

## CROSS-BORDER SMUGGLING

### LG Calls For A Comprehensive Strategy



**Jammu:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha emphasized the need for a comprehensive strategy for crackdown against drug smugglers, drug hot-spots and cross border smuggling in a meeting concerning development and security in Jammu Division.

Sinha held the meeting with the senior officers, Deputy Commissioners, SSPs and discussed various issues. The LG also took appraisal of the status of the key infrastructure projects and the steps taken by the District Administrations to facilitate industries, saturation of government schemes, implementation of Holistic Agriculture Development Programme and promotion of tourism. He directed the district administrations to ensure saturation of schemes in all border villages and to connect youth of all Panchayats to self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

LG further instructed the officials to prepare regular outcome reports of Block Diwas, Thana Diwas and other Jan-Abhiyan programmes. Quality disposal of grievances and effective delivery of public services should be the priority of the administration at all levels, he said.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to LG Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar; Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo; | [More on P6](#)

# Kashmir Weather Defies Winter's Script

## Srinagar Warms, Jammu Braves Cold Wave

» Srinagar's day temp 8 Deg above normal » Jammu temp 9 Deg below normal » 5th all-time lowest max temp in January in Jammu » Banihal breaks records, temp 13.1 degrees above normal



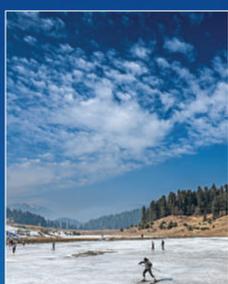
Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** A dry and snowless winter in Kashmir has resulted in freezing nights and warmer than usual days as Srinagar's day temperatures were over eight degrees above the normal for this time of the year, officials said on Wednesday. Jammu, the winter capital of the union territory, has been

colder than Srinagar for the past couple of days, recording a high of 9 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, which was nine degrees below the normal.

Jammu is currently under a cover of dense fog which has resulted in colder days.

Srinagar city recorded a minimum temperature of minus 5.0



degrees Celsius on Wednesday night, same as the previous night, the officials said.

Jammu recorded the 5th all-time lowest maximum temperature in January, Faizan Arif, an independent weatherman from Kashmir said.

"Jammu City recorded a maximum temperature of 8.6°C which is | [More on P6](#)

### Snowless January Squeezes Kashmir's Winter Tourism

Syed Mohammad Burhan

As the Kashmir Valley experiences an unprecedented absence of significant snowfall, an unexpected challenge looms over the region's vital tourism sector. The uncharacteristic weather conditions have not only defied expectations of travelers but also triggered concerns about the broader economic implications and the livelihoods dependent on tourism.

Tourism players in the valley said that with each passing day without snowfall, the tourist footfall is set to decline. Akib Chaya, President of Gulmarg Hoteliers Club, expressed concern over the situation and said that in the early days of January, Gulmarg was sold out but the numbers are coming down rapidly.

"The issue has gained national attention, with people creating memes and drawing comparisons from previous years," Chaya said.

"It is rare to witness the stark and | [More on P6](#)



### Dry Spell Sparks Water Crisis In Kashmir Valley

**Have Started Supplying Drinking Water Tankers: Jal Shakti Chief**

AUQIB JAVEED

Amidst the prolonged dry spell, Kashmir valley finds itself grappling with far-reaching consequences in different sectors including tourism, agriculture and electricity. However, the most palpable and urgent repercussions have emerged in the form of water scarcity, compelling people to hit the streets in many areas of north Kashmir.

In a brief chat with Kashmir Observer, Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti Department Kashmir, Sanjeev Malhotra said that the persistent dry spell in the Kashmir Valley has led to the drying up of major water resources and they have already started supplying drinking water tankers in many areas of Kashmir. Malhotra said that the ground water resources need to be recharged to supply the water through-out the year. "The snowfall in the peak Chillai-Kalan | [More on P6](#)

### PMSSS Students Allege Delay In Fund Disbursement

Majid Nabi

**Srinagar:** Students from Jammu and Kashmir enrolled under the Prime Minister Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS) have alleged that the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is delaying the disbursement of scholarship funds, with many of them contemplating to quit their courses midway.

The aggrieved students said the delay on the part of the AICTE in releasing scholarship funds not only causes issues with housing but also occasionally leaves them hungry.

"The scholarship was aimed at benefiting students from weaker sections of the society. Initially the funds were released well in time, however the AICTE disburses funds after six months," Kifayat Ahmad, an engineering student told Kashmir Observer.

"Ninety percent of students from J&K face the same problem, while many have left courses midway, some are following suit. From food to clothing and accommodation,

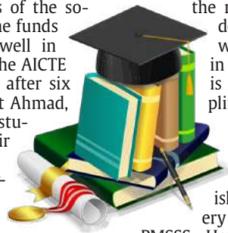
our scholarships cover everything. Without food, how could we ever live outside? he questioned.

An AICTE's top official, wishing anonymity, told Kashmir Observer that students enroll in two courses, however, the scholarship is granted for only one course and that is the reason for the delay in releasing scholarship funds.

He said the scholarships of many students were cancelled in the past for enrolling in two courses, which is not only illegal but unethical as well.

Refuting the allegations, Sana, who is pursuing nursing course under PMSSS said the authorities are free to check the records of the students, and if anyone was found involved in any such activities is entitled for disciplinary action.

"Causing delay in releasing scholarship funds is collective punishment for every student availing PMSSS. How could they say so? Most of the students here complain of delay in releasing scholarships. Not every student has registered | [More on P6](#)



### Terror Activities In Poonch, Rajouri An Issue Of Concern: Army Chief

Says Adversaries Trying To Aggregate Terrorism In The Area

Press Trust Of India

**New Delhi:** The situation in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri-Poonch region is a matter of "concern" and enhancing deployment of troops, boosting intelligence apparatus and reaching out to local people are part of measures being initiated to contain terrorist activities in the area, Chief of Army Staff Gen Manoj Pande said on Thursday.

At a press conference, he also said he has conveyed an unambiguous message to the soldiers and commanders that there will be "zero tolerance" to human rights violations and they must operate in a professional manner.

Three civilians were killed in Poonch last month allegedly during questioning by the



Army in connection with an ambush of Army personnel by militants. Four Army soldiers were killed in Jammu and Kashmir but such incidents have increased in | [More on P6](#)

- Drop In Overall Incidents Of Violence In J&K
- Zero Tolerance For Human Rights Violations
- Guidelines Issued To Soldiers To Act In A Professional Manner
- Have Adopted Affected Village In Poonch
- Terrorists Operating In The Area Are Very Well-trained
- Focus On Strengthening The Human Intelligence
- 45 Terrorists Killed In J&K In The Last Three Years

### 'Situation Around LAC Sensitive'

Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande on Thursday said that the situation along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh is "stable" but "sensitive", and asserted that Indian troops are maintaining a "high state" of preparedness to deal with any challenge. Addressing a press conference ahead of Army Day, Gen Pande also said that both India and China continue to hold talks at military and diplomatic levels to find a resolution to the remaining issues. Our operational preparedness | [More on P6](#)

### Crackdown on Banned Separatist Groups Centre Orders Seizure of Assets of TeH, Muslim League

Press Trust Of India

**Srinagar:** The Centre on Thursday directed the Jammu and Kashmir administration to seize all assets and freeze bank accounts and finances belonging to the pro-Pakistan separatist amalgam Tehreek-e-Hurriyat and Muslim League Jammu Kashmir headed by separatist Masarat Alam.

Both the organisations were recently banned by the government. Tehreek-e-Hurriyat was founded by late separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani.

Issuing two identical notifications, the Union Home Ministry said the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) was declared unlawful outfit on December 27, 2023 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 and the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, Jammu and Kashmir (TeH) was banned on December 31, 2023 under the same law.

"Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 42 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, the central government hereby directs that all powers exercisable by it under section 7 and section 8 of the said Act shall be exercised

also by the state governments and the Union Territory administration in relation to the above said unlawful association," the notification read.

The Section 7 of the UAPA is related to power to prohibit the use of funds of an unlawful association and the Section 8 is related to power to notify places used for the purpose of an unlawful association.

While declaring the TeH outlawed for five years, the home ministry had said it was fomenting terrorism and spreading anti-India propaganda in the Union Territory.

The objective of the TeH is to separate Jammu and Kashmir from India and establish Islamic rule in Jammu and Kashmir, it said.

The group was founded by Geelani, who was succeeded by Masarat Alam Bhat. Bhat is also known for his anti-India and pro-Pakistan propaganda. Bhat is currently in jail.

Bhat's outfit Muslim League Jammu Kashmir, which he heads, was also declared a banned organisation by the government for its involvement in anti-national and secessionist activities in Jammu and Kashmir. The home | [More on P6](#)

### Farooq Abdullah Skips ED Appearance

**N**ational Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah did not appear before the Enforcement Directorate on Thursday for questioning in a money laundering case, official sources said. The 86-year-old politician was called by the central agency at its Srinagar office in connection with an ED investigation into alleged irregularities in the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA). It was not immediately known | [More on P6](#)

### Mehbooba Survives Car Accident

**P**DP chief Mehbooba Mufti had a narrow escape on Thursday as her car met with an accident at Sangam in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district, officials said. The vehicle of the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister collided with a civilian car at Sangam, a police official said. Mufti, who was on her way to Khanabal to meet the victims of a fire incident, did not suffer any injuries. However, | [More on P6](#)

### Forest Fire Erupts In Poonch

**A** fire erupted in a forest area along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Thursday, officials said. No casualty has been reported. Forest department | [More on P6](#)

### Jamat-e-Ahle Sunnat Calls On LG

**A** 20-member delegation of Jamat-e-Ahle Sunnat Jammu called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan, today. The delegation of Islamic Scholars and community members expressed gratitude to the Lt Governor for the progress made in the establishment of the Madrasa Board. Meanwhile, Junaid Azim Mattu, former Mayor, Srinagar Municipal Corporation also called on the LG at Raj Bhawan, today.

