

## Embracing Differences: Navigating Down Syndrome In Kashmir

Auqib Javeed

**Srinagar:** In September 2015, Rizwan Ahmad and Nargis welcomed a baby boy after seven years of marriage. The joy for their families knew no bounds. However, their initial euphoria settled into a new reality when doctors informed them about their son's Down syndrome diagnosis. "We couldn't believe it," said Rizwan, 44, a resident of North

Kashmir's Bandipora district. "The doctors mentioned that while late marriage can be a factor, there are other causes of Down syndrome as well," Rizwan added. Health experts explain that DS occurs when the fertilized egg carries three copies of Chromosome 21 instead of the usual two. Typically, a baby is born with 46 chromosomes. Babies with Down syndrome have an extra copy of one of

these chromosomes, chromosome 21. A medical term for having an extra copy of a chromosome is 'trisomy.' Down syndrome is also referred to as Trisomy 21. This extra copy changes how the baby's body and brain develop, which can cause both mental and physical challenges for the baby. Down syndrome causes a distinct facial appearance, intellectual disability, and developmental delays. It



may be associated with thyroid or heart disease.

This condition is regarded as one of the most readily identifiable neurodevelopmental genetic disorders due to its distinctive physical and cognitive characteristics, making it detectable through genetic testing. According to studies, Down syndrome is the most common chromosomal abnormality which occurs with a frequency of 1 in 600 to 1 in 1000 newborns. Notably, World Down

Syndrome Day is celebrated on March 21st each year in recognition of people with Down's Syndrome having three copies of chromosome 21 (21/3). Raising a child with Down syndrome can present significant challenges. Unfortunately, due to a lack of support and resources, some families in Kashmir feel overwhelmed, leading to a heartbreaking trend of newborns being abandoned. | More on P06

## Stray Dogs Kill Minor Girl In South Kashmir

Agencies

**Srinagar:** A minor girl was mauled to death by stray dogs at Waghama area of Bijbehara in South Kashmir's Anantnag district. An official said that a minor girl identified Arshima, 8, daughter of Gulam Nabi Wani resident of Waghama was attacked by stray dogs at her native village. He said that the girl was grievously injured in the incident and she was shifted to the hospital where she was declared dead. | More on P06

## Marching Backwards?

# Kashmir's Higher Reaches Receive Fresh Snow

Agencies

**Srinagar:** The shiver has once again gripped Kashmir after the fresh Western Disturbance (WD) affected Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday while the weatherman here has predicted more rains and snow in the next 24 hours.

Several areas of Kashmir including Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir has received light rainfall today, bringing down the temperature in the valley. However, some of the areas including Kupwara higher reaches, Machil, Sadhna Top, Razdan Top and Zojilla received light snowfall today.

Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad stated that the weather is expected to remain wet

tomorrow and would record a significant improvement from Saturday.

There is a possibility of light to moderate rains, snow at many places with thunder, lightning and gusty winds over parts of Kashmir and Jammu division tomorrow, he said.

He further added that the weather would remain generally dry on March 23 while on March 24, the weather is expected to remain generally cloudy with light rain and snow at isolated places.

While the weather is expected to remain dry during March 25 and 26, the MeT Director said on March 27 to March 29, the weather would remain generally cloudy with possibility of light rain and | More on P06



**WORLD WATER DAY 2024:** Women carry water-filled pots after collecting water from a stream in Khanpat village of Baramulla's Pattan area. KO Photo Abid Bhat



## Halt 'Viksit Bharat' Messages On WhatsApp: EC

Press Trust Of India

**New Delhi:** The Election Commission Thursday directed the Centre to "immediately halt" sending bulk WhatsApp messages under the "Viksit Bharat Sampark" to highlight the government's initiatives.

The Commission issued the direction to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology after it received complaints about the matter. "The move is a part of a series of decisions taken by the Commission to ensure a level-playing field," the Commission said. It has also sought a



compliance report on the matter to the ministry.

The ministry had informed the Commission that the messages along with a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi were sent before the Model Code of Conduct came into force on March 16. | More on P06

## President Appoints MY Wani As Addl Judge HC

M Ahmad

**Srinagar:** Nine days after being recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium, the President of India on Thursday appointed Mohammad Yousuf Wani as Additional Judge of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court, for a period of two years.

"In exercise of the power conferred by Clause (1) of Article 224 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Mohd. Yousuf Wani, to be an Additional Judge of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court, for a period of two years with effect from the date he assumes the charge of his office," reads a notification issued by ministry of law and justice system.

On March 12, the Supreme Court Collegium recommended the name of Mohammad Yousuf Wani, Judicial Officer, as Judge of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh.

Last year | More on P06

## Record-breaking Voter Turnout Expected In Kashmir In Lok Sabha Polls: Div Com



**Srinagar:** The Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri anticipates a historic voter turnout for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, with extensive preparations underway to facilitate a smooth voting process.

Emphasizing the importance of civic participation, he encourages people to

exercise their right to vote. Also, arrangements are being meticulously organized to ensure the Amarnath pilgrimage proceeds seamlessly, prioritizing the safety and comfort of pilgrims, he said.

"Efforts are also directed towards infrastructure development in Srinagar, with plans to enhance road conditions | More on P06

## 'Voting Only Power Left With People Of J&K'

Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday said voting is the only power left with people of Jammu and Kashmir as the BJP-ruled Centre is making all efforts to suppress their voices. "All kinds of injustices are being done and Jammu and Kashmir has been turned into a jail. To suppress the voice of people here, Amit Shah broke the PDP. They took away legislators, ministers and members of parliament from the PDP so that they can finish off the voice of the party," Mufti told reporters in Anantnag district, 55 kilometres from here. "Now people of Kashmir are left with just their votes," she pointed out. She said several parties were formed in Jammu and Kashmir after the "illegal" abrogation of Article 370 so that the Centre could send to | More on P06

## Jitendra Singh Files Nomination From Udhampur

Union minister Jitendra Singh on Thursday filed his nomination papers from the Udhampur-Kathua Lok Sabha constituency for the first phase of general elections in Jammu and Kashmir on April 19.

The notification for the Udhampur-Kathua constituency was issued on Wednesday along with 102 seats in 17 states and four Union Territories where polls will be held in the first phase. Flanked by wife Manju Singh and Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Singh filed his nomination papers at the office of Returning Officer Rakesh Minhas in Kathua town, officials said. Singh, whose | More on P06

## NC Will Announce LS Candidates After Eid: Omar

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Thursday said the names of NC candidates for the three Lok Sabha seats in Kashmir will be announced at an appropriate time.

"We will announce our candidates at the right time. Our constituencies are going to polls in the third, fourth and fifth phases. There is a lot of time left. Let's celebrate Eid first," he said. Abdullah said that BJP does not have a problem with dynastic politics but has issues with those families that oppose the saffron party. Abdullah cited | More on P06

## Grazing Rights Dispute In Budgam Referred To Gram Sabha

Agencies

**Budgam:** A local court in Chadoora Budgam has directed the Gram Sabha of panchayat halqas Branwar, Neegu and Jabbad to decide about granting of grazing rights to the local population as mandated under the Forest Rights Act -FRA. The order issued by Sub Judge Chadoora (Civil Judge Senior Division) Mr Mir Wajahat has directed the Gram Sabha to consider the rights and preferences of both the parties within 30 days from date of issuance of the order so that there is equitable distribution of the resources. The order was passed by the Court of Sub Judge Chadoora



in the matter of Ghulam Mohammad Jahara V/S Ghulam Qadir Thekrey, both residents of Branwar, Chadoora district Budgam.

The plaintiffs Ghulam Mohammad Jahara @ Chowdhary and others had claimed rights over Chaskani Nad meadow which is spread over an area of more than 5000 kanals located in Doodh Ganga forest range of Pir Panjal forest

division Budgam. The other party Ghulam Qadir Thekrey (defendants) who also belong to Gujjar community allege that Ghulam Mohammad Jahara alias Choudhary had forcibly taken control over 5000 kanals of meadows and were earning money from it as the family takes money from Bakarwals of Rajouri and Poonch for grazing their animals in summer months while as majority of the local Gujjar and other pastoralist communities were deprived of these rights.

The matter finally landed in court last year and Sub Judge Chadoora recently directed the Gram Sabha to decide the matter. Pertinently | More on P06

## Misappropriation Of Govt Funds ACB Files Case Against Ex CEO, Other Officers

Agencies

**Srinagar:** Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Thursday said to have registered a case against the former Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Executive Engineer and Assistant Executive Engineer, Manasbal Development Authority for abuse of official position and misappropriation of Govt funds.

In a statement issued, a spokesman said that Anti Corruption Bureau registered a case under FIR number 03/2024 under section 5(1)(d) r/w Section 5(2) J&K P.C Act Svt. 2006& section 120-B RPC

at PS ACB Baramulla against Zulfiqar Mohammad Khan, then Chief Executive Officer, Bashir Ahmad Baba, the then Executive Engineer, Zahoor Ahmad Sheikh the then Assistant Executive Engineer/ Executive Engineer as well as beneficiary contractors namely Ghulam Nabi Mir S/o Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din R/o Treesa and Ghulam Nabi Bhat S/o Mohammad Maqbool Bhat R/o Safapora and others on account of misappropriation of Govt funds meant for various development works parks etc on the culmination of verification. The verification | More on P06

## Offshore Online Betting, Gambling Govt Issues Advisory Against SM Influencers

Agencies

**New Delhi:** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has today advised all endorsers and influencers on social media to refrain from promoting or advertising, including surrogate advertisements, of offshore online betting and gambling platforms. The Ministry has said that these advertisements have a significant financial and socio-economic implications of online betting and gambling on consumers, particularly the youth.

The Ministry has further advised the online advertisement intermediaries not to target such promotional content towards

Indian audiences. Social media intermediaries have also been advised to conduct sensitization efforts among their users to refrain from publishing such content.

The advisory cautions that failure to comply with it may lead to proceedings under the provisions of Consumer Protection Act, 2019 including removal or disabling of social media posts or accounts and penal action under the applicable statutes.

The advisory underlines that while Section 79 of the IT Act, 2000 provides for exemption from liability of intermediaries for third party information, data, or communication link made available or | More on P06



# RHEUMATIC DISEASES Can Lead To Reproductive Problems, Finds New Study

Press Trust Of India

**R**heumatic diseases of joints, muscles or connecting tissues can lead to reproductive problems like childlessness, preterm birth and birthing children of low weight, new research has found.

Published in the journal *Rheumatology*, the study examined the impact of autoimmune diseases on reproductive health using data from Finnish nationwide registers.

For a person suffering from an autoimmune disease, the body's immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissues and organs.

Authors of the study measured reproductive health in terms of number of children and adverse maternal and pregnancy-related outcomes for such patients.

The researchers found that among those born in Finland between 1964 and 1984, roughly 8 per cent of women and the same percentage of men had an autoimmune disease diagnosed before or during reproductive years.

While many of these autoimmune diseases had little impact on the number of children, women having selected conditions were found to experience a higher prevalence of childlessness.

