

## Over 1.9 Million Children To Receive Polio Vaccine In J&K Today Vaccines Dispatched To Snow-affected Areas Through Choppers

Jahangir Sofi

**Srinagar:** The Directorate of Family Welfare MCH and Immunization in Jammu and Kashmir is set to launch Pulse Polio vaccination drive to immunize over 19 lac children between 0 and 5 years of age against polio at around 11,000 booths across the region on Sunday, said a senior official. Dr. Tabasum Jabeen, Director, Directorate of Family Welfare, while speaking to Kashmir Observer expressed readiness with a workforce



**11,000**  
Booths In J&K  
**5,500**  
Booths In Valley Alone  
**45,000**  
Health Workers  
Door-to-door Surveys On  
**March 4, 5**

of over 45,000 vaccinators and health workers. These professionals are primed to ensure the seamless administration of polio drops to children across Jammu and Kashmir. "An estimated target of around 19 lac children are to be vaccinated, with 11,000 booths set up throughout J&K, with 5,500 booths in the Kashmir province alone. These booths are strategically placed in locations such as bus stops, shopping bazaars, and even picnic spots," Dr. Jabeen said.

Highlighting the preparedness, she noted the extensive training provided to health workers, including Asha workers, Anganwadi workers, and vaccinators from the health department. The pulse polio day is set to be inaugurated on 3 March at the Children's Hospital in Bemina by the Secretary of Health, Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah with similar events planned across district headquarters by deputy commissioners. "For this day-long vaccination

drive over 45,000 health workers including Asha workers, Anganwadi workers and vaccinators from the health department have been trained", she said. Addressing concerns about adverse weather conditions, particularly heavy snowfall in higher reaches, Dr. Jabeen assured that measures have been taken to reach remote areas. "Vaccines have been dispatched to snow-affected regions like Gurez, Tulail, and higher reaches of district Kupwara | [More on P10](#)

## Snow, Rains Disrupt Life In Kashmir Valley



- National highway closed
- 2 dead, 6 injured
- Several structures damaged
- Avalanche warning issued

KO Photo | Abid Bhat

Press Trust Of India

**Srinagar:** Several areas in the higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir received fresh snowfall while the plains were lashed by rain on Saturday, officials said.

During the past 24 hours, there has been moderate rain or snow in most parts of the Valley with heavy snow or rainfall over a few places, they said. The officials said the famous ski-resort town of Gulmarg and tourist resort towns Sonamarg and Doodhpathri received moderate to heavy snow. Gurez, Kupwara, Baltal and some other towns in the higher

reaches also received fresh snow, they added.

A few places -- particularly over the higher reaches of north Kashmir, central and south Kashmir and the Pirpanjal range of Jammu division -- may experience heavy to very heavy snow, the Met office said.

It said the plains of Kashmir may receive moderate rain or snow while the plains of Jammu are likely to receive moderate rain with the possibility of heavy rain over the Ramban, Udhampur and the Reasi districts.

A few places may experience thunder/lightning/hailstorm, accompanied by gusty winds. The inclement | [More on P10](#)

## Free, Fair LS Polls Would Be Ensured In J&K: CEO

Says ECI To Notify LS Poll Schedule Soon

Press Trust Of India

**Srinagar:** Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Electoral Officer P K Pole on Saturday said free and fair Lok Sabha polls would be ensured in the Union Territory.

Pole reviewed the preparations for the polls in the

Anantnag Parliamentary constituency in south Kashmir.

"The notification for Lok Sabha polls would be issued in 10-12 days. Election is definitely a challenging task, but our officers are experienced. Our endeavour is to have a peaceful, transparent, free and fair election | [More on P10](#)

## 1,735 Cr Spent On Citizen Treatment Under Sehat Scheme: LG

Says Committed To Provide Quality, Accessible Healthcare Services In J&K

Press Trust Of India

**Jammu:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said his administration is committed to provide quality, affordable and accessible healthcare services to the people in the Union Territory.

Under the Sehat Scheme, the administration spent a total amount of Rs 1,735 crore on the treatment of the citizens till the first week of January this year, Sinha said, virtually addressing the closing ceremony of a health camp organised by Rotary



Club in Poonch and Rajouri.

The LG lauded the contribution of the trained specialists from different parts of the country in providing a full range of surgical treatment

» Digital interventions

» Reforms in medical education

» Awareness about Tele-MANAS

» Quick Ambulance Services

» Health Camps

options and performing more than 600 surgeries during the week-long health camp in the border districts, which benefited the people of the far-flung areas. | [More on P10](#)

## KP's Will Celebrate 'Herath' In Kashmir Soon: LG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking Jammu and Kashmir and the country forward and soon the 'Herath' festival will be celebrated in the valley, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said at a gathering of Kashmiri Pandits here. Mahashivratri is celebrated as 'Herath' by the | [More on P10](#)

## 'Strategic Significance and Security Of Nation' HC Grants Permission For Army Constructions In Sonamarg

M Ahmad

**Srinagar:** The high court of J&K and Ladakh has directed authorities to "expeditiously" pass appropriate orders regarding constructions of dilapidated and new structures by army in Sonamarg by "keeping in mind the strategic significance and security of the nation."

Hearing a Public Interest Litigation, a division bench of Chief Justice N. Kotiswar Singh and Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal passed on the orders on an application filed on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, seeking permission to commence constructions in respect of the dilapidated structures and new construction which will be required for operation and training of the forces including providing



accommodation for own and foreign officers and troops along with the allied infrastructure at Sonamarg in phases.

"Considering the fact that this pertains to the defence and security of the nation, the matter is remitted to the BOCA (Building Operation Controlling Authority) for grant of necessary permission," the court said, adding, "The BOCA shall accordingly do the needful for grant of permission to the applicant-Indian Army in order to

enable them to make necessary repair/fresh construction in accordance with the norms, as applicable."

At this stage, Counsel for the defence ministry submitted that they have already approached the BOCA authorities.

"The authorities shall consider the same and pass appropriate orders keeping in mind the strategic significance and security of the nation, as expeditiously as possible, preferably within a period of one month," the court said.

In its application, the defence ministry said that with the turn of events on northern borders accentuated with increased deployment of troops in those heights and thereof, there is requirement for specialized high-altitude training required for | [More on P10](#)

## BJP Gears Up for PM's Srinagar Rally

Press Trust Of India

**Srinagar:** The BJP is finalising preparations for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kashmir on March 7, with party leaders saying they expect around one lakh people at his first rally in the Valley since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

Modi would address the rally at Bakshi Stadium here.

A meeting of the BJP was held here on Saturday to discuss the preparations and arrangements for the rally.

"Discussions took place over the preparations for Modi's rally. Different departments of the party were given different tasks and party leaders were asked to mobilise people," BJP's Jammu and Kashmir spokesman Altaf Thakur told PTI.

He said over one lakh people are expected to attend the rally.

"It will be a mega rally and people from various parts of Jammu and Kashmir will attend. People will come in droves and flood the venue to listen to | [More on P10](#)

## Kashmiri Students Assaulted In Punjab College



Over 100 Students Sent Back To Valley, 14 Suspended

Majid Nabi

**Srinagar:** In a shocking incident, several Kashmiri students were allegedly attacked in CT Institute of Engineering in Punjab's Jalandhar on Friday. According to sources, clashes broke out between two groups

of students and those from Kashmir, after a female Kashmiri student was subjected to the alleged harassment and heckling within the college campus. A tense atmosphere gripped the CT college in Jalandhar, as students rallied in protest against the alleged assault of Kashmiri students on campus.

The CT Institute administration in Punjab's Jalandhar on Friday. According to sources, clashes broke out between two groups | [More on P10](#)

## From Surgery To Sanctuary: Kashmir's Lone Wildlife Hospital Emerges As Lifeline For Wild Animals

Syed Mohammad Burhan

**Srinagar:** Amidst the heavy downpour on Saturday, a group of men in Nehru Park Srinagar, armed not with umbrellas but with tranquilizers and expertise, embarked on a mission. A team from the Dachigam Wildlife Sanctuary veterinary hospital, led by Dr. Mohsin Ali Gazi, waded through the weather, to rescue a distressed monkey.

"Precision is the key," Gazi, Veterinary Officer and Head of Rescue Operations, explained. "We work closely with the team to ensure smooth and efficient rescues, from administering tranquilizers safely to navigating the technical aspects of the situation," he said.

This is just another day at the office for the dedicated team, racing through congested localities of Kashmir to save wild



animals in need.

Highlighting the constant influx of cases they manage, Gazi said, "We receive many calls for rescues. A couple of days ago we received a barn owl from the city's Bemina locality."

"If the rescued animal has slight wounds, it is treated on the way or else it has to be admitted to the recently

established healthcare facility for the wild animals."

Pertinently, established less than a year ago, the Wildlife Healthcare Hospital at Dachigam is emerging as a beacon of hope for Kashmir's wildlife.

"Our center has become a lifeline for countless wild animals, offering vital medical care and treatment. From

surgical emergencies to medical crises, we leave no stone unturned in restoring these creatures to health," Gazi said.

While the center didn't disclose the actual numbers, the veterinary officer said that they treated a significant number of animals, rehabilitating them back into their natural habitats.

"In the few months since its inception, we have treated animals including bears, leopards, civets, leopard cats, porcupines, wild herbivores like goral and musk deer, and various wild birds," he said.

The healthcare facility boasts impressive capabilities, including ultrasound diagnostics crucial for identifying illnesses in wild animals. In addition, the facility conducts post-mortem examinations of dead and deceased animals to ascertain their actual cause of death. | [More on P10](#)

## Pollution Threatens Nadroo Production In Dal, Nigeen Lakes

Majid Nabi

**Srinagar:** The production of Nadru (Lotus Stem), a quintessential part of Kashmiri cuisine, has gradually declined as a result of the direct disposal of garbage and human excreta from the surrounding locations into Dal Lake, one of the most popular and sought-after tourist attractions in Srinagar.

Likewise, Nigeen Lake, once renowned for its crystal clear waters and scenic beauty, has seen a drastic decline in Nadroo production, with its harvesters attributing the steep decline to the increasing pollution levels and rapid urbanization.

Growers said that each passing year sees a further decrease in production as the water quality is worsening due to heightened pollution levels.

"Despite challenges and



severities I have been harvesting Nadru for three decades, but the production has undeniably declined as depth of Dal Lake has reduced to such an extent that I'm not sure we would be able to harvest Lotus Stem after ten years," Ashraf Ahmad, a Nadroo grower, told Kashmir Observer.