### Armyman Slips To Death In Gulmarg

**A**n army man slipped to death in the Gulmarg area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district on Thursday. Official sources said that an army man namely Gurbpreet Singh of 18RR at the forward post of Gulmarg has slipped near his post which resulted in his death. They said that the body is being brought to Gulmarg which would take 5-6 hours while the legal formalities would be done before handing over the body back. Further proceedings | [More on P6](#)

### CRPF Recovers 4 Tiffin IEDs

**T**he CRPF on Thursday recovered four improvised explosive devices (IEDs) fitted in tiffin boxes and about two dozen bullets of AK series assault rifles in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said. A cordon and search operation (CASO) was launched by the paramilitary force on the basis of inputs generated by the intelligence wing of the force deployed in the Jammu region, they said. | [More on P6](#)

## SHORT TAKES





Demand For E-Rickshaws Rises In Srinagar, 7-8 Vehicles Sold Per Week

Observer News Service

Srinagar: With e-rickshaws turning out to be a major relief for the Srinagarites, the sale of electric vehicles has surged across the summer capital. The dealers in Srinagar claimed that the demand has increased manifold as nearly 7-8 electric-rickshaws are sold in a week at retail outlets in Srinagar.

"I personally have six to seven bookings for this week, and my previous stock has been sold out. I started selling e-rickshaws in 2021 after the government gave the green signal to the services in December 2020, and since then, the demand has increased manifold," "Till now, I have sold around 200 e-rickshaws since the beginning and the demand is very high. My order book is filled with advance bookings," he added.

Week-Long Road Safety Program Begins To Sensitize People

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Amidst the rise in road accidents, the week-long National Road Safety program has commenced in Srinagar while a series of activities are expected to take place in which the commuters and general public will be sensitized about the traffic norms that will help in reducing the

fatal accidents. The Traffic Police authorities as well as the Jammu and Kashmir Transport Department launched the National Road Safety Week in Srinagar. The inauguration ceremony at Srinagar saw the presence of officials and students from various colleges and other educational institutions.

Dry Weather: Anjuman Auqaf Jamia Masjid Calls For 'Salatul Istisqa'

Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid has asked people to join the 'Salatul Istisqa' at the central mosque.

At the time of such trials, we should turn to Allah and seek his help through supplications.

The organization believes that turning to Allah and seeking his intervention through supplications is crucial during such challenging times.

Observer News Service

Srinagar: With the valley grappling with a severe drought-like situation, Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid has asked people to join the 'Salatul Istisqa' at the central mosque to pray for an end to the unprecedented dry spell in Kashmir, which experts have dubbed as extremely alarming.

The organization believes that turning to Allah and seeking His intervention through supplications is crucial during such challenging times. "At the time of such trials, we should turn to Allah and seek His help through supplications and ask Him to make us steadfast on the path of Islam so that He delivers us from this difficult time," the Auqaf stated.

nagar. The organization called upon the people to actively participate in the prayer of repentance and forgiveness. "We shall collectively, as well as individually, seek forgiveness of our sins before Allah so that His favor may descend upon us, and He helps us get rid of this difficult weather situation," the Auqaf emphasized.

DC Srinagar Reviews Republic Day-2024 Celebration Arrangements

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In connection with celebrations of forthcoming Republic-Day-2024, a meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC), Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud Din Bhat here today at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex to ensure smooth and flawless conduct of the national event.

March Past Parade, Cultural programs, Transport & Parking facilities, Power & drinking Water Supply, deployment of Sanitation staff, Medical/First Aid & Fire and Emergency teams, Installation of Public Address System, besides Illumination of Government Building on eve of upcoming Republic Day.

cles, the DC asked the Officers of the Traffic Department to assess the capacity of the parking slots identified for the event and formulate an action plan so that the maximum number of vehicles of the dignitaries and other participants coming to attend the function are accommodated in a hassle free manner.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Ashish Mishra was also present in the meeting. At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner took a Department wise review about the arrangements to be put in place by the respective Departments. The DC directed the Officers of the concerned Departments to ensure all preparations including Seating arrangements,

On the occasion, matters related to Security, Media Management and entry of VVIPs, VIPs and other participants were also discussed in detail. The DC stressed on making fool-proof security arrangements in and around the Stadium to ensure hassle-free celebrations of the function. He also enjoined upon the concerned Officers to maintain close coordination with each other for holding the function smoothly.

While SMC authorities were asked to ensure that all washrooms are functioning properly, besides establishing mobile toilets at the venue on January 26. They were also asked to take measures for dog menace around the venue. The DC asked the Education Department and Cultural Academy to ensure all necessary arrangements for boarding/lodging of participating school children and Artists are taken care of well in advance, while

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for the issuance of Pesticides Licence under name and style Dar Agro Chemicals Turkawangam Shopian. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Plant Protection Officer Lal Mandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

R/o Turkawangam Shopian

The Jammu And Kashmir State Board Of School Education, Sub-Office Bandipora

The candidates whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost the original marks certificate of 10th session Oct-Nov 1996 issued by the board of School Education under Below mentioned particulars Name : Nisar Ahmad Khan S/o: Ab Hamid Khan Roll No: 356236 Year & Session Oct-Nov 1996

Now the candidate has applied for Duplicate Marks Card. Anybody (if) having any objection may file the same before undersigned with (07) Seven days from the date of publication of this notice. Besides, the original marks card is treated as cancelled.

Office of the Headmaster Modal Public School Maazbugh Sopore

It is to inform to general public that this office received a written application from Ab. Gani Dar of Maazbugh Sopore for the name change of his daughter Qariya Gani reading in class 7th under Roll No.07 and admission No. 144 with date of Birth 15th of March 2012 (15-03-2012). The applicant intends to change the name of his daughter from Qariya Gani to Asma Jan, anybody having any kind of objection shall file the same in the office of the undersigned or in the office of the Zonal Education Officer Rohama within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after the expiry of the due date.

رسم چھارم... سونگوار خاندان

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AWANTIPORA, KASHMIR. ADMISSION NOTIFICATION FOR POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

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

AIRPORTS SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

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

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

PRAYERS FAJR 6:08 ZUHR 12:39 ASR 4:04 Magrib 5:45 ISHA 7:10

This Day In History

- 475 - Basiliscus becomes Byzantine Emperor, with a coronation ceremony in the Hebdomon palace in Constantinople. 1528 - Gustav I of Sweden "father of the nation" crowned King of Sweden. Rules 37 years. 1552 - Dutch west coast hit by heavy storm, 100s killed. 1806 - French evacuate Vienna. 1816 - France decrees Bonaparte family excluded from the country forever. 1836 - Battle of Wetumka, Fla. 1915 - US House of Representatives rejects proposal to give women right to vote. 1916 - Britain proclaims Gilbert & Ellice Islands as a colony in Pacific. 1940 - World War II: Soviets bombs cities in Finland. 1942 - National War Labor Board created 1944 - Churchill & de Gaulle begin a 2-day wartime conference in Marrakesh. 1945 - German forces in Belgium retreat in Battle of Bulge. 1945 - The Soviets begin a large offensive against the Nazis in Eastern Europe. 1948 - Mahatma Gandhi begins his final fast. 1950 - USSR re-introduces death penalty for treason, espionage & sabotage. 1959 - Rediscovery of the Caves of Nerja in Spain 1961 - UN genocide pact goes into effect. 1962 - Operation Chopper begins, America's first combat mission in the Vietnam War. 1970 - Biafran War ends, Biafra surrenders to Nigeria. 1970 - Boeing 747 makes its maiden voyage. 1971 - Negotiations over price of petroleum begin in Tehran between OPEC Persian Gulf states and 22 oil companies. 1974 - Libya & Tunisia announces they are merging as "Islamic Arab Republic". 1976 - UN Security Council votes 11-1 to seat Palestine Liberation Organisation. 1977 - Anti-French demonstrations takes place in Israel after Paris released Abu Daoud, responsible 1972 - Munich massacre of Israeli athletes. 1986 - 24th space shuttle (61-C) mission-Columbia 7-launched. 1990 - Romania bans Communist party (1st Warsaw Pact member to do so). 1991 - US Congress gives George H. W. Bush authority to wage war against Iraq. 1992 - Algeria's general elections canceled after strong gains by Islamic Salvation Front in the 1st round. 1992 - A new constitution, providing for freedom to form political parties, is approved by a referendum in Mali.

From KO Archives

Mobile Phones In JK soon

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Centre has agreed in principal to extend the mobile telephone service to Jammu and Kashmir. Announcing this at the inauguration of the state's first Software Technology Park (STP) here today, the Union Minister for Information Technology, Pramod Mahajan, dismissed the Idea that security of the state would be adversely affected if the mobile services were allowed here. He said he was not convinced with the argument and had discussed this with the Prime Minister & Ministers of Home & Defence who have all agreed to his suggestion of extending the facility in J&K. He asserted that mobile telephone had nothing to do with the security of the country adding, nobody in the government Of India is saying 'no' to it. He said contrary to the belief of risk to the security, the mobile facilities would help in tracking down the militants. (KASHMIR OBSERVER, 12 January, 2001)

KASHMIR OBSERVER<sup>TM</sup>

Friday | 12-01-2024

## Tough Security Environment

The Army Chief General Manoj Pande on Wednesday attributed the escalation in militancy related violence in Rajouri-Poonch region over the last 5-6 months to the attempt by adversaries to disrupt the prevailing normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. Speaking to media in the run up to Army Day on January 15, General Pande said that between 2003 and 2017-18, militancy in the Rajouri and Poonch districts had been effectively curtailed, and peace had prevailed. However, the recent spike in terrorist activities indicates a resurgence of unrest. He pointed out that the Pakistan Army is actively involved in fuelling militancy in the area, attempting to amplify instability.

The situation certainly became worse in Jammu 2023 with security forces losing over twenty personnel in ambushes by militants. That said, the security situation improved remarkably last year, despite some conspicuous rise in violence. According to data, around 121 persons including 21 local militants, 52 infiltrators, 29 soldiers, 4 policemen, 14 civilians, and a BSF personnel were killed in Jammu and Kashmir in 2023.

At the same time, there has been an 80 percent decrease in the recruitment of local youth in the militant ranks in 2023. The figures put the number of local youth who took up arms last year at just 22 compared to around 100 in 2022. There are now just 31 local identified militants active across Jammu and Kashmir. "27 local active terrorists belong to Kashmir zone while 4 from Jammu areas."