The team found that the top three diseases having the maximum impact were Addison's disease (23.9 per cent more childlessness), juvenile idiopathic arthritis (9.3 per cent), and vitamin B12 deficiency anaemia (8.6 per cent).

Addison's disease is a disorder in which the adrenal glands do not produce enough hormones, while juvenile idiopathic arthritis is an arthritic condition affecting children or juveniles.

"Despite seeing an elevated risk for diverse childbearing problems in rheumatic and other immune-mediated diseases, many of the complications are still fairly rare," said the study's lead author Anne Kerola from University of Helsinki in Finland.

Several rheumatic diseases lead to higher rates of childlessness and fewer children, and on average, people with such diseases tend to have preterm deliveries, the researchers found in their case-control study.

The study also found that men with rheumatic conditions experienced more childlessness than controls, with most diseases showing no difference but some diseases resulting in much higher prevalence of childlessness.

The team said the top three such

“ **The researchers found that among those born in Finland between 1964 and 1984, roughly 8 per cent of women and the same percentage of men had an autoimmune disease diagnosed before or during reproductive years.** ”

diseases were myasthenia gravis (20.1 per cent more childlessness), Addison's disease (16.4 per cent), and vitamin B12 deficiency anaemia (13.7 per cent).

Myasthenia gravis is a condition in which antibodies prevent nerves and muscles from communicating with each other, thereby weakening the skeletal muscles.

"Family planning should actively be discussed between patients, both men and women, with rheumatic diseases and their healthcare providers. Pregnancies in women with rheumatic diseases are carefully followed up to tailor medications appropriately, which helps reduce risks," said Kerola.

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## LS Polls: DEO Srinagar Urges Young Voters To Inspire Others

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The District Election Officer, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Thursday urged the young voters to inspire their families, friends, relatives and neighbors for participating in the upcoming General Elections with enthusiasm.

A series of awareness programs on the directions of DEO were held under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation program (SVEEP) in various Schools of the District.

The awareness programs were conducted under the supervision of District Nodal Officer SVEEP, AH Fani during which awareness programs and rallies were organized at GHSS Kothibagh and SP Model Higher Secondary School.

The DEO also emphasized the young voters to play their role as ambassadors of democracy.

approach this democratic responsibility with diligence and awareness.

The programs under SVEEP are aimed to raise awareness among the students about the importance of active participation in general elections with a special emphasis on the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

During the awareness programs, the Nodal Officer SVEEP, AH Fani highlighted the crucial role that every voter plays in shaping the democratic process, urging them to exercise their right to vote.

He also provided important information about the various facilities available in polling booths for persons with disabilities, elders, and women. He emphasized the commitment of election machineries to ensuring a fair and accessible electoral process.

Nodal Officer, SVEEP stressed that these aware-



He also congratulated and commends the students who will be casting their vote for the first time in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The DEO further expressed his admiration for their enthusiasm and commitment to playing an active role in the electoral process. He emphasized the importance of informed decision-making and encouraged them to

ness programs will continue, with the goal of reaching every school in District Srinagar to ensure maximum participation in the electoral process.

Following the successful awareness programs, rallies were conducted at GHSS Kothibagh and SP Model Higher Secondary School, further reinforcing the importance of voter education and participation in the electoral process.

## Teenager Dies In Srinagar Road Accident

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A 17-year-old boy died in a road accident after the Scooty he was riding was hit by a vehicle near Lasjan Bridge at Pantha Chowk area in Srinagar on Thursday.

The victim identified as Ashiq Hussain Hajam, a resident of Nilnag Gogipathri Budgam was working at a baker's shop in

Mehjoor Nagar Srinagar.

Officials said the victim on his way to Pantha Chowk from Mehjoor Nagar on his Scooty suffered grievous injuries after being hit by a vehicle. He was taken to SMHS Hospital Srinagar where doctors declared him as brought dead. Police registered a case under relevant sections of law in this regard. KNT



Amid sporadic rains, three young guys could be seen burning electric cables in order to remove the copper wire from them near Nigeen Lake in Srinagar on Thursday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

## Facebook Page Admin Charged With Several Criminal Counts

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Srinagar police on Thursday booked an administrator of a Facebook page on the charges of 'criminal intimidation and alleged sexual assault of a lady', two days after a controversy erupted over a non-governmental organization soliciting contributions from a mobile van in Srinagar.

The victim (name withheld) filed a criminal complaint at Rainwari police station, leading to the registration of a case against Mudasir Bashir alias Mu-

dasir Aziz son of Bashir Ahmad Bhat of Khayam, the administrator of a Facebook page 'Kashmir Youth Power'.

Pertinent to mention here that the court of the Munsiff/Sub Registrar Srinagar Adnan Manzoor Naqashbandi had restrained Aziz from meddling in the NGO's affairs or uploading any video pertaining to it.

The court directions came following a defamation suit filed by the victim. The court had also directed the admin to remove all the related content to the case in hand from his Facebook pages

forthwith.

An investigation has been taken up to ascertain the facts, a senior police official informed Kashmir Observer, confirming the filing of a First Information Report (FIR) number 8 of 2024 under sections 341 (Wrongful Restrain), 354 (sexual Assault), 499 (Defamation) and section 506 (criminal Intimidation) against the accused admin.

Aziz, he added, may be taken on a police remand in light of the heinous accusations made by the complainant woman, who manages the nonprofit Smile Foundation in Srinagar.

## Srinagar Smart City Chosen For Innovative Integrated Waste Management Project

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant development to promote sustainable urban development, the Srinagar Smart City has been chosen as one of the beneficiaries of the CITIIS 2.0 Challenge, a flagship initiative aimed at fostering circular economy solutions across Indian cities.

A senior official said the project aims to revolutionize waste management practices through an Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) facility, set to be established at the Achan dumpsite in Srinagar.

An official document revealed that CITIIS 2.0 is the second phase of the City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain (CITIIS) program which has been conceived by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in collaboration with the French Development Agency (AFD), KfW Development Bank, the European Union (EU), and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) to supplement climate initiatives taken by the Government of India through

a unique model.

"Under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) approach, the ISWM facility will be developed based on the Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Transfer (DBFOT) model. Private investors will inject capital for infrastructure development, with operational rights spanning a fixed concession period", states the document.

As per the officials the project's financial viability will be bolstered by an upfront Viability Gap Funding (VGF) component, sourced from the CITIIS 2.0 funds, covering approximately 30% of the estimated project cost.

Projected to handle a daily waste generation of 650 Tons Per Day (TPD) by 2026, the officials said that the proposed facility will address the gap of 500 TPD of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) through a comprehensive approach.

"Components include waste pre-processing (RDF Plant), bi-methanation for wet waste, waste-to-energy conversion for dry waste, leachate treatment, and a

sanitary landfill facility", the official revealed.

According to the document, one of the key highlights of the project lies in its revenue model, where energy generated from the ISWM facility will be supplied to Distribution Companies (DISCOMS) at a fixed tariff, determined through a competitive bidding process. Additionally, revenue streams from by-products such as compost and recyclables will ensure long-term financial sustainability.

As per the reports, with an estimated capital cost of INR 225.24 Crores, the project aligns with the goals outlined by the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 guidelines, emphasizing the need for VGF support for transformative waste management endeavors.

The CITIIS 2.0 initiative, designed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in collaboration with international partners, represents a pivotal step towards realizing India's climate objectives while fostering economic growth and environmental stewardship at the city level.

## Roadside Encroachments Causes Slow Traffic Movement In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The residents from various areas of Srinagar have raised concerns over slow traffic movement, attributing the issue to the encroachment of roads by different types of roadside vendors on several road stretches in the district.

Residents from several Srinagar areas complained that they were facing difficulties commuting through the city especially during the holy month of Ramadan in evening time, due to congested roads caused by vendors on many road

stretches of Srinagar.

Sajad Ahmad, a resident of Batamalloo, highlighted the problem, stating that the stretch from the AG's office opposite the Secretariat to the old bus yard in Batamalloo has been particularly affected by roadside encroachments.

"The commute along this route has become a headache. Roadside vendors are encroaching carriage roads, and it seems there is no authority monitoring these encroachments," Ahmad remarked.

Similarly, concerns were raised by residents

**The commute along this route has become a headache. Roadside vendors are encroaching carriage roads, and it seems there is no authority monitoring these encroachments**

living in the outskirts of Srinagar, noting that the encroachments on the service lane near the Fairdeal complex in Parimpora pose a significant threat of accidents.

"The service lane near Parimpora Fairdeal complex has become accident-prone as people park their vehicles on the highway to shop from vendors occupying the lane," expressed a local resident.

Many people also highlighted the road stretch from Qamarwari to cement bridge as another point of traffic jam, caused due to the vendors occupying the road sides.

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

**AIRPORTS**  
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

**RAILWAYS**

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

**HIGHWAY STATUS**

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

**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
11 Ramzan  
1445

PRAYERS	
FAJR	5:10
ZUHR	12:40
ASR	4:58
Magrib	6:47
ISHA	8:07

### This Day In History

- 1421- Battle of Baugé - French defeat English
- 1556- Cardinal Reginald Pole becomes archbishop of Canterbury
- 156-5 Turkish Armada leaves Constantinople bound for the siege of Malta with about 193 ships
- 1680- Parliament of Breisach accepts French sovereignty over Elzas
- 1692- Emperor Leopold I names Duke Earnest August of Braunschweig, king
- 1778- Captain James Cook sights Cape Flattery, now in Washington state
- 1784- The Emerald Buddha is moved with great ceremony to its current place in Wat Phra Kaew, Thailand
- Thomas Jefferson, 1st Secretary of State
- 1790 - Thomas Jefferson becomes the 1st US Secretary of State under President Washington
- 1794- Congress bans US vessels from supplying slaves to other countries
- 1832- British Parliament, led by Charles Grey, passes the Reform Act, introducing wide-ranging changes to electoral system of England and Wales, increasing electorate from about 500,000 voters to 813,000
- 1873- Slavery is abolished in Puerto Rico, celebrated as Emancipation Day
- 1917- The USA is the first nation to recognize the new government of Russia
- 1943- Obligatory work for woman ends in Belgium
- 1945- Arab League forms with adoption of a charter in Cairo, Egypt
- 1946- Britain signs treaty granting independence to Jordan
- 1953- Antonín Zápotocký chosen as President of Czechoslovakia
- 1954- Closed since 1939, the London bullion market reopens
- 1957- Republic of India adopts Saka calendar along with Gregorian
- 1958- Under pressure King Saud appoints Faisal Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia
- 1960- 1st patent for lasers granted to Arthur Schawlow & Charles Townes
- 1965- Dudley Senanayake wins his third in general elections in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)
- 1965- US confirms its troops used chemical warfare against the Vietnam
- 1967- Muhammad Ali KO's Zora Folley in 7 for heavyweight boxing title
- 1971- Brian Faulkner becomes the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland
- 1971- USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalinsk USSR
- 1972- Kareem Abdul-Jabbar named NBA MVP
- 1972- US Congress approves the Equal Rights Amendment (still not ratified)
- 1977 - Indira Gandhi resigns as PM of India
- 1978 - France performs nuclear test
- 1979 - Israeli parliament approves peace treaty with Egypt
- 1979 -The Provisional Irish Republican Army explode 24 bombs in various locations across Northern Ireland
- 1981 - Soyuz 39 carries 2 cosmonauts (1 Mongolian) to Salyut 6
- 1982 - 3rd Space Shuttle Mission-Columbia 3 launched
- 1982 - Iran offensive against Iraq
- 1983 - Chaim Herzog elected Israeli president
- 1985 - NASA launches Intelsat VA F-10
- 1988 - US Congress overrides President Reagan's veto of sweeping civil rights bill
- 1993 - Intel introduces Pentium-processor (80586) 64 bits-60 MHz-100+ MIPS
- 1994- Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid is the first woman to win architecture's Pritzker Prize [1]
- 1994- Soyuz TM-21 lands
- 1997- Comet Hale-Bopp Closest Approach to Earth (1.315 AU)
- 2010- NASA's rover 'Spirit' gets caught in a sand trap on Mars and ceases communications with Earth