"Drains constantly discharge

into water bodies, contaminating the water," he added.

He claimed that because of the alteration in flavor brought on by pollution in Dal Lake, the market value of Nadur has also been impacted.

Environmental experts blamed both the authorities and the residents | [More on P10](#)











## The Himalayas

# An Impending Threat to Earth and How We Can Act

Sheikh Yameen

“The countries sharing the Himalayan habitat should collaborate in developing a shared path to environmental sustainability, disaster management, and climate resilience. By combining the efforts and skills of a number of countries, we will be able to jointly address the many-sided problems of climate change in the area

In the endless weaving of our world's beautiful scenery, nothing could be more marvellous and magnificent than the heights of the Himalayas. This colossal mountain range, spanning several countries, is not just an astonishing scenic phenomenon but also key to balancing the natural world. The Himalayas, infamously considered the 'roof of the world', are becoming a pot that triggers many environmental disasters that have dangerous effects spreading to the entire world if the current situation continues.

Scientists and experts in climate and environment have issued statements, like blaring sirens, regarding the rapidly increasing influence of climate change in the Himalayan region. The retreat of glaciers, unusual fluctuations in weather patterns, and frequent manifestations of destructive natural phenomena are only a few examples of the visible results of this catastrophe. The fast melting of the area's glaciers, which provide fresh water for millions of people, is severe. The overall impact of this melting is manifested not merely in the vicinity of the site but also by a gradual rise in sea levels and landmass erosion worldwide.

Besides deforestation, unsustainable tourism and industries seriously threaten the fragility of the Himalayan ecosystems. Moreover, the disappearing fragility of the region is not only declining its natural look but also eroding the region's ability to control the climate and provide necessary ecosystem services.

The realisation and acceptance that nobody cares much about the problems of the Himalayas are uneasy and horrifying. However, the good

part is that there is hope. Through the joint efforts of people, communities, and the government, various active measures can be taken in order to swing the tide on the current environmental crisis and continue to keep our planet alive at the same time.

However, one more priority in this process is to involve sustainable activities in our development projects in order to make sure economic growth does not come at the expense of environmental preservation. Thai authorities should enforce heavy regulations that punish deforestation, award renewable energy sources, and give tax incentives for sustainable tourism. By starting with investments in green technology and likewise creating environmental awareness in society, it would be feasible to manage the adverse effects of climate change in the Himalayan region.

The countries sharing the Himalayan habitat should collaborate in developing a shared path to environmental sustainability, disaster management, and climate resilience. By combining the efforts and skills of a number of countries, we will be able to jointly address the many-sided problems of climate change in the area.

Obviously, individual endeavours, too, assume a central position in combating the Himalayan predicament. Through implementing small lifestyle changes, including conserving energy use, recycling, and waste reduction, and practicing ethical consumption, every individual can make a remarkable contribution to the overall movement of environmental conservation. We need to educate ourselves and others on the signif-

icance of protecting the Himalayas and taking serious initiatives to reduce our ecological footprint. Regardless of the small steps we take, it makes a huge difference.

Besides that, funding and giving chances for small-scale initiatives and community-based conservation projects will definitely have a positive impact on the environment of the Himalayas. From tree planting drives to ecologically sound agriculture practices, the idea is to make ordinary citizens the main stakeholder in their ecosystems, which in turn ensures long-term sustainability.

To sum up, the Himalayas are revered for their aesthetic value, but recent trends indicate that they are under serious threat due to changes in climate and human activity. Yet the main solution is to take preventive measures at both the individual, community, and legislative levels, since otherwise the problem of ecological crisis will continue to exist, putting the whole planet at risk. The time to act is right now, and we all have our part to play in ensuring that the Himalayas do not experience further pollution and environmental degradation. With the challenge upfront, let us start and collectively go on a journey towards a sustainable and resilient future for all.

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer*  
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What happens in the United States does not stay in the United States. The global economy depends on America to act as a main engine of growth, and global financial markets depend on US investors' outsize appetite for risk. This became particularly evident in 2023 when major economies like Japan and the United Kingdom slipped into recession, Germany narrowly avoided one, and China grappled with obstacles to growth and pockets of high debt. But whether the US economy can drive global growth in 2024 depends on the answers to three key questions.

First, can the domestic economy maintain its current growth momentum and achieve the softest of soft landings? Second, can it remain resilient in the face of domestic political divisions and geopolitical uncertainties around the world? And lastly, will investors be able to secure sufficient liquidity to refinance debts accumulated during the era of artificially low interest rates and exceptionally high liquidity injections by central banks?

Based on current market prices, investors believe the answer to all three questions is a solid yes. Similarly, many economists are optimistic about the US economy, albeit with slightly less enthusiasm than that exhibited by capital markets. I find myself taking a more nuanced view. Consider the three key issues.

The US economy undoubtedly holds two significant advantages over other major economies: its current growth engines are more dynamic, and it has taken significant measures to foster and invest in future growth drivers. This

helps to explain why the US exceeded expectations in 2023, with GDP growing by 4.9% and 3.3% in the third and fourth quarters, respectively. By contrast, the German, Japanese, and UK economies contracted, while China, grappling with cyclical issues, risked being pulled into the dreaded middle-income trap.

These huge advantages set the US apart from other developed economies. Moreover, its comparative advantages will continue to strengthen unless other countries shift swiftly and decisively toward policies that support growth and increase productivity. But the American economy also faces powerful headwinds. The US has entered 2024 with weaker household balance sheets, marked by lower savings and higher debt levels. This reduces the future effectiveness of consumer spending as a direct and indirect growth driver. Moreover, with inflation receding, there is a greater risk that the Federal Reserve's overreliance on historical data will lead to another monetary-policy mistake.

## US Economy And Global Growth

Mohamed A El-Erian

These challenges are compounded by domestic and geopolitical uncertainties that have not been adequately reflected in market risk premia and economic assessments. The possibility of escalation in the Middle East is considerable as the already distressing number of civilian deaths and human suffering in Gaza rise further. The war in Ukraine risks tilting in a manner that threatens wider conflict over time. Meanwhile, the ongoing tensions between China and the US show little sign of abating. Elections this year in dozens of developed and developing countries add another layer of uncertainty, as political shifts could trigger new supply shocks and further weaponization of trade and finance.

The third issue is whether markets can navigate the refinancing legacy of excessive risk-taking fueled by years of artificially low interest rates, massive liquidity injections, and an unhealthy codependency between the Fed and financial markets. The commercial real-estate

sector, where roughly \$1.5 trillion in debt is set to mature by the end of 2025, is a prime example. But there are other areas of concern, especially within the lightly regulated and insufficiently understood non-banking sector.

It is important to note that these refinancing issues tend to unfold gradually. This has both advantages and disadvantages: while the slow pace mitigates the risk of massive contagion and sudden stops, it also erodes resilience and agility. Together, all these factors challenge the automaticity of the consensus forecast of a very soft landing for the US economy and its ability to drive global growth. Indeed, looking ahead to the rest of the year, I would put the probability of a soft landing at 55%. There is also a 30% likelihood that the US will slip into a recession, and a 15% chance that continued transformational innovations—particularly in generative artificial intelligence, life sciences, and green technologies—will lead to surprise on the upside. While the consensus entered 2024 with a much more optimistic view than a year ago, it needs to be more nuanced than what is currently reflected in market prices and economic forecasts. Think of a “yes, but” outlook, which calls for paying timely attention to the two tails of the distribution of potential outcomes.

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

## Is the Algorithm in Your Favor or Against You? The Truth Behind Online Gambling Apps

Ikkz Ikbal

From the standpoint of happenings in this fast paced digital world, Kashmir is marred by a growing pandemonium among the youth, caught in the clutches of shortcuts, online businesses, scams, and the allure of online gambling games. This escalating issue demands a critical examination of accountability and a concerted effort to eliminate this societal menace.

In the digital age, smartphones have seamlessly integrated into our lives, offering convenience and comfort. However, there exists a darker side – the negative impact on the youth, manifested in unbridled use of mobile phones for online gambling. Apps like Dream11, BC Game, Teen Patti, and Rummy and hundreds such Apps have become the epicenter of a disturbing trend, leading to a surge in youth engaging in online gambling activities.

Unofficial statistics paint a grim picture, suggesting that approximately 2.5 lakh Kashmiri youth are directly involved in these online gambling ventures. Shockingly, this includes both unemployed and employed individuals, reflecting the pervasive nature of the issue.

The reasons behind this youth involvement are multi-faceted. The desire to attain overnight wealth with the shortcut. The second reason is the strategic promotion by the owners of these apps. They cleverly enlist the endorsement of well-known Bollywood and Sports Stars, as well as your favorite YouTubers, creating an illusion of credibility in the minds of the youth. This calculated association with celebrities fosters a misguided belief in the fairness of these platforms, further entangling the unsuspecting in the web of online gambling.

Additionally, a herd mentality prevails, with the current generation engaging in these activities simply because others are doing so, regardless of ethical considerations.

Compounding the problem is the lack of clear regulations from the government, leaving the majority of these games in a legal gray area. This regulatory void allows these apps to



operate with impunity, ensnaring unsuspecting youth in their web of deception.

The insidious format of these gambling games unfolds a calculated sequence, luring unsuspecting players into a relentless cycle. The allure begins with enticingly huge winning amounts and a seemingly favorable algorithm during the initial stages. A tantalizing demo, coupled with bonus amounts, creates an illusion of easy victories, setting the stage for addiction.

As users invest their own money, the algorithm initially plays in their favor, winning them a little amount that serves as a deceptive hook. However, as time progresses, the tide turns, and the losses begin to mount. It's

at this critical juncture that users find themselves ensnared, becoming permanent customers on the app.

The trap tightens further as individuals, desperate to recover their losses, pour more money into the app. The initial promise of winning is replaced by a relentless cycle of losses, leading to a cascade of financial ruin. In this harrowing descent, users find themselves trapped in a net of addiction, unable to break free.

Adding to the predatory nature, these gambling apps read user's Gambling Behaviour. When users minimize or cease their engagement, the app swiftly detects the waning interest or depleted funds. Exploiting this

vulnerability, the apps shower users with attractive offers, a cunning strategy designed to keep them perpetually engaged – always to the benefit of the app creators.

The format of these games plays a pivotal role in their insidious nature. Offering tempting winnings and a gradual introduction through demos and bonus amounts, these apps employ algorithms that initially favor the player. However, as users invest their own money, the tide turns, leading to a pattern of consistent losses that solidify addiction.