Army chief in his interaction also highlighted the positives in the situation. He emphasized the continuation of the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) despite the infiltration attempts, many of which the Army has successfully thwarted. General Pande also highlighted the robust anti-drone mechanism along the border to counter the use of drones for smuggling weapons and narcotics.

Army, according to the Army chief, has signed contracts worth Rs 12,000 crore with private Indian firms. These contracts encompass major projects, including the development of light tanks and future-ready combat vehicles which will go a long way to boost indigenous defense capabilities. More so, at a time, when India faces an increasingly tough security environment, both along the LoC with Pakistan and the LAC with China. Even Army chief termed the situation along the Northern border stable but "sensitive".

Going forward, India has to not only be prepared for the evolving regional threats but also find a way to fashion a peaceful regional environment by repairing ties with its neighbours, especially Pakistan and China. The strong government at the Centre under prime minister Narendra Modi is best positioned to make this a reality.

### OTHER OPINION

## A change for the worse

The rapid decline in ties between India and the Maldives, just a month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the newly elected Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu, should set alarm bells ringing. The trigger came from tweets by three Maldivian Ministers, attacking Mr. Modi for promoting the Lakshadweep islands during his recent sojourn there at a perceived cost to the Maldives and for his close ties with Israel; the Ministers also made derogatory remarks about Indians. The tweets have been deleted, the Ministers suspended, and the Maldivian government has distanced itself from them, but the damage has been done. The respective Ambassadors were summoned. Hurt Indians have crowded social media sites calling for an economic "boycott" of the Maldives — Indian tourists make up the most arrivals post-COVID-19. However, the underlying reasons run deeper, and could have a broader impact on India-Maldives relations and the neighbourhood, accruing to the change in government in Male. Mr. Muizzu rode to power on the back of the PPM's "India Out" campaign. Despite its disappointment with the win of 'anti-Indian forces', given the warm relationship it shared with his predecessor Ibrahim Solih, the Modi government sent a Minister to his swearing in, and there was a Modi-Muizzu meet at the COP28. However, Mr. Muizzu chose Turkey as his first bilateral destination, and is now visiting China — becoming the first President not to make India his first priority. Even President Yameen, who began the "India Out" movement and cozied up to Beijing, visited Delhi first in 2014. Mr. Muizzu has continued to press India on the withdrawal of its military personnel, even though India has clarified their role.

With the calls for boycotts and rising hypernationalistic rhetoric, Delhi and Male need to take a step back and reassess their responses. Mr. Muizzu can ill-afford to antagonise India, given its proximity, economic might and historical position as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean, something Maldives has relied on. India too must see the futility of muscling in a much smaller neighbour, however egregious the provocation. The last few years of ties between the Solih government and Delhi show the benefits of a stronger relationship: India's infrastructure forays and development projects in the islands, an intense strategic partnership, support during the COVID-19 pandemic, and cooperation on the international stage. For India, in a region that sees several elections this year, it is paramount to ensure that domestic political changes in the neighbourhood do not change the basic structure of bilateral ties, or affect regional stability.

The Hindu

# The Biggest Threats to Global Economic Stability

KAUSHIK BASU

NEW YORK — The International Economic Association (IEA) recently concluded its 20th World Congress in Medellin, Colombia. This triennial event brings together scholars from all over the world to share and discuss the latest developments in economic thinking. This year's edition underscored the urgency of re-evaluating some of the field's core assumptions. The rapidly escalating debt crisis in the Global South, while not a direct focus of the conference, cast a shadow over it.

The IEA was founded in 1950, with Joseph Schumpeter chosen to be its first president. Since then, the organization has been led by some of the world's most renowned economists, including Paul Samuelson, János Kornai, Kenneth J. Arrow, Amartya Sen, and Joseph E. Stiglitz. With the world economy increasingly strained by supply-chain disruptions related to the war in Ukraine, the lingering consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cloud of uncertainty hanging over the fighting between Israel and Hamas, this year's Congress has thrown these daunting challenges into sharp relief.

As the global economy undergoes a fundamental transformation, some of the deeply held assumptions economists have relied on to model it must evolve, too. Unsurprisingly, many of the presentations during this year's Congress focused on the impact of digital technologies and social media on labor, wages, and inequality. Others focused on the changing nature of globalization, the shift from a unipolar to a multipolar economic order, and the erosion of democratic institutions amid the rise of populist nationalism.

Danny Quah's lecture underscored the speed with which the global economy is changing. Building on earlier studies by Jean-Marie Grether and Nicole A. Mathys, as well as his own previous research, Quah illustrated the world economy's shifting center of gravity, which he defines as the "average location of economic activity across geographies." In 1980, he showed, this center was located in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, reflecting the dominance of North America and Western Europe during that period.

As East Asian economies took off, the global center of economic gravity began to shift eastward. Quah estimates that by 2008, it had moved close to zmir, Turkey, and kept moving east, driven by the Indian and Chinese economies' rapid growth. He projects that by 2050, the world's economic center will settle between India and China, unlocking opportunities but also stoking geopolitical tensions and giving rise to new threats.

Rising authoritarianism, in particular, remains a major driver of global economic uncertainty. The growing appeal of populist movements, Sergei Guriev argued (based on some of his earlier writings with Elias Papaioannou), could pose an "existential threat" to democratic governance, civil liberties, and the liberal world order.

To be sure, the populist surge is partly an understandable response to rising within-country inequality and reduced social mobility, as Adam Szeidl pointed out in his Congress presentation. Disillusioned Western voters' tendency to favor right-wing leaders is puzzling, however, given that these politicians' favored policies will likely exacerbate the problems they purport to address.

A financial crisis could provide far-right authoritarians with the momentum they need to



“Despite the grim predictions of a prolonged economic downturn, the global economy successfully dodged a recession in 2023, buoyed by unexpectedly robust GDP and job growth in the United States. While this has led some economists to adopt a cautiously optimistic outlook for 2024, I believe that such complacency is misguided

dominate Western politics.

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The new optimism can be attributed to ana-

lysts' tendency to focus on rich countries when assessing the state of the global economy. A more granular analysis yields a bleaker picture of the world's economic landscape. Unlike the Great Recession of 2008-09, which was triggered by the collapse of the US housing market, the biggest threat to global economic stability today comes from the developing world.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, virtually every country in the world was forced to increase public spending. But while developed and middle-income countries had the resources to purchase vaccines, drugs, and equipment, low- and lower-middle-income economies borrowed massively to cope with the pandemic and subsequent food and energy crises. That left dozens of countries in debt distress or at high risk of it, underscoring the need to look specifically at the developing world.

According to the World Bank's latest International Debt Report, the world's poorest countries have been hardest hit by the sovereign-debt crisis. Their external debt service, which reached an all-time high of \$88.9 billion in 2022, is projected to surge by 40% in 2023-24. Ghana and Zambia have already defaulted, Ethiopia will likely default by 2024, and domestic debt levels in countries like Argentina and Pakistan are alarmingly high.

Not enough is being written about this, but urgent international intervention is necessary to prevent the situation from escalating. While the current crisis may not have the immediate global impact of the 2008 collapse of the US subprime mortgage market, its potential long-term effects could be far-reaching. Notably, it could exacerbate the migration crisis, further fueling the surge of right-wing populism across the developed world.

While the IEA's five-day Congress in Medellin felt like a breath of fresh air, tackling the developing world's debt crisis requires more than cutting-edge research. The international community, especially multilateral institutions like the World Bank, must act decisively before the situation spirals out of control.

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



OBSERVER  
MAIL

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MAIL YOUR LETTERS

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## Graceful Gestures

In the hustle and bustle of our cutting-edge lives, where efficiency and speed often take priority, the significance of mannerism can occasionally be neglected. Mannerism, the diffused art of carrying out oneself with grace and politeness, is an undying distinctive feature that provides a touch of beauty to our interactions. Beyond being an insignificant social nicety, it plays a pivotal role in fostering tremendous relationships, developing harmonious environments, and contributing to personal and expert achievement.

Mannerism isn't restrained to a hard and fast of inflexible regulations; rather, it is an expression of consideration and appreciation for others. It features a spectrum of behaviors, from easy gestures like protecting doors open for others to greater complicated interpersonal competencies like powerful communication and active listening. At its

center, mannerism displays a cognitive of the impact our movements can have on the ones around us and a dedication to contributing definitely to our shared areas.

One of the profound benefits of training mannerism is its ability to put the foundation for meaningful relationships. Politeness, kindness, and attention form the cornerstone of wholesome interactions. By adopting a mannered technique, we create an ecosystem of consideration and warmth, making it easier for others to connect to us on a deeper stage. Whether in non-public relationships or expert settings, the artwork of mannerism will become a bridge that fosters information and cooperation.

Imagine a world wherein anyone prioritizes kindness and attention. Mannerism has the energy to convert our environment into havens of tranquility and positivity. When people embrace correct manners, conflicts

are minimized, and the general environment turns into conducive to collaboration and creativity. A polite and respectful environment nurtures a feel of network and belonging, contributing to the overall well-being of its inhabitants.

In the expert realm, mannerism is a precious asset which can set people apart in their careers. Employers often cost personnel who no longer only excel of their abilities however additionally show off a high degree of professionalism and courtesy. Effective conversation, punctuality, and a deferential demeanor decorate one's professional recognition, establishing doors to possibilities and advancement.

Mannerism isn't always handiest a non-public exercise however it is also a catalyst for wonderful exchange in society. The ripple effect of courteous conduct can encourage others to undertake comparable atti-

tudes, growing a collective movement closer to a greater thoughtful and compassionate international. In this way, the effect of mannerism extends far beyond personal interactions, influencing groups and shaping the cultural fabric.

In a world that is continuously evolving, the undying essence of mannerism stays a beacon of mildness, guiding us towards a greater graceful and harmonious lifestyle. It is a preference to embrace the artwork of consideration, politeness, and respect—and funding in the first-rate of our interactions and the proper-being of our groups. As we navigate the complexities of our lives, let us now not neglect the transformative power of mannerism, for in its subtlety lies the key to growing a greater stunning and interconnected world.

