

## New J&K MLAs To Take Oath On Monday

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The newly elected MLAs of Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly will be administered oath on Monday by MLA Eidgah, Mubarak Gul, who was appointed as pro tem speaker by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday.

The LG today appointed Mubarak Gul, six-time MLA, as pro tem speaker of the Assembly for administering oath to newly elected MLAs. The oath-taking ceremony will take place at the Legislative Assembly complex here on Monday at 2:00 PM.

The pro-tem speaker is appointed as the temporary speaker when a new legislative assembly session begins and till a full-time speaker is elected by the MLAs.

After appointment of the pro tem speaker, who would be administered oath by LG Manoj Sinha, the Legislative Assembly secretariat has asked all newly elected MLAs to attend the oath-taking ceremony.

This would be the first time that MLAs of Jammu & Kashmir would be administered oath of allegiance to the Constitution of India. Before scrapping of Article 370 and re-organisation of J&K, MLAs in the erstwhile state were administered oath of allegiance to the Constitution of Jammu & Kashmir.

The oath would make MLAs eligible to participate | [More on P6](#)

## J&K LG Allocates Portfolios

# Who Gets What In Omar-led Cabinet?

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Friday allocated portfolios to the newly inducted ministers in Chief Minister Omar Abdullah-led cabinet.

An order to allocate the portfolios on the advice of the Chief Minister was issued by the LG here.

According to the order, deputy chief minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary will hold the charge of Public Works (R&B), Industries and Commerce, Mining, Labour and Employment, and Skill Development.

The lone woman minister -- Sakeena Masood (Ito) has been assigned the charge of important ministries of Health and Medical Education, School Education, Higher Education, and Social Welfare.

She was the Social Welfare minister during Abdullah's first tenure as the CM in the erstwhile state.

Javed Ahmed Rana has been allocated the departments of Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, and Tribal Affairs.

Javid Ahmad Dar will be the minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative, and Election.

Satish Sharma has been assigned the charge of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science and Technology, Information Technology, Youth Services and Sports and ARI and Trainings.

The order said any other departments/subjects not allocated to any of the ministers, shall remain with the chief minister.

Notably, National | [More on P6](#)



**SURINDER KUMAR CHOUDHARY (DY CM)**

- Public Works (R&B)
- Industries and Commerce
- Mining
- Labour and Employment
- Skill Development



**SAKEENA ITOO**

- Health and Medical Education
- School Education
- Higher Education
- Social Welfare



**JAVID AHMAD DAR**

- Agriculture Production
- Rural Development & Panchayati Raj
- Cooperative
- Election



**JAVED AHMED RANA**

- Jal Shakti
- Forest, Ecology & Environment
- Tribal Affairs



**SATISH SHARMA**

- Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs
- Transport
- Science & Technology
- Information Technology
- Youth Services and Sports
- ARI and Trainings

## Gul Appointed Pro Tem Speaker



Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha appointed National Conference (NC) MLA Mubarak Gul as the pro tem speaker of the new legislative assembly on Friday, an official order said. Gul, who won the Idgah assembly seat in Srinagar for the sixth time, will administer oath to the newly elected members of the assembly on Monday, according to the order issued by the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Secretariat.

"The Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, in pursuance to Section 24 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 appointed Mr Mubarak Gul, | [More on P6](#)

## Non-local Man Found Shot Dead

Agencies

Srinagar: A non-local man was discovered dead in the Waduna area of Zainapora, Shopian district, late Thursday night. The body, reportedly riddled with bullets, was found by local residents. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shopian confirmed the incident, labeling it an act of terrorism.

Authorities have launched a thorough investigation to identify the victim and gather evidence from the crime scene. The body has been transported to a local hospital for medico-legal formalities. In response to the attack, security forces have ramped up their vigilance in the area, with intensified efforts underway to locate the attackers.

In light of the attack, security forces have increased their presence throughout the region, particularly in areas considered vulnerable. Officials are urging calm and assuring citizens that efforts are being made to bring the perpetrators to justice. The tragic event has reignited concerns regarding terrorism and violence in the valley, posing challenges for the newly elected government as it aims to establish stability and progress in Jammu and Kashmir.

## 'From Online Portal To Prohibition Officers'

# SC Frames Measures To Report, Restrict Child Marriage

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday stressed on legal enforcement, judicial measures and technology-driven initiatives to prevent child marriages in the country.

A bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud and Justice J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra passed a slew of directions in this regard.

Under the title of "legal enforcement", states and Union Territories (UT) were directed to appoint officers solely responsible for discharging the functions of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPO) at the district level.

It said to enable personal accountability and ensure immediate preventive measures are taken against any planned

solemnisation of child marriages, each state and UT will upload quarterly reports from CMPOs on their official websites.

The ministries of Women and Child Development and Home in each state and UT were further directed to conduct quarterly performance reviews of CMPOs and law enforcement agencies to assess among others, the effectiveness of child marriage prevention initiatives and response times and outcomes of reported cases.

Towards "judicial measures", all magistrates vested with authority under Section 13 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA), were ordered to take proactive measures, including issuing suo-motu injunctions to prevent the | [More on P6](#)



## Cabinet Passes Resolution For J&K Statehood

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu & Kashmir Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has passed the resolution for the restoration of statehood, media reports said on Friday.

Official sources said that during its first meeting on Thursday, the J&K Cabinet passed a resolution urging the Central government to restore statehood.

"The draft of the resolution has been prepared and the Chief Minister will travel to New Delhi in a couple of days to hand over the draft of the resolution to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to restore statehood to J&K," sources said.

The meeting was presided over by the Chief Minister and was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary and ministers Sakeena Masood Ito, Javed Ahmad Rana, Javid Ahmad Dar and



Satish Sharma. Congress JKPC president Tariq Hameed Karra had told reporters that the party would not join the J&K Cabinet unless statehood was restored.

NC president, Farooq Abdullah has expressed confidence that the Centre would soon restore Statehood to J&K.

"We have talked about statehood before and even today, the Supreme Court has agreed to hear an application seeking restoration of

Statehood within two months. I am sure the Government of India will soon restore it," Abdullah said.

When asked whether the National Conference would raise the issue of Article 370 or pass a resolution against it in the Assembly, Abdullah said that they would need to return to court to present their arguments.

During his visit to the city centre Lal Chowk, Abdullah said that there would be no VIP culture | [More on P6](#)

## Farooq Downplays Urgent Need To Restore Art 370

Says Solving People's Problems More Important

Agencies

Srinagar: In a significant shift from his earlier stance, National Conference (NC) president Dr. Farooq Abdullah downplayed the immediate need to restore Article 370, emphasizing instead that addressing people's everyday problems is the top priority.

Dr. Abdullah, a three-time Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, made these remarks during a public interaction on Thursday, marking a notable departure from his earlier rhetoric during election campaigns, where he frequently raised the demand for the Article's reinstatement.

Speaking to reporters here, when asked about the status of Article 370, which granted special autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir until its abrogation by the central government on August 5, 2019, Dr. Abdullah said, "The most important task for the current government is to address the problems faced by ordinary citizens." He highlighted pressing issues like unemployment and civic inconveniences, such as poor traffic management, over political priorities. "Scooter riders here don't even wear helmets. It's dangerous," he remarked while



pointing to his cap, stressing public safety concerns.

Responding to speculations that he might be nominated to the Rajya Sabha, Abdullah quipped, "Who said I am going? The day I go, I'll salute you first."

Farooq Abdullah's softened stance, however, comes even as his son Omar Abdullah took the oath as Chief Minister just a day earlier. The NC has consistently maintained that restoring Article 370 remains central to its political agenda. The party now faces mounting pressure from opposition parties to introduce a censure motion against the 2019 abrogation in the Assembly's inaugural session.

