

## How To Bend The Curve? Chenab- Pir Panjal Killer Roads Left 22,124 Dead In 12 Years

Parvaiz Bhat

Chenab-Pir Panjal region stands at the top with most of the road accident fatalities in Jammu and Kashmir. More people have died in road accidents in the region than those killed in all of the natural disasters across Jammu and Kashmir in the past decade. And it is for this reason highways connecting the mountainous region with the outside world have earned the sobriquet of killer roads. Almost every 10 households in the region have been directly

or indirectly affected by road accidents here, says Asif Iqbal Butt, a social activist from the region known for raising the issue of recurring road accidents. "Almost every week, we hear about fatal road accidents in the region," Butt says.

Butt's claim is fully supported by official data. Only within the past four weeks (June and July, 2023), as many as 13 people have lost their lives and 15 others have received grievous injuries in the road accidents. Official data at Jammu and Kashmir's Traffic Department accessed by Kashmir Observer



reveals that 22,124 people have been killed in 21,834 road accidents from year 2010 to 2022 across the six districts of

**6 I HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT ALL OF US HAVE TO MAKE EFFORTS** to at least minimize the number of road accidents and casualties. But, there is a lot the government can do for making sure that the number of accidents gets reduced if not completely stopped."

Chenab and Pir Panjal region-Poonch, Rajori, Doda, Ramban, Reasi and Udhampur.

Interestingly, around the same period (from 2010 to 2022), natural disasters in all the districts of Jammu & Kashmir have killed 552 people besides causing heavy damage to infrastructure and livestock, says a study Extreme Weather Events induced mortalities in Jammu and Kashmir, India during 2010-2022, published in the International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction.

The comparison of data reveals that the number of people killed in road accidents in 12 years in Chenab region is 40 times more **More on P10**

## Data Protection Bill Becomes Law

Press Trust of India

**New Delhi :** The Digital Personal Data Protection bill, passed by Parliament this week, has received President's assent, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said today.

Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) law aims to protect the privacy of Indian citizens while proposing a penalty of up to 250 crore on entities for misusing or failing to protect digital data of individuals.

Companies handling user data will be required to safeguard the individual's information, and instances **More on P10**

## Will Ensure Livelihood, Bright Future For Poor: LG

Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** Undeterred by sharp criticism of his recently introduced land to landless scheme, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Saturday that his administration has made a commitment to provide a roof over the head of poor families, ensure their livelihood and build a brighter future for them.

"My prime objective is to liberate marginalized sections of society from clutches of underdevelopment and to ensure that every family enjoys benefits of peace and prosperity. With land to landless, we have made



a commitment to ensure livelihood and build a brighter future for them," the LG said.

He made these remarks during the valedictory session of Samagra Awaas-Convergence

under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) here on Saturday.

Sinha released the installments worth Rs 150 crore to the PMAY-Gramin beneficiaries, and also shared the reforms introduced by his administration to improve the quality of life of the people of J&K.

"Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are dedicated to inclusive development and reaching the last mile," he said.

Highlighting the progress registered under PMAY, the LG said all 3.39 lakh eligible houses out of 3.42 lakh sanctioned to J&K

under PMAY-G were approved.

Of these, he said, 1.74 lakh houses were handed over to the beneficiaries while the construction work of the remaining houses will be completed by this financial year.

"We are determined to provide a roof over the heads of poor families and saturate benefits provided in convergence with schemes for better and decent living. We want to empower the last person in the queue and to make our villages self-sufficient to achieve the goal of Aatma-Nirbhar J&K," he said.

Congratulating the PRI members, **More on P10**

## No Restrictions, Internet Blockade On Aug 15: Div Com

Majid Nabi

**Srinagar:** Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri said on Saturday that except traffic diversions, there will be no restrictions in Kashmir and that the internet and other services would function normally on 76th Independence Day of India.

Addressing media persons at his office here, Div Com Kashmir also extended an open invitation to the people of Kashmir to attend the main Independence Day function at Bakshi Stadium on August 15.

The Div Com said the credit for whatever historic decisions the government has taken over

the years, goes to the people for helping the administration to create such a peaceful environment in Kashmir.

"My responsibility as a Div Com Kashmir is to invite people of Kashmir to attend the main event on August 15 at Bakshi Stadium. We are also holding a Tiranga Yatra tomorrow from SKICC to the Botanical Garden at 6am tomorrow and I invite you all to attend the event. People need not to carry any Tiranga in their hands, besides refreshment will also be served to attendees," he added.

He said besides those having received invitations to attend the main **More on P10**

## 'Some People Made J&K A Conflict Economy For Their Benefit'

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday said that some people had made J&K a "conflict economy just to benefit themselves and leave the common man suffer", but the present administration has gradually pulled the UT out of the financial crisis. The LG stated this while speaking at the valedictory session of Samagra Awaas-Convergence under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin **More on P10**

## Dedicates Various Digital Initiatives To People

Maintaining that Jammu and Kashmir is the first in the country to integrate the auto-appeal feature to service platform, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said Saturday that on-boarding of 300 public services on the auto appeal system launched today will improve the quality of disposal of services. The LG made these remarks while addressing a gathering during the **More on P10**

## To Counter Pakistan & China India Deploys Upgraded MiG-29 Squadron in Srinagar



KO Web Desk

**Srinagar:** In a strategic move to counter potential threats from Pakistan and China, India has deployed a squadron of upgraded MiG-29 fighter jets at the Srinagar air base. Known as the "Defender of the North", the squadron replaced the MiG-21 squadron, which has traditionally guarded the borders from Pakistan.

"Srinagar lies in the centre of Kashmir valley and its elevation is

higher than plains. It is strategically better to place an aircraft with a higher weight-to-thrust ratio and less response time due to proximity to the border and is equipped with better avionics and long-range missiles. The MiG-29 fulfils all these criteria due to which we are capable of taking on the enemies on both fronts," Indian Air Force pilot Squadron Leader Vipul Sharma told news agency ANI.

Squadron Leader Shivam Rana said the upgraded aircraft **More on P10**

## Power Tussle Hits J&K Unit Of BJP

Auqib Javeed

**Srinagar:** The Jammu and Kashmir unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is battling with internal crisis after the party leaders have raised the banner of revolt against what they termed "discriminatory approach and step-motherly treatment" by the leadership in winter capital.

The cracks within the party unit came to fore when Valley leaders held a crucial meeting at a hotel here on Wednesday to discuss the "future course of action" to deal with "discriminatory approach and step-motherly treatment".

The party has over 120 members from Kashmir Valley.

The leaders who participated in the meeting included Sofi Yousuf, Altaf Thakur, Asim Masoodi, Manzoor Bhat, Hina Shafi Bhat, Javaid Qureshi GM Mir, Arif Raja, Hilal Parray, Anwar Khan, Ashok Bhat and others.

Two days after the Valley leaders held a closed-door meeting; State President Ravinder Raina issued an official order, outlining the adjustments to the party's leadership roles **More on P10**

### SHORT TAKES

#### Police Officer Dies Of Dog Bite

An Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of the Jammu and Kashmir Police died of rabies on Friday, three months after being bitten by a dog in Ramban district, an official said. ASI Mohammad Rafiq Naik, a resident of Perihinder-Neel area of Ramssoo, was diagnosed with rabies and succumbed to the disease, the officials said. They said he was attacked by a stray dog while he was performing duty in Ramban **More on P10**

#### Man Slips To Death In Bla

A man died on Saturday after falling from the rooftop of his house in Sopore town of North Kashmir's Baramulla district. Sarfaraz Ahmad Gujjer of Gujjerpati village in Bomal, Sopore was on the rooftop of his house when he lost balance and fell down on the ground, reports said. Sarfaraz received critical injuries due to the fall. He succumbed to his injuries before he **More on P10**

#### Hardcore Criminal Arrested In Samba

A criminal, wanted for his alleged involvement in heroin smuggling and an attack on a police party, was arrested in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district on Saturday, officials said. Mansha, a resident of Vijaypur, has been arrested from Supwal area, a police spokesperson said. Two separate cases -- an attack on a police party and heroin smuggling -- are registered against Mansha, the **More on P10**

#### CRPF Man Found Dead

CRPF personnel was found dead inside a camp in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district in a suspected case of suicide, officials said. According to preliminary reports, Sepoy Ajay Kumar was found dead at Chursoo in the Awantipora area of the south Kashmir district after gunshots were heard around 2 am, the officials said. The investigators believe Kumar may have committed suicide, they said. Police **More on P10**

**Department of Information & Public Relations, UT of J&K**

invites you for

# جشن-۷۶

# آزادی

# 2023

**BADALTE**

**JAMMU KASHMIR**

*ki nayi tasveer*

at

**Zabarwan Park, Srinagar**

**13th August 2023 | 6:30 PM onwards**

under

## Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

DIPK-6971/23 Dated: 13.08.2023



'Meri Maati Mera Desh' campaign

## Comm Secy I&C Hoists National Flag, Unveils 'Martyrs Memorial' At JKEDI

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a profound display of unwavering patriotism and respect for the Nation's martyrs, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce (I&C), Vikramjit Singh, today led a solemn ceremony at Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), where the National Flag was hoisted and a 'Martyrs Memorial' was unveiled.

The event marked a significant event in the ongoing 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' campaign, dedicated to commemorating the sacrifices of valiant souls.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner Secretary conveyed his sentiments and said, "Today, as we raise our National Flag and unveil this poignant memorial, we extend our sincerest respect to our martyrs, individuals who selflessly laid down their lives for our Nation's cause". Their sacrifices remain a source of inspiration, infusing us with courage and this memorial, a timeless homage, stands testament to their unwavering dedication, he added.

In his address, Director, JKEDI, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat said that the JKEDI honors the de-

termined spirit of the martyrs who laid down their lives for a better tomorrow. He added that the memorial at JKEDI is a poignant representation of sacrifice, courage and serves as a constant reminder to future generations, encapsulating the sacrifices made and inspiring them to uphold the values these martyrs held dear.

He highlighted that JKEDI has already organized series of events under the 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' campaign with full fervor like plantation drives, Panch Pran Pledge, Tiranga rallies and cleanliness drives and will continue to hold different events in all the districts of the UT.

As an integral part of this campaign, a significant number of trees were planted within the JKEDI campus, symbolizing the campaign's dedication to a greener and more sustainable future.

The 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' campaign has resonated with citizens across the Union Territory, urging them to reflect upon their responsibility towards the nation and its unity. The unveiling of the 'Martyrs Memorial' at JKEDI stands as a testament to this commitment, serving as a symbol of remembrance, courage, and collective determination.



A Tirnaga Rally under Meri Maati Mera Desh Campaign was held at city center Lal Chowk on Saturday as part of the 76th I-Day being celebrated across India on August 15. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

## Growing Drug Menace

### SDGP Crime Chairs Meeting With Heads Of Prominent Coaching Centers In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to cull-out holistic, collaborative counter-measures to deal with the growing menace of drug abuse among the youth in J&K, a meeting under the chairmanship of A.K Choudhary, (Special DG Crime Branch Headquarters J&K) was conducted at Crime Headquarters J&K (Srinagar), on Saturday.

The meeting was attended by all the management heads of prominent Coaching Institutes, being run in the municipal limits of Srinagar City, a police spokesman said in a statement.

The meeting was also attended by DIG Crime J&K, SSP's of Economic Offences, Special Crime Wing and Staff Officer to SDGP Crime, Deputy Director Prosecution CHQ and senior officers of Anti-Narcotic Task Force (ANTF) Kashmir.

The main objective of the meeting was to foster a sense of collective responsibility among various stakeholders and discuss strategies to effectively counter the growing drug menace.

At the outset, SDGP Crime J&K reiterated the importance of concerted and collaborative efforts from all stakeholders in curbing the menace of drug abuse. The fact that the number of abusers has doubled in a short span of time and therefore the need to take the problem head on was highlighted by him.

He laid stress upon the heads of coaching institutes to take necessary measures, as a part of their social and legal responsibility, in the coaching centers for prevention of drug

abuse. Various preventive and awareness measures were discussed threadbare and agreed upon for implementation.

Javid Iqbal Mattoo, DIG Crime J&K, briefed the participants about the intensified actions and strategies undertaken by the Government against the drug peddlers and their associates.

He also highlighted the ramifications of the substance abuse on the society in general and youth in particular who are more vulnerable to the drug

the need of having a multi-pronged strategy and efforts by all stakeholders in curbing the menace.