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that I have changed the name of my son from Abdul Mannan Sheikh to Mana'an Tariq. If anybody has any objection he/she may contact concerned department within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

Tariq Ahmad Sheikh  
F/o Mana'an Tariq  
R/o Arampora Sumbal

fko

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The mother's name of my wards Zoya Jan and Zaira Jan in their DOB certificates issued by Sani Kids School Gojwara has been wrongly written as Rehana while the correct mother's name is Insha which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the above mentioned school within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Insha  
Mother Of Zoya Jan and Zaira Jan  
R/o Nowhatta Srinagar

INF



KASHMIR OBSERVER<sup>TM</sup>

Friday | 22-03-2024

## Rise In Divorce Cases

In recent years, Kashmir has witnessed a conspicuous surge in divorce cases, reflecting broader societal transformations and shift in marital relationships, as a report carried by this paper has revealed.

Various factors contribute to this upward trajectory in divorce rates, spanning a web of challenges faced by couples. Experts have pointed out the impact of modernity on marriages, where shifting gender roles and individualistic attitudes intersect with entrenched cultural norms. The trend of working spouses has, in turn, created a clash between traditional values and contemporary realities, as revealed by our report.

The pressure to conform to societal expectations, coupled with unrealistic notions of marital bliss, often sets the stage for marital discord. Interference from extended family members further exacerbates tensions, impeding couples' ability to navigate conflicts and compromises.

Economic strains have also been found to weigh heavily on marriages, particularly for marginalized communities grappling with financial instability. The inability to manage expenses and fulfill familial responsibilities deepens rifts between partners, aggravating existing tensions. Also, societal pressures and unrealistic expectations contribute to a culture of intolerance, where minor disagreements escalate into irreconcilable conflicts.

The issue of infertility was found to further complicate the marital landscape, with childless couples facing heightened strains and increased likelihood of divorce. While once considered a taboo topic, divorce has gradually shed its stigma, empowering couples to seek liberation from unhappy unions. The shifting attitudes reflect a growing recognition of individual agency and the pursuit of personal happiness.

However, alongside these shifts, certain challenges persist, perpetuating cycles of marital discord. Drug abuse has been found to fuel domestic violence and relationship breakdowns. The failure to address underlying social issues, such as unemployment and substance abuse, further compounds the challenges faced by couples seeking to salvage their marriages.

In this regard, Dr Muzamil Jan and Asma Hyder's research stresses the importance of communication and mutual understanding in fostering healthy relationships. Rejecting outdated notions of marital roles and power dynamics, couples must embrace flexibility and empathy to weather the storms of marital life.

The surge in divorce cases in Kashmir signals a broader social change, necessitating the need for nuanced interventions to support struggling couples. By addressing underlying socio-economic challenges, promoting gender equality, and fostering open dialogue on marital issues, stakeholders can work towards creating a more resilient institution of marriage. Only through collective action and empathetic engagement can we navigate the complex terrain of modern relationships and build a society where love and understanding prevail over discord and despair.

# Ladakh's Fight for Identity

Ladakh's struggle for constitutional rights and identity highlights the complexities and challenges following the region's transition to a Union Territory status



ANI Photo

RIYAZ WANI

People in the region have developed a deep sense of existential crisis: they apprehend an inevitable change in demography and takeover of their land, jobs and resources in the absence of credible constitutional protections. Exacerbating this fear among the people of the region is their small population which has bred a fear of a rapid demographic change

As the climate activist Sonam Wangchuk observes fast unto death as part of his struggle for constitutional rights for his people, the irony of his protest hasn't been lost on anyone. In 2019, Wangchuk was at the forefront of the activists in Leh, who celebrated the withdrawal of Article 370 and the granting of union territory status to Ladakh. In a tweet, Wangchuk then thanked the prime minister Narendra Modi "for fulfilling Ladakh's longstanding dream," and termed the far-reaching constitutional changes as a step towards "democratic decentralization."

Since then, he has grown increasingly disillusioned with Ladakh's UT status and come to a conclusion that the region was better off with being a part of Jammu and Kashmir," something he told the media last year. And now his fast, second since last year, shows that Wangchuk has moved 180 degrees from his 2019 position. Not just him but also the people of the Leh district while those in the neighbouring Kargil had largely opposed the UT status from the day one.

The two districts have now closed ranks and are jointly fighting for the constitutional protections for Ladakh. The Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) which are spearheading the agitation, are demanding special rights and statehood for Ladakh. It is the first time in decades, the two Ladakh districts have been on the same page in pressing the union government to fulfill their demands.

In the new scheme of things, the democratically elected Ladakh Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs), both of Leh and Muslim majority Kargil, which acted autonomously in undivided J&K have become redundant. The region is now directly ruled by the centre through a Lieutenant Governor. So, LAHDCs effectively mean little for regional empow-

erment. The current Ladakhi struggle is thus born of a deep sense of loss.

However, the struggle has so far achieved little. The centre has largely cold-shouldered Ladakhi leaders but the latter too have not backed down. Ladakhi demands have only grown in number. The LAB and KDA now seek tribal status for Ladakh, statehood, inclusion in the constitution's Sixth Schedule, job reservation for locals, and a parliamentary seat each for the Leh and Kargil districts. They are citing the cases of Mizoram, Tripura and Sikkim which are protected by special constitutional provisions.

Wangchuk has explained the significance of the Sixth Schedule, emphasizing its requirement for consulting local indigenous people on any agenda. The provision entails the establishment of councils with legislative and law-making rights, ensuring that industries can operate only with the consent of the local population.

Last year, the Ladakh Tourist Trade Alliance (LTTA), a coalition of trade, tourism, religious, and political organizations in Leh, passed a resolution opposing investment by outsiders in the tourism sector of Ladakh. The alliance warned that if such investments continue, they would impose restrictions on these investors through non-cooperation from the local travel trade fraternity, as well as from the community and political organizations.

Where do we go from here? Nowhere in the near future. More so, until the new government is formed at the centre. And should the BJP return to power with a landslide mandate as looks likely, it may do little to address Ladakhi demands. Meanwhile, the Ladakhi agitation is likely to continue. People in the region have developed a deep sense of existential crisis: they apprehend an inevitable change in demography and

takeover of their land, jobs and resources in the absence of credible constitutional protections. Exacerbating this fear among the people of the region is their small population which has bred a fear of a rapid demographic change, in case the outsiders aren't constitutionally barred from settling in the region.

The total population of Ladakh, according to the 2011 census, is 2.74 lakh. While Leh with a population of 1,33,487 is Buddhist majority, Kargil with a population of 1,40,802 is Muslim majority. Overall, Ladakh has a slim Muslim majority. But this hasn't prevented the two communities who in the past were at daggers drawn to come together.

This has created a difficult situation for the union government. It can't be seen extending constitutional safeguards to Ladakh and denying the same to Jammu and Kashmir where similar anxieties about identity and culture prevail - albeit, currently in a dormant state. The agitation in Ladakh has thus come as a moment of reckoning for New Delhi.

At the same time, it is crucial for the union government to work towards a solution that ensures Ladakh's constitutional rights and preserves their cultural identity. The demand for tribal status, inclusion in the Sixth Schedule is not extraneous but a rightful claim that deserves attention and consideration. As Ladakh faces economic and political challenges in the aftermath of the constitutional changes, it is imperative to find a middle ground that respects the region's unique circumstances.

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

The author is the Political Editor at Kashmir Observer



Your FINANCIAL

Did you know ?

## Smart and Strategic Improvement

Irshad Mushtaq

Did you know that an investment of Rs 4.27 lac in Titan shares in 1999 is worth Rs 38.39 cr today? This staggering growth exemplifies the potential for creating wealth through the stock market. However, it is important to note that such extraordinary returns are not achieved without careful consideration and investment strategy.

One key lesson to take from this success story is the importance of holding onto quality management and honest management. Companies with strong and ethical leadership tend to perform well over the long term, leading to greater returns for investors. It is also crucial to focus on companies that are continuing to grow and remain profitable. By investing in such businesses, one can position themselves to capitalize on their success and secure long-term gains.

The stock market is known for its volatility, and it is imperative to maintain patience and discipline during times of fluctuation. While it may be tempting to panic and sell during downturns, staying the course and remaining invested in quality companies is vital for long-term success. It is important to remember that quality will follow the business over time, and by being patient and disciplined, investors can benefit from the growth of their investments.

In conclusion, the remarkable growth of an investment in Titan shares serves as a powerful reminder of the potential for wealth creation in the stock market. By focusing on quality management, honest management, and continuing profitable companies, investors can position themselves for long-term success. While the stock market may be volatile, maintaining patience and discipline can lead to significant returns over time. This serves as a valuable lesson for anyone looking to build wealth through smart and strategic investment.

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## Power of Words

Words carry a lot of power. They can build and lift, comfort and calm, and teach and inspire. Contrarily, words can destroy and demolish, incite and enrage, and embarrass and demean. Their meanings crystallize perceptions that shape our beliefs, drive our behaviour, and ultimately create our world. The power of words

arises from our emotional responses when we read, speak or hear them. The words we write or speak to others can leave a huge impact and create a lasting memory, either good or bad. It is therefore very important to choose them wisely and use them properly. Words are like music - when played well, they can enchant and delight the whole environment. And, words

are free. But, if used in a wrongful and harmful manner, they even cost you a mountain. Words hold incredible power to shape our lives. Positive communication, rooted in empathy and understanding, can transform relationships, boost our physical and mental well-being, and inspire personal growth. By choosing our words carefully, we can harness the power

of language to create a brighter, more fulfilling life. So, let us embrace the power of words and use them to uplift, inspire, and transform the world. Said Mother Teresa: "Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless."