The ramifications are severe, impacting not only individual finances but also mental and physical health, family dynamics, and over-

all societal well-being. The negative spiral has pushed many into depression and anxiety, with some even contemplating suicide as a way out of their financial ruins.

To combat this rising crisis, a multifaceted approach is imperative. Educating parents about the potential dangers of smartphones and implementing restrictions is a crucial first step. Family timings must be established, and vigilant monitoring of children's online activities is essential.

Addiction counseling sessions should be conducted for affected youth, emphasizing the importance of open communication. Policy makers, teachers, social influencers, and politicians share the responsibility of driving change. Stringent laws against online gambling apps must be implemented to deter potential users.

Religious and moral education, as advocated by Islam and Qur'an, can serve as a guiding light for the youth. Embracing halal means of earning is encouraged, steering individuals away from the pitfalls of shortcuts and gambling.

Remember, each decision we make weaves a unique thread into our story. The menace of online gambling, gripping the youth of Kashmir, serves as a stark reminder of the pitfalls that lurk in the digital shadows. As we reflect on the need for change and collective responsibility, let us remember that our actions today shape the narrative of tomorrow.

In the face of shortcuts and false promises, resilience and wisdom become our greatest allies. Embracing halal means to success not only aligns with the teachings of Islam but also steers us away from the treacherous allure of overnight riches. As we stand at the crossroads of choice, let us choose the path that leads to a brighter, more responsible future.

P.S. To those entangled in the web of online gambling, take heed. Quite Now. Learn from mistakes, delete the apps, and embrace a responsible, halal path to success – for there are no shortcuts in life.

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## Is "The Secret" a Hoax?

Peter Strelan

Imagine you really wanted something and all you had to do was ask the universe and you would get it. That'd be awesome, right?

I present this to my students in my first-year Research Methods in Psychology course, in the first session of the semester. Then I ask them what they think.

The first respondent is usually bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. They say something like: "Absolutely! You can achieve anything you want if you put your mind to it!" Emboldened, a handful of others express similar sentiments. Naturally, there are also sceptical students, but at this point it doesn't suit my agenda to give them much oxygen.

Next, I tell the students I presume they'd all love to achieve High Distinctions in my course. I tell them it is, in fact, possible, and I'm going to share how it can be done. At this point, even the most sceptical students are intrigued.

I tell them all they need to know is ... The Secret.

A self-help megaseller

The Secret is a 2006 feature-length film and then book created by Australian Rhonda Byrne, who was a television executive when she came up with it.

The book has sold more than 35 million copies and been translated into more than 50 languages. Byrne has gone on to produce several related books, including The Greatest Secret, and associated merchandise, like a card deck.

It was even adapted as a romantic drama film, The Secret: Dare to Dream, starring Katie Holmes and released in 2020. (The Guardian described it as "inoffensively middling [...] with nothing of note other than a few laughably dumb moments".)

Others have also got in on the act. For example, there's a DVD titled The Secret Behind The Secret, in which a self-help guru purports to channel a spiritual being called Benjamin.

The Secret's fundamental claim is that a law of attraction operates within the universe: we become or attract what we think about most. In effect, positive things happen to positive people and negative things happen to negative people. Importantly, we are not passive recipients of our outcomes. Rather, we manifest our outcomes by actively thinking about them.

Oprah Winfrey, who lavishly embraced The Secret, devoting two episodes of her talk show to it in 2006, said it embodied the message she'd been trying to share for 21 years: "you are responsible for your life".

As others have pointed out, these ideas are not a secret and they're not new.



The Secret is effectively a repackaging of the "power of positive thinking" pop psychology from recent decades – and, centuries earlier, the quackery of the metaphysical movement.

Victim blaming

Much empirical psychological research suggests thinking and feeling positively is likely to be associated with more positive outcomes.

But there's a stark gap between the blithe blanket statements of The Secret and the empirical studies that have tested the qualifications and nuances of the effects of positive expectations.

It's in that gap where The Secret becomes an easy target.

For instance, The Secret is good news for

anyone fortunate enough to be blessed with an eternally sunny disposition, but less so for anyone struggling with chronic depression. The Secret suggests depression and its consequences are the fault of the victim. If only they could think more positively!

Taken on face value, the principles espoused in The Secret should mean the end of poverty and war. Perhaps we're not wishing hard enough?

Elsewhere, The Secret has offended physicists with its misappropriation of quantum physics principles to explain the "law of attraction" (in itself a pseudoscientific idea).

And yet ... people love this stuff.

An alluring fiction

On Amazon, more than 40,000 customers have taken the time to review the book. The average rating is 4.6/5. Perhaps this should not be surprising.

The Secret (superficially) taps into a spiritual realm and research demonstrates that spirituality nurtures and comforts many. The Secret speaks to a search for meaning and we know feeling a sense of purpose in life provides a measure of happiness. The Secret proposes the individual has the power to control their own destiny – and research demonstrates the role a sense of personal control has in people's lives.

And The Secret encourages magical thinking, which some people may be prone to more than they realise. The Secret promises the alluring fiction that – just for once – things in life might be easy.

Back in the classroom, in this Trumpian age where truth is in the eye of the beholder, The Secret reminds us the principles of the scientific method are still important when it comes to critically consuming information.

There are several ways of knowing about the world. We can defer to authority. We can rely on our intuition. We can employ logic. And we can make observations based on our experiences.

Pseudo 'experts'

To some extent, Rhonda Byrne and her devotees leverage these knowledge sources to help give credence to The Secret. For example, it has been endorsed by high-profile influencers (like Winfrey) and prominent US personal development gurus (like Bob Proctor, John Assaraf and Jack Canfield). Byrne claims eminent historical figures – including Plato, Shakespeare and Einstein – knew the secret and employed its principles.

All these people are experts, or at least present themselves as experts. So they must know what they're talking about. As they're authority figures, we intuit they can be trusted.

Unfortunately, it's the equivalent of toothpaste advertisers dressing an actor in a white coat to imply they're a scientist, who recommends a particular brand of toothpaste.

To persuade you, The Secret takes you down the peripheral route, the one where you don't put much effort into your research – "Einstein used it! There must be something to it!" – rather than the central route, where you think critically about claims. "Just because she says Einstein used it doesn't make it valid. And how does she know he used it?"

The Secret appeals to intuition, by appropriating spiritual and scientific language. To the extent an individual believes in a spiritual dimension to this world, or that they can control their own destiny, The Secret speaks loudly.

On the other hand, anyone who thinks critically about its claims presumably finds themselves arriving at the maxim that if it sounds too good to be true, it is.

Positive thinking plus effort

Back in the lecture theatre, my students unpack the claims of The Secret. Quite reasonably, they suggest a whole bunch of important ingredients are needed in addition to "positive thinking", if someone really is going to manifest their deepest desires. Things like hard work, perseverance, motivation, skill and ability.

The Secret is less able to appeal to logic, though it attempts to by referring to the pseudoscientific "law of attraction". Again, the secret of The Secret's success lies in the suggestibility of association. Referring to a "law" implies there is a scientific basis to the principles – and we all know science is logical, right?

A key component of the scientific method is that theories must be testable. Testing theories requires making observations – that is, collecting data. If personal experience is one form of empirical evidence, then The Secret performs very impressively. There are thousands of testimonials on the internet from people around the world attesting to its ability to deliver results.

But dig a little deeper, and it's clear this anecdotal evidence ("it happened to me, therefore it's a thing") almost always reflects the problem of the illusory correlation. Two events occur in close proximity to the other and rather than putting it down to coincidence, for example, people presume the first event caused the second.

This is even more likely to occur when an individual is looking to confirm – rather than test – their beliefs.

So, individuals wanting to see evidence The Secret works will find it. They ask the universe for a pay increase and two weeks later they get it. The possibility the pay increase was always on its way, due to their previous hard work and diligence, does not seem to be relevant.

Before my students leave, I wish them all the best for the course and their other university studies. I tell them I hope they all achieve the outcomes they desire.

And I remind them some of the principles embraced by The Secret do have some merit and are supported by empirical psychological research. Particularly, the idea that having a positive attitude tends to produce positive outcomes – though not always, and not because some magical connection with the universe made it so.

By arrangements with The Conversation





## Sensex, Nifty End Special Live Trading Session At Record Closing High Levels



Press Trust Of India

**MUMBAI:** Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended at new closing high levels in the special trading session on Saturday, extending their previous day's sharp rally, amid impressive GDP data and foreign fund inflows.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE conducted a special trading session in the equity and equity derivative segments on Saturday to check their preparedness to handle major disruption or failure at the primary site.

The special live trading session had an intra-day switch over from Primary Site (PR) to Disaster Recovery (DR) site.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 60.80 points or 0.08 per cent to reach its all-time closing high of 73,806.15. During the trade, the benchmark reached

its record peak of 73,994.70, up 249.35 points or 0.33 per cent.

The Nifty went up by 39.65 points or 0.18 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 22,378.40. During the day, it hit the lifetime peak of 22,419.55, up 80.8 points or 0.36 per cent. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies reached its all-time peak of Rs 394.06 lakh crore.

There were two trading sessions -- the first from 9:15 am to 10 am on the PR, and the second from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm on the DR site, exchanges had announced earlier.

"Trading members are requested to note that the exchange will conduct a special live trading session with intra-day switch over from Primary Site (PR) to Disaster Recovery Site (DR) on Saturday, March 2, in equity and equity derivatives segments," BSE and NSE said in separate circulars.

## Delhi HC Sets Aside Bank's Order Declaring Bizman Ratul Puri As Wilful Defaulter

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court has set aside Bank of Baroda's decision declaring businessman Ratul Puri as a wilful defaulter under Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines.

The court said the forensic audit report did not verify the source of funds invested in the subsidiaries of Moser Baer India Ltd (MBIL), with which Puri was earlier associated, and the bank could not have issued source cause notice to the petitioner for wilful default without verifying the source of funds.

"Unless the funds that were invested were found to be borrowed funds, the respondent-bank did not have jurisdiction to invoke the Master Circular. The very genesis of 'diversion' or 'siphoning' of funds is dependent on the funds being borrowed funds," Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav said in a 92-page judgement passed

on February 29.

The court said the reliance placed by the bank on the forensic audit report is clearly misconceived as the report does not record any conclusion regarding diversion or siphoning of funds qua Puri. The reliance placed by the bank on the forensic audit report to issue source cause notice of wilful default to the petitioner is clearly misplaced, it added.