When asked if Omar Abdullah's government would bring such a | [More on P6](#)

## 'Deprives Children Of Life Opportunities'

Deprivation of health, education, employment and life opportunities wreaked by child marriage was an affront to constitutional principles of equality, liberty and free of expression, the Supreme Court said on Friday. The apex court termed the prevalence of "social evil" of child marriage as "sobering" and passed a slew of directions to the Centre, | [More on P6](#)

## 'Utter Surrender' Says Opposition

Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday described the reported resolution by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah-led cabinet seeking restoration of statehood only and not Article 370 as an "utter surrender" and a departure from the stand of the ruling National Conference (NC). While there has been no word from either the government or the NC, a Jammu-based newspaper 'Daily Excelsior' carried a report that the | [More on P6](#)



A breathtaking sunset paints the sky above Dal Lake, casting a warm glow on the water and the shikara boat. KO Photo by Abid Bhat

## Rape & Murder Of Minor In Handwara HC Commutes Death Penalty To Life Term For 4 Convicts

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has modified death penalty to life imprisonment without remission for "minimum" 25 years to four persons, convicted for their involvement in the gruesome rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl in Handwara area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district in 2007.

The trial court, Principal District & Session's Judge Kupwara, in 2015 had pronounced death penalty to the four persons—Mohammad Sadiq Mir alias Sada of Langate Kupwara, Jehangir Ansari of Nawada Jungoo area of West Bengal, Azhar Ahmad Mir alias Billaof Shatapora Langate and Suresh Kumar Sasi alias Mouchiof Rajasthan, at present Amritsar Punjab—after holding them guilty for the rape and murder

of the minor girl.

"...we are inclined to modify the sentence of death imposed by the trial Court on the appellants (four convicts) for commission of offence punishable under Section 302 RPC and instead sentence the appellants to imprisonment for life without remission for at least 25 years i.e. they shall not be released for any reason, whatsoever, before serving the minimum sentence of twenty-five years," a division bench of Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice M.A.Chowdhary said.

"Rest of the sentences imposed by the trial Court shall remain intact and those of imprisonment would run concurrently with imprisonment for life," the court said, adding, "Trial Court shall issue warrant for execution of sentences, in terms of | [More on P6](#)

## J&K Govt Announces Jammu Master Plan 2032

Agencies

Srinagar: The Union Territory administration has announced a groundbreaking revision of the Jammu Master Plan for 2032 (JMP-2032), marking a significant step toward transforming Jammu into a sustainable and vibrant urban centre.

"This comprehensive framework prioritises heritage conservation while addressing the pressing needs of urban expansion," a government spokesperson said in a communique.

The revised plan expands the city's planning boundaries dramatically, from 112 sq. km to an impressive 777.84 sq. km, incorporating 351 villages from Jammu and Samba districts. This ambitious expansion will enable "a more extensive and strategic approach to urban development", allowing for better management of the rapid population growth the region is experiencing.

A central focus of JMP-2032 is sustainable | [More on P6](#)



# Big Finding On Fruit Flies Could be Key to Human Longevity: Study

Press Trust Of India

The gut could be key to understanding longevity, according to a study that found a gut hormone in fruit flies could control lifespan, a result important to humans as both species have many similar genes and hormones. Researchers at Brown University in the US have found that suppressing the insulin-regulating 'neuropeptide F' hormone in the gut of fruit flies extended longevity. The findings are important for humans too, especially as new diabetes and obesity drugs developed from gut hormones in the same insect family are becoming widespread, the researchers said. Understanding ageing mechanisms in flies may thus help explain what's happening in humans as well, they said. The findings are published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Reducing insulin and



targeting related processes have been found to slow ageing and extend lifespan in animals in previous studies. In this study, the researchers manipulated gene activity in the intestines of fruit flies such that they produced lower levels of the neuropeptide F hormone, and thereby lower levels of insulin.

The team then compared the hormone production in the gut to what was happening in the fruit flies' brains and connected all the results with the diet that the insects were consuming. The researchers found that suppressing the gut activity of the neuropeptide F hormone extended longevity in the flies, as

did blocking the activity of related proteins in their brains. These proteins control the production of 'juvenile' hormones, which are known to regulate physiology. The researchers said that neuro-peptide F hormone in the gut impacted ageing in flies by integrating these factors -- nutrient sensing, insulin processes and juve-

nile hormone production. "Gut neuropeptide F modulates (fruit fly) ageing through the integration of nutrient sensing, insulin signalling, and juvenile hormone," the authors wrote. "Based on (our) research, we suspect that over-production of gut neuropeptide F in flies will have a negative effect on ageing and decrease lifespan," study author Marc Tatar, a professor of biology at Brown University. The researchers explained that humans do not produce either of the neuropeptide F or juvenile hormones. Instead, gut hormones are involved in regulating insulin in humans. Given how diabetes and obesity drugs, which are known to target hormones involved in controlling insulin, and the findings on the relationship between insulin and ageing in flies, it may be time to consider how the drugs could impact human ageing, the authors said.

# ESIC Body Approves Convergence Of ESI, AB-PMJAY

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- Employees' State Insurance Corporation's (ESIC) Medical Benefit Council on Friday approved convergence of ESI scheme with Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY to enhance healthcare accessibility to beneficiaries.

crore beneficiaries) that form the bottom 40 per cent of the Indian population. The council also approved the implementation of the Common Support Mission (CSM) for states. The CSM aims to improve and strengthen ESI's medical service delivery system in states with focus on the IP (insured



The decision to converge the two schemes was taken at 86th Meeting of Medical Benefit Council held at ESIC headquarters here, a labour ministry statement said. Ashok Kumar Singh, Director General (DG), ESIC chaired the meeting. Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY is the largest health assurance scheme in the world which aims at providing a health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to over 12 crore poor and vulnerable families (approximately 55

persons) centric approach. Besides, the council approved the launch of annual preventive health check-ups & awareness camps for the beneficiaries to focus on early diagnosis of lifestyle disorders; identification of pre-cancerous lesions, and detection of nutritional deficiencies among insured persons / women / transgenders. The meeting was attended by T L Yaden, Financial Commissioner; Deepika Govil, Medical Commissioner, ESIC and other senior officers of ESIC.

**Public Notice**

I have applied for the issuance of DOB certificate in favour of my son namely Mohammad Hamzah Wani who was born on 06-05-2009. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file the same in the office of the Naib Tehsildar Kakapora within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Ajaz Nadeem Wani  
F/o Mohammad Hamzah Wani  
R/o Ratnipora

laa

**Public Notice**

I have applied for the issuance of DOB certificate in favour of my son namely Athar Rashid who was born on 09-04-2013. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file the same in the office of the Naib Tehsildar Kakapora within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Abdul Rashid Dar  
F/o Athar Rashid  
R/o Lelhar

laa

**Government of Jammu & Kashmir**  
**DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM, KASHMIR**  
Tel:0194-2315378, Fax 0194-2479548, e-mail: ddtreg123@gmail.com

**Subject: - Application for change in location of the excursion agency under the name and style "M/s Think Green Holidays" located at 1st Floor Sheikh Complex Kelashpora Khanyar, Srinagar.**

**PUBLIC NOTICE.**

Whereas, proprietor of the excursion agency under the name and style "M/s Think Green Holidays" has approached this office for change in location of his Excursion Agency from **1st Floor Sheikh Complex Kelashpora Khanyar, Srinagar** to **New Theed Harwan, Srinagar** as per Section 39 of the J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/2011;

Whereas, the said excursion agency is registered with this department under the name and style "M/s Think Green Holidays" in the name of **Mr. Kifayat Hussain Kuthoo S/o Mr. Ghulam Ahmad Kuthoo R/o Barji Harwan, Srinagar** bearing registration No. Reg/T/2035/544/DTK/L-11/P-68 dated 20.10.2018 and the same is valid upto 31.03.2022;

Whereas, the applicant has submitted Rent deed (Notarized) dated: 27.09.2024 alongwith supportive affidavit dated 27.09.2024 duly authenticated by Executive Magistrate, NOC from ICICI Bank Srinagar, photocopy of Registration Certificate and NOC from HDFC Bank;

Now therefore, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 39 of J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/2012, before the request of the applicant for change in location of his Excursion Agency "M/s Think Green Holidays" from **1st Floor Sheikh Complex Kelashpora Khanyar, Srinagar** to **New Theed Harwan, Srinagar** is considered, the matter is hereby notified for information of General Public/Financial Institutions/ Banks/ Development Authorities/ PHE Department/ Electric Department that in case of any objection, the same should reach the office of undersigned within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections beyond a period of 07 days will be entertained and the request of the applicant will be considered under rules, after submission of requisite documents.

