

# KASHMIR OBSERVER

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## Confusion Over Milad Holiday

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Confusion and uncertainty prevailed on Monday, as the holiday commemorating Eid Milad-un-Nabi was observed a day before the Prophet's (Pbuh) birthday.

Government employees were left in a state of confusion as the General Administrative Department (GAD) did not issue an order specifying whether or not the Milad holiday was to be observed on Monday.

"Since no formal order was issued, we had to rely on the J&K Bank calendar. To find out if I should attend office or not, I had to call my seniors," Ghulam Jeelani, a government employee said.

Every year, people celebrate Milad, which commemorates the prophet's birth anniversary. Nevertheless, there was a sense of confusion across J&K as no formal order specifying whether or not the holiday was to be recognized today.

"We assumed there wouldn't be a holiday today when we couldn't find an order from GAD. And in the morning, I left the home to attend the office, which I discovered was closed," Tariq Ahmad, another employee said.

Schools across the valley faced similar | [More on P6](#)



**Eid-e-Milad Celebrations Begin:** Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi, the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), is being celebrated with religious fervour across Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday. Muslims across the world use this day to rekindle their faith, seeking inspiration from the exemplary character, wisdom, and compassion of the Prophet. A festive look prevailed in Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir as many shrines, mosques and thoroughfares were decorated and illuminated with fluorescent lights while religious flags and bunting were hoisted atop many buildings and vehicles. Thousands of people thronged the Kashmir's most revered shrine Hazratbal in Srinagar for the night-long prayers on the occasion of Eid-e-Milad un Nabi. The devotees will also have the glimpse of the holy relic of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) after pre-dawn prayers on Tuesday morning and later for the remaining four prayers of the day. | [More on P6](#)

## Phase I: 24 Assembly Seats Set To Go For Polls Tomorrow

- 23.27 Lakh Voters To Decide Fate Of 219 Candidates
- 3,276 Polling Stations Set Up Across 7 J&K Districts

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The stage is set for the first assembly showdown in ten years in Jammu and Kashmir, with the first phase of polling scheduled for Wednesday (September 18).

In the first phase, twenty-four assembly segments spread across the Chenab valley districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban, and south Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian will be up for grabs. The campaign in the seats has concluded, with political parties and independent candidates canvassing in every nook and corner to attract more voters.

Total 3276 polling stations are set up

for polling to be held across the 7 districts.

These include 302 Urban Polling Stations and 2974 Rural Polling Stations. Four election staff, including Presiding Officer will be stationed in every polling station. In total, more than 14,000 Polling staff will be deployed on duty for 1st phase election.

A total of 23,27,580 electors are eligible to vote during the Phase 1 of the J&K Assembly Elections, including 11,76,462 male electors, 11,51,058 female electors and 60 Third Gender Electors. As many as 1.23 lakh youth between the age 18-19 years, along with 28,309 Person with Disabilities (PwDs) and 15,774 elderly | [More on P6](#)



## Key Candidates Battle In South Kashmir

As south Kashmir gears up to go into polls in the first phase of Assembly elections on September 18, political analysts say that there is a clear edge for many seats, while there is a neck-to-neck contest between the National Conference (NC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) on other seats. | [More on P6](#)

## PM To Address Rally In Srinagar On Sep 19

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a star campaigner for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), will hit the campaign trail in Kashmir on September 19.

A mega rally is being planned at Sher-e-Kashmir Park (SKICC) by the BJP and the visit will happen a day after Jammu and Kashmir would have voted in the first of the three phase election on September 18.

"The rally is going to be a pivotal moment in the party's campaign strategy and would also mark a significant step in bolstering the BJP's presence and deepening its connection with the people of Jammu and Kashmir," said a senior BJP leader who attended the core body meeting in Srinagar on Sunday, adding that around 20,000 to 30,000 party workers are



expected to attend the rally. Sharing details, Chairman of the BJP Campaign Committee, Dr Nirmal Singh said, "Prime Minister Modi desires to interact directly with the youth of J&K and encourage them to seize this opportunity to usher in a new phase of development in the union territory." The former deputy chief minister of the BJ-PDP | [More on P6](#)

## Er Rashid Wasn't In Jail For 2 Months: Sajad Lone

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: People's Conference president Sajad Lone on Monday launched a scathing attack on Lok Sabha member Sheikh Abdul Rashid, alleging that the latter was not in jail for the past two months. Lone said the timing of Rashid's release from the Tihar jail smacked of a BJP plan.

"This is the worst executed plan of Delhi since 1947. No plan has been so badly executed. This plan smells of BJP," Lone told reporters here. The People's Conference | [More on P6](#)

## 40% Independents In Fray Rivals Accuse BJP Of Vote-Splitting Ploy

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: More than 40 per cent of the 908 candidates contesting the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir are Independents, leading to claims that a large number of them have been propped up by the BJP to divide votes.

These are the first assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir since the 2019 abrogation of Article 370 and its reorganisation into two Union territories. | [More on P6](#)

## KU Postpones Exams On Sep 24, 25, 30

Agencies

Srinagar: In view of upcoming assembly elections, the University of Kashmir (KU) Monday postponed all the examinations scheduled | [More on P6](#)

## Will Bury Terror In J&K: Shah

Asserting that the BJP-led central government will "bury terrorism" so deep that it can never rise again, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday alleged that the National Conference, PDP and the Congress wanted to release terrorists and stone-pelters to plunge Jammu and Kashmir into a terror inferno again. Addressing three election rallies on the last day of campaigning for the | [More on P6](#)

## Congress Unveils 'Haath Badlega Halaat' Manifesto Promises Welfare Measures For Farmers, Women

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The Congress on Monday released its manifesto for the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, promising a slew of welfare measures for farmers, women and the youth.

The highlight of the manifesto -- Haath Badlega Halaat -- is insurance for all crops against natural calamities and a minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 72 per kilogram for apple.

The manifesto was released by AICC chief spokesperson Pawan Khera and PCC president Tariq Hameed Karra at the party office here.

"We will provide an additional financial support of Rs 4,000 for landless, tenant, and land-owning farming households per year. We will also arrange 99-year leases to landless farmers cultivating state land," Khera said. He said a Rs 2,500-crore fund will be set up for all district-level irrigation projects to ensure 100 per cent irrigation for farmers in Jammu and Kashmir.

For the youth of Jammu and Kashmir, the party promised an unemployment allowance of up to Rs 3,500 per month for one year to qualified youths.

The party promised to fill one lakh vacant government posts by issuing a job calendar within 30 days. The manifesto promises to revive special border recruitment for police, fire brigade and forest protection force. It also promised to revive the | [More on P6](#)

## Have Powers Of LG Increased? Manoj Sinha's Take

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has questioned the controversy over the alleged increase in the powers of Lieutenant Governor of the union Territory, asking if such a bill has been presented in parliament.