Prominent participants of coaching centers who participated in the meeting were Lateef Masoodi (President Coaching Institutes Association Kashmir), Vijay Samuel (Allen Head Kashmir), Junaid Yousuf Bhat (Akash Institute), Ashraf-ul-Hassan (HOPE Institute Rajbagh) and others, who also gave their valuable suggestions and



The main objective of the meeting was to foster a sense of collective responsibility among various stakeholders and discuss strategies to effectively counter the growing drug menace.

menace. He pointed out instances wherein students of coaching centers have reported to have indulged in substance abuse and highlighted the role and responsibilities of the administrators of coaching institutes to implement strategies in controlling the spread of drugs.

He further emphasized on

assured their support in making the coaching centers drug free.

At the end of the meeting, SDGP Crime J&K stressed that together we can build a safer and healthier environment for our youth and assured all necessary support to the management of the coaching institutes in curbing the menace.

## Khayam Food Street Road Craves For Attention

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar's prominent barbecue street at Khayam is craving for attention with dilapidated roads causing inconvenience to people.

Locals from Khayam area of the city said the condition of the food street road has turned from bad to worse and that the authorities de-

spite repeated requests and reminders have failed to address the issue.

A commuter said that his two-wheeler suffered damages due to the large crates and potholes on the road.

Similarly, shopkeepers said they are facing the brunt of the bad roads as little showers result in multiple problems for commuters.

## Security Guard Held For Assaulting Child In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A private security guard employed at the 'New Nursing College' hostel in central Kashmir's Srinagar district has been arrested for allegedly assaulting a child within the premises, police said here on Saturday.

The Srinagar police

via a tweet said that "One private security guard of 'new nursing college' hostel namely Mubarak Hussain Hafiz S/o Abdul Rashid Hafiz R/o Brein Nishat arrested for assaulting a child in premises".

"In this regard FIR no 26/2023 u/s 323,341 of IPC registered in Karan Nagar PS," the city police added in the tweet.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir  
**Office Of The General Manager**  
**District Industries Centre Srinagar**  
 Email: srinagardic@gmail.com/ gmDIC-srinaga@jk.gov.in tel. no 0194-2427478

### PUBLIC NOTICE

M/S Dara Agro Industries I/E Khunmoh Srinagar stands formally registered with this office under No. 01/003/09542/PMT/MSME dated.30-02-2023 for the line of activity "Canning of fruits and vegetables" as a proprietorship concern of Ms Atiqa Wani D/o Ghulam Ahmad Wani R/o Zawoora Balhama Lasjan Srinagar. In this connection it is to inform that the promoter intends to induct two partners namely Mohammad Haroon Rather and Nazir Ahmad Rather both sons of Bashir Ahmad Rather R/o Dara Harwan Brein Srinagar

Any person having any objection, for change of constitution by way of induction of two partners Mohammad Haroon Rather and Nazir Ahmad Rather both sons of Bashir Ahmad Rather R/o Dara Harwan Brein Srinagar, may contact the office of General Manager DIC Srinagar within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice.

DIPK-7031/23  
 dated: 12-08-2023

General Manager  
 District Industries Centre  
 Srinagar

GOVT. OF JAMMU & KASHMIR  
**Sheep Husbandry Department Kashmir**  
**Office Of The Assistant Director**  
**Sheep Breeding Farm Goabal**  
 Email Id: sbfgoabal@gmail.com

Sub: - Auction of Culled Animals-publication of Notice thereof.  
 Ref: - DSHK/Tech/65/2021-08/DIRECTORATE OF SHEEP HUSBANDRY DEPARTMENT KASHMIR I/255430/2023 DATED 04.08.2023

### ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE

Government Sheep Breeding Farm Goabal Kangan is conducting auction of culled animals (lambs and hoggies) at **highland pasture Mohanmarg on 16/08/2023 (Wednesday) at 1:00 PM.** As such all the interested persons/stake holders are hereby informed through the medium of this notice to participate in the process of auction of culled animals at above mentioned place on scheduled date and time on following **Terms & Conditions** which shall be binding on the bidders.

- The animals shall be disposed off strictly as per WHO/VPK protocol where ever required.
- The payment shall be accepted only through cash to be deposited on spot.
- The committee shall have the final authority to accept or reject a bid.
- Any other terms and condition as may be deemed necessary by the auction committee shall be announced on spot.

No: SBFK/Tech/Auction/2023-24/927-31  
 Date:12.08.2023

Sd/-  
 Assistant Director  
 Govt. Sheep Breeding Farm

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

### HIGHWAY STATUS

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

**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
 25 Muharram  
 1445

### PRAYERS

FAJR	4 :20
ZUHR	12:37
ASR	5 :24
Magrib	7:24
ISHA	8 :53

## This Day In History

- 1516 - The Treaty of Noyon between France and Spain is signed. Francis recognises Charles's claim to Naples, and Charles recognises Francis's claim to Milan.
- 1521 - Spanish conquistador under Hernán Cortés capture Aztec Emperor Cuauhtémoc in Tenochtitlan marking the end of the Aztec Empire
- 1642 - Dutch astronomer Christiaan Huygens discovers Martian south polar cap
- 1923 - Turkish National Congress selects Mustafa Kemal Atatürk Pasja as President
- 1937 - Second Sino-Japanese War: Japanese forces begin the Battle of Shanghai, a conflict that will last 3 months and involve 1 million troops
- 1940 - Battle of Britain: Hermann Goering's "Adlertag" (Eagle Day) offensive happens, intending to destroy the Royal Air Force; 47-48 German aircraft shot down, the RAF loses 25 planes
- 1943 - Red army recaptures Spas-Demensk
- 1944 - British 8th Army occupies Florence
- 1944 - Allied generals Bernard Montgomery, Miles Dempsey and Omar Bradley discuss a future breakthrough in the European theatre during World War II
- 1951 - Great Britain & Iraq sign new oil contract
- 1953 - 4-5 million French go on strike against economizations
- 1959 - US Military satellite Discoverer 5 launched (into polar orbit)
- 1960 - USSR withdraws advisors from China
- 1961 - Construction of the Berlin Wall begins in East Germany
- 1977 - 1st test glide of space shuttle
- 1984 - Morocco & Libya sign "Arab-African Union" treaty
- 1989 - US space shuttle STS-28 lands

## From KO Archives

### Major Ground Offensive On In Pir Panjal

Agence France Presse

JAMMU: Army launched a major offensive Thursday against hideouts in southern Kashmir, military commanders said. The Indian air force also deployed planes to help the sweeping military campaign on the higher reaches of southern Kashmir, officials said. Air force, sources said Russian-designed helicopter gun-ships were being used for 'casualty vacations, re-induction and re-location of ground forces' in the rugged mountain areas of Doda and Banihal.

"So far, we have not engaged in direct combat but if necessary there will be a combined ground-air operation," a highly-placed air force source said in New Delhi.

Meanwhile, Major General P.P.S. Bindra, commander of the elite counter-insurgency Delta Force, confirmed to AFP the offensive had been launched in Doda and Banihal.

"We have launched helicopter mounted operations in Doda and other areas of Pir Panjal ranges to sanitise the entire belt against attacks", the general said here.

The helicopter operations in Pir Panjal were being carried out -with ground support from heavily-armed paramilitary forces and commandos from Kashmiri police who are familiar with the terrain, other officials said.

In Jammu, Indian officials said the army's counter-offensive was also aimed at providing a 'security blanket' to people living in remote areas in southern Kashmir.

Thousands of federal border guards, paramilitary forces and police deployed in the region have been placed on maximum alert in the districts of Doda, Poonch, Rajouri, Udhampur and Kathua, the officials said.

Night patrols have been intensified in and around Hindu-dominated districts and military installations and government offices to stem counter-attacks, the officials said. Security barricades were also being installed at 31 localities without local self-defence committees.

(Kashmir Observer, August 13, 2000)





## Tiranga Rally Held In Budgam

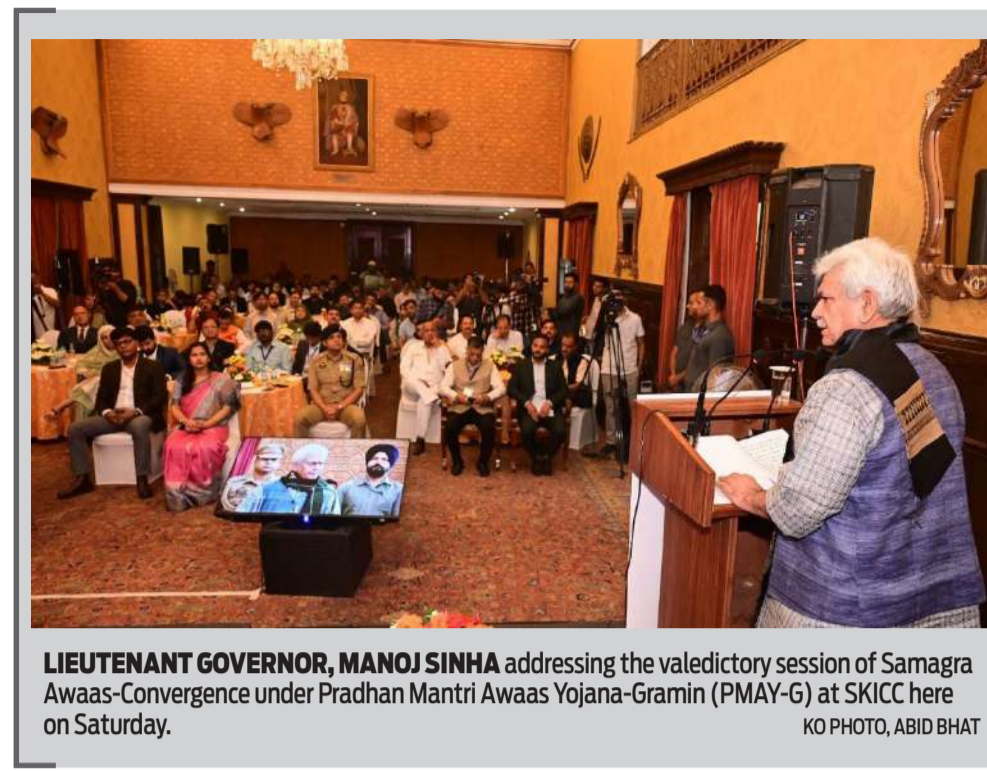
**Press Trust Of India**  
**SRINAGAR:** A Tiranga rally was taken out in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday with people from all walks of life including sportspersons, NGO volunteers and security personnel taking part in it. The participants carried the Tricolour as they marched from the Budgam stadium to the old bus stand. "We had to in fact put a cut-off number since the crowd was swelling too much and the roads had limited capacity. Chants of 'Jai Hind' could be heard all through Budgam town as part of the Tiranga rally," District Magistrate Akshay Labroo said.

## Additional Secy Edu GoI Assures Full Support For CUK Projects

**Observer News Service**  
**SRINAGAR:** The Additional Secretary (Education), Department of Higher Education, Government of India, Mr. Sunil Kumar Barnwal, Saturday assured to extend all possible support and cooperation from the Ministry, for the ongoing construction projects in the Central University of Kashmir (CUK) Ganderbal and also for the growth and progress on the academics, research and allied fronts. Speaking on the occasion, Vice-Chancellor, CUK, Prof. A Ravinder Nath, made a detailed presentation and gave an overview of the CUK functioning and said the varsity was marching forward on the academics and research front. He said the university is functioning from four different campuses, including the designated Tulmulla campus, has nine School of Studies, having 21 departments, offering various programmes. He said the students from different corners of the country are pursuing education and research in various departments of the university and are contended with the facilities provided. CUK Vice



Chancellor, said the university has also employed motivated faculty from different states of the country and Jammu and Kashmir who are continuously mentoring the students. CUK VC said that a nodal officer has been appointed for successfully implementing the NEP-2020 and academic coordinators have been identified for each department, focussing on multidisciplinary education. "As the Technical Committee constituted by the MoE, has submitted its detailed report for construction of permanent structures, the university will now submit the Detailed Project Report (DPR) so that the construction on academic and administrative blocks, Central facilities and amenities, sports centric recreational facilities, will be taken up soon". Prof. A Ravinder Nath, said the scope of institutional growth is very high and can attract the best expertise in the country. Director Colleges, Prof. Yasmeen Ashai, apprised Mr Kumar about the functioning of colleges across Kashmir and said that NEP-2020 and other directives from the Ministry are being implemented in these institutions in letter and spirit. Registrar KU, Dr. Nisar Ahmad Mir apprised the Ministry official about the academic growth of the university of Kashmir. Registrar NIT, Prof. Kaiser Bukhari, briefed him about the research and development projects and the patents obtained by the students of NIT. MD, RUSA, Mr. Ashok Kumar, also apprised the Additional Secretary about the progress made in different arenas.



**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, MANOJ SINHA** addressing the valedictory session of Samagra Awaas-Convergence under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) at SKICC here on Saturday.