It further said that the finding of the bank's identification committee, which was also confirmed by the review committee, on the allegation that MBIL has made substantial investment in subsidiaries and related entities amounting to Rs 1586.75 crore as on December 31, 2013, to the extent that it holds that the investments by MBIL in its subsidiaries amounted to 'diversion' and 'siphoning' of funds within the meaning of the RBI's Master Circular on Wilful Defaulters, 2015 is unsustainable.

## RBI Ombudsman Organizes Consumer Awareness Program At Sopore

Educates consumers about protection and grievance redress mechanism under "One Nation-One Ombudsman Scheme"

Observer News Service

**BARAMULLA:** With a view to enhance awareness about consumer protection and grievance redressal mechanism available under Reserve Bank - Integrated Ombudsman Scheme, 2021, Office of RBI Ombudsman (Jammu) organized a Consumer Awareness Programme on Saturday at Auditorium of J&K Bank's Zonal Office (Baramulla) at Sopore.

The programme was chaired by Ramesh Chand, RBI Ombudsman (RBO) for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. Besides J&K Bank Zonal Head (Baramulla) Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat, AGM & in-charge RBI (Srinagar) Sanjeev Sharma, General Manager J&K Grameen bank, Cluster Head J&K Bank and other senior bankers, the programme witnessed extensive participation of around 250 customers of regulated entities of RBI.

In his keynote address, Ramesh Chand apprised the audience about various steps taken by RBI towards consumer education and protection including alternate grievance redress mechanism, the Charter of Customer Rights, Inter-



national grievance redress mechanism of regulated entities, etc. in detail. Thereafter, he explained in detail the customer centric features of the Reserve Bank Integrated Ombudsman Scheme-2021 (RBIOS- 2021), Complaint Management System (CMS) Portal, role of Central Receipt and Processing Centers, Contact Centre of RBI, Toll Free number, etc.

On the occasion, he informed the participants about various ways of lodging complaints under RBIOS-2021 and encouraged them to use CMS portal, which is the most simple and convenient mechanism for lodging complaints.

He highlighted the need of adopting safe digital practices while availing digital financial services and shared various

precautionary measures that need to be taken while performing digital transactions. He cautioned the participants about the use of different innovative methods of digital frauds by the fraudsters and appealed to the participants to stay away from the lure of such tricks/offers.

While apprising the participants about various modus operandi used by fraudsters to lure and defraud the customers by taking advantage of their ignorance, he emphasized on the need of timely reporting of instances of unauthorized transactions to the regulated entities so that the liability of the customers is limited in the event of any unauthorized transaction taking place in their accounts.

## WTO Talks End Sans Decision On Key Issues; Duty Moratorium On E-Commerce Trade Extended Again

Press Trust of India

**ABU DHABI:** The talks at the WTO's ministerial conference ended with no decision on key issues such as finding a permanent solution to public food stockpile and on curbing fisheries subsidies, but the members agreed to further extend the moratorium on imposing import duties on e-commerce trade for two more years.

The 13th ministerial conference (MC13) also managed to get at least five more outcomes such as new disciplines on domestic regulation for services, formal joining of Comoros and Timor-Leste as members of the WTO, and least developing countries continuing to get the benefits

of LDC even three years after graduation.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said it is a "good outcome and we are completely satisfied".

He said that a lot of issues continue to make progress in terms of discussions.

"Progress was made on several contentious issues which have not been closed for many years but forward movement is always a sign of possible closure going forward," he told reporters here.

India successfully pushed the food security issue and the country did not yield any ground on protecting the interest of poor farmers and fishermen as well as on other issues.

Despite the four days of hectic parleys getting extended for a day, the 166-member World Trade Organisation (WTO) was not able to reach a common ground for resolving the food security issue, a demand raised prominently by India as it was crucial for the livelihood of 800 million people across the globe, and curbing subsidies that leads to overfishing and over capacity.

The Cairns group, comprising countries like Australia and Brazil, has claimed that public stockholding is market-distorting and that there should be no export restrictions. Food-importing countries like Japan and Singapore are pushing for predictability in farm policies.

## Byju's Unable To Pay Salaries As Rights Issue Funds Locked In Separate A/C Amid Rift With Investors

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Byju's founder Byju Raveendran on Saturday said the edtech company will not be able to pay salaries to employees as the recent funds raised through a rights issue are inaccessible due to a legal dispute with certain investors.

In a letter to staff, Raveendran said the rights issue, launched a month ago, has been successfully closed.

"This was supposed to be a happy correspondence. After all, we now have funds to meet our short-term needs and clear our liabilities. However, I regret to inform you that we will still be unable to process your salaries," he said.

In the letter - seen by PTI - Raveendran said the company is still striving to ensure that salaries are paid by March 10.

"We shall make these payments the moment we are permitted to do so as per law," he added. Further, Raveendran said that last month, the company faced challenges due to a lack of capital, and "now we are experiencing a delay despite having funds".

"Unfortunately, a select few (4 out of our 150 plus investors) have stooped to a heartless level, ensuring that we are unable to utilise the funds raised to pay your hard-earned salaries," Raveendran said.

"At their behest, the amount raised through the rights issue is currently locked in a separate account," he added.

Raveendran accused these select investors of having a callous disregard for the lives and livelihoods of others even though they had reaped substantial profits from investment in Byju's.



"It is an agonising reality that some of these investors have already reaped substantial profits - in fact, one of them has made a staggering eight times their initial investment in BYJU'S. And yet, their actions convey a callous disregard for our lives and livelihoods," he said in the letter.

Raveendran noted that he has fought fearlessly and tirelessly, "leaving no stone unturned" to find a way to honour the company's commitment to employees. "Countless hours have been spent exploring every possible avenue, engaging our legal teams, and advocating for your rights. However, despite our best efforts, we are left with no option but to confront the heart-wrenching reality that we are temporarily unable to provide you with the financial support you deserve," he said.

Earlier this week, a company law court had asked the embattled edtech firm to consider extending the closing date of the USD 200 million rights issue, a request that the management had hinted it would not accept even as estranged investors flagged technicalities that prevented the closure of the issue on Wednesday.

In an interim order dated February 27, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Bengaluru Bench said the funds received by the company in respect to the rights issue should be kept in a separate escrow account, and it should not be withdrawn till the disposal of the matter.

### NOTICE

I have lost X Ray Diploma Certificate & 2nd Year Marks card. If any body found please return back. Other wise I am applying for the duplicate of the same. In this regard if any body have any objection may convey to Principal Govt. A.M.T School Srinagar within seven days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

**Shahnawaz Amin Khan**  
S/o :Mohd Amin Khan  
R/o :Karihama Kupwara Kashmir  
Contact :9596520438

## Sibling Rivalry Costs Indian Tycoon In Us Rs 20,000 Crore. All About The Case

John Gittelsohn, Bloomberg

**NEW DELHI** An obscure 21-year legal feud involving five brothers from India who have amassed a fortune in diamonds and Los Angeles real estate burst into public view this week with a multi-billion-dollar US verdict that may be among the largest of the decade.

After a five-month trial, a jury ordered Hareesh Jogani to pay his brothers Shashikant, Rajesh, Chetan and Shailesh Jogani more than \$2.5 billion (over ₹20,000 crore) in damages and to divide up shares of their Southern California property empire - about 17,000 apartments worth billions more.

The trial, over allegations that Hareesh breached a longstanding partnership with his siblings, continues with a punitive damages hearing Monday that could add to the award.

**Jogani v. Jogani**

The 2003 lawsuit already has been through 18 appeals, generations of attorneys and five judges in Los Angeles Superior Court. It's drawing comparisons from some of the lawyers to the fictional Victorian-era probate case that Charles Dickens wrote about in his 1852 novel Bleak House. They're calling Jogani v. Jogani the new Jarndyce v. Jarndyce, but with a twist.

"At end of the book, there was no money, hence the name, Bleak House," said Peter Ross, an attorney who represents Chetan and



Rajesh Jogani. "That's not the case here. There's billions here that remain to be distributed."

Making the case more unusual is that most multibillion-dollar verdicts in the US are against giant corporations. How much each brother ultimately walks away with turns on the ups and downs of the real estate market, with apartment prices having fallen from their 2022 peak after higher interest rates raised borrowing costs and cut into property values. Apartment prices averaged \$329,000 a unit in January in the Los Angeles area, down 26% from a November 2022 high, according to MSCI Real Assets.

Rick Richmond, the lawyer for defendant Hareesh Jogani, declined to comment because the jury isn't finished yet.

**Diamond Trade**

The Jogani family, natives of Gujarat, India, built a fortune in the global diamond trade, establishing outposts in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and North America. Shashikant "Shashi" Jogani moved at age 22 in 1969 to California, where he began a solo firm in the gem busi-

ness and started to build a property portfolio, according to a complaint he filed in 2003.

The properties suffered losses in the recession of the early 1990s, which worsened after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake killed 16 people in one of his buildings, leading Shashi to bring in his brothers as partners. The firm then embarked on a buying spree that eventually built the portfolio to roughly 17,000 apartment units with the brothers collaborating until Hareesh "forcibly removed" his sibling from managing the firm and refused to pay him, according to Shashi Jogani's complaint.

Hareesh Jogani contended that without a written agreement, his brothers couldn't prove they had a partnership with him. But the jury found that Hareesh had broken an oral contract. Jurors heard testimony that oral agreements are customary in both the diamond trade and among Gujaratis.

**'Just as Valuable'**

"The law is you can have oral contracts that are just as valuable as written con-

tracts," said Steve Friedman, an attorney for Shashi Jogani.

As the trial was coming to a close, Hareesh Jogani moved to disqualify the judge, accusing her of "racial animus" toward his lawyer and other misconduct. In a filing last week, Judge Susan Bryant-Deason denied doing anything improper and rejected the claim that she's "biased or prejudiced for or against" any of the parties or lawyers in the case. She referred the motion to the court's supervising judge, where it is pending.

The jury awarded \$165 million in damages to brothers Chetan and Rajesh over Hareesh's breach of the diamond partnership, as well as \$1.8 billion to Shashi, \$234 million to Chetan and \$360 million to Rajesh for breach of the real estate partnership.

The jurors also concluded that Shashi, now 77 years old, owns 50% of the real estate partnership, followed by 24% for Hareesh, 10% for Rajesh, 9.5% for Shailesh and 6.5% for Chetan, the youngest, who is now 62, according to Ross.