No: Reg/T/2035/DTK/589  
Dated: 17.10.2024

Sd/-  
Assistant Director Tourism,  
Registration

DIPK-6289-24  
DT: 18/10/2024

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform that an NGO is being constituted under name and style The Jammu and Kashmir Private Hospitals and Dialysis Centres Association for streamlining and betterment of patient care and infrastructure. If anyone has any objection, he/she is advised to report the same within 7 days to the office of Registrar/Director Industries Kashmir.

mdl

**Government of Jammu & Kashmir**  
**SKIMS MEDICAL COLLEGE-HOSPITAL**  
BEMINA, SRINAGAR, J&K - 190017  
**DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS MANAGEMENT**  
0194-2493226, email: mmo@skimsmc.edu.in

Sub: Procurement of Pachymeter Probe for A-scan Biometer System (Make: Quantel Medical, Model: AXIalis) on Proprietary Article basis - Notice for invitation of objections thereof. SKIMS Medical College-Hospital, Bemina, Srinagar J&K, intends to procure Pachymeter Probe for A-scan Biometer (Make: Quantel Medical, Model: AXIalis) from M/s Quantel Medical S.A.S, 1, Rue du Bois Joli - CS 40015, 63808 Coumion D'Auvergne, France through their local authorized distributor M/s Leighton Systems Pvt. Ltd. Karan Nagar, Srinagar, on PAC basis as per provisions of Rule 166 of GFR.

In this connection, objections (if any) from companies manufacturing/ marketing such items compatible with the above machine and capable of delivering the same result as intended from the above system, regarding the proprietary nature of the above item, should be communicated on the above mentioned email id within a two weeks' period i.e., by or before 29th of October, 2024 up to 04:00 PM.

After due date, it will be presumed that no manufacturer/ company has any objection/ comments to offer and the claim for the proprietorship of the item, shall be accepted.

No: SKIMS/MCH/MMD/S-493/22-23/3200-06  
Dated: 16/10/2024

Sd/-  
Materials Management Officer  
(SKIMS MCH Bemina)

DIPK-NB-1782-24  
DT: 18/10/2024

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**MECHANICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION PDC**  
BEMINA SRINAGAR  
Email: xnmidkmr@gmail.com

**GIST of Short term e-NIT. No: 09 of 2024-25 Dated:- 16 /10/2024**

For and on behalf of the Managing Director JKPDC; e-tenders in Two-Cover System (Technical & Financial) from Registered, reputed and resourceful Mechanical / Electrical Contractors / SSI Unit holders with relevant experience in execution of similar job, are invited from the office of the Executive Engineer Mechanical Investigation Division PDC Bemina, for below mentioned work

S. No	Particulars	Advert cost (In lacs)	Tender Fee (In Rs.)	Class of Contract	Time of completion	Bid submission start date	Bid submission end date	Date of Opening of technical bids
1	Fabrication Of Mild Steel storage Racks for proper stacking of store items at different Stores of MID PDC Bemina Srinagar.	2,46,160/=	200/-	Registered Mechanical/ Electrical Contractors / SSI Unit holders with relevant experience in execution of similar job.	20 days	19 /10/24	28 /10/24	30 /10/24

**Position of funds: Budgeted**  
**Instructions for Bidders:-**

- The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of terms & conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the e-Nit portal website www.jktenders.gov.in upto said bidding schedule. The e-Nit GIST is also published on departmental website www.JKSPDC.nic.in.
- The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website www.jktenders.gov.in upto said bidding schedule time and date with Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and no financial bids will be accepted on physical form.

No: MID/PDC/Tech/ 928-936  
Date:- 16 /10/2024

DIPK-NB-1804-24  
DT: 18/10/2024

Sd/-  
Engineer Executive  
MID, PDC Bemina Srinagar

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPARTMENT**  
RURAL WATER SUPPLY DIVISION, GANDERBAL/ SRINAGAR.  
H.Q: Cheki-Duderhama Ganderbal.  
e-mail: ptherwsd@gmail.com Phone/Fax: 0194 - 2416292.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Rural Water Supply Division Ganderbal/Sgr hereby informs the general public that due to proposed shut down of Power Canal by JKPDC on 26th & 27th October 2024, the water supply is likely to remain affected on 26th, 27th & 28th October 2024 in the following areas of the District Ganderbal & District Srinagar and accordingly the consumers are advised to store water in advance & make judicious use of stored water. The likely areas to be affected are:

Ganderbal Town, Nagbal, Rangil, Dariend, Malshaibagh, Khamulla, Nunner, Gutlibagh, Baba Wayil, Wayil, Nadirbagh, Bobsipora, Budurkund, Bandibagh, Arch, Search, Suderbagh, Chowdribagh, Malpora, Hard Muradabagh, Gundrehman, Harran, Gundmumin, Hakingund, Hatborah, Kustooripora, Sehpora, Shalbugh-A, Tulbagh, Chundina Deh Naowabaf, Gogijund, Malikpora, Kokgund, Korag, Gadoora, Kujjar, Rakhi Harran, Benehama & Manigam, Tulmulla, Dangerpora, Wahidpora, Theeru & Daggora Anchar Shuhama, Wanihama, Hadoora, Batpora, Syedpora, Meerak Shah Abad Colony, Zakura, Rakhi Zakura, Gulab-bagh, Takenwari, Palpora, Goripora, Kreshbal & all other adjoining areas.

In case of any emergency, the general public can call on the below-mentioned telephone numbers:

**Landline: 0194 - 2416292**  
**Whatsapp No. 9797073882**

No: JS-PHE/RWSD/Corrs./ 5702 - 12  
Dated: 16.10.2024  
DIPK-6351-24  
DT: 18/10/2024

Sd/-  
(Er. Samiullah Beigh)  
Executive Engineer JS-PHE  
RWSD Ganderbal/Sgr

## Mirwaiz Concerned Over Rising Un-Islamic Practices

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant sermon delivered at Jama Masjid Srinagar, Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Dr. Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq expressed deep concern over the growing prevalence of un-Islamic practices in society, particularly the disturbing rise in black magic and superstitions.

Mirwaiz, according to a statement, pointed out that every other day, reports surface of taweez (amulets) and other objects being found in graveyards—an act reminiscent of the Jahiliyyah (Age of Ignorance) that starkly contradicts Islamic teachings.

Mirwaiz also highlighted a disturbing trend where even birds and other animals are being used to profess superstition and black magic, further emphasizing the deviation from Islamic principles. He urged the Muslim community to adhere strictly to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who condemned

such harmful practices. Mirwaiz reminded the congregation that faith in Allah and following the prophetic tradition are the foundations of a righteous life, and cautioned against those who exploit others through these means.

During his Friday sermon, Mirwaiz also called on the people of Kashmir to generously support families devastated by recent fires in Kishtwar and Gurez. Over 100 homes, including the Jamia Masjid, were destroyed in Kishtwar, while a market and homes were lost in Gurez.