Speaking about the Opposition comments on the issue, he told NDTV in an exclusive interview: "Some things are done to create controversies. If the powers of a Governor or Lieutenant Governor has to be increased, it has to be approved by parliament. Did such a bill ever come in parliament?"

Pointing out that the State Reorganisation Act was challenged in the Supreme Court along with the scrapping of the Article 370, he said it now has the approval of the court.

In July, the Union home ministry had amended the transaction rules in the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019. The law was originally passed as the Article 370 granting J&K special powers was scrapped and the state was bifurcated into two



Union Territories. Under the new law, the Lieutenant Governor was granted powers on key administrative and legal matters, from police and public order to postings and prosecution sanction. This drew a sharp reaction from the Opposition, which said the step will render the Chief Minister "powerless" and "disempower" the region's people. "No one has to get involved in the question of rights," Sinha said. "The assembly elections will be held soon. What will be the goals of the new government, whichever party is it? If it is peace, prosperity, development | [More on P6](#)



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**'Replacing Rice With Other Crops Could Help Recover Groundwater Lost Since 2000'**

Press Trust Of India

Replacing about 40 per cent of the area sown with rice with other crops could help recover 60-100 cubic kilometres of groundwater lost since 2000 in north India, a study has found. Current cropping patterns -- dominated by rice, which relies heavily on groundwater for irrigation -- could result in a loss of about 13-43 cubic kilometres of groundwater if warming of the planet continues, a team of researchers, including those from the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar, Gujarat, said. The researchers proposed shifting from existing cropping habits by cutting down on cultivating rice as a potential solution for sustaining the fast-depleting resource in a warmer world that threatens food and water security. "Replacing 37 per cent area of rice with other crops can recover 61 to 108 cubic kilometres groundwater compared to 13 to 43 cubic kilometres with current cropping pattern under the 1.5-3 degrees Celsius global warming levels," the authors wrote in the study accepted for publication in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) Nexus. Compared to current cropping trends, the benefits of switching crops in saving groundwater are more during the prolonged dry periods predicted under global warming, the researchers said. According to the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, if current trends con-



tinue, global warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2050 and could reach 3 degrees Celsius by 2100. Changing crop patterns can be substantially beneficial -- particularly for the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh -- for ensuring groundwater sustainability and farmers' profitability, the authors said. They also found that switching of crops did not substantially impact groundwater levels where recovery rates were low such as in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand. The findings have policy implications for identifying optimal cropping patterns for sustaining groundwater in the irrigated regions of north India, along with ensuring farmers' profitability and income, they said. Previous estimates have suggested that about 300 cubic kilometres of groundwater have been lost between 2002 and 2022 as a result of the cropping trends in north India, where 80 per cent of the cultivated area is sown with rice. Parts of Punjab and the Ganga basin experienced the fastest rates of groundwater depletion in the world, the researchers said, and added that northern and north-western regions of India are among the global groundwater hotspots. Studies have shown crop switching to be beneficial for environmental sustainability and farmers' income in China, the US and India. In this study, the researchers looked at current cropping patterns in regions that have seen considerable groundwater depletion. The team then used groundwater, well and satellite observations and models to estimate groundwater lost between 2002 and 2022.

**Chatting With ChatGPT Found To Soften Beliefs Of Conspiracy Theorists**

Press Trust Of India

A 'conversation' with a chatbot lasting under 10 minutes was found to mellow down conspiracy theorists, believing some of the most deeply entrenched conspiracies, such as those involving the Covid-19 pandemic, a new study has found. A team, including researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, US, designed the AI-model ChatGPT to be highly persuasive and engage participants in tailored dialogues, such that participants' conspiratorial claims were factually rebutted by the chatbot. For this, the researchers leveraged advancements in GPT-4, the large language model powering ChatGPT, that "has access to vast amounts of information and the ability to generate bespoke arguments." A form of artificial intelligence, a large language model is trained on massive amounts of textual data and can, therefore, respond to users' requests in the natural language.



The team found that among over 2,000 self-identified conspiracy believers, conversations with the AI-model ChatGPT lowered the average participant's beliefs by about 20 per cent. Further, about a fourth of the participants, all of whom believed a certain conspiracy previously, "disavowed" it after chatting with the AI-powered bot, the researchers said. "Large language models can

thereby directly refute particular evidence each individual cites as supporting their conspiratorial beliefs," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Science. In two separate experiments, the participants were asked to describe a conspiracy theory they believed in and provide supporting evidence, following which they engaged in a conversation with the chatbot.

"The conversation lasted 8.4 min on average and comprised three rounds of back-and-forth interaction (not counting the initial elicitation of reasons for belief from the participant), ..." the authors wrote. A control group of participants discussed an unrelated topic with the AI. "The treatment reduced participants' belief in their chosen conspiracy theory by 20 per cent on average. This effect persisted undiminished for at least 2 months..." the authors wrote. Lead author Thomas Costello, an assistant professor of psychology at the American University, said, "Many conspiracy believers were indeed willing to update their views when presented with compelling counter evidence." Costello added, "The AI provided page-long, highly detailed accounts of why the given conspiracy was false in each round of conversation -- and was also adept at being amiable and building rapport with the participants." The researchers explained that until now, delivering persuasive, factual messages to a large sample of conspiracy theorists in a lab

experiment has proved challenging. For one, conspiracy theorists are often well-informed about the conspiracy -- sometimes more so than skeptics, they said, and added that conspiracies also vary widely, such that evidence supporting a certain theory can differ from one theorist to another. "Previous efforts to debunk dubious beliefs have a major limitation: One needs to guess what people's actual beliefs are in order to debunk them -- not a simple task," said co-author Gordon Pennycook, an associate professor of psychology at Cornell University, US. "In contrast, the AI can respond directly to people's specific arguments using strong counter evidence. This provides a unique opportunity to test just how responsive people are to counter evidence," Pennycook said. As society debates the pros and cons of AI, the authors said that the AI's ability to connect across diverse topics within seconds can help tailor counter arguments to specific conspiracies of a believer in ways that aren't possible for a human to do.

