# KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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#### 'BAG FULL OF TRAGEDIES'

### **Mourning And Desperation Grip Families In Grief**

**Nazir Ganaie** 

Srinagar: The boat tragedy in Gandbal, Soiteng area of capital Srinagar has unveiled a bag full of tragedies and miseries as families desperately search for their loved ones.

Parents, overcome with grief, frantically search bags, hoping for any sign of their missing children. The ongoing search is a grim reminder of the devastating impact such tragedies can have on families and communities.

The tragic incident along the banks of the river Jhelum, where a boat capsized, has left the entire area in mourning. Six lives have been lost, and the search continues for at least three missing persons, including a father-son duo. Later the administration issued a detailed list of victims and also

those who were rescued. The number stands at 19, where the locals quoted different figures.

"Why are you coming now to shoot all this? Do you want this to go to deaf ears? We have been sobbing, waiting for this bridge to get completed. Nothing happened till our area became a graveyard of dreams and aspirations," Ateeka Bano, a wailing woman at the site, says. Another woman in her late

50's, Shahida Begum, adds, "I was preparing tea. I live just nearby, just opposite the bridge. I overheard a big scream. I thought this nearby army camp had been attacked. I went out running and shouting. I saw people gathering at the river banks and then this tragedy struck us," she says, adding "The river's cruelty knows no bounds, submerging us in sorrow and consuming

our loved ones with its relentless force. This water has been too cruel for us. Sometimes it submerged us. Sometimes it consumes our dear ones."

"Our hearts weigh heavy with

sorrow and uncertainty. The atmosphere among us is somber, shrouded in a cloud of apprehension as we await any news," says Muhammad Iliyas, a local. One of the boatmen, Shakeel

Ahamd, who More on P6

#### **LG Grieved Bv Loss Of Lives**

**KO Web Desk** 

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor. J&K, Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that he was grieved by the boat capsizing, which claimed the lives of its occupants.

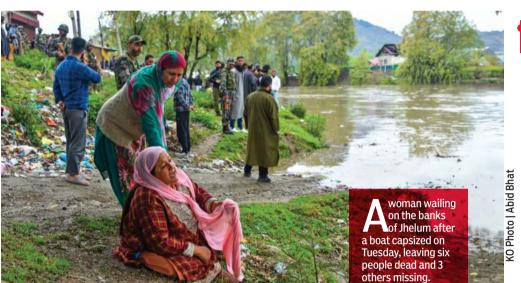
LG Sinha in a post on X (formerly Twitter) said, "I am deeply grieved by the loss of lives due to a boat accident in Srinagar. My thoughts are with the bereaved families & I pray to the Almighty to give them strength to withstand this immense loss. Team of SDRF, Army & | More on P6

# Boat Tragedy: Rescue Ops Continue Through Night To Locate 3 Missing

#### **Residents Bid Tearful** Adieu To Five Dead

**Srinagar:** Entire Kashmir plunged into deep shock and grief after a boat ferrying school kids, locals and a few non-J&K residents capsized at Gandabal-Soiteng area of Batwara in Srinagar on Tuesday resulting in the death of six persons including a mother, her two children and the boatman.

The incident occurred at 8:15 am when a boat with at least 15 persons on board, including two women, four school kids and locals was trying to cross from Gandabal to Batwara. The two school kids, accompanied by their mother, were heading for



#### **'Limited Schools** In Locality'

n Gandbal locality, only one government primary school is functional with locals saying that the 'inadequate and poor infrastructure' prompts them to send their wards to other places and cross-river to pursue education.

An official source said that the government primary school in Gandbal was established in year 2011 and since then have been demanding an upgradation of the school. "In a recent Back to Village (B2V) program, | More on P6

#### **Bridge Of Broken Promises**



**Auqib Javeed** 

Srinagar: For years, the Gandbal bridge had been the collective groan of the morning commute, a rusty skeletal frame to perpetually unfulfilled promises. As they bobbed along in boats across the Jhelum River, conversations inevitably turned to the bridge. While construction began

years ago, progress seemed to crawl. Residents might jokingly nudge each other and say, "Maybe next year," with a hint of longing in their voices.

Yesterday, however, the familiar grumbling morphed into a different kind of murmur - one laced with shock and grief. A boat carrying mostly school children capsized in the More on P6

#### **Twin Boys Lost, Dreams Drowned**

**Agencies** 

orn with a single heartbeat echoing in two chests. Tahir Fayaz and Mudasir Fayaz were not just twins, but kindred spirits. Their infectious laughter and playful banter painted every ordinary day with vibrant hues of joy. Alongside their mother, they formed an inseparable trio. However, fate dealt a | More on P6

#### **Political Parties Suspend Poll Campaign**

arious political parties in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday suspended campaigning for the parliamentary elections in the wake of the boat capsize tragedy that left six people dead. National Conference (NC) candidate for the Srinagar | More on P6

### Congress, NC, PDP Responsible For Fake Encounters: Amit Shah

#### Says 'Lotus' Will Bloom On Its Own In Kashmir

**Press Trust Of India** 

Jammu: Union minister Amit Shah on Tuesday slammed the Congress, National Conference and PDP, alleging that most fake encounters and incidents of firing on youths in Jammu and Kashmir occurred during their rule.

Rejecting rival parties' charge the BJP was more interested in Kashmir's land than the welfare of its people, he said the BJP is in no haste and believes in winning the hearts of people as it will ultimately lead to the 'lotus', the party's poll



symbol, blooming across the Valley.
Addressing an elec-

tion rally here, Shah also said that assembly polls in J&K will be held according to the dateline

set by the Supreme Court (September 30). "Nobody should have any doubt on this," the minister said.

Shah alleged that the Congress, National Conference | More on P6

#### **'No Discrimination With Muslims Under Modi'**

nion Minister Anurag Thakur on Tuesday said that there was no discrimination with the Muslim community in the country under Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government which focused on "service, good governance and well-being of the poor" after coming to power in 2014. The information and broadcasting minister accused the Congress of dividing people on | More on P6

## भारत निर्वाचन आयोग **Election Commission of India**



# informed voter?

Download the **Know Your Candidate (KYC) App** to check the details of each candidate of your constituency.

Be an informed voter!



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#### **HC Comes To** Bilquis Mir's Rescue Directs Govt To Permit Her To Travel To Japan

M AHMAD

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has directed the government to grant permission to Bilquis Mir,International athlete and Coach in the Sport of Canoeing and Kayaking, for traveling abroad. Bilquis has been selected as Chief Finish

ing held in Japan. "Subject to objections and till next date of hearing before the Bench, the respondents (authorities) shall grant NOC/ permission to the petitioner

Line Judge in the

Asian Canoe Sprint

Olympic Qualifier be-

(Bilquis) to travel abroad for the event scheduled in Japan in the first Instance," a bench of Justice Sindhu Sharma said while hearing a petition filed by Bilquis Mir. In her plea, Bilquis said that

has been selected by the Asian Canoe Confederation as a Chief Finish Line Judge in the Asian Canoe Sprint Olympic Qualifier to be held in Japan from April 14 to

21. She has also been selected as a Judge (ITO) for the Paralympic Games to be held in Paris, France, from August 28 to September 8 this year, and is nominated from Asia for 2024 Paralympic | More on P6

#### WATER TRANSPORT REGULATION

#### **Committee Formed To Frame Policy**

**Press Trust Of India** 

Srinagar: Authorities here on Tuesday set up a committee to frame a policy for the regulation of water transport in the wake of a boat capsized in the Jhelum river, claim-

Kashmir Divisional Commissioner Vijay Kumar Bidhuri today called an urgent meeting of officers of various departments to frame a strategy to avoid unfortunate incidents of boat capsizing in future and save precious lives," an official said.

Bidhuri, while stressing on the safety measures for water transportation, issued an advisory mandating life-saving jackets for all onboard passengers, he said.

The divisional commissioner constituted a committee to frame a policy for the regulation of water transport. This team headed by Kashmir Additional Mourning And More on P6











Scan the QR Code to check your name in the Voters' L your name in the Voters' List and Know the Poll Date in

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir



# Will AI Help Or Hinder Trust In Science?

360info

n the past year, generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and OpenAI's video generation tool Sora – have captured the public's imagination.

All that is needed to start experimenting with AI is an internet connection and a web browser. You can interact with AI like you would with a human assistant: by talking to it, writing to it, showing it images or videos. or all of the above.

While this capability marks entirely new terrain for the general public, scientists have used AI as a tool for many years.

But with greater public knowledge of AI will come greater public scrutiny of how it's being used by scientists.

AI is already revolutionising science – six per cent of all scientific work leverages AI, not just in computer science, but in chemistry, physics, psychology and environmental science.

Nature, one of the world's most prestigious scientific journals, included ChatGPT on its 2023 Nature's 10 list of the world's most influential and, until then, exclusively human scientists.

The use of AI in science is

twofold. At one level, AI can make scientists more productive. When Google DeepMind



released an AI-generated dataset of more than 380,000 novel material compounds, Lawrence Berkeley Lab used AI to run compound synthesis experiments at a scale orders of magnitude larger than what could be accomplished by humans.

But AI has even greater potential: to enable scientists to make discoveries that otherwise would not be possible at all.

It was an AI algorithm that for the first time found signal patterns in brain-activity data that pointed to the onset of epileptic seizures, a feat that not even the most experienced human neurologist can repeat.

Early success stories of the use of AI in science have led some to imagine a future in which scientists will collaborate with AI scientific assistants as part of their

daily work. That future is already here. CSIRO researchers are experimenting with AI science agents and have developed robots that can follow spoken language instructions to carry out scientific tasks during fieldwork.

While modern AI systems are impressively powerful – especially so-called artificial general intelligence tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini — they also have drawbacks.

Generative AI systems are susceptible to "hallucinations" where they make up facts. Or they can be biased.

Google's Gemini depicting America's Founding Fathers as a diverse group is an interesting case of over-correcting for bias.

There is a very real danger of AI fabricating results and this has already happened. It's relatively easy to get a generative AI tool to cite publications that don't exist.

Furthermore, many AI systems cannot explain why they produce the output they produce.

This is not always a problem. If AI generates a new hypothesis that is then tested by the usual scientific methods, there is no

However, for some applications a lack of explanation can be a problem.

Replication of results is a basic tenet in science, but if the steps that AI took to reach a conclusion remain opaque, replication and validation become difficult, if not impossible.

And that could harm people's trust in the science produced. A distinction should be made here between general and

narrow AI. Narrow AI is AI trained to carry out a specific task.

Narrow AI has already made great strides. Google DeepMind's AlphaFold model has revolutionised how scientists predict protein structures.

But there are many other, less well publicised, successes too such as AI being used at CSIRO to

discover new galaxies in the night sky, IBM Research developing AI that rediscovered Kepler's third law of planetary motion, or Samsung AI building AI that was able to reproduce Nobel prize winning scientific breakthroughs.

When it comes to narrow AI applied to science, trust remains high.

AI systems – especially those based on machine learning methods – rarely achieve 100 per cent accuracy on a given task. (In fact, machine learning systems outperform humans on some tasks, and humans outperform AI systems on many tasks. Humans using AI systems generally outperform humans working alone and they also outperform AI working alone. There is a large scientific evidence base for this fact, including this study.) AI working alongside an expert scientist, who confirms and interprets the results, is a perfectly legitimate way of working, and is widely seen as yielding better performance than human scientists or AI systems working alone.

On the other hand, general AI systems are trained to carry out a wide range of tasks, not specific to any domain or use case.

ChatGPT, for example, can create a Shakespearian sonnet, suggest a recipe for dinner, summarise a body of academic literature, or generate a scientific hypothesis.

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

My name has been wrongly written on my Electricity Bill bearing C.ID No; 0235010004122 as Assadullah Rather S/o Qasim Rather while my correct name is as per Aadhaar is Mohd Asadullah Rather S/o Mohd Qasim Rather which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the PDD Division Sumbal within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohd Asadullah Rather S/o Mohd Qasim Rather R/o Rather Mohalla Sarai Dangerpora

X

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

I Ali Mohammad Bhat Father of Moizim Ali want to Inform General Public through this Notice that the actual Date of Birth of my son is 15-03-2015 which is wrongly recorded in school records as 30-04-2015.

Now I would like to correct the school records with 15-03-2015 instead of 30-04-2015. If anyone have any objection in this regard he can contact ACE International school Mattan Anantnag within 05 days after the no objection will be entertained.

Correct DOB 15-03-2015 Contact No: 7006508228

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#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to information of general public that I have lost my Mobile Phone Realme 11x5G having two Sims bearing No.7889585685 & 9419564970 While I was travelling at Batamaloo area Srinagar on 16/04/2024 after that I approached to the Station Police Officer, Batamaloo, Srinagar and submitted a application regarding missing report of the same if anyone found it may kindly return back on the given below mentioned address otherwise, I am applying duplicate of the same from the concerned authorities if anybody having any objection in this regard may file the same to the concerned authorities within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained after expiry of the stipulated period.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from (Old

name) Ishfaq Bashir to (New Name)

Ishfaq Bashir Bhat. In future I will be

known as (New name) Ishfaq Bashir

Bhat. If anybody is having any

objection he/she may contact

Passport Office, Srinagar within 7

days. After 7 days no objection will

Gulshan Ara W/o Nisar Hussain Mir R/O Balhama, Srinagar Contact No. 9906613508

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## 'Will To Resist Temptations, Achieve Goals More Trustworthy Than Using Apps'

**Press Trust Of India** 

People relying on willpower to resist temptations and achieve goals are perceived as more trustworthy compared to those resorting to "commitment strategies" such as using apps, a new research has shown.

In one experiment, participants were found to judge hypothetical users of commitment strategies as less trustworthy despite recognising that sometimes these strategies are more effective than willpower alone, researchers said.

Approaches involving commitment strategies have been shown to be successful for a varied range of goals such as quitting smoking, weight loss, academic achievement and saving money, according to Ariella Kristal of the Columbia University, US, and lead author of the study

period of 01 Year be forwarded to Higher Authorities.