He stressed the moral and religious responsibility to assist these vulnerable communities, especially with the harsh weather conditions approaching. He urged people to come forward and provide material and financial support. Mirwaiz also praised the ongoing relief efforts by Dar-ul-Khair Mirwaiz Manzil and other organizations, encouraging continued public support (KNO)



PIC: Abid Bhat/KO

## Friday following Urs Dastgir Sahab Observed With Fervor

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A fervor of devotion gripped Srinagar as the 'Friday following' Urs of Hazrat Sheikh Syed Abdul Qadir Jeealani (RA) was celebrated with zeal and zest, with thousands of devotees thronging the shrine in the city's Khanyar area.

To observe the Urs, all roads led to the shrine, with long queues of people moving toward the shrine with devotion. As the faithful gathered, the air was devotional with the sounds of Quranic verses and collective prayers.

The holy relic was displayed at the shrine with emotional scenes witnessed. People were seen crying while raising their hands towards the Almighty and asking for blessings.

At the crowded Chowk of Khanyar were men, women, and children, all crying and asking for blessings from the Almighty while their eyes were moist amid hues and cries. Standing in the crowd was an elderly man raising his hands for forgiveness, with tears rolling down his cheeks.

The devotees said he had been visiting Khanyar since childhood. "I first

## Gandhi Memorial College Organizes Camp To Serve Devotees

Srinagar: The NSS wing in collaboration with Red Ribbon Club, Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar organized a camp on the eve of the Urs of Sheikh Syed Abdul Qadir Jeealani at Khanyar.

The camp was aimed at promoting social service and connecting with the Sufi heritage of Kashmir.

As a part of the camp, the college distributed tradition-

al Kashmiri Kehwa to the attendees, with about 1000 cups of tea and Bakirkhanis being distributed. This gesture not only provided refreshments to the participants but also highlighted the rich culture and traditions of Kashmir.

The main focus of the camp was to instill a spirit of social service among the youth and to promote unity and harmony in society.

came here along with my father and now I bring my children here with me. This place gives me peace," said Mukhtar Ahmad, from Budgam.

Raja Begum, a devotee, said she comes here every year with a heart full of prayers and leaves with peace.

"I am emotional today and feel an eternal peace," she said.

Authorities had made arrangements to ensure smooth management of the Urs by ensuring security and facilities for the comfort of the devotees—(KNO)

I first came here along with my father and now I bring my children here with me. This place gives me peace

## GMC Srinagar Hosts Maiden National Critical-Care Update Conference

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Department of Anaesthesiology and Critical Care, Pain and Palliative Medicine Government Medical College (GMC), Srinagar, under the guidance of Professor Dr Hina Bashir, HoD Department of Anaesthesiology, Critical Care, Pain and Palliative Medicine GMC Srinagar organized the first annual national critical care update conference and workshop under the aegis of Indian Association of Anesthesiologists and the All India Difficult Airways Association.

Renowned faculty from AIIMS New Delhi, PGI Chandigarh, AMU Aligarh presented the latest techniques and cutting edge updates in critical care sciences.

Endorsed by the All India Difficult Airway Association (AIDAA), the conference brought together leading experts, practitioners, and students from across the nation. Renowned experts in airway management and critical care delivered keynote speeches and facilitated workshops, fostering a rich exchange of ideas.

## Dr Farooq Offers Friday Prayers At Hazratbal

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, Dr. Farooq Abdullah offered Friday congregational prayers at Asar-e-Sharif Dargah Hazratbal, alongside thousands of other devotees.

He fervently prayed for lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

In the meantime, numerous individual and group delegations visited the party president at his residence to extend their congratulations on the party's success in



He fervently prayed for lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

the recent elections.

Among the visitors was a delegation led by party Minority Wing leader Sardar JS Azad and other distinguished members, who highlighted the multitude of

issues faced by the Sikh community in Kashmir.

Dr. Farooq assured the delegation that the government would attend to these pressing issues.

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&D) DIVISION DORU

E.mail:-Xenrnbdor@gmail.com

#### FINAL NOTICE

No: 2510-13  
Dated: 18-10-2024

Sabeel Ahmad Magray,  
S/o: Nazir Ahmad Magray,  
R/o: Mandipora Doru

**Subject:- Construction of Overhead Bridge Crossing at Model Hospital Dooru at MC Dooru Verinag.**  
**Reference:- Allotment No. 435-40 Dated 24-04-2023.**

The above subjected work stands allotted to you vide Executive Engineer Qazigund Allotment No. referred above. Wherein the work was supposed to be completed within 180 days, but after lapse of considerable time period of 560 days you have not completed the project as reported by the concerned Assistant Executive Engineer. Despite the repeated instructions through verbally and notices by his office for resumption of work but you did not paid any heed to these notices and left the work unattended since long time which has been viewed very seriously by higher authorities as well as MC authorities. As such you are finally directed through the medium of this notice to get your resources mobilized and resume the work within two days without any further delay failing which the work shall be put to fresh tenders at your risk and cost and action as per conditions of NIT/Allotment be initiated against you. Treat it as final notice, no further remainder shall be given to you in this regard.

(Er. Farooq Ahmad Khan)  
Executive Engineer  
PWD (R&B) Division Dooru

DIPK-6377-24  
DT: 18/10/2024

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION TANGMARG.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER (MACADAM WORKS)

Fresh NIT No: 42/R&B of 2024-25 Dated: 16/10/2024

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest money (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor	Project Authority
1	Macadamization of Bonpora Link road at Teran.	24.51	800/-	49020/-	15 days	C&T (Addl.)	C/B	R&B Deptt.
2	Macadamization of balance portion of Baderkoot Gogaldara road	17.64	800/-	35280/-	15 days	C&T (Addl.)	C/B	R&B Deptt.
3	Macadamization of Road from Jamia Masjid (Bus Stand) to Mohalla Pethpora at Hardboora.	20.00	800/-	40000/-	15 days	C&T (Addl.)	C/B	R&B Deptt.
4	Up-gradation of balance part of Mirchipora Kilwara road incl. inner link Katipora Chanpora.	24.71	800/-	49420/-	15 days	C&T (Addl.)	C/B	R&B Deptt.
5	Up-gradation of NTR (Kunzer Police Station) upto Check Bani via Hardbani.	20.00	800/-	40000/-	15 days	C&T (Addl.)	C/B	R&B Deptt.
6	Macdamization of link road from main road H/O Peer Hafizullah up to H/O Gh. Hassan Bhat (Ikhrjpora to Rather Mohalla road at Dugmorla).	5.87	300/-	11740/-	10 days	District Capex 2024-25	D/C	DDC Bara-mulla

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	16-10-2024
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	16-10-2024
3	Bid submission Start Date	16-10-2024
4	Bid Submission End Date	22-10-2024 4:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	23-10-2024 10:00 AM

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan (Dated between bid submission start date and bid submission end date) with NIT No., Serial No. and name of work to be deposited in M.H. 0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender inviting authority)
- All the bidders must upload Earnest money /Bid security equal to 2% of advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority)(The Date of earnest money/Bid security should be between the Bid Submission start date and Bid submission End date, otherwise bids shall be rejected).
- The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security @ 5% of contract value in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority)as per rule-171 (l) of GFR 2017. The earnest money/ Bid security @2% shall be released to the successful bidder only on receipt of Performance Security @ 5% of Contract value which shall be released after successful completion of DLP /maintenance period.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority).
- The earnest money/ Bid security in favour of unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of original Treasury Challan.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids
- All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25(Double agreement Form) and detailed NIT issued vide this office NIT No. 01 and 02 of 2024-25.

No: R&B / Divn./ Tang/3693-3704  
Dated : 16 -10-2024

DIPK-6360-24  
DT: 18/10/2024

sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
R&B Division Tangmarg.

