

HEATWAVE Crisis Hits Kashmir

Jhelum Water Levels Drop By 30%



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Amidst the persistent dry spell, most parts of Kashmir on Monday recorded heatwave with Srinagar recording a maximum temperature of 35.6 degree Celsius, subsequently declining the water level in river Jhelum by 30 per cent.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, was warmer than the Jammu division as the mercury settled above 5.7 degree Celsius than normal temperatures today.

Besides Srinagar, Qazigund, Pahalgam, Kupwara and Kokernag also recorded the heat wave amidst the forecast of persistent heat wave conditions in Jammu & Kashmir parts for the next 24 hours.

Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir, has recorded a maximum temperature of 34.0 degree Celsius while Pahalgam, Kupwara and Kokernag have recorded the day temperature

20% Of Water Supply 'Badly' Affected: PHE

Agencies

Srinagar: After the protests erupted over water scarcity in the Valley, the administration on Monday said that nearly 20 per cent of water supply has been affected in Kashmir.

15-20 percent of the valley's potable water supply is "badly affected", the Jal Shakti Department's Chief Engineer, Er. Vivek Kohli said, adding that the situation may deteriorate further in case the ongoing wet spell persists. | More On P6

of 30.2 degree Celsius, 35.6 degree Celsius and 33.5 degree Celsius respectively. | More On P6

All Political Parties Must Fight Together For Country: PM

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Ahead of the start of Parliament's Budget session, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said people have given their verdict in the Lok Sabha polls and now all political parties must fight together for the country for the next five years.

A day before the presentation of the Union Budget, Prime Minister Modi said the Budget will set the direction for the journey of the next five years and lay the foundation for fulfilling the dream of 'Viksit



Bharat' in 2047.

Speaking with the media before the start of the session, Modi also slammed the "negative politics" of

some parties and said they used Parliament's time to hide their failures.

PM Modi also hit out at opposition | More On P6

'Economic Survey Identifies Areas For Further Growth'

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the Economic Survey highlights the prevailing strengths of the economy and identifies areas for further growth and progress as "we move towards building a Viksit Bharat".

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday presented the | More On P6

PM To Attend Kargil Vijay Diwas Silver Jubilee

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to attend the 25th anniversary of the Kargil war in Ladakh on July 26, officials said here on Monday.

Top officials said that PM Modi will pay tribute to war heroes at the War Memorial and interact with war widows. The grand celebration to mark the 'Rajati Jyanti' of India's

victory over Pakistan in the 1999 war is scheduled to be conducted in Dras from July 24 to 26.

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Anil Chauhan, Army chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, IAF chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari and Navy chief Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi are also expected to attend the Silver Jubilee function.

The officials said that Lieutenant Governor

of Ladakh Brigadier BD Mishra will visit Dras on July 24 to review the arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit on July 26. They said that after reaching Dras, PM Modi will participate in a wreath-laying ceremony followed by the visit to the Wall of Fame.

"He will inspect the museum of Kargil War artefacts and will be briefed on the Kargil war by top Army commanders."

They said that PM Modi is also scheduled to inaugurate Shinku La tunnel virtually and address the gathering before departing from the Kargil War Memorial.

Kargil Vijay Diwas is held every year at Dras War Memorial on July 26 to mark India's victory over Pakistan at the Kargil heights after nearly three months of war in which around 500 Indian soldiers lost their lives. | More On P6

J&K's Budget To Be Unveiled In LS Today

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory's budget for 2024-25 would be unveiled in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman would present a statement of estimated receipts and expenditure of Jammu & Kashmir for 2024-25 today (Tuesday) shortly after presenting the Union budget for the ongoing fiscal.

On February 5 this year, Rs 59,634 crore interim budget for J&K was presented in the Parliament by Niramala Sitharaman.

Sources said that the total budget estimates for J&K are expected to be Rs 1.18 lakh crore. Of which the revenue expenditure is estimated to be Rs 80 lakh crore and capital expenditure is likely Rs 38 lakh crore.

This would be the fifth consecutive budget of Jammu & Kashmir in the Parliament after imposition of Central rule in the erstwhile state. The budget document is being presented in the Parliament as J&K is currently without its own Assembly. Since June 19, 2018 when BJP withdrew support to Mehbooba Mufti-led government, J&K is without an elected government. | More On P6

AMARNATH YATRA 2024 Pilgrim Count Exceeds 4 Lakh Mark

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The number of pilgrims who paid obeisance to Lord Shiva at Amarnath cave shrine in South Kashmir crossed the four lakh mark on Monday as more than 12,000 yatis had darshan of the naturally formed ice lingam, officials said here.

"As many as 12,539 pilgrims performed the yatra on Monday and had darshan of Baba Bholenath on the 24th day of the annual yatra," the officials said. They said the number of pilgrims who have been to the 3,880-metre high cave shrine has now reached 4,08,518. | More On P6

'Ek Ped Shaheedo Ke Naam' LG Calls For Tree-Planting Mass Movement To Honor Martyrs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday chaired a meeting with the deputy commissioners and senior officers of civil and police administration to review the preparations for Independence Day celebration.

The LG directed the district administrations and the line

departments to ensure all arrangements for hassle-free and smooth conduct of the Independence Day events across the Union Territory, an official spokesperson said.

Sinha emphasised the importance of all stakeholders working together to facilitate people's active participation and meticulous planning of activities and events to

honour freedom fighters, unsung heroes and the martyrs. | More On P6



Fresh Terror Attack Thwarted In Rajouri

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Army troops thwarted a terrorist attack on a security post and house of a village defence guard (VDG) in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district early Monday morning, officials said.

A cordon and search operation was launched to track down the terrorists, triggering gunfight,

they added.

A terrorist has been killed and a jawan and a civilian, kin of the VDG whose house was attacked, suffered injuries, according to sources.

"Terrorists attacked the house of a VDC (member) at Gunda, Rajouri at 03.10 hours. A nearby Army column reacted and a firefight ensued," White Knight Corps said on X. | More On P6

JKP Issues Alert On JeM Video

Observer News Service

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Monday issued an alert about a propaganda video by the pro-Pakistan banned terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), cautioning people against sharing it as it may attract charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The JeM has produced a 5 minute and 55 second video with a poster of the Bollywood movie Phantom. | More On P6

Will Not Allow Attempts To Spread Sectarian Discord: MMU

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Kashmir's top Muslim clergy, on Monday said they will not allow attempts to spread sectarian discord that can destroy peace and harmony in Jammu and Kashmir.

Clergy met at the residence of Mirwaiz Umer Farooq under the auspices



of The Muttahida Majlis-e-Ulama (MMU), and later addressed the press.

Ulema expressed a collective resolve to counter any attempts to disrupt

the sectarian harmony. The religious leaders called for preserving the historic unity and harmony among different sects in Kashmir.