Ranaganathan Sivakumar



Mindful Fridays

# Strengthening Bonds

## The Art of Understanding and Conflict Resolution in Marriage

Wasim Kakroo

Misunderstandings and arguments are often viewed as disruptive forces within marital relationships, yet they possess the potential to fortify and deepen the connection between partners. Contrary to popular belief, when handled constructively, these challenges can serve as catalysts for growth, communication, and intimacy. In this article we discuss the nuances of embracing misunderstandings and arguments within marital relationships, elucidating their transformative power when approached with empathy and understanding.

### EMBRACING CONFLICT

Conflict avoidance often stems from a desire to maintain harmony and avoid discomfort within relationships. Yet, it can inadvertently result in unresolved issues simmering beneath the surface. Embracing conflict, however, offers a path to growth. Instead of seeing disagreements as threats, couples can view them as opportunities for understanding and strengthening their bond. By confronting differences openly and respectfully, they lay the groundwork for honest communication and deeper connection. Through this process, couples not only resolve immediate issues but also build resilience and trust, fostering a healthier and more fulfilling relationship in the long run. Embracing conflict may be uncomfortable at times, but the rewards of increased intimacy and understanding make it a worthwhile endeavor.

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Effective communication serves as the bedrock for nurturing successful relationships. It acts as a shield against misunderstandings that frequently stem from miscommunication or varying perspectives on events. Mastering communication skills becomes imperative in steering through misunderstandings and conflicts adeptly. Key elements like active listening, where one genuinely absorbs and comprehends the partner's message,



empathy to understand their emotional state, and the knack for articulating thoughts clearly play pivotal roles in fostering effective communication within marital bonds. Through active listening, partners demonstrate respect and validation for each other's viewpoints, while empathy cultivates understanding and connection. Clear expression ensures that thoughts and feelings are conveyed accurately, reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation. In essence, honing these skills lays the foundation for harmonious and enduring marital relationships.

### CULTIVATING EMPATHY

Empathy acts as the vital con-

duit between partners, enabling comprehension and bonding despite conflicts. Amidst disagreements, individuals often fixate on their own viewpoints, disregarding their partner's emotions and experiences. Nurturing empathy entails consciously contemplating your partner's sentiments, viewpoints, and requirements. Through recognizing and affirming each other's feelings, couples cultivate a more profound connection and intimacy. Rather than solely focusing on proving oneself right, empathy encourages individuals to genuinely listen and understand their partner's perspective. This empathetic approach fosters mutual respect, strengthens emotional bonds,

and paves the way for constructive communication, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of the relationship.

### TRUST AND RESILIENCE

Conflict resolution transcends mere problem-solving; it's a journey toward fortifying trust and resilience in relationships. It demands openness, honesty, and a readiness to confront discomfort. Couples who adeptly navigate disagreements not only find solutions but also deepen their bond. Each instance of overcoming challenges together strengthens their commitment and equips them with resilience for future conflicts. It's not just about reaching an agreement; it's about nurturing the foundation of trust upon which the relationship thrives. Through vulnerability and communication, conflicts become opportunities for growth and deeper connection. Ultimately, conflict resolution becomes a testament to the strength and endurance of the relationship.

### GROWTH AND ADAPTABILITY

Every misunderstanding and argument offers a silver lining, serving as a catalyst for growth and learning within relationships. Through introspection and reflection, couples can discern recurring patterns and unearth underlying issues, paving the way for improvement. Approaching conflicts with a growth mindset fosters adaptability and resilience, essential qualities for navigating the complexities of relationships. Embracing disagreements as opportunities for personal and relational development instills a sense of continuous improvement and evolution. Rather than viewing conflict as a threat, couples can embrace it as a tool for strengthening their bond and deepening their understanding of each other. In this way, every discord becomes a stepping stone towards a stronger, more harmonious relationship.

### THE ART OF DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Difficult conversations are crucial for fostering healthy rela-

tionships, despite the discomfort they may bring. Evading such discussions only prolongs issues and stifles genuine connection. Mastering these conversations requires empathy, openness, and vulnerability. Establishing a safe environment where both parties feel heard and understood enables couples to navigate concerns and desires effectively. Through transparent dialogue, partners can address underlying tensions constructively, strengthening their bond in the process. Embracing difficult conversations as opportunities for growth fosters mutual trust and understanding, ultimately deepening the connection between individuals. By confronting challenging topics head-on, couples lay the foundation for a resilient and fulfilling relationship built on honesty and mutual respect.

### ESTABLISHING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Conflict within relationships can indeed be productive, but maintaining healthy boundaries is paramount to ensure that disagreements lead to growth rather than harm. Couples must establish clear guidelines to navigate arguments constructively. This involves implementing strategies like taking breaks when emotions run high, using "I" statements to express feelings without assigning blame, and refraining from resorting to personal attacks or criticism. By respecting each other's boundaries, couples foster an environment of safety and mutual respect. Such boundaries serve as pillars supporting the foundation of the relationship, allowing for open communication and the resolution of conflicts in a constructive manner. Ultimately, these boundaries help strengthen the bond between partners, promoting understanding and growth within the relationship.

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Conflict within relationships can indeed be productive, but maintaining healthy boundaries is paramount to ensure that disagreements lead to growth rather than harm. Couples must establish clear guidelines to navigate arguments constructively

# Understanding Right to Dignity in Islam

Umer Riyaz

Human dignity is recognition that human beings possess a special value intrinsic to their humanity and as such are worthy of respect. It unfolds that a person is inherently and by nature venerable and honorable. None has the right to humiliate, insult and diminish the respect of any human being irrespective of the reasons and circumstances. Human dignity is a fundamental value that elevates a person's feeling of being revered. Everything that diminishes human dignity contradicts the principle of honor and respect such as torture, insult and humiliation. But unfortunately, the world is witnessing a visible violation of human rights in contemporary times. The status of human life as well as its dignity is largely depreciated. However, the Quran says: "And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on land and sea and provided them with good things and preferred them over many of those whom We have created" (Al-Isra:70). Human dignity is a basic principle upon which not only the principles of human rights are based but also all the principles of the divine religions endorse the same. This dignity is equal for every human being irrespective of his cast, creed and gender.

However, Islam came with the message of equality without affecting differences in livelihoods, ages, colors and races centuries before the formulation of modern human dignity theories. It was a manifestation of the greatness of the Creator and His wisdom in the construction of the universe within a framework of coexistence, cooperation and integration. The Quran explicitly defines this concept in the following verse: "O people, indeed We created you from male and female

and made you peoples and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (Al-Hujrat:13). In other verse it is mentioned: "And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and colors. Indeed, in that are signs for those of knowledge" (Al-Rome:22). The quality of life of the corporeal being is depended on food and nourishment while as the souls or ethereal being is depended on honor which diminishes by humiliation, oppression and disrespect. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ forbade striking on anybody's face because it is a subject of one's dignity. Similarly, Almighty forbade any action which degrades or lowers human dignity by saying: "O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule another people, perhaps they may be better than them, nor let women ridicule other women, perhaps they may be better than them, and do not insult one another and do not call each other by offensive titles. Wretched is the name of disobedience after one's faith. And whoever does not repent then it is those who are the wrongdoers" (Al-Hujrat:11). The aforementioned verses depict that almighty Allah forbade the believers from making fun of others by mocking them and looking with contempt. Moreover, He forbade cursing anyone with unpleasant words because that becomes a catalyst of hatred and lead people to ignorance. Thus, sarcasm and mockery does not emanate except from a soul polluted with arrogance and it is a tool for destroying human relations. The Almighty states: "And speak kindly to people". (Al-Baqarah:83)

Allah commanded mankind not to be suspicious of any human being including slaves and not to spy on their private lives and follow their short-



comings. Furthermore, He also commanded not to talk ill about them or make backbiting in order to corrupt their image. Allah terms these social evils equivalent to eating the flesh of one's own dead brother. On the contrary, He commanded us to protect ourselves from these reprehensible things and to stamp out the root of these evils. On the authority of Al-Ma'rur bin Suwaid, he said, "I met Abu Dhar who was wearing a cloak and his slave too was wearing a same so I asked him about the reason. He replied: I insulted a man by cursing his mother so the

Prophet ﷺ said to me: O Abu Dhar, you still have some characteristics of ignorance. Your slaves are your brothers..." (Bukhari).

Human dignity is a one of the basic spirits of Islam, it obligated Muslims to observe the human dignity that Almighty Allah bestowed to man with His bounty and mercy in which He did not differentiate between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ resoundingly and reverberatory said on farewell pilgrimage: "O people, your Lord is one, your father is one, and there is no superiority for an Arab over

a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for a white over a black, nor for a black over a white except with piety." (Bukhari)

Islam commanded its followers to preserve the dignity of non-Muslims and respect their feelings and sentiments. The Almighty Allah says: "And do not argue with the People of the Book except in a way that is best, except with those who do wrong among them" (Al-Ankabut:46). In Islamic perspective man is honored being regardless of his ethnicity, culture, origin, religious belief and his position

and value in the society. Almighty said: "And do not insult those who invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah as an enemy without knowledge" (Al-An'am:108). There is an explicit prohibition against harming the gods of the other faiths in order to preserve human dignity, freedom, and to respect their religious sentiments and emotions. While interpreting this verse Imam Al-Qurtubi says, it is not permissible for a Muslim to insult their students, their religion, or their churches and not expose anything that leads to that as it is the way that leads person to sin.

Preserving human dignity is evident to us in the Prophet's ﷺ dealings with non-Muslims even with the dead among them. On the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah, he said: "A funeral passed by us, so the Prophet ﷺ stood up for it, and we also did the same, so we said: O Messenger of God, it is the funeral of a Jew! He said: "If you see the funeral, stand up." (Bukhari). This depicts that Islam is a religion of peace, mercy and justice that seeks to guide people and bring them out of darkness into light.

In numerous hadiths, Prophet ﷺ urged Muslims to uphold the divine morals and to deal others with mercy as Allah is merciful to his servants. In other traditions Messenger ﷺ of Allah says: "Those who are merciful will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful, and have mercy on those on earth and He who is in heaven will have mercy on you" (Tirmidhi). He also says: "He who does not have mercy will not be shown mercy" (Muslim). Thus, Islamic law preserve human dignity and considers all those acts against the spirit of Islam that undermine human dignity.

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# FCIK Calls For Measures To Improve EODB Index For MSMEs In J&K

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) has called upon the UT government to re-assess the relevance and requirement of current rules, regulations and compliances in industrial policies and schemes in order to improve 'Ease of Doing Business' (EODB) index for MSMEs in J&K as per the parameters suggested by the GOI and the World Bank.

While acknowledging the decisions taken by the UT government in past few years regarding minimizing the human interface by introducing online systems in processing of cases and claims of MSMEs, the FCIK regretted that such wonderful reforms could not achieve desired results due to lack of cohesion at various levels of the administration coupled with complex procedural guidelines.

"The requirement of heaps of irrelevant and unnecessary documents asked for submission for disposal of cases and claims have only resulted in time loss



and mental agony of the entrepreneurs, but have also put a question mark on relevance of the very incentives if not disbursed within a timeline," a statement from FCIK said.