**Study Targets Cardiac Fibrosis-Controlling Enzyme To Treat Heart Failure**

ANI

As society ages, the number of patients suffering from heart failure grows significantly. Fibrosis, or excessive growth of fibrotic tissue in the heart, has been linked to the advancement of heart failure. A group from Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine in Japan discovered an enzyme called protein kinase N (PKN) that controls cardiac fibrosis. The enzyme converts heart fibroblasts to myofibroblasts, putting the heart's integrity at risk. Deleting this enzyme reduced ventricular dysfunction, indicating that anti-PKN therapies are a prospective therapy for protecting patients from heart failure. The findings were published in Nature Communications. Risk of heart attack The heart maintains its integrity by the usage of tiny cells known as fibroblasts, which are frequently transformed into myofibroblasts following damage. Myofibroblasts promote wound healing by creating fibrous connective tissues like collagen and elastin. However, in heart failure patients, they frequently cause extra tissue to collect, resulting in hardening of heart tissue and reduced function, a disease known as fibrosis. This process reduces the integrity of



the heart's structure, increasing the risk of a heart attack. The enzyme PKN has been implicated in a signaling cascade that causes heart fibroblast activation. A group led by Drs. Satoya Yoshida, Mikito Takefuji, and Toyooki Murohara in the Department of Cardiology at the Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine suspected the involvement of PKN in the changes of fibroblasts to myofibroblasts seen in fibrosis. In collaboration with colleagues at the Max Planck Institute, they investigated its role. In mammal cells, there are three forms

of PKN: PKN1, 2, and 3. Using RNA-sequencing data, they identified PKN1 and 2 in heart fibroblasts. The study used mice raised without PKN1 and PKN2. It found that although heart function remained unaffected, there was a notable decrease in actin and collagen expression in the myocardial infarction and heart failure model. These proteins are essential components responsible for the tissue buildup observed in fibrosis. They also found that mice with suppressed PKN1 and 2 did not show conversion of fibroblasts to myofibroblasts.

**'Govts Should Engage AI Research Institutions To Detect Fake News'**

Press Trust Of India

With the need for regulating dissemination of information becoming extremely crucial, governments should engage AI research institutions and social media companies to detect and flag false or misleading content, says a new book. Author Aswin Chandarr says "The Inevitable AI: Art Of Growth With Generative Intelligence" is a "friendly guide" to the world of AI or artificial intelligence, seeking to demystify its essence, strengths and limitations. Governments have traditionally been the custodians of public discourse and the architects of national narratives. However, the landscape has significantly changed with the advent of social media and its unprecedented reach, the book says. "Distorted narratives can manipulate public opinion, sway elections, and even incite violence. The need for governments to regulate the dissemination of information has never been more crucial," it says. How can this be achieved? "One approach is through monitoring and fact-checking. Governments could collaborate with AI research institutions and social media companies to develop sophisticated AI systems capable of detecting and flagging false or misleading content," suggests Chandarr. "Additionally, public investments can be directed towards enhancing digital literacy, which would equip citizens with the necessary skills to discern truth from falsehood in the digital arena," he says.

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## DGP Extends Eid Milad-un-Nabi Greetings To people

Observer News Service

Srinagar: On the auspicious occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi, Director General of Police, J&K, R.R. Swain has extended his warm wishes to all citizens, families of martyrs, police personnel, security forces, and their families in Jammu and Kashmir.

In his message, the DGP has said, "Eid Milad-un-Nabi is a time for togetherness, sharing happiness and worries with family, friends, and community. Let us express grati-

tude to the Almighty and on this auspicious occasion pray for peace and prosperity in the Union Territory."

The DGP, J&K while remembering those who sacrificed their lives for peace in the region has impressed upon all personnel to work for the families of these martyrs.

Conveying his heartfelt thanks to the brave police and security force personnel for ensuring safety, the DGP has prayed, "May this Eid Milad-un-Nabi bring joy to our lives, love to our hearts, and peace to our UT".

## Bukhari Greets People On Eid Milad-un-Nabi

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Monday extended warm greetings to the people, particularly the Muslim community, on the auspicious occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW).

He prayed that this revered occasion brings peace, prosperity, and well-being to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who have been grappling with hardships and challenging situations for quite a long time.

In his message on the auspicious occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said, "Eid Milad-un-Nabi, which commemorates the birth of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is

one of the most revered occasions for people around the world. This blessed day brings divine grace to humanity, as Almighty Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a messenger of peace and harmony for all living beings. I extend my heartfelt greetings to everyone, especially to the Muslim community, on this auspicious occasion. I urge all, particularly devotees and worshippers, to pray for peace, tranquility, and the well-being of our land and its people on this sacred day."

"May this Eid Milad-un-Nabi bring peace and harmony into our lives and may the blessings of this sacred occasion fill our hearts with Allah's mercy, guiding us to the righteous path," he prayed.

## Will Sagar Retain Khanyar seat 5th time in a row?

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Out of the eight assembly constituencies in Srinagar district, there is a stronghold of the National Conference (NC) i.e. Khanyar segment where the party's candidate, Ali Muhammad Sagar has never lost elections against anyone since 1996.

Sagar, who is among the 10 candidates in the electoral fray this time, has won the elections four times in a row. He was first elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) in the 1996 elections.

While the seat is set to go to the polls on September 25, in the second phase of assembly elections, a total of 91226 electorates are scheduled to cast their ballots in favour of their favourite representatives. The electorates include 45407 males and 45816 females, besides three Transgender.

The prominent candidates out of the 10 vying for the seat include Ali Muhammad Sagar

and former Deputy Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Sheikh Imran, who is contesting as an independent candidate.

The other candidates in the battlefield include Peoples Democratic Party's Tafazul Mushtaq, Apni Party's Bilal Ahmad Mir, Farooq Ahmad of National Panthers Party (BHM), five other independent candidates.

A total of six independent candidates are vying for the seat in the phase-II.

However, the question remains whether the four-time MLA, Ali Muhammad Sagar will be defeated in the upcoming assembly elections or will he continue to retain the seat for the fifth time in a row.

Sagar first won the elections in 1996. He later retained the seat in three consecutive assembly polls in 2002, 2008 and 2014.

In the previous 2014 assembly elections, Sagar had managed to secure 6505 votes and defeated his nearest rival by a margin of 1,167 votes.

## Gazanfar Ali Seeks Support For Lal Chowk AC

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Gazanfar Ali, former Commissioner of Srinagar Municipal Corporation, is contesting the upcoming assembly elections from the Lal Chowk constituency on the Engineer Rashid led Awami Ithihaad Party (AIP) ticket.

Addressing a gathering of supporters, Ali appealed to voters to give him a chance, promising not to disappoint them.

Gazanfar Ali vowed to transform Srinagar into a beautiful landscape if elected, stating that his doors would always be open to the people. He emphasized his commitment to mitigating the sufferings of the people and fighting against the drug menace. The AIP candidate also

highlighted the need to address unemployment among youth, promising to prioritize job creation and engagement opportunities.

Ali faces competition from Engineer Ajaz Hussain of the BJP, Zuhab Mir of the PDP, Muhammad Ashraf Mir of the Apni Party, and Ahsan Pardesi of the NC.

The Lal Chowk Assembly segment goes to polls on September 25. [KNT]



## Srinagar Smart City Roads Marred By Dust Pollution, People Suffer

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Srinagar Smart City Project, aimed at transforming the city's infrastructure, has become a continuous source of nuisance for residents due to rampant dust and pollution. The road from Bohrikadal to Khanyar, a key stretch in Srinagar city, has been rendered impassable due to excessive dust, causing hardships for pedestrians and commuters.