No. 290-305

DIPK-109/24 Date:16-04-2024

published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

Commitment strategies can also include having to pay a fine upon engaging in unwanted behaviour or relying on apps that help people avoid websites like Facebook and Instagram.

However, the researchers believe that resorting to commitment strategies could possibly signal a weakness in an individual's character, or a past failure, because of which they are having to rely on external incentives, rather than overcoming self control problems on their own.

"Past failures of self control can be seen by others as moral failures. Because morality is an important component of integrity in particular, and trustworthiness more broadly, people who rely on commitment strategies may be viewed as less trustworthy than those who simply use willpower," Kristal said. Through online experiments, the researchers involved more than 2,800 participants in the US for their study.

The participants were asked to rate the integrity of individuals in hypothetical situations who attempted to achieve a certain goal either through willpower or through a commitment strategy.

In one such situation, the participants were asked to judge people relying on willpower to avoid eating junk food or drinking alcohol, while in another people either displayed self control or depended on an app to avoid using Facebook or Instagram.

Generally, the researchers found that individuals described as depending on commitment strategies to achieve goals were judged to be less trustworthy than those relying on willpower alone.

#### The Jammu and Kashmir **State Board Of School Education**

New Campus Bemina Srinagar Notice for General Public

The applicant/ candidate whose photograph is published in this notice and claiming to have lost her qualification certificate/s issued under as per below mentioned details:-

Roll No: 2608217 Class 10th

Year & Session Annual Regular 2015 Registration: N14460090111 Name: Basit Ali Father's Name: Ali Mohmad Parray

Mother's Name: Shaheena Begum Date of Birth:- 16-03-2001 Residenc:- Dachigam Bandipora

According the candidate concerned has approach to this office for issuance of Duplicate Qualification /Marks Certificate/s, so before the same is processed and provided to the candidate, under rules, anybody having any objection in this regard, shall bring into the notice of Assistant Secretary of Certificate as well as Assistant Secretary Examination Unit I & III KD within the period of 10 & 7 days respectively, from the date of publication of this notice. (Besides the above referred "Qualification / Marks Certificate/s"

bearing No: 15 ARKAM 2004457 be treated as "CANCELLED" No: F(Cer is-I-DQC)B/KD/24 Dated 15-04-2024 **Assistant Secretary** 

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

I have lost my card pouch containing PAN card, work ID, and Credit and Debit cards On April 13, 2024, around 6:20 PM during an unfortunate incident where I bumped into a car (Alto) near Munawarabad. Thankfully, both parties involved mutually resolved the matter. However, in the midst of the commotion, I inadvertently left my card pouch with the other party. If by any chance someone has come across a misplaced card pouch. I kindly request him to reach out to me at 6005334141. Otherwise I have to apply for the duplicate of the above lost documents. In that case if anybody has any objection he/she may contact concerned offices within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

#### **Aamil Javeed** Cell: 6005334141

ازعدالت ایکزیکییومجسٹریٹ بااجلاس تحصیلدار نارہ بل ضلع بڈگام عنوان: درخواست منجانب عا قب رشيد شير گوجري ولدعبدالرشيد شير گوجري ساکنه موضع ييك كاؤسه تخصيل ناره بل ضلع بدرگام بمراد اجرائي OBC سرنفيكيك بحق سائل

اشتهار هرخاص وعام

معامله مندرجة عنوان الصدريين سائل نے ايك درواست بغرض حصول سوشل كاسٹ سرٹفيكيث پیش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس ہے عیاں ہے کہسائل موضع کیک کا وُسہ کا سکونت دار ہے وارشیر گوجری زات ہے تعلق رکھتا ہے۔ سائل کا کنبہ بذیل ہے۔

عبدالرشيد شير گوجري ولد غلام محمد 49سال مزدوري والدسائل افرازه بانوزوجه عبدالرشيدشير گوجري 47سال گريلوكام والده سائل شبنم رشید دختر عبدالرشید شیر گوجری 20 سال زیرتعلیم ہمشیرسائل عادل رشیدولدعبدالرشید شیر گوجری 18 سال ۔۔ برادرسائل عا قب رشیدولدعبدالرشید شیر گوجری 18 سال ۔۔ ۔۔ دانش رشیدولدعبدالرشید شیر گوجری 16 سال ۔۔ ۔۔ ىنوبررشىد دختر عبدالرشيد شير گوجرى 12 سال ــ بمشيره سائل ے علاوہ اورکوئی افراد کنیمہ نہیں ہے سائل کے کنہ کی سالانہ آمد فی تقریباً ایک لاکھ دس ہزار رویے تک ہے۔ سرٹفیکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کشخص کو کوئی عزریاا عتراض ہوتووہ بعد مشتہر

اخبارسات دن کے اندراندرآ ینے عذریاعتراض ودالت هذا کودفتری ادقات کے دوران پیش کریں \_ بعد گزرے میعاد کو بی عذر یاعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

**Ishfaq Bashir Bhat** 

be accepetd.

S/o Bashir Ahmad Bhat

Media Line

ازدفتر نائب تحصيلدار زونيمرسرينكر عنوان: درخواست از جانب محمد يوسف بزاز ولدمرعوم غلام محمد بزار ساكنه في شخ بهمزا عنوان: در نواست ارباب بدید که کالونی لعل بازار نسبت اجرائی لیگل همیر سر نفیک کالونی لعل بازار نسبت اجرائی لیگل همیر سر نفیک کال میر سراد آگاهی معامله عنوان السد رمیں درخواست سائل ہے کہاس کا والدمتو فی محمہ پوسف بزاز ولد

مرحوم غلام محمه بزازسا كنه شيخ بمزا كالوني لعل بإزار مورخ202-12-26 كوفوت ہو چاہے اس نسبت سائل خواہاں ہے کہ اسکے حق میں لیگل ہیرسٹیفیکیٹ اجراء فرمائی جائے۔ بروےر پورٹ پٹواری حلقہ متو فی کنیمہ بذیل افراد پر مشتل ہے عبال پير تجارت(شادى شده) 47سال پير ازاداحمه بزاز 43سال وختر بل ا سکے کہ درخواست سائل بر مذید کاروائی عمل میں لائی جائے۔ ہرخاص وعام کو طلع کیاجا تاہے کہا گرکسی شخص کوسٹیفیکیٹ ھذاا جراء کرنے میں کوئی عذریااعتراض ہوتووہ ا یک ہفتہ کےاندراندردفتر ہذامیں پیش کریں۔میعادگز رنے معادکوئی عذریااعتراض

از نیابت گوم احمد بوره ورخواست از جانب غلام مصطفا فينتخ ولد محمد مضان شيخ ساكنه كوم احمد بوره مختصيل بينن بار بهموله بمرادحصول D.O.B سرٹفکیٹ جق رہبرعلی وبرکت علی۔

media line

اشتهار بمرادآ گاہی خاص وعام

. معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر کے نسبت رپورٹ ، پنچایت سکڑی ونمبر دار دہدوچو کیدارعلاقہ وآشامیڈم سے موصول ہوئی۔مطابق رپورٹ عملہ فیلڈ سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل کے پسران رہبرعلی وبرکت علی گی پیدائش مورخہ2016-10-10اور2017-09-10 کوہوئی ہے اورسائل مذکورنے تاحال کوئی بھی سند D.O.B حاصل نہیں کی ہے۔ سائل مذکورا ہے پسران کے خق میں D.O.B حاصل کرنے کا س بارے میں بذریعہ خباراشتہار مشتمر کیا جاتا ہے اگر کسی شخص کوکوئی اعتراض نسبت اجراء سرٹفکیٹ ہوتو

دفتر ھٰڈ میں اندرسات یوم پیش کریں۔بعد گزرنے میعاد کوئی عذریا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

#### Office Of The Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Oazigund

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Fresh NIT No.05 OF R&B/Qazigund/2024-25 /E-TENDERING/290-305 DATED:16-04-2024 For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K e-tenders (In Single Cover) are invited on %age basis from approved and

eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-Ceiling Amount Basic Cost GST Amount Cost of T/ Earnest (Rs in lacs) (Rs in lacs) (Rs in lacs) Doc. (in Rs) Money (In Rs) tion Contractor 15.00 12.71 2.29 600/= 30000 Till Completion of BEE, CEE, Stage contract at FCI Yatra-2024 DEE Class Mirbazar

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), bill of quantities (B.O.O). Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Qazigund.					

Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt(Under MH- 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Qazigund [Tender Inviting Authority] (NIT NO & Item No/Name of Work to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt) (Refer Govt. order No. O.M No. A/24 (2017)-651 Dt 07-06-2018 (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD as tabulated above (2% of Ceiling amount) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Qazigund (Tender receiving Authority). (The Date of EMD{CDR/FDR/BG} should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date)

All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD @ 2% of Ceiling amount) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/ Bid Security shall render the bidder as No-responsive. The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Qazigund (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debarring of the Contractor for a

5. The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD @ 2% of Ceiling amount) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @5% of contract amount/allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. The bidders are requested to quote their rates excluding GST. GST @18 Percent shall be added to the contract value by the allotting authority at the time of

The date and time of opening of Bid shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Qazigund The tenders shall be opened only after proper authorization/administrative approval received from concerned authorities.

The Earnest Money/Performance Security shall be forfeited If: Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid. a) b) c) d) 10. Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period before issue of letter of intent. Successful Bidder fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract. If at any stage of work, the Bidder back up from the contract, again the Performance security/EMD as well as work done claim will be forfeited.

The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of Opening of Technical bids.

Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov. into acquaint bid submission process. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital

The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para 1.

Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.

SD/= Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Qazigund

# **Thousands Join Families In Mourning Over Loss Of Loved Ones In Boat Capsize Incident**

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Loud cries echoed near the banks of the Jhelum in Gandbal on the outskirts of Srinagar on Tuesday where a boat capsize cut short six lives, including three of a family, as the bodies were being fished out of the water one after the other.

The boat was ferrying mostly schoolchildren. It collided with a pillar of an underconstruction bridge and split into two in the fast-flowing currents of the river already in spate following incessant rainfall in the Kashmir Valley over the last few days.

While the exact number of people on the boat was not clear yet, rescuers dragged 10 people out of the water safely while three are still missing.

The atmosphere slowly turned grim as anxious locals gathered at the embankment and watched the rescue operation but the lull did not last long. Loud wails pierced the air as rescuers began pulling out lifeless bodies from the water, which brought many others to tears.

The administration has pressed marine commandos into the rescue operation to trace those missing. The elite commandos were airlifted from their base in the Manasbal area of the Ganderbal district.

Amid all the gloom and grief, a heroic effort by a mi-

grant laborer found praise. Dhoodhnath, who was at



his rented accommodation near the banks of the river, saw the boat capsize mid-water and jumped into the river to save lives.

"I saw the boat overturn. The current was strong but I rescued three people," he said later.

A survivor said there were about two dozen people on the boat, most of them children.

"The ropes of the boat snapped and it hit one of the pillars of the under-construction bridge and broke into two. Many people drowned and three of us caught hold of the

edges of the hoat and somehow

managed to save ourselves. A woman was also pulled out of the water and the four of us were rescued by another boat," he told reporters.

The man said local people, including children, use the boat service every day to cross the river in the absence of a bridge.

The bridge being built on the river was sanctioned in 2017. Locals said had the bridge been completed by now, the loss of lives could have been avoided.

"Had there been a bridge,

this accident could have been avoided. The mourning in so many houses today could have been avoided. We have raised this issue with the authorities several

attention," a local said. Former minister and Peoples Democratic Party leader Naeem Akhtar, who had laid the foundation stone for the bridge, said the loss was heartbreaking.

times, but they did not pay

"These deaths are on somebody's hands. Remember the day when I laid the

foundation stone of this footbridge and the happy faces around us celebrating the fulfillment of a long-pending demand. It was fully funded. But then the #vikas took over. Heartbreaking loss,' Akhtar said in a post on 'X'.

Of the six dead were the wife and two sons of Fayaz Ahmad Malik, a resident of Gandbal.

Funeral prayers for the deceased were offered together. Malik buried all three members of his family in a single grave as thousands looked on.

As the Malik family mourned, Showkat Ahmad Sheikh's kin held on to hope. Sheikh and his son Haziq have been missing since the incident.

A public works department official said when work was started on the project, there was initially poor funding but the delay happened because while it was to be a footbridge, due to public pressure, the plan was changed to build a Motorable bridge instead.

'When Article 370 was abrogated, there was a 'change of scope'. The rules which were not there earlier were implemented. Because of that, its technical sanction took time. We have been working very fast for the last three months, he said.

The official said about 75 per cent of the work has been completed and the bridge would be completed by June

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: Kashmer EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

**AIRPORTS** 

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

#### **RAILWAYS**

SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259 ANANTNAG: 01932-228243 BARAMULLA: 0194-102029 BIJBHERA: 01932-228243 PAMPORE: 01933-294132 PATTAN: 01954-293507

QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

#### **HIGHWAY STATUS**



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



**PRAYERS FAJR** 4:31 **ZUHR** 12:32 ASR 5: 11 Magrib 7:06 ISHA 8:32

#### This Day In History

- 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki is signed ending the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95)
- 1930 Abkhazian ASSR forms in Georgian SSR
- 1932 Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia ends slavery
- 1939 Stalin signs British-France-Russian anti-Nazi pact
- 1941 World War II: The Kingdom of Yugoslavia surrenders to Germany.
- 1945 German occupiers flood Wieringermeer, **Netherlands**
- 1945 Benito Mussolini flees from Salò to Milan 1945 - US troops land in central Mindanao, 1946 Svria declares independence from French administration
- 1967 Surveyor 3 launched; soft lands on Moon, April 20.
- 1970 Apollo 13 limps back safely, Beech-built oxygen tank no help
- 1971 Egypt, Libya & Syria form federation (FAR) 1979 - Four Royal Ulster Constabulary officers are killed by a Provisional Irish Republican Army van bomb in Bessbrook, County Armagh; the bomb is believed to be the largest PIRA bomb used up to
- 1982 Proclamation of the Constitution Act by
- Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau 1986 - IBM produces 1st megabit-chip

From KO Archives

Govt says threat less if passengers

travel on their own to 'safer' Uri

Observer News Service

sources said here today.

were earlier.

on April 21.

raising fears about their safety.

down drastically in the latter case.