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


AIRPORTS  
SHEIK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS  


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

HIGHWAY STATUS  


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


**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
 15 Rabi-ul-Sani  
**1446**

PRAYERS	
FAJR	5: 17
ZUHR	12:16
ASR	4: 15
Magrib	6:57
ISHA	7: 16

- 1466 - The Thirteen Years' War ends with the Second Peace of Thorn, Germany
- 1512 - Martin Luther becomes a doctor of theology (Doctor in Biblia)
- 1739 - England declares war on Spain [OS=Oct 30]
- 1812 - Napoleon's forces begin their retreat from Moscow
- 1818 - US Government & Chickasaw Indians sign a treaty
- 1859 - Wilhelm Tempel discovers diffuse nebula around Pleiad star Merope
- 1912 - Tripoli (Libya) passes from Turkish to Italian control
- 1913 - At a meeting of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) in Durban, NIC secretaries, M. C. Anglia and Dada Osman, severely criticise Mahatma Gandhi and tender their resignations
- 1915 - Russia and Italy declare war on Bulgaria
- 1916 - France extends formal recognition of the Provisional Government in Crete proclaimed Eleftherios Venizelos
- 1925 - Italian army takes Somalia
- 1926 - Russian Politburo throws out Leon Trotsky and his followers
- 1932 - British government signs trade agreement with Soviet Union
- 1935 - Mao Zedong's army reaches Shanxi
- 1944 - British Prime Minister Winston Churchill flies back to London from Moscow
- 1950 - UN forces entered Pyongyang, capital of

“ A key expectation from the people is the Centre's commitment to restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. This long-overdue step is crucial in giving the region back its political autonomy and in providing the people a stronger sense of representation



## A New Chapter for Jammu and Kashmir

Dr. Shahid Amin

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a significant political development. For the people of this diverse region, the installation of a stable government is not just a matter of governance but a beacon of hope for progress, development, and inclusivity. The people of Jammu and Kashmir are eager for leadership that brings sustainable development to the region. It is essential that this new government addresses the issues while ensuring that every community, irrespective of their background, reaps the benefits of progress.

One of the most pressing issues that has plagued Jammu and Kashmir is unemployment. For decades, the

region's youth have struggled with limited job opportunities, leading to frustration and unrest. The new government carries the hope of introducing policies that will not only create jobs but also provide equal opportunities for all. Additionally, the elimination of favouritism and nepotism from the recruitment process is a key expectation from this administration. A transparent, merit-based system is essential for restoring the faith of the youth in their government.

Infrastructure, healthcare, and education are critical pillars of development that need urgent attention in Jammu

and Kashmir. The people hope that under the new government, the UT will witness a revival in these sectors. Developing better roads, communication networks, schools, and hospitals will uplift the quality of life and serve as a stepping stone to overall economic growth. A focus on education will empower the youth, while improving healthcare will ensure that the populace can lead healthier, more productive lives.

At the core of this new government is the hope for justice in every sphere of governance. This includes justice in terms of law, fairness in development projects, and accountability in the gov-

ernment's functioning. It is imperative that the leadership ensures no section of society feels marginalized or left behind. There is a strong desire for policies that promote diversity by creating inclusive and equitable opportunities for all segments of society.

Additionally, people hope that development will not come at the cost of the region's natural beauty and environment. The preservation of Jammu and Kashmir's unique cultural heritage and the protection of its breathtaking landscapes are vital. The government must focus on boosting the economy while maintaining the region's natural charm.

Promoting the preservation of old cultural sites and fostering the state's rich heritage is essential for maintaining its unique identity. The balance between progress and environmental conservation will ensure the region thrives without losing its essence.

The hope is also that the government will treat all Jammu and Kashmir citizens equally, without bias towards those who have voted for other parties, and that the alliance will work harmoniously, prioritizing the interests of the Union Territory. True leadership lies in being accessible and providing confidence to citizens that their issues are understood and addressed. A government that stands with its people, especially during times of crisis, can earn their trust and long-term loyalty.

There is a resounding hope that this new government will be honest and corruption-free. Corruption has been a long-standing problem, eroding public trust and hindering progress. The administration must make a concerted effort to root out corrupt practices and establish a system where integrity prevails at all levels of governance.

A key expectation from the people is the Centre's commitment to restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. This long-overdue step is crucial in giving the region back its political autonomy and in providing the people a stronger sense of representation. The central government holds the responsibility to guide, support, and ensure that Jammu and Kashmir's developmental journey is inclusive and beneficial for its diverse population.

Finally, there is hope that this government will foster a positive political culture by avoiding unnecessary criticism of the opposition. Constructive politics, focused on development and welfare rather than mudslinging, will ensure that democracy functions as it should. While hope sets the foundation, it is now time for the new government—along with the support of the central government—to turn this hope into reality.

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

*The author is pursuing Advanced Business Consultancy Programme by IIMA and is former Associate Professor in ITM University Gwalior and an IIMA (FDP) Alumnus and can be reached at dr.shahidamin15@gmail.com*

## Is AI Dangerous?

AI doesn't threaten humanity. Its owners do.

Joseph Jones

In April a lawsuit revealed that Google Chrome's private browsing mode, known as "Incognito," was not actually as private as we might think. Google was still collecting data, which it has now agreed to destroy, and its "private" browsing does not actually stop websites or your Internet service provider, such as Comcast or AT&T, from tracking your activities.

In fact, that information harvesting is the whole business model of our digital and smart-device-enabled world. All of our habits and behaviors are monitored, reduced to "data" for machine learning AI, and the findings are used to manipulate us for other people's gains.

It doesn't have to be this way. AI could be used more ethically for everyone's benefit. We shouldn't fear AI as a technology. We should instead worry about who owns AI and how its owners wield AI to invade privacy and erode democracy.

No surprise, tech companies, state entities, corporations and other private interests increasingly invade our privacy and spy on us. Insurance companies monitor their clients' sleep apnea machines to deny coverage for improper use. Children's toys spy on playtime and collect data about our kids. Period tracker apps share with Facebook and other third parties (including state authorities in abortion-restricted states) when a woman last had sex, their contraceptive practices, menstrual details and even their moods. Home security cameras surveil customers and are susceptible to hackers. Medical apps share personal information with lawyers. Data brokers, companies that track people across platforms and technology, amplify these trespasses by selling bundled user profiles to anyone willing to pay.

This explicit spying is obvious and feels wrong at a visceral level. What's even more sinister, however, is how the resulting data are used—not only sold to advertisers or any private interest that seeks to influence our behavior, but deployed for AI training in order to improve machine learning. Potentially this could be a good thing. Humanity could learn more about itself, discovering our shortcomings and how we might address them. That could assist individuals in getting help and meeting their needs.

Instead, machine learning is used to predict and prescribe, that is, estimate who we are and the things that would most likely influence us and change our behavior. One such behavior is how to



“ This explicit spying is obvious and feels wrong at a visceral level. What's even more sinister, however, is how the resulting data are used—not only sold to advertisers or any private interest that seeks to influence our behavior, but deployed for AI training in order to improve machine learning.

get us to "engage" more with technology and generate more data. AI is being used to try and know us better than we know ourselves, get us addicted to technology, and impact us without our awareness, consent or best interest in mind. In other words, AI is not helping humanity address our shortcomings, it's exploiting our vulnerabilities so private interests can guide how we think, act and feel.

A Facebook whistleblower made this all clear several years ago. To meet its revenue goals, the platform used AI to keep people on the platform longer. This meant finding the perfect amount of anger-inducing and provocative content, so that bullying, conspiracies, hate speech, disinformation and other harmful communications flourished. Experimenting on users without their knowledge, the company designed addictive features into the tech-

nology, despite knowing that this harmed teenage girls. A United Nations report labeled Facebook a "useful instrument" for spreading hate in an attempted genocide in Myanmar, and the company admitted the platform's role in amplifying violence. Corporations and other interests can thus use AI to learn our psychological weaknesses, invite us to the most insecure version of ourselves and push our buttons to achieve their own desired ends.