## AMARNATH YATRA

# Chhari Mubarak Rituals To Be Held On Aug 16

**Press Trust Of India**  
**SRINAGAR:** The Chhari Mubarak the holy mace of lord Shiva will be taken to the Shankaracharya Temple here on August 16 for rituals connected with the ongoing annual Amaranth Yatra. As there are two Shravan' months this year, an astronomical event taking place after 19 years, Amaranth Yatra has a greater significance, custodian of the holy mace Mahant Deependra Giri told PTI in an interview here. The holy mace yatra will have night halts at Pahalgam on August 26 and August 27, at Chandanwari on August 28, at Sheshnag on August 29 and at Panchtarni on August 30, Giri said. The custodian of the holy mace said the since the yatra is a pilgrimage it should happen as per the wishes of the deity. "My view is that the annual Amarnath ji yatra is a pilgrimage and it has to be seen as such," Giri said. So, arrangements should be made accordingly and pilgrims should also undertake the yatra keeping that in mind, he added. "The duration of the yatra is decided by the Sri Amarnath ji Shrine Board (SASB) but my view is that the yatra has always taken place from Ashad Purnima to Shrawan Purnima for a month traditionally as well as religiously. But, I believe that since this yatra is a pilgrimage, it will happen according to the wishes of the deity," the Mahant said. However, he added that the Akhara on August 19, he said. After performing 'Chhari Pujan' at Dashnami Akhara, Srinagar on the occasion of Nag Panchami' on August 21, Giri will carry the holy mace to the Amarnath cave shrine to perform puja and have darshan' early morning on Shrawan Purnima' on August 31. The main attraction for this yatra is the naturally formed ice-lingam, and it is everyone's wish to have the darshan as soon as possible," he added. Giri said security forces personnel will do their duty for two months or more if they are asked to do so "but they will perform their duty with enthusiasm and full of energy" if the yatra has a tighter schedule. However, he added, the decision lies with the SASB. The Mahant also said there was a need to improve the infrastructure so that more yatri come in large numbers in the first three weeks and then it declines. "This has been made clear this year also as about four lakh pilgrims had the darshan till July 31 or August 1 and it has decreased since then," he said. "The track has been made larger. Build infrastructure in Panchtarni, Sheeshnag and Baltal (base camps) so that more yatri visit the cave shrine. If about 20,000 yatri visit the cave every day for a month, then the total will be about six lakhs. I think this is possible in the times to come. This is not a huge number provided there is infrastructure," he said.

## Searches Launched In Over A Dozen Villages Near LoC

**Press Trust Of India**  
**JAMMU:** Security forces on Saturday launched a search operation in over a dozen villages near the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said. The joint operation by the Army and police in the Gursai area of Mendhar subdivision is being carried out as part of stepped-up security in the border villages ahead of Independence day, they said. The security forces cordoned off over a dozen villages, including Salwah, Sarooti, Gursai Top, Sanai, Keri Kanga and Terkhara, and a search operation launched. The operation was still underway when the last reports were received. Security has been beefed up across the Jammu region to thwart any attempts by terrorists to disrupt Independence Day celebrations on August 15.

## JPDCL Seeks Public Support In Smart Meter Installation Across Jammu

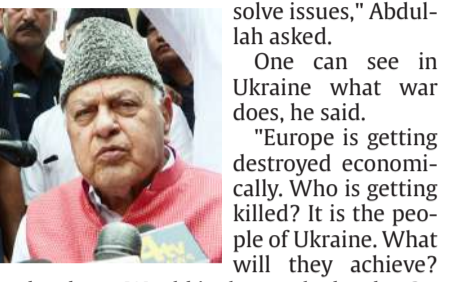
**Press Trust Of India**  
**JAMMU:** Amid ongoing protests by consumers over the installation of smart meters, Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Ltd (JPDC) on Saturday dispelled fears of overcharging by the power supplier and sought the cooperation of the people in completing the project. Chief Engineer (Distribution), JPDC Sandeep Seth dismissed overcharging through smart meters as propaganda to mislead the public. "People have a lot of doubts and reservations over the installation of smart meters which needs to be dispelled. The smart meters are for the benefit of the public as these are highly accurate and require no human intervention (for its reading and billing)," Seth told reporters here. Jammu has been witnessing protests by locals almost on a daily basis in different localities against the installation of smart meters. Almost all opposition parties, including Congress, National Conference, PDP, Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP), National Panthers Party (NPP) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), extended their support to the protesting people and also organized several protests in the city over the past two weeks. "Anyone having any doubt has to simply submit an application to the department and we will use check meters to clear their doubts. Besides the toll-free numbers to register a complaint, all subdivisions have three days a week Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday to address the public grievances between 11 am to 1 pm," the chief engineer said. Defending the replacement of digital meters with smart meters, he said the metering programme is a component of a revamped distribution sector scheme of the central government as part of the technology upgrade to minimize human interference. "We are moving to an automatic system where we do not need a meter reader to visit consumers for billing or snapping power supply to defaulters. The reading directly reaches our data centres, while the power supply to defaulting consumers can be switched off from the control room," he said. On claims of some consumers that they have got higher electricity bills after the replacement of the digital with smart meters, the official said, "Why should the department charge extra money from the consumers? The people should be assured that they will get electricity bills for the units which they have consumed." "If they have any issue, we are here to resolve it amicably and there is no need to pro-



test," the chief engineer said, appealing to the people not to get misled by propaganda and instead use the energy judiciously. He said smart meters provide an opportunity to consumers to watch their daily consumption of power, using the mobile application. "We seek the support of the public in smooth installation of the meters which are highly beneficial to them," he said. Seth said the smart meters come with a five-year warranty and would be replaced without any cost in case of a fault or damage. He said the fully metered areas are being provided round-the-clock electricity supply. "We have already installed 1.80 lakh meters in Jammu city, over 50 per cent of the total target."

## Dr Farooq Advocates India-Pak Talks On Kashmir

**Press Trust Of India**  
**SRINAGAR:** National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Saturday said promoting border tourism or holding rallies in Jammu and Kashmir is only a tamasha which will go on until India and Pakistan hold talks with honesty on the Kashmir issue. "The hearts of both the countries should be pure. There has been enough show-off," the Srinagar MP told reporters here when asked whether the situation in Kashmir had changed as border tourism is being promoted and Tiranga rallies are being organized across the valley. India and Pakistan should talk with pure intentions as wars do not resolve anything, Abdullah said. "Till both the countries do not talk with honesty over the Kashmir issue, all this is a show-off (and) this tamasha will go on till then. It will happen every year but the issue will remain there," he said. Raising questions over the government's claims of normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir, the NC president asked if there is peace in Jammu and Kashmir, then why is there terrorism, why are bullets being fired, and soldiers and people getting killed. "If there is peace in reality, then why is this happening? That's because they (Pakistan) think it has not been resolved yet. Who will make them understand that only talks will solve issues," Abdullah asked. One can see in Ukraine what war does, he said. "Europe is getting destroyed economically. Who is getting killed? It is the people of Ukraine. What will they achieve? Would it change the borders?" "So, both the countries (India and Pakistan) should keep in mind that nothing will be achieved by war and only talks will resolve issues, like they (Indian government) are talking to China. There have been 18 rounds of talks and talks have taken place at the foreign minister level as well," he said. Asked about the Jammu and Kashmir administration promoting border tourism at many places near the Line of Control (LoC), Abdullah said, "We want that borders should be opened so that we will also see the part (of Kashmir) which is under them (Pakistan). Then, we will accept that there is true peace."



## Bear Cub Rescued Near Amarnath Cave

**Press Trust Of India**  
**SRINAGAR:** A bear cub was Saturday rescued after its head was trapped inside a tin box near the Amarnath cave shrine in south Kashmir Himalayas, officials said. The baby bear came down from the upper reaches of the holy cave on Friday night with its head trapped in a tin box, the officials said. On Saturday early morning, a joint team of Jammu and Kashmir Police, State Disaster Response Force, National Disaster Response Force, and the wildlife department made several attempts to rescue the cub even as its mother was lurking around, they said. However, after a few attempts, the mother bear was shooed away and the cub was overpowered, the officials said. A cutter was used to cut open the tin box and the cub was finally freed. Due care was taken by the rescuers to avoid any injuries to the cub, they said. After the rescue operation, the cub reunited with its mother and the duo fled towards the mountains, the officials added.



## SP Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Bags HM's Medal

**Agencies**  
**JAMMU:** Superintendent of Police, Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, presented on deputation to Ladakh has been awarded the Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation for the year 2023 among 140 Police personnel including 22 women police officers across the country. Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, a 2008 batch, Jammu Kashmir Police Service officer, deputed to Union Territory Ladakh in year 2022 and held various important positions including SP Traffic before assuming charge of Additional SP Leh. Rehman is the only police official of Jammu and Kashmir police, whose name figured in the list. The medal was constituted in 2018, with the objective to promote high professional standards of investigation of crime and recognize such Excellence in Investigation. It is announced on August 12 every year, a communique from the Ministry of Home Affairs said. Among the personnel receiving these awards, 15 are from Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), 12 from National Investigation Agency (NIA), 10 from Uttar Pradesh, 9 each from Kerala and Rajasthan, 8 from Tamil Nadu, 7 from Madhya Pradesh, 6 from Gujarat and the remaining from the other States/UTs/Organizations--(KNO)



File photo of Theatre play in Srinagar

# Fading Folk Theatre of Kashmir

Mushtaq Hurra



**Bhaands of our valley have almost given up their ancestral profession of performing on stages. Folk art has suffered on multiple fronts. It has failed to win the necessary governmental patronage, and consequently, the players have shifted to other professions, because it hardly extinguishes the blaze of their hunger**

Some three decades earlier, Wazwan and Bhaande Paether were the two premier fascinations of marriage ceremonies in Kashmir. Both the legacies symbolise Kashmir and its uniquely glorious past, encompassing unprecedentedly simple yet cherishing traditions, acculturation and heritage. Though the wazwan has grown corpulent with an exceedingly high number of non-veg cuisines, but, the Bhaande Paether has almost vanished and waned to oblivion. The latter was almost imperative to a marriage in Kashmir, and would draw huge crowds of people. But, now, the folk custom has almost withered away. Bhaande Paether ( Performance staged by Bhaands ) was more than a source of amusement and entertainment for commoners in Kashmir.

Bhaande Paether was an integral part of our rural marriages, and people would hardly miss any opportunity to have a glimpse of these jesters. Unmindful of being invited or not, people would throng in flocks to enjoy the folk feast of the bhaands. Sight of a transitory dais, in the compound of a house, or the thumping melody of rhythmic patterns of dhol, would entice people to attend a marriage ceremony. One would endure harsh climatic conditions happily, because the entertainment concoction by these jesters ( Bhaands ) was worth billions. And interestingly, during those days, sources of pleasure derivation and entertainment for common masses were very scanty and rare. Television was confined to a handful of households, that too with only a couple of government channels viz Doordarshan 1 and 2. Though radio was at its zenith, then; but, it had its own limitations.

Well, Bhaande Paether in a village would drive people of many peripheries crazy, and would almost cram them together, to enjoy the appealing plays. The folk artists with sterling genius were admired and loved for their extraordinary comic timings and dialogue delivery. Their skits would absolutely enchant on-lookers. My father says that many would bunk their inescapable assignments but

would not miss the piece-de-resistance of these jesters. Even many school going grownups would play truant to enjoy the spellbinding performances of the Bhaands. Skits, songs and dance were the three major brands of their artwork. Their cracking jokes would burst people into laughter.

The jesters ( Bhaands ) were latent with immense ability to extempore. Many of their theatrical tapestries were scripted, but they had a rich innate potential to improvise. Their ad-lib and off-hand renditions were highly commendable. Their live performances were proof of their spontaneous acting skills. They were chefs d'oeuvre of contemporary

**“ Bhaande Paether was an integral part of our rural marriages, and people would hardly miss any opportunity to have a glimpse of these jesters. Unmindful of being invited or not, people would throng in flocks to enjoy the folk feast of the bhaands**

times. Social issues like dowry, corruption, superstitions, gender bias, crime against women, illiteracy used to be chief areas of attraction of their dramas and lampoons. Even their political satires would portray the atrocities and injustice meted out to hapless Kashmiris, by cruel rulers.