The meeting presided over by MMU head Mirwaiz Umer Farooq was attended by Maulana Rahmatullah Qasimi, Agha Syed Hassan al-Moosvi al-Safawi. | More On P6

Baramulla Human Trafficking Case

3 More Minor Girls Rescued

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Police in Baramulla on Monday said to have rescued three more minor girls and arrested two persons involved in a case under FIR number 173/2024 of PS Baramulla.

"During the course of investigation of case FIR No. 173/2024 of PS Baramulla, it surfaced that two (02) more persons identified as Ghulam Mohammad Khan son of Ab Rehman resident of Narbal & Manzoor Ahmad Shah son of Gh Mohammad

resident of Janbazzpora, were also involved in the trafficking and exploitation of minor girls from outside the UT," a police spokesman said in a statement.

Subsequently, a police party of Police Station Baramulla headed by SHO PS Baramulla, | More On P6

CLARIFICATION

Kashmir Observer carried a news item under the headline "MMU Calls For Unity, Peace Amid Sectarian Tensions In Kashmir" on July 21, 2024 in which it was mentioned that Muttahida Ulama-e-Ahli Sunnat is led by Maulana Abdul Rasheed Dawoodi. Muttahida has clarified that Maulana Dawoodi is only its member and the group is not led by him. KO stands corrected and regrets the inadvertent error. -Editor

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Kashmir Counter Militancy Model

Repeated militant attacks in the Jammu region has created a challenging situation for both the state and the union government. On Saturday, Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi held two separate joint security review meetings in Jammu to introduce a new counter-terrorism strategy. The strategy aims to address operational flaws, intensify counter-terrorist operations, and track down hiding militants with active support from locals. It will take some before the situation gets better. Although, the local militancy has, to a large extent, been reigned in, the influx of foreigners, especially in Jammu, has thrown the union territory into fresh turmoil.

The rise of militancy in twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch in Jammu division, and which is largely led by foreign militants attests to this fact. More than a decade ago, the twin districts were declared free of militancy by the government. However, since October 2021, the region has witnessed a surge in militant attacks. Although an uneasy calm prevailed in Jammu in 2022, this year the region has once again become a hotspot for militancy, with around ten security personnel being killed in two ambushes. The dense forests of the region have made it difficult for security forces to trace them. The situation has been made even more concerning by the fact that the forest area where the militants are hiding extends to the districts in South Kashmir, which have been a hotbed of militancy in recent years. Kokernag, a scenic spot in the region, recently witnessed a six day long encounter in which a Commanding Officer, Major, DySP and a soldier were killed beside one militant.

In a statement, Lieutenant General Manoj Sinha said that the government is now working on a plan to replicate the counterinsurgency strategy adopted in Kashmir Valley to curb the rising violence in Jammu, a statement he had also made last year. This includes identification and arrest of over-ground supporters of militants, proactive counter-insurgency operations, deployment of police, Army, Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) and night patrolling and area domination, which are believed to have helped check infiltration to a large extent in the Kashmir region.

That said, the militancy may be down but it is not out. And it is likely to linger on as long as the fresh recruitment and the infiltration continue to replenish the depleted militant ranks. And to achieve this, the government needs to also work on a political outreach in addition to a security approach which may not deliver results beyond a point.



Why do people have a negative perception of stock market investments?

Did You Know?

Irshad Mushtaq

Historically, people in Kashmir lost money due to intraday trading instead of investing. Holding quality shares, diversifying portfolios, and proper money management are key to success in the market.

Let me first explain historically, most people did intraday trading instead of investing.

Investment means holding a position for a long period and having patience for fluctuations, which can give good returns. For example, the Nifty index has shown a compounding annual growth of over 17% in the last 20-30 years. However, for investment, one must accept market fluctuations that occurred during that period.

So why do people lose money in intraday trading? The answer is that they focus too much on the screen and trade based on emotions, risking large sums of money. Emotional trading on the same day is a sure way to lose money. Investors can create wealth in the stock market if they practice proper money management, hold quality shares, diversify their portfolios, and have proper asset allocations. It's important to understand these things to avoid losses and create wealth in the stock market.

Stock market investment is passive income, without doing anything wealth creates, well specially means without doing anything subject to hold quality, we need to understand it's also business as you are becoming a shareholder of the company so you have to think like an owner, not just speculate. If we look at the stock prices 20 years ago, they were at quite low amounts like 100 rupees, now they are between 2000 to 12000 so they have increased by 20 times, 30 times, and 50 times, but still, people lost money during that time due to increased investment risks. If someone is a beginner, trading can be detrimental to their financial health.

It is crucial to focus on quality investments when venturing into the stock market. One should recognize the risks associated with intraday trading screens. Although holding non-quality shares can prove to be risky.

Learn from the insights of writer and investor, founder of MI Securities and Business Partner at Sharekhan! Reach out to him at Irshad@bp.sharekhan.com for valuable knowledge on financial matters

An 'Indo-Russian' Eurasia- The Deepening Of Strategic Cooperation

Anuraag Khaund

The recent summit between Indian PM Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir on July 8-9 was a strong reiteration of the strong and strategic partnership between India and Russia which has survived the test of time since the Cold War era of 1971 (then USSR). This strength was evident in the Joint Statement of the 22nd Indo-Russian Summit which not only described the ties as a 'Privileged' and 'Strategic Partnership' based on 'trust, mutual understanding and strategic convergence' but also in the commitment to deepen partnerships in traditional areas of defence, military technical, space, nuclear, energy and trade and economic cooperation. However, for purposes of the article, noteworthy was the focus on transport & connectivity, Russian Far East and the Arctic as the sites of Indo-Russian cooperation which was identified in a separate Joint Statement as strategic areas of economic cooperation till 2030 by which the bilateral trade volume is aimed to be around 100 billion USD.

The geostrategic and geoeconomic values of the Russian Far East, Arctic and the connectivity projects such as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Route have compelled both New Delhi and Moscow to accord it greater priority in the background of the geopolitical flux in Eurasia. A deepened cooperation in the latter spheres would allow a stronger Indo-Russian footprint in Eurasia in the face of increasing Chinese penetration in the region.

Eurasia is a geopolitical and geographical term referring to the combined landmasses of the Europe and Asian continents including its economic, political, and military resources. Eurasianism is the idea going back to 20th century Russia which posits the latter not as a 'periphery of Europe (West)' but as the median power between the West and Asia (East) and its culture being the melting pot of both the Eastern and Western cultures. The idea also stipulates the regions of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia as falling within the Russian 'Eurasian' sphere of influence. In today's time, the Eurasian identity has re-emerged in the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine conflict since 2022. Aiding this shift in focus is Moscow's 'Pivot to Asia' entailing deepened ties with Asian countries such as India and China among others.