Exemplifying the cases filed by hundreds of enterprises online for 'Turnover incentive' claims for the year 2021-22, FCIK said that these cases had been subjected to pre-disbursal audit and returned to the MSMEs more than a year

after filing with mostly unnecessary observations. Under the J&K Industrial Policy 2021-30, Turnover Incentive scheme was one of the incentives provided to MSMEs, however, without any headway till date.

FCIK suggested that the government could make this incentive scheme automatic in tune with the time-tested duty draw-back scheme on export of goods. "Like in case of duty draw-back scheme, the incentive was being

assessed on the electronic shipping bill stamped by customs and credited automatically in the exporters account, the detail of annual turnover by each MSME in J&K could be obtained from Commercial Taxes department paving way for automatic transfer of the assessed amount under the scheme" FCIK said, adding that this fool-proof mechanism with zero error possibility could relieve the entrepreneurs from the burden of submitting unnecessary and time-consuming documents against their claims.

FCIK has sought the intervention of incumbent Chief Secretary to look into the possibilities of such automatic transfer of incentives on the basis of details available with departments and other organisations with very less or no demanding requirements for entrepreneurs.

"Whereas the details required for disbursement of Turnover incentive and GST refunds could be obtained from Commercial taxes department, the interest subvention claims could directly

be entertained from the banks and other financial institutions," FCIK suggested to the CS, adding that such a mechanism would not only simplify regulations for protection of interests of entrepreneurs but would also improve the ranking index of J&K among performing states/UTs in Ease of Doing Business.

FCIK has also invited the attention of the Chief Secretary towards issue of renewal of forest licenses of existing wood based units that were being asked to upload "consent to establish" and "consent to operate" certificates from Pollution Control Board besides many other documents with their renewal applications.

"Hundreds of wood based units established decades back were being asked to produce a certificate that is obtained only once in the lifetime of a unit", regretted FCIK, adding that the rules, norms and procedures in the UT had to be at par with the policies and procedures of the central government as well as other states."

## 'Voting Towards Progress': KU hosts daylong awareness program

Srinagar: To understand the significance of voting and empowering individuals to actively shape the future they desire, the Kashmir University (KU) Wednesday, hosted a daylong awareness programme here.

Titled, 'Voting Towards Progress: Voters as Architects for a Bright Future' under the banner 'Nothing like Voting, I Vote for Sure', the programme witnessed talks and deliberations highlighting the significance of electoral process in shaping the future of a nation, an official statement issued here read.

In her message, KU Vice Chancellor, Prof Nilofer Khan, said that peoples' collective actions at the ballot box pave the path towards progress, unity and inclusive governance.

"Voting is not merely a right but a sacred duty of every citizen, empowering individuals to actively shape the future they desire," Prof Khan said while urging masses to harness the power of their voices "to steer the

society towards prosperity and justice".

While emphasising the paramount importance of each vote, KU Registrar, Prof Naseer Iqbal, said: "Every vote matters, it is the cornerstone of all democracies and a powerful tool for change."

Dean, Students Welfare, Prof Aneesa Shafi, reiterated that voting is not merely a right but a solemn responsibility for every citizen, including

The event featured talks by various speakers underlining the significance of voting in decision-making and ensuring the representation of diverse voices and perspectives.

KU faculty, officials from the administration, scholars and students attend the programme.

The varsity's Department of Students Welfare and Educational Multimedia Research Centre made all the necessary arrangements for the smooth conduct of the event, the statement added.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Embracing Differences:

The trend, according to child experts, is changing as a "sense of acceptance" is taking hold among parents.

Take the case of Rizwan and Nargis. After remaining in grief and shock for a week, the parents came out of the denial mode and decided to take care of their only child.

"This is from Allah, what can we do," said Rizwan, adding, "Our love for our child continues to grow and remains unchanged."

Dr. Suhail Naik, Assistant Professor at the New Children's Hospital, GMC Srinagar, spoke of the immense love and dedication he has witnessed from parents raising children with Down syndrome.

"It's a good sign but these parents need some schooling and guidance to learn how to take care of their child at home," Dr. Naik said. "These kids need special services."

Dr. Naik said that DS is a very common genetic disorder all over the world and in Kashmir as well and late marriage is the primary reason for a child with down syndrome.

"The birth of a child with down syndrome invariably depends on the age of the mother. The older the mother, the higher the chances of having a child with Down syndrome," Dr Naik added.

He further explained that the disease occurs because of nondisjunction of Chromosome 21. "The Chromosome has to separate but with aging that Chromosome 21 fails to separate," he added.

Several studies indicate that mothers of children with Down syndrome face significant stress and often need to adjust their careers, finances, and lifestyles.

"There is a need for training programs to help parents cope with the problems faced by their children with Down syndrome. Stakeholders in the education sector could help in this regard," one study found.

The parents, according to the study, became anxious and worried when their children did not develop speech, and when behavioral problems became difficult to manage.

According to a study, published in 2021 by a group of scholars, trisomy 21 stands as a major contributing factor for intellectual disability.

The study titled, "Pattern of cytogenetic abnormalities in syndromic mental retardation/intellectual disability in Kashmir region of Jammu and Kashmir" reveals that the frequency of free trisomy and advanced maternal age in J&K is much higher as compared to that reported by different studies across India.

Dr Yasir RATHER, a child psychiatrist said that most of the patients with down syndrome develop behavioral changes and Alzheimer (a type of dementia).

"...however most of the patients with down syndrome are jolly in nature and the parents do not perceive them as burdensome," Dr Yasir added.

In Kashmir, a number of children are born with Down syndrome and the parents find it very hard to find schools for their Children. Although there are few private NGOs who have started some special homes for these kids. However, these special educational resources are mostly concentrated in Srinagar, with a limited number available in other parts of Kashmir. Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sheetal Nanda told Kashmir Observer that In a move

towards greater inclusion, the school education department is working on a policy for these children.

"We don't have special schools for these kids as such but the education department is working on inclusive education. This initiative will see children with Down syndrome integrated into regular schools with the support of specially trained educators," she said.

The policy of the government, according to Nanda, is that these kids should not feel left out and aloof. "They should be part of the system."

### J&K Startups

the spotlight as they showcased their ground breaking ventures alongside 110 students from SKUAST Jammu, Central University, Jammu, SMVDU Katra, Govt Polytechnic College, Jammu and Jammu University heralded as future entrepreneurs of Jammu and Kashmir. All participants were facilitated by Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), the nodal agency for J&K Startup Policy implementation in Jammu and Kashmir. The students

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, visited the venue on the concluding day and offered words of encouragement and motivation to the burgeoning startups and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Speaking on the occasion, Director JKEDI, Rajinder Kumar Sharma (JKAS), expressed his gratitude for the overwhelming response and success of the event. He emphasized the pivotal role of startups and budding entrepreneurs in driving socio-economic development and fostering innovation in Jammu and Kashmir. "As the curtains fall on Startup Mahakumbh, the journey towards nurturing and empowering the entrepreneurial spirit in Jammu and Kashmir continues. The success of the event reinforces the region's commitment to leveraging innovation and entrepreneurship as catalysts for growth and prosperity," he said.

The event served as a catalyst for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and networking, providing a platform for startups and students to showcase their potential and connect with investors, mentors, and industry leaders.

### Kashmir's Higher

snow at few places. Meanwhile, the night temperatures in all the weather stations across Kashmir settled above the freezing point.

The summer capital Srinagar recorded 9.9 degrees Celsius against 4.2°C on the previous night.

The ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district recorded a minimum temperature of 3.2 against minus 0.8 the previous night.

Similarly, the tourist resort of Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district recorded 3 degrees Celsius against minus 1.1 as the minimum temperature.

### Halt 'Viksit Bharat'

"... some of them could have possibly been delivered to recipients with a delay because of systemic and network limitations," the ministry said in a communication to the Commission.

The poll authority had received several complaints that such messages highlighting the government's initiatives were still being delivered on citizens' phones despite the announcement of the General Elections

2024 and the MCC coming into force.

The Congress and the Trinamool Congress had raised objections to the message and requested the Election Commission to act against this "blatant violation" of the Model Code of Conduct.

### President Appoints

on September 21, the Chief Justice of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh in consultation with his two senior-most colleagues had recommended the appointment of Wani as an Additional Judge of the High Court.

"In order to ascertain the suitability of the candidate for elevation to the High Court, we have consulted Judges of the Supreme Court who are conversant with the affairs of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh," the Collegium headed by the Chief Justice of India Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud had said.

For the purpose of assessing the merit and suitability of the candidate for elevation to the High Court, the Collegium is said to have scrutinized and evaluated the material placed on record.

"We have also perused the observations made by the Department of Justice in the file."

Mohammad Yousuf Wani joined the judicial service on 9 December 1997 and has served as a judicial officer in various capacities. Prior to this, he practised at the Bar for over three years.

"The inputs placed by the Government in the file indicate that he enjoys a good personal and professional image. Nothing adverse has come to notice with regard to his integrity," the Collegium had noted.

The Annual Confidential Reports of the officer are consistently of a high order, it said.

"The consultee-judges have concurrently given a positive opinion about his suitability for appointment as a Judge of the High Court," the Collegium had said, adding, "Having regard to the material on record and all relevant factors, the Collegium is of the considered view that Shri Mohammad Yousuf Wani is fit and suitable for being appointed as a Judge of the High Court for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh."

### Record-breaking Voter

through black topping once weather conditions improve," he added.

### Jitendra Singh

candidacy was announced in the BJP's first list on March 3, performed a puja at his residence in the Trikuta Nagar area of the city in the presence of friends and relatives earlier in the day.

The two-time MP from Udhampur-Kathua is aiming for a hat-trick of wins and thanked the people for their faith in him while seeking their blessings for yet another term.

"The people from the hills of Kishtwar and Doda had come here yesterday to show their love and faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is proof of the work done in this region. But the opposition failed to see any development," Singh told the rally in Kathua.

Seeking the support of the people, he said, "I bow before you for the love and faith in me and I again seek your blessings".

Before filing the nomination papers, Singh took out a rally that saw the participation of Dalip Singh Rana, better known as 'The Great Khali' for

his exploits in the World Wrestling Entertainment, and BJP J&K chief Ravinder Raina.

Khali, who is also a BJP leader, sought votes for Singh and said the region has progressed under him.

The Udhampur-Kathua Lok Sabha constituency was once a stronghold of the Congress party.

In 2014, Singh defeated former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and veteran Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad by more than 60,000 votes from the Udhampur seat.

Singh received 4,87,369 votes to 4,26,393 votes garnered by Azad, who has since quit the Congress.

In 2019, he won against Congress candidate Vikram Aditya Singh, the son of Congress leader Karan Singh. He won by a substantial margin of 3,57,252 votes. After a recent summary revision, the Udhampur-Kathua constituency now has over 16.20 lakh registered voters. Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be conducted in five phases with voting in each of the five parliamentary constituencies to be held in a separate phase. Polling in the five Lok Sabha constituencies will be held on April 19 (Udhampur), April 26 (Jammu), May 7 (Anantnag), May 13 (Srinagar) and May 20 (Baramulla). The Ladakh Lok Sabha seat spread over Kargil and Leh districts will go to polls in the fifth phase of polls.