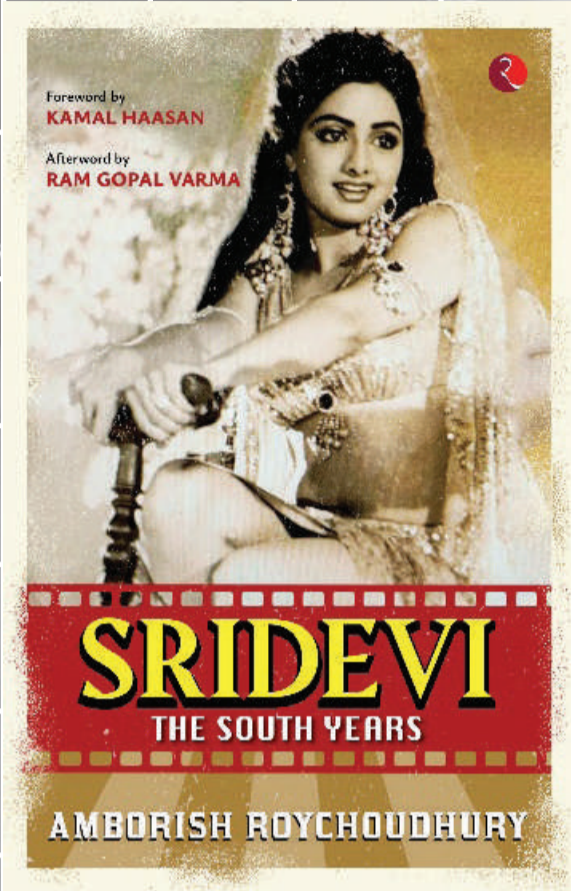
Sir Walter Lawrence in his famous travelodge - " The valley of Kashmir " remarks : " It is said that Maharaja Gulab Singh acquired a very intimate knowledge of village administration from the Bhaggats' ( Bhand ) performances, and I have picked up some hints from them as to the methods of the Patwari, the village accountant." Thus, Bhaande Paether was not merely confined to entertainment, rather it was a mirror shown to people at the helm, and those who had been detrimental in the social degeneration and decline of precious moral values. Kashmir folk theatre artists had the courage to lampoon boldly.

The Bhaands were adept musicians who would enthrall their audiences, on their folk tunes. Donned in drooping cot-

ton trousers and Pherans; the Bhaands had a notable appearance. White turbans and cone shaped caps were the hallmark of their looks. Their performances were adorned with the jingle of Surnai ( The wooden flute ) and the rhythmic beat of dhol. The Bhaands of Kashmir were masters at parodying. Their humour with wit would never cross the frontiers of decency. Unlike modern comedians, their acts were impeccably pure and polished. Vulgarism had no space in their performance, yet they would touch the deepest chords of your heart. The great tradition and art has been instrumental in the preservation and conservation of kashmiri language and culture.

Ironically, the folk-theatre of Kashmir valley is on its deathbed. Bhaands of our valley have almost given up their ancestral profession of performing on stages. Folk art has suffered on multiple fronts. It has failed to win the necessary governmental patronage, and consequently, the players have shifted to other professions, because it hardly extinguishes the blaze of their hunger. People at the helm should ensure special scholarships, incentives and rewards for the Bhaand children in educational institutions to revive the dying folk tradition. It must be institutionalised to add a new lease of life to it. We can't afford to lose our centuries old identity so easily.

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer  
The author is an academician and a columnist. He can be reached at mushtaqhurra143@gmail.com*



**THERE WAS NOT A MOMENT OF DITHERING OR THE NATURAL TIMIDITY YOU SEE IN THE EYES OF A CHILD IN AN UNFAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT.** In those six minutes, she had conquered the world of cinema. The audience was enraptured by the toddler portraying their revered Lord Muruga. Sridevi had, for all intents and purposes, truly arrived. All the posters and publicity material of the film featured her prominently. She wasn't a star yet, but it was obvious that she was special.

# THE DEVI AND THE DIVA

## On The Birth Anniversary Of Bollywood Superstar: LATE SRIDEVI

Amborish Roychoudhury

This was in or around 1968. Ayyappan and Rajeswari were raising a happy little family while finding a way to adjust to the hustle and bustle of Madras. Sridevi was a sensitive child, often lost in a world of her own. It was easy to peg her as an introvert because she was so withdrawn, but there were rare moments when the future performer peeked out of her...

This phenomenon would always be a part of her life and work. Throughout her career as a heroine she mostly kept to herself, socializing only when absolutely necessary. But the very second she faced the camera, a floodgate of energy opened that electrified the whole atmosphere. When the shot was done, she used to clam up again.

Back in the 1960s, Sridevi and her family were living in the CIT Colony in Mylapore. Ayyappan, like his brother and his family, had to make an entry into politics. It all boiled down to choosing a party. His brother was already a senior member of the Janata Party. Ayyappan, on the other hand, closely followed the exploits of the Congress and its leader K. Kamaraj. In those days,

Ayyappan used to visit the Kamaraj residence at Thirumalai Pillai Road quite often. On one such evening, he may have taken his daughter along. Little Sridevi was delighted at the opportunity of going out with her father. When they reached Kamaraj's residence, he was surrounded by his associates discussing the possible reasons for his recent defeat in his constituency (Virudhunagar). Ayyappan, eager to learn the ropes of politics was quickly sucked into the discussion as well. As the elders spoke the Greek and Latin of politics, little Sridevi was bored to bits. Her initial exuberance of going out with her father was replaced with monotony. She was roaming about the hall, gazing at the pictures of Indian political icons lining the walls. But how was that going to hold her attention for long? She was getting impatient. She tugged at her father's clothes and asked if they could go now. That was when the cherubic little kid caught the kingmaker's attention. Ayyappan grinned from ear to ear and introduced her as his daughter. Kamaraj wanted to know about her schooling. Ayyappan revealed she would be turning five soon and they wanted to put her in for dance and music training, since her mother wanted her to become an ac-

tress. 'That's fine,' said Kamaraj, 'but don't stop schooling her.'

Kamaraj turned to his poet friend, who was observing from a distance and smiling away. 'Help this cute child, if you can.' The Kaviarasu nodded his approval. That day, they left Kamaraj's house and headed home brimming with promise and potential...

Sridevi's few minutes on-screen were glorious. The film can be found on YouTube. A close look at the scene puts one in awe of the six-year-old Sridevi's histrionics. Tell me you can't see the spark that was to later consume the whole nation, unabated for 30 years! Despite appearing at the fag end of the movie, Sridevi stole the show. It was as if she knew what she was born to do. There was not a moment of dithering or the natural timidity you see in the eyes of a child in an unfamiliar environment. In those six minutes, she had conquered the world of cinema. The audience was enraptured by the toddler portraying their revered Lord Muruga. Sridevi had, for all intents and purposes, truly arrived. All the posters and publicity material of the film featured her prominently. She wasn't a star yet, but it was obvious that she was special...

In a 1985 interview given to Bhawana Somaaya, Sridevi reminisced about meeting Sowcar Janaki for the first time: [...] At the shooting, I saw Sowcar Janaki. I liked her shimmery clothes and jewellery. My first film was shot inside a temple. I played Lord Muruga. Just before the shot, the director insisted that I shave my head to play the role of the deity. My mother wasn't willing. 'My child has to go to school,' she cried. There were long discussions. Eventually, Sowcar Janaki intervened and suggested I wear a wig. The wig felt funny on the head. Nevertheless, I thoroughly enjoyed myself in the film atmosphere.<sup>4</sup> Close on the heels of Thunaivan came a plethora of mythological films, with Sridevi as the quintessential Muruga for Tamil filmgoers. This includes films like Aathi Parasakthi (1971) and Agathiyar (1972). These three men—Kingmaker Kamaraj, the poet Kannadasan and 'Sandow' Chinnappa Thevar—laid the foundation for Sridevi's stardom. Had they not seen the face of a god in her that day, the world would probably not have witnessed the phenomenon called Sridevi.

Excerpted from Sridevi: The South Years by Amborish Roychoudhury with permission from Rupa Publica-





## Lehanwan Orchard & Wailoo Nursery Offer Compelling Insights Into Horti Advances



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Lehanwan Orchard and Fruit Plant Nursery Wailoo are two establishments in South Kashmir offering compelling insights into the potential for horticultural advancement in Anantnag district.

To strategically fortify horticultural practices and uncover avenues for sustainable growth within the region, Director Horticulture Kashmir, G. R. Mir visited the establishments on Saturday.

He was accompanied by Secretary Kissan Board, Subject Matter Specialist Anantnag, and the Horticulture Development Officer.

He visited the renowned Lehanwan Orchard, distinguished for its sprawling Hazelnut orchard established in 1987, covering an impressive area of approximately 300 kanals, provided an exquisite setting for meaningful discussions.

This orchard is graced with an array of exotic hazelnut varieties, symbolizing the labour and expertise of local horticulturists.

During the visit, Director Mir engaged in insightful dialogues with the staff, offering valuable

counsel on venturing into commercial cultivation and enhancing the production of high-quality planting material. Notably, the Lehanwan Orchard stands as the valley's largest hazelnut haven, making a substantial contribution to the region's horticultural legacy.

His perceptive tour also encompassed the Fruit Plant Nursery Wailoo where he garnered firsthand knowledge of various ongoing activities, including budding and innovative techniques. The visit demonstrated his unwavering commitment to nurturing growth and efficiency across all facets of horticultural development.

Director Horticulture also conducted inspections of several recently established High-Density apple orchards. These orchards, nurtured with the unwavering support of the Department, hold promise for a fruitful future for local orchardists.

Engaging with the orchardists on a personal level, the Director seized the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences, further enriching the discourse on progressive horticultural practices.

## Training on Fishing Technologies Concludes at SKUAST-K

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The seven-day training programme on 'Fishing Technologies for Sustainable Fisheries' concluded today at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, Rangil campus.

The training was organised by the SKUAST-K's Faculty of Fisheries under ICAR-World Bank-funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) for the institutional development of the university.

Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, who was the chief guest at the concluding function, stressed exposing the students to the newer realities of the world science and technology to inculcate creativity and innovation among them. He said that holistic efforts need to be made in order to unlearn, learn and relearn to make oneself relevant in present times, when the whole world is dependent on new technologies like artificial intelligence and data sciences.

Former Principal Scientist CIFE, Mumbai, Dr Lata Shenoy,

who was the expert trainer at the workshop, gave insights into different technologies being used in the fisheries sector for meeting future requirements in a sustainable manner.

Besides Shenoy, the training witnessed expert lectures from eminent person in the field from international and national level institutes like Dr Krishna S Salin from Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand, Dr Parveen Putra, Former ADG Fisheries, ICAR, Dr Debajit Sarma, CIFE Mumbai, Dr Sajjan Ali CIFRE West Bengal, Dr Ranji Kumar Raut, NIT Srinagar, Dr Sandhya KN CIFT Cochin, Jatinder Soni Garver MHA Gol, and Muffera Khooru, Entrepreneur.

Dean, Faculty of Fisheries, Prof Farooz A Bhat delivered the welcome address and Head, Division of Fishery Engineering Prof Gohar Bilal Wani, who was the course director of the training, gave a brief overview at the valedictory function. Director Research, Prof Tariq H Masoodi, Director Planning, Prof Haroon H Naik, HoDs, faculty members and all the participants who had joined in offline and online mode.

## KPDCL Proposals: JERC Holds Public Hearing In Srinagar

SAC to discuss matter on Aug 29, delegations share viewpoints, raise objections, says JERC member

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Several trade bodies including Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) on Saturday raised their objections with regard to the proposal submitted by Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) about subsuming electricity duty in the tariff of consumers of all categories and others.

The objections were raised during a session of public hearing held by Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) in Srinagar for obtaining views and listening to the objections from various consumers and organisations against various proposals submitted by KPDCL for approval of the Commission. The hearing session was presided over by JERC Chairman Lokesh D. Jha and two members including Er. Ajay Gupta and Mohammad Rafi Andrabi.

Secretary V.K Dhar, Managing Director of KPDCL Baseer ul Haq Chowdhary, Chief Engi-



neer Javid Dar and others were also present on the occasion.

Divulging the details Muhammad Rafi Andrabi, one of the members of JERC, said that at least delegations including FCIK raised their viewpoints during the session today.

The Commission heard the objections and viewpoints of the public delegations and organization patiently. "The proposal is in the hearing stage at present. Back to back

hearings are slated to take place in this regard. It will take time to come up with a conclusive decision," he said.

He further said that the State Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting is also going to take place in this regard on August 29.

Moreover, Shakeel Qalandar, former FCIK President, who also spoke on the occasion, expressed surprise over the KPDCL's proposal. KNO

## FCIK Contests KPDCL for Subsuming of Electricity Duty in Tariff

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) has strongly contested the proposal filed by Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) with Joint Electricity Commission for UT of J&K and UT of Ladakh (JERC) seeking approval for subsuming of 15% of electricity duty in the tariff of consumers of all categories.