Dr Mudasir Ahmad Gori

# Why Marriages Are Failing in Kashmir

*The pulpits that hold the utmost responsibility for addressing societal evils have failed to address this serious matter, choosing instead to remain silent.*

Gazi Muzamil

In recent years, late marriages and failed marriages are the worst of the evils that have enveloped our society and significantly contributed to our moral, mental, and social degeneration. If late marriages are a result of several cultural taboos such as caste, dowry, unemployment, poverty, costly weddings, and government jobs, failed marriages reflect our collective hypocrisy, if not shame.

On the ninth day after her divorce, Asma, 33, sits on a balcony in despair, gazing at her thirteen-month-old baby. Her face has grown pallid, with evident dark circles around her

lashes the main door.

Asma holds a PhD in Zoology and was married two years ago. She recounts her dreadful tale of marriage at her home in Kulgam. Her marriage to Aftab ended a week ago after she discovered his extramarital affair.

During pregnancy, due to her husband's and in-laws' neglect, she lost one of her twins in the womb, and the other baby was born with mental disabilities. She faced all the criticism and was blamed for giving birth to an unhealthy and disabled child, who spent his first 8 months in ICU.

"Kashmir is a male-dominated society where men decide the future of a relationship," Asma says.

"I have lost faith in the institution of marriage. I'll never consider remarrying. My only concern is..." She pauses, referring to her child who is surrounded by toys in the corner.

## WHY MARRIAGES FAIL

According to the 2011 census, Jammu & Kashmir has a divorced population of 0.34% but experts believe that divorce cases in the region have seen a significant surge in recent years.

Shahnawaz Ahmad Khanday, a sociology professor at the J&K Higher Education Department, attributes this rise to the faster pace of life, population growth, and longer life expectancy.

Infertility, often unfairly attributed to female partners, is also a key contributor to unsuccessful marriages. Sabreena, 28, got divorced a year ago when her in-laws in Srinagar accused her of being unable to conceive a child, despite medical evidence proving the contrary.

Forcing wives to prioritize their in-laws' needs over their own well-being also leads to marriage failure. Yusra, 30, whose primary responsibility was to care for her two children, was compelled to look after her husband's parents.

"I did my best but fell short of my husband's expectations. I was abused and eventually divorced for failing the role of caretaker for my husband's parents." She says

Jozey, 28, who married in 2021 in Shopian, narrates her harrowing experience of an arranged marriage

that turned into a nightmare. "The problem was getting married to someone I had never met before," She says. Her spouse worked in the fruit industry. She has taken refuge at her brother's home for a year waiting for her husband to divorce her, who seeks Rs. 500,000 in exchange for declaring the divorce.

"Arranged marriages are scary. He would come every night between 12 and 2 a.m., and when I protested, he would abuse and beat me." She says, "My marriage was a disaster. He would make fun of me for coming from a middle-class family."

When asked why they don't seek legal assistance, she responds, "We are kind people, they have all the wealth and approach." "My brother will now sell a house our father built for us to compensate for my divorce", she adds.

Moreover, domestic violence, family interference, incompatibility, and drug addiction are cited as additional factors contributing to marital breakdowns in the region

Prof. Shahnawaz stresses the importance of understanding that marriage entails both ups and downs and requires compromise. "There is glitz and glamour connected with our youth. The romanticized notion of love and compatibility, perpetuated by the media and the virtual world, leads them to believe that marriage is solely based on passion and infatuation."

He says, "Our youth is avaricious, always on the go, making sure that all of his needs are met. Marriage is a process of making concessions."

Sajad Ahmad Mir, a prominent advocate at J&K High Court highlights the increase in matrimonial disputes in courts in 2023.

"Couples bring minor concerns to court, yet due to emotional manipulation, ego issues, or unnecessary meddling from in-laws, these minor issues escalate into major disputes."

He said that a major cause of these disputes among working people is the husband's refusal to let his wife work and wife's refusal to live in a joint family with her in-laws. "What's surprising is that before marriage, couples don't discuss these matters, which subsequently become big marital feuds."

"We have to be realistic," Prof. Shahnawaz recalls, "because our marriage expectations are different." Maintaining a strong marriage needs commitment, understanding, compromise, and continuous



effort from partners. We forget that once we're in it, it's the responsibility of both parties to keep things smooth, not complicated.

## SEEKING RESOLUTION

In today's fast-paced society, couples often struggle to find the time and energy to work out their differences amicably.

"Women tend to be more motivated than men to resolve their marital issues," Prof. Shahnawaz says, adding that, for men, the patriarchal mindset always creeps in.

Advocate Sajad observes that before entering into a marital bond, couples must sit down and discuss the key aspects such as whether the girl wants to work after marriage or not, or whether she wants to live in a joint family after marriage or not. Is this marriage the result of both part-

ners' agreement, or of some family pressure? What are their mutual preferences, and how often do they use social media?

"There are extremely few chances that a marital conflict would emerge in their relationship in the future if they discover satisfying answers to these questions at the right moment." He says

Sajad adds "Couples should consider seeking marriage counseling to identify the root cause of their problems and work on improving their marital relationship instead of opting for separation."

## POST DIVORCE

A study conducted by Muzamil Jan and Asma Hyder at Kashmir University revealed that divorce brought about numerous social, eco-

nomical, cultural, and psychological challenges for women in Kashmir. The survey included 600 divorcees from rural and urban Kashmir. The study finds, 38.3% of divorcees in rural regions and 37.4% in urban areas felt sad about their current marital status, while only 13.3% in rural and 15.3% in urban felt proud. Similarly, 51.7% of divorcees

in rural regions and 51.3% in urban areas felt a sense of carelessness.

Remarriage remains tough because of prejudices against a divorcee. "Marriage in our society is a proper enterprise. A lot of passion, money, and social capital are put into this venture. Remaining in a relationship cannot be enforced. Ultimately, it is an emotional bond," Prof. Shahnawaz says. We should make sacrifices where they are justified and worth it. If, despite efforts, it doesn't work, we should let it go.

Jozey continues, "Even after divorce, my ex-husband can dream of a good wife who is unmarried and from a well-to-do family, but I have to face the social stigma of being a divorced lady." To achieve a second marriage, I must sacrifice my ideals.

## WAY AHEAD

Marriage is not a hurried decision; it's a lifelong commitment, a devotional act, not a mere civil contract. Choosing a life partner in haste may be a half-hearted suicide attempt. It is important to take time to understand ourselves and our potential partners.

"It is better to remain single than to enter into a failed marriage that disrupts our peace and, in some cases, our lives. A financially secure marriage does not ensure a happy marriage. Rushing into marriage without knowing our partners and the responsibilities involved leads to innumerable failed marriages, impacting the entire societal fabric and contributing to rising mental health issues. It turns precious lives into misery and damages families irreparably." Says Prof. Shahnawaz

The pulpits that hold the utmost responsibility for addressing societal evils have failed to address this serious matter, choosing instead to remain silent. Let's delve and reflect on what makes marriages successful and happy. A happy family is the cornerstone of a thriving society.

*Note: Names have been changed for anonymity*

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**THERE IS GLITZ AND GLAMOUR CONNECTED WITH OUR YOUTH. THE ROMANTICIZED NOTION OF LOVE AND COMPATIBILITY, perpetuated by the media and the virtual world, leads them to believe that marriage is solely based on passion and infatuation**

formerly glittering eyes and she has lost interest in her daily tasks. Her appetite has vanished after discovering her dreams shattered. "She's still in mourning over her divorce," her younger sister says as she un-

## Unleashing Mental Toughness

Wasim Kakroo

Mental toughness refers to a psychological trait that describes an individual's ability to cope with and perform efficiently under pressure, stress, or hardship. This quality is characterized by having a resolute and optimistic mindset that enables individuals to overcome obstacles, concentrate on their objectives, and withstand difficult circumstances without giving up. People with mental toughness possess the ability to regulate their emotions and thoughts, remain motivated, and maintain a realistic outlook in challenging situations. They are not discouraged by setbacks or failures, but instead use them as opportunities to learn and develop.

### WHAT IS VULNERABILITY?

Vulnerability refers to a state of being open or exposed to potential harm, whether it's physical or emotional. This feeling of weakness arises when our defenses are down and we're susceptible to criticism or danger. Emotionally, vulnerability involves expressing our true thoughts, feelings, and emotions to others without fearing rejection or judgment. This requires us to accept our imperfections as a natural part of being human.

Although it may be difficult to embrace vulnerability, it is a crucial element in building strong relationships and connections with others. By being vulnerable, we can deepen our relationships, foster greater trust and understanding, and create a sense of intimacy. Brené Brown, a research professor and author, has extensively studied vulnerability and believes that it is the source of innovation, creativity, and change. She encourages individuals to embrace vulnerability as a means of personal growth and fulfillment.

### HOW IS VULNERABILITY AN ESSENTIAL PART OF MENTAL TOUGHNESS?

It may seem counterintuitive, but vulnerability is an essential part of mental toughness.

Being vulnerable means accepting our limitations and understanding our limitations is the first step towards building mental toughness. We must be honest with ourselves about our abilities and acknowledge where we fall short. When we recognize our limitations, we can develop strategies to work around them and find solutions to overcome challenges. However, it takes vulnerability to admit that we cannot do something, that we need help or that we may have made a mistake. Acknowledging our limitations requires us to be open to feedback and receptive to criticism, which can be uncomfortable. But when we embrace our limitations and vulnerabilities, we can work towards personal growth and development.

Accepting our weaknesses is another aspect of vulnerability that is essential for mental toughness. Everyone has weaknesses, and no one is perfect. By accepting our weaknesses, we can handle self-judgment and criticism. We can also become more compassionate and understanding towards others when they make mistakes. However, accepting our weaknesses requires us to be vulnerable because it means exposing our imperfections. It means admitting that we are not always in control, and sometimes things do not go according to plan. But accepting our weaknesses and vulnerabilities can also help us build resilience, adaptability, and perseverance.