Shopkeepers in the area are struggling to keep their businesses afloat as the heavy dust pollution has deterred customers from visiting their shops. The situation has been exacerbated by the use of bajri and other materials by contractors, which has worsened the dust pollution after the filling of drains.

Locals are aghast at the

“Our business has been badly hit as customers don't visit our shops due to pollution. Authorities are unmoved, doing nothing

government's approach to the issue, expressing resentment over the lack of accountability. "We don't want development at the cost of our health," said a local resident to the news agency Kashmir News Trust adding

that the construction material is lying everywhere, and the roads are dilapidated, making it difficult to commute.

The dust pollution has also raised serious health concerns, with residents fearing long-term effects on their well-being. "Look at these flowers and plants and vehicles, all have been disfigured due to heavy dust pollution," said a trader.

"Our business has been badly hit as customers don't visit our shops due to pollution. Authorities are unmoved, doing nothing," he added.

The locals said that the situation has persisted for over a year, with no respite in sight. They have demanded immediate action from the authorities to mitigate the dust pollution and ensure that development projects do not come at the cost of their health and well-being. [KNT]

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- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar- Leh- (Open)

 <b>HIJRI CALENDAR</b> 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1446	<b>PRAYERS</b> FAJR 4: 50 ZUHR 12:36 ASR 4: 53 Magrib 6:42 ISHA 8: 02
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### This Day In History

- 642 - Arab forces under Amr ibn al-'As conquer Alexandria
- 1462 - The Battle of wiceno (or Battle of arnowiec) is fought during Thirteen Years' War.
- 1598 - Dutch sailors discover island of Mauritius
- 1644 - French troops occupy Mainz
- 1678 - France & Spain sign Treaties of Nijmegen
- 1778 - 1st treaty between the US & Indian tribes signed (Fort Pitt)
- 1809 - Peace between Sweden and Russia in the Finnish War. The territory to become Finland is ceded to Russia by the Treaty of Fredrikshamn.
- 1862 Battle of Mumfordsville, Kentucky, US Col J Wilder surrenders city
- 1862 - American Civil War: The Allegheny Arsenal explosion results in the single largest civilian disaster during the war; 78 workers killed.
- 1899 - 1st British troops leave Bombay for South Africa
- 1916 - WWI flying ace The Red Baron of the German Luftstreitkräfte, wins his first aerial combat near Cambrai, France
- 1924 - Italy signs treaty of Rapallo
- 1934 - USSR joins League of Nations (Netherland, Switzerland & Portugal vote no)
- 1939 - German U-29 sinks British aircraft carrier Courageous, 519 die
- 1939 - Soviet Union invades Eastern Poland allowing Germans to advance West, taking 217,000 Poles prisoner, without a formal declaration of war
- 1940 - Adolf Hitler indefinitely postpones Operation Sealion, the planned German invasion of Great Britain
- 1941 - World War II: A decree issued by the Soviet State Committee of Defense, restoring Vsevoluch "Universal compulsory military training of the citizens of the USSR" in the face of the "Great Patriotic War"
- 1943 - World War II: Soviet city of Bryansk is liberated from Nazis.
- 1944 - Dutch begin railroad strike against German occupiers
- 1959 - Transit 1A, 1st navigational satellite launched; failed to orbit
- 1959 - Typhoon kills 2,000 in Japan & Korea
- 1962 - US space officials announce selection of 9 new astronauts
- 1968 - Zond 5 completes circumnavigation of Moon
- 1970 - Jordan launches offensive against guerrilla army

### From KO Archives

## CM Strips Ministers Of Security

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The State Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah has ordered his ministers and senior officers of the administration not to use pilot jeeps, except when they are on tour outside Jammu and Srinagar cities.

The Chief Minister also ordered the measures to economise manpower and to reduce inconvenience to general public. The CM's order states there shall be only one escort jeep for ministers and chief secretary while other senior officers shall be given only a PSO and a gunman for their security.

"Sirens on official vehicle would not be used henceforth," an official press release said here this evening. The ministers and senior officers have been asked not to use flags within Jammu and Srinagar cities.

Only the vehicles of ministers and chief secretary would use red lights. The CM has also directed to ensure smooth flow of traffic in the interest of general public with due regard to security aspect.

(Kashmir Observer, September 17, 1998)

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Tuesday | 17-09-2024

## Vote Sensibly

With every passing day, the electoral scene is getting more interesting. As against the earlier domination of the two political entities like the National Conference and the PDP, the scene has become suddenly overcrowded, with more political parties and the independent candidates throwing their hats in the ring. This has created confusion in the public mind with by and large, similar manifestos, identical rhetoric, and same slogans doing the rounds. The general opinion is that Jammu and Kashmir will have a hung assembly with no party being in a position to form the government on its own. That is, apart from the BJP which sees a consolidation in its favour in a less politically crowded Jammu division. That is, if a rejuvenated Congress under Rahul Gandhi is unable to make deeper inroads to upset its calculations. Should the Congress fare well in Jammu, it could splinter the mandate across the union territory, with the new government composed of multiple parties. And it would be a lame duck government from the word go, with none of them in a position to run a stable government. But the entire effort of the BJP is to prevent such a turn of events and ensure a decent number of seats for it in Jammu and then form a government with support of smaller parties or independents from the Valley. This could also fulfill the party's dream of having the first BJP chief minister in J&K. As things stand, this appears an eminently realizable goal.

The entry of just-released Engineer Rashid has both livened up the electoral scene and also made the outcome further predictable. He is drawing good crowds all across the Valley, although still short of expectations. In South Kashmir, which is not his constituency, the crowds rooted for him wherever he went. It is still not certain whether he will win seats across the Valley, but he is certain to create a major disruption. His presence has already strained the grip of the established parties like the NC, PDP and the Congress, as well as the smaller parties like the People's Conference. The alliance between Rashid and the Jamaat-e Islami is expected to further queer the pitch for the NC and the PDP. The situation is expected to take more turns going forward. The anticipated division and sub-division of votes will profoundly impact the Valley's representation in the Assembly. Whether to its advantage or detriment, only time will tell. This is why it is incumbent on people to exercise their franchise very sensibly this time.

### OTHER OPINION

#### Did You Know?

## Why SIPs in Mutual Funds are the Best Option for Regular Investment

Investing in the stock market can be volatile and unpredictable, making it difficult to time investments correctly. No one can perfectly predict market highs or lows, even for high-quality companies that generally offer returns over the long term. This is where Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) in mutual funds come into play as a practical solution.

#### The Benefits of SIPs

1. Regular Investment: SIPs allow you to invest a fixed amount regularly, ensuring that your investment is spread across different market phases.
2. Cost Averaging: By investing regularly, you average out the cost of your investments, buying more units when prices are low and fewer when they are high.
3. Simplicity: SIPs are easy to set up and automate, making the investment process seamless for the average investor.