A session of public hearing was held by JERC on Saturday in Srinagar for obtaining views and listening to the objections from various consumers and organisations against various proposals submitted by KPDCL for approval of the Commission. The hearing session was presided over by Hon'ble Chairman of the Commission Sh. Lokesh D. Jha, with other two members of the Commission Er. Ajay Gupta and Mohammad Rafi Andrabi besides Secretary V.K Dhar in attendance. Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) authorities including Managing Director Baseer ul Haq Chowdhary, Chief Engineer Javid Dar, S.Es, Exens, consultants and others were present on the occasion who made presentation of their petition and argued the objections of consumers and organisations before the Commission.

The FCIK delegation led by former President Shakeel Qalandar included former presidents Er. Zahoor Bhat, Mohammad Ashraf Mir, Syed Fazal Illahi and Ovees Jami.

The delegation while ex-

pressing its surprise on the opportunistic proposal of KPDCL for subsuming of 15% electricity duty in the wake of abolitionism by the government asked as to why the utility wanted to snatch the smile from the lips of consumers had the government made up its mind to extend some relief to them. FCIK also made a point that GST council was understandably contemplating to include many left out goods and services under the purview of GST which possibly may also include supply of electricity. The delegation argued that any increase in the tariff could only be sought from the Commission against valid details which have not been furnished by the utility. FCIK submitted the Commission not to entertain the misleading plea of the utility that there would be no impact on the last year's tariff of consumers. FCIK also opposed the proposal to double the flat rates for unmetered consumers, terming it harsh for the poor of far flung areas.

While hailing the performance of the corporations for putting in place necessary grid and transmission infrastructure, the FCIK delegation submitted that the continued addition in such infrastructure was inevitable in view of growing demands for electricity from industry and the general public. Explaining the need for future electricity requirement, FCIK said that current per capita energy consumption in Jammu and Kashmir of 1492 kilowatt hour was only 1/3rd

of the average global per capita consumption and was likely to increase with more and more use of modern gadgets and setting up of industry.

The FCIK also took up the matter of deficiency in manpower with all power related corporations and submitted that this could directly affect the efficiency of the corporations pointing out that as per the petition there were 774 vacant posts in JKPTCL alone. FCIK also submitted that the Commission recommended enhancement in the retirement age of senior technocrats with vast experience in similar way as decided for medicos, university professors if it was within its mandate. FCIK regretted that two of the power corporations JKPCIL and JKSPDC were running without full time heads.

FCIK also laid emphasis on purchase of more solar energy for its attractive cost besides recommending setting up of solar projects in the UT. FCIK regretted that currently the UT was producing just 30 MWs of solar energy in comparison to 17800 MW in Rajasthan, 10130 MW in Gujarat, 9050 MW in Karnataka and 6800 MW in Tamil Nadu. The members of the commission, KPDCL and civil society entered into a prolonged argument on the issue but all of them accepting the need to promote roof top solar panels apart from setting up of solar projects. The Commission directed the officials to have more interaction with FCIK on the issue with participation of JAKEDA authorities also.



## Saffron Growers Get Organic Certificates from JKTPO

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) bestowed 'organic certificates' upon saffron growers of District Pulwama. The certificates were presented by Commissioner Secretary Industry and Commerce, Vikramjit Singh.

The event was organized by Jammu Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) in association with InvestIndia under National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) was part of "Meri Maati Mera Desh" initiative, aptly named "Maati Ko Naman, Veeron Ka Vandan."

This milestone event marks a significant stride towards recognizing and promoting sustainable agricultural practices in the region.

Addressing the business community on the occasion, Vikramjit Singh emphasized the need to embrace change by pursuing organic certification for their products. He further highlighted the potential of expanding the organic umbrella to include products such as cherries, garlic, apples, and more.

"Embracing the change towards organic certification is not only a strategic move for businesses but also a responsible choice towards

promoting a sustainable future," the Commissioner Secretary said. "We encourage entrepreneurs and producers to take advantage of this opportunity and register their products for organic certification. This not only adds value to their offerings but also contributes to the overall well-being of consumers and the environment", he added.

The Commissioner Secretary urged businesses to explore the organic potential of various products that are yet to come under the organic ambit. He specifically mentioned cherries, garlic, apples, and several other items that possess qualities that could be enhanced through organic cultivation practices. He added that bringing these products into the organic fold would not only cater to niche markets but also align with the growing demand for healthier alternatives.

Managing Director JKTPO, while speaking on the occasion shared the illuminating vision of JKTPO, dedicated to providing comprehensive assistance to saffron farmers in obtaining organic certifications. He added that these certifications not only validate the farmers' commitment to eco-friendly practices but also serve as a gateway to expanded markets and increased consumer trust.

## Dir Tourism Flags Off ATV Rally at Gulmarg



Appeals stakeholders to help build laws at tourist destinations

Observer News Service

**GULMARG:** Director, Tourism Kashmir, Raja Yaqoob, who also holds the charge of Chief Executive Officer, Gulmarg Development Authority, today flagged off a rally of All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) as part of Meri Maati Mera Desh campaign here today.

A plantation drive was also organized on the occasion with Director Tourism planting a sapling in the premises of Gulmarg Golf Club.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Director Tourism said the idea behind the Meri Maati Mera Desh is to make citizens aware about their role and responsibility in making the country strong and prosperous. He said the tourism sector and stakeholders associated with it have a definite role to play in this connection.

On the efforts of the Tourism Department, Raja Yaqoob

said the endeavour has been, besides ensuring an increased footfall, to see that tourists return back with cherished and sweet memories. He enumerated many initiatives like complaint redressal, establishment of helpline desk, strict enforcement etc taken by the Department in this regard.

On the specific needs of Gulmarg, the Director Tourism said that cleanliness has been accorded top priority and many concerned quarters have appreciated the efforts in this regard. He said efforts would be made to enhance the capacity of the local Solid Waste Management plant to cope up with the waste disposal at the famed tourist destination.

Raja Yaqoob appealed the stakeholders of Gulmarg and other tourist destinations to help the Department in maintaining the ecology of these destinations and respect the rules and laws governing the building permissions so that the beauty and aesthetics of the place is maintained and the local authorities are not forced to take stringent measures to maintain the same.

## Kashmir Potter Bags Bulk Order For 10,000 Diyas For I-Day Celebrations

Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** This year, Diwali has come early for Mohammad Umar, a potter who has bagged an order for 10,000 oil lamps from the Jammu and Kashmir administration for Independence Day celebrations.

This is the biggest order Umar has received in recent years.

"My family has been doing pottery for generations and I have been doing it since childhood.

"Ahead of Independence Day, we received a bulk order for earthen lamps. I am very delighted to have received this order as it has generated a huge income for us," Umar told PTI.

Initially, the administration had placed an order for 5,000 oil lamps but then it doubled it, he said.

"We have made more than 8,000 lamps and hopefully all lamps will be ready in the next couple of days," he added.

This "unexpected order" is what is keeping Umar's seven-member team



busy these days.

Umar said pottery art is on the decline but when the oil lamps will be lit in front of the Tricolour, it will help create awareness about it and generate a demand for earthen products.

"A potter makes gold out of clay and now authorities are working to revive this craft by launching a number of schemes. In Kashmir, we do not get such big orders except for Diwali," he added.

The oil lamps will be lit on the evening of August 13 at Zabarwan Park along the banks of the famous Dal Lake here.

Showkat Ahmad Kumar, who works with Umar, said he is very happy with the order as it will lead to more earning opportunities for them.

Handicrafts Department Director Mahmood Shah said it is very important that the government extend support to artisans.

"The order given to the potters is not a one-time order. We are trying to promote local souvenirs in government events and we also want that every office should proudly display the art forms of Jammu and Kashmir. Such orders are very encouraging for the artisan community," Shah said.

## Gutlibagh Residents Demand J&K Bank Branch, ATM

**GANDERBAL:** The residents of Wayil Woodeer area Gutlibagh in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district on Saturday urged the J&K Bank authorities to set up a branch and an ATM in their area.

According to the residents their area has a population of thousands but is without a bank branch due to which they have to face difficulties.

"We have to travel about five to six kilometers to Nunner bank branch even for minor work. We also have to visit the main town Sumbal to withdraw money from the bank or ATMs," Bashir Ahmad, a resident, said.

The traders of the area also complained about the difficulties in the absence of the bank and ATM. "Our business is affected due to the absence of the bank and ATM," Abdul Aziz, a shopkeeper, said.

The locals alleged their demand for a new bank branch and ATM has been turned down by bank officials on several occasions.

They have appealed to the district administration to look into the matter. KNO

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Sabia Syed W/O Sarmad Sadiquain R/O Raghunath Singh Marg, Sidhra Jammu have purchased Plot No.232 in Housing Colony Bagh-e-Mehtab from Mohammad Syed Teli S/O Abdul Samad Teli R/O Bagh Mehtab Srinagar originally allotted in favour of Brij Mohan S/O Sh. Dewan Chand R/O Fruit Mandi Jammu. Srinagar. I have applied for transfer of leasehold rights of above said plot in my favour. Objection, if any, may be conveyed to the Managing Director, J&K Housing Board, Green Belt Park, Gandhinagar, Jammu within a period of 15 days from the date of publication of this Notice. However, no objection will be entertained after the expiry of the above said period.

Name: Sabia Syed  
W/O Sarmad Sadiquain  
R/O Raghunath Singh Marg,  
Sidhra Jammu

# Dr Ashraf Ganie Led NAMS JTS To Study Health Issues Of People In High-Altitude Areas

Observer News Service

New Delhi- Dr M Ashraf Ganie, Professor of Endocrinology & Metabolism and Sub-Dean Research at SKIMS Srinagar has been nominated Chairman of the Joint Task Force instituted by the National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS) to conduct detailed study on the health issues of the populations inhabiting and the people visiting high-altitude Sub-Himalayan regions.

Pertinently, Dr Ashraf is Convener of the J&K and Ladakh chapter of NAMS and has been involved in research on non-communicable diseases among tribal populations who generally inhabit high-altitude areas. He has also been the member of ICMR's National Task Force on Universal Health Coverage among tribal population.

The Joint Task Force involving medical experts from NAMS, AFMS & SKIMS has been tasked, by the Ministry of Health & Family



Welfare, Govt of India, to develop a white paper to be submitted to the Ministry, for improving the interventions in the area of High-altitude medical problems.

The Task Force will identify the current status of High-altitude Medical problems, identify the deficiencies that need to be addressed and recommend measures for management of these problems.

The maiden meeting of the JTF

was held through virtual mode earlier this week. The meeting was, among others, attended by Dr K K Deepak, Professor & Head, Physiology and Dean AIIMS New Delhi; Maj Gen Sandeep Thareja, Senior Consultant Medicine, AH(R&R); Brig Ajay Chandra, of General Hospital, Firozpur; Col Y Uday, Prof, Department of Medicine, AFMC Pune; Col VS Shekhawat, Senior Advisor, AH (R&R); Col Vivek Aggarwal of General Hospital, Leh

and Dr Jyoti Kotwal.

Addressing the meeting, Dr Ashraf said that hypoxia, polycythemia, lung problems, heart diseases including hypertension are increasingly being recognized among the inhabitants of mountainous regions. He said serious and potentially fatal problems, such as high-altitude pulmonary edema or cerebral edema, occur in approximately 0.5 percent to 1.0 percent of visitors to elevations above 10,000 feet—especially with heavy physical exertion on arrival, such as climbing or skiing. Most of the health problems remain unexplored as the research in this area very scarce and hence the Task Force, said Dr Ashraf.

The final report of the Task Force is scheduled to be released at the 63rd Convocation and Annual Conference of NAMS to be organized from 6th to 8th October 2023 at Ramaiah Medical College, Bengaluru.

NAMS is a nodal agency under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare which acts as an advisory body to the Government of India in matters related to National Health Policy & Planning. NAMS also promotes Continuing Medical Education (CME) for medical & health professionals.

It may be noted that Dr Ashraf who is currently working as Professor of Endocrinology at SKIMS Srinagar has been working in the area of lifestyle disorders and has published numerous research papers on the subject.

Dr Ashraf was working as Associate Professor at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi before joining at SKIMS Soura. At SKIMS Dr Ashraf has taken many initiatives to create a vibrant research ecosystem at the Institute by establishing the Department of Clinical Research, Medical Research Unit and other similar facilities.

# Heavy rains lash Himchal Pradesh, landslides at many places

**Shimla:** Heavy rain wreaked havoc at many places in Himachal Pradesh on Saturday, causing floods and landslides and forcing the closure of over 300 roads, as Monsoon bounced back in the hill state.

The local MeT office has issued an orange alert of heavy to very rainfall on Sunday and a yellow warning of heavy rain on Monday.

Twelve passengers were injured when a Himachal Roadways Transport Corporation (HRTC) bus met with an accident following caving-in of the road near Kango on the Mandi-Shimla highway in Mandi district in the wee hours, officials said.