Next Bus From Uri?

RINAGAR - The authorities are consider-

ing running the second bus to Muzaffarabad

from border tow n of Uri instead of Srinagar

in view of security considerations, official

The idea to run the bus from Uri was discussed

Passengers will have to reach Uri of their own

Public circles say if the threat perception was the reason behind government's purported rethink then

Official sources said other major reason for re-

Militant groups AI Nasireen, Al Arifeen. Save

in that case passengers will become more vulnerable

to attacks by groups opposed to the service than they

stricting the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad service to Uri

· Muzaffarabad is security costs which would come

Kashmir Movement and Farzandan-e-Millat which

claimed responsibility for the attack on the tourist

reception centre, have reportedly issued a threat

to passengers of the second bus loo. List of passen-

gers swapped As the authorities mulled running the

second, Muzaffarbad-bound bus from Uri instead of

Srinagar India and Pakistan today exchanged list of

prospective travelers for the bus Which will roll out

given clearance to travel (to Srinagar) on the bus.'

Regional Passport Officer John S Shilshi said.

Pakistani authorities, he said.

"We have handed over the list of 47 passengers from Pakistan-controlled Kashmir who have-been

Shilshi who returned here from Uri after ex-

A maximum of 30 passengers from each side

(Kashmir Observer, 17 April, 2005)

changing the list, said the Pakistani side had cleared

32 passengers to travel on the second bus from the

would board the bus as agreed between Indian and

during a meeting of the concerned authorities as the town is "much safer" being situated in a high-sani-

tised zone and having virtually zero militant pres-

#### **Tulip Garden Welcomes** Over 286,000 Visitors, Expects **Record-Break Season**

**Observer News Service** 

Srinagar: Since its inauguration, the Srinagar tulip garden has attracted a total of 286,350 visitors, with daily numbers steadily increasing.

According to tulip garden management, there has been a surge in footfall. particularly since Eid, with over 10,000 visitors flocking to the garden daily. Despite recent heavy

rains, the garden has remained a popular spot, attracting thousands even on rainy days, Contractor Mudasir Khan, who oversees the garden, informed.

He said that over the past six days, the garden saw a total of 92,000 visitors, including 12,202 on Wednesday, 23,660 on Thursday, 17,580 on Fri-

Observer News Service

promise of early yields

and superior quality com-

pared to traditional meth-

ods, VC SKAUST said on

Tuesday. He urged farm-

ers to adopt modern tech-

nologies to boost fruit cul-

Blossom Festival at

SKUAST-K Shalimar, VC

During the Apple

tivation productivity.

Srinagar:

plantation

Apple Blossom Festival

**High Density Plantation** 

**Quality, Say VC SKAUST-K** 

High-density

holds the

**Promises Early Yields, Superior** 

day, and 21,121 on Saturday. Despite heavy rains in the past two days, the garden still received 9.100 visitors on Sunday, 8,300 on Monday, and 10,350 on Tuesday.

The official expressed confidence in surpassing last year's record of 366,000 visitors, crediting the government's efforts to enhance the visitor experience and introduce new tulip varieties for the increased interest.

Established in 2007 to extend Jammu and Kashmir tourism season, the tulip garden continues to fulfill its vision. However, the garden's popularity has led to traffic congestion on roads leading to the site, posing challenges for traffic authorities in managing vehicle flow.

SKAUST Dr Nazir Ahmad

Ganaie encouraged farm-

ers to consider high-den-

sity orcharding as a viable

alternative to pursuing

scarce government em-

Notably, the Division of Fruit Science at

SKUAST-Kashmir inaugu-

rated the highly anticipat

ed Apple Blossom Festi-

val, marking a celebration

of innovation and growth

in fruit cultivation.

12238-R1,12266-F1,14634-F1,12492-F1,12238-F1

ployment opportunities.

## **Mission Director HADP Yasha Mudgal Conducts Extensive Tour Of Srinagar**

#### Inspects Developmental Works Under HADP

**Observer News Service** 

Srinagar: The Mission Director Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) Yasha Mudgal (IAS) today conducted an extensive tour of Srinagar district. She visited hi-tech polygreen houses mandi Lalmandi Srinagar, controlled crop growing unit HMT and took stock of the agriculture scenario in the area.

Mudgal held interaction with the vegetable farmers and agri-preneurs of different areas of the district.

Speaking to the farmers, the Mission Director reiterated the department's commitment to the socio-economic development of the farming community of the UT of J&K. She highlighted the importance of the Holistic Agriculture Development Program and asked the farmers to come forward and



avail the benefits from different projects under HADP.

She directed the concerned officers to ensure maximum awareness among the farming community across the UT regarding the projects under HADP.

Director Earlier Mission (HADP) visited vegetable mandi at agriculture directorate Lalmandi Srinagar and inspected vegetable stalls and community

seed bank there.

She also held interactions with the progressive farmers. The Mission Director also released a book on PGS INDIA Organic Certification. Director Agriculture Kashmir Chowdhury Mohammad Iqbal, all Joint Directors of the Department, Sectoral officers, Chief Agriculture officer Srinagar and other senior officers of the department were present on the occasion.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir,

#### Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir Tel: 0194-2315378, Fax 0194-2479548, e-mail: ddtreg123@gmail.com

Application for transfer of registration certificate of houseboat under name and style "Athena Palace" moored in Dal

#### Public Notice

Whereas, Mr. Ghulam Rasool Guroo S/o Mohammad Sidiq Guroo R/o Batgo, Nishat, Tehsil Khanyar, District Srinagar has requested for transfer of registration certificate of house boat "Athena Palace" moored in Dal Lake, Srinagar;

Whereas, the house boat has been registered with this Department in 1990 vide No. Reg/179/TD/4/1/L3/56 dated 20.08.1990 in the name of Haji Mohammad Sidiq Guroo S/o Abdul Rahim Guroo R/o Dal Lake, Srinagar and the same stands renewed upto 31.03.2020; Whereas, the applicant has submitted the documents i.e, Death Certificate of Mr. Haji Mohammad Sidiq Guroo, Legal heir certificate of Mohammad Sidiq Guroo, Irrevocable General Power of Attorney duly registered by Sub-Registrar in favour of Mr. Mr. Ghulam Rasool Guroo S/o Mohammad Sidig Guroo from the other two legal heirs, Non-Conviction Affidavit, Character Certificate, NOC from KHBOA, NOC from BANK, Domicile Certificate, Aaddar Card, Photographs of Houseboat;

boat and does not confer any right of ownership of the house boat;

considering transfer of Registration certificate in the name of Mr. Ghulam Rasool Guroo S/o Mohammad Sidiq Guroo R/o Batgo, Nishat, Tehsil Khanyar District, Srinagar the matter is hereby notified for information of General Public / Financial Institutions / Banks / Development Authorities / PHE Department/Electric Department that in case of any objections, the same should reach this office of undersigned within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice. No objections beyond period of 07 days will be entertained and the request of the applicant will be considered under rules, after submission of requisite documents.

> Assistant Director Tourism, Registration

Whereas, transfer of registration for the houseboat is purely for the purpose of running operation management of the said house-

Now, therefore, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 39 of J&K Registration Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12 before

#### NORTHERN RAILWAY **E-Auction Notice** pehalf of President of India invites E-Auction from eligible and registered bidders fo he following works over Firozpur Division Catalogue No. Auction Start 09.05.2024 Allotment of contract for Leasing of parcel space in 11.00 Hrs. Train No./SLR compartment: 15098-F1,14036-F2 12470-F1,14036-F1 12752-F1,22552-F1,14036-F1 14634-R1,12588-F1,22486-F1,14634-F2,12238-F2

Serving Customers With A Smile

For other details and registration, please visit Railway website

No. Reg/Dee/4/DTK/36 DIPK-103/24 Dated: 16.04.2024

#### KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Wednesday | 17-04-2024

# An Avoidable Tragedy

he boat capsizing tragedy at Gandbal area stands as a stark reminder of the consequences of neglect and unfulfilled promises by successive governments, especially by the administrations over the past seven years. The avoidable catastrophe, resulting in the loss of innocent lives, demands urgent introspection and accountability.

First and foremost, the absence of a bridge in the locality despite promises made reflects government negligence and failure to prioritize essential infrastructure. The lack of a safe means of crossing the river compelled locals to resort to risky alternatives, such as using boats, endangering lives, especially of school children. The tragedy highlights the urgent need for the timely completion of crucial infrastructure projects, particularly in areas where public safety is at stake.

The delayed response of rescue teams exacerbates the gravity of the situation. Every minute counts in such emergencies, and the failure of authorities to promptly mobilize adequate rescue efforts undoubtedly contributed to the loss of lives. It is unacceptable that precious human lives were sacrificed due to administrative inefficiency and sluggish emergency response mechanisms.

The accountability of authorities cannot be overlooked in this grim scenario. The administration must conduct a thorough investigation to determine the lapses that led to this tragedy and hold those responsible accountable. Additionally, there must be a reassessment of disaster preparedness protocols to ensure swift and effective responses to similar emergencies in the future.

Moreover, the anguish and sorrow of the affected families must not be underestimated. Their cries for justice and accountability resonate throughout Valley. The government must provide comprehensive support and assistance to the bereaved families, including financial compensation and access to medical and psychological care.

The tragedy should serve as a wake-up call for both the government and the public. It should lead to prioritisation of public safety and ensuring that essential infrastructure projects are completed in a timely manner. It also emphasizes the need for robust emergency response mechanisms and proactive measures to prevent such calamities from occurring again.

As a society, we must collectively demand accountability from our elected representatives and hold them responsible for fulfilling their obligations to safeguard the lives and well-being of citizens. Let us turn this tragedy into a catalyst for positive change, ensuring that such avoidable catastrophes never recur in our communities.

The boat capsizing tragedy in Srinagar is not just a natural disaster but a man-made failure rooted in negligence and complacency. It is incumbent upon all stakeholders to learn from this tragedy, take corrective measures, and prioritize public safety above all else. Only then can we honour the memory of the lives lost and prevent similar tragedies from haunting our future.

#### OTHER OPINON

### Risky premise

he Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday raised its forecast for India's GDP growth in the current fiscal year ending on March 31, 2025, to 7%, from 6.7% earlier, citing robust public and private investment as well as expectations of a gradual improvement in consumer demand as the rural economy recovers. The regional multilateral lender also projected that India's economy would expand by 7.2% in fiscal 2025-26. The ADB's latest growth forecast for India's GDP is, however, still slower than the 7.6% pace that India's National Statistical Office has estimated for the 12 months that ended on March 31. Last year's expansion too was driven by strong investment while consumption remained muted. The ADB, however, cautioned that its forecast could be proven wrong by global risks including a sharp rise in oil prices or prolonged high interest rates in the West to tackle inflation. It estimated that India would likely be the economy most affected in Asia by the high interest rates due to the greater sensitivity of the rupee to western interest rates. It also noted that while the Centre's capital expenditure spending had been strong and was projected to grow with rising budgetary allocation, project completions in the private sector had failed to match rising project announcements. Most conspicuously missing from the ADB's report, however, was the absence of any comment on the controversies surrounding the integrity of India's national income data or concerns raised about the heavy influence of government tax receipts on final GDP.

The lender also failed to make any mention of the absence of significant structural reforms in India, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the reasons the strong growth numbers reported by the government have been questioned is that they have come at a time when economic reforms have taken a back seat. The ADB's assumption of a likely rebound in consumer spending to support its 2024-25 growth projection is also at risk of being undermined. Global country risk research firm BMI recently flagged the risk to consumption spending from stretched household savings which are near all-time lows. In any case, the Centre would do well to listen to the ADB's suggestion to create large-scale special economic zones with an easier policy environment to boost exports. Given the challenges flagged by the lender to global merchandise trade, including the extremely volatile situation in West Asia and the disruptions to the normal east-west shipping route through the Red Sea, India must heed the ADB's recommendations to integrate better with global supply chains and improve its logistics infrastructure

The Hindu

# We Can't Demand Good Governance and Stay Away from Elections

Let us send good people to Lok Sabha who can represent our aspirations & ensure sustainable development





Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

We need leaders who can debate and differentiate between infrastructural development and sustainable development. We need leaders who are courageous and have the ability to communicate effectively. We don't need leaders who are visionless

ver the past few years, the health of democracy declined significantly in many nations. The concept of electoral democracy, also called representative democracy, continues to thrive. In most of the democratic nations, especially India, people elect their representatives after every 5 years and they represent them in various forums like national assemblies, parliament, state or provincial assemblies or even at local level like Urban Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions PRIs. The enthusiasm for electoral democracy has slipped in many nations and people feel good people are not going to parliament or state assemblies.

I personally believe that the fault lies within the citizens themselves, especially in Jammu & Kashmir who don't participate in the electoral process actively. On the other hand, we want better services from the Government like good roads, robust healthcare, 24 x 7 electricity supply and better education and corruption free services etc. How is all this possible when we don't elect better leaders?

Irony is that even in Municipal elections people don't vote for good people nor educated and public spirited people come forward to participate in the electoral process? Let us analyse the Srinagar Municipal Corporation elections in the last 10 to 15 years. Did we ever elect good people who could represent our aspirations?

The Smart City Srinagar plan was thrusted on people which otherwise should have been put forward by the SMC corporators. The work was taken up haphazardly and these corporators didn't even utter a word. The reason was that they were not elected by the vast majority of people. They didn't represent the aspirations of the people. Some were elected with mere 50 to 60 votes and many didn't even get 300 votes.