### Stray Dogs Kill

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident.

### NC Will Announce

the BJP's tie-up with Chirag Paswan in Bihar and Union Home Minister Amit Shah's meeting with Raj Thackeray amid speculation of an alliance in Maharashtra for the Lok Sabha polls and asked if these were not examples of 'parivarvad' or family politics.

"BJP does not have a problem with dynastic families. They have a problem with those families which oppose them. And I am proud to say that I oppose the BJP," Abdullah told reporters here.

"Did not the BJP tie up in Bihar with Chirag Paswan? Amit Shah recently met Raj Thackeray. Are these not examples of parivarvad. Is there (BJP's) candidate from Guna in Gwalior (Jyotiraditya Scindia), not a dynast?" he asked.

When asked about the Congress taking back former BJP leader Chaudhary Lal Singh, Abdullah said, "I will not say anything on it as it is an internal matter of the Congress. It is better you ask the Congress about it."

Singh had supported the people accused and later convicted of the brutal rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in Kathua in 2018.

Singh, who had left the Congress ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha polls and joined the BJP, is seen as a front-runner for a Congress ticket to contest the parliament elections from Kathua.

The NC, which is part of the INDIA bloc, will have to support Singh -- if he is named as Congress candidate -- according to the seat-sharing agreement.

**'Voting Only**  
Parliament the leaders favoured by it.

"It is a different matter if you want to rig that too, so that you can take to parliament those blue-eyed leaders whose parties were formed after 2019. What can one do about it?" the

PDP supremo said.

"It is for the people of the country to ponder that it took a long time

### Grazing Rights

under Forest Rights Act 2006 also Gram Sabha is the supreme authority to decide upon the claims filed by local population. The Gram Sabha is the adult population of the village and 50 % quorum is necessary to decide on the Forest Rights Act (FRA) related cases.

Chairman DDC Budgam Nazir Ahmad Khan hailed the order issued by Sub Judge Chadoora and assured that a mahā Gram Sabha would be held soon to decide this long pending dispute

"The order issued by the Court of Sub Judge Chadoora on Feb 28th 2024 is in tandem with the provisions of the Forest Rights Act and District Development Council Budgam will ensure compliance of this order and within a week or so we will make sure a joint Gram Sabha is held at Branwar for three panchayats (Branwar, Neegu and Jabbad) under the guidance of District Development Council Budgam, DFO Budgam, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, BDO Surasayr and others" said Nazir Ahmad Khan Chairman DDC Budgam

Pertinently the Gujjar community of Branwar, Jabbad, Neegu villages in Budgam district were denied the grazing rights for their hundreds of sheep in the pasture-land of Chaskani Naad last summer. The said pastureland is located at an altitude of 4000 meters in Doodh Ganga forest range of Pir Panjal Forest Division. The villagers had been alleging that Chowdhary family from Branwar Chadoora had taken control over the hundreds of acres grassland (5000 kanal plus) in Chaskani Naad meadow for last many years and the family takes money as "ransom" from grazers especially from Bakerwal families of Rajouri and Poonch by allowing them to graze their animals in the said meadows. The matter finally landed in court which has now ordered the local Gram Sabha to decide the issue within a month's time. The defendants have also been restrained from using the pastureland until disposal of the case.

As the matter took an ugly turn last year the Chairman DDC Budgam Nazir Ahmad Khan had to write to Lt Governor Shri Manoj Sinha regarding this issue and had ordered for holding a gram sabha to address this issue under Forest Rights Act -FRA.

Finally the Court of Sub Judge Chadoora has also ordered for holding of gram sabha to decide the grazing rights to sheep and cattle at Chaskani Nad meadow. This meadow belongs to the entire population but few families are illegally claiming rights over it. We hope to get the certified copy of the order in a few days. We also appeal DC Budgam, DFO Budgam and SDM Chadoora to facilitate holding the gram sabha soon and address this issue democratically as mandated under Forest Rights Act " said Ali Mohammad Jahara a local resident of Branwar Chadoora and an aggrieved person.

**ACB Files Case**  
conducted into matter revealed that Wullar Manasbal Development Authority executed about 23 number of civil works during the financial years 2016-17, 2017-18 & 2018-19. Out of which 18 works were tendered and in 15 works, huge illegal & fraudulent extensions were granted ranging

from 44% to 218% by the then Chief Executive Officer Zulfikar Mohammad Khan in brazen violation of laid down norms by gross abuse of official position & authority as same was beyond competence of the officer, the statement reads.

The statement added that the verification conducted further revealed that five works were illegally & fraudulently executed on approval basis, even without inviting tenders by the then Chief Executive Officer namely Zulfikar Mohammad Khan and then Executive Engineers, Wullar Manasbal Development Authority, Bashir Ahmad Baba and Zahoor Ahmad Sheikh AEE during the period 2016-2019.

"The accused persons not only granted illegal/fraudulent extensions in these works but also raised & provided huge exorbitant rates to contractors on various items utilized in these works during execution of works which was also in grave violation of lid down norms in vogue," the statement added.

During the course of preliminary probe the experts from Engineering wing of ACB Kashmir conducted spot inspection of the works executed by the accused public servants and scrutinized the record on the basis of which the loss caused was computed & liabilities of the officers fixed, it said.

The acts of omission & commission on part of the accused public servants in connivance and conspiracy with private beneficiaries (contractors) led to huge loss to state exchequer and commensurate undue pecuniary benefits upon the contractors. 6. Immediately after the registration of FIR, House search warrants in respect of accused public servants were issued by the court of Spl Judge Anti Corruption Baramulla and in pursuance to House search warrants, the ACB conducted searches in multiple locations simultaneously belonging to accused persons at Rhematabad Colony Hyderpora, Malik Masjid Soura, Sabzi Mandi Soura and Durpora Mangiam Ganderbal in presence of respective jurisdictional Magistrates, the statement said.

The searches were conducted meticulously, in accordance with legal/laid down/ procedure, to gather evidence linked with the investigation of the case. During the course of searches various incriminating documents have been recovered. Further investigations of the case are going on, the statement said.

**Govt Issues**  
hosted by them, Sub section (3)(b) of section 79 provides that the exemption from liability shall not apply if upon receiving actual knowledge, or on being notified by the appropriate Government or its agency that any information, data or communication link residing in or connected to a computer resource controlled by the intermediary is being used to commit the unlawful act, the intermediary fails to expeditiously remove or disable access to that material on that resource without vitiating the evidence in any manner.

The Ministry has reiterated the advisory by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) dated 06.03.2024 which had expressed concerns regarding endorsements of betting/gambling platforms by celebrities and influencers to endorse and promote their betting activities, and had cautioned that any such direct or indirect advertisement or endorsement shall be subject to rigorous scrutiny.



## EXPLAINER

# Why is Ancient Leech therapy still popular in Kashmir?

### Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Despite being abandoned as a medical cure by modern science long ago, many people in the Kashmir Valley still resort to leeches to suck their blood in hopes of curing everything – from swollen joints and headaches to frostbite and acne.

According to the news agency, a significant number of people visited practitioners of 'leech therapy' on the occasion of Novroz on Tuesday, as the therapy is believed to be more effective on this particular day. Scores of people were seen standing in queues, eagerly waiting for their turn to undergo the procedure, at various places in the valley, especially at Dargah Hazratbal and other locations.

It is believed that leeches can cure frostbite, skin diseases, and other blood infections by extracting impure blood from the body. Leech therapy on Novroz has been a common practice in many parts of the valley, as people believe that

being treated on that day is more effective.

Mohammad Akbar, a practitioner of leech therapy, said he has been practicing this technique for the last 40 years and has witnessed people finding relief through leech therapy. "In my experience, people have been cured with this therapy. They believe that this therapy provides the best cure for their illnesses, which they don't get from other medications," he said.

"I tried medicines worth almost 10 to 20 thousand rupees, but I couldn't find any relief from my pain with any medication. However, when I tried leech therapy, I started feeling relief in my pain," said Waqar Ahmad, a patient from Srinagar.

"When the leeches feed on blood, chemical substances like hirudin, proteins and bio-active molecules from the leeches' saliva mix with the patient's blood," explained Gh Nabi, a Unani doctor. "This thins the blood, and hiru-

din is helpful in cardiac diseases. These substances have analgesic, anti-inflammatory, anticoagulant, and antimicrobial functions."

The practice of leech therapy is ancient, and the tradition is still alive in Kashmir, particularly on Novroz. Practitioners used to collect leeches from local water streams and rivers in the past, but now they obtain them from outside Kashmir.

Leech therapy is said to be a long-practised procedure in the Perso-Arabic traditional medicine of Unani, which is also practised in Muslim culture in South Asia and modern-day Central Asia.

According to doctors, leeches are effective in increasing blood circulation and breaking up blood clots. "It should come as no surprise that leeches can be used to treat circulatory disorders and cardiovascular disease. Chemicals derived from leech saliva have been turned into pharmaceutical drugs that can treat hypertension and other diseases," they added—(KNO)



Abid Bhat/KO

## Islam Gives Equal Rights To Women, Disheartening To See Domestic Violence Cases: Mirwaiz

### Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has said that Islam has laid great emphasis and clear guidelines on equal rights for women and treating them with respect and dignity.

Addressing a religious gathering at the revered shrine of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jelani (Dastgeers Sahib) at Khaniyar he said it is a matter of serious

greatly supportive of the Prophet's mission, helping in his work, proclaiming his message and fighting opposition to him."

He added that it was her encouragement and faith that helped the Prophet believe in his mission and spread Islam.

"She used her wealth to support the mission, providing financial and emotional support during the most challenging periods of early Islamic preach-



concern that women are still treated as inferior in the society.

He asked women to stand up for their rights and their rightful place as given to them by Islam.

Paying rich tributes to Hazrat Khadija (R.A) the beloved wife of Prophet of Islam (SAW), he said that she is the best model for women of all generations to emulate - a model of empowerment and resilience.

"The Mother of Believers, the first to accept the message of Islam delivered to her by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself, she was his true and wise companion. A highly successful businesswoman in a time when few women had such opportunities, Khadija was

ing, Hazrat Khadija's life is a shining example of commitment to truth, belief in faith, value of being a supporting partner, compassion and empathy, patience in the face of adversity, generosity, and unwavering support for the righteous causes."

He said that it is extremely disheartening to witness instances of domestic violence and the denial of rightful inheritance to women, practices that starkly contradict the essence of Islamic teachings.

He said that this has to change, the right to inheritance as per Islamic principles should be adhered to by all, and violence against women at home is unacceptable. (KNS)

## Opposition Criticizes PM Modi's Statehood Promise For Ladakh

### Agencies

**NEW DELHI:** The Congress on Thursday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi if he has any intention of upholding his "guarantee" to the people of Ladakh on grant of statehood and self governance.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said "since the prime minister has put off his Bhutan photo-ops today, we hope he can devote some time to Ladakh".