The passengers had a narrow escape as the bus stopped over the sunken stretch of the road and did not roll into a khud, they said.

So far 255 persons have died in rain-related incidents and road accidents in Himachal

during the ongoing Monsoon season since June 24, according to the data of the state emergency operation centre.

"Continuous heavy rain has resulted in caving in of roads, building collapse, landslides and increase in water levels in the rivers and streams. DGP Sanjay Kundu has directed the district superintendents of police to be on alert and advise hospitals to be in readiness," a statement issued here on Saturday said.

Kullu-Manali areas were cut off as landslides blocked the Mandi Kullu National Highway between Mandi and Pandoh.

Several alternative routes were blocked as swollen waters of Suketi Khud not only flooded the areas along the banks and the roads but also entered the houses in Balh valley in Mandi.

The local administration sounded an alert advising the people in the valley to remain confined to their houses.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### How To Bend The

than deaths occurring as a result of natural disasters in all the districts of Jammu and Kashmir around the same period. This, despite the study revealing that there is a significant increase in mortality over the years in Jammu and Kashmir particularly due to flash floods and windstorms adding that there has been an increase in extreme weather events in the region over the past two decades which is seen as a manifestation of global warming and human-caused climate change.

According to another study, Review of Disasters in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Region, published in the International Journal of Population Studies in June 2020, Jammu & Kashmir is afflicted not only by multiple natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, avalanches, and landslides, but also by violence, which has caused unparalleled death and destruction. Yet, the data cited in the study reveals that the insurgency and anti-insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh region over the past three decades has led to 47,689 deaths between 1988 and July 30, 2020. This implies that the number of people who have got killed in road accidents in the six districts of Chenab and Pir Panjal region in the past 12 years is almost the half of the total number of people having lost their lives in three decades of armed violence (between 1988 and 2020) in the entire erstwhile Jammu & Kashmir state.

Udhampur with 5,918 deaths, Rajori with 4,898 and Ramban with 3,665 are the three districts in the region which have recorded the highest number of deaths in the said period.

Accidents in the six districts of Chenab and Pir Panjal region makes Jammu and Kashmir one of the worst regions all across India in terms of death prone accidental areas. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) which works under the union home ministry, Jammu and Kashmir topped the list of "high death prone accidental areas" in 2011 in India.

The NCRB survey also revealed that any accident in Jammu and Kashmir has 64 percent chances of being "death prone", the worst among Indian states on the basis of percentage of fatalities.

Another report of NCRB in 2014 concluded that Jammu and Kashmir with 1.1 accidental deaths per thousand vehicles, was one of the highest accident hotspots in the country. The all India rate of accidental deaths per thousand vehicles was 0.9, the report said.

While traffic authorities and other government officials often blame rash and negligent driving for most deaths across Jammu and Kashmir and Chenab region, activists and locals in Chenab and Pir Panjal region say that the government is equally responsible for not doing enough for reducing the number of road accidents and casualties despite the fact that these accidents have been occurring for years.

"I have been saying that all of us have to make efforts to at least minimize the number of road accidents and casualties. But, there is a lot the government can do for making sure that the number of accidents gets reduced if not completely stopped," Butt says adding that a house committee of the state assembly in 2012, headed by Mohammad Yousof Taragami, had recommended several measures including forming a traffic regulatory authority which would oversee monitoring and regulating of traffic on the roads across Chenab region besides making the violators accountable.

"But, unfortunately, those recommendations were never implemented," Butt regrets and adds that still a lot can be done if this issue is addressed seriously. For example, he says, installing CCTV cameras, constructing tunnels at sharp curves, keeping critical care ambulances available in the Chenab region. According to him, the administration has to be pressured to do something urgently about the recurring accidents besides spreading awareness among drivers to take care of their lives and those traveling with them. Butt observes that training the drivers for driving in hilly terrains is something the government should consider urgently "in the manner it is being done in Himachal Pradesh and some other hilly regions."

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, in response to public interest litigations and a letter written to the chief justice of High Court in December last year by Butt for taking suo moto notice of the recurring fatal road accidents in Chenab region, had asked the state government on February 20 this year to

constitute a committee to look at the causes of the road accidents in Chenab region and give recommendations for stopping or minimizing the accidents.

Accordingly, the government had constituted a committee in compliance with the directions of the High Court for ascertaining the reasons for an increase in cases of road accidents in the hilly Chenab Valley and suggesting measures for stopping the accidents.

The court had specifically mentioned the PIL No. 30/2019 C/W PIL No. 01/2018 WP(C) PIL No. 13/2022 titled Intakhab Ahmed Qazi V/s Union territory of J&K.

Headed by the Engineer in Chief (Secretary of Technical, the other members include the Public Works (R&B) Department, Secretary, Road Safety Council, Executive Director (P) NHIDCL, Jammu Office, Superintending Engineer PW(R&B) Circle Doda and Senior Superintendent of Police, (Traffic) Rural.

Kashmir Observer contacted one of the members of the committee, Superintending Engineer PW(R&B) Circle Doda, Rampal Gupta, who said that the report prepared by the committee is ready.

Quoting from the report, he said: "The accidents are not limited to road alignment only but also have broader correlation with driver's state of mind, fatigue, condition of vehicle and weather conditions."

The experts in the committee have suggested strict enforcement of speed limit by installing CCTVs cameras and speed trackers at the specified spots along the roads in Chenab region besides taking measures such as conducting breathing tests for drunken driving at different spots along the roads.

Strict action should be taken against the violators of traffic rules including registering FIRs against them, the committee has recommended and has urged the administration to strongly act against the use of expired vehicles in the extremely difficult roads in Chenab region. Other recommendations include: checking the overtaking of vehicles by erecting dividers at vulnerable spots, fixation of automatic speed control devices in passenger vehicles and training sessions for drivers besides awareness campaigns using traditional and social media.

"Over-speeding is the main cause of traffic accidents in the Chenab valley. And most of the drivers use mobile phones while driving which divides their attention and often results in accidents," Gupta told Kashmir Observer.

Other reasons, he said, include untrained drivers and some drivers mixing driving with drinking. "Otherwise, the roads are not bad for driving. We found the roads OK," Gupta told Kashmir Observer.

But local residents say that the fatality of roads has been "ignored" for quite some time now. "Only a very bad accident involving the death of dozens attracts attention of the authorities," says a resident of Doda, Imtiyaz, while preferring sharing his first name only.

"The response remains limited to statements and condolence messages, and then everything settles in and the vehicles go on killing people as usual," he opines.

### Data Protection

of personal data breach have to be reported to the Data Protection Board (DPB) and the user. "DPDP Bill becomes an Act. Received Hon'ble President's assent," Vaishnav said in similar posts on X (formerly Twitter), and homegrown app Koo.

On August 9, the Rajya Sabha approved the DPDP bill that introduces several compliance requirements for the collection and processing of personal data, has provisions to curb misuse of individuals' data by online platforms, and entails up to 250 crore penalty for any data breach.

Data of children can be processed after consent from guardians, as per the DPDP law. The Lok Sabha had approved the bill on August 7. The government expects to implement the Act within 10 months, IT Minister Vaishnav had said earlier this week.

The bill lays down the manner in which companies should process users' data, and gives the government power to seek information from firms and issue directions to block content on the advice of a data protection board appointed by the Union government. It allows users the right to correct their personal data.

The bill applies to the processing of digital personal data in India, where the personal data

is either collected in digital form or in a non-digitalised format and subsequently digitised.

The bill defines 'personal data' broadly to include any data about an individual who is identifiable by or in relation to such data. 'digital personal data' is defined to mean personal data in digital form.

DPDP gives the government powers to exempt state agencies from the law.

"The Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023 a bill to provide for the processing of digital personal data in a manner that recognises both the right of individuals to protect their personal data and the need to process such personal data for lawful purposes and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto," the DPDP bill said.

It moots creation of Data Protection Board of India to handle grievances of individuals around personal data privacy if data fiduciaries or firms using personal data fail to address individuals' complaints.

### Will Ensure Livelihood

all stakeholder departments and the people of Kathua, Budgam, Kulgam and Ramban districts for achieving ODF plus and 100% model district status, the LG said due to the collective efforts of all, the UT has emerged as top performer in Model Village Coverage.

Sinha also called upon the people of the UT and sought their active participation in Independence Day events.

He felicitated the best performing blocks under PMAY-G and the Districts with maximum convergence. He also handed over installment cheques to beneficiaries under PMAY-G.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Shailesh Kumar Singh, Union Secretary Rural Development; Ms Mandeep Kaur, Commissioner Secretary, Rural Development J&K, Gaya Prasa, DDG Rural Housing, Rural Development Ministry and senior officers attended the valedictory session.

DDC Chairpersons and PRI members were also present.

### No Restrictions

1-day function at Bakshi Stadium, the general public can also be the part of these celebrations for which enormous sacrifices have been rendered by the people of India.

"All preparations in this direction have been completed. This is a festival of joy and we are celebrating it. The administration chose Bakshi stadium owing to the space crunch at SKCC Sonwar so that more and more people could participate in the event," he added.

### 'Some People Made

(PMAY-G) here. Sinha said that some people were happy to see J&K's economy choked and limited as it was in their benefit. "Common man was left to suffer," he said. The LG said UT's economy was shaped gradually and today "we have as stable economy."

"Many people ask what has changed in the past four years. Let me tell them that street violence is a history, Pakistan sponsored terrorism has almost ended, closure of schools, colleges and business for 150 days a year is also a history now," he said, adding that "peace prevails across UT and youth could be seen enjoying night life after so many decades."

The LG said that after a long wait, youth could be seen going home late night with guitars and ice-creams in their hands. "This indeed is a big change," he said. "Kashmir is now looking like European cities."

He said last year, 1.88 Cr tourists visited J&K and who benefited from it. "It was the local auto-driver, taxi driver, tourism players, their children who after a long wait enjoyed peace and earned their livelihood to their satisfaction," the LG said.

Without naming anybody, the LG said that the hands of those who misguided J&K youth are drenched with the blood of innocents.

"J&K is full of talent and youth will shine in various fields," he said, adding that he wishes to see massive participation of people in the upcoming Independence Day functions across J&K.

"People were not given a chance to participate in I-Day functions earlier," he said. (KNO)

### Dedicates Various

'Yug Parivartan, Badalta Jammu Kashmir' programme here in which he dedicated various digital initiatives to the people of J&K UT in his

address, the LG appreciated the IT Department and other stakeholder agencies for their endeavours to ensure seamless access to government services.

He said the new digital initiatives launched today such as Digi-Dost (Doorstep delivery of services), CSC-Aadhaar Seva Kendras at Block Level, on-boarding of 300 services on auto appeal system and Digi Sahayak, a multilingual chatbot will provide improved citizen-centric services to the people.

Addressing the gathering, Sinha highlighted the key initiatives of UT administration to make the governance system more transparent, accountable and responsive.

"Digital J&K has given many unique and incredible digital-first experiences. In future, the outcome of combined team efforts of UT would be cited as the best and leading administrative reforms," he said.

"J&K is the first in the country to integrate the auto-appeal feature to the service platform. The on-boarding of 300 public services on the auto appeal system will ensure the quality and timely disposal of services," he added.

This feature, the LG said, will auto escalate the appeals in case the services are not provided to the applicant within time limit set under Public Services Guarantee Act and it will establish the most transparent public services delivery system.

The LG underlined the need to address the local needs by integrating digital based solutions.

"We recognize the fact that the future digital transformation will be fuelled by Artificial Intelligence across the sectors. We are adopting multiple applications to support a wide variety of businesses, public sectors and their functions, processes, goals and objectives," he said.

"Digital J&K is in the middle of the journey. We have attained functional scale, now time is for population scale and next is big transformational scale. The need is to use technology massively and further enhance the UT systems based on the underlying principle of digital born J&K 2.0," he added.

On the occasion, Sinha also released an e-compendium of transformational Digital Services and launched an AI-based Facial Recognition attendance application. He also flagged off Digi-Yatra under IEC activities.

In presence of LG, a Memorandum of Understanding was also signed between CSC e-Governance Service Ltd and IT Department for doorstep delivery of services through Digi-Dost.

### India Deploys

can operate at night with night vision goggles and has a longer range due to air-to-air refuelling capability.

"We have also included the air-to-ground armament which was not there earlier. The biggest capability of the aircraft are the pilots which are handpicked by the Indian Air Force to serve on these aircraft," he said.

The MiG-29s moved to the Srinagar air base in January this year and have flown extensively in the Kashmir valley along with the Ladakh sector where they would be one of the first to respond in case of any air space violation attempts by the Chinese.