Learning from our mistakes is perhaps the most critical aspect of vulnerability and mental toughness. Mistakes are inevitable, and they provide an oppor-

tunity for growth and learning. However, it takes vulnerability to acknowledge our mistakes and take responsibility for them. It can be challenging to admit that we have made a mistake, especially when we fear judgment or criticism. But when we own our mistakes, we can learn from them, and we can avoid making the same mistake twice. By learning from our mistakes, we can develop a growth mindset, which is essential for mental toughness.

When we embrace vulnerability, we can develop the resilience, perseverance, and adaptability necessary for mental toughness. We can also become more compassionate and understanding towards ourselves and others. So, the next time you feel vulnerable, remember that vulnerability is not a weakness. It is an opportunity for growth and development.

### WHAT DOES ISLAM SAY ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCEPTING VULNERABILITY IN DEVELOPING MENTAL TOUGHNESS?

The Quran and Hadith emphasize the importance of resilience and mental toughness in dealing with the challenges of life. Here are some teachings from the Quran and Hadith that highlight the importance of vulnerability in developing mental toughness:

**1. Acknowledge your weaknesses:** The Quran instructs us that being flawed and weak is a natural aspect of being human, and we should acknowledge our shortcomings. In Surah al-Nissa, verse 28, Allah says, "And Man was created weak." This verse reminds us that humans are inherently weak and vulnerable, and we should not be ashamed of our limitations.

**2. Embrace vulnerability:** Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was renowned for his modesty and openness to seek-

ing counsel from his companions. This demonstrates that being vulnerable is not a flaw, but rather a characteristic of strength. In one Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, but there is good in both." The Hadith implies that displaying vulnerability can actually demonstrate one's strength and faith.

**3. Trust in Allah:** According to the Quran, we should believe in Allah and have confidence in His design. In Surah al-Baqarah, verse 216, Allah says, "But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not." This verse reminds us that we must trust in Allah's plan, even when we face difficulties or challenges.

**4. Seek support:** The Quran advises us to seek assistance from others when we encounter difficulties. In Surah al-Isra, verse 23, Allah says, "Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor." This verse highlights the significance of seeking assistance from our relatives and close associates, particularly when facing challenging situations. In Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah says, "And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression" (2:189). This verse emphasizes the significance of seeking assistance from individuals who are virtuous and devout.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts support each other" (Bukhari). This Had-

ith emphasizes the significance of receiving assistance from others as we strive to develop resilience in our mental state.

**5. Patience and perseverance:** The Qur'an highlights the significance of patience and perseverance in the face of hardships. In Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah says, "And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient" (2:155). This verse reminds us that challenges and hardships are a part of life, and we need to have patience and perseverance to overcome them.

**6. Self-reflection:** The Quran inspires self-reflection as a way of personal growth and development. Allah says in the Quran, "And those who, when they have committed a shameful deed or have wronged themselves, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know" (Quran 3:135). Being vulnerable can lead to self-reflection and personal growth, which can ultimately lead to greater mental toughness.

**7. Positive thinking:** Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him" (Muslim). This Hadith reminds us that accepting our vulnerability in hard times and thinking positively while having faith in Allah's plan is essential in developing mental toughness.

### HOW TO DEVELOP MENTAL TOUGHNESS THROUGH VULNERABILITY IN LIGHT OF

## PSYCHOLOGY?

Mental toughness is a crucial trait that enables individuals to persevere through difficult situations and achieve their goals. Developing mental toughness requires a willingness to confront one's vulnerabilities and embrace them as opportunities for growth. By cultivating vulnerability, individuals can develop the skills necessary to become more resilient, adaptable, and self-aware.

Following are the ways through which we can develop mental toughness through vulnerability:

### 1. Embracing change and new challenges:

Many individuals are resistant to change because it can be uncomfortable and even scary. However, to develop mental toughness, it is essential to embrace change and take on new challenges. Doing so requires individuals to step out of their comfort zones and confront their fears head-on. When individuals take on new challenges, they learn to adapt to new situations, develop problem-solving skills, and become more resilient. By embracing change and new challenges, individuals can develop the mental toughness necessary to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals.

### 2. Practicing self-compassion:

Developing mental toughness requires individuals to confront their vulnerabilities, which can be a difficult and emotionally taxing process. Practicing self-compassion can help individuals be kinder and more forgiving of themselves, which can, in turn, make the process of developing mental toughness more manageable. Self-compassion involves acknowledging one's mistakes and weaknesses without judgment, and treating oneself with the same kindness and under-

standing that one would offer to a friend. When individuals practice self-compassion, they learn to be more accepting of themselves and their limitations, which can help them build the resilience and mental toughness needed to face challenges and overcome obstacles.

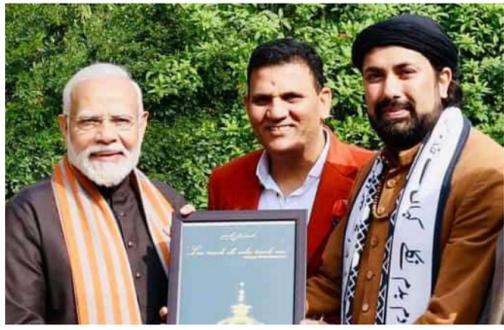
### 3. Cultivating self-awareness:

Developing mental toughness requires individuals to be aware of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Self-awareness involves being honest with oneself about one's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth. Cultivating self-awareness requires individuals to reflect on their experiences, thoughts, and feelings, and to examine how these factors affect their behavior. When individuals cultivate self-awareness, they learn to recognize their patterns of thought and behavior, which can help them identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to overcome obstacles. By cultivating self-awareness, individuals can develop the mental toughness necessary to persevere through difficult situations and achieve their goals.

In conclusion, developing mental toughness through vulnerability requires individuals to embrace change and new challenges, practice self-compassion, and cultivate self-awareness. By doing so, individuals can develop the resilience and adaptability necessary to face obstacles and achieve their goals. Developing mental toughness is not easy, but it is a skill that can be learned and developed with time and practice. Through vulnerability, individuals can unlock their full potential and become the best versions of themselves.

*The author is a licensed clinical psychologist*

## Noted Transporter Pyare Khan & Other Muslim Intellectuals Call On PM Modi



New Delhi: Noted transporter from Maharashtra and Chairman Hazrat Baba Tajuddin Trust Nagpur on met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. Pyare Khan who is CEO of Ashmi Group that owns more than 600 trucks was part of the Muslim delegation that met the PM in New Delhi on Thursday. Prime Minister Modi was highly impressed with the design layout of Dargah at Tajbag and the management of Hazrat Baba Tajuddin Trust under the leadership of Pyare Zia Khan. "PM has plans to make a Sufi

Corridor in India taking Hazrat Baba Tajuddin Dargah as the benchmark. He wished that all the major dargahs in India to look like Baba Tajuddin Dargah," said Pyare Khan sharing the pictures on X, formerly Twitter, PM Modi said. "Met a Muslim community delegation. During our interaction, I presented the sacred Chadar, which will be placed during the Urs of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti at the esteemed Ajmer Sharif Dargah." Minority Affairs Minister Simriti Irani was also present during the occasion.

## Tit for Tat: Iran Navy Seizes US Oil Tanker in Sea of Oman

AGENCEIS

Iran confirmed that its navy was behind the seizure of the Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker near Oman's coast on 11 January, which it said was taken in line with an Iranian court order.

"The Iranian Army Naval Forces seized an American oil tanker in the waters of the Sea of Oman by judicial order," the public relations office of Tehran's navy announced on Thursday afternoon.

Citing UK maritime sources, Reuters had initially reported that an oil tanker had been boarded by unidentified armed men off the coast of Oman on 11 January and redirected towards Iran.

The tanker was identified by UK maritime security firm Ambrey as the Marshall Islands-flagged St Nikolas ship. The ship was boarded at around 7:30am at approximately 50 miles from the Omani city of Sohar, and redirected towards the city of Bandar-e-Jask in Iran.

According to the security firm, Ambrey, "the individuals covered



the vessel's cameras" and that an officer "reported hearing unknown voices over the phone along with the master's voice."

"The armed suspects are reportedly wearing military-style black uniforms with black masks," the security firm added.

According to the MarineTraffic tracking website, the St Nikolas was sailing from the Iraqi port of Basra and was en route to Turkey. AP said that the tanker was loaded with oil at the Iraqi port.

Ambrey said that the St Nikolas, formerly known as the Suez Rajan, is the same tanker seized by the US in April 2023 for carrying Iranian crude oil.

Washington seized the Suez Rajan in April 2023 in what was described by the Pentagon as "a sanctions-enforcement

operation." Washington also charged the ship owner with "sanctions evasion" and directed the cargo to waters 65 miles off Galveston, Texas.

Greek tanker management firm Empire Navigation pleaded guilty to smuggling sanctioned Iranian oil, and agreed to pay a \$2.4 million fine, US court documents show.

According to the Wall Street Journal (WSJ), the Suez Rajan came under Washington's radar after an anti-Iran organization, the New York-based United Against Nuclear Iran, provided information about the ship's cargo to government officials.

WSJ reported in July last year that US oil firms were "reluctant" to unload the oil because they were "too worried about Iranian reprisal."

## Flipkart's F1 opens Apple service centers in Srinagar and Chennai

Srinagar: Flipkart's subsidiary and service arm, F1 Info Solutions & Services Private Limited, announced the opening of dedicated service centers for Apple in Srinagar and Chennai. At these dedicated service centers, one in each city, F1 Info Solutions & Services will deliver comprehensive post-purchase services for all Apple products, from mobile phones to laptops and beyond.

At the dedicated service centers in Chennai and Srinagar, customers can get their Apple products, both in-warranty and out-of-warranty, repaired by highly qualified Apple-certified technicians. Apart from these dedicated service centers, customers using Apple products can enjoy post-purchase services by trained technicians at 25 other service centers across the country. With a reputation for excellence, these technicians guarantee a swift turnaround time for repairs and services. The engineers undergo certified technical courses by the company.

With a collaboration spanning over a decade, Flipkart and Apple have cultivated a relationship built on trust and unparalleled customer service.

Currently, F1 supports Apple customers through 27 centers across the country. These centers offer walk-in services, on-site repair services for all Apple products under warranty & out of warranty and help desk support for enterprise customers. Customers can also buy genuine accessories and warranty extension packs (Apple Protect+) from these centers.