The properties generated as much as \$137 million a year in net operating income, according to Michael Friedman, 37, who with his father, Steve, has represented Shashi since 2014, the year after he passed the bar to practice law. "There's an enormous portfolio that Shashi built," he said. "And it sustains itself."

## DIRECTORATE OF ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS, J&K

SDA COLONY BEMINA SRINAGAR/ASHOK VIHAR JANIPUR JAMMU

Fax(K)2493376, (J) 2531731 .L-Line-2490092(K) 2538907(J) E-mail:jandk-des@jk.gov.in

**Sub :** Appointment of candidates for the post of Drivers advertised vide notification No: 04 of 2020 under item No. III.  
**Ref:-** 1. J&K Services Selection Board, Jammu's teller No: JKSSB-Scry/ 7/2023-03(E-7259835) dated 11-01-2021.  
2. Planning, Development & Monitoring Department's letter No: PDMD-ADM/21/2024 dated 23-01-2021.

**ORDER NO: 60-DES of 2024**

**DATED : 23-02-2024**

As recommended by the J&K Services Selection Board and approval conveyed by the Planning Development & Monitoring Department vide No. PDMD/Adm/21/2024 dated: 23-01-2024, followed by receipt of the satisfactory verification report from Criminal Investigation Department (CID) J&K in favour of the selected candidate, sanction is hereby accorded to the temporary appointment of Shaizad Ahmed (ST) S/o Mohd Aslam, Laroka Qila, Darhal Rajouri as Driver (Kashmir Division Cadre) in the J&K Economics & Statistics (Subordinate) Service, in the Pay Level-2 (19900-63200) with immediate effect.

Consequent upon the above, the appointee shall report in the office of Regional Director, Evaluation & Statistics, Kashmir within a period of twenty-one (21) days from the date of issuance of this order failing which he shall forego his right to appointment, and the same shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio without any further notice.

The appointee shall be allowed to join only on the production of the following certificates (in original) to be verified subsequently:-

- Academic/Qualification Certificate.
- Matriculation/Date of Birth Certificate.
- Health Certificate from the concerned Chief Medical Officer of the District.
- Domicile Certificate issued by the Competent Authority
- Driving License issued by the competent authority.
- Valid relevant Category Certificate, if any applicable.

**The appointment of the above candidate shall further be subject to the following conditions:-**

- The appointee shall give an undertaking in the shape of an Affidavit to the effect that if on verification, his Qualification/ Date of Birth/ Reserved Category Certificates/ any other certificate from the concerned issuing authorities is found fake/ forged or the Institution/ Course itself is not recognized, his appointment as Driver in the J&K Economics and Statistics (Subordinate) service shall be deemed to have cancelled ab-initio without any further notice and the legal action as warranted under rules shall be initiated against him.
- The appointee shall also give an undertaking in the shape of an Affidavit to the effect that he is not possessing the qualification higher than the maximum qualification prescribed for the post of Driver and if at any stage, it comes to the notice that he is in possession of qualification other than the required for the post, his appointment as Driver in the J&K Economics and Statistics (Subordinate!) service shall be deemed to have cancelled ab-initio without any further notice and the legal action as warranted under rules shall be Initiated against him.
- That if (he candidate has taken loan for self-employment from DIC/ Employment Department, to be' ascertained from the District Industries Centre (DIC) and District Employment a Counselling Centre of the domicile District, he shall relinquish the proprietorship of unit/ enterprise and also stakes, if any, in such self-employment unit/ enterprise before Joining the Government service. He shall be required to repay the entire loan liability in suitable EMIs to be worked out by the DDO concerned from his/her salary. DDO concerned shall obtain an affidavit from the concerned appointee regarding both relinquishment of proprietorship and stakes, if any, in such a self-employment unit/ enterprise and recovery to be made and also personally monitor its recovery.
- The salary of the appointee shall not be drawn and disbursed to him unless the satisfactory reports in respect of genuineness of Qualification/ Date of Birth/Relevant Category Certificate/ Driving License is received from the concerned Authorities/ Agency.
- The appointment of the candidate shall be cancelled ab-initio, if at any stage, the documents produced are found fake / forged, without any further notice.
- The appointee shall be on probation for a period of two years.
- The appointment of the candidate shall be governed by the "New Pension Scheme "as notified vide SRO-4DO of 2009 dated: 24-12-2009. 1
- The Inter-se-seniority of the appointee in the J&K Economics & Statistics (Subordinate) Service shall be determined as per the J&K Civil Service (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1956.
- The appointment of the above appointee shall be subject to outcome of writ petition(s)/ If any, pending before Competent Court of Law which may not be presently within the knowledge of the Directorate.

No: DES-ESTOADM/3/2024/8725-32

Dated:- 23-02-2024

DIPK-17360-23

DT: 02/03/2024

(Satvir Kour Sudan)

Director General  
Economics and Statistics,

## Over 1.9 Million

and other areas via choppers," she affirmed. Following the pulse polio vaccination drive, health workers will conduct door-to-door surveys on March 4 and 5 to ensure comprehensive coverage. "These visit rounds aim to reach children who may have missed receiving the vaccine on March 3," Dr. Jabeen said.

Notably, the Pulse Polio Immunization Programme, initiated in India on 2 October 1994, played a crucial role towards eradicating polio. India received a 'Polio-free certification' from the World Health Organization on 27 March 2014.

## Snow, Rains

weather has resulted in shooting stones at various places along the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, leading to its closure for traffic.

## National Highway Closed

Traffic was suspended on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway early on Saturday after heavy rainfall triggered multiple landslides and shooting stones in the Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

The 270-km highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, was blocked at over half a dozen places between Nashri and Banihal, they said.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) have mobilised men and machines to clear the highway for one-way traffic, officials said.

Traffic on the highway has been restricted to one-way since February 26 and was being used alternatively from Jammu and Srinagar after heavy rains and snowfall damaged the arterial road at several places last week.

According to the meteorological department, Banihal recorded the highest 74.4 mm of rainfall in the past 24 hours, ending around 8.30 am on Saturday.

It said snowfall in high-altitude areas and rains in the plains will continue at most places in the Union territory. The weather is likely to improve gradually on Saturday night.

## Structures Damaged In South Kashmir

A strong windstorm swept south Kashmir, damaging several structures in the Verinag area of Anantnag district, the officials said.

They said strong winds damaged the rooftops of houses and shops in Nowgam village.

Signboards of several shops were also blown away but there have been no reports of any loss of life or injury.

## 2 Dead, 6 Injured

Two people were killed and six others injured in separate incidents as incessant rains pounded several parts of Jammu region for the second day on Saturday, officials said.

Over three dozen houses and other structures suffered damages due to gusty winds in the province, they said. Suhunksha Devi, a resident of Batmas-Changa village of Bhalesa, died and her brother injured when the ceiling of their house collapsed due to a windstorm in Doda district, they said. At least 10 other houses suffered damages in Gandoh tehsil of Doda district, and 15 more houses and other structures were damaged by windstorm in Trigam, Palmar, Mughal Maidan and adjoining areas in nearby Kishtwar district, officials said.

A fuel tanker driver was killed when he lost control and crashed his vehicle into a hillside amid heavy rain in Moud Passi in Udhampur district, they said. Six people were injured when a boulder from a hillock hit a passenger bus at Manoor Gala in Rajouri district, officials said.

They said the bus was on its way from Mandir Gala to Rajouri and the injured passengers were rushed to a hospital.

Officials said strong winds also damaged rooftops of three school buildings and a public health centre in Trigam, Kudji, Tanka and Mangit in Khari tehsil, while rooftops of over a dozen houses were damaged in Sub-division Banihal, Ramsoo and Gool.

A religious school was also damaged when a tree fell on its building in the Batote area of the district, they said.

Four residential houses were partially damaged due to heavy rains in Kishtwar district of

Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday morning.

Due to heavy rains, three residential houses were partially damaged in Mughalmaidan, while one house was also damaged in the Pathimhall area of Kishtwar district.

They however said that no loss of life or any other injury was reported in the incident.

A police officer said that soon after information was received about the incident, a team immediately rushed to the spot and were accessing the losses. The officer further added that all the people residing in the houses are being shifted to safer places amid this rainy weather.

Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) chairman and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad expressed concern over the widespread damage across several hamlets due to the inclement weather.

Azad urged the Lt Governor-led administration to assess the damage and pay adequate compensation to victims.

A snowfall up to two to three feet was reported in high altitude areas including Pir Ki Gali in Poonch, Sinthan top in Kishtwar, Chatergala in Doda district over the past 24 hours, officials said.

A hail storm also hit various parts of Jammu during the day.

## Avalanche Warning

Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority on Saturday issued a medium-danger level avalanche warning for multiple districts in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Avalanche with Medium Danger Level is likely to occur above 2200 metres over Doda, Kishtwar, Poonch, Ramban, Resai, Anantnag and Kulgam districts in next 24 hours," reads an advisory.

Further avalanche with higher danger level is likely to occur above 2200 metres over Kupwara, Ganderbal, Bandipora and Baramulla districts in the next 24 hours.

"People living in these areas are advised to take precautions and avoid venturing in the avalanche prone areas till further orders," the advisory reads.

In case of any help, the authority can be reached at 112.

## 1,735 Cr Spent

"Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we have achieved greater success in bridging the health gap in the Union Territory," he said, reiterating the commitment of his administration to provide "quality, affordable and accessible" healthcare services to all.

He said state-of-the-art health infrastructure, digital interventions and reforms introduced in the field of medical education and critical care have strengthened the healthcare ecosystem of Jammu and Kashmir.

"We have laid special focus on four important aspects - doctors, drugs, diagnostics and delivery mechanism," Sinha said.

The LG directed the secretary of health and senior officials to spread mass awareness on the facilities like Tele-MANAS (Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States) and availability of doctors in hospitals and health centres.

"Institutionalised mechanisms should be put in place to ensure quick response of the ambulance service, especially in far-flung areas," he said.

He saluted the doctors and Rotary Club members for their "dedicated and selfless service" to the people.

"The collaborative efforts have ensured that the people of Rajouri and Poonch can avail the benefits of special surgeries without any financial burden," he said, urging the Rotary Club to organise a similar special health camp for the people of Doda and Kishtwar districts.

## KP's Will Celebrate

Kashmiri Pandit community. Speaking at a 'Herath Milan Samaroh' organised by 'Youth All India Kashmiri Samaj' here, the Lt Governor informed the gathering that PM Modi would visit Srinagar on March 7 and requested all those present in the valley to attend his programme.