However, Russia's pivot to and its no-limit partnership with China has generated some uneasiness among strategic circles in Moscow. This is in view of Beijing's increasing economic and security penetration into Central Asia - a region regarded as falling under the Russian sphere while Moscow's position in the wider Eurasian region gets gradually reduced to that of a 'junior partner' to China. Also alarming from the Russian perspective is the growing influx of Chinese farmers and immigrants into the Far Eastern territories resulting in a demographic change in an area which has historically been the site of Sino-Russian border clashes and dispute going back to the Qing dynasty era of 1860. These concerns have also spilled over into the Arctic partnership between Moscow and Beijing with the former becoming wary of the latter's ambitions in the resource rich region.

The above sets the stage for India in the Russian strategic calculus as a more reliable partner than China. Moreover, Moscow plays an indispensable role for New Delhi in the latter's ambitions in the three areas of Eurasia, Far East and Arctic.

Given India's increasing focus on Central Asia and the Caucasus, the partnership with Russia a longstanding traditional power in the two regions, is crucial and advantageous for New Delhi's own ambitions. The importance of this partnership is especially evident in the Eurasian forum of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) where India joined as a full-fledged member in 2017 with Russian backing. Also important for the Indo-Russian Eurasian ambitions are the connectivity initiatives such as the



Feature image credits: Reuters

“ However, some have also opined the Indian engagement with Russia as beneficial to the West in checking the increasing converge between Moscow and Beijing the rival of the US in the Cold War 2.0. The reverse is also true where New Delhi can act as the bridge between the West and Russia as the latter's 'all-weather friend'

Russian and Iranian perspective, the Middle Corridor has been designed to bypass both Moscow and Tehran given the latter's conflicted relations with the West while it would simultaneously deepen Chinese influence in the region much to the detriment of Russia and India. Hence, the operationalisation of the INSTC by the trio of New Delhi, Moscow and Tehran should take priority basis while also exploring other initiatives such as the Persian Black Sea Corridor involving the latter along with Armenia. In addition, the interest exhibited by Singapore in Chabahar should be banked upon to extend the INSTC to Southeast Asia.

At the same time, the decision to open Indian consulates in Kazan and Yekaterinburg two key Russian cities known as the centre of industrial production and international expos would allow Indian companies to showcase their talents and products to visiting Eurasian countries which might pave the way for robust cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in addition to the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) being negotiated between the latter and New Delhi. It also helps that the members of the EAEU are also part of the INSTC which can open the pathway for synergizing.

Another vital area for Indo-Russian Eurasian cooperation is the Russian Far East an area rich in hydrocarbons and other resources such as coal and diamonds. Also important for India's maritime ambitions is the port of Vladivostok which is the terminus of the Eastern Maritime Corridor with the other being Chennai. Hence, New Delhi has increased engagement with the region through forums such as the annual Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) while also expanding its role in areas such as shipbuilding, port infrastructure development as well as extending Line of Credit of 1 billion under India's Act Far East Policy announced in 2019. A major asset for India's Far East ambitions is its demographic dividend which could be utilized by Russia to tackle the growing Chinese immigration.

Also crucial for Indo-Russian interests is the Northern Sea Route (NSR) straddling the Arctic Ocean and Russia's Far East all the way to Asia thereby reducing the time and distance between the two continents by 7000 km and less than two weeks. While India has rightly shown interest in exploiting this route, so has New Delhi's rival China. Given the current instability of traditional routes such as the Red Sea as well as Chinese influence over the Houthis, the NSR controlled by Beijing would allow it to choke India's energy supplies from both the sides. Hence, the need to strengthen Indian involvement in the NSR which was identified as a core interest area for the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC). At the same time, the linkage between the NSR and the Chennai-Vladivostok Route should also be explored which would allow both New Delhi and Moscow to engage with ASEAN countries bypassing China.

Related to the NSR is the Indo-Russian cooperation in the Arctic

region a strategic region near the Russian landmass which has seen increasing penetration by China as a 'Near Arctic State'. The Polar Silk Road of the BRI is aimed at allowing Beijing to not only take advantage of the NSR and other potential sea routes of the Arctic as alternative energy shipping lines bypassing the 'Malacca Dilemma', but also the exploration and tapping of the potential hydrocarbon and other resources in the Arctic Shelf. Moreover, the increasing Chinese presence in Arctic states such as Greenland and Iceland is not something which can be ignored by Moscow.

Hence, it has turned to India for cooperation in areas of mutual interest as shipbuilding, development of the NSR, exploration of resources and scientific research on climate change. Moreover, the presence of India could also offset or put to check the ambitions of China in the region. For India, its Arctic ambitions are best served by partnership with Russia which has the largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Arctic. It was this realisation that led to the Arctic along with the Far East featuring together among the strategic areas of cooperation in the Joint Statement. Given the proximity between the two regions, a strong Indo-Russian presence in the Far East would provide the base for more pronounced cooperation in the Arctic and vice-versa. This dynamic would inevitably involve the NSR which is fast becoming the new geopolitical hotspot in Eurasia.

Finally, a deepened partnership with Moscow might even nudge the Kremlin to check its tilt towards China a major factor behind Modi's outreach to Putin. For the West, the Modi-Putin Summit's coincidence with the NATO Summit of 9-11 July in Washington was interpreted as Kremlin's signalling of the latter's failure at isolating Moscow. However, some have also opined the Indian engagement with Russia as beneficial to the West in checking the increasing converge between Moscow and Beijing the rival of the US in the Cold War 2.0. The reverse is also true where New Delhi can act as the bridge between the West and Russia as the latter's 'all-weather friend'. At the same time, both the countries should also be mindful of Chinese attempts at playing spoilsport by misrepresenting the Indo-Russian relationship to the West which would be detrimental for both Moscow and New Delhi. Hence, the PM's visit to Austria, a neutral state, immediately after the Summit was smart step aimed at countering such moves by Beijing's propaganda machine.

Let the spirit of Druzhba-Dosti (friendship in Russian and Hindi respectively) usher in an Indo-Russian led Eurasia.

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

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Is Our Reliance on Technology Making Us Vulnerable?

My Firsthand Experience With Mobile Banking App Glitch in a Cashless Situation

Ikkz Ikkal

I was about to check out. I had purchased my favorite gift for my cousin, Ayesha. She had freshly graduated from Kindergarten and I had promised her a special gift. Then suddenly my heart stopped breathing as my Mobile Banking App succumbed leaving me in complete chaos and confusion. It was such an embarrassing moment. She started crying. Then I had to purchase it on credit just to please this little angel.

In this age of digitization, where smartphones have become extensions of ourselves, everything is now at our fingertips. The advancement in mobile banking has made cashless transactions more convenient. The mobile banking apps have transformed the way we manage our finances, making transactions easy with a single tap on the screen. Who can forget lugging around a bulging wallet full of cards, cash, and whatnot?