Commenting on the collaboration, Dr. Nipun Sharma, CEO at Jeeves Consumer and F1 Info Solutions & Service, Flipkart Group, said, "We are thrilled to announce the inauguration of dedicated service centres for Apple in Srinagar and Chennai. This strategic expansion reflects our commitment to providing excellent and reliable post-purchase services to Apple users. With our team of highly skilled Apple-certified engineers and a decade-long partnership with Apple, we are confident in delivering swift and comprehensive support. We look forward to enhancing the overall customer journey and reinforcing our position as a trusted post-purchase service provider for Apple devices across India."

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### LG Calls For A

Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department, R K Goyal; DGP, R R Swain; other senior officers, Administrative Secretaries; DIGs, Deputy Commissioners and SSPs.

### Kashmir Weather

9.3°C below the normal level. The all-time lowest maximum temperature is 5°C recorded in 1986," Faizan posted on X.

"Same region, with one recording all-time highest and another recording one of the all-time lowest," he added, comparing the weather patterns of Jammu and Srinagar. "One with cold, one with heat, one without snow, one with fog."

Interestingly, this year, January has brought an unprecedented temperature surge to Banihal as well, breaking all the previous records.

"Banihal today recorded a maximum temperature of 23.4 degrees Celsius, which is 13.1 degrees Celsius above normal," Faizan said. The previous all-time record was 22.6°C recorded on 18 January 2003.

Qazigund recorded a low of minus 4.6 degrees against minus 4.4 degrees Celsius, while in the ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir it was minus 3.5 degrees Celsius, up from minus 5.0 degrees Celsius recorded the previous night.

Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, which serves as one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra, recorded a minimum temperature of minus 6.3 degrees Celsius.

The minimum temperature in Kokernag town settled at minus 2.4 degrees Celsius while it was minus 5.3 degrees Celsius in Kupwara.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of "Chilla-i-Kalan", a 40-day harsh winter period, when a cold wave sweeps the region and temperatures drop considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies as well as water in pipes.

The chances of snowfall are the highest during this period and most areas, particularly the higher reaches, receive heavy snowfall.

Kashmir has been going through a prolonged dry spell and a 79 per cent deficit in rainfall was recorded for December while there has been no precipitation in the first week of January.

There has been no snowfall in most plain areas of Kashmir, while the upper reaches of the valley have received lesser than usual amounts of snow.

The meteorological department has forecast mainly dry weather till January 20 but added that a feeble Western Disturbance would affect Jammu & Kashmir after January 16.

### Snowless January

barren slopes of Gulmarg in January. Last year, Gulmarg was completely packed with tourists at this time, but this year, despite a similar initial demand, tourists are cancelling plans.

Chaya, who runs Hotel Hilltop in Gulmarg said that the tourists check weather forecast sites like "accuweather" and plan their visits based on predicted snowfall.

"Around 20 to 30 percent of bookings for January have been canceled and without significant predictions this month, the situation may worsen," Chaya said.

"The hotel industry alone may suffer losses of up to 30 percent. However, the impact extends beyond hotels, affecting local people, tourist guides, sled drivers, and skiers. When there is no snow, it poses a significant challenge for these individuals to sustain their livelihoods."

"As there is prediction for snowfall at the end of the month of January, hopefully the situation will change," Chaya said.

A skier wishing anonymity said, "The absence of snowfall in Gulmarg has left all of our skilled skiers jobless. Snow means everything to us and unfortunately it is nowhere to be seen."

Chairman Houseboat Owners Association, Manzoor Pakhtoon, voiced similar views saying that Kashmir is known as an all-weather tourist destination and the lack of snowfall is putting a big question mark on it.

"In January 2023, there was almost 60 to 70

percent occupancy in houseboats. However, this year the things are completely different. This year the occupancy is around 15 to 20 percent, so the bookings have come down by almost 50 percent," Pakhtoon said.

Pakhtoon painted a grim picture for the month of February as well.

"Houseboat bookings for February are quite low, and there is also a noticeable trend of cancellations," he added.

"A lot of people would visit Kashmir for winter activities that have been hit because of the lack of snowfall. Foreign tourists especially Malaysians would visit Kashmir for snow purposes but they have avoided Kashmir."

Chief Executive Officer, Gulmarg Development Authority, Waseem Raja said, "Snow is one of the USPs of Gulmarg and it offers much more than just snowfall. Visitors engage in activities such as Gondola rides and other leisure pursuits."

"The repercussions of a lack of snow can be severe for other sectors as well. Without snowfall, essential resources like water and electricity will be scarce," Raja added.

Rauf Trambo, President of the Travel Agents Association of Kashmir (TAAK) also said, "The delay in snowfall is global this year. Some tourists having wedding plans here have cancelled their visit due to the absence of snowfall."

He said that winter sports at Gulmarg will be the most hit if the situation continues for more weeks. "The tourists who come to Kashmir to spend their leisure time are coming in good numbers. However, there has been a decline in winter sports and recreational tourism at Gulmarg," said Trambo, who is also the President of Winter Games Association of J&K (WGAKJ).

"Due to the deferred snowfall, hoteliers, skiing guides at Gulmarg have been hit, it is worrisome but it is all about nature."

He added that some skiing groups from foreign had to visit Kashmir but given the situation they chose to travel to Kazakhstan.

### Dry Spell Sparks

period is vital for these resources to get recharged, otherwise it will have a long term impact not only on drinking water but on electricity as well," Malhotra said.

While appealing people to use the drinking water judiciously, Malhotra said there can be a severe water crisis if the dry spell continues.

When asked about the reports of scarcity of drinking water pouring in from different areas of Kashmir with people blocking the roads to press their demands, Malhotra reiterated that the shortage of water is inevitable where surface water sources are not adequate.

"I mean to say, this is something that I can't produce in a factory. People need to understand it. But as of now, wherever people complain of shortage of drinking water, we press water tankers to meet the demands," he added.

Malhotra, however, acknowledged that "people are feeling the pinch" because the water they were using for different purposes including kitchen garden, car washing, house cleaning etc. isn't there. "For drinking, we have sufficient supply," he said.

When asked about the plans to meet the demands through-out the year, if these conditions persists, Malhotra said, "as of now we have no plans but if there is water scarcity, we have to supply drinking water through tankers."

The top engineer, however, was quick to add that they can't provide water meant for other purposes but only drinking purposes.

He further said if the situation demands, they can go for dredging for collection of water and go for pumping in rural areas. He said the department also has reservoirs in every division.

"But let's hope it snows during the Chillai-Kalan period only," he added.

### ICJ Begins Hearing

had breached Article II of the Genocide Convention, which included the "mass killing" of Palestinians in Gaza.

"Israel deployed 6,000 bombs per week... No one is spared. Not even newborns. UN chiefs have described it as a graveyard for

children," she said.

"Nothing will stop the suffering, except an order from this court," she added. South Africa has demanded that the ICJ order Israel to suspend its military campaign.

Also called the World Court, the ICJ is the highest UN legal body that can adjudicate issues between member states.

Alanna O'Malley, a professor of UN and international history, told Al Jazeera that South Africa's case was a "historic" one.

"We see from the invocation of the various articles of the Genocide Convention by the South African legal team the ways in which they are going to structurally present this case," she said outside the court in The Hague, calling it "extremely compelling."

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said his nation was pursuing the case of what it called "the ongoing slaughter of the people of Gaza".

Israel will respond to the allegations made by South Africa on Friday.

'Genocidal intent'

Tembeka Ngucukaitobi, another lawyer for South Africa, tackled the issue of Israel's "genocidal intent" against the Palestinians in Gaza, usually the most difficult thing to prove in a case of this kind.

"Israel's political leaders, military commanders and persons holding official positions have systematically and in explicit terms declared their genocidal intent," he said.

"These statements are then repeated by soldiers on the ground in Gaza as they engage in the destruction of Palestinians and the physical infrastructure of Gaza."

Ngucukaitobi brought to the court's attention Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's comments on October 28, 2023, urging ground troops preparing to enter Gaza to "remember what Amalek has done to you".

"This refers to the Biblical command by God to Saul for the retaliatory destruction of an entire group of people," the lawyer said.

"The evidence of genocidal intent is not only chilling, it is also overwhelming and incontrovertible," he added.

Israel has rejected the accusations of genocide as baseless, with President Isaac Herzog calling the case "preposterous" and saying it constitutes a "blood libel".

On Thursday, Israel's foreign ministry spokesman, Lior Haiat, called the case "hypocrisy" and accused South Africa of being the "legal arm" of Hamas.

'Stop genocide'

Gaza resident Aya Daloul said she hoped for a favourable decision and for the ICJ to help "stop the Israeli genocide against the Palestinians".

"The war must come to an end. We need to go back home and live in freedom and peace," she told Al Jazeera.

Outside the ICJ, a large number of demonstrators gathered to express solidarity with Palestinians and call for an end to Israel's war, with people holding Palestinian flags and chanting occasionally: "Stop, stop genocide," "We are all Palestinians" and "Boycott Israel".

"I'm here because we just can't assist this genocide every day on social media and not do anything," said Kim Wouters, a demonstrator who travelled from Brussels.

Meanwhile, South Africans are feeling "a lot of pride" over the legal action taken by their country, said Al Jazeera's Fahmida Miller, reporting from Pretoria.

"What is happening in Gaza resonates very deeply with many South Africans because of their own history of apartheid, subjugation, oppression, institutionalised racism and the challenges South Africans have had to overcome," she said.

In a sign of how seriously Israel is taking the accusation, it has sent a strong legal team to defend its military operation launched in the aftermath of the Hamas attacks. Israel often boycotts international tribunals or U.N. investigations, saying they are unfair and biased.

### PMSSS Students

for two separate courses in order to get benefits," she said.

Saksham Scholarship, Pragati Scholarship, AICTE PG Scholarship, Prime Minister Special Scholarship Scheme, and National Doctoral

Fellowship are a few of the well-known AICTE awards.

Additionally, scholarships ranging from Rs 5000 to 12,400 per month are given to full-time GATE/GPAT certified students who are admitted into M.E., M. Tech, M. Arch, and M. Pharma courses at AICTE-approved institutions and colleges in India.