In the last eight to 10 years under the leadership of Modi, the country has witnessed a change in the political style and work culture, as a result of which the country is moving

ahead to become a world leader, Sinha said.

"We have such a government at the Centre which is speaking the same language in Delhi, Jammu and Srinagar. The time has passed when some people used to speak differently at these places.

"There are some things which if spoken creates problems. The prime minister is taking the country and J&K forward and the day is not far when you will celebrate Herath in Kashmir rather than in Jammu," he said.

The Lt Governor said 'Herath' is an integral part of our rich cultural and spiritual heritage. "May the festival usher in the happiness, prosperity and well-being of all," he said.

"A new period of renaissance began some-time back. We will regain the lost reputation and emerge as the world leaders. The young generation has to prepare for themselves to fulfil their duties in the new India," Sinha said.

Extending his felicitations to the people, the Lt Governor appreciated the 'Youth All India Kashmiri Samaj' for working towards the welfare of the people of J&K for over two decades and reconnecting future generations of the community with their roots.

The J&K administration is working with the resolve of 'Vikas Bhi Virasat Bhi', he said.

## '370 Abrogation Led

of now abrogated Article 370.

Sinha was speaking at the National Commission for Women's event themed on 'Celebrating Inspirational Women' titled 'Tu Bol' here.

Sinha commended the endeavour of the national commission for women to bring together women achievers to share their inspirational journey ahead of the International Women's Day on March 8.

"Today 'nari shakti' (women power) is at the forefront of our developmental journey and taking the lead in nation building. The Jammu and Kashmir administration is focusing on women-led development with unwavering dedication and determination to support gender parity and gender equity," he said.

The Lt Governor lauded the remarkable achievements and invaluable contributions of the women across diverse domains.

"I am proud of our 'nari shakti'. From education to entrepreneurship, from information technology to agriculture sector, from sports to science, they are scripting their own success stories," Sinha said.

National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson Rekha Sharma in her address emphasised the importance of encouraging young women to speak fearlessly and to promote empowerment and equality.

On the occasion, the women achievers shared their stories of struggle and journey towards success and motivated others to pursue their dreams.

## BJP Gears Up

the PM," he said.

Thakur said that at a meeting here on March 4 BJP general secretary and J-K incharge Tarun Chugh would review the party's preparations for the rally.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, senior BJP leader and Kashmir division in-charge Sunil Sharma said it would be a huge rally.

"Today we had called all the district presidents and senior leaders. Discussion was held regarding the numbers in this rally so that people can attend it from different places. There is a lot of excitement about the rally. There is a lot of enthusiasm about this rally in Kashmir as well as across the country," Sharma said.

He said there was enthusiasm among the people in Kashmir "where the BJP was regarded as untouchable before".

"Today, every poor, every person, woman and elderly have full faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi. And you will get to see that yourself on March 7," Sharma added.

## Free, Fair LS Polls

and improve the voter turnout compared to the last elections," Pole told reporters.

Asked about the security arrangements, the CEO said the security environment has become better over the last few years but there were some challenges.

"The challenges are still the same and so we have flagged the requirement for forces. The locally available forces and those who come from outside will be deployed according to the norms of the election commission whether it

is on polling station duty or area domination or other duties. We will ensure free and fair, transparent and event-free elections," he said.

Pole appealed to the people to come out to vote in large numbers when the elections take place.

## HC Grants Permission

troops deployed there.

"The military establishments at Sonamarg also act as the lifeline for the logistics and transient movement to the Ladakh Region which is huge in numbers and critically important for the Indian Army," the ministry said.

More so, it said, the fact that the Ladakh region gets cut off during the winter season, all the logistic support is carried out from Sonamarg before the snowfall sets in.

"All these military establishments also handle the security aspects of the Amarnath yatra which takes place everywhere and has a huge fallout in this region which increases the requirements of accommodations in that area."

## Kashmiri Students

Additionally, 110 Kashmiri students who were pursuing various professional courses have reportedly been sent back to the valley.

"A non-local student passed a vulgar comment against a female Kashmiri student, triggering angry reaction from her male counterparts from the valley," a student from Kashmir told Kashmir Observer.

"Instead of offering an apology to the victim, he hurled choicest abuses against Kashmiri students, which infuriated one of us, who slapped him for misbehaving with a female and abusing Kashmiris," he added.

The J&K Students Association informed via its official X handle (formally Twitter) that despite lodging a complaint with the college administration, the grievances were purportedly ignored, leading to heightened resentment among the Kashmiri student community.

The situation took an ugly turn as Kashmiri students claimed to have been ruthlessly beaten by non-local students, further intensifying the already charged atmosphere on the campus.

"The girl student, who was harassed, approached the college administration, requesting action against the student involved. However, the college management chose to overlook her ordeal," one of the expelled students said.

The students alleged that local students enrolled in the same institution attacked Kashmiri students with stones, but fortunately nobody was hurt in the incident on either side. "During the scuffle, one of the Sikh students' turban was unintentionally struck by a Kashmiri, yet they gave the incident a communal hue without taking into account the fact that it was an accident."

"A few hours later, as we were getting ready for supper in the mess, a group of goons, brandishing swords and other weapons, gathered outside the college and attempted to break in, but the college management forbade them from doing so," he added.

The J&K Students Association said that a committee has been formed in this regard, and to ensure the safety and security of Kashmiri students, they have been sent back to the valley with the support of the college management. Special transport was arranged for Kashmiri students to travel back to their hometown.

"Even though the victim girl's statement was recorded by the college administration, they did not take any action against the accused student and instead requested that we leave Punjab until the situation returns to normal", the aggrieved students said.

When Kashmir Observer contacted one of the members of the college management, he stated that the students were sent back for a temporary period until the situation returns to normal. He mentioned that the step was taken as a precautionary measure to ensure peace is maintained.

"We have been asked by the police to hand over the CCTV footage, so that action against the accused can be initiated. As of now, no case has been lodged as the matter is still under investigation," he said.

Meanwhile Nasir Khuehami, a student activist and national convener of J&K Student Union, said the matter has been taken up with the Commissioner of Police Punjab, who assured that no FIR will be lodged against any Kashmiri student.

"This is sheer hooliganism. Is this a way to treat a female? How could one student pass lewd comments against a female counterpart and then heckle her," Khuehami told Kashmir Observer.

## From Surgery

"We treat animals with traumas and injuries, some from impacts and others in shock, stabilizing them promptly. We also oversee several zoos, including Pahalgam Mini Zoo, Dachigam Rescue Center, and Shikargah. Regular healthcare interventions for wild animals are part of our responsibilities, ensuring their well-being."

Just like a regular hospital OPD, the center meticulously documents every wild animal's case. Beyond immediate medical needs, the center also addresses long-term conservation efforts, overseeing zoos, rescue and rehabilitation, and captive breeding centres across Kashmir.

Gazi, however, highlights that insufficient manpower hampers timely intervention in rescue operations.

"We are not just treating animals, we are fostering a deeper understanding of their needs and behaviors and this office also conducts regular training of the frontline workers engaged in man animal conflicts operations across Kashmir valley."

In addition to treating and curing animals, the department has control rooms strategically positioned across the Kashmir valley to ensure swift coordination, with rescue teams operating in tandem to address urgent calls for assistance.

"However, some rescues are incredibly demanding and require sustained effort. For instance, we recently faced a challenging situation at Rawalpora, where an operation lasted for 21 days," Gazi said.

## Pollution Threatens

for poisoning the twin lakes, asserting the outcome may have been different, had they paid careful attention to the deteriorating state of Dal and Nigeen Lakes.

Besides waste, siltation is a significant factor in lowering Dal Lake's depth, according to Dr Khurshid Ahmad, a microbiologist at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Science and Technology (SKUAST-K). He noted that siltation has been occurring in Dal Lake over time, and that this process will undoubtedly have an impact on its inner layer.

"In addition to plants of distinct varieties growing deep within the water, algal weeds are another factor reducing its depth," he told Kashmir Observer.

"These lakes—Dal and Nigeen—are in danger of going extinct, according to periodic studies, and that's before we even discuss the reduction in Nadur production," said Manzoor Ahmad Wangnoo, an expert on the changing patterns of Nigeen and Dal Lakes.

The direct disposal of thousands of metric tons of garbage and human excreta from the surrounding areas, he claimed, ruined Dal Lake, although Nigeen Lake's condition has not yet gotten to that of Dal.

The facts supporting the decline in Nadur output, he claimed, were that the build-up of huge garbage and solid waste had caused both lakes' depths to diminish, making Nadru taste differently.

"The situation of Dal and Nigeen Lakes would deteriorate with each passing day until we, as citizens, recognize the serious challenges they confront. Our valley's distinctive character stems from these water bodies. How on earth could we let them become extinct?" Wangnoo told Kashmir Observer.

Notably, Nadroo harvesting entails a meticulous and labor-intensive process. It grows on the marshy bogs of the freshwater lakes in the area, such as Nigeen and Dal Lakes in Srinagar. Beneath the water, the Nadroo has a maximum height of four feet.

In the present times, Nadroo harvesting has become increasingly challenging and hazardous for the growers. The harvesters are exposed to polluted water, which poses significant health risks. Direct contact with contaminated water can lead to skin irritations, respiratory problems, and other illnesses.

"It's not everyone's cup of tea to dive deep into the lake and brave all weather conditions to get Nadroo from deep within Dal Lake's contaminated water," Ashraf said.

26<sup>th</sup> year OF PUBLICATION

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OR SCAN



# Did Big Three Ignore ICC's Study To Save Test Cricket?

Press Trust of India

**C**ricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley on Saturday rebutted reports that India, England and his organisation had not paid attention to a draft presented to the International Cricket Council to save Test cricket.

A report in the Sydney Morning Herald said that the three powerful boards were dismissive of a document compiled by New Zealand Cricket chair Martin Snedden, who proposed an overhaul of the future tours program (FTP) to save the longest version of the game.

"Categorically, I think there was some misreporting around that. Certainly, the discussions I'm in at the moment are very much thinking about how we can optimise the calendar and how we can continue to grow cricket around the world," Hockley told SEN Cricket.



The changes proposed in the blueprint document include additional windows for T20 leagues other than the Indian Premier League, alteration in the World Test Championship

points system, 40-over ODIs, apprehensions about T20Is and an effort towards pooling of broadcast rights revenue for bilateral series.