Modi's visit to Bhutan, which was scheduled for Thursday, has been rescheduled due to inclement weather conditions in the Himalayan nation.

"Since February 3rd, when there was a complete shut-down of Ladakh by the locals, the people of Ladakh have been protesting in large numbers against the Modi Sarkar's heavy handed 'rule by bureaucracy,' which has made a mockery of local elected institutions," he said.

The courageous environmental activist Sonam Wangchuk has brought the agony of the people of Ladakh to national and global attention, he noted.

Posing a set of four questions the people of Ladakh have for the PM, the Congress leader said the people of Ladakh are demanding constitutional safeguards for the Union Territory of Ladakh, including statehood and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Incidentally, he said, the BJP had promised Ladakh's inclusion in the Sixth Schedule in its manifesto for the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections and the 2020



Ladakh Hill Council Polls.

"Does the Prime Minister have any intention of upholding his 'Modi ki guarantee?'" If not, why did he make the promise in the first place? Ten years after he first took office, why is this issue still pending," he asked.

Ramesh also said that since the dissolution of the BJP-PDP Government in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir in 2018, the people of Ladakh have had no representative government at the state-level.

"On August 5, 2019, by converting Ladakh into a separate Union Territory without a legislative assembly, the Modi Sarkar closed the possibilities of any self-government for the people of Ladakh.

"What vision did the Prime Minister have for Ladakh when he declared it a separate Union Territory? Were the people of Ladakh ever consulted during the development of this vision," he asked.

Ramesh also alleged that under Prime Minister Modi's governance, "India has lost prime pasture land in the Changthang plains in the north of Ladakh to Chinese encroachment. In addition to a national security crisis, this is also a serious socio-economic issue for the nomads of Ladakh".

"The prime minister, however, gave a clean chit to China on June 19th, 2020, at the all-party meet on China, when he declared that not a single Chinese soldier had crossed over into Indian territory," he said, asking whether the people of Ladakh are lying while claiming that their lands had been encroached upon by the Chinese PLA.

Ramesh claimed that the proposed Ladakh Industrial Land Allotment Policy 2023 has suggested single-window clearance committees that have only government officials and an industry representative.

## DSEK Warns Schools Against Unauthorized Charges

### Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) Thursday warned private schools of strict actions for charging prohibited capitation charges from students.

Director School Education Kashmir Tassaduq Hussain Mir, as per the news agency KNO told reporters that schools will face action who will charge admission or miscellaneous charges.

He also said that the department had already issued a circular in this regard and are monitoring the situation closely.

About the recent incident of

distributing wrong question paper to 12th standard students, Mir said that the government has already constituted a committee. "There will be no leniency to the responsible person and the factual report will be submitted to the government."

He further said that it will start probe into the incident from tomorrow. "Whosoever is responsible for this blunder intentionally or unintentionally will not be spared."

Notably, on Wednesday 12th standard students appearing in annual regular exams were given question paper of 11th standard.

The board later cancelled the exam.

## Transport commissioner visits ARTO office Ganderbal

### Agencies

**GANDERBAL:** J&K Transport Commissioner Rajinder Singh Tara on Thursday conducted a comprehensive visit to the ARTO office in Ganderbal.

During his visit, he meticulously reviewed the office's operations and various online services offered by the department.

Additionally, Tara inspected the site designated for the construction of the ARTO Office, underscoring the administration's commitment to modern-

izing infrastructure.

Furthermore, as part of his tour, the Transport Commissioner visited Sonamarg and conducted an on-site inspection of the check post and weigh bridge, crucial facilities ensuring compliance and safety standards.

He was accompanied by officials including Additional Transport Commissioner Ajaz Ahmad Saraf, RTO Kashmir Shahnwaz Bukhari, ARTO Ganderbal Wajahat Yaqoom as well as inspectors and other dedicated employees—(KNO)

## PDD Lineman Dies After Falling from Electric Pole in Budgam

### Agencies

**BUDGAM:** A 35-year-old lineman of Power Development Department (PDD) and a father of five daughters lost his life after falling from an electric pole while repairing a High Tension (HT) line at Magam area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district.

An official told the news agency said that the incident occurred during routine maintenance work, resulting in se-

vere injuries to the lineman. After the accident, the lineman was immediately rushed to Magam Hospital where he was referred to SKIMS Soura for advanced treatment where he succumbed to his injuries.

He has been identified as Farooq Ahmad Wani, son of Ghulam Ahmad Wani of Hazarpora Aripant Budgam.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident and started further investigation in this regard—(KNO)

## Three Gamblers Arrested in Sopore

### Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Police on Thursday said that they have arrested three gamblers in north Kashmir's Sopore district and seized stake money from their possession.

As per the news agency CNS, a police spokesperson said, "Acting on specific information about gambling activities in the orchards of village Reban, a police party headed by Incharge PP Fruit Mandi under the supervision of SDPO Sopore Sarfaraz Bashir raided the specific spot and arrested three gamblers on the spot."

They have been identified as Mohammad Akbar Sheikh son of Abdulah Sheikh, a resident of Hadipora, Sajad Ahmad Dar son of Abdul Kabir, a resident of Parrypora Hadipora and Bashir Ahmad Tantray son of Mohammad Subhan Tantray, a resident of Reban.

"Officers have seized stake money of ₹7160/- and playing cards from the gamblers. They have been shifted to the police station where they remain in custody," said the police spokesperson.

Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 54/2024 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Sopore and further investigation has been taken up, he added. (CNS)

## Govt Kick Starts Mulberry Plantation Drive In Pulwama

### Agencies

**PULWAMA:** On the eve of Navroz Mr. Ajaz Ahmad Bhat (IAS), Director Sericulture J&K, today visited District Pulwama to kick start Mulberry plantation drive in Kashmir Division from District Pulwama by planting a Mulberry Sapling in Mulberry Nursery at Nikas, Pulwama.

Speaking on the occasion the Director Sericulture J&K conveyed that more than 1.50 lac standard size Mulberry Saplings shall be distributed free of cost among the farmers of Kashmir Division. He also informed that the department is providing 150 to 300 Mulberry plants with incentives to every interested farmer in order to establish their own Mulberry Farms.

The Director Sericulture J&K while addressing the gathering of Farmers assured full support of the Department and reiterated his commitment for extending all the facilities to them which include Rearing Kits, Disinfectants and financial assistance for construction of rearing sheds in a phased manner for hassle free Silkworm Rearing. Moreover, while giving account

of the other schemes of the department he said that for establishing a reeling unit the department provides 90% subsidy to the interested parties.

The Director Sericulture J&K emphasized that the unemployed youth and farmers should come forward and avail all the facilities being provided by the Department to earn dignified livelihood. He also informed that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has brought the Sericulture Development Department J&K under the ambit of Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) which will go a long way to boost the Sericulture Industry and will significantly generate employment in J&K.

The Director Sericulture J&K informed that for any query people can contact the nearest Sericulture Assistant (Zone) or District Sericulture Officer or Directorate of Sericulture J&K, Tulsji Bagh, Srinagar/ B.C Road Jammu. The contact numbers and email addresses of the department have already been shared through print and electronic media.

## IUST Organizes Seminar on Environmental Philosophy

### Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** IUST's Averroes Centre for Philosophical Studies on Thursday organised a seminar to underscore the enduring significance of Philosophy as an inspiring discipline and everyday practice that can transform societies.

A statement Dr. Anil K Tewari, Associate Professor at Harisingh Gour University, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, presented the keynote address. Dr. Tiwari in his address highlighted the human responsibility for environmental disturbance and degradation. He stressed the need for establishing mutualistic and egalitarian social structures to re-harmonize human connections with the natural world.

Prof. A. H. Moon, Dean of Academic Affairs at IUST, presided over the inaugural session wherein he emphasized the role of religion in resolving environmental issues by motivating adherence to limits governed by trans-historical values. Prof. Sheikh Javid, Dean of Research at IUST, contrasted the holistic approach of philosophers in understanding the universe with the narrower focus of scientists. Prof. Waseem Bari, the Registrar of IUST, drew parallels between Philosophy and Physics, highlighting their shared concern with unravelling the universe's complexities and understanding human nature and existence's relationship through various technical worldviews.

Prof. Munejah Khan, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, reiterated the commitment of the Averroes Centre for Philosophical Studies to impart inclusive and comprehensive philosophical understanding and promote interdisciplinary engagement and research to address contemporary socio-political and ethical challenges.

## CUkashmir VC Launches Weeklong Plantation Drive

### KO NEWS SERVICE

**GANDERBAL:** Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) Vice-Chancellor, Prof. A Ravinder Nath kick-started a weeklong plantation drive under the theme "Each One Plant One", at the varsity's Tulumulla campus here on Thursday.

The drive is being organised by the varsity's Division of Landscape and Green Mission in collaboration with the Rahim Greens, Sindh Forest and Social Forestry Divisions of Ganderbal.

Prof. A Ravinder Nath planted a sapling and called the initiative aimed at fostering a sense of responsibility towards nature and encouraging the community to contribute to a greener tomorrow. "As a learning institution, it is

our prime duty not only to impart knowledge, but also to instil values of environmental consciousness and sustainability. Plantation Day serves as a reminder of our interconnectedness with nature and the imperative to safeguard it for future generations," he remarked. He asked the Landscape division to actively involve the students, scholars and faculty from all the departments, for making the drive successful.

Speaking on the occasion, Dean School of Physical and Chemical Sciences, Prof. Mohammad Yousuf, who also planted a sapling, said, the plantation drives are imperative to maintain the ecological balance and to address the endemic environmental issues, confronted by the Kashmir division.



# Railway Track Through Baramulla Football Field: J&K Football Association Meets Engineering Head

Seeks LG and PM's intervention in "safeguarding cherished ground"

Observer News Service

**BARAMULLA:** A proposed railway track cutting through Baramulla Degree College football ground has stirred the J&K Football Association into action. On Tuesday, the FA sent a delegation to meet North Kashmir Engineering Head Ajaz Ahmad Kawoosa to discuss the proposed move.

The JKFA delegation consisted of Masters Health Club (Sports Organization of Baramulla) Headed by its Chairman Mohd Ashraf Khan, Civil Society Baramulla, District Football Association Baramulla and JKFA Senior Member Naseemul Gani. The FA said the meeting took place upon the directives of DC Baramulla. The administration had earlier directed the Deputy Chief Engineer, Northern Railway Srinagar, to address the issue. The meeting came about



after civil society members wrote to the DC and noted that the said football field is only available ground in Baramulla.

The JKFA delegation told the Northern Railway officials that the railway track will have "det-

rimonental ramifications".

"The delegation meticulously elucidated the detrimental ramifications posed by the proposed construction of a railway track crossing through the middle of Baramulla Degree College foot-

ball ground. JKFA emphasized the invaluable significance of this ground as a hub for nurturing local talent and fostering community cohesion through sports," the FA said in a statement Wednesday.