However, these technological conveniences come with potentially equal embarrassment. Many of you can relate to me, when you run out of cash or forget your cash wallet at your home, and you feel awkward when even all those fine mobile banking apps stop responding. A moment of cringe-worthy awkwardness ensues.

Picture this: you are at the checkout counter of a shop, cashless but have your smartphone with you which is loaded with a sophisticated mobile banking app. You are about to check out your favorite "shopping" and suddenly your mobile banking app refuses to co-operate. And you pretend to search through pockets, and keep tapping on the



screen to no avail and you are counting down a minute before the next one. You are left stranded, the curious shoppers and the cashier look at you with sympathy and impatience.

This digital awkwardness does not stop here. Imagine you are traveling on a public transport and all of a sudden you realize you have left your cash wallet at home and your banking app is also napping. I can feel this embarrassment as I have met with this situation many times.

I recently visited my sister's house. And I wanted to give some money to my niece and

nephew. But my mobile banking app stopped responding and, unfortunately, I was also out of cash. The moment then turned awkwardly embarrassing. Only I know.

There are numerous other such instances we encounter day-in and day-out. Thus, as we tackle these digital problems, it is necessary to exercise caution and use technology responsibly. So, what can be done to avoid these cringe-worthy awkward situations and stop them from becoming recurring nightmares?

Some Solutions
Here are a few examples of

such situations and potential solutions:

1. EMERGENCY CASH STASH:

Always keep a small amount of cash in your wallet to deal with those unexpected moments when the digital modes of payment go down. This will provide you with confidence to handle situations with a peace of mind, knowing you won't get overwhelmed and respond in embarrassing ways.

2. DUAL PAYMENT METHODS:

It is prudent, in my opinion, to make use of both traditional cash

and digital mobile banking for a seamless transaction experience. Having a backup payment method is crucial and can be a lifesaver when confronted with unexpected technological hiccups.

3. INCREASED DIGITAL LITERACY:

Take time to understand how the mobile banking app works. Having a profound knowledge about functionalities like the offline mode or other vital payment options may prevent you from the annoying predicament that occurs when you run out of money or digital napping.

4. COMMUNICATION IS KEY:

Before going into any social settings, let others know that you are a person who relies on digital transactions. This kind of communication is crucial to manage expectations and minimize embarrassment arising due to technological back-logging.

While we are having fun balancing the advantages of digitization and its possible dangers, let these embarrassing situations be dealt with caution and grace. In this age of cashless payments, let's not forget to keep a few cash bills in our wallets.

In these rare moments of technology malfunction where somebody may be exposed, a dash of humor can be the best possible response. You know what, the best way to deal with life's weirdness is by smiling. So, the next time your mobile banking app goes down without notice, let it go and take a deep breath. It might even be fun to smile at an unfortunate incident with your loved ones nearby.

As we continue to evolve with modern technological advancements, let's not forget that tech-

nology is just a "tool" though a powerful one, but a tool nonetheless. By approaching and adopting it with caution, responsibility and a dash of preparedness, we can transform these awkward moments into stories of strength, reminding us that even in the digital age, a touch of humanity can turn a glitch into a giggle.

Tail Piece

The AI technology glitch was in witness today on account of an outage at the Microsoft headquarters that has adversely impacted industries, banking, healthcare, flight/train schedules around the world, which is starting at a doomsday scenario.

A single update pushed out from an anti-virus company in the US has managed to cause global havoc today. It's being described as the biggest outage ever.

This Microsoft outage has taken out almost all the major and important services and companies across the world.

Notwithstanding how life has been positively impacted by technology in almost all spheres of human activity in recent decades, it's tom foolish to lose sight of the unforeseen glitches in the AI-inspired technology that keep cropping up once every while, with the potential to spell doom everywhere around us at a time of its own choosing. The world has never been more vulnerable to such IT and AI-related threats as it's poised to contend with right now.

A foolproof security system needs to be conceived and put into place to prevent such contretemps from occurring in future.

The author is a columnist

Off With Female Genital Mutilation!

Gambia
Bans
FGM

In a welcome move, MPs in Gambia, recently voted to retain a law outlawing female genital mutilation (FGM), sparking joy and relief among campaigners. The move also reinforces this un-Islamic origin of this practice in Africa and elsewhere

Asad Mirza

Last week, thirty-four out of 53 Gambian lawmakers voted to maintain the FGM ban, which was introduced in 2015, aid workers told the Guardian. The remainder voted to repeal it.

There was certainly an air of jubilation amongst the anti-FGM activists and workers of the world bodies, like the WHO, UNICEF, UN Women who have continuously waged an advocacy campaign against this barbaric practice.

Jaha Dukureh, an FGM survivor and founder of Safe Hands for Girls, said: "Today we stood on the right side of history one more time. We have shown that even if they burn down this country, we will rebuild to protect our women and girls. Today, we won for Gambia."

According to the UN, Gambia has the ninth-highest rate of FGM in the world. Almost three-quarters of Gambian women between 15 and 49 have undergone FGM, which involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia. Nearly two-thirds of them were cut before the age of five.

The bill was tabled in March by Almameh Gibba, who said he did so to "uphold religious loyalty and safeguard cultural norms and values" in the Muslim-majority state. It was initially approved by a majority of MPs, which forced human rights campaigners to intensify lobbying against the move.

The law's repeal was backed by Muslim clerics, who hold much sway in the Gambia, a conservative country of 2.7 million people.

The vote was taken following the bill's second reading after being referred to a parliamentary

committee for consultation. A third and final reading had been tabled for next week.

Fabakary Tombong Jatta, the speaker of parliament, said: "(We) cannot be engaged in such a futile exercise as to allow the bill to proceed to a third reading. The bill is rejected and the legislative process exhausted."

Judy Gitau, coordinator for Equality Now's Africa office, applauded last Monday's vote for setting a precedent. She said: "Repealing the FGM law was going to set a new low in the push-back against women's rights."

While welcoming the move to uphold the law, human rights campaigners warned that more needed to be done to improve the lives of women and girls in the West African country.

Binta Ceesay, women's rights manager at ActionAidGambia, said: "Since FGM was banned nearly a decade ago, we have made encouraging strides in ending the practice, but it has not been enough."

The World Health Organisation estimates that about 230 million women and girls have undergone this traditional procedure, in which not only the clitoris but often also the inner and outer labia are cut away by a knife or razor, usually without anaesthetics, antiseptics or antibiotics. Infections, some of them fatal, are commonplace.

Most girls are "circumcised" in this way in Egypt, Sudan and the Horn of Africa, in the Muslim countries of West Africa, and in Indonesia, usually under the age of five. It is less common in the eastern Arab countries (eg, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Yemen), and rare in Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, but the victims are overwhelmingly Muslims. So are the perpetrators.