Hockley, when asked about the report, denied suggestions that the powerful nations were turning a blind eye to Test cricket, saying he had met Snedden during the New Zealand-Australia first Test in Wellington

and conveyed to him that Australia was very much committed to help ICC ensure all the three formats flourish.

Pointing out the growth of cricket across the world, Hockley said countries like the United States too had embraced the game and would be co-hosting the T20 World Cup with the West Indies later this year.

Hockley added that Australia had great respect for the World Test Championship and that its men's Test cricket was its prized property. "Practically, it is making sure that the World Test Championship is given greater prominence so each Test series has context.

"I think it's looking at the economic viability in different territories and how we make sure that it is economically viable for those countries where it isn't (currently). Still for Australia... men's Test cricket is the most valuable property. So, it's really working together."

## Short TAKES

### 92.7 Big FM Knockout Football Tournament Final Today

J&K Bank FC will take on Galaxy FC today, Sunday, March 3, in the grand finale of the 92.7 Big FM Knockout Football Tournament 2024 at Synthetic Turf TRC here.

Both teams beat formidable opponents on their way to the finals and will look to seal this year's first major football tournament. The game will kick off at 2:30 PM.

### Various National Athletes From Kupwara Call On DC

National athletes of Growth Sports Academy Kupwara called upon Deputy Commissioner Kupwara Ayushi Sudan at her office on Saturday.

The meeting aimed to felicitate the exemplary athletes and engage in discussions regarding the future plans to augment sports infrastructure in Kupwara.

Led by the international medalist Aadil Manzoor Peer of Halmatpora Kupwara, the delegation included national athletes including Zubair Ahmad Sofi, Navaid Nabi, Mohammad Ibrahim, Maroof Ahmad Khan, Zakir Hussain Wani, Haroon Showkat, Munazirah Mushtaq, Amaan Iqbal and others.

### With IPL In Sight, Gambhir Ends Political Career

Former India cricketer and BJP MP Gautam Gambhir, on Saturday announced that he has requested the BJP President to relieve him of his political duties.

"I have requested Hon'ble Party President @JPNad-daji to relieve me of my political duties so that I can focus on my upcoming cricket commitments. I sincerely thank Hon'ble PM @narendramodiji and Hon'ble HM @AmitShahji for giving me the opportunity to serve the people. Jai Hind!."

A BJP MP from East Delhi, Gambhir returned to his former IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders as a mentor for the upcoming season, starting on March 22.

### CSK Training Camp Ahead Of IPL 2024 Gets Underway

Chennai Super Kings' pre-season camp got underway here on Saturday in the presence of pacer Deepak Chahar, who will be eyeing a national comeback through a consistent run for his franchise in the IPL beginning March 22.

"The first batch of local (Indian) players arrived on Friday and more are expected to arrive in the coming days," a Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) official told PTI.

On Friday, CSK confirmed the arrival of the first batch of players in the city.

### Saudi Arabia Launch Bid To Host The 2034 World Cup

Saudi Arabia launched its campaign to host the 2034 Soccer World Cup on Friday, a bid that is all but certain to succeed due to the absence of any other expressions of interest before FIFA's deadline late last year. With Morocco, Portugal and Spain set to share the hosting of the 2030 tournament, global governing body FIFA limited the 2034 contest to bidders from the Asian and Oceania confederations.

The Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF) said its "Growing Together" World Cup campaign would showcase the way the nation was strengthening bonds with other countries through sport.

## AIFF President Chaubey Accused Of 'Corruption'

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** All India Football Federation's principal legal advisor Nilanjan Bhattacharjee on Saturday made serious 'corruption allegations' against president Kalyan Chaubey, who termed them baseless and said he would take legal action.

In a letter written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Bhattacharjee said Chaubey worked out 'corruption avenue' through non transparent tender process and preferential allotment of tender.

Bhattacharjee also alleged that Chaubey made attempts to 'siphon off money from the federation's exchequer' and used AIFF fund for personal expenses.

"...through coercion and at his own subservient interest, allotted numerous tenders such as broadcasting of I-League (last season), IWL, Santosh Trophy in favour of one (company name withheld) which happens to be close to the incumbent president," Bhattacharjee said in his letter, which is in possession of PTI.

"Further tenders running into crores were allotted to the same service provider for broadcasting of futsal and other such tournaments," he wrote in the letter, a copy of which was also marked to



Home Minister Amit Shah and Sports Minister Anurag Thakur. He said even the tender for the ongoing Santosh Trophy was also given to the same entity.

Bhattacharjee claimed that when he suggested safeguards in subsequent tenders, Chaubey attempted to 'malign' his image and professional integrity.

"Crores of money have been spent by the current president for his personal trips, hotel stays. For his numerous Bangalore trip alone, a conservative estimation of more than Rs 40 lakhs has been spent to fund his business class travel, local conveyance and hotel stays."

Chaubey said he has gone through the allegations and he will take legal action.

"All these (allegations) are baseless. I will reply legally," he said.

Bhattacharjee said he was appointed after Chaubey took charge as AIFF head in September 2022 and his tenure was extended recently.

"My first tenure ended in October last year. It got extended by another year after that. But I would not care if I am terminated from my job," he said.

Bhattacharjee had earlier alleged that the AIFF did not pay him his retainership sum for a couple of months last year but later got it.

## New Zealand Chase 258 In First Test Against Australia



Agencies

**WELLINGTON:** New Zealand were 111 for three at the close of play on the third day of the first Test against Australia at Wellington's Basin Reserve on Saturday, still 258 runs away from their daunting victory target of 369.

Spinner Glenn Phillips had earlier taken 5-45 - his first five-wicket haul in first-class cricket - as New Zealand took Australia's last six wickets for the addition of 37 runs to end the tourist's second innings on 164.

Rachin Ravindra, who reached the half century mark for the second time in his short test career and was 56 not out at stumps, will resume on day four alongside Daryl Mitchell, who was unbeaten on 12, in a partnership worth 52 runs.

New Zealand's highest successful fourth-innings run chase was the 324 they scored against Pakistan at Christchurch in 1994. Their highest at Basin Re-

serve was the 285 they scored to beat Sri Lanka last year.

Australia will be looking to off spinner Lyon to play a key role in putting the tourists 1-0 up in the two-match series that concludes with the second test in Christchurch starting on Friday.

As nightwatchman, Lyon had punished New Zealand for dropping him off the final ball of day two by hitting a bright 41 to push Australia from 13-2 at the start of the day to 53-3 when he was caught at square leg off Matt Henry.

Opener Usman Khawaja also departed before lunch for 28 to give Phillips his first wicket off a stumping, but Australia would have been happy at reaching the break on 113-4 with their lead already past the 300 mark.

Green's 174 in a rearguard action in the first innings was largely responsible for Australia's lead, but there was to be no tailend heroics in the second as Henry (3-36) stepped up to take the last two wickets.

## Manchester Derby Can Further Expose Gulf Between City & United

Agencies

**MANCHESTER:** Jim Ratcliffe's determination to bring down Manchester City is abundantly clear.

So is his admiration, it seems, for the team he calls "the enemy." Since becoming co-owner of Manchester United last week, Ratcliffe has spoken about the "driven and elite environment" that has been created at City in its Abu Dhabi-controlled regime.

He described City's 4-0 win over Real Madrid in last season's Champions League semifinals as "the best football I have ever seen."

He was even behind United's recent appointment of one of City's former top executives, Omar Berrada, as the new chief executive in what United said was the first step on a journey "to put football and performance on the pitch back at the heart of everything we do."

Ratcliffe acknowledged United was a "long way behind" City. Just how far might be placed into sharp focus this weekend.

It's the 192nd Manchester derby on Sunday, pitting two rivals at opposite stages of their modern development: City, the English, European and world club champion, vs. United, a fallen giant looking to be kickstarted by the riches



and passion of a locally born billionaire.

Few are giving United a hope in the Premier League clash at Etihad Stadium - privately, maybe even Ratcliffe will not expect a win, either - but his recent investment in United, not forgetting his comments about knocking City and fellow local rival Liverpool "off

their perch" within three years, provides the narrative and backdrop to a fixture that, for the most part, has been one-sided in recent years.

Take last season's match at the Etihad, for example, where Erling Haaland and Phil Foden scored hat tricks in City's 6-3 thrashing of United.

Or this season's match at Old Trafford, where United was overrun and ultimately humiliated in a 3-0 loss in October.

City comes into the derby following a 6-2 win at Luton in the FA Cup highlighted by a five-goal performance by Haaland. United has actually won seven of its nine games in all competitions in 2024 but barely ever convinces, which leaves Ten Hag under permanent pressure. Tellingly, Ratcliffe, in his round of post-takeover interviews, never gave his complete backing to the Dutchman.

March will also see United take on its other big foe, Liverpool, in the FA Cup quarterfinals. It's a month of great opportunity for Ten Hag and his players but also one of potential danger, if United was to lose to City - and therefore further jeopardize its Champions League qualification ambitions - and Liverpool.

Fifteen points separate second-placed City and sixth-placed United, and that could be 18 by Sunday evening.

More important for City is the points gap to leader Liverpool, which stands at one heading into the weekend. Liverpool plays first, away to Nottingham Forest. Third-placed Arsenal, which is a point behind City in third place, visits Sheffield United on Monday.

## FIFA Rules Panel Scraps Plan For Blue Cards

Agencies

**LOCH LOMOND:** There will be no blue cards shown in soccer, FIFA president Gianni Infantino said on Saturday ahead of the annual meeting of the sport's rule-making panel.

The rules panel known as IFAB is due to look at extending trials of 'sin bins' at low-level games. But beyond that, the idea aired a month ago of adding blue cards to referees' pockets with their red and yellow to remove players from the field for several minutes has been scrapped.

"Let me be clear - it's a red card to the idea of blue cards," Infantino told reporters in a video clip posted overnight on his Instagram account. "There will not be any blue cards used at elite level."

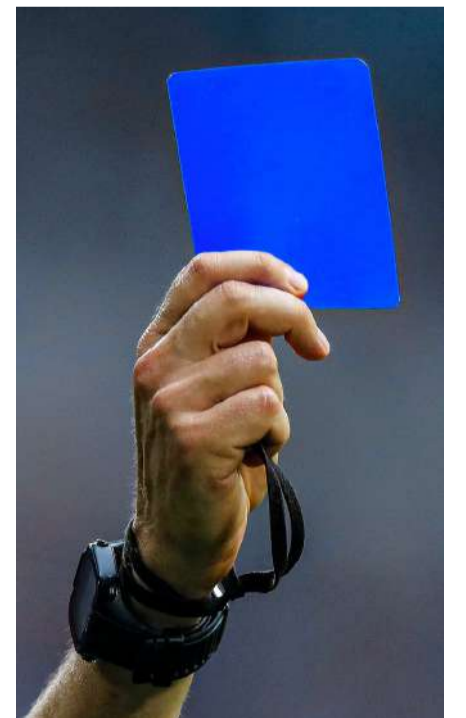
"This is a topic that is non-existent for us and FIFA is completely opposed to blue cards," Infantino said at a lakeside hotel that will host the meeting near Glasgow.