I know some councillors and corporators who got elected by their own family votes (1 to 4 votes only). Same is the case with the last Panchayat elections and a vast majority of Sarpanches were selected and not elected at all. Many of these Sarpanches and Panches looted public funds and became contractors rather than representing their own people.

#### Lok Sabha election 2014 and 2019

For many decades now, people of J&K have been boycotting elections especially in Srinagar city. There were many well known political reasons for that.

The election boycott helped many people rule J&K but I believe this Lok Sabha election is the right time to send our true representatives to Parliament. It is shocking to know that the last two Lok Sabha elections (2014 and 2019) saw less than 50% participation of people in J&K. When it comes to Srinagar, Anantnag and Baramulla Lok sabha segments,

the participation of people was not very less.

In 2014 lok sabha elections, a mere 25 % people voted in Srinagar parliamentary seat, 39 % votes were polled in Baramulla and 28% voters cast their votes in Anantnag parliamentary constituency. On the contrary, 71% votes were polled in Ladakh, Udhampur recorded 70.95% turnout and in Jammu lok sabha 68% voters cast their votes.

In 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the polling percentage further came down as mere 9% voters cast their votes in Anantnag lok sabha segment, Srinagar recorded mere 15% votes and Baramulla was a bit higher with around 38% polling. On the contrary, Jammu Lok Sabha Segment saw 80% plus voting, Udhampur 79.7% and the voting turnout in Ladakh was 79%.

#### Sustainable Development

At a time when every political party or leader talks of development, we haven't heard any MP from J&K raise the issue of sustainable development in J&K in the Lok Sabha. We have seen disasters happening in J&K and other Himalayan states in the last 10 to 15 years but how many MPs have raised these issues in Lok Sabha?

Under the garb of tourism and development, our forests, wetlands, mountains and valleys have been plundered but how many Lok Sabha MPs raised this issue? Our apple orchards were axed and land acquired by NHAI for the Srinagar Ring Road project but Lok Sabha MP Dr Farooq Abdullah never ever raised this issue in Parliament. 7000 kanals of land was acquired for peanuts in Srinagar, Budgam area and central land acquisition law applicable to J&K post article 370 was not applied at all. This law otherwise guarantees 3 to 4 times higher compensation but the Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar didn't even issue a statement nor did his party protest over it.

The poor farmers had to seek judicial intervention and the case is now pending before the Supreme Court of India. When forest dwellers like Gujjars, Bakerwals and Chopans were being evicted in 2020 by the Forest Department, no MP from J&K highlighted this issue in Lok Sabha . This author wrote a series of articles in many national and local newspapers on the issue plus made several video reports and held protests as well, but our MPs didn't even bother to meet the Union Minister of Tribal Affairs. It was only after constant protests by activists and media highlighting this issue the Govt decided to roll out the Forest

Rights Act in J&K.

More than 90% of farmers in all the Himalayan states are marginal farmers as per official figures. The size of small agricultural landholdings in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, J&K and adjoining areas was estimated to be less than a hectare. This figure

came further down in the 2015-16 Agriculture Census. In the Kashmir valley, where most farmers own less than half acre of land, any government policy related to land acquisition, especially for "development projects", needs to take into account the fragile mountainous environment and climatic conditions as well.

#### Better land compensation in Hill states

The Govt is supposed to pay more compensation for land acquired in Himalayan states like J&K , Himachal, Uttarakhand and Ladakh and the Right to Fair Compensation Act 2013 must be amended to incorporate these provisions as people in these regions have small landholdings and are considered to be below marginal farmers. On the contrary, our land is being acquired and repealed land acquisition law is applied for the same. Did MPs from Himalayan states especially J&K ever raise this issue in Parliament?

The land from below marginal farmers in Srinagar, Pulwama and Budgam was taken away for peanuts by National Highways Authority of India -NHAI in 2020 -2021 and the issue was not even raised in Lok Sabha. Our apple trees were axed and provision of tree transplanting was also not given to farmers but this issue wasn't raised in Lok Sabha.

For the last decade, I have been saying that snow clearance works should be taken up under the MG NREGA in rural areas of Himachal , Uttrakhand and J&K but no MP ever raised this issue in Lok Sabha. Srinagar is choking with trash and our landfill site at Achan is stinking. How many meetings our MP held with the Union Urban Affairs Minister in the last 5 years. Was this issue ever raised in Lok Sabha?

#### Conclusion

Participation of people in elections is the need of the hour as we cannot only complain and not be a part of the solution. Without our participation in the electoral process we cannot expect delivery of good governance. By electing good people we not only help ourselves but this helps strengthen our democratic institutions as well.

Let us elect educated and energetic leaders who can represent our aspirations in the Parliament. We need leaders who can debate and differentiate between infrastructural development and sustainable development. We need leaders who are courageous and have the ability to communicate effectively. We don't need leaders who are visionless. Let us all effectively participate in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections with full enthusiasm. Famous author Nannete L Avery says, "Talk is cheap, voting is free; take it to the polls.'

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



## SKUAST-Kashmir's Innovations and Impact

N.R.Sofi\* Ashaq Hussain **Abid H Lone** 

ndia is one of the leading global producers of oilseeds, annually yielding over 38 million metric tons. However, it faces a substantial challenge as the primary importer of vegetable oils, indicating a widening gap between production and consumption. For instance, in 2013-14, India imported 11.6 million tonnes of edible oils valued at Rs 60,750 crore. By 2022-23, these figures rose to 16.5 million tonnes worth Rs 138,424 crore, emphasizing a critical reliance on imports to meet domestic demands. In Jammu & Kashmir, this disparity is particularly stark, as local production significantly lags behind regional demand due to factors like population growth and changing dietary preferences. The region's requirement for edible oils is 14.20 lakh quintals, whereas local production is only 3.36 lakh quintals, showcasing a 76% dependency on imports.

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) has played a pivotal role in addressing the oilseed production challenge in the region. Since the early 1980s, SKUAST-K has undertaken extensive research and development efforts focused on improving oilseed varieties suitable for the agro-climatic conditions of Jammu & Kashmir. Under the All India Coordinated Research Project on Rapeseed-Mustard, SKUAST-K has developed many high-yielding, stresstolerant varieties tailored to the specific needs of the region. Based on our analysis of govern-

ment data regarding the oilseed cultivation area and production, it is estimated that SKUAST-Kdeveloped varieties contribute approximately 850 crore INR an-

breeding programs have yielded notable successes. The journey began with the release of KOS-1 in 1994, followed by KOS-101 (Gulchin) in 1996, which represented early milestones in improving brown sarson crop yields in the valley. The breakthrough came with the introduction of the Shalimar series-Shalimar Sarson-1 (SS-1), Shalimar Sarson-2 (SS-2), and Shalimar Sarson-3 (SS-3). These varieties exhibited significant yield potential, ranging from 16 to 17 quintals per hectare, representing a marked improvement over earlier releases. Brown sarson (Brassica rapa) has two distinct ecotypes: 'lotni' (self-incompatible) and 'tora' (self-compatible), with the former being predominantly cultivated in Kashmir due to its cold tolerant character. Additionally, SKUAST-K has made significant strides in promoting Gobhi sarson (Brassica napus) as a promising alternative for oilseed production in Kashmir. The recent release of Shalimar Gobhi university's commitment to diversify crop options and improve

oilseed productivity. One significant challenge faced by farmers in Jammu & Kashmir is the poor performance of oilseed varieties imported from Punjab and Rajasthan. These varieties often fail to adapt to the cold temperate conditions of the valley, leading to suboptimal yields and disappointing results for local farmers. The lack of win-

Over the decades, SKUAST-K's

dertaken by SKUAST-K.



ter hardiness and delayed maturity of these varieties underscore the importance of developing region-specific varieties through research initiatives like those un-

SKUAST-K, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, plays a crucial role in maintaining the seed production chain from breeder to foundation to certified seed. This ensures the availability of high-quality seeds for scaling up production and distribution to farmers across the valley. However, challenges associated with the cross-pollinated nature of brown sarson pose limitations on seed purity and uniformity. Due to the cross-pollinated nature of brown sarson, achieving Seed Replacement Rate (SRR) of 50% is essential to sustain seed purity. Further, SKUAST-K is continuously engaged in developing new oilseed varieties to enhance

production and productivity, aiming to improve the Varietal Replacement Rate (VRR) for sustained agricultural progress.

Under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) project "Promotion of Oilseeds", SKUAST-K has conducted 17 demonstrations across the valley to showcase the performance of newly developed high-yielding oilseed varieties best agronomic practices. Starting from the rabi season 2022-23, there has been a growing demand for Shalimar Sarson-2 (SS-2) from the University due to its exceptional yield potential of 15 quintals per hectare, coupled with its tolerance to biotic and abiotic stresses, making it highly suitable for rice-based cropping systems. Collaborative efforts with Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) have been instrumental in dis-

seminating knowledge and technology to farmers, facilitating capacity-building programs, and enhancing oilseed production through hundreds of CFLDs on SS2 supervised by KVKs.

Looking ahead, SKUAST-K remains committed to advancing oilseed farming in J&K by focusing not only on increasing yield but also on enhancing oilseed quality. The university's research agenda includes developing varieties with higher productivity potential, aiming for yields nearing 20 quintals per hectare, while also improving oilseed quality through targeted breeding and agronomic practices. Integrated crop management technologies, including optimized nutrient management, appropriate sowing dates, and pest management strategies, will continue to be pivotal in unlocking the full genetic potential of new varieties and addressing agroecological constraints.

In conclusion, SKUAST-K's dedicated efforts have not only contributed to boosting local oilseed production but also empowered farmers with resilient, high-yielding crop varieties. As Jammu & Kashmir endeavours to enhance its self-sufficiency in oilseed production, ongoing research and score a promising trajectory towards agricultural self-reliance and sustainability. The university's commitment to innovation and knowledge dissemination remains essential in achieving longterm food security and economic prosperity for the region.

 $The \ author \ is \ Associate \ Director$ Research MRCFC, Khudwani: Email id:adrkhudwani@gmail.com

# Facing Difficulties, Literally and Figuratively

Sandra Wartski

acing hard things is, well, **◄** hard. Sometimes we are forced to simply shift, such as with a loss or a pandemic; however, much of the time, we may be aware of the difficulties lurking underneath that might need attention but feel too overwhelming to contemplate. And humans are masters of avoidance and denial. The difficulty might be a behavior pattern or habit we know is no longer serving us well, a relationship that is unsatisfying or unsafe, even a memory or conflict that burdens but has been ignored for far too long.

The decision to make a change or a pivot in one's life is a complicated process. Even if the change is more internal rather than an externally visible change, it can still be challenging. There are various metaphors one might use to consider the avoidance of change, and the three highlighted here involve mice, weeds, and wires. By contemplating your possible way out of your hesitation, you can then plan your way forward.

#### **METAPHOR 1: RELEASING MICE** UNDER THE RUG

Some individuals seem to attempt to fool themselves into thinking that there really is not a problem and everything is just fine. They are often not deceiving others around them but are scared, worried, or unsure of how to make changes in their life. I sometimes reference this as being like someone working actively to hold active mice under a rug by continuously holding down the edges of the moving rug. We all see the bumps and the movements under the rug, but the individual is nervous to let go. When called out by others who see creatures lurking underneath, the person may just smile, argue or deny that there is anything going on. Pulling back the rug and letting the mice out so that they can be dealt with openly and effectively is what is needed, despite the fact this can be intimidating or even terrifying. Once the mice are released, there may be other complications of how to cope with getting them out of the house; however, they cannot be faced if they are not first recognized.



**METAPHOR 2: PULLING THE ROOT** 

**OF THE WEEDS** 

individuals find themselves facing the same problems again and again but struggle to get to the root of the problem. The parent whose child misbehaves repeatedly when out in public, the teen who gets panicky in social situations, or the worker who keeps getting fired from

jobs. Avoiding or leaving the situation may seem like it has fixed the problem, but this really hasn't gotten to the root of the problem. Rather than repeatedly weed whacking,

getting down on the ground and actually pulling the root of the weed is often much more effective in the long run. Some weed roots are deep and ingrained, others are shallower and simpler. The process of facing our fears, worries or issues is the process of getting to the roots so new beginnings can bloom. Quick fixes might provide relief in the short term but often not in the long term. The work might feel messy to start, but the overall benefits allow flourishing.

& Kashmir

**\**endeavours

to enhance its

self-sufficiency in

ongoing research

and collaborative

promising trajectory

towards agricultural

self-reliance and

sustainability

initiatives

underscore a

oilseed production,

#### **METAPHOR 3: UNTANGLING WIRES**

Making changes in one's life is hard and complicated. It can sometimes look like a balledup mess of wires of all types that are difficult to untangle. But pulling hard at only one wire actually tightens the knot rather than loosens it. In order to untangle the wires, we often have to take a closer, calmer look at the different parts and slowly pull apart each of the wires one at a time. We don't need (and often can't) expect the wires to loosen or untangle themselves. They are there and part of the tangle; however, once they have been freed from the cluster, they can then sometimes be separated, organized, put aside, and used as needed. Individuals with difficult childhoods, traumas, long-standing behavioral habits or mental health challenges often have very tangled wires. Other well-meaning family, friends or even the individual themselves may see a loose wire and think that simply pulling this one wire will be the solution to all problems. Sadly, the difficulty often worsens when we approach it with anger, contempt, or impulsivity. Instead, we need to slowly and carefully sort through the mess with more direct compassion in order to make bet-

ter sense of the mess. Considering methods of facing difficulties doesn't necessarily lessen the impact of actually addressing the issues but can assist in expanding our perspective, increasing our optimism, and inspiring the decision to finally face changes.

The article was originally published by Psychology

**Mourning And** 

was rescued, tells Kashmir Observer, that he had requested parents and those wanting to cross the river to wait and not overload the boat. "Everyone seemed to be in a hurry. They wanted to reach school in time. A boat which would accommodate hardly 8 to 10 people, was overloaded. It resulted in this tragedy.