"Although the funds were released well in time a few months ago, I receive Rs 5,000 per month as a scholarship. However, the ICTU has been consistently delaying disbursing of scholarship funds for several months now. When students are unable to make their monthly rental payments to the house owner, they are occasionally forced to vacate their rooms," said Kifayat.

Nasir Khuehami, National Convener of J&K Students Association said he also received several complaints with regard to delay in monthly scholarship funds by AICTE. Khuehami said that he will take up the issue with the Union Education Minister soon to ensure the students from J&K do not suffer for want of funds.

"Actually PMSSS was launched in the year 2020, and the government was mulling to discontinue the same, however the scheme was later extended for five years. So far as PMSSS is concerned, this scheme except MBBS covers all courses," Khuehami told Kashmir Observer.

He added that the issue of delaying disbursement of scholarship funds by AICTE was taken up with the authorities in the past as well following complaints by many students.

### Terror Activities

Rajouri-Poonch sector. The terror infra continues to thrive across the border, in an apparent reference to Pakistan's support to various terrorist groups, added.

It is learnt that the terrorists operating in the Rajouri-Poonch area are very well-trained in carrying out terror attacks and ambushes.

The Army Chief said his force is focusing on strengthening the human intelligence which includes synergising the Army's efforts with other agencies, adding having support of the locals is also "extremely crucial" in anti-terror operations.

"We have already taken follow up action," he said.

The Chief of Army Staff said the Army is also looking at strengthening the ability to use technology to gather intelligence.

"We have enhanced our deployment and also reoriented some of the units," he said.

At the same time he said the troops have been told to operate professionally.

"My guidance to soldiers and commanders is unambiguous -- in terms of respect for human rights, there will be zero tolerance for any actions on that account," he said.

"We have clearly laid out guidelines spelling out what you (Army personnel) must do and what you must not do in those areas and for the soldiers to be able to (operate) in a professional manner," Gen Pande said.

He said there has been an increase in terrorist activities in Rajouri-Poonch region in the last five-six months.

"In the last five to six months, in Rajouri and Poonch, there has been an increase in terrorism. Terrorism in that area was eradicated in 2003 and peace was there till 2017-18," he said.

"Because of the situation in the valley getting normal, this is one area, our adversaries have been active in, in terms of abetting terrorism, encouraging proxy tanzeems in operating in this area," he said.

"Under Operation Sadbhavna, we are engaging with the local community (in Rajouri-Poonch). I personally interacted with the local community there and the army has already adopted the affected village (in Poonch)," he said.

The Army Chief said 45 terrorists were killed in Jammu and Kashmir in the last three years.

### 'Situation Around

continues to be at a high level, he said, noting that the Indian Army is maintaining adequate reserves to confront any security challenge in the region.

Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several

areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

Asked about talks between Bhutan and China to resolve their boundary dispute, Gen Pande suggested the developments having bearing on India's security are being monitored.

We have robust military engagement with Bhutan and closely monitoring developments, he said

The Army Chief described the situation along the Indo-Myanmar border as a matter of concern.

We are closely watching developments there, he said. He also said that integration of Agniveers into the Army is moving forward well. The Army Chief also said that 2024 will be the year of technology adoption for the Indian Army as part of overall modernisation of the force.

### Centre Orders

ministry had said the outfit and its members are involved in anti-national activities in Jammu and Kashmir, supporting terrorist activities.

### Farooq Abdullah

if the agency issued him a fresh date. The MP from Srinagar Lok Sabha seat was charge-sheeted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the JKCA case in 2022.

The case relates to siphoning off the funds of the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association by way of transfer to various personal bank accounts of unrelated parties, including those of JKCA office bearers, and by way of unexplained cash withdrawals from JKCA bank accounts, the ED had said.

The agency's case is based on a 2018 charge sheet filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against the same accused.

### Mehbooba Survives

a police officer in her personal security sustained minor injuries, the official said.

Mufti's vehicle was badly damaged in the accident, but she went ahead with her scheduled visit in another car.

A spokesperson of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) said Mufti was safe and did not suffer any injuries.

Mufti's daughter Iltija Mufti, who is also the media advisor to the PDP president, confirmed that her mother is safe.

"Ms Mufti's car met with a terrible accident enroute Anantnag today. Thanks to the grace of god she and her security officers escaped unhurt without any serious injuries," Iltija Mufti posted on X.

National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah, while expressing satisfaction that Mufti was safe, called for an inquiry to ascertain the cause of the accident.

"Glad to hear that @MehboobaMufti Sahiba escaped injury in what could have been a very serious incident. I expect the government to enquire into the circumstances of the accident. Any gaps in her security that contributed to this accident must be addressed immediately," Abdullah posted on X.

### Forest Fire

officials were engaged in dousing the blaze, which has spread to several acres of land destroying trees and other forest material.

### Armyman Slips To

in this regard have been taken up, they said.

### CRPF Recovers

Troops of the C company of the 237th battalion of the Central Reserve Police Force along with local police undertook the operation in the Hayatpura-Manjakot area of the said district.

The four IEDs concealed in tiffin boxes, 23 live bullets of AK assault rifles, a wireless set and a tape recorder were recovered, the sources said.

The search operation has been widened and adjoining areas are being searched as the Poonch-Rajouri region has seen a spurt in terrorist activities by Pakistani terrorists over the last over two years, a senior officer said.

The Centre has inducted CRPF units in this area to strengthen the security grid. Operational units of the Army and the Rashtriya Rifles (RR) are also deployed here.

## CCTV Cameras Installed To Check Poaching Of Migratory Birds In Wular Lake



**Press Trust Of India**  
**SRINAGAR:** Authorities have taken the help of technology to check the poaching of migratory birds in the Wular lake in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district during the peak winter months when more than a million avian visitors arrive here.

The Wular lake, India's largest and Asia's second largest fresh-water lake, is spread over a total area of around 200 square km and is spread over two north Kashmir districts - Baramulla and Bandipora. The lake provides 60 per cent of the valley's fish produce and is home to millions of local and

migratory bird species. However, owing to poaching, with an increased threat in recent years, and encroachment, the lake saw a decreasing footfall of the avian visitors over the last few years.

The authorities, including the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA), launched a campaign against poachers over the last few years, arresting many of them and seizing arms, including punt guns. However, to keep 24-hour surveillance around the lake, especially in the areas where the migratory population resides, the authorities have installed CCTV cameras at strategic

places around the lake, along with taking some other counter measures to restore the lake to its "pristine glory", officials said.

"CCTV cameras have been installed along the lake in Suderkote and Baniyar areas. The cameras are high-definition and are controlled by mobile phones," coordinator, WUCMA, Irfan Rasool Wani, told PTI. Wani said taking advantage of the technology was the need of the hour as the staff cannot monitor every area

round-the-clock. "Wular is an open area and so the cameras are the best surveillance device. We can monitor it round-the-clock using our mobile devices. Their movement can be

controlled with mobile phones. The cameras are interactive as well and we can send a message through them to the other end," he said. He said the cameras have acted as a deterrent as there has been no incident of poaching or movement of poachers in these areas since their installation. The officer added that more cameras are being installed this month to effectively cover 10 square km area of the lake.

He said the department is also conducting a drone survey in the area, especially for

boundary encroachment. "We are also monitoring the boundary of the lake for encroachment or damage," he said. There is a scope for eco-tourism in the area as well and steps are being taken to develop it so that the Wular-dependent community, which consists of 30 villages, gets opportunities to earn livelihood which would also help in checking poaching, Wani said. Showkat Maqbool, a forest guard with the WUCMA, said the CCTV cameras were an added protection for the winged guests. "Thousands of birds have arrived here this year as well. The installation of CCTV cameras has added to

their safety. We can even keep surveillance in the area even from our homes now," Maqbool said. Ghulam Nabi Dar, a local, said the CCTV cameras have not only helped in protecting the birds, but have also increased the footfall of avian visitors this year. The Wular lake is known for water chestnuts and lotus stems and is the lifeline of the 30 villages surrounding it. It was designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention in 1990.



## LG Flags Off Exposure Visit Of J&K Students To IIT Kanpur



**Observer News Service**  
**JAMMU:** The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Thursday flagged off the exposure visit of the batch of 98 students of Secondary and Senior Secondary from Government schools of Jammu and Kashmir to IIT Kanpur.

He interacted with the students and extended his good wishes for the 5-day visit which will include a 3-day stay at IIT Kanpur and also the visit to Regional Science City Lucknow.

The visit will provide an opportunity to students to learn about the latest technologies like robotics, IT arena, Artificial

Intelligence etc and research being conducted by IIT Kanpur. Students can also explore various career opportunities available in the field of Engineering and Technology.

Under the exposure visit, an MoU has been signed with IIT Kanpur by Samagra Shiksha, J&K under the aegis of School Education Department.

On their return, the students will also visit India Gate, Rashtrapati Bhavan, Red Fort and other historical places at New Delhi.

Dr. Piyush Singla, Secretary to Government, School Education Department and senior officers of Samagra Shiksha were also present.

## People Of Kashmir Suffering Because Of Discrimination: Congress

**Press Trust Of India**  
**SRINAGAR:** The Congress on Thursday said the last ten years of the BJP rule have been a period of "injustice" and party leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' is to fight for the economic, social and political justice in the country.

"Gandhi is undertaking the yatra again and it is called as 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra'. He will take the yatra from Manipur to Maharashtra and travel 6,713 km across 15 states and 110 districts in 66 days. It will culminate at the Azad Maidan in Mumbai," Congress national spokesperson Meem Afzal told reporters at a press conference here.

Afzal said that Gandhi had after the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', which culminated here in January last year, promised to undertake the yatra again and it would start on January 14 from Imphal.

"This yatra is to fight for justice, including economic, social and political justice in the country. We have given a slogan that 'pichle das saal, anyak kaal' (Last ten years, period of injustice). The last ten years have been an example of injustice. There have been grave injustices in every field," the Congress leader said.

He said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government has tried to "destroy democracy and the Constitution" in the country.

Escalating his attack on the ruling BJP, Afzal said the back-breaking inflation has "destroyed" savings of the poor and middle class, adding this government has become a "puppet" in the hands of few rich businessmen.

