form of purification for our sins, and the Prophet ﷺ said, "When a Muslim man performs ablution, his sins are removed from his hearing, his sight, his hands, and his legs. If he sits down, he will sit down forgiven." (Musnad Ahmad) This Ramadan, you can strive to always be in a state of wudhu even when you're on your period as it carries a lot of barakah.

"When the Messenger ﷺ was in the state of major ritual impurity and intended to eat or sleep, he would perform wudu, the way he would for prayer." (Muslim)

Zakat is another form of purification which we can engage in as it purifies us and our wealth.

"Take, [O Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [Allah's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing." (Qur'an 9:103)

Although, it's not necessary to pay Zakat al-Maal in the month of Ramadan (unless it's due at the time), we can utilise the added barakah of the month and engage in this act of worship then.

3. THOSE WHO RELY ON HIM (AL-MUTAWAKKILIN)

Sometimes Shaitan can deceive us into thinking that if we give, we'll never have enough for ourselves or we'll be losing out. But Allah encourages us to give even when we don't have much, and He comforts us with His reminder that He "...loves those who rely [upon Him]" (Qur'an 3:159).

One way to quell the fear of scarcity which arises is by giving to others from what we think we'll have less of. Relying on Allah includes leaving our affairs in His hands and trusting that He will provide for us and reward us with much more and better than we've given.



4. THOSE WHO REPENT (AL-TAWWABIN)

In the month where the gates of heavens are open and the gates of hell are closed, the Prophet ﷺ taught our mother Aisha (RA) a beautiful du'a to constantly seek repentance from Allah:

Allahumma innaka 'afuwun tuhibbul 'afwa fa fu 'annee' (O Allah, You are the Most Forgiving and You love to Forgive, so forgive me)

As you go through your day in Ramadan, strive to make it a habit to recite this du'a constantly as it's not limited to the last ten days of the month.

5. THOSE WHO ARE JUST (AL-MUQSITIN)

Allah tells us in the Qur'an that He "loves those who are fair (and just)." (Qur'an 49:9-10)

Everywhere you look in the world today, there seems to be an injustice of some kind. This can leave us feeling helpless but Islam also provides us with Zakat, an effective way to tackle one of the most prevalent forms of injustice which is economic injustice. Zakat is a form of social justice which involves giving out of our wealth back to the community. Giving Zakat ensures an ethical redistribution of wealth and means that those most in need

are given their due share.

6. THOSE WHO ARE CONSISTENT

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately and know that your deeds will not make you enter Paradise, and that the most beloved deed to Allah is the most regular and constant even if it were little." [Bukhari]

Technology has made it easy to automate some acts to achieve easy consistency. One way to do this can be to set up regular donations for a cause you care about even if it's a £5 a month direct debit.

Not sure where to donate? Islamic Relief UK offers several causes which you can choose to donate monthly to including providing water, supporting orphans and children or contributing towards a form of sadaqatul jariyah.

7. THOSE WHO DO GOOD (AL-MUHSININ)

Allah provides us with a plethora of opportunities to do good such as kindness to others, feeding others, spreading salaam, forgiving those who wrong us or even saying a good word.

"Who spend [in the cause of Allah]

during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people – and Allah loves the doers of good." (Qur'an 3:134)

"And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction [by refraining]. And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good." (Qur'an 2:195)

"Worship Allah 'alone' and associate none with Him. And be kind to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, near and distant neighbours, close friends, 'needy' travellers, and those 'bonds people' in your possession. Surely Allah does not like whoever is arrogant, boastful..." (Qur'an 4:36)

8. THE PATIENT (AS-SABIRIN)

Another group of people Allah says He loves, are those who are "steadfast" (Qur'an 3:146) in patience and perseverance.

Ramadan teaches us the importance of sabr in our abstinence from haram (all actions displeasing to Allah) as well as in practising good deeds even when we don't attain any personal benefit from our actions. Sabr can also manifest in moments of trials and difficulty.

This Ramadan, when you find yourself in a difficult situation before resorting to saying or doing anything you might regret, remind yourself of Allah's love for those who are patient and seek His help through duas instead.

9. THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE PROPHET ﷺ

Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Qur'an 3:31)

The best way to strive to emulate the way of the Prophet ﷺ – and hence earn the love of Allah – is by engaging in actions he ﷺ has commanded us:

The Prophet ﷺ said, "The most beloved people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to people. The most beloved deed to Allah is to make a Muslim happy, or to remove one of his troubles, or to forgive his debt, or to feed his hunger. That I walk with a brother regarding a need is more beloved to me than that I seclude

myself in this mosque in Medina for a month. Whoever swallows his anger, then Allah will conceal his faults. Whoever suppresses his rage, even though he could fulfil his anger if he wished, then Allah will secure his heart on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever walks with his brother regarding a need until he secures it for him, then Allah Almighty will make his footing firm across the bridge on the day when the footings are shaken." [al-Mu'jam al-Awsat 6/139]

"Free the captives, feed the hungry and pay a visit to the sick." [Bukhari]

"He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbour goes hungry" [Al-Albani]

"Whoever gives food for a fasting person to break his fast, he will have a reward like theirs, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest." [Darussalam]

"Guard yourself from the Hellfire, even with half of a date in charity. If one cannot find it, then with a kind word." [Bukhari]

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, 'I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, "Which of the deeds is most beloved to Allah?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Performing the prayer at its prescribed, fixed time." I asked, "What next?" He replied, "Dutifulness to the parents." I asked, "What next?" He replied, "Jihad (striving) in the Cause of Allah." Had I asked him for more, he would have told me.' [Bukhari]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "One of Prophet Dawud's supplications was:

Allahumma inni as'aluka hubbaka, wa hubba man yuhibbuka, wal-'amalaladhi yuballighuni hubbaka. Allahumma-aj'al hubbaka ahbaba ilayya min nafs, wa ahli, wa minal-ma'il-baridi

O Allah! I ask You for Your Love, the love of those who love You, and deeds which will cause me to attain Your Love. O Allah! Make Your Love dearer to me than myself, my family and the cold water." [At-Tirmidhi]

Whatever act you choose, we pray Allah makes it easy for you, accepts it from you and makes you among those who are beloved to Him. Ameen.



AIFF Prez Meets J&K LG

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The President of All India Football Federation Kalyan Chaubey and Secretary General Shaji Prabhakaran met J&K LG Manoj Sinha during their official visit to Srinagar on Monday, April 10, 2023, and discussed the development of football in the state.

The two senior officials of the AIFF also held a series of meetings with various stakeholders of local football, including district associations, clubs, academies, former players, coaches, referees, senior officers of the J&K Sports

Council and the local administration. They also visited the renovated Bakshi Stadium.

"Considering the immense potential of football in J&K, which has produced many top footballers in the past, the AIFF has decided to collaborate with the local administration here to initiate projects which would unearth talents and develop the best among them through the Centre of Excellence. We will also do everything to develop a competitive structure that would encourage regular participation of local youths in football," Chaubey said.

Inter-School TT, Chess & Carrom Competitions Held At Bijbehara

Observer News Service

BIJBEHARA: The Zonal Physical Education Officer (ZPEO) Bijbehara organized Inter School Zonal Level competitions in Table Tennis, Chess and Carrom on Tuesday at Govt. Boys Model Higher Secondary School Bijbehara for U-14 and U-17 age group boys.

Almost 180 students from different schools of Zone Bijbehara participated in the competitions.

In the U-14 Table Tennis, GMS Samthan emerged Winner and GMS Kanelwon was the Runner Up. While in U-17 Table Tennis, HSS Veeri was the Winner while HSS Arwani came Runner Ups.

In the U-14 Carrom, MS Nowpora emerged as Winner and GMS HP Tawaila was the Runner Up. In U-17 Carrom, HSS



Marhama emerged as Winner and HS HP Bagh was the Runner Up.

In the U-14 Chess, HSS Jablipora emerged as Winner and BMS Gadiseer came Runner Ups. In U-17 Chess, HSS Marhama was the Winner, while HSS Veeri emerged as Runner Up.

IPL: RR Face Chepauk 'Test' Against CSK



Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: The in-form dynamic opening Rajasthan Royals pair of Jos Buttler and Yasasvi Jaiswal will face a quality 'Spin Test' on a tricky Chepauk pitch when they lock horns with some world-class short-format tweekers in the Chennai Super Kings line-up in an IPL match here on Wednesday.