"While school going children and their parents and laborers were coming on board, one elderly man chose to stay back. He was the one shouting on the banks to save the drowning kids" he adds

Evewitnesses have provided harrowing accounts of the events leading to the tragic capsizing of the boat. According to their testimonies, the vessel, which had been secured with a rope tethered to a cable for stability, encountered a catastrophic obstacle. In the relentless rush of the river's current, the boat collided with an unforgiving iron pillar, causing irreparable damage. The force of the impact inflicted severe harm upon the vessel, ultimately resulting in its overturning. In the chaos that ensued, passengers found themselves thrust into the merciless waters, their fates hanging precariously in the balance.

Amidst the flickering flames of hope, there exists a palpable sense of despair. Rescue teams including NDRF, SDRF, and police among others tirelessly comb through the wreckage, their efforts a testament to human resilience in the face of adversity.

"With each passing minute and the alarms around, it only serves to compound our anguish, prolonging the agony of uncertainty," says Khalida Jan of the locality. "As we mourn the loss of those who have tragically departed. we find some measure of comfort in knowing that their journey has found its rest. Meanwhile, those who have been spared from the clutches of disaster are receiving much-needed care and support at the local hospital."

However, amidst the grief and relief, a haunting question looms overhead – the exact number of missing souls remains unknown. This uncertainty deepens our collective sorrow, casting a shadow of doubt over our community.

This tragedy serves as a stark reminder of the inherent dangers and unpredictability of life along the river.

"We have been witnessing disasters in the areas living by the river Jhelum. Nobody seems to be bothered. Our MLAs only remember us in times of elections," an elderly man, Abdur Rehman, says. "Go and have a look at this area. you will yourself understand how we have been neglected. We want the LG to initiate an inquiry into this and punish those who have sabotaged the completion of the bridge."

The atmosphere is somber as families anxiously wait for news, some resorting to prayer for divine intervention. Hope is mingled with despair as rescue teams' work tirelessly, but false alarms add to the anguish. The bodies of the deceased have been laid to rest, while the rescued are being treated at a local hospital, some have been discharged. Police quotes 3 people still missing and 8 rescued and 6 dead in the tragedy.

"This tragedy has not only deeply affected the area but entire Kashmir. It highlights the dangers and unpredictability of life along the river," says a social activist, Javed Ahmad.

'Each bag told a story of ambition and aspiration'

As Kashmir mourns the loss of the students from this Srinagar boat tragedy, whose dreams and hopes tragically sank in the depths of the Thelum river. Each bag they carried told a story of ambition and aspiration, now submerged in the waters.

"Every morning parents, mostly mothers, accompany their children, holding their bags and later in the evening receive them as well. For many mothers, this is the only exciting job here. Today, the bags floated and the boys sank. Their dreams got shattered, their aspirations got killed," says Bashir Ahmad Bhat, who lost his

"I didn't know. I kept asking my son in the morning not to take the boat today as if I knew something had was going to happer

The Srinagar boat tragedy has brought immense grief to the family of Bashir Ahmad Bhat. Bhat's 30-year-old son, Shabir Ahmad Bhat, a hardworking laborer, was among the unfortunate individuals whose lives were claimed when the boat capsized. The loss of Shabir Ahmad Bhat is a tragic reminder of the human toll such accidents can exact. This bridge which remains incomplete and unfinished from last over a decade is a grim reminder of how people have suffered over the years for the want of basic amenities and were devoid of the basic fundamentals of

It's truly tragic when promises remain unfulfilled, especially when they concern critical infrastructure that could enhance safety and convenience for the community. Such incidents underscore the importance of timely completion of essential projects.

People have blamed local MLAs, Vote hungry politicians. It's understandable that the community is frustrated and disillusioned with politicians who make promises but fail to deliver. Wailing Father, Aggrieved Inhabitant

"In absence of the bridge, we have been requesting the concerned departments, government to provide us with a big boat which would have ensured the safety of the children. Since this was the routine for us, we would manage it on our own. They (government) couldn't provide us with a simple rope, leave everything else."

According to them, this underscores the challenges faced by marginalized communities in accessing basic infrastructure. Despite repeated requests, the government has failed to provide even a simple solution like a rope or a boat, leaving residents to manage on their own. "This highlights a larger issue of neglect and lack of support for areas like ours that are often overlooked. The need for basic amenities, especially for ensuring the safety of children, has been neglected a great deal."

Despite the desperate prayers and cries for the safe return of their loved ones, the harsh reality of the river's swift currents became increasingly apparent as search and rescue efforts continued. The overall feeling was one of helplessness and despair, with little optimism for a positive outcome. The sentiments expressed by residents reflect a deep-seated frustration and lack of faith in the government's ability to ad-

dress their needs. The remark about not having any government reflects a sense of abandonment and neglect, suggesting that the government has failed to provide the necessary infrastructure and support to prevent such tragedies. The skepticism about the completion of the bridge and the belief that even the deaths of children would not prompt action from the government highlight the deep-seated disillusionment among the affected community.

As the SDRF team found a school bag, cries of the people reverberated through the air. A woman fought to break free from the grasp of others. determined to search for her son on her own. Every eye was in tears, as each person seemed to recall sending off their own children that very morning to school.

Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Bilal M Bhat confirmed the incident occurred at 8: AM when an old wooden boat headed from Gandbal on one side of the Jhelum was headed towards the other bank of Batwara. Though the distance between the localities is 500 metres by boat, the nearest bridge is 3km away, prompting residents to take the risky ride. A footbridge near the area where the accident took place has been under construction for nearly a decade.

"Fifteen people, including schoolchildren, were in the boat when it capsized. While six people were rescued, six bodies were retrieved till the afternoon. A search is on for three missing persons," Bhat said. People rescued were rushed to the local Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital, where three are admitted and three were discharged after first-aid.

#### **LG Grieved By**

other agencies are carrying out relief & res-

cue work.' "Administration is providing all possible help to the bereaved families who have lost their near and dear ones and medical facilities to those who have been injured. Marcos teams have also been alerted. I am constantly monitoring the situation and guiding the team on the ground," he added in a post on X.

#### **Bridge Of Broken**

Jhelum river, leaving six people dead and many others missing.

The heart-wrenching wails of mothers and the hollow cries of devastated fathers echoed off the incomplete bridge - a cruel monument to lives cut short.

The bridge has now become a focal point of people's anger who say that an Overpass could have averted tragedy. The residents of Gandbal slammed the authorities for their inability to finish constructing a footbridge that would connect the area with the rest of Srinagar city.

According to reports, the bridge was sanctioned in 2011 next to the old dilapidated bridge. By March 2018, it missed the second deadline claiming floods and lack of funds.

"Despite protests and constant calls for completion about the dangers of boarding overcrowded fishing boats and especially since the facility goes off in the evening due to the area being a 'high security' zone. A bureaucrat claimed in 2018 that it will be finished in two months," a social media post read.

Locals told Kashmir Observer that the construction of the bridge was started in 2016 by the R&B department, however till date the work hasn't been completed.

"The bridge construction has dragged on for years," said Shabir Ahmed, a resident of Gandbal. "Locals are forced to use boats to cross the river. If the bridge had been completed, this tragedy could have been avoided."

Abdul Rashid, another local, said that the work was going at snail pace for the last seven years and the residents had taken-up this issue with the authorities a couple of times.

'However, despite repeated pleas there was no positive response," Rashid said, adding, Now, after the loss of precious lives, maybe they'll finally complete the bridge.'

"Who stole their tomorrows? Who is accountable for these young lives lost in a river, when a bridge could have saved them?" a young

He stressed that this tragedy struck just 3 kilometers from the smart city hub of Lal Chowk. "The unfinished bridge stands as a stark reminder of the gaps between development promises and the realities faced by residents.'

Notably, the valley is witnessing heavy rainfall from the last four days, due to which the water level in Jhelum river has swollen.

Sajad Ahmad Naqeeb, Chief Engineer R&B Central Kashmir, told Kashmir Observer that the work on the footbridge began in 2018 at the cost of Rs 4.76 Crore, however, he added that there was a lack of "dedicated funding".

"The width of the bridge was 1.8 meters but when the department started work on the pridge, the locals requested to make the bridge motorable," he said, adding, "the basic param-

eters of the bridge got changed." He further said after 2019, the whole new process was initiated and the work is going on rigorously. He mentioned the width of the bridge is now 4.1 meters and it can be converted into a motorable one, once the land is acquired from both sides of the bridge.

"The bridge has three spans and out of which two have been completed already," he said. The construction of the third span, he said,

#### will be completed in the month of June 2024.

Twin Boys Lost, ruel hand. The 12-year-old twins drowned with their mother when the boat overturned in the swollen Jhelum at 7.30 am.

Their school bags were found several km downstream at Chattabal. Mohammad Azan is still not ready to accept the unpleasant truth that his twin friends—Tahir

and Mudasir are no longer going to giggle and play with him. On the way to tuitions, everyday Tahir and Mudasir used to crack jokes to make their

friends laugh. However, fate changed everything on Tuesday morning when a roaring Ihelum river took the lives of the duo along with their mother in a boat capsize accident. "We used to call them Dolu and Bolu because

they were alike in height and shape," twelvevear-old Azan saaid.

"There was not a single day when they would not make me and my all friends laugh during a brisk walk to tuition

#### **'Limited Schools**

has 87 students and six teachers.

people have demanded an upgrade of the school. The school has the state land available but has not been upgraded."

"The school is being operated from three classrooms wherein only two are being used for teaching purposes and one is being used to serve Mid Day Meals to the students," the official said. The official also said that the school currently

The locals of Gandabal said that in view of tough competition to provide quality education and good studying environment to their wards. they send them to other areas wherein quality of education in government or centrally sponsored schools is 'far better' in comparison to the local

One of the locals Altaf Ahmad said, "Recently, one of the students of the primary school in Gandabal has taken discharge from the school in view of dearth of infrastructure and has got enrolled in Kendriya Vidyalaya No-1 in Batwara."

Ahmad further said that in the locality, another student was enrolled in KV No-1 but decided to take admission in the government school of Gandabal. "But in a short span of time, he chooses to return back to KV because of infra-

structural issues quality of education." Another local of Gandabal, Ahmad Tariq said that the area has always been ignored by the administration of providing basic infrastructures and facilities.

"Majority of the locals in Gandabal locality belong to BPL category. Ironically, there is no other government school in our locality and for better and quality education, we have to send our wards cross-river to pursue education," Tarig said.

Pertinently, the nearest higher secondary of Gandabal is government girls' higher secondary Rajbagh and government boys higher secondary Jawharnagar.

Meanwhile Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) was not available for his comments.

#### **Political Parties**

Lok Sabha constituency, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi suspended his campaigning for two days. "This is a tragic day today for all of us and the bereaved families of the children who lost

their lives in #Batwara. I cancel all my campaigning programmes for today and tomorrow. Prayers for the angelic souls and the families of the deceased." Mehdi, an influential Shia leader. posted on X.

The Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference (JKPC), led by Sajad Lone, also suspended all

election-related activities of the party.
"Out of respect for the families affected by the boat capsize tragedy today, JKPC cadres and leaders are directed to suspend all electionrelated activities. Our hearts are with those enduring this loss. We stand together with the affected families in support and solidarity," the party said.

Lone is contesting the Lok Sabha polls from the Baramulla constituency in north Kashmir. The Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party, led by Altaf Bukhari, said there would be no political

activity for the day in the Kashmir valley. "In view of the tragedy caused by the boat capsize incident, the Appli Party is postponing all its activities and events that were scheduled for today. The loss of precious lives, including those of children, in this fatal incident is a monumental tragedy for all of us, and we are grieving.

"Therefore, there will be no political activity anywhere in the valley today," the party said on

#### Congress, NC, PDP

and PDP exploited the youths of Kashmir. "These three parties did not allow democracy to grow in Jammu and Kashmir... on the pretext of security, our Kashmiri vouths were exploited. want to ask (National Conference president) Farooq Abdullah and the PDP - under whose rule most of the fake encounters took place, who fired on the children of Kashmir and handed the gun to them? It is these three parties."

But the BJP, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, restored peace and ensured development after the abrogation of Article 370, Shah said.

"Modiji restored peace in Jammu and Kashmir. J-K slipped into backwardness due to terrorism and agitations for the past 70 years. "Modi facilitated the end of terrorism,

fake encounters, stone-pelting, and Pakistansponsored strikes, paving the way for development in J-K," he said. The BJP's rival parties have asked people not

to vote for the BJP and its "proxies", claiming the ruling party was more interested in the land of Kashmir than the welfare of its people.

"I want to clear the misgivings being created among Kashmiri youths that the BJP wants to take the land of Kashmir by force.

"The BIP is not among those who occupy land by force but believes in winning the hearts of people," Shah told the rally held here in support of Jugal Kishore, who is seeking the third term from the Jammu parliamentary constituency.

Shah said the BJP is in no haste as it knows that the party's symbol 'lotus' will bloom on its own in the Valley with the love of people.

He asked people in Kashmir not to vote for the Congress, National Conference and PDP, saying they have only exploited them over the past seven decades. The Home Minister said the vote of 'lotus' is

a vote for Modi under whose government J-K was benefitting the most among all parts of the "Modi fulfilled the dream of Syama Prasad

Mookerjee who made the supreme sacrifice on this land for his slogan of 'ek desh mein do vidhan, do pradhan aur do nishan nahi chalenge'. 'The evil shadow of Article 370 is gone now and the tricolour is touching the skyline across

J-K like the rest of the country," he said. He said nobody has the power to raise pro-Pakistan slogans and now the air reverberates only with the slogan of 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' in

every nook and corner of J-K. 'The change happened because of Modi. The PDP was saying that nobody will raise the tricolour if Article 370 is revoked but I want to tell Mehbooba that we will be gone but the tricolour is going to stay forever and flutter with honour,

pride and prestige," he said. Abdullah was saying that BJP will not be able to revoke Article 370 even if Modi comes to power 10 times but "Modi did it in his second tenure only".