Afzal said the poor people in the country "are being discriminated upon".

"The people of Kashmir are suffering because of discrimination. They are facing it every day. The government is also fooling the people on the China issue," he said.

When asked whether the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summon to National Conference president Farooq Abdullah was a part of pressure tactics on the opposition leaders before the general elections, the Congress leader said that "there was no second thought about it".

## FCIK Urges For Liberation Of Agro-Wood Based Industry From 'License Raj'

**Observer News Service**  
**SRINAGAR:** The Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) on Thursday urged for liberation of agro-wood based industry from "License Raj" in order to foster growth and development of this vital activity.

In a statement, the apex industrial chamber while terming the "License Raj" as an oppressive system to keep wood based enterprises of J&K in chains has demanded for its banishment in order to provide fresh gust of liberalized environment to the activity particularly to those industrial units that have had no impact on the nationalized forests.

FCIK has sought intervention of the Financial Commissioner, Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment, Dheeraj Gupta in early removal of anomalies in the guidelines issued under SRO 321 of 2022 which contradicted with the guidelines issued by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC) under S.O 3000 (E) at many places.

"Notwithstanding the fact that GOI was contemplating to further amend their guidelines in order to promote sustainable development of wood-based industries in the country to its potential on the persistent demand from business chambers across the country including FCIK, J&K forest officials wish to pursue archaic rules to whip the entrepreneurs," an FCIK spokesperson said.

FCIK, he said, has constantly been receiving complaints of heavy intervention in the operation of wood based industrial units across Kashmir valley which was stifling this economic activity and hampering the smooth operations of concerned units.

While acknowledging the difficulties faced by wood-based industry, the President FCIK Shahid Kamili intimated to the concerned that FCIK was vigorously following the issue for a meaningful resolution and in this regard has held two formal meetings with Financial Commissioner and other top authorities of forest department in recent months.

"Whereas many decisions to remove anomalies in the guidelines and easing out the renewal of license mechanism were taken in a meeting of 21st October, 2023, the formal orders were still awaited despite the record note of minutes having been issued on 13th of November", Kamili said.

He said that the matter was again taken up with Financial Commissioner with a fresh reminder and it was expected that formal orders would be issued at the earliest as per the verbal assurances given by him.

According to FCIK, the issues resolved in previous meetings but awaiting formal orders included removal of anomalies in exempted list of industries, approval of clusters of 5 or more units at par with industrial estates, introduction of auto renewal mechanism for licenses after self-attested declarations and making licenses transferable upon sale, succession or change of constitution of the unit.

## Secy Tourism Asks JKTDC To Make Their Assets Profitable

**Observer News Service**  
**JAMMU:** Commissioner Secretary, Tourism, Yasha Mudgal, after taking the charge of the department, recently chaired a meeting to review the functioning of J&K Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC).

Besides Managing Director JKTDC, the meeting was attended by other office bearers of the corporation and senior officers of the Tourism Department here.

The Commissioner Secretary had a holistic overview of business of the corporation. She enquired about its assets, their upkeep and utilization in realizing the revenue for JKTDC. She also asked about the staff strength of the corporation and their roles and responsibilities in running the business of the entity successfully.

Describing tourism business as highly profitable, the Commissioner Secretary asked the officials to explore the ways for optimum utilization of all assets of the corporation so as to fetch a good revenue and make the business profitable.

Yasha Mudgal directed the officers to hold the board meetings on regular basis for deciding the matters of the corporation and carrying out its activities smoothly. She asked them to be proactive in realizing all their outstanding besides being competitive in doing the business in the market.

Regarding assets of the corporation, the Commissioner Secretary was apprised that it possesses 36 Hotels comprising 780 rooms, 46 restaurants, 14 shops, 5 cafeteria, 199 huts and 133 dormitory rooms, conference halls etc. It was also given out that the corporation bears a staff strength of 622 in position at different designations.

## Panel To Probe Pregnant Woman's Death At SDH Banihal

**Another Committee Formed To Investigate Inadequate Medicine Supplies At District Hospital**  
**Agencies**  
**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday established two distinct committees to investigate allegations of negligence which resulted in the death of a pregnant woman at Sub District Hospital (SDH) Banihal and complaints of inadequate medicine supplies at the District Hospital Ramban.

According to an official order, the inquiry into alleged medical negligence will be led by the District Programme Officer, Poshan Ramban. The investigation into reports of medicine unavailability at DH Ramban will be spearheaded by the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Ramban.

The order stated, "Sanction is hereby accorded to the constitution of a committee to conduct an in-depth inquiry into the death of a lady, namely Afroza Begum, Wife of Zakir Hussain, Resident of Neel, due to the alleged negligence of Doctors and Hospital Staff at Sub District Hospital (SDH) Banihal."



constitutive report along with recommendations within four days of its formation.

The move follows the circulation of a viral video on social media in which an individual claimed that his wife experienced pain while travelling from Srinagar to Jammu and was admitted to the District Hospital Ramban. The complainant alleged that he had to procure medicines outside the hospital due to the unavailability of drugs within the facility.

A separate committee has been instituted to investigate these claims, as per the order.

Giasul Haq, JKAS Assistant Commissioner, Revenue, Ramban, will serve as the committee's Chairman, with Dr Kamal Jee Zadoo, Chief Medical Officer, Ramban, Deepak Kumar, District Treasury Officer, Ramban, and Dr Varinder Trisal, MS DH Ramban, as members.

The committee has been directed to submit a detailed report, along with specific comments and recommendations, to the office within a week (KNO)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to information of general public that I Gulshan wife of Manzoor Ahmed Teli R/o. Dargah, Hazratbal, Srinagar am applying fresh electricity connection from the concerned Assistant Executive Engineer Electric Sub Division IV Rainawari, Srinagar, if any body having any objection in this regard he/she the same may contact to the concerned Assistant Executive Engineer Electric Sub Division IV Rainawari, Srinagar within seven days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper, after the stipulated time no objection shall be entertained. INFO

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**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION SRINAGAR NEAR J&K BANK, (Zaldagar)**  
Telefax No. 0194-2952696 e.mail Id: xenmidrsrinagar@gmail.com

Corrigendum to this office e-NIT No. e-NIT No. 33 of 2023-24 date: 23-11-2023 for below mentioned work:  
Installation of Irrigation Distribution system at Government Fruit Plant Nursery, Zawoor  
Ref:- JK Government official e-Procurement portal Tender ID No.: 2023\_IFC\_237978\_1

**CORRECTION TO THE CORRIGENDUM 2**  
Intending bidders are requested to note the following change in the corrigendum 2:  
Kindly read UPVC Pipes instead of HDPE Pipes  
Rest of the terms and conditions shall remain un-altered as laid down in the original e-NIT.

No. MIDS/Ts/4223-28 Sd/-  
Date:10-01-2024 Executive Engineer  
DIPK-15079-23 Mechanical Irrigation Division  
DT: 11/01/2024 Srinagar

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT TREHGAM KUPWARA**  
Email Id cdpotrehgam98@gmail.com

Subject:- Tentative selection List of Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper) in Anganwadi Centres of Poshan Project Trehgam in response to the advertisement Notice No 01 of 2023 dated 15/05/2023. & Advertisement Notice No 02 of 2023 dated 19/07/2023 and Adv. Notice No.08 Dated 28-10-2023.

Objections are invited from the applicants if any in response to the tentative Selection List of Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers) tentatively selected in response to the above subjected Advertisement Notice Nos. which should reach to office of under Signed within 10 Days. No objection shall be entertained once the stipulated time is over. Selection is purely on the bases of merit and with preference to daughter In-Laws. Selection of candidates is subject to clearance of variation in particulars of School records and other documents.

S No	Index No.	Name of the Selected Candidate	Parentage/Spouse	Name of Anganwadi Centre	Markes obtained in 10th	Percentage	Total Points acquired	Remarks
01	030	Basharat Bano	D/O Ab Rashid Khatana	Manwan A	237/500	47.4	47.4	Tentatively Selectd
02	021	Rafiq Akhter	W/O Ab Qayoom Reshi	Bab Mohalla Gulgam	176/500	35.2	37.2	---do---
03	001	Shabnam Rashid	D/O ab Rashid Shah	Kulpora Gugloosa/	400/500	80%	80	---do---
04	013	Shaista Gaffar	W/O Javid Ahmad Malik	Gugloosa C	258/500	51.6%	51.6	---do---
05	019	Ruqaya Bano	W/O Bilal Ahmad Malik	Shaldaggar	228/500	45.6%	45.6	---do---
06	018	Atiq Akhter	W/O Showqat Ahmad Malik	Tazi Mohalla Hayen	191/500	38.2%	38.2	---do---
07	017	Kulsooma Moosa	W/O Nissar ahmad malik	Hayen Old	223/500	44.4%	44.4	---do---
08	010	Tabish Ahad	D/O Ab Ahad Lone	Rampora B	253/500	52.6%	54.6	---do---
09	01	Jabeena Akhter	W/O Gh Mohd Mir	Maqam Awoora	219/500	43.8%	43.8	---do---
10	01	Maymoona Bano	W/O Gh Qadir malik	Mirpora Zirhama	329/600	54.83	54.83	Middle

No.:CDPO/Poshan/Trgm/Estt/24/1015-1026 Sd/-  
Date:- 10/01/2023 Child Development Project Officer Poshan Project Trehgam

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**ATTENTION PLEASE.**  
The candidate whose photograph is published here reports that he has lost his qualification certificate/s having the following description:-  
Roll No:- 6120247  
Class:- 10th  
Year & Session: 2019 Annual Regular  
Registration No: N18381750038  
Name:- Adnaan Naseer  
Father's Name:- Naseer Ahmad Sheikh  
Mother's Name:- Shameema Akhter  
Date of Birth:- 01-11-2004  
Residence:- Uthoora Pulwama

Now the candidate has applied for issuance of DUPLICATE QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATE/S. Before the case will be processed under rules, if somebody have any kind of objection in this regard he/she shall approach the office of the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publishing of this notice after expiring date no objection shall be entertained.  
(Besides, the losted "QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATE", bearing Serial No/s 19ARKAM5035718 is/are be treated as CANCELLED").

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