#### Choosing the Right Mutual Fund

Not all mutual funds are created equal. It's crucial to select a mutual fund scheme that aligns with your financial goals and risk appetite. Professional advice can be invaluable here, ensuring that your chosen fund offers better returns compared to selecting a fund on your own.

#### Trusted Advisory Services

A reputable advisor plays a significant role in maximizing your returns. Their expertise and experience in fund selection can leverage your investments to create significant wealth over time. An advisor can also help you plan a Systematic Withdrawal Plan (SWP), allowing you to withdraw regular amounts post-retirement or after a set period.

#### Invest Early and Consistently

Starting a SIP at an early age can significantly impact your corpus over time. The power of compounding works wonders, and the disciplined approach helps in building a substantial savings pool. An SWP later in life can provide you with a steady income stream, complementing other retirement savings.

#### Flexibility and Liquidity

One major advantage of mutual funds is liquidity. You can withdraw your investments anytime, making it a flexible option compared to other long-term investments.

In summary, SIPs in mutual funds are an effective way for an average person to earn returns from the stock market. With professional advice, you can make the most out of your investments, building a substantial corpus while mitigating risks associated with market volatility.

Learn from the insights of @Irshad Mushtaq, Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of M I Securities! Connect for valuable financial advice at [misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com](mailto:misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com)

## MICROPLASTICS

# Emerging Threat to the Pristine Himalayas



Shahid Ahmad Dar

“**The discovery of microplastics in the Himalayas underscores the urgent need for better waste management practices, particularly in high-altitude regions. Local governments, NGOs, and the tourism industry must work together to reduce plastic waste, promote sustainable tourism, and raise awareness about the impact of plastic pollution**”

The majestic Himalayas, often revered as the "Third Pole," are under a new threat—microplastics. These tiny plastic particles, less than 5 mm in size, are infiltrating one of the most remote and pristine ecosystems on Earth, raising concerns about the health of the environment and the communities that depend on it.

#### The Spread of Microplastics in the High Altitudes

Recent studies have revealed alarming levels of microplastics in high-altitude regions of the Himalayas, including in snow, soil, and alpine lakes. These findings are startling because the Himalayas are far from major urban centers and industrial activities, traditionally thought to be the primary sources of plastic pollution. The presence of microplastics in such remote areas suggests that these pollutants are not just a local problem but a global one, carried by wind, water, and human activity.

#### Sources and Transport Mechanisms

Microplastics in the Himalayas likely originate from various sources, including tourist activities, local settlements, and even

atmospheric deposition from distant regions. The region has seen a surge in tourism over the past few decades, bringing an increase in plastic waste. However, due to inadequate waste management infrastructure, much of this plastic waste is improperly disposed of, eventually breaking down into microplastics. Additionally, atmospheric transport mechanisms play a crucial role in distributing microplastics to high-altitude areas.

#### Impact on Ecosystems and Human Health

The presence of microplastics in the Himalayas is not just an environmental issue but a potential threat to human health. These particles can be ingested by aquatic organisms, entering the food chain and eventually reaching humans. The full extent of their impact on the delicate ecosystems of the Himalayas is still being studied, but the potential for harm is significant. Microplastics can also affect water quality, which is crucial for the millions of people who rely on Himalayan rivers for drinking water, agriculture, and other essential needs. The pollution of these waters with

microplastics could exacerbate existing environmental stresses, such as climate change and glacial melting, further threatening the region's sustainability.

#### Urgent Need for Action

The discovery of microplastics in the Himalayas underscores the urgent need for better waste management practices, particularly in high-altitude regions. Local governments, NGOs, and the tourism industry must work together to reduce plastic waste, promote sustainable tourism, and raise awareness about the impact of plastic pollution. The Himalayas, with their breathtaking beauty and vital ecosystems, are a symbol of the planet's natural heritage. Protecting them from the scourge of microplastics is not just a regional responsibility but a global one. As the world becomes increasingly aware of the pervasive nature of plastic pollution, it is imperative that we take action to preserve these mountains and the life they sustain.

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## Confidence and Willpower

Confidence and willpower are the keys to personal improvement and accomplishment. A person needs confidence and willpower to succeed in any sphere of life. Confidence means belief in yourself and determination in support. Willpower is the strong desire to achieve one's goals through any adversity. Neither of these qualities are innate, but can be developed with hard work and consistent practice. To build self-confidence, you first need to recognize your abilities and limitations. Only when you understand yourself well will you develop confidence in your abilities. Building confidence in your strengths and interests can help you move forward with confidence in any situation. It is best to set small goals at the

beginning to build confidence. When you accomplish these small goals, the feeling of accomplishment bolsters your confidence. This approach helps to move towards a bigger goal. One of the most important ways to build self-confidence is to learn from failure. Failure is not a big deal. Failure happens at some point. Learn new lessons from failure. Not being afraid of mistakes, correcting them and moving forward increases self-confidence many times over. Thorough preparation and investment of time in any task boosts confidence. When you are well prepared for any task, the results lead to success and this boosts your confidence. Helping and encouraging others increases your self-confidence.

When you play a distinct role in the lives of others, your confidence grows. The first step in building willpower is setting goals. When you know where you want to go, you will develop the will to move in that direction. When the goal is not clear, the willpower is weakened. Continuity is very important for building willpower. Like making a habit of doing anything regularly. The practice of moving forward little by little every day strengthens one's willpower and increases the scope of work. Morals should be developed to increase willpower. When you face difficult situations, you can change them by developing morale. An important part of increas-

ing willpower is self-control and patience. Willpower is strengthened by exercising self-control and persevering in the right direction even when circumstances are not favorable. Good physical and mental health is a factor in increasing willpower. Proper diet, adequate sleep, and physical exercise also strengthen the willpower. Self-confidence and willpower are two very important assets in a person's life. Developing both of these qualities requires patience, perseverance, and regular practice. When you set goals with confidence and move consistently towards them with willpower, you will surely succeed.

Satyabrat Bora

# 21st Century Western Scholarship On The Prophetic Seerah

## Some Positive Glimpses

Dr Tauseef Ahmad Parray

The Western scholarship on Islam in general, and on the primary sources of Islam in particular—the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): the Last Divine Message and the Last Messenger—have continued from centuries, and, indeed, has seen an impressive growth from the last few decades, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A plethora of literature has been produced on the life of the Last Prophet (PBUH), which is generally denoted by the Arabic term *Seerah/Sirah*—one of the most prominent genres in the Islamic literary tradition. A large number of biographies of the Prophet (PBUH) exist in all Islamic languages as well as in the European languages (especially English) in prose, poetry, and more recently even through films/documentaries. In the West, interest has increased about the popular as well as scholarly *Seerah* works; however, most of this scholarship, throughout history, has remained 'biased', 'bigoted', 'negative', and 'offensive'.