Shah said terrorism in I-K) is taking its last breath and the youth who were carrying stones in their hands are now equipped with laptops and pursuing their goals.

He said the abrogation of Article 370 also led to the restoration of rights to various sections of the society including women, Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and other backward classes (OBC) who were deprived of the constitutional rights by the Congress and the National

Highlighting various developmental schemes and projects undertaken by the Modi government since 2014, he said the budget which was enhanced many times was utilised by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha-led administration for the welfare of the people.

"The Lt Governor ensured zero-tolerance against corruption and also showed the door to those linked to terrorism," he said, referring to the sacking of over 50 government employees who were dismissed from service for their involvement in terror activities.

The Home Minister assured the people that the Modi government would develop border villages at par with Jammu city, take the number of tourist arrivals to three crore and encourage border tourism besides providing piped domestic gas to every household.

#### 'No Discrimination the name of 'creed, caste and religion' and

said the BJP believes in uniting the country and taking it forward.

"Before 2014, Muslims were being told if Modi comes to power you will be finished...have you seen the Modi-led government discriminating against anyone on the basis of religion? Has anyone asked you whether you are a Muslim, Hindu or Sikh when it comes to availing the Central government schemes and facilities like free ration and free treatment." Thakur said addressing an election rally in Kishtwar district.

Kishtwar is part of the Udhampur

parliamentary constituency, which is going to polls on April 19 to decide the fate of BJP candidate and Union Minister Jitendra Singh and 11 others, including his main opponent and INDIA

bloc candidate Choudhary Lal Singh. "Modi government is working with a motto of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas' and dedicated to service, good governance and well-being of the poor which will be further strengthened in the next five years," said Thakur, who reached here for the third time to garner support for BJP candidates.

"The Modi government ensured iustice for all including those who were deprived of their rights in Jammu and Kashmir under the garb of Article 370," he added.

Launching a scathing attack on the Congress, the BJP leader said its leaders Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi are claiming that Modi will change the Constitution if he returns to power for the third term.

'The Constitution was given to us by B R Ambedkar whom we are taking in high esteem and honour him. It was the Congress which made amendments in the Constitution 62 times. including 17 during Pandit Nehru's prime ministership and 33 times during Indira Gandhi's rule," Thakur said.

He accused the Congress of making compromises with the national interests by conceding land to Pakistan (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) China (Aksai Chin) and Sri Lanka (Katchatheevu Island) in the past.

"We give top priority to our national interests and India is first for us unlike the Congress," Thakur said.

The BJP leader said the Indian economy jumped to fifth position in the world and the Modi government is working to make it the third largest economy in the world.

"It is possible if you vote for Modi to make him the prime minister for the third term. Modi is the one who strengthened our borders, equipped our defence forces with modern weapons and fighter planes and a free hand,"

"The nation is aware of the surgical strikes in Pakistan and a befitting response to China in Ladakh." he added.

The minister said the terror incidents in Kashmir have shown a decline as was evident from 81 per cent drop in civilian killings and 50 per cent drop in the killing of security personnel.

"Tiranga is our pride but some people in Srinagar used to desecrate it. I took out a march in 2011 from Kolkata to Kashmir against this but was imprisoned by the Omar Abdullah led National Conference government. Today, the atmosphere has altogether changed after the abrogation of Article 370 by the BJP and the tricolor is fluttering high there," he said.

Seeking votes for Jitendra Singh, Thakur said the BJP restored peace in Jammu and Kashmir which is the biggest achievement for the party.

"Terror acts were the major hurdle in attracting tourists to the picturesque region. Last year, over two crore tourists visited I&K and the number is expected to cross three crore this year.

The BJP leader said the assembly elections along with restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir are going to take place in the coming months.

Talking to reporters later, Thakur said India is not in favour of war among any country.

"We are not in favour of war (between Israel and Iran) and always support peace." He criticized the Congress, National Conference and PDP, and said they always worked for their families without caring for the welfare of the masses.

Thakur lauded the sacrifice of the people of Kishtwar who stood with the security forces to defeat terrorism from their soil.

"Those who laid down their lives for the country will always be remembered," he said.

#### **HC Comes**

Games in Paris from 3rd September to 9th September as a first ever Technical Officer from

She said that the President, Indian Kayaking and Canoeing Association, requested the I & K government, on February 21 this year, to issue a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to enable her participation in these competitions. On March 22, she said, the Association again requested the Secretary, Youth Services and

Sports to issue NOC for her timely participation in the International event as it was a "unique honour" for the country to be a Jury Member in the Pre-Olympics. In case the opportunity is denied to her, it

might act as a deterrent for future as it may result in loss of reliability in International Forum for future selection, the Association said.

She said despite repeated requests, the government has not issued NOC/ permission to her to travel abroad to participate as a Judge in the Olympics in Japan.

Sajad Ashraf, Government advocate reported instructions in this regard and submitted that prior permission of the Competent Authority is required by an employee who intends to visit the foreign country on private affairs during the period of leave. This permission can be denied in the interest of security of the State or if the investigation/ inquiry is faced or in case of apprehension of evading the arrest, he said.

He said Bilquis is facing investigation in a case (FIR no.23/2023) under Section 5 (1)(d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, regarding her appointment as Physical Education Teacher and such requires mandatory vigilance clearance by ACB before processing her case for a visit to foreign country.

In addition, he said, a complaint has also been filed against her. Further the form submitted by her on the online portal was not accepted as she has not submitted her property statement.

Referring to a circular dated 21 February 2019 regarding grant of permission to visit outside the country on private affair, he said it provide that permission may be denied in the interest of security or individual facing investigation or inquiry on serious charges or trying to evade apprehension by police authority. 'The only reason of petitioner's travel to

abroad is to participate in the Asian Canoe Sprint Olympic Qualifier to be held in Japan from April 14th to 21st April, 2024 on an invitation as it will only bolster and promote the sport of canoeing and kayaking," the court said, adding, "It is not the case of the respondents (authorities) that there is any apprehension of her evading arrest." While Bilguis said that she is available for

investigation, the court observed that in case it was not expedient to grant permission due to some reason or any lacuna, the same should have been conveyed to her within a reasonable "In this case, it appears that no such decision has been taken," the court said, adding, "Keeping

in view the fact that the event in Japan is going to be held on 14th April to 21st April, 2024, and the petitioner (Bilquis ) would lose all opportunities to participate in the same and this may even act as deterrent for appointment as Chief Line Finish Judge in future," the court said directed authorities to grant permission to her

#### **Committee Formed**

Commissioner Oazi Sarwar comprises officers from the district administration and other departments concerned, the official said.

The divisional commissioner also directed for safety audit of all means of water transportation, he added.

"Besides, he issued directions to prohibit ferrying the passengers beyond the capacity of boats," the official said.

The meeting discussed the licensing and regulation of means of water transport operating in Jhelum and other water bodies, officials said. Regarding the under-construction bridge at

Gandbal Batwara, the meeting's attendees were informed that work on the bridge is underway and shall be completed by June 30, the official spokesperson said.

Bidhuri directed the officers concerned of Roads and Buildings Department to strictly adhere to the deadline for the completion of the

A boat carrying mostly school children capsized in the Ihelum river on the outskirts of the city on Tuesday, leaving six people dead, officials

The incident took place around 8 am in Gandbal Nowgam area here and six people have been pulled out of the river whose water level had risen over the last couple of days due to incessant rains in the Kashmir valley.

#### **Water Transport**

was rescued, tells Kashmir Observer, that he had requested parents and those wanting to cross the river to wait and not overload the boat. "Everyone seemed to be in a hurry. They wanted to reach school in time. A boat which would accommodate hardly 8 to 10 people, was

overloaded. It resulted in this tragedy."
"While school going children and their parents and laborers were coming on board, one elderly man chose to stay back. He was the one shouting on the banks to save the drowning kids," he adds.

Eyewitnesses have provided harrowing accounts of the events leading to the tragic capsizing of the boat. According to their testimonies. the vessel, which had been secured with a rope tethered to a cable for stability, encountered catastrophic obstacle. In the relentless rush of the river's current, the boat collided with an unforgiving iron pillar, causing irreparable damage. The force of the impact inflicted severe harm upon the vessel, ultimately resulting in its overturning. In the chaos that ensued, passengers found themselves thrust into the merciless waters, their fates hanging precariously in the

Amidst the flickering flames of hope, there exists a palpable sense of despair. Rescue teams including NDRF, SDRF, and police among others tirelessly comb through the wreckage, their efforts a testament to human resilience in the face

of adversity. "With each passing minute and the alarms around, it only serves to compound our anguish, prolonging the agony of uncertainty," says Khalida Jan of the locality. "As we mourn the loss of those who have tragically departed, we find some measure of comfort in knowing that their journey has found its rest. Meanwhile those who have been spared from the clutches of disaster are receiving much-needed care and

support at the local hospital." However, amidst the grief and relief, a haunting question looms overhead - the exact number of missing souls remains unknown. This uncertainty deepens our collective sorrow, casting a

shadow of doubt over our community. This tragedy serves as a stark reminder of the inherent dangers and unpredictability of life along the river.

"We have been witnessing disasters in the areas living by the river Jhelum. Nobody seems to be bothered. Our MLAs only remember us in times of elections," an elderly man, Abdur Rehman, says. "Go and have a look at this area, you will yourself understand how we have been neglected. We want the LG to initiate an inquiry into this and punish those who have sabotaged

the completion of the bridge." The atmosphere is somber as families anxiously wait for news, some resorting to prayer for divine intervention. Hope is mingled with despair as rescue teams' work tirelessly, but false alarms add to the anguish. The bodies of the deceased have been laid to rest, while the rescued are being treated at a local hospital, some have been discharged. Police quotes 3 people still missing and 8 rescued and 6 dead in

the tragedy. "This tragedy has not only deeply affected the area but entire Kashmir. It highlights the dangers and unpredictability of life along the

river," says a social activist, Javed Ahmad. 'Each bag told a story of ambition and

aspiration' As Kashmir mourns the loss of the students from this Srinagar boat tragedy, whose dreams and hopes tragically sank in the depths of the Jhelum river. Each bag they carried told a story of ambition and aspiration, now submerged in the waters.

"Every morning parents, mostly mothers. accompany their children, holding their bags and later in the evening receive them as well. For many mothers, this is the only exciting job here. Today, the bags floated and the boys sank. Their dreams got shattered, their aspirations got killed," says Bashir Ahmad Bhat, who lost his 30-year-old son.

"I didn't know. I kept asking my son in the morning not to take the boat today as if I knew something bad was going to happen," he sobs.

The Srinagar boat tragedy has brought immense grief to the family of Bashir Ahmad Bhat. Bhat's 30-year-old son, Shabir Ahmad Bhat, a hardworking laborer, was among the unfortunate individuals whose lives were claimed when the boat capsized. The loss of Shabir Ahmad Bhat is a tragic reminder of the human toll such accidents can exact. This bridge which remains incomplete and unfinished from last over a decade is a grim reminder of how people have suffered over the years for the want of basic amenities and were devoid of the basic fundamentals of

It's truly tragic when promises remain unfulfilled, especially when they concern critical infrastructure that could enhance safety and convenience for the community. Such incidents underscore the importance of timely completion of essential projects. People have blamed local MLAs, Vote hungry

politicians. It's understandable that the community is frustrated and disillusioned with politicians who make promises but fail to deliver. Wailing Father, Aggrieved Inhabitant "In absence of the bridge, we have been requesting the concerned departments, government to provide us with a big boat which would

have ensured the safety of the children. Since

this was the routine for us, we would manage it

on our own. They (government) couldn't provide us with a simple rope, leave everything else." According to them, this underscores the challenges faced by marginalized communities in accessing basic infrastructure. Despite repeated requests, the government has failed to provide even a simple solution like a rope or a boat, leaving residents to manage on their own. "This highlights a larger issue of neglect and lack of support for areas like ours that are often overlooked. The need for basic amenities, especially for ensuring the safety of children, has been neglected a great deal."

Despite the desperate prayers and cries for the safe return of their loved ones, the harsh reality of the river's swift currents became increasingly apparent as search and rescue efforts continued. The overall feeling was one of helplessness and despair, with little optimism for a positive outcome. The sentiments expressed by residents reflect a deep-seated frustration and lack of faith in the government's ability to address their needs.

The remark about not having any government reflects a sense of abandonment and neglect, suggesting that the government has failed to provide the necessary infrastructure and support to prevent such tragedies. The skepticism about the completion of the bridge and the belief that even the deaths of children would not prompt action from the government highlight the deep-seated disillusionment among the affected community.

As the SDRF team found a school bag, cries of the people reverberated through the air. A wom-an fought to break free from the grasp of others, determined to search for her son on her own. Every eye was in tears, as each person seemed to recall sending off their own children that very

morning to school. Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Bilal M Bhat confirmed the incident occurred at 8: AM when an old wooden boat headed from Gandbal on one side of the Jhelum was headed towards the other bank of Batwara. Though the distance between the localities is 500 metres by boat, the nearest bridge is 3km away, prompting residents to take the risky ride. A footbridge near the area where the accident took place has been under

construction for nearly a decade. "Fifteen people, including schoolchildren, were in the boat when it capsized. While six people were rescued, six bodies were retrieved till the afternoon. A search is on for three missing persons," Bhat said. People rescued were rushed to the local Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital, where three are admitted and three were discharged after first-aid.

LG Grieved By

other agencies are carrying out relief & rescue work.'

"Administration is providing all possible help to the bereaved families who have lost their near and dear ones and medical facilities to those who have been injured. Marcos teams have also been alerted. I am constantly monitoring the situation and guiding the team on the ground," he added in a post on X.

Bridge Of Broken Jhelum river, leaving six people dead and

many others missing.