This poses a real problem for



the anti-FGM campaigners, because most of the people who do this to their girl children are convinced that it is an Islamic practice, or even a religious obligation. It particularly appeals to men who are obsessed about female "chastity".

These attitudes are common even in the farthest reaches of the Islamic world, like the Muslim-minority parts of Russia. When a 2016 report revealed the practice is widespread in the mountain villages of Karachayvo-Cherkessia.

Samira Daoud, Amnesty International Regional Director for West and Central Africa, said: "We welcome with great relief the rejection of the bill aimed at reversing the ban on FGM in Gambia. In 2015, the adoption of the Women's (Amendment)

Act, which criminalises and sets out punishments for performing, aiding and abetting the practice of FGM, represented a significant milestone in the country's efforts to safeguard girls' and women's rights. It was essential that this progress be protected."

In a joint statement UNICEF Executive Director, Catherine Russell, UNFPA Executive Director, Natalia Kanem, WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, UN Women Executive Director, Sima Bahous, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk said: "The decision to maintain the FGM ban aligns with the Gambia's international and regional commitments to prevent harmful practices against girls and women, consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the

Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Maputo Protocol protecting African women's rights."

Islam and FGM

There is no mention of female circumcision in the Holy Qur'an, and only five hadiths (reports of what Prophet Mohammed actually said) refer to it. None of them states that it is a religious duty, and there is no evidence that the Prophet (PBUH) had any of his wives or daughters circumcised.

Why do the hadiths mention it at all? "It is as if Islam deemed it necessary to regulate this practice which was already performed by the Arabs prior to

the advent of Islam," suggests Egyptian Islamist scholar Dr Mohamed Selim Al-Awa, founding General Secretary of the International Union of Islamic Scholars.

Senior Muslim religious authorities agree that FGM is neither required nor prohibited by Islam. The Qur'an does not mention FGM or male circumcision. FGM is praised in a few hadiths as noble but not required, and moreover the authenticity of these hadith has been questioned.

Several Muslim leaders have called for an end to the practice. In 2004, after CNN broadcasted images of a girl in Cairo undergoing FGM, the then Grand Mufti of Egypt Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi declared that hadiths on FGM as unreliable. A conference at Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 2006 saw prominent Muslim clergy declare it unnecessary. Sheikh Ali Gomaa, the then Grand Mufti of Egypt, stated: "It's prohibited, prohibited, prohibited." Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation said in 2012 that FGM was "a ritual that has survived over centuries and must be stopped as Islam does not support it."

Indeed, it would be much preferable if international Islamic organisation like the OIC join hands with world bodies like the UNICEF, UN Women etc. to put a complete ban on this inhuman practice in today's modern world.

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

Asad Mirza is a Delhi-based senior political and international affairs commentator and a media consultant

World Brain Day Doctors Share Ways To Boost Cognitive Health

Agencies

Srinagar: Mental stimulation, regular physical exercise, stress management and nutrition-rich diets are some of the main ways through which a person may keep their brain young, doctors say.

Doctors said that research has found that stimulating new connections between nerve cells may help the brain generate new cells, developing neurological "plasticity" and building up a functional reserve that provides a hedge against future cell loss.

They said that regular exercise increases the number of tiny blood vessels that bring oxygen-rich blood to the brain region responsible for thought. "Engaging in regular physical activity can improve cognitive function and reduce the risk of cognitive decline. Exercise increases blood flow to the brain and promotes the growth of new brain cells," they said.

Dr Showkat, a cardiologist, said that exercise lowers blood pressure, improves cholesterol levels, helps balance blood sugar, and reduces mental stress, all of which benefit both brain and heart health. He advised improving blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels, considering low-dose aspirin, avoiding tobacco and other drugs, caring for emotions and ensuring restful sleep to maintain good mental

and physical health.

"Adequate sleep is crucial for brain health as poor sleep can impair cognitive function and increase the risk of developing neurodegenerative diseases. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night," he added.

Dr Firdous, a neurologist, said that chronic stress can negatively impact the brain. He recommended practising stress-reducing techniques such as mindfulness meditation and deep breathing exercises to maintain cognitive health. "Routine health check-ups can help detect and manage conditions like hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol which can affect brain health. Managing these conditions can reduce the risk of cognitive decline," he said.

He added, "Maintaining strong social connections and engaging in social activities can protect against memory loss and cognitive decline. Interacting with friends and family, participating in group activities, and volunteering can provide the necessary mental stimulation and emotional support."

According to doctors, maintaining a balanced lifestyle that includes physical activity, healthy eating, mental stimulation, social engagement, quality sleep and stress management is key to promoting long-term brain health—(KNO)

Amid Tourism Ministry's Push, Kashmir Emerges As Prime Wedding Destination

Agencies

Srinagar Kashmir is rapidly emerging as a top destination for weddings, thanks to the concerted promotional efforts by the central government.

Travel agents in the region have reported a significant uptick in inquiries related to destination weddings, highlighting Kashmir's growing appeal as a picturesque and unique venue for such events.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his desire to promote destination weddings within India during a rally in Srinagar. He encouraged people to choose Indian locations like Jammu and Kashmir for their weddings instead of spending money abroad.

Kashmir's tourism department also joined the 'India Says I Do Wedding' campaign to promote Kashmir as a marriage destination akin to Jodhpur and other parts of the country.

The government's promotional initiatives have played a crucial role in showcasing the region's potential, positioning Kashmir as a prime spot for couples looking to tie the knot in a picturesque and culturally rich environment.

Following the union gov-



ernment's blitzkrieg, local travel agents have noted a surge in bookings and inquiries, reflecting the rising trend of destination weddings in Kashmir.

"We receive numerous inquiries about destination weddings in Kashmir. Destination weddings, which have been popular in places like Jaipur, Goa, and Kerala are now becoming a trend in the valley as well. There's no better place than Kashmir for a destination wedding, given its stunning beauty,

rich culture, delicious cuisine, and favourable weather," Umer Ahmad Bhat, a travel agent, said.

From the pre-wedding function to the bride's farewell, the hoteliers and travel agents plan each and every event as per the local traditions.

"Last time when we held a destination wedding function, we served local cuisines including wazwan and kehwa. We manage each and every function as per the expectation of our clientele," Malik said.

Wedding planners and travel agencies have also capitalized on this trend, offering comprehensive packages that take care of all the logistics, leaving couples free to savor every moment of their special day.

"Queries related to pre-wedding and destination weddings have increased for Kashmir. We have framed different packages and offer them to the newlyweds to make their wedding memorable," said Anju Mehta, a wedding planner—(KNO)

Authorities Prohibit Tourists From Approaching Kishanganga River

Agencies

Srinagar: Authorities issued new orders on Monday prohibiting tourists from approaching the Tetwal Crossing point and Kishanganga River in the wake of the significant water flow in the river.