Nevertheless, in the recent Western scholarship on this theme, one observes a positive perception in these biographies. These "recent works on *Sirah* in English", as Professor Abdur Raheem Kidwai puts it in his *Images of the Prophet Muhammad in English Literature* (2018), "reflect a sea-change in the representation of Prophet Muhammad" (PBUH), indicating "the welcome trend of acknowledging the Prophet's greatness and glory." He labels this recent positive representation of the Prophet as "Towards Fairness and Truth" in contrast to the negative portrayal of medieval times, which he terms as "The Distorting Mirror". He has summarized the whole discourse in these words: "Notwithstanding the highly regrettable and detestable portrayal of the Prophet down the centuries, ... which makes a sad, depressing reading, it is gratifying that since early twentieth century there has been some fairness in the West's treatment of the Prophet... acknowledging the gross injustice and hostility in the West's representation. Equally welcome is the appearance of several biographies



of the Prophet by Western scholars, which do justice, to a large extent, to the Prophet's genius and his life-enobling message."

It is in this backdrop that views of some of the Western non-Muslims scholars/ writers are presented (on the eve of 12<sup>th</sup> Rabi-ul-Awal) in this write-up to show the developments as well as perception of the Prophet (PBUH) in the 'West' (from 2000 onwards).

Professor Carl W. Ernst (Professor at North Carolina Chappell Hill, USA), in his *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (2003) writes: "While the Qur'an as divine revelation may be the most important resource of the Islamic tradition, we would not have it in its present form without the Prophet Muhammad [PBUH]... He [PBUH] served as an ongoing model for ethics, law, family life, politics, and spirituality in ways that were not anticipated 1,400 years ago. There are few people in history who have had a greater impact on humanity, and it is through the historical elaboration

These few examples clearly reveal that the Western scholarship has seen a 'sea-change' in the representation of the Prophet's biography in recent years and is, thus, indicative of a 'welcome trend of acknowledging the Prophet's greatness and glory'.

of tradition that we must seek to understand that impact".

Professor Gerhard Bowering (Yale University, USA) in an article entitled "Muhammad (570-632)", in his *Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (2013) is of this opinion when he presents the Prophet (PBUH) as a 'political leader': "That one man could achieve so much in such a short time is astounding. ... [He (PBUH)] made a global impact over more than a millennium and whose cause continues to exert a worldwide attraction today. His message has stood the test of time for more than a thousand years, and his community has grown steadily over the centuries".

Professor Tamara Sonn (Professor in the History of Islam at Georgetown University, USA) in her *Islam: A Brief History* (2010), admits that Prophet's [PBUH] role "extends beyond the task of delivering revelation", for his life is "a model for humanity of how to live every moment, and make every choice, in accordance with God's will. The way he lived his life is

described by the Quran as the best example of Islam" (Q. 33: 21); and together with the Quran, his example (*Sunnah*) "comprise the guidance [and direction] Muslims need in their collective responsibility to establish justice".

Professor John L. Esposito (professor of Religion & International Affairs and of Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, USA) in his *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam* (2002 & 2011) writes: "In contrast to the often spiritualized Christian view of Jesus [Prophet 'Isa (AS)], Muslims look upon Muhammad [PBUH] as both a prophet and a very human figure, one who had great political as well as spiritual insights. Thus Muslims look to Muhammad's [(PBUH)] example for guidance in all aspects of life: how to treat friends as well as enemies, what to eat and drink, how to mourn and celebrate. ... [Prophet] Muhammad's [(PBUH)] life translated the guidance revealed in the Quran into action; he lived the revelation, giving concrete form to the laws that God revealed for the various conditions of ordinary human life. For Islam, no aspect of life is outside the realm of religion".

In his *The Future of Islam* (2010), Esposito writes as: "Muhammad [PBUH] is one of the great figures of world history. Few have had more of a global religious and political impact; yet no prophet has been more vilified throughout history. ... In his lifetime, throughout Muslim history, and today, the Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] is seen as the 'living Quran', the embodiment of God's will in his behavior and words". Esposito repeats almost similar views in the 5<sup>th</sup> (updated) edition of his *Islam—The Straight Path* (2016), wherein he devotes a full chapter to the "Muhammad and the Quran—The Messenger and Message". Highlighting his role as a reformer, Esposito writes: "Muhammad [PBUH] was not the founder of Islam; he did not start a new religion. Like his prophetic predecessors, he came as a religious reformer. ... The Prophet brought a revolution in Arabian life, a reformation that sought to purify and redefine its way of life.

William E. Shepard (Retired Associate Professor of Religious

Studies, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand), in his *Introducing Islam* (2014) devotes a full chapter to the Prophet's biography, entitled "The Prophet Muhammad [PBUH]: 'the best of all creatures'". He begins his chapter with these words: "If the Qur'an is the Book of God, Muhammad [PBUH] is the person through whom that book came to humanity and his words and deeds are the first and most important commentary on it. In his lifetime, he was prophet, arbitrator, political leader and moral exemplar". Furthermore, he presents the views (both positive and negative) of some modern Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, regarding the various facets of the Prophet's (PBUH) blessed life. As a reformer, Shepard sums up as: "Muhammad [PBUH] is also presented as a reformer who considerably raised the social and ethical level of the Arabs of his time... He called for equality and mutual responsibility among his followers, and for the abolition of class privilege and extremes of wealth. He is described as calling for social justice and sometimes even for socialism".

These few examples clearly reveal that the Western scholarship has seen a 'sea-change' in the representation of the Prophet's biography in recent years and is, thus, indicative of a 'welcome trend of acknowledging the Prophet's greatness and glory'. It is apt to conclude with this passage from the Preface of Professor Kidwai's *Images of the Prophet in English Literature*: "In today's globalized world with numerous opportunities for interaction and much faster and varied channels of communication we can and should ensure a better representation of the Prophet and of ourselves. Our real, meaningful tribute to the Prophet consists in facilitating a better understanding of Islam and the Prophet by dint of our character and conduct patterned after the Prophet's role model which is characterized by sympathy, sincerity and love for all fellow human beings."

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# Many Attributes Of The Prophet

Dua Zahra

Never has so much been written by so many on the life of one human being, of any time, than on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Eminent people from other faiths, too, have showered him with praise.

Thomas Carlyle was not the only one to pay him tribute in his lecture on 'Hero as a Prophet', choosing him over all those mentioned in the Old Testament, from Adam through Abraham, to Moses and Jesus.

Napoleon Bonaparte in Bonaparte et Islam is quoted as saying: "Moses revealed the existence of God to his nation. Jesus to the Roman world, Muhammad [PBUH] to the old continent.... Arabia was idolatrous when, six centuries after Jesus, Muhammad [PBUH] introduced the worship of the God of Abraham, Ishmael, Moses and Jesus.

"The Aryans ... had disturbed the tranquility of the East by agitating the question of the nature of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Muhammad [PBUH] declared that there was none but one God who had no father, no son.... I hope the time is not far when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of the Quran which alone are true and which alone can lead men to happiness."