The heart-wrenching wails of mothers and the hollow cries of devastated fathers echoed off the incomplete bridge - a cruel monument to lives cut short.

The bridge has now become a focal point of

people's anger who say that an Overpass could

have averted tragedy. The residents of Gandbal slammed the authorities for their inability to finish constructing a footbridge that would connect the area with the rest of Srinagar city. According to reports, the bridge was sanctioned in 2011 next to the old dilapidated bridge.

By March 2018, it missed the second deadline claiming floods and lack of funds. "Despite protests and constant calls for completion about the dangers of boarding overcrowded fishing boats and especially since the facility goes off in the evening due to the area being a 'high security' zone. A bureaucrat claimed in 2018 that it will be finished in two

months," a social media post read. Locals told Kashmir Observer that the construction of the bridge was started in 2016 by the R&B department, however till date the work

hasn't been completed. "The bridge construction has dragged on for years," said Shabir Ahmed, a resident of Gandbal. ocals are forced to use boats to cr If the bridge had been completed, this tragedy could have been avoided."

Abdul Rashid, another local, said that the

work was going at snail pace for the last seven

years and the residents had taken-up this issue with the authorities a couple of times. "However, despite repeated pleas there was no positive response," Rashid said, adding, Now, after the loss of precious lives, maybe

they'll finally complete the bridge.

"Who stole their tomorrows? Who is accountable for these young lives lost in a river, when a bridge could have saved them?" a young boy lamented. He stressed that this tragedy struck just 3 kilometers from the smart city hub of Lal Chowk

er of the gaps between development promises and the realities faced by residents." Notably, the valley is witnessing heavy rainfall from the last four days, due to which the wa-

"The unfinished bridge stands as a stark remind-

ter level in Ihelum river has swollen. Sajad Ahmad Naqeeb, Chief Engineer R&B Central Kashmir, told Kashmir Observer that the work on the footbridge began in 2018 at the cost of Rs 4.76 Crore, however, he added that there was a lack of "dedicated funding"

"The width of the bridge was 1.8 meters

but when the department started work on the

bridge, the locals requested to make the bridge motorable," he said, adding, "the basic parameters of the bridge got changed." He further said after 2019, the whole new process was initiated and the work is going on rigorously. He mentioned the width of the bridge is now 4.1 meters and it can be converted

from both sides of the bridge. "The bridge has three spans and out of which two have been completed already." he said. The construction of the third span, he said,

into a motorable one, once the land is acquired

will be completed in the month of June 2024. Twin Boys Lost, cruel hand. The 12-year-old twins drowned with their mother when the boat overturned in

the swollen Ihelum at 7.30 am. Their school bags were found several km downstream at Chattabal.

Mohammad Azan is still not ready to accept the unpleasant truth that his twin friends—Tahir and Mudasir are no longer going to giggle and play with him. On the way to tuitions, everyday Tahir and Mudasir used to crack jokes to make their friends laugh. However, fate changed everything on Tuesday morning when a roaring Jhelum river took the lives of the duo along with their mother in a boat capsize accident.

'We used to call them Dolu and Bolu because they were alike in height and shape," twelveyear-old Azan saaid. "There was not a single day when they would not make me and my all friends laugh during a

brisk walk to tuition. 'Limited Schools people have demanded |

**FULL REPORT ON KO WEBSITE** 

# Flood Fears Ease As Jhelum **Water Level Recedes**

SRINAGAR: With weather improving across Kashmir, flood threat in the valley and that they were closely monitoring water levels across key areas with water level in the river Jhelum near Ram Munshi Bagh steadily rising.

A senior official of the Irrigation of Flood Control department told the news agency that with the cessation of rainfall, they anticipate water level in the Jhelum river to recede in Srinagar in the next few hours and that there was no flood threat as of now in the Val-

"Rainfall has stopped, water level in Jhelum and other water bodies in south Kashmir is receding but in Srinagar it is showing an increasing trend since morning. As of now there is no flood threat, we will review it in the next hour, hopefully it will start receding here too", the official said.

He said at 10:00 am g, the



gauge at Ram Munshi Bagh recorded 15.67 feet, just below the warning level. However, in contrast, water showing a receding trend,

offering a glimmer of relief. According to the officials, at 10 am gauge at Sangam recorded 16.79 Ft, Pampore bodies in south Kashmir are recorded over 15 ft and Asham recorded 8.98 ft.

The official said that the situation remains under close review, with hopes pinned on a reversal of the rising trend in Srinagar, and Pampore—(KNO)

# INDI Alliance to bag all 6 seats from J&K, Ladakh: Sachin Pilot

JAMMU: Congress's star campaigner and former deputy chief minister of Rajasthan, Sachin Pilot Tuesday accused ruling Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) of playing politics of vendetta and hatred. He also criticized the government for deferring state elections and downgrading the erstwhile state into two union territories.

Addressing twin rallies in Kathua and bordering Suchetgarh in favor of Congress candidates Choudary Lal Singh and Raman Bhalla, who are vying for Udhampur and Jammu seats respectively, Pilot criticized the BJP leaders for allegedly using religion for political gains

"The BJP leaders centre their politics on issues like Mandir-Masjid, Hindu-Muslim, Hindustan and Pakistan. However, they show little interest in issues concerning schools, colleges, hospitals, economy, employment, women, youth, farmers, and inflation," the Congress leader claimed and said people know their prank and are seeking a report card of ten years' rule of the BJP government on the ground.

Commenting on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent announcement regarding Jammu and Kashmir Assembly election and Statehood, Pilot said, "It's not any privilege but the legitimate right of people and importantly



the announcement came after Supreme Court (SC) directed the government to conduct assembly elections by September 30.

"BJP leaders came here and told you about holding assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, but want to tell you that elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held before September this year. It is not the government saying so but the order of the Supreme Court," Polit said, adding, "In a similar way, the Ram temple was built after the Supreme Court's judgment.

Pilot also accused BIP of playing politics of vendetta and hatred and said that the party had two MPs during Rajiv Gandhi's time but Congress never raised the slogan of BJP Mukt Bharat.

He said BJP has destroyed the democratic culture of the country by its mission to target only opposition leaders. While it has collected huge amounts through illegal electoral bonds schemes, the accounts of Congress were seized on the eve of election's on

filmy grounds and citing old cases of three decades old, he said.

He also stated that the Election Commission (EC) has remained silent when the accounts of the main opposition party were frozen and elected chief ministers were sent to jail.

"The Election Commission is watching as a mute spectator. In connection with the Chandigarh mayoral elections, we had to move to the Supreme Court for justice, and we got it. They sealed the accounts of the Congress, put elected chief ministers in jail, and tried to muzzle the opposition," Pilot said.

Highlighting the Congress manifesto, Pilot mentioned five major announcements, including a guarantee that women from poor families would receive Rs 1 lakh in their accounts annually. "Under the rule of the Lieutenant Governor, outsiders are encroaching lands. Lands that are being cultivated are being snatched from the people and given to outsiders," he further alleged.

Congress has come out with Nyay Pattar for youth, women, farmers, workers and each section. The party has brought about several revolutions like Right to work (MGNREGA), Right to food, Right to education. Right to information etc but BJP has snatched the rights.

Pilot claimed that INDIA alliance will win all six seats in J&K and Ladakh—(KNO)

#### **PDP Launches Poll Campaign In South Kashmir**



**Agencies** 

**PULWAMA:** PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday launched her campaign for the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency with a road show here with a promise of raising the voice of voiceless people in Jammu and Kashmir.

"I have started my election campaign to raise voice against this enforced silence, the wanton arrests and atmosphere of suffocation that prevails here," Mufti told reporters after the road

"Pulwama and Shopian have always supported us and I have started my campaign from here. I hope people will make our voice, which talks about the wounds of Jammu and Kashmir, successful," she added.

The former chief minister, who is up against National Conference candidate and influential Gujjar leader Mian Altaf Ahmad, alleged that a process of arresting youth has been started since the elections were announced.

verted into a jail. No one is allowed to talk. Since the elections have been announced, the process of arrests has also started," Mufti said.

"You must have heard that recently militants shot at a tourist guide in Shopian which is an unfortunate development. But it does not mean that you will arrest hundreds of youth and place them under the public safety act," she added. Mufti said the situation was not peculiar to Shopian and Pulwama district.

"It is not about Pulwama and Shopian districts only, this atmosphere has been unleashed across Kashmir. If they are claiming that everything is normal then why these wanton arrests?' she asked.

The PDP president was accompanied by her party's youth president and candidate for Srinagar Lok Sabha seat Waheed Para.

"Waheed is here with me. He youth," she said.

# Over 100 Schools In Budgam **Lack Electricity**

**Auqib Javeed** 

**SRINAGAR-** Over a hundred schools in central Kashmir's district Budgam sans electricity, leaving students and teachers grappling with daily challenges in their pursuit of education.

According to figures from the Chief Education officer, Budgam the district has 917 out of which 12 schools are without drinking facilities, 11 schools are without toilet facilities and 99 schools are without electricity facilities.

The CEO had submitted this report to the State Human Rights Commission of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir, which was then transferred to the National Human Rights Commission in pursuance of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The complaint was filed by Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat, Chairman, RTI Movement before the SHRC in 2017 where he stated

that there is lack of basic facilities at Government schools / educational institutions in the Kashmir valley.

The Commission vide its proceedings transmitted a copy of the complaint and other documents to Director of School Education, Jammu & Kashmir calling for the present status of the case. In pursuance of the direction of the Commission, a report of Chief Education Officer, Budgam has been submitted stating the present status of the Government Schools in Kashmir.

The CEO said that "temporary arrangements in these schools are already in place."

It is further submitted that sincere efforts are going on to achieve 100 percent saturation in building toilets, drinking water and electricity in Government schools and that instructions have been conveyed to all the heads of the institutions of the Districts

The National Human Rights Commission has asked Dr. Bhat for his comments positively within six weeks, failing which, the case shall be decided on the basis of the reports

available on record. Bhat told Kashmir Observer that the tall claims of the government regarding "100 percent electrification" of government schools have fallen flat.

According to a report, over 63 percent of schools in J&K are still without electricity connection, while a survey revealed that over 45 percent of schools do not have drinking water available.

In 2019, the government started a process for electrification of all un-electrified government schools, from primary to higher secondary level in coordination with the power development department (PDD). However, the target of 100 percent electrification is

#### **Flash Floods Damage Machinery Of Under-Construction Handwara GMC**

Agencies

**KUPWARA:** Flash floods triggered by continuous rains have damaged materials and machinery worth crores deployed at the under-construction site of the Government Medical College in Handwara, North Kashmir's Kupwara.

According to reports, the flash floods, triggered by heavy rains, submerged tools, materials, and heavy machinery worth crores at the under-construction site of GMC Handwara.

An official confirmed that the entire premises of the underconstruction site of GMC Handwara in Chogal area are flooded, and the machinery and materials of the contractor have been badly damaged.

He added that work was progressing at full swing, but due to the flash floods, existing construction work also suffered damages. Last year, too, construction work suffered damages and was hampered due to flash floods, he also said.

"We then brought the matter to the attention of higher authorities and requested a report on the feasibility of continuing construction at GMC Handwara," he added. "As of now, an invest-

been spent on the construction. However, we are awaiting a response from higher authorities," he added. The contractor, Mushtaq Ahmad, engaged in the construction, said that his machinery and materials worth around Rs 16 crores suffered damages due to flash floods. "I have deployed huge machin-

ment of around Rs 14 crores has

ery on the spot, including mobile plants, concrete plants, JCBs, timber, shattering equipment, generators, concrete pumps, and other heavy machinery," he said. "The temporary office and ac-

commodations for our workers were badly damaged due to the flood. We have no idea what to do." he also said. When asked about restarting

the work, he said; " The flash flood was so sudden that we couldn't save anything except the lives of laborers and other staff."

"We have deployed sophisticated, costly machinery at the site, and it is highly time-consuming and expensive to repair some of the machines because all machinery is modern. However, we will try to start our construction work as soon as possible. We will resume work immediately after the situation improves," he added.

#### **Agencies** has suffered everything in the past few years. I feel that he re-**SRINAGAR:** Pained to see parents flects Kashmir and what is happening with its people and its struggling in getting text books for "Entire Kashmir has been contheir wards, former Law minister

Sved Basharat Bukhari has wondered how the government could announce a change of textbooks without the availability of the same in the market.

In a strongly worded statement. the former minister expressed his anger over - what he called-"flawed decisions and policy paralysis" in the Education sector and said, people at the helm of affairs seem to have lost their way and wit which has the potential of affecting the future of the new generation

According to a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir

News Observer (KNO), he said, almost half of the session has already passed off, and students are yet to get new books due to non availability of the same in the market.

**'Decision Of Changing Textbooks** 

**Taken Without Proper Home Work'** 

they had no plan in place for keeping the text books available in the market. "I fail to understand how you can take such a huge decision without actually having done your homework properly. You seem to be least bothered about the future of our children." guipped Bukhari. adding that there was a huge policy of inertia in the administration and nobody seemed willing to shoulder the responsibility.

The former minister also castigated the government for leaving

Over Rs 2.26 Lakh In Auction

students in lurch by changing the academic session and said that by doing so, the government has ended up wasting almost more

"You send them to more than three months of winter vacations from 25th of Nov. Then spend two months (March -April) in exams. Then another one month (May) for result declaration. Though they can go to school provisionally till results are declared, but the uncertainty remains. After an extended sort of Holidays, the class work finally begins by mid June. July or August you have again 15 more days of summer vacation. So please tell me how many days you provide them for new classes." asked Bukhari.

#### **Airtel Celebrates 1.2 Million 5G Customers In J&K**

**Observer News Service** 

SRINAGAR: Bharti Airtel, one of India's leading telecommunications service providers, on Tuesday announced that it has 1.2 million customers enjoying 5G service in the Union Territories of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The company has successfully deployed 5G service across all cities and districts in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh reflecting a promising shift towards offering next-generation mobile connectivity.