The orders were issued by Sub District Magistrate (SDM) Karnah, who emphasized the strict advisory for both locals and tourists to maintain a safe distance from the river at all times.

SD Karnah Zaffar Ahmad Lone said that the measure is crucial for protecting lives, given the high water pressure in the Kishanganga River. "There is immense pressure in the river, and despite the fact that this is a prohibited area, some young individuals, ranging from 15 to 20 years old, risk their lives by attempting to take selfies near the river. This area is a Line of Control, with military presence on both sides. We welcome tourists as they are our guests, but their safety is our priority. We have witnessed reckless behavior, such as jumping into the river for selfies, fishing in the river which is strictly forbidden. What if anyone slips into the gushing waters. All this will be troublesome and that is the reason that I have directed the police personnel stationed there not to allow anyone to go near the river. This directive will remain in vogue till the water levels in KishanGanga recede," said the SDM—(KNO)

Gastroenteritis Outbreak

3 Fresh Cases Reported In Anantnag

Agencies

Srinagar: Fresh cases of gastroenteritis have been reported in Trail Srigufwara in Sallar medical block of South Kashmir's Anantnag district on Monday, officials said.

Block Medical Officer (BMO) Sallar, Dr Zahoor Ahmad Sofi said that three fresh cases have been reported today from the village.

Earlier, over 100 people were hospitalized after developing gastroenteritis issues, creating panic in the hamlet.

However, the BMO Sallar said that the situation is very much under control, adding that they are working on chlorination of water. "Besides door to door survey has been started," he said.

Officials had on Saturday claimed a large population including elderly people in Trail village of Srigufwara suffered loose motions and vomiting, following which the health teams reached the area and all the affected people were hospitalized.

He said that most of the affected people were discharged after a short stay while others are recovering.

Locals have accused the Jal Shakti for the prevailing situation and demanded investigation in this regard.

Nonetheless, the Jal Shakti department has maintained that water from the same source and scheme is being supplied to around 10 villages, but gastroenteritis cases have been reported from only one village.

Officials said that as a precautionary measure, the water samples have been taken to ascertain the cause behind gastroenteritis outbreak.

M Y Zagoo, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Anantnag told KNO that the situation is under control while the severity of the disease has gone down and all necessary measures are being taken in this regard.

He urged people to drink boiled water and proper emphasis must be given towards hygiene—(KNO)

Go Working On 'Mission Mode' To Explore, Produce Lithium in J&K: Reddy

Agencies

Srinagar: Union Minister for Geology and Mining Kishan Reddy today said that the government of India is collaborating with J&K State Government to explore and produce Lithium deposits identified in Reasi district of Union Territory.

Responding to a query raised by Shiv Sena MP from Mumbai South Lok Sabha Constituency in Maharashtra, the Union Minister informed the Rajya Sabha, that Geology and Mining department is collaborating with J&K State Government to further explore the lithium deposit identified in J&K.

Earlier, in February



2023, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) discovered 5.9 million tonnes of lithium in the Salal-Haimana area of the Reasi district in Jammu and Kashmir. This was India's first discovery of lithium, a critical raw material used in electric vehicle batteries, solar panels, and mobile phones. Officials say the lithium reserve in Reasi is of high quality—(KNO)

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
**Office Of The Child Development
Project Officer, Larkipora HQ DOORU**
Re-Advertisement Notice: No. 01 of 2024
Dated: 20 .07.2024

Subject: Advertisement for Recruitment of Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers) in Anganwadi Centres of Poshan Project Larkipora HQ Dooru.
Reference: 1. Government order No 222-JK(SWD) of 2022 Dated:30.11.2022
2.Government Order No.103-JK(SWD) of 2023 dated: 28.04.2023
3.Communication from Social Welfare Department Civil Sectarat J&k Vide No:SWD-ICDS/43/2022 Dated :14-08-2023.

Approval has been accorded, vide letter No: SMD/ICDS/Recruitment/2022-23/6235-38 of 2023 Dated: 21.02.2024 for filling up of various vacancies of Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers) in Anganwadi Centres of Poshan Project Larkipora, as per the details given below:

Sr.No.	Name of Project	Name of Post	No. of Post
1.	Poshan Larkipora	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers)	17
Total	17		

Applications are invited in the Prescribed Performa in Annexure "A" from the eligible candidates for engagement as Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper) on Honorarium basis for aforementioned posts of Anganwadi Centres. The important dates/details with regard to the posts are as under:

- Date of commencement for submission of application 26-07-2024
- Last date for submission of applications is 05.08.2024
- Annexure B- Name of the Post, Location/Ward , Qualification and Criteria for selection
- Annexure C- Affidavit

ANNEXURE 'A'
Format of Application

- Name of POSHAN Project_____.
- Name of Anganwadi Centre_____.
- Post applied for_____.
- Name of the Candidate_____.
- Father's Name_____.
- Husband's Name_____.
- Residence_____.
- Ward No._____.
- Address for correspondence_____.
- Contact No._____.
- Date of Birth_____.
- Age as on 01.01.2024_____.
- Academic Qualification:_____.

Sr.No.	Examination passed	Board/University	Year of Passing	Marks Obtained	Total Marks	Percentage

- Do the candidate belong to Retiring Sanginis (Anganwadi Workers)/ Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper) (YES/NO)
- Document Attached: _____

Signature of the candidate _____
Date: _____

ANNEXURE 'B'
Detail of Vacant Posts Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper) along with name and location of Anganwadi Centre.

S.no	Name of Panchayat Halqa	Name of Anganwadi Centre	Ward NO	Name of Post
1	Qammar A	Qammar A Drabihal	Panch Ward 4	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
2	Nowgam B	Nowgam B Rather Mohalla	Panch Ward 2	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
3	Henglipora	Saskhudan A	Panch Ward 4	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
4	Mehmoodabad B	Tethan Gujar pora	Panch Ward 2	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
5	Shangran (Nowpora B)	Shangran A Mughat Mohalla	Panch Ward 7	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
6	Badasgam	Badasgam G Fatehabad	Panch Ward 7	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
7	A.K. PORA	Ak pora A Maqdam-pora	Panch Ward 5	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
8	Poolia	Poolia Herpora	Panch Ward 7	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
9	MC Ward 10	Chambran	MC Ward 10	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
10	Batagund B	Zamalagam C Gujarbasti	Panch Ward 8	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)