So when we use our phones, computers, home security systems, health devices, smart watches, cars, toys, home assistants, apps, gadgets and what have you, they are also using us. As we search, we are searched. As we narrate our lives on social media, our stories and scrolling are captured. Despite feeling free and in control, we are subtly being guided (or "nudged" in benevolent tech speak)

towards constrained ideas and outcomes. Based on previous behaviors, we are offered a flattering and hyperindividualized world that amplifies and confirms our biases, using our own interests and personalities against us to keep us coming back for more. Employing AI in this manner might be good for business, but it's disastrous for the empathy and informed deliberations required for democracy.

Even as tech companies ask us to accept cookies or belatedly seek our consent, these efforts are not done in good faith. They give us an illusion of privacy even as "improving" the companies' services relies on machines learning more about us than we know ourselves and finding patterns to our behavior that no one knew they were looking for. Even the developers of AI don't know how exactly it works, and therefore can't meaningfully tell us what we're consenting to.

Under the current business model, the advances of AI and robot technology will enrich the few while making life more difficult for the many. Sure, you could argue that people will benefit from the potential advances (and tech industry-enthralled economists undoubtedly will so argue) in health, design and whatever efficiencies AI might bring. But this is less meaningful when people have been robbed of their dignity, blamed for not keeping up and continuously spied on and manipulated for someone else's gain.

We shouldn't be afraid of AI taking over humanity; we should fear the fact that our humanity hasn't kept up with our technology. Instead of enabling a world where we work less and live more, billionaires have designed a system to reward the few at the expense of the many. While AI has and will continue to do great things, it's also been used to make people more anxious, precarious and self-centered, as well as less free. Until we truly learn to care about one another and consider the good of all, technology will continue to ensnare and not emancipate us. There's no such thing as artificial ethics, and human principles must guide our technology, not the other way around. This starts by asking about who owns AI and how it might be employed in everyone's best interest. The future belongs to us all.

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

# Bhand Pather and Fading Laughter of Kashmir



However, with the passage of time, this traditional art form is slowly fading away. The younger generation, drawn to modern forms of entertainment, is no longer interested in preserving this cultural heritage

Rayees Wathori

As I close my eyes and imagine a Kashmir without Bhand Pather, I feel a shiver down my spine. The idea of a valley without the bright colors, happy laughter, and amazing performances of this traditional folk theater is too sad to think about. Bhand Pather, a centuries-old art form, has been an integral part of Kashmiri culture, bringing joy and solace to the people of the valley. It is a unique blend of dance, music, and satire, which has been a source of entertainment and social critique for generations of Kashmir. The performances, often held in village squares and festivals, would bring the community together, providing a platform for social critique. The Bhands, with their colorful costumes and exagger-



ated gestures, would weave a narrative that was both humorous and poignant, leaving the audience in stitches and tears.

I had the privilege of meeting many people across Kashmir, including Kashmiri Pandits, who still yearn for these performances. One of the Kashmiri Pandits who lived in Kashmir many decades back shared his personal experience with me and said:

*"I used to go to witness the Bhand Pather in our neighboring village, where these Bhands would often perform and give us messages and entertainment. We may have everything now, but those gatherings, those times, and those actors are nowhere to be found. We've moved from small streets to big buildings, but modern life can't fill the gap."*

Another person reminisced, "I used to witness those perfor-

mances, but now they seem like a distant dream and illusion."

However, with the passage of time, this traditional art form is slowly fading away. The younger generation, drawn to modern forms of entertainment, is no longer interested in preserving this cultural heritage.

The Bhands, who once roamed the valley, performing in every nook and corner, are now a rare sight. The few remaining troupes struggle to make ends meet, their performances limited to occasional festivals and events. This decline is not just a loss of a cultural tradition; it is also a loss of identity for the people of Kashmir. This art form, which has been an integral part of Kashmiri culture for centuries, is a reflection of the valley's rich history and heritage.

Without Bhand Pather, the

valley will lose a part of its soul, its laughter, and its tears. We will lose a history that has been passed down through generations, a history that has shaped the very fabric of our society.

It is imperative that immediate action be taken to preserve this invaluable cultural heritage. I am sure the newly formed government, along with concerned departments, will come together to support the remaining troupes and provide a platform for the younger generation to learn and perform this traditional art form. Government must also document and archive the existing performances, scripts, and music to ensure that this cultural legacy is preserved for future generations.

As a Folk Theatre artist and activist, the thought of a Kashmir without Bhand Pather is un-

imaginable. It is a thought that fills my heart with sadness and my mind with concern. However, it is not too late to act. We can still preserve this cultural heritage and ensure that the smile of Kashmir is not lost forever. Let us come together to support this traditional art form and keep the laughter and tears of the valley alive.

To ensure the survival of Bhand Pather, we need to adapt to the changing times. We need to create new scripts, new directions, and new ways of storytelling that appeal to the younger generation. We need to organize workshops on script-writing, provide resources to the artists, and create a platform for them to showcase their talents. There are many contemporary issues we witness on our social, political and environmental front which

we can talk about through the theatre. We need to encourage innovation and experimentation, while still preserving the traditional essence of Bhand Pather.

Tail Piece  
Let's preserve this great heritage which is our traditional art form that keeps Kashmir's laughter alive. Bhand Pather bestows us with a kind of entertainment that is full of information and solution oriented performance as well. Let's ensure its stories, emotions, and memories stay vibrant for generations to come.

*The author is a Theatre Artist from Kashmir. He works with Anant National University Ahmedabad, India's first Design X University as Artist in Residence  
Email: ravicerashid@gmail.com.*

## How to Manage Religious OCD and Reclaim Your Faith

SUMAYAH YASEEN

Most people are familiar with the term 'OCD' (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder), and use the word to describe individuals who are tidy or organised. However, few are aware of the detrimental impact it can have on well-being, especially when intersecting with religious practices, as it did with mine. OCD is a common mental illness which affects people from all walks of life around the world. It affects 1 to 4% of people in the UK alone. Those who receive a diagnosis usually suffer debilitating symptoms ranging from intrusive thoughts to compulsive rituals, health anxiety and repetitive actions.

How does OCD affect religious acts?

I was diagnosed with OCD at the age of twelve and suffered daily with intrusive thoughts. As I began performing salah regularly, it became almost impossible to maintain the minimum requirements for Islamic obligations. My struggle with fasting started soon after I was diagnosed, although I didn't know that my mental health was the main factor. Fasting worsened my anxiety which in turn triggered my OCD and increased my compulsive rituals. I would furiously scrub my hands with soap, sobbing until they were red and raw.

The symptoms weren't limited to cleaning impulsively; I would sit for hours ruminating on pointless things and exaggerating scenarios in my head. My anger, anxiety and OCD became uncontrollable, and by the time Maghrib arrived, I could not sit with my family and eat. I felt it was better to stay alone in my room where my symptoms would only affect me until I calmed down.

Praying was similarly challenging as the rituals drained my energy. I was so weakened by hunger

and compulsive behaviours that I just couldn't pray. Moreover, the khushu (focus) I once had during salah had vanished, reducing the awaited conversations with my Lord to mere obligations. Many of us strive to complete our five daily prayers on time every day, however, it can become difficult when dealing with worldly commitments. It is even harder to manage praying while suffering from symptoms of OCD. Although OCD becomes a diagnosed mental disorder when it becomes overwhelming, you can still experience intrusive thoughts and impulsivity without the label.

How often do we question a missed rakah, or let our subconscious wander? These distractions can make one doubt the validity of their prayer and induce a need to start the prayer from the beginning.

Wudhu is a necessary act that precedes salah; however, it becomes an exhausting task when paired with illness. Intrusive thoughts hinder the completion of wudhu, allowing people to doubt their actions, leading them to believe their ablution has been broken or wasn't performed correctly.

My intrusive thoughts appeared in the form of an alter ego, a harsh voice in the back of my head feeding me the worst negative affirmations. It told me I wasn't going to Jannah and that Allah didn't love me anymore. Sometimes I was able to quieten it for a while and hear my own voice assure me that I was worthy, at other times it became an engorged darkness which suffocated me and told me that there was no hope and that there never would be.