The MiG-29s were the first aircraft to have been deployed in the Ladakh sector for tackling the threat from the Chinese side after the Galwan clash of 2020 and have thwarted multiple such attempts since then.

India to push for troop disengagement in military talks with China

Meanwhile, India will once again push for troop disengagement at the Depsang Plains as well as Demchok in eastern Ladakh at the next round of top-level military talks early next week.

The 19th round of corps commander-level talks will be held on the Indian side of the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on August 14. The Indian delegation will be led by 14 Corps commander Lt-General Rashim Bali and include officials from MEA and ITBP. The Chinese side will be headed by the South Xinjiang Military District chief.

China is yet to accede to India's earlier demands for troop disengagement at the Depsang Plains and the Charding Ninglung Nallah (CNN) track junction at Demchok.

### Power Tussle Hits

in the region to "douse off" the flames. Raina relieved Abhijeet Jasrotia of his position as BJP's Social Media Prabhari for J&K, while

Vir Saraf was recalled from his current post in South Kashmir. Similarly, Mudassar Wani was also recalled from his duties in North Kashmir and directed to report to BJP Headquarters in Jammu.

However, sources said that the Kashmir unit is not satisfied with the changes and are looking forward to meeting the top leadership in New Delhi.

According to sources, some prominent members are actively considering their resignation from the party's basic membership if their grievances are not addressed. The dissent group feels that the Jammu unit doesn't give them their due place in the party.

Sources from BJP told Kashmir Observer that the group feels that they don't get due credit in the party as the leaders from Jammu get.

"They are demanding sharing of posts in the party equally among both the divisions (Jammu and Kashmir)," said a senior leader, wishing not to be named.

The existing party structure, according to BJP sources in the UT includes 8 posts of Vice Presidents, One General Secretary, 8 Secretaries, 8 spokesperson and other low profile posts.

Giving a detailed break-up of the party's organizational structure in UT, sources said, out of 8 VP's, seven are from Jammu and one from Kashmir. Similarly, 7 Secretaries are from Jammu and one from Kashmir.

The party General Secretary is also from Jammu, sources said, adding that out of nine spokespersons, five, including chief spokesperson are from Jammu while the Valley has four.

"The Valley leaders want all the party posts to be shared equally between the two divisions. However, the Jammu unit is raising objections saying that they provided 25 MLA's in the last assembly elections while the Valley gave none," said one of the leaders.

Talking to Kashmir Observer, Altaf Thakur, BJP spokesperson said the reports of resigning from the party aren't true but there are some demands that have been put forward to the top leadership.

"We met the party president a few days ago and he has assured us that all the demands will be addressed. The party stands with us," Thakur said.

Notably, party president Ravinder Raina reached Srinagar and met the agitating party men in the Valley to calm down the tempers.

Thakur said they had lost many men to militancy and had joined the party when no one was willing to join.

"The party has given us a positive response so there is no scope of resignation," he added.

However, sources said that the disgruntled Valley leaders will approach the top leadership in New Delhi, if their grievances aren't met.

According to sources, the BJP government at the Centre is likely to send a delegation led by BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh to meet the disgruntled BJP members on August 13.

### Police Officer

town on May 11, trying to save commuters. At least 10 persons including Naik were bitten by the dog.

The body of the deceased was handed over to his family for last rites, the officials said.

### Man Slips To

could be evacuated to the hospital for treatment.

Meanwhile, police have started proceedings under relevant sections of the law in this regard.

### Hardcore Criminal

spokesperson said, adding that investigation of both the cases are underway.

"Mansha is a hardcore criminal who used to operate in Samba district, supplying heroin to small suppliers and individual addicts," he said. Senior Superintendent of Police Samba, Benam Tosh said a total 67 narco-suppliers, including 13 women, have been arrested in past seven months in the district while several others have been jailed under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PTI NDPS) Act.

### CRPF Man

have taken cognizance of the incident, the officials added.

## STFC Wins 8-1 In 2023 Srinagar Premier League



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The 2023 Srinagar Premier League continued with its Round 9 matches as one game was played on Saturday at Synthetic Turf TRC here.

In the matchup, STFC Natipora took on Jehlum FC. STFC took the lead early in the first half, before adding another shortly after. The Natipora team added their third and fourth goals to make it 4-0 at half time.

STFC scored their fifth goal via a penalty early in the second half. Jehlum FC managed to pull one back via a penalty of

their own. However, the relentless STFC side added three more goals to win the match at full time whistle 8-1.

The other fixture of the day was scheduled to be played between ARCO FC and J&K Police XI. The organizers, however, had to reschedule the contest due to unforeseen circumstances.

Two SPL matches will be played today, Sunday, August 12. In the first game, Real Kashmir FC will take on Kashmir Maharaja FC at 2:00 pm. In the other matchup, JK Bank Academy is scheduled to lock horns with AG's Office XI at 4:30 pm.

## YSS Anantnag Holds Sports Events Across District



Observer News Service



**ANANTNAG:** The Department of Youth Services & Sports on Saturday organized various sports events as well as co-curricular activities in different institutions and zones.

Zone Doru organized Chess and Carom under the Banner of Meri Maati Mera Desh with a huge participation of 410. Zone Mattan organized a Tiranga rally and ThrowBall event under the Banner of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahatsov with a total participa-

tion of around 430 students. In another event, Zone Srignawara concluded its Cultural Program and other 15th August preparations with a participation of 750. Zone Shangus also continued the department's plantation drive and other sports activities as well as co-curricular events with context to preparations for Independence Day, and around 196 participated in the said zone. Zone Bhijbehra and Bidder also hosted Panch Pran Pledge, Tiranga Rally and Plantation Drive.

## Fighting India Beat Spirited Malaysia 4-3 To Win ACT For Fourth Time

Agencies

India fought back from two goals down to eke out a 4-3 win over a spirited Malaysia in a thrilling final to claim their fourth Asian Champions Trophy title at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium here on Saturday. Jugraj Singh (9th minute), skipper Harmanpreet Singh (45th), Gurjant Singh (45th) and Akashdeep Singh (56th) were the goal scorers for India.

For Malaysia, Abu Kamal Azrai (14th), Razie Rahim (18th) and Muhamad Aminuddin (28th) found the back of the net. It is

India's record fourth title, making it the most successful team in the event.

India had earlier thrashed Malaysia 5-0 in the round-robin league stage.

Malaysia were aggressive in the first half as the Indians found it difficult to restrict their opponents.

India converted their first penalty in the ninth minute with Jugraj scoring with a fierce flick to the right of the Malaysian goalie. The Indians got into their groove as the match progressed and played full-pressure hockey after a sluggish start.

## India Brush Aside WI, Level Series 2-2

Press Trust of India

**LAUDERHILL:** Shubman Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal gave a glittering manifestation of their talent as India humbled West Indies by nine wickets in the fourth T20 International here on Saturday.

India hunted down 179 with full three overs to spare, and the victory helped them to level the five-match series 2-2.

The deciding fifth T20I will be played here on Sunday. Coming into this match, India needed some runs from their openers and the two young men did precisely that.

Gill (77 off 47 balls) and Jaiswal (84 not out off 51 balls) slipped into overdrive from ball one and they seldom downshifted either. They made 165 runs together and it was India's best stand for the opening wicket in this series so far.

There were apprehensions of pitch getting slowed down in the second half of the match, as it often happened in the past. But the centre square that was recently refurbished using the Mississippi soil stayed true for the whole course of the match.

Gill and Jaiswal used the wicket's friendly nature to the hilt as 66 runs cascaded in the Power Play segment. The eight fours and three sixes they smoked during that phase, underscored Indian batters' dominance. Incidentally, all three sixes took birth off Gill's punishing bat.

Gill was the first to stroll past the fifty-run mark, cutting Rovman Powell past the point fielder for a couple.

Jaiswal soon joined his part-



ner on that landmark point, and it was achieved in an even more eye-popping fashion.

Powell tried to go wide of off-stump but the left-hander moved across and thumped the ball through wide square leg for a boundary, and celebrated his maiden T20I fifty with unmasked glee.

In the process of making 165, Gill and Jaiswal equalled the record for the second highest opening alliance for India in T20Is. They are now tied with Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul who made 165 against Sri Lanka at Indore in Sri Lanka in 2017.

Perhaps, it was the first chapter in passing of the baton to the younger crop as far as the shortest format is concerned.

Earlier, an outstanding effort by bowlers helped India pin down West Indies to a total that was underwhelming considering a pitch that offered true bounce and little turn.

West Indies' decision to bat first was understandable as teams batting first often

enjoyed a distinct advantage here, largely because of a pitch that tends to slow down as the match progresses.

However, the home batsmen, save Shimron Hetmyer (61) and Shai Hope (45), failed to capitalise on an excellent chance to put on board a bigger total. In fact, the hosts did not manage even a single fifty stand in their innings.

The West Indies essay revolved around two partnerships - a 49 for the fifth wicket between Hope and Hetmyer and then a 47 for the eighth wicket between Hetmyer and Odean Smith. On other times, Indian bowlers led by Arshdeep Singh (3/38) and Kuldeep Yadav (2/26) kept the Windies batting unit on a tight leash.

Hetmyer, who pounded a fifty, played some meaty shots in the end as West Indies scored at a fair clip in the last five overs.

But Gill and Jaiswal ensured that the total was not even sufficient to stretch India.

## Pak Cricket Team At ICC World Cup Will Be Treated Just Like Any Other Team: MEA

Agencies

India on Friday said the Pakistani cricket team will be treated just like any other squad participating in the upcoming ICC World Cup in the country.

India is hosting the tournament from October 5. "The Pakistan cricket team will be treated just like the cricket team of any other country participating in the ICC World Cup," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said. On Pakistan seeking better security for its team, he said the questions should be better directed towards the security agencies or the organisers. "Of course, we would hope that all necessary security will be provided not just to them but to all other participating teams."

"I hope that there is a good match and I hope this is not war as it seems to be made out to," Bagchi said when asked about Pakistan foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's reported comments that Islamabad does not mix sports with politics and that was the



reason why it decided to send the team to the tournament and defeat India in India.

The much-awaited India-Pakistan clash would take place on October 14 in Ahmedabad.

Asked about Bhutto Zardari's reported claim that India decided to hold the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in the virtual considering his visit to Goa to attend a ministerial meeting of the grouping, Bagchi said it would be certainly "presumptuous" of anyone to think that one factor or one

person would have had a role to play in that.

India hosted the SCO summit on July 4 in the virtual mode.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin were among those who joined the summit presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Ministry of External Affairs had said that the decision to hold the annual summit in the virtual format was taken considering a number of factors.

## Bayern Sign England Striker Kane From Tottenham On Four-Year Deal

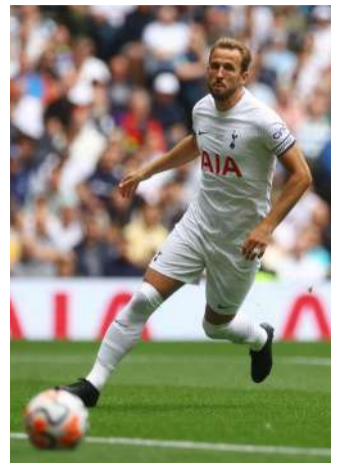
Agencies

England captain Harry Kane has joined Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich from Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur on a four-year deal, the German club said on Saturday.

Bayern, who kick off their season later on Saturday in the Super Cup against RB Leipzig, said the 30-year-old striker was signed until 2027 after protracted talks between the two clubs. They did not disclose the transfer fee, which media reports have put at around 100 million euros (\$109 million). That would be a Bundesliga record, smashing the 80 million euros paid by Bayern to sign Lucas Hernandez from Atletico Madrid in 2019.

"The fans can look forward to Harry Kane and the new season," said club CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen. "Harry was at the very top of our wish list. So we went a bit all-in but always within a framework and within financial reason." Kane, who passed his medical late on Friday, has spent most of his career at Tottenham after joining their academy as an 11-year-old, scoring a club record 280 goals in over 430 appearances in all competitions.

He is also the second-highest Premier League scorer of all time with 213 goals - 47 behind Alan Shearer - and with 58 goals for his country in 84 games. Kane is England's all-time leading marksman. "I am happy to be here," Kane said in club interview. "I think Bayern are one of the biggest clubs in the



world. I want to keep improving and pushing myself to be the very best."

"I felt it was the right step in my career. (Bayern have) a good winning culture year-on-year," he said. Signing Kane, who also brings a wealth of experience and leadership qualities, means Bayern have finally landed a striker to replace Robert Lewandowski who left for Barcelona in 2022.

The Bavarians struggled for goals last season and only narrowly won the league title after Borussia Dortmund unexpectedly failed to win their last game at home. Bayern kick off their Bundesliga season against Werder Bremen next week.