11	Fethapora B	Kuchpora B Mochi Mohalla	Panch Ward 2	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
12	Pethbugh	Pethbugh C Parrey Moh	Panch Ward 1	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
13	Fethapora A	Fethapora A Malik-pora	Panch Ward 6	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
14	Fethapora A	Fathepora E Herpora	Panch Ward 5	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
15	MC Ward 7	Shiekhpura Mirmaidian	MC Ward 7	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
16	MC Ward 5	Khudhamam B Dhobi Mohalla	MC Ward 5	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)
17	Omoh B	Gutligund A Herpora	Panch Ward 5	Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper)

Eligibility:

- Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers):**
 - The selection of Helper shall be restricted to the electoral ward where Anganwadi Centre (AWC) is located.
 - Women candidates in the age group of 18-37 years shall be eligible.
 - The candidate must be domicile of the UT of J&K.
 - Minimum qualification for Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper) shall be matriculation.
 - In case no matriculate candidate is available in the ward, candidates with qualification not less than 8th standard shall be considered.
 - The selection shall be made on the basis of Merit in 10th among Married Candidates in light of Communication No:SWD-ICDS/43/2022. Dated 14-08-2023
 - In case no married candidate is available, unmarried candidate may be considered.
 - Document Verification**
 - The candidate who is shortlisted for Document verification will be required to appear for Document Verification along-with the original documents as well as self-attested Photostat copy of each document as per the Advertisement Notification. The candidate must be in possession of the prescribed academic qualification and other document like Domicile Certificate, on or before the last date of submission of application form.
 - Marks sheet(s)/Diploma/Degree of the qualification prescribed for the post as per Advertisement Notification.
 - Date of Birth/Matriculate Certificate.
 - Domicile Certificate.
 - Unmarried Certificate (where required)
 - Candidates have to bring two passport size recent colour photographs and one original Photo ID proof.
Photo ID Proof can be:
 - Aadhaar Card.
 - Voter ID card.
 - The candidates who are supposed to furnish various certificates issued by or before the prescribed cut-off date, shall be required to produce them at the time of Document Verification or as may be sought by the Committee; in case of failure, the committee shall take necessary decision which shall be final.
- List of documents to be Submitted with Application Form.**
- 10th Marks card/DOB Certificate.
 - Voter List/Ward Certificate.
 - Domicile Certificate.
 - Adhaar card/Voter ID
 - Affidavit of fulfilling all formulaties of HR Policy vide Government order No 222-JK(SWD) of 2022 Dated:30.11.2022

ANNEXURE C

- All applicants to submit affidavit stating following facts:
- All Documents submitted are correct, without any mismatch, scanning, duplicate or fallacious in nature. If found incorrect or in any of the above stated situation the candidature of deponent may be cancelled and liable to action under law.
 - Maximum qualification is Graduation for vacancy of Sanginis (Anganwadi workers) and Class X for Sahayikas (Aganwadi Helpers) and this is as per facts and onus of proving it to be true lies with the deponent.
 - The deponent has read the HR policy no. 222-JK(SWD) of 2022 dated: 30.11.2022 and is well versed with all salient features of the policy and shall be applicable to the deponent in case of selection as Sanginis (Anganwadi worker)/ Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helper).

No.:CDPO/POSHAN/LP/2024-25/286-96
DIPK-3362/24
Date: 22.07.2024

**Child Development Project Officer
Poshan Larkipora HQ Dooru**

No Proposal For Offshore T20I Series Against India, Says PCB

Press Trust of India

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday made it clear that it has made no proposal to play an offshore T20I series against India, and its current focus is on the smooth conduct of the Champions Trophy.

There have been talks about PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi holding discussions with the BCCI officials on the possibility of a T20I series at an offshore venue, likely in either England or Australia.

"There is no such proposal on the table or under consideration because right now the biggest challenge for us is to organise the Champions Trophy in a befitting manner and we also have a packed international schedule," a highly reliable source said.

The source said the PCB's two main targets at the ICC meetings in Colombo was to



get the budget approved for the Champions Trophy and then to get assurances from the ICC and BCCI that India would send their team to play in Pakistan in the showpiece.

"That is our main agenda

right now. So, there is no question of contemplating any bilateral venture with India," the source added.

India have suspended bilateral series with Pakistan since 2012 after Pakistan visited the

country for a short white ball series. Both the countries have not played any Test series since Pakistan's tour to India in 2007.

Even the participation of India in the Champions Trophy remains on tenterhooks with

speculations doing rounds about Men In Blue wanting to play their matches outside Pakistan.

GAMBHIR BACKS ROHIT, KOHLI TO PLAY UNTIL 2027 WC

India coach Gautam Gambhir expects veteran batters Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli to continue to come good with match-winning knocks, stating both those guys have got a lot of cricket left in them.

"I think they've shown what they can deliver on the big stage whether it was the T20 World Cup and in the 50 over World Cup as well. I think both those guys have got a lot of cricket left in them and more importantly with the Champions Trophy and a big tour of Australia, obviously they would be motivated enough and then hopefully they can keep their fitness till the 2027 World Cup as well," Gambhir said at the press conference on Monday.

WTC Table: India Remain No 1; England Make Big Leap



Agencies

DUBAI: England have moved off the bottom of the ICC World Test Championship standings and kept in touch with the competition pacesetters with a comprehensive 241-run victory over the West Indies in the second Test of their series in Nottingham.

The hosts wrapped up the series-clinching triumph late on the fourth day, with spinner Shoaib Bashir (5/41) claiming the third five-wicket haul of his career to help England dismiss the West Indies for 143 in pursuit of 385 for victory, as per an ICC press release.

It means England now hold a

2-0 series lead in the three-match series against the West Indies and Ben Stokes' side gets the chance to clinch a series sweep when the third and final Test commences in Birmingham on Friday.

It also helps England jump up the World Test Championship standings, with the victory catapulting them past South Africa, Bangladesh and West Indies into sixth place on the current table.

The World Test Championship standings remain unchanged at the top. India continues to hold the number one spot with a dominant 68.51% points percentage, while Australia remains hot on their heels

Dailgam, Anantnag Schools Clinch Football Tournaments

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The much-anticipated Department of Youth Services and Sports-organised Under-19 and Under-17 football finals concluded on Monday with spectacular performances at the HSS Dailgam venue.

HSS Dailgam clinched the U-19 football title by defeating SRJ HSS Khanabal with a decisive score of 3-0. The U-19 final match showcased HSS Dailgam's superior strategy and coordination, as they secured their victory with three remarkable goals, leaving SRJ HSS Khanabal unable to respond.

In another fiercely contested match, the U-17 age group saw Zone Anantnag triumph over



Zone Bijbehara with a score of 3-1. Zone Anantnag displayed excellent offensive tactics and solid defense, which enabled them to outplay Zone Bijbehara and claim the title.

The tournament, which drew considerable attention from football enthusiasts in the region, highlighted the emerging talent and competitive spirit

among the young players.

The final matches were followed by a prize distribution ceremony, where the winning teams were awarded trophies and medals by Principal HSS Dailgam.