My mind would convince me I wasn't "clean" enough to stand before Allah. I firmly believed that my prayer wouldn't count if I had missed a spot, and the years I spent being scolded for not being able to perform wudhu correctly by my Islamic school teachers didn't help

either. I also thought that I would be severely punished if I chose to ignore the 'missed' areas.

Having Contamination OCD can come with sensory issues, such as feeling like the skin on one arm doesn't 'match' the other. For example, I would wash my right arm, then my left, only to feel the right one wasn't as clean, leading me to wash my right arm again. This became a cycle, causing me to miss my prayers, or stop making wudhu and praying salah altogether. This brought further distress, anxiety, and an unshakeable feeling of guilt and resentment. I started resenting mandatory acts, only to feel guilty for doing so.

As my disorder spun out of control, it became harder to retain the energy to fast and perform other duties in Ramadan. I felt the blessed month was not so blessed for me, and my guilt and resentment were exacerbated by a lack of understanding from other Muslims. As these thoughts, which can also be called waswas, worsened – my iman felt weakened, heightening negative feelings and convincing me I was a bad Muslim.

When it comes to mental health help from religious professionals, it's sad to say that there isn't much. Scholars are qualified to provide religious and spiritual advice, however, when it comes to religious, spiritual and mental health advice combined, they're suddenly at a loss. This is a recurring dilemma within the Muslim community, a problem which doesn't have a concrete solution, although this is improving gradually.

What is Waswas?

Waswas is an Arabic word meaning "whispers." Essentially, these are intrusive thoughts from the devil whispering into your subconscious. Waswas is referenced in the hadith as negative thoughts from Shaytan, and not from oneself.

There are two types of waswas, the first one comes from the nafs (the self) and the other from the Shaytan. It is the second type which becomes overwhelming and obsessive, leading to extreme disruption in life and interfering with duties. Waswas plays on an individual's fears, exaggerating them, making you believe they have occurred, or will, occur.

It took a long time for me to distinguish my own voice between the 'bad' one, and there are still days, even months, where I'm unable to tell the difference. What worked for me, was learning to sit with my thoughts, and come back to them once things seemed a little clearer. When an intrusive or obsessive thought enters my mind, I let it be, I wait, and I continue. This action, along with prescribed medication from my doctor, made my disorder manageable. When I started medication things started to get better, and slowly I began working on my spiritual relationship with Allah again.

The Qur'an and Hadith on OCD  
Although the Qur'an itself does not explicitly mention OCD, there are many verses which touch on the struggles associated with it. Waswas is clearly written in Surah An-Nas.

Allah says,  
'Say, (O Prophet) "I seek refuge in the Lord of humankind, the Master of humankind, the God of humankind, from the evil of the lurking whisperer—who whispers into the hearts of humankind—from among jinn and humankind."' (Surah An-Nas 114:1-6)

Allah also talks about the evil eye in Surah Al-Falaq, warning us that black magic and envy exist and that we need to protect ourselves against them.  
He says, 'Say, (O Prophet) "I seek refuge in the Lord of the daybreak. From the evil of whatever He has created, and from the evil of the night when it grows dark,

and from the evil of those 'witches casting spells by' blowing onto knots, and from the evil of an envious when they envy.'" (Surah Al-Falaq 113:1-5)

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has mentioned waswas, stating that Shaytan uses intrusive thoughts to break down a believer—it is a sign of strong faith if you experience these. It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah RA said: "Some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah came to the Prophet and said to him, 'We find in ourselves thoughts that are too terrible to speak of.' He said, 'Are you really suffering from that?' They said, 'Yes.' He said, 'That's a clear sign of faith.'" (Muslim)

Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ has also expressed to us that if we suffer from intrusive thoughts without verbalising them, then we will not be held accountable and Allah will forgive us. He said, "Allah forgives my followers those (evil deeds) their souls may whisper or suggest to them as long as they do not act (on it) or speak." (Bukhari)

The beautiful structure of Islam assures us that our suffering will bring rewards beyond comprehension.

Lack of Support from Scholars and Community

A wider problem within our community is the limited understanding Islamic scholars have of mental health itself. Unfortunately, when it comes to individuals struggling with depression or even schizophrenia, many professionals are unaware of the mind's ability to display a variety of emotions and coping mechanisms. You may hear talks of people in the community being 'possessed' or having 'Jinn' living inside their bodies. This may be true in some cases, most of these are undiagnosed disorders and illnesses. It is often easier to believe in the paranormal than fathom the complexities of the mind.

Denial plays a significant part in preventing treatment as the older generation refuses to acknowledge the issue. There is also a stigma attached to mental health as it is often an obscure concept for the Muslim community – and as a result – considered taboo.

Generally, it is quite difficult to find scholarly advice for mental illnesses. However, I was lucky to have found a scholar, a local Imam whom my family knew, who made things easier for me – as I struggled with reassurance and needed it before I made a decision. The scholar helped in assessing my situation and providing a solution which goes to show that there are good scholars out there, it is only a matter of finding one with good character and a deep sense of empathy instead of judgement.

It is a good idea to search for scholars in your local area. This way, you can request recommendations and consider which Imams' ideologies align with your concerns. Counselling and Psychology training are necessary for integrating both Islamic teachings and science to move communities forward. It is important to search for a trustworthy scholar who can offer support and is willing to understand your experiences.

Furthermore, when individuals confess to depression or intrusive thoughts – scholars often advise them to pray more, do more dhikr and make more du'a. The lack of psychological knowledge only causes increased suffering, doubt and isolation. The interpretation of Qur'anic texts and hadith often links mental health struggles to the weakness of faith, suggesting that low iman equals decreased acts of worship. However, this is not necessarily the case. We know that our Prophet ﷺ struggled with feelings of emptiness and despair and in response, Allah sent Surah Ad-Duha to console him and remind him of His love

and mercy.  
Allah says, 'Your Lord has not taken leave of you, (O Muhammad), nor has He deserted (you).' (Surah Ad-Duhaa 93:3)

Allah reminds Muhammad that he is not alone, neither are his emotions invalidated. We can take comfort in knowing Allah understands us better than anyone else, and His love for us is greater than any other.

Accessing Help

It is important to look for the right support when struggling with mental illness and experiencing overwhelming symptoms. First and foremost, making an appointment with your GP and accessing medical help is vital to ensure you are getting the right treatment. Additionally, a qualified professional, from a reliable Muslim counselling service, who understands your cultural and religious background, can help to talk through your emotions. Services such as Aafiyah Healing and Muslim Women's Network Helpline are easily accessible and available. In times of crisis, always call a helpline; Samaritans are readily on hand for calls and can guide you through difficult situations. Sometimes, discussing your problems with a third party can help considerably. Therapy is a construct which encourages conversations between individuals and therapists, resulting in a connection which relaxes the mind and allows the patient to discuss issues and reach short-term and long-term objectives.

Above all else, always remember that Allah is the best of Planners, and your reward for bearing your suffering will surpass any pain you went through in this temporary world.

The article was originally published by Amaliah





## Noman Ali's Heroics Lead Pakistan To Series-Leveling Victory

### Agencies

MULTAN: Noman Ali claimed eight wickets as Pakistan's frontline spinners bowled them to a 152-run victory over England in the second Test in Multan on Friday to level the three-match series at 1-1.

Chasing 297 for victory on a turning track at the Multan Cricket Stadium, England were all out for 144 in the fourth day's morning session. Skipper Ben Stokes was the top scorer for England with 37 but their frontline batters struggled against the turning ball.

Left-arm spinner Noman was pick of the Pakistan bowlers claiming 8-46.

Noman and player of the match Sajid Khan, who claimed seven wickets in the first innings, shared all 20 England wickets in a terrific display of spin bowling.

It ended Pakistan's winless run on home soil where they had not won a Test match since February 2021.