And this from George Ber-

nard Shaw: "If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe, within the next hundred years, it could be Islam. I have always held the religion of Muhammad [PBUH] in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him, the wonderful man, and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity.

"I believe that if a man like him were to assume the [leadership] of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much-needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad [PBUH] that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."

Muslims everywhere, too, shall pay the Prophet special tribute in this month of Rabi-ul-Awwal to celebrate his birthday. Many will rejoice, as there will be illuminations, particularly in the mosques. Religious scholars will recount anecdotes from his life, highlighting his character and achievements, and recalling his sayings on different aspects of human life before gatherings of devotees. Naat recitations and milads (sessions singing praise to the



RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS WILL RECOUNT ANECDOTES FROM HIS LIFE, highlighting his character and achievements, and recalling his sayings on different aspects of human life before gatherings of devotees

Prophet) will be held everywhere.

Scholars will dwell upon his attribute of Rahmatil Alemeen ('Mercy for all the worlds'—including those of the birds and beasts, of insects and worms, etc.), because a Muslim is enjoined to not hurt any living being except in the way of God. Scholars will explain what the Prophet said to his followers about how to treat women, how to interact with people of other faiths and how to carry oneself in one's everyday life.

Yet, unfortunately, many will forget the profound and inspired discourses as they leave their respective congregations. A few of those who may be swaying in ecstasy at the mention of the Holy Prophet's name would go back to indulge in sectarian hate and killing.

As Rahmatil Alemeen, the Prophet gave protection to Christians through a covenant signed in 628 CE, when a delegation from St Catherine's Monastery visited him seeking his protection. (The monastery, located at the foot of Mount Sinai, is the world's oldest, and a treasure house of rare manuscripts, icons and Christian history.) The covenant's words are as follows:

"This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them.

"Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers de-

fend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them.

"No compulsion is to be on them ... Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries.

"No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to Muslims' houses.

"Should anyone take any of these [belongings], he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter....

"No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. Muslims are to fight for them.

"If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray.

"Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor [barred] the sacredness of their covenants." "No one of the nation is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (of Judgment)."

It is important to remember that this covenant was made binding on all Muslims for all times, past, present and future, till the Day of Judgment. How this covenant has come to be violated in some Muslim countries should shame anyone who claims to love or follow the Prophet of Islam.





# Rohit & Co Sweat It Out In Third Training Session In Chennai

Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** Rohit Sharma and Co had another extensive training session in the build up to the first Test against Bangladesh with all 16 squad members turning for practice at the Chepauk here on Monday.

After a day off, the India squad members took part in their third training session since their arrival here last week. The first Test begins on Thursday.

As it is often the case, Virat Kohli was among the first set of batters to hit the nets. In the adjacent net was southpaw Yashasvi Jaiswal as both he and Kohli faced Jasprit Bumrah and home hero R Ashwin.

The next set of batters included skipper Rohit, Shubman Gill and Sarfaraz Khan, the last named player arriving here af-



ter taking part in the second round Duleep Trophy match in Anantapur. The captain focussed on playing spinners, keeping Bangladesh's slow

bowling attack in mind. Ravindra Jadeja, Rishabh Pant and pacer Mohammed Siraj too faced local bowlers and a significant amount of throwdowns.

The practice pitch at the main square offered a decent amount of bounce.

India will have two more practice sessions scheduled be-

fore the series opener against Bangladesh, who are riding on the confidence of their series sweep in Pakistan.

Most players in the playing eleven select themselves. The Chennai surface usually favour the spinners and there is likelihood of India going into the game with three spinners and two pacers.

The spinners expected to feature are Ashwin, Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav while Bumrah and Siraj will share workload in the pace department. Axar Patel, despite his impressive all-round returns across formats, may have to sit out.

On the batting front, Pant is expected to make his Test return after a gap of almost two years. Dhruv Jurel, who impressed in his debut series against England, will be benched in that case.

## DYSS Budgam Kicks Off Inter-Zonal District Level Yoga Event



Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** The Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSSO) Budgam organised an Inter-Zonal District Level Yoga event for boys and girls of all age groups at Indoor Sports Stadium on Monday. The event was

inaugurated by Gh Hassan Khanday, activity in charge DYSSO Budgam.

The event saw a good turnout of students who participated in the competitions. The sessions were designed to promote physical wellness and mental tranquility, highlighting the importance of yoga in daily life.

## Two-Day Budgam Fencing Championship Concludes



Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** The second District Budgam Fencing Championship 2024 concluded at Sacred Heart Public School, Nusraullah Pora, Budgam, on Monday. The event was organised by District Budgam Fencing Association in collaboration with the school and witnessed participation of 250 boys and girls from various schools and clubs.

Sacred Heart Public School secured the first position, while Soibugh Martial Art Club and A.S.A Safvi Memorial Education School, Mirgund, Budgam, bagged the second and third positions, respectively. Aatif Ayoub, Media Incharge, while

briefing media persons, praised the participants for their outstanding display of skills and sportsman spirit throughout the championship.

The selected participants will now represent Budgam in the State Championship, competing against top fencers from other districts of J&K.

The District Budgam Fencing Association also congratulated two students from Govt Girls Higher Secondary School, Wadwan, Saba Nasir and Toyba Yousuf, who have been selected for the 68th National Schools Games to be held in Patna, Bihar. Coach Zain-Ul-Abideen from J&K Fencing Association was present to congratulate the selected students.

## Sri Lankan Secures Historic Double In ICC Players Of The Month Awards



Agencies

**DUBAI:** Sri Lanka's Dunith Wellalage and Harshitha Samarawickrama were named as the ICC Players of the Month for August 2024 by the International Cricket Council on Monday.

The rare double for Sri Lanka comes after Wellalage excelled in a home ODI series against India and Samarawickrama hit a purple patch on a tour of Ireland.

The only previous instance of players from the same country winning the awards the same month was when Jasprit Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana were named the Players of the Month in June this year.

Wellalage won the coveted monthly award ahead of South Africa spinner Keshav Maharaj and West Indies fast bowler Jayden Seales, who were the others shortlisted.

Wellalage won the award after a Player of the Series performance that helped his side to a 2-0 ODI series win over India. The 31-year-old

left-hander had scores of 67 not out, 39 and two, while also picking up seven wickets in the series including a haul of five for 27 in the third match.

This is the fifth time that a Sri Lanka player has won the men's award, the previous winners being Angelo Mathews (May 2022), Prathap Jayasuriya (July 2022), Wanindu Hasaranga (June 2023) and Kamindu Mendis (March 2024).

Wellalage was elated at winning the award and said that the award comes as a great encouragement. "This is great news for me and brings immense satisfaction, as this recognition gives me further strength to continue doing the good work I do as a player and contribute to my team to reach excellence in the field," the spin all-rounder said.