The England white-ball skipper and his young Indian partner have both scored a couple of half-centuries each and that too at healthy strike-rates -- 180.95 for Buttler and 164.47 for Jaiswal.

But in the three games that Royals have played so far, two were in Guwahati, which was the flattest batting deck amongst all the venues. The Hyderabad track was also loaded heavily in favour of batters.

And, suddenly, they come to Chennai where the ball can grip and also get slower as the match progresses. The toss is

always an important factor in Chennai as chasing anything above 170 to 175 could be a risky proposition.

Especially, when Moeen Ali, Ravindra Jadeja and Mitchell Santner are operating at the Chepauk and might bowl 10, if not 12, overs between them. Matches can be won and lost there.

The three seasoned CSK campaigners have taken 11 wickets between them in three games but, more importantly, their economy rate has been very impressive.

But by no means Royals' spinners could be taken lightly as the wily 'Cricket Scientist' Ravichandran Ashwin has played all his cricket at this very ground and the intelligent Yuzvendra Chahal can outfox any batter on a given day. Add the other Tamil Nadu spinner Murugan Ashwin in the mix and CSK will also have their own set of challenges.

However, CSK will be missing Deepak Chahar, who is expected to be out of the tournament due to recurrence of a left hamstring injury.

Whether Dhoni prefers the erratic but pacy Rajvardhan Hangargekar or the incisive Simarjeet Singh will be a big question.

On the batting front, the vastly experienced Ajinkya Rahane showed he too could score quickly on his CSK debut as the team turned in a strong performance with spinners Jadeja and Santner doing a fine job.

Add the good run of Ruturaj Gaikwad at the top of the order and CSK do have a formidable batting line-up. But they would be up against an equally well-endowed Royals team.

It promises to be an interesting battle on the morrow with the two sides boasting of a strong batting unit, and the onus would be on the bowlers to seize the moment.

Match starts at 7:30 PM (IST).

Chennai, Kolkata Could Be Pakistan's Preferred WC Venues

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Pakistan cricket team would prefer playing bulk of its 2023 ODI World Cup matches in Chennai and Kolkata -- the two venues where the team has felt safe during its earlier tours, according to ICC sources.

The World Cup will start tentatively on October 5, with 46 matches, including final set to be played across 12 Indian cities, including Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Mumbai, Rajkot, Bengaluru, Delhi, Indore, Guwahati and Hyderabad, Dharamasala. It is understood that discussions are currently on at the ICC level as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) bigwigs are in talks with a top level ICC executive on the issue, which still remains a sensitive one.

"A lot will depend on what BCCI and the Indian government

best chance to earn optimum profits but the Narendra Modi Stadium is already hosting the final, so another venue might host the game.

Each team will play nine games at the league stage which will be held in round-robin format.

Pakistan Could Lose USD 3M If It Skips Asia Cup: PCB Chief Najam Sethi

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Najam Sethi has said that it stands to lose around USD 3 million in revenues from the tournament if the country refuses to play in the Asia Cup this year.

Sethi said that Pakistan was willing to bear this loss of revenue as it was "a matter of principle" as far as the hosting rights of the Asia Cup are concerned.

"We have made it very clear that unless the Asia Cup is held



decide but given a choice, Pakistan will like to play most of its World Cup matches in Kolkata and Chennai.

"In Kolkata, Pakistan played its T20 World Cup game against India in 2016 and the players were very happy with the security. Similarly, Chennai as a venue remains memorable for Pakistan. It's also about feeling safe at specific venues," a source close to ICC Board, tracking developments, told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The bone of contention will be the India versus Pakistan game. While Ahmedabad with 1,32,000 capacity gives ICC, the

on a hybrid model like we have proposed, that is India playing its matches at an offshore venue and Pakistan hosting the remaining games at home we will not accept any other schedule and neither play," he said.

Pakistan is due to host the Asia Cup in September but uncertainty surrounds the venue of the tournament as India has made it clear it can't play in Pakistan.

Sethi has proposed a "hybrid model" to host the Asia Cup where India will play its matches at an offshore venue.

"We will not lose our hosting rights," he added.

Ramazan Kargem

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