Sin bins were introduced in grassroots soccer in the 2019-20 season to try to reduce dissent and increase fair play.

The idea has been unpopular with English Premier League coaches who believe teams will use defensive and negative tactics if a player is removed for 10 minutes.

However, the new suggestion of using blue cards to send players to sin bins was met with widespread derision.

The IFAB panel is made up of officials from FIFA and the four British soccer federations. FIFA has four votes and the federations of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales has one each. Six votes are



needed for a proposal to pass.

Sin bins are used in rugby for a variety of fouls.

Ice hockey similarly whistles penalties that send players to the 'penalty box'. Infractions such as tripping are two-minute penalties that give the other team an advantage called the 'power play' that creates more goal-scoring opportunities.

## India To See Warmer Summer, More Heatwave Days This Year: IMD

Agenceis

India is likely to experience a warmer summer and more heatwave days this year with El Nino conditions predicted to continue at least until May, the India Meteorological Department said on Friday.

The country is likely to record above-normal rainfall in March (more than 117 per cent of the long-period average of 29.9 mm).

India is likely to see above-normal maximum and minimum temperatures in most parts of the country in the March to May period, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said at a press conference.

From March to May, the above-normal number of heatwave days is likely over most parts of the country except northeast India, the western Himalayan region, the southwest peninsula and the west coast.

More heatwave days than normal are predicted over northeast peninsular India - Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and north interior Karnataka - and many parts of

Maharashtra and Odisha, it said. Heatwave conditions are not expected over north and central India in March, he said.

Lok Sabha polls are likely to be held in April-May.

Mohapatra said the prevailing El Nino conditions - the periodic warming of waters in the central Pacific Ocean - will continue through the summer season and neutral conditions are likely to develop thereafter.

La Nina conditions - generally associated with good monsoon rainfall in India - are likely to set in by the second half of the monsoon season. The IMD chief also said that India recorded an average minimum temperature of 14.61 degrees Celsius in February, the second highest in the month since 1901.

A total of eight western disturbances - cyclonic storms originating in the Mediterranean region and beyond - affected the weather in western Himalayan states in February.

Of these, six were active western disturbances that led to rain and hailstorms over the plains in north and central India.



## Asia's Richest Man Launches Lavish Pre-Wedding Party In India



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: India's richest man has kicked off lavish pre-wedding parties for his son by feeding more than 50,000 people in his hometown, with celebrations in the coming days expected to include some of the world's most influential figures.

Global tech CEOs, industry titans, Bollywood stars, pop icons and politicians are expected to jet in Friday for the main three-day celebrations hosted by billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani, who is building a sprawling Hindu temple complex for the event.

Ambani, 66, chairman of oil-to-telecoms giant Reliance Industries, is Asia's richest person according to the Forbes real-time billionaires list, worth more than \$114 billion.

On Wednesday evening, Ambani and wife Nita - along with their son Anant and his fiancée Radhika Merchant - launched a three-day feast for villagers

at the Reliance Township in his hometown of Jamnagar, in India's western state of Gujarat.

Anant, 28, who also serves as a director on the boards of several Reliance-owned firms, is expected to marry Merchant, 29, the daughter of an industrialist, later this year.

Ambani held the most expensive wedding in India for his daughter in 2018, which reportedly cost \$100 million and saw US pop megastar Beyonce perform. This time, R&B star Rihanna, illusionist David Blaine and Bollywood's Diljit Dosanjh will perform for the guests, who are expected to include Microsoft founder Bill Gates, Meta head Mark Zuckerberg, and several current and former political leaders, according to a list released by Reliance.

Also among the invitees is Disney chief Robert Iger, following a deal agreed Wednesday between Reliance Industries and Walt Disney to merge their Indian media businesses. The merger will create a \$8.5 billion entertainment giant

in the world's most populous nation and fifth-largest economy.

Other guests invited include Ivanka Trump, the former US president's daughter, as well as ex-Swedish prime minister Carl Bildt, former Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper and the King of Bhutan.

Bollywood stars Amitabh Bachchan and Shahrukh Khan, cricket icons Sachin Tendulkar and M. S. Dhoni, and industry titan Gautam Adani are also invited in a who's-who of India's super-rich elite.

The Ambanis are building a Hindu temple complex in Jamnagar, to keep "India's rich cultural and spiritual identity at the heart of the wedding festivities", the Reliance Foundation said on social media.

The main celebrations, running from March 1-3, will have different themes, events and dress codes - including a "jungle fever" day with a visit to an animal rescue centre run by Ambani.

## AI Shows Prostate Cancer Is Not Just One Disease: Study

Agenceis

Scientists have used artificial intelligence (AI) to reveal a new form of aggressive prostate cancer which they said could help thousands of lives by revolutionising how the disease is diagnosed and treated in the future.

The study, published in the journal Cell Genomics, reveals that prostate cancer, which affects one in eight men in their lifetime, includes two different subtypes termed evotypes.

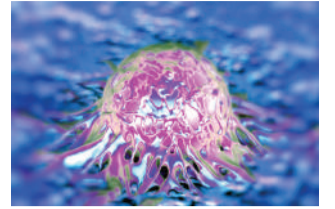
The findings, led by researchers at the University of Oxford, and the University of Manchester, UK, could help provide tailored treatments to each individual patient according to a genetic test which will also be delivered using AI, they said.

Our research demonstrates that prostate tumours evolve along multiple pathways, leading to two distinct disease types," said lead researcher Dan Woodcock, from the University of Oxford.

This understanding is pivotal as it allows us to classify tumours based on how the cancer evolves rather than solely on individual gene mutations or expression patterns, Woodcock said.

The researchers worked together as part of international consortium, called The Pan Prostate Cancer Group, set up by scientists at The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) and The University of East Anglia, UK, to analyse genetic data from thousands of prostate cancer samples across nine countries. The team's collaboration with Cancer Research UK (CRUK) aims to develop a genetic test that, when combined with conventional staging and grading, can provide a more precise prognosis for each patient, allowing tailored treatment decisions.

The researchers used AI to study changes in the DNA of prostate cancer samples, using whole genome sequencing, from 159 patients. They identified two distinct cancer groups



among these patients using an AI technique called neural networks. These two groups were confirmed by using two other mathematical approaches applied to different aspects of the data. This finding was validated in other independent datasets from Canada and Australia.

They went on to integrate all the information to generate an evolutionary tree showing how the two subtypes of prostate cancer develop, ultimately converging into two distinct disease types termed evotypes'.

This realisation is what enables us to distinguish the disease types. This hasn't been done before because it's more complicated than HER2+ in breast cancer, for instance," said Professor David Wedge of Manchester Cancer Research Centre, who led the study.

"This understanding is pivotal as it allows us to classify tumours based on their evolutionary trajectory rather than solely on individual gene mutations or expression patterns," Wedge said.

Professor Colin Cooper, from UEA's Norwich Medical School, highlighted that while prostate cancer is responsible for a large proportion of all male cancer deaths, it is more commonly a disease men die with rather than from.

This means that unnecessary treatment can often be avoided, sparing men from side-effects such as incontinence and impotence.

This study is really important because until now, we thought that prostate cancer was just one type of disease. But it is only now, with advancements in artificial intelligence, that we have been able to show that there are actually two different subtypes at play," he added.

## US Probes Security Risks Posed By Chinese Tech In Cars

Agenceis

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden announced an investigation Thursday into the national security risks posed by Chinese tech in cars, warning they could be used to collect sensitive data.

He has ordered the Commerce Department to conduct the probe, focusing on connected vehicles containing technology from "countries of concern" such as China, and to respond to threats.

"China is determined to dominate the future of the auto market, including by using unfair practices," Biden said in a statement.

"China's policies could flood our market with its vehicles, posing risks to our national security."

Washington has been working

to lower the US auto sector's reliance on China, offering tax breaks for American-made electric vehicles and batteries, while trying to build up its domestic production capacity.

The latest investigation concerns vehicles that constantly connect with personal devices, other cars, US infrastructure and their manufacturers - including electric and self-driving cars.

As part of the probe, Commerce will collect information with a 60-day public comment period.

Authorities could eventually impose limits on some transactions but officials did not commit to a timeline.

The White House said connected vehicles collect vast amounts of data on drivers and passengers, log information on US infrastruc-



ture through cameras and sensors, and can be piloted or disabled remotely.

"New vulnerabilities" could

arise if a foreign government gained access to their systems or data, it added.

"This is yet another acknowl-

edgment by the Biden administration that critical and emerging technologies are set to shape both economic growth and national security," Thibault Denamiel of the Center for Strategic and International Studies told AFP.

It is noteworthy that the new measure considers "risks associated by technology transfers into the United States," he added.

Previous moves, such as outbound investment restrictions and semiconductor export controls, focused on transfers from the United States to foreign countries.

"China imposes restrictions on American autos and other foreign autos operating in China," said Biden.

"Why should connected vehicles from China be allowed to operate in our country without

safeguards?" he added.

While there are not many such vehicles containing China-made tech on US roads currently, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo stressed the need to "understand the extent of the technology in these cars."

A senior US official told reporters on condition of anonymity it is important to act before there are large numbers of these vehicles in the country, with China's automobile export market growing rapidly and making strong inroads including in Europe.

In a January post-earnings conference call, Tesla CEO Elon Musk said Chinese car companies were "the most competitive" globally, expecting that they would likely be successful outside China.

"If there are not trade barriers established, they will pretty much demolish most other car companies in the world," he said.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing welcomed the investigation, calling for more to be done including higher tariffs and limiting EV tax credits.

In November, 14 members of Congress signed letters to 10 China-related companies involved in the auto sector - including Baidu, Didi Chuxing and AutoX - raising concerns over the handling of data collected when testing autonomous vehicles in the United States.

Besides autos, the White House said this week that Biden was issuing an executive order aimed at limiting the flow of sensitive US personal data abroad.

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