Samarawickrama, who edged out the Ireland duo of Orla Prendergast and Gaby Lewis, had a fine run on a tour of Ireland that saw her become only the third wom-

an cricketer from Sri Lanka to notch a century in ODIs.

The 26-year-old left-hander aggregated 151 runs in the two T20Is played in Dublin at a strike rate of 169.66, which included a match-winning 86 not out off 45 balls in the first match. She scored 172 in three ODIs in Belfast at a strike rate of 82.69 including a knock of 105 in the second match.

Samarawickrama is only the second Sri Lanka player to win the ICC Women's Player of the Month award. Captain Chamari Athapaththu has won the award three times - in September 2024, May 2024 and July 2024.

Samarawickrama said this recognition was very important since it came less than three weeks before the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024.

"I am extremely happy with this recognition, which I consider a new high in my career. It certainly gives me a lot of confidence ahead of the big competition, the Women's T20 World Cup," she said.

## Short TAKES

### Bangladesh Prepare For 1st India Test With Intense Session



**Y**oung pacer Nahid Rana was in focus as Bangladesh started their preparations for the two-Test series against India from September 19 with an intense practice session, here at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Monday.

Buoyed by their historic 2-0 win in away series over Pakistan, the Tigers are high on confidence but world No 2 India, perched at the top of the table in World Test Championship, will pose the sternest test for Najmul Hossain Shanto's side.

### Asian Hockey Championship: India Set Up China Final

**S**kipper Harmanpreet Singh's sublime form resulted in twin strikes as defending champions India entered the final of the Asian Champions Trophy with a clinical 4-1 win against South Korea in the semi-final in Hulunbuir, China, on Monday.

India scored through Uttam Singh (13th minute), skipper Harmanpreet Singh (19th, 45th) and Jarmanpreet Singh (32nd), while Korea's lone goal came from through Yang Jihun (33rd)'s penalty corner conversion.

India will take on hosts China, who defeated Pakistan in the first semi-final, in Tuesday's final.

### CWG 2024 Finds New Host After Australia's Withdrawal

**T**he Scottish capital of Glasgow is set to be announced as the host city of a "scaled down" Commonwealth Games in 2026, a year after Australian state Victoria pulled out due to ballooning costs, according to reports.

The 2026 Commonwealth Games were to be held in multiple cities across Victoria but the Australian state made a shock announcement in July 2023 that it has pulled out of the multi-sport event citing a steep rise in projected expenditure.

### Barcelona Forward Dani Olmo Sidelined For Up To Five Weeks

**B**arcelona forward Dani Olmo has been sidelined for up to five weeks after injuring his right hamstring, the LaLiga club confirmed on Monday. The 26-year-old appeared to suffer muscle discomfort following his goal in Sunday's 4-1 league victory over Girona, leading to his substitution in the 61st minute.

Olmo's injury poses a significant challenge for manager Hansi Flick's side as they gear up for their European Champions League campaign, set to begin on Wednesday.

### Cristiano Ronaldo Misses AFC CL Due To Viral Infection

**C**ristiano Ronaldo, the star forward for Al-Nassr, was sidelined from his team's AFC Champions League Elite debut match against Al-Shorta in Iraq due to a viral infection.

Al-Nassr, Ronaldo's Saudi Arabian club, indicated that the Portuguese forward "wasn't feeling well" and a team physician confirmed he needs to rest.

Ronaldo recently increased his men's-record tally of international goals to 132, scoring for Portugal against Croatia and Scotland in the Nations League.

## No Room For Error Against Liverpool In Champions League, Says Milan Boss Fonseca

Agencies

**MILAN:** AC Milan will have to be perfect defensively when they host Premier League side Liverpool in their Champions League opener at San Siro, manager Paulo Fonseca said on Monday.

The seven-times European champions Milan are ninth in the Serie A standings, having won one of their four matches and welcome Liverpool on Tuesday.

Liverpool, who convincingly won their first three Premier League games under new coach Arne Slot without conceding, were stunned 1-0 by Nottingham Forest at Anfield on Saturday to sit fourth in the English top-flight.

"I think Liverpool is one of the strongest teams in Europe. They have a good game and strong individuals. We have to be perfect defensively, you cannot make mistakes," Fonseca told reporters.

"I see it as an opportunity to show our progress. It



will lead us to do different things... but also to prove our worth.

"I am sure it will, the support of our fans is always important for us. Tomorrow it will be like that, we want to feel their love."

Milan play rivals Inter Milan in Serie A on Sunday, and the Portuguese remained tight-lipped about any potential changes in the squad.

Milan have already suf-

fered a blow with defensive midfielder Ismael Bennacer undergoing surgery on his right calf. The 26-year-old Algeria international's recovery period is estimated to be four months.

"We have many games and I have to think about all of them. Tomorrow is definitely the most important because it's the next one, but I can't forget that on Sunday there's the derby," Fonseca said.

Milan's new signing, Alvaro Morata, expected a stiff test against Liverpool.

The 31-year-old Spanish striker has scored once in two appearances for Milan since joining from LaLiga club Atletico Madrid on a four-year contract in July.

"It will be a great challenge, we have so many different players and we have to fix so many mechanisms, only time will tell," Morata said.

## Real Madrid Boss Ancelotti Gets Injury Boost Ahead Of Champions League Opener

Agencies

**MADRID:** Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti expects to have several players back from injury ahead of their Champions League opener against German side VfB Stuttgart on Tuesday.

Midfielders Jude Bellingham, Aurelien Tchouameni and defender Eder Militao are set to be available for the match at the Santiago Bernabeu despite Militao missing training as he required an extra day to recover fully.

Though Real would be without midfielder Eduardo Camavinga, and former mainstays Nacho, Joselu, and now-retired midfielder Toni Kroos, Ancelotti said he was excited to start their title defence with 'the best player in the world,' Kylian Mbappe.

"Yes, we lost Nacho and Kroos, two of our most important players. And Joselu. In exchange, one of the best players in the world is coming. Do we have a better squad than last year? I



think so," Ancelotti told reporters on Monday.

"Jude's return is fantastic news for us. We know what he contributes with and without the ball," defender Dani Carvajal said. "We demand much more from ourselves and tomorrow is a new opportunity to continue growing."

All three European club competitions have been expanded to 36 teams this season and Ancelotti's side

will also be taking part in the expanded men's 32-team Club World Cup, starting next June in the United States.

Forward Brahim Diaz was the latest player to be sidelined in a slew of injuries and Ancelotti said their gruelling schedule was to blame. "The calendar is too demanding. A new competition is coming and we don't know how it will turn out," he added.

"It may or may not be more entertaining. The fact is that we have two more games in this competition."

The Italian, who has won the Champions League five times as a manager and twice as a player, said the competition holds a place above all else in his heart. Madrid triumphed over German side Borussia Dortmund in last season's final at Wembley, securing their sixth trophy in 11 years.