In a statement, the company said that Airtel has registered a signifi-

cant increase in 5G users in the past 6 months in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The company's expansive network deployment has effectively extended its services across the entire Union Territories, greatly simplifying the process for customers to

embrace 5G Commenting on the milestone, Adarsh Verma, COO- Jammu and Kashmir, Bharti Airtel said, "We are making significant strides in building the network infrastructure required to facilitate widespread adoption of 5G in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

#### **Accepting Bribe In Baramulla** the commission of offence pun-Agencies **SRINAGAR:** The Anti Corruption

**Lambardar Arrested For** 

Bureau trapped and arrested a Lumberdar for demanding and accepting Rs 4,000 bribe for handing over two NOCs of building permissions. According to a statement, issued

to the news agency, a complainant alleged that he along with his father applied for building permission at Municipal Council Baramulla with two separate applications which were forwarded by MC Baramulla to different departments for issuance of NOCs and report.

The statement reads that the complainant further alleged that when he went to Patwari of village Kunthbagh for NOC and revenue report, he kept delaying and finally he got a phone call from Manzoor Ahmad, Lambardar who told him that both NOCs and Patwari reports of are with him and he asked the complainant to pay him Rs 5000 which he finally agreed for

Rs 4000. "He asked him to take the report from him as Patwari halqa has kept the NOC and revenue reports with him. Under these circumstances the complainant approached ACB with his complaint against the officials and requested for legal action

against them," it reads. It added that as the contents of complaint prima facie disclose

ishable under section 7 of the P.C Act 1988 (r/w its amendment Act 2018) and Section 120-B IPC by accused namely Manzoor Ahmad and Patwari Halqa Khawaja Bagh Baramulla, a Case FIR No. 04/2024 under section 7 of the P.C Act 1988 (r/w its amendment Act 2018) and 120-B IPC was registered at Police Station, ACB Baramulla and investigations was taken up.

"During the course of investigations, a trap team was constituted which caught accused Lambardar red handed inside the Tehsil office Baramulla premises while demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 4000 from the complainant. The revenue NOCs of the complainant and his father prepared by the Patwari concerned and issued by tehsil office were also recovered from his possession in presence of independent witnesses along with bribe money.

It added that the accused Manzoor Ahmad was immediately taken into custody after completing all legal formalities.

"Searches were also conducted at the residence of the accused person. The role of Patwari concerned and other public servants of tehsil office Baramulla is also being investigated who were using accused Lambardar as tout to receive bribe from the general public. Further investigations in the case are going on," it reads—(KNO)

#### than half of the academic session in He questioned how the governvacations, exams results, and new ment could suddenly change the classification. text books for private schools when

Egg Donated For Mosque Construction Fetches

**Agencies** 

raise Rs 2.26 lakh in an

auction, the committee

managing the religious

The heartwarming

gesture has come to the

fore from Malpore village

in Sopore, 55 kilometers

from Srinagar, where the

local mosque committee

started collecting dona-

place has said.

tions both in cash and in

**SOPORE:** An egg donated An elderly woman, who has requested anonymity, to raise money for the construction of a mosque said she donated a freshly laid egg by her chicken. in this apple town in north Kashmir's Baram-All donations made in ulla district has helped kind were put up for auc-

> A local resident said people bid on the egg for three days and after every round, the successful bidder paid the amount they bid and then returned the egg to the committee as

a donation to raise more

tion and the egg turned

out to be the most sought



On the final day of the auction, a young businessman named Danish Ahmad bought the egg for a whopping

Ahmad, who hails

from the neighbouring Warpora area, said, "We are very eager to complete the construction of this mosque at the earliest. As the mosque is planned to be big, the funds needed are also rather large.' "I am not a rich man

but it was just my passion and emotion towards the sacred space...," he added. According to Ahmad,

after several rounds of auction, the cumulative funds raised by bidders for the egg was a staggering Rs 2,26,350.

# IPL 2024: Gujarat Titans, Delhi Capitals Search For Consistency

**Press Trust of India** 

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat Titans will be striving for muchneeded consistency when they meet Delhi Capitals in an Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday. Unlike the past two editions, the Titans have not been able to play like a welloiled machine though they still have time to fix the flaws.

A last-ball win over table leaders Rajasthan Royals on April 10 was just the kind of result the Titans needed to infuse fresh life into their campaign. They have only managed only two wins from their first six games but with another eight matches remaining, the Shubman Gill-led team has enough time to turn things around.

The absence of Mohammad Shami has hurt them but they must best use the available resources. Umesh Yadav has taken seven wickets but has leaked more than 10 runs per over.



His new ball partner Spencer Johnson and the seasoned Mohit Sharma too can improve on their economy rate.

Star spinner Rashid Khan has been at his frugal best but would like to have more wickets in his kitty. Delhi Capitals, on the other hand, have struggled to assemble their playing eleven due to form and fitness issues

After four losses in five games, they got a much-needed boost with the win against Lucknow Super Giants but they still have a lot to sort out if they are to push themselves for a place

n the playoffs.

The presence of a fit again Kuldeep Yadav made a huge difference as he broke the backbone of the opposition with three timely strikes in Lucknow

In Jack Fraser-McGurk, the Capitals seem to have found an able number three and will be hoping that the Australian builds on the success of his maiden IPL game. Anrich Nortje, who has been taken to the cleaners by the batters so far in the IPL, did not play the last game.

Mukesh Kumar has conceded 10 runs per over in the five games and was also expensive in his comeback game against LSG.

Thin on Indian batting talent, the Capitals rely heavily on the likes of David Warner, who would itching to make an impact after not contributing much in the last three games.

Match starts 7.30pm IST.

# RCB's Maxwell Takes 'Mental & Physical' Break From IPL



Press Trust of India

**BENGALURU:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has decided to take an indefinite "mental and physical" break from the Indian Premier League, blaming his wretched batting form for the decision.

Maxwell's absence from RCB's match against Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Monday was initially attributed to a finger injury he suffered during the previous match against Mumbai Indians. But he later admitted to dropping himself

from the squad.

"It was a pretty easy decision. I went to Faf and the coaches after the last game (vs Mumbai Indians) and said it was probably time we tried someone else (in his place),"
Maxwell said in the post-match

press meet.
"It's actually a good time to give myself a bit of a mental and physical break, get my body right. If I'm required to get in during the tournament, I can, hopefully, get back

into a solid mental and physical space where I can make an impact," he added.

This is the second time in his career that Maxwell has opted out of competitive cricket in order to gather himself.

He had taken a similar break in October 2019, stating that he felt mentally and physically ruined at that time. The 35-year-old made his comeback a couple of months later.

In the ongoing IPL, Maxwell has been quite underwhelming with the bat in the six matches he has played this season, contributing just 32 runs at an average of 5.33 and a strike-rate of 94.

Twenty eight of those 32 runs came against Kolkata Knight Riders alone, helped to a great degree by two dropped catches.

"I have been in this situation in the past where you can keep playing and get yourself deeper into a hole. We have had a pretty big deficiency after the power play, which has been my area of strength over the last couple of seasons.

### 'Would Have Pant In Indian Team Every Day Of Week': Ponting

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** In Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting's Indian team for the upcoming T20 World Cup, Rishabh Pant will feature "every day of the week" despite some established keeper-batters staking claim with their exploits in the ongoing IPL.

Ponting was not sure whether Pant would be able to play again after the horrific car accident in December, 2022.

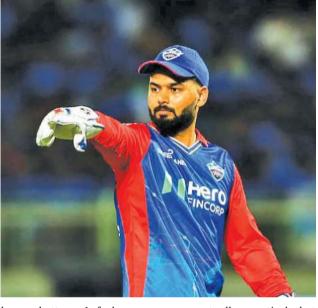
But having seen the manner in which Pant has been making an impact since returning to action on the back of his remarkable resilience, the DC head coach is left with no doubt about who should board the plane to New York at the end of the IPL.

"Do I believe whether Rishabh should be there in the World Cup squad? Absolutely I do. He deserves to be in that WT20 squad by the end of the IPL," Ponting told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"I think we have seen Rishabh play the way we have seen him play in last five or six years in IPL, and now back playing for India," added the Australian batting great.

While he acknowledged that there are lots of options for Indian selectors as far as choosing a keeper-batter goes, Pant remains the No.1 choice for him.

"One thing we certainly know that there is lot of depth around Indian cricket. With



keeper-batters, I feel some guys are in really good form at the moment. (Ishan) Kishan is playing well, (Sanju) Samson is playing well and KL Rahul is playing well.

"There are a lot of options but if I was picking a team, I would have Rishabh Pant in it every day of the week," the 'Punter' made his call.

Since his entry as DC coach, Ponting has shared a special bond with Pant and he is a touch emotional seeing him in full flow once again.

"Rishabh's comeback to international cricket is nothing short of remarkable. I spent a lot of time with him during last IPL and a lot of us

were actually sceptical that whether he will actually play the game again, such a horrific accident and I had spoken to him about it, I wasn't sure whether he will play again."

But like with all champi-

But like with all champions, Pant refused to throw in the towel.

"There was never any doubt in his mind that he will be back playing again. As each game goes by, we are starting to see a better and better version of Rishabh Pant, his batting has had more impact in last couple of games compared to start of the tournament, he is starting to move well behind the stumps," the coach sounded ecstatic.

#### **Short TAKES**

#### Narine's Ton Powers KKR To 223/6 Against RR



Sunil Narine smashed a whirlwind century to Single-handedly power Kolkata Knight Riders to a mammoth 223 for six against Rajasthan Royals in an Indian Premier League match here on Tuesday.

Sent into bat, Narine smashed 109 off just 56 balls with the help of 13 boundaries and six hits over the fence to guide KKR to the score. Besides Narine, Angkrish Raghuvanshi made 30 off 18 balls for KKR. Towards the end, Rinku Singh remained unbeaten on 9-ball 20.

#### DC Unsure Of David Warner's Availability Against GT

Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting on Tuesday revealed an X-ray performed on David Warner's swollen finger showed no major injury but a call on his participation in the IPL game against Gujarat Titans will be taken only after he is put through a fitness test before the match.

The Capitals are taking on Gujarat Titans in an away match here on Wednesday with Warner's fitness under observation. The top-order batter Warner sustained a finger injury while batting in the match against Lucknow Super Giants.

#### Pat Cummins, Nat Sciver-Brunt Named Wisden Leading Cricketers

Australian skipper Pat Cummins and England all-roundder Nat Sciver-Brunt have been named as the Wisden Leading Cricketers in the World in the 2024 edition of Wisden Cricketers' Almanck, published on Tuesday.

The Australian pace spearhead and skipper in Tests and ODI formats, led his side to the front as they overcame a tough challenge from India to win their maiden ICC World Test Championship in June and later their sixth ICC Cricket World Cup title in Ahmedabad in November.

#### Pakistan's Mushtaq Ahmed Becomes Bangla Spin Bowling Coach

Former Pakistan cricketer and legend Mushtaq Ahmed joined the Bangladesh men's team on Tuesday as their new spin bowling coach ahead of the T20I series against Zimbabwe. Earlier, the 53-year-old was the spin bowling coach for England, West Indies, and Pakistan.

The addition of Mushtaq to the Bangladesh squad will help them prepare for the upcoming T20 World Cup, looking at the conditions in the USA and West Indies.

#### Werder Bremen Suspend Naby Keita For Rest Of The Season

Werder Bremen have suspended midfielder Naby Keita until the end of the season and fined the Guinean after he did not travel with the team for their Bundesliga match against Bayer Leverkusen upon learning that he would not be in the starting line-up.

Bremen, who suffered a 5-0 defeat by Leverkusen on Sunday, said the 29-year-old will no longer train with the team or be in the dressing room.

# Man City Boss Guardiola Warns It Is Too Soon To Dream About Double Treble

Agencies

MANCHESTER: While Manchester City midfielder Bernando Silva said he and his team mates are motivated by the possibility of winning their second consecutive treble, manager Pep Guardiola cautioned against dreaming too far ahead.

City host Real Madrid in the second leg of their Champions League quarter-final tie on Wednesday at the Etihad having overcome them in the semi-finals last season on their way to winning the competition for the first time.

They also lead the Premier League standings and are in the final four of the FA Cup.

"I am not going to say 'don't feel this' to my players, but I have a different opinion. We are far away from those hypothetical dreams," Guardiola told reporters on Tuesday.

"When we are in the final of the FA Cup and two or three games (remaining) in the Premier League and in the final of the Champions League I will start to think about that. "I started to think of the treble last season only when we beat Manchester United in the FA Cup final," he added.

Guardiola's team can book their spot in this year's FA Cup final with a win over Chelsea in Saturday's semifinal at Wembley. They also have a two-point lead over Arsenal and Liverpool in the Premier League with six games remaining.

City captured the treble — Champions League, FA Cup and Premier League — for the first time last season to match Manchester United's treble win in 1998-99. No team has won it in consecutive seasons and no English side has won it twice.

Silva said being on the brink of history can drive the squad for the rest of the season.

"Obviously, it is an inspiration and motivation," he said. "We want to create the legacy. We want four Premier Leagues in a row. We want the Champions League twice in a row and two trebles in a row.

"In one week we could be out of all the competitions. But we are fighting."

Real Madrid and City slugged out a thrilling 3-3 draw in the first leg last week to leave the tie wide open. City will have midfielder

Kevin De Bruyne back after he sat out the match at the Bernabeu with an illness. "When Kevin is present, everything is different because he is one of the best

players of our generation,"

Silva said. "When he is on a

good day it's difficult to stop him."

Defender Kyle Walker is also available after returning to the bench for City's 5-1 league thrashing of Luton

Town on Saturday.
Former Barcelona player and manager Guardiola said he relished once again facing old rivals Madrid, who have an eight-point lead at the top of the LaLiga standings.

"Always has been and always will be (a big game)," he said. "It's Real Madrid and in this competition it is always a big game. It's special for me. Of course it is." (Reuters)