Kane's arrival also looks to improve his own chances of winning major silverware having failed to end Tottenham's 15-year trophy drought during his time at the club. Spurs failed to qualify for European football this season.

## France Forward Dembele Leaves Barcelona To Join PSG

Agencies

Barcelona's France forward Ousmane Dembele has joined Ligue 1 champions Paris St Germain on a five-year deal, both clubs said on Saturday.

Barcelona said they had reached an agreement with PSG on Dembele's transfer for 50.4 million euros (\$55.16 million). Dembele, 26, last year extended his contract with the Spanish champions until June 2024 after his previous deal expired. He won three LaLiga titles and two Spanish Cups in six years.

"I'm delighted to be joining Paris St Germain and can't wait to play for my new club," Dembele told the club's website. "I hope I can continue to grow here." Dembele started his playing career at French side Stade Rennais, making his debut in the 2015-16 season before moving to Bundesliga club Borussia Dortmund.

He signed with Barca for 105 million euros plus add-ons on a five-year deal in 2017 and scored 40 goals along with 43 assists in 185 appearances. The forward has 37 international caps and was part of France teams that won the World Cup in 2018 and reached the final in December.

Dembele joins new signings Marco Asensio, Milan Skriniar,

Lee Kang-in, Hugo Ekitike, Lucas Hernandez and Manuel Ugarte at PSG. The club sacked manager Christophe Galtier in July and replaced the Frenchman with former Barca and Spain coach Luis Enrique. PSG will aim



to win a record-extending 12th Ligue 1 title this season and challenge for the Champions League - a trophy that has eluded them despite their domestic dominance. They begin their title defence at home to Lorient on Sunday.

"We are delighted to welcome Ousmane Dembele to Paris St Germain where he will be an important and committed player for our club," PSG chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi said. "We are proud to be able to bring another French World Cup winner to Paris St Germain as we enter a new great era for our club."

## Kylian Mbappe, Neymar And Marco Verratti Left Out Of Psg Squad For Opening Ligue 1 Game Against Lorient

Agencies

Kylian Mbappe, Neymar and Marco Verratti were all left out of the squad for Paris Saint-Germain's season opener against Lorient later Saturday.

Mbappe is mired in a contract standoff and was widely expected not to be in the squad after having been left out of the pre-season tour to Japan and South Korea. He trained apart from defending champion PSG's first-team regulars all week.

Neymar trained alone on Friday, with the club saying it was because he was recovering from a viral infection. But, Neymar is heading for a PSG exit and could leave this month.

The 30-year-old Verratti, who has been in PSG's midfield for 11 years, has been linked with a move to the lucrative Saudi Pro League.

PSG's new coach Luis Enrique spoke to both Neymar and Verratti and said at his news conference Fri-



day that "my decisions will clearly express my views." It appears neither is in his plans for the coming season.

Central defender Milan Skriniar, attacking midfielder Marco Asensio, and forward Goncalo Ramos could all

make their debuts after joining. PSG signed France winger Ousmane Dembele from Barcelona on Saturday in a deal worth 50.4 million euros (USD55.2 million), but he was not ready to be in the squad.

## Arsenal Beat Forest 2-1 In Premier League Opener

Agencies

Arsenal began their new Premier League campaign with a 2-1 home win over Nottingham Forest on Saturday thanks to first-half goals from Eddie Nketiah and Bukayo Saka.

Kickoff was delayed by 30 minutes due to turnstile issues at Emirates Stadium which prevented fans from getting in on time. But once the game kicked off Arsenal shot out of the blocks, dominating possession and cutting through Forest's defence.

Nketiah opened the scoring after being set up by a sublime turn and back-heel pass from Gabriel Martinelli before Saka doubled their advantage when he curled in a shot from range that easily beat his former team mate Matt Turner in Forest's goal.



Arsenal took their foot off the gas in the second half and were nearly pun-

ished when Taiwo Awoniyi gave Forest a lifeline with a late goal from a sweep-

ing counter-attack but the north London side held on for all three points.

## Meerut Murder Case: 'Asur' Web Series Inspired Accused, Arrests Follow



**Agenceis**

Two men were arrested here on Saturday in connection with the recent alleged murder of a businessman and his wife, officials said.

The accused said they committed the crime after being inspired by the 'Asur' web series, released in 2020. Senior Superintendent of Police Rohit Singh Sajwan said.

On Thursday, Dhan Kumar Jain (70), a resident of the Brahmamuri area, was killed while his wife Anju Jain (65) was seriously injured when they resisted a robbery bid by two men who broke into their house, Sajwan said.

The accused fled with cash and jewellery, he said.

Anju succumbed to her injuries on Friday during treatment, the police said.

The SSP said eight teams were formed to crack the case, which examined the CCTV footage, conducted electronic surveillance and also gathered inputs from informers, following which the two accused were nabbed.

The arrested persons have been identified as Priyank Sharma (25) alias Parush, a final year LLB student and his friend Yash Sharma alias Yashu (24), a Class 8 pass-out who works in a battery shop, the police said.

During interrogation, Priyank told the police that inspired by the 'Asur' web series, he looked up on YouTube ways to escape

the police, the SSP said.

The accused added that they used gloves, masks and helmets to hide their identity and changed the number plate of the bike after committing the crime, the SSP said.

The duo chose an escape route where the CCTV cameras could not identify them, the police said.

A day before the incident, the accused had gone to the businessman's house on the pretext of looking for a room to rent, they added.

The SSP said a pistol, motorcycle, clothes, helmets and shoes worn during the commission of the crime, besides gold and silver jewellery and cash looted from the businessman's house have been recovered from the accused.

After the incident came to light, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav had tried to corner the state government over the incident.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, Yadav had said, "The murder of a businessman in Meerut by entering his house, looting and murderous attack on his wife is a heart-wrenching incident." "Recession during the BJP government, corruption of officials, collection of donations by the ruling party and above all, the fear of criminals have completely killed the business in UP," he added.

## Cameras With "Skin Colour Analytics" In China Triggers Rights Concern

**Agenceis**

Washington: Chinese surveillance equipment maker Dahua is selling cameras with what it calls a "skin colour analytics" feature in Europe according to a report by the IPVM (Internet Protocol Video Market), a US-based security and surveillance industry research group, as cited by Voice of America.

In the July 31 IPVM report accessed by VOA Mandarin, "The company defended the analytics as being a 'basic feature of a smart security solution.'"

VoA is the state-owned news network and international radio broadcaster of the United States of America, which produces digital, TV, and radio content that is shared worldwide.

In February 2021, IPVM and the Los Angeles Times reported that Dahua provided a video surveillance system with "real-time Uyghur warnings" to the Chinese police that included eyebrow size, skin colour and ethnicity.

IPVM's 2018 statistical report shows that since 2016, Dahua and another Chinese video surveillance company, Hikvision, have won contracts worth USD 1 billion from the government of China's Xinjiang province, a centre of Uyghur life.

Dahua's ICC Open Platform guide for "human body characteristics" includes "skin colour/complexion," according to the report. In what Dahua calls a "data dictionary," the company says that the "skin colour types" that Dahua analytic tools would target are "yellow," "black," and "white." VOA Mandarin verified this on Dahua's Chinese website, VOA reported.

The IPVM report also says that skin colour detection is mentioned in the "Personnel Control" category, a feature Dahua touts as part of its Smart Office Park solution intended to provide security for large corporate campuses in China.

"Basically what these video analytics do is that, if you turn them on, then the camera will automatically try and deter-



mine the skin colour of whoever passes, whoever it captures in the video footage," VOA quoted Charles Rollet, the co-author of the IPVM report.

"So that means the camera is going to be guessing or attempting to determine whether the person in front of it ... has black, white or yellow, in their words, skin colour," he added.

The IPVM report said that Dahua is selling cameras with the skin colour analytics feature in three European nations. Each has a recent history of racial tension, Germany, France and the Netherlands.

Dahua said its skin tone analysis capability was an essential function in surveillance technology.

In a statement to IPVM, Dahua said, "The platform in question is entirely consistent with our commitments to not build solutions that target any single racial, ethnic, or national group. The ability to generally identify observable characteristics such as height, weight, hair and eye colour, and general categories of skin colour is a basic feature of a smart security solution."

IPVM said the company has previously denied offering the mentioned feature, and colour detection is uncommon in mainstream surveillance tech products.

In many Western nations, there has long been a controversy over errors due to skin colour in surveillance technologies for facial recognition. Identifying skin colour in surveillance appli-

cations raises human rights and civil rights concerns.

"So it's unusual to see it for skin colour because it's such a controversial and ethically fraught field," Rollet said.

Anna Bacciarelli, technology manager at Human Rights Watch (HRW), told VOA that Dahua technology should not contain skin tone analytics.

"All companies have a responsibility to respect human rights, and take steps to prevent or mitigate any human rights risks that may arise as a result of their actions," she said in an email.

"Surveillance software with skin tone analytics poses a significant risk to the right to equality and non-discrimination, by allowing camera owners and operators to racially profile people at scale — likely without their knowledge, infringing privacy rights — and should simply not be created or sold in the first place" she added.

Dahua denied that its surveillance products are designed to enable racial identification. On the website of its US company, Dahua says, "Contrary to allegations that have been made by certain media outlets, Dahua Technology has not and never will develop solutions targeting any specific ethnic group."

The US Federal Communications Commission determined in 2022 that the products of Chinese technology companies such as Dahua and Hikvision, which has close ties to Beijing, posed a

## Superhighway: Researchers Create World's Smallest Light-Guiding Technology

**Agenceis**

The future is looking incredibly bright — thanks to a few atoms thick piece of glass crystal that carries light in a 2D space!

Researchers at the University of Chicago have revolutionised the way we guide light, unveiling a technology that's not only incredibly thin but also astonishingly efficient. Imagine a sheet of glass crystal so minuscule, it's just a few atoms thick, yet it can trap and carry light over relatively long distances — up to a centimeter! This incredible discovery, known as a 2D optical waveguide, could pave the way for a new era of technology.

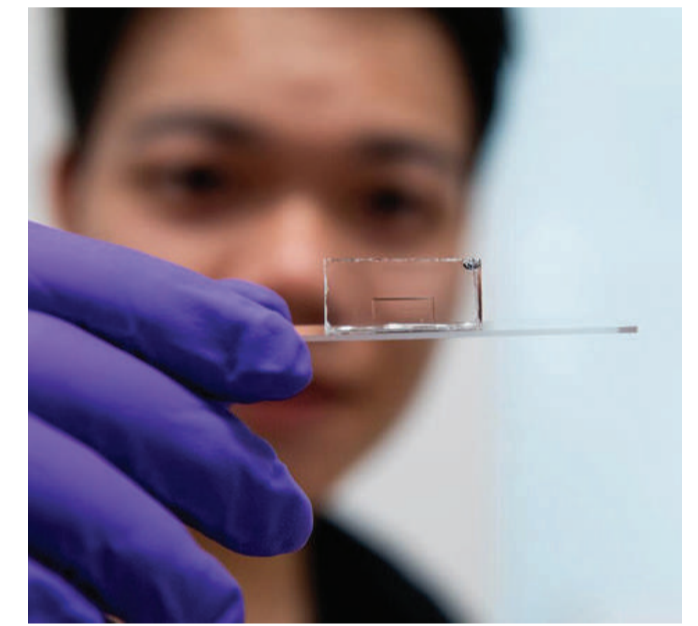
The lead author of the study, Professor Jiwoong Park, and his team used ingenious experiments to demonstrate the power of this super-thin crystal. They found that this revolutionary waveguide acts as a kind of light highway, allowing us to guide photons (particles of light) along its path. Unlike existing bulky 3D photonic circuits, this 2D waveguide lets part of the photon stick out as it travels, making it more flexible and easier to manipulate using lenses and prisms.

This breakthrough has tremendous potential. Think of it

as building microscopic sensors that can detect specific molecules as the light waves travel through a sample. For example, if you had a liquid sample, you could use this waveguide to sense the presence of a particular molecule based on how the light behaves. This level of precision opens the door to a wide range of applications, from advanced sensors to super-compact photonic circuits.

The scientists behind this discovery faced significant challenges during their years-long journey to make it a reality. They had to develop everything from growing the ultra-thin material (molybdenum disulfide) to measuring the behavior of the light. This groundbreaking research has been published in the prestigious journal Science.

In simple terms, this new 2D optical waveguide is like a microscopic superhighway for light, allowing us to control and direct it in a more efficient and precise manner than ever before. This breakthrough has the potential to reshape technology, making it smaller, faster, and more adaptable. Imagine the possibilities of integrating these thin photonic circuits into tiny chip areas, unlocking a whole new world of compact and powerful devices.





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