The JKFA appealed to LG Manoj Sinha and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene in the matter. "Their support and intervention are pivotal in safeguarding this cherished ground, ensuring that future generations have access to a conducive environment for honing their athletic prowess and fostering a culture of sportsmanship," the statement read.

The locals and football community of district Baramulla have been voicing their displeasure at the proposed expansion plans for a 50km-long Baramulla-Uri railway line cutting through one of north Kashmir's oldest football fields.

The JKFA further called upon all "stakeholders to join hands in preserving the sanctity of sports infrastructure" in J&K and to protect "our sporting heritage and securing a brighter future for aspiring athletes."

## Short TAKES

### F1 Great Lewis Hamilton Calls For Ceasefire In Gaza



Formula 1 driver Lewis Hamilton on Wednesday called for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza, where Israeli attacks have killed 31,000 Palestinians since last October. "Sending my love and support to all the people in Palestine who are spending this holy time facing danger, loss and heartbreak," the seven-time F1 champion posted on Instagram stories.

"In a month that is sacred to so many in the region, we must keep calling for a permanent ceasefire and return of hostages so that families can be together and be free from the constant threat of destruction and violence. Ceasefire now."

### PCB In Touch With Langer, Kirsten For Head Coach Role

After Shane Watson turned down the offer, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is in contact with several foreign coaches, including Justin Langer and Gary Kirsten, to work with the national team as head coach on a long-term contract.

According to the 'Jang' newspaper, the PCB has contacted high-profile names such as Langer, Kirsten, Mike Hesson, Matthew Hayden, Eoin Morgan and Phil Simmons.

### Blow For Royals As Adam Zampa Withdraws From IPL

Rajasthan Royals were on Thursday dealt a big blow when leg-spinner Adam Zampa pulled out of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) citing personal reasons.

Zampa, who was retained by Rajasthan Royals ahead of last year's auction for Rs 1.5 crore, has withdrawn his name following a busy season for Australia. Zampa's manager confirmed the development to ESPNcricinfo.

Zampa's withdrawal depletes Rajasthan's bowling attack further since they are already without fast bowler Prasidh Krishna.

### Sharath Kamal To Be India's Flag Bearer At Paris Games

Veteran table tennis player and CWG champion Sharath Kamal will be India's flag bearer at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games while legendary boxer MC Mary Kom was on Thursday appointed the chef de mission of the country's contingent.

The 41-year-old Kamal symbolises "the unity and spirit of our contingent as they compete on the Olympic stage", the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) said in a statement.

### McDonald's To Sponsor French League For Next 3 Seasons

McDonald's will become the title sponsor of the French league from July for the next three seasons, the league said on Thursday.

According to L'Equipe newspaper, which did not specify its sources, McDonald's will pay 30 million euros per season (\$33 million). The sports outlet said the food delivery service Uber Eats currently pays about 16 million euros (\$17.5 million) per season.

IPL 2024

CSK vs RCB - 8:00 PM

## Dhoni 'Hands Over' CSK Captaincy To Gaikwad Day Before Opener

Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** The legendary Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Thursday "handed" over the Chennai Super Kings captaincy to opener Ruturaj Gaikwad on the eve of the IPL opener here, a stunning decision that is bound to send speculation swirling on his playing future with the franchise.

In a post on X, the Indian Premier League made the announcement a day before CSK take on Royal Challengers Bengaluru. The five-time champions issued a brief statement soon after.

"MS Dhoni has handed over Chennai Super Kings' captaincy to Ruturaj Gaikwad ahead of the start of TATA IPL 2024. Ruturaj has been an integral part of Chennai Super Kings since 2019 and has played 52 matches in IPL during this period. The team looks forward to the upcoming season," said CSK.

There is speculation that Dhoni will retire at the end of the season and therefore the franchise felt the need for a smooth transition in the stalwart's presence as a player.

Gaikwad, who has played six ODIs and 19 T20s in In-



dia, made his CSK debut in 2020 and has gone on to represent the team in 52 games.

"Whatever Dhoni does, it is in the best interest of the team. I got to know of the decision just before the captains' meeting. You have to respect his decision, it is his call," CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan told PTI.

The stylish opener had a memorable run last year, aggregating 590 runs in 16 games at an impressive strike rate of 147.50. His breakout year was 2021 when he amassed 635 runs in 16 games.

The 27-year-old from Maharashtra is not new to captaincy, having led the Indian team to the gold medal in the Asian Games last year.

CSK and Dhoni share an

unbreakable bond and the World Cup-winning captain is expected to keep a significant role in the franchise going forward albeit not as a player.

CSK had attempted the leadership transition even in the 2022 edition but it did not work out with Ravindra Jadeja handing back the captaincy duties to Dhoni after eight games.

Dhoni officially announced his retirement from international cricket on August 15, 2020 but has kept playing the IPL. The 42-year-old, who played with a dodgy knee last season, underwent a surgery after leading CSK to their fifth title.

Dhoni has played as many as 250 IPL matches, scoring more than 5000 runs at a strike rate of 135.92.

## Kohli's Wicket Will Be Key At Tricky Chepauk: Hayden

Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** Virat Kohli can be the most dangerous if he gets to bat long and Chennai Super Kings will need to get him out early on a tricky Chepauk pitch during the IPL opener against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, said former Australia opener Matthew Hayden.

Kohli will be returning to action at the IPL after a paternity break which saw him miss the five-Test series against England at home.

The much-awaited T20 extravaganza will kick off with a clash between CSK and RCB at the Chepauk Stadium in Chennai on Friday.

"His record is a 30 average at Chepauk stadium with a strike rate of 111. Someone like Virat, even the greatness of Virat has been reduced in terms of his overall performance at that venue," Hayden told Star Sports.

"It is a tricky venue to bat on, especially as an opening batsman. It gets a weird tennis ball type bounce, it's quite slow and difficult to play shots early, but the longer you bat, the game opens up and that's where Virat can be at his most dangerous.

"It's really tricky, so they're going to need Virat Kohli out early inside the powerplay. They've done so thrice over the last 5 innings, and they'll need to do so for the 4th time."

Hayden said Kohli can take the game away if he stays longer.

"If he is prepared to bat the 20 overs, he can put together a match-winning performance. 200 is very accessible at Chinnaswamy but not nec-



essarily at Chepauk Stadium," he said.

"A 150, 130 at times has been plenty of runs when you get guys as good as (Ravindra) Jadeja there who bowls stump to stump with the odd ball to turn and the odd ball that stays low."

Kohli, who last played against Afghanistan in the T20 series in January, has been in red-hot form, having scored 765 runs in the ODI World Cup last November to become the second-highest run scorer in the history of the tournament.

"Virat's form is brilliant. I don't remember the last time he's played so well for so long. Yeah, he is a big player, but the last 2 years, he's been amazing. In the World Cup, he became the player of the tournament and the hunger and desire to score runs make him a big player," said former India batter Mohammed Kaif.

# IPL 2024: 4 Men, 4 Narratives & A Cup On The Horizon

Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** The never-ending speculation surrounding Mahendra Singh Dhoni's retirement, Virat Kohli's 16-year-itch, the second chance that life has offered Rishabh Pant and Rohit Sharma's bleeding heart will make for intriguing sub-plots in the annual carnival called the Indian Premier League starting on Friday.

Known to do the unexpected, Dhoni stepped down as captain on the eve of the IPL opener against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, handing over the reins to Ruturaj Gaikwad, a man he mentored for the leadership role.

But the 42-year-old, will once again smile wryly when asked if it's his last year. His heir apparent Pant, literally back from the brink after a life-threatening accident, will be desperate to show the world that he can still hit those one-handed sixes with elan.

In between, he could also be slipping in those quotable quotes behind the stumps that are considered broadcast gold.

Rohit will be the last person to show his scars hidden

behind the typical 'Mumbaiya' nonchalance as he gets down to enjoying his evening dates at the Wankhede albeit without the captain's title. The partisan crowd would nonetheless look forward to those pulled sixes.

As for King Kohli, he would be in pursuit of that elusive jewel in his crown. By his own admission, he has been longing for a big title and his own passionate approach to the game would be a key factor in deciding whether the RCB men manage to emulate the women this year.

A bigger prize is also at stake for at least 10 to 12 other players, who will be vying for eight slots in the New York-bound flight that will take off at the end of May for the T20 World Cup in the USA and the Caribbean.

### CSK & MI THE ETERNAL FAVOURITES

Away from the money talk and purely on cricketing prowess, CSK would be the favourites for a sixth IPL title with a squad that has all bases covered.

Rachin Ravindra was a breakout World Cup star but who knows under Dhoni, he



might become a T20 superstar. Deepak Chahar, the much-maligned seamer who is often accused of making CSK his first priority, would like his wrists to do the talking for him and

with new captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, Moeen Ali, and Ravindra Jadeja in the mix, anything can happen.

And how can one forget Dhoni, the smiling assassin. All

it takes is one six in T20 cricket and Dhoni's love affair with the maximum is eternal.

For Mumbai Indians, it has been a story of all or nothing.

Five titles till 2020 and three

years of lull forced them to change a captain, who can still whip up crazy sentiments.

### TOUGH TASK FOR HARDIK THE CAPTAIN

It will be a tightrope walk for Hardik Pandya the leader.

For other captains, they need to win the on-field games but Pandya needs to win the dressing room too. There will be seniors with bruised egos, knowing that a shot at leadership has bypassed them. They could well be difficult to handle.

If he wins that dressing room, half of his battle will be won as MI do have a solid batting line-up even if the bowling looks weak.

For RCB, the greatest inspiration could be the women's team that gave the men a crash course on how to play calmly at the business end where Kohli and Co. have faltered.

### KOHLI ALONE CANNOT WIN IT...

Kohli wouldn't mind 200 runs less but he would badly want that trophy. Dhoni has laid his hands on it five times, so has Rohit Sharma.

But what would rattle Kohli is the fact that even KKR has

won it twice under his bete noire Gautam Gambhir.

However, Kohli alone cannot win it. The Dinesh Karthiks, the Faf du Plessis', the Glenn Maxwell and likes of Akash Deep need to believe that 'E saala Cup Naam de' (This time Cup is Ours).

### PANT - THE EMOTIONAL STORY THIS SEASON

The team that Gambhir quit, Lucknow Super Giants has a new coach in Justin Langer and it would like to do better than Play-offs this time but with a bowling attack that doesn't exactly inspire confidence.

Ditto for Delhi Capitals although Pant's comeback could well be the most emotionally charged story of this IPL.

Gujarat Titans, the team of the last two seasons, might not make it this time with no Pandya or Mohammed Shami, who is out injured, in its line-up.

Rajasthan Royals with Yas-hasvi Jaiswal, Sanju Samson, Dhruv Jurel and Jos Buttler will be serious contenders.

Sunrisers Hyderabad, despite having Pat Cummins as captain, and Shikhar Dhawan's Punjab Kings are not expected to go the distance.