The tournament was a significant event in the local sports calendar and was organized by the District Youth Services and Sports Department.

District Level Sports Competitions Held In Anantnag

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The Department of Youth Services and Sports' Under-14 and Under-17 District Level Inter-Zone Kabbadi Tournaments culminated on Monday at BHSS Bijbehara, with Zone Achabal and Zone Anantnag clinching the titles in their respective categories.

In the U-14 category, Zone Achabal emerged victorious over Zone Anantnag with a score of 37 to 25 points. Meanwhile, in the U-17 category, Zone Anantnag defeated Zone Achabal, scoring 38 points against Achabal's 29 points.

Earlier in the semi-finals, Zone Anantnag triumphed over Zone Bijbehara, while Zone Achabal secured their place in the final by defeating Zone Verinag.



Outstanding performances in the U-14 category were delivered by Jasim Kumar of Zone Anantnag, Mir Numan of Zone Achabal, and Zeeshan Bashir of Zone Bijbehara. In the U-17 category, notable players included Zeeshan Nisar, Zahid Hussain, and Suhail Mukhtar from Zone Anantnag, along with Faisal Mukhtar from Zone Qazigund.

The post-match presentation ceremony was graced by Mrs. Nasreena Akhter, Principal of BHSS Bijbehara.

In Qazigund, a cricket competition for U-17 boys at Sports Stadium Wanpora Kewa and Sports Stadium Nipora. The final match, held between HS Panzath and HS Nipora, was won by HS Panzath.

YSS Ganderbal Hosts Series Of Sports Activities



Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Ganderbal organised several sports events across the district on Monday.

The department held a Zonal Level football competition for girls Under-17 at MM Stadium, Ganderbal.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from all zones of the district, culminating in a thrilling final where Zone Ganderbal defeated Zone Kangan with a 2-1 score, securing the trophy.

A similar football competition for girls Under-19 was held at GCOPE Gadoora, Ganderbal. In this

event, Zone Ganderbal once again emerged victorious, defeating Zone Kangan with a decisive 2-0 victory.

Meanwhile, Inter-School Zonal Level cricket competitions for boys Under-17 were organized by Zone Ganderbal, Zone Kangan and Zone Tullamulla. Zone Ganderbal hosted the event at MS Fatehpura, while Zone Kangan conducted Pool A at BMS Prang and Pool B at the Zonal Office Ground in Kijpara.

Zone Tullamulla successfully organized their event at BHSS Safapora.

Monday marked the successful commencement of these events in the respective zones, with the remaining matches scheduled for Tuesday.

France Says Israeli Athletes 'Welcome' At Olympics, To Provide 24-Hour Security

Agencies

FRANCE: Israeli athletes are welcome at the Paris Olympics, French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne said Monday, after a hard-left member of the French parliament sparked outrage by urging them to stay away.

"The Israeli delegation is welcome in France," Sejourne said in Brussels ahead of talks with his Israeli counterpart, adding that the call by France Unbowed (LFI) lawmaker Thomas Portes for the coun-

try's exclusion had been "irresponsible and dangerous".

"We will ensure the security of the delegation," Sejourne added.

Portes drew ire from French Jewish groups and both political opponents and allies for saying Israeli athletes were "not welcome" and calling for "mobilisation" around the Olympics, during a demonstration in support of Palestinians.

He later told the Parisien newspaper that "France's diplomats should pressure the In-

ternational Olympic Committee to bar the Israeli flag and anthem, as is done for Russia" over its invasion of Ukraine.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said the comments had "hints of anti-Semitism" while the head of the Crif Jewish organisation Yonathan Arfi said he was "putting a target on the backs" of Israeli athletes.

Portes' remarks were condemned at the weekend by some allies from the more moderate Socialists, but backed by others in LFI.

FRANCE TO PROVIDE ISRAELI SQUAD 24-HOUR PROTECTION

Israeli athletes will receive 24-hour protection during the Paris Olympics, France's interior minister said, after a far-left lawmaker said Israel's delegation was not welcome and called for protests against their participation.

The Games begin on Friday amid pronounced security concerns at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions over the wars in Ukraine and

Gaza. Israel's war against Hamas that has devastated Gaza has become a lightning rod among France's far left, with some critics accusing pro-Palestinian members of antisemitism.

French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said in a TV interview on Sunday evening that Israeli athletes would be protected around the clock during the Games, 52 years after the Munich Olympics massacre in which 11 Israelis were killed by Palestinian militants.

Short TAKES

ICC Forms Committee To Review Conduct Of T20 WC

The International Cricket Council on Monday formed a three-member committee to "review the delivery" of the T20 World Cup which was co-hosted by the USA and the West Indies last month.

The committee features former New Zealand batter Roger Twose and two other directors Lawson Naidoo and Imran Khwaja, who is the deputy chair of the ICC.

It is understood that ICC incurred losses in excess of USD 20 million for conducting matches in New York, Florida and Dallas.

Dominant India Women face Nepal, Eye T20 Asia Cup Semis

Buoyant India will look to extend their winning run and seal a semifinal berth when they face Nepal in their final Group A Women's T20 Asia Cup match here on Tuesday.

India registered convincing wins in their first two matches of the continental tournament, beating traditional rivals Pakistan and United Arab Emirates by seven wickets and 78 runs respectively to put one foot in the semifinals.

Minnows Nepal hardly have any time to recover from their defeat to Pakistan on Sunday.

India's Paes, Amritraj Make History Joining Tennis Hall Of Fame

Former doubles world number one Leander Paes and tennis broadcaster, actor and player Vijay Amritraj became the first Asian men inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame on July 20.

The first inductees from India were joined by British tennis journalist and author Richard Evans in enshrinement ceremonies at the Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island.

Paes won Olympic bronze, eight men's doubles and 10 mixed doubles grand slam crowns.

Amritraj reached the men's singles quarterfinals at the Wimbledon and US Open twice.

LeBron James Named Team USA's Male Flag Bearer At Olympics

Four-time NBA champion LeBron James will be Team USA's male flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics on July 26, the American team said on Monday.

The two-time Olympic gold medalist, aged 39, will be participating in his fourth Olympics.

"It's an incredible honour to represent the United States on this global stage, especially in a moment that can bring the whole world together," James said in a statement.

Midfielder Amadou Onana Joins Aston Villa from Everton



Aston Villa have signed defensive midfielder Amadou Onana from fellow Premier League side Everton, both clubs said on Monday.

Neither Villa nor Everton disclosed financial details, but British media reported the deal was worth around 50 million pounds (\$64.6 million). Villa did not reveal the length of the 22-year-old Belgian international's contract.

Born in Dakar, Senegal, Onana started his senior career at German side Hamburg before moving to Ligue 1's Lille in 2021.



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