"I think the first one's always special, and it's come after some hard times, some rough times," Shan Masood said after his first Test win as Pakistan captain.

"Noman and Sajid coming in for their first games — it's never easy, and they seemed like two seasoned campaigners coming in and doing their job in the second innings."

"We didn't need a third bowler, so that just speaks volumes for them." Pakistan were already in the ascendancy when England resumed

on 36-2 needing an extraordinary batting effort to get anywhere near the target.

Vice captain Ollie Pope (22) fell in the second over of the day, giving off-spinner Sajid Khan a return catch before left-arm spinner Noman ran amok. Noman dealt the tourists a body blow when he trapped Joe Root lbw for 18, a decision the batter reviewed but could not get overturned.

Harry Brook (16) fell to Noman in a similar fashion and England slumped to 88-6 when Jamie Smith was sent packing.

Stokes has played some match-defining knocks in his illustrious career and England badly needed a similar innings from him.

The captain, scoring at a run-a-ball rate, came dancing down the track against Noman and swung his bat only for it to fly out of his hands to midwicket.

Pakistan wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan had all the time in the world to collect the ball and whip off the bail with Stokes well out of the crease.

"When you get extreme conditions like that, you've got to find a way to negate that spin, which I think we managed to do in some good parts," Stokes said.

"... we would have liked to have gone on, especially myself and a couple of the guys who got starts, we might even be able to get closer, if not win the game."

The third and final Test begins in Rawalpindi on Thursday.

## Kohli, Rohit, Sarfaraz 50s Take India To 231/3 On Day 3

### Press Trust of India

BENGALURU: A counter-attacking India kept alive the hopes of a miracle turnaround through free-flowing 50s from the trio of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Sarfaraz Khan, reaching 231 for three in their second innings on the third day of the first Test against New Zealand here on Friday.

Kohli (70), who completed 9,000 Test runs during the course of his knock, got out to Glenn Phillips off the last ball of the day, edging him to Tom Blundell, leaving Sarfaraz (70) at the crease at close. The deficit at the end of an overcast day was a less intimidating 125.

Kohli and Sarfaraz added 136 runs for the third wicket after skipper Rohit did the early running with a fluent 52.

This was after New Zealand posted a total of 402 all out to gain a massive lead of 356 runs thanks to Rachin Ravindra (134) and Tim Southee (63), who added precious 134 runs for a flowing eighth wicket stand.

The largest deficit India has overturned to win a Test in their cricketing history is 274 during the iconic Kolkata Test against Australia in 2001.

Such an epic is still some distance away, but hopes will be flickering after the day's effort with the bat.

Amid the more coruscating 50s by Rohit and Sarfaraz, Kohli's effort still stood out for its personal and situational significance.

It was his first Test half-century of 2024, and he could not have timed his 31st in the longest format better—literally and figuratively.

Seldom a shot describes the touch of Kohli better than the cover drive, and the moment he executed one off pacer William O'Rourke, the 35-year-old was in full flow. He took 15 balls to get off the mark.

Kohli brought up his 50 with a single off Matt Henry but at the other end, Sarfaraz resembled a race car on the tarmac.

The Mumbai man punished all bowlers with disdain and left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel was shunted off the park for two successive sixes.

Then there was a daring upper cut for maximum off O'Rourke



and fortune also blessed him as a couple of edges fell inches short of Ajaz at gully and wide of third slip.

Before Kohli and Sarfaraz ran roughshod, another old-young combination of Rohit and Yashasvi Jaiswal (35) gave India a solid start.

Jaiswal went through an early uncertain play-and-miss phase but he overcame that to play some sparkling shots.

Rohit had no such issues. The right-hander flicked and drove New Zealand pacers to reach a 50 off just 59 balls, and also thrilled the crowd with that patented swivel pull on one leg.

But his tenure in the middle ended in unfortunate circumstances. Rohit offered a forward defensive shot to Ajaz, but the ball trickled back onto his stumps after taking a deflection from his bat.

A few minutes before that, Jaiswal's decision to give a charge to Ajaz resulted in him getting stumped by Tom Blundell, after adding 72 for the opening wicket with Rohit.

The recovery was impressive but it could not overshadow what New Zealand accomplished earlier in the day.

Resuming the day at 180 for three, the Kiwis were halted to an extent by Ravindra Jadeja (3/72) and the other Indian bowlers who

took some early wickets to reduce them to 233 for seven.

They lost Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Blundell and Henry in this period.

Jasprit Bumrah snaffled Blundell while Mohammed Siraj had the number of Mitchell. Phillips and Henry perished to the crafty Jadeja.

The Blackcaps were ahead by 187 runs at that point and it was imperative for them to stretch the lead at least till the 250-mark to maintain their edge.

Ravindra and Southee exceeded the expectations during their partnership to take the lead past the 300-run mark.

Ravindra started cautiously but unfurled his full range once he and the pitch settled down past the first-hour mark.

The 24-year-old, who has his family roots in Bengaluru, showed the correct method of playing Indian spinners, either staying on the front foot or making a shimmy down to nullify the turn.

A cleanly swept four off Ravichandran Ashwin carried him to his second Test hundred.

Southee, who hammered a couple of his trademark sixes, gave solid company to Ravindra and duly completed his seventh Test fifty immediately after the lunch.

## Champions Trophy PCB Makes India A Unique Proposal

### Press Trust of India

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has reached out to the BCCI and proposed an arrangement allowing India to return to either New Delhi or Chandigarh in between matches during the Champions Trophy next year if the team is not willing to stay in Pakistan due to security reasons.

The PCB has "verbally" suggested to the BCCI that the Indian team can set up a camp in either New Delhi or Chandigarh/Mohali and use chartered flights to travel to Lahore for their matches.

A PCB source though confirmed to PTI on Friday that the Board had not made any suggestions in writing to their Indian counterparts.

A PCB source though confirmed to PTI on Friday that the Board had not made any suggestions in writing to their Indian counterparts.

"But yes it is true that these options have been discussed verbally between officials as a way to ensure that India plays its matches in Pakistan," the source said.

The Champions Trophy is

scheduled to take place from February 19 to March 9, with matches scheduled in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Karachi.

Due to its proximity to the Indian border and logistical ease, the PCB has planned India's matches in Lahore.

India's three group-stage matches in the tournament are slated for February 20 (against Bangladesh), February 23 (against Pakistan), and March 2 (against New Zealand).

The PCB is however adamant that the final must be held in Lahore regardless of whether India plays in Pakistan or not.

The Indian team has long gap between its group matches and Lahore is located close to the Indian border.

The ICC is considering a hybrid model for the tournament, with some matches played outside of Pakistan.

The hybrid model is being considered due to India's unlikely participation in the tournament, as they have not toured Pakistan since 2008.

The ICC is exploring alternative venues, such as Dubai and Sri Lanka, to host the matches.

## Jammu Wins Inter Division U-19 Cricket Tournament



### Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Jammu clinched the Inter Division UT Level Under-19 Cricket Tournament 2024 after defeating Kashmir 2-1 on Friday here at BHSS Ground Bijbehara. Earlier, Jammu Division won two consecutive matches in the three-match tournament.

In the third game played on Friday, Kashmir defeated Jammu by 6 wickets. In the match, Jammu while batting first set the target of 101 runs, in which Ashutosh contributed 24 runs and Adnan made 18. From Kashmir, Soulib Tariq clinched 5 wicket haul which included a hat trick.

In reply, Kashmir Division chased down the target easily with 6 wickets in hand, in which Waris Rashid contributed unbeaten 28 and Mohd Umair made 27. For Jammu, Nazir Khanday picked up 2 important wickets.

Later, Solib Tariq was adjudged as man of the match for his 5 wicket haul in the match.

The tournament was organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports and hosted by DYSSO Anantnag at BHSS Ground Bijbehara. Soon after the completion of the tournament, the selectors selected 16 members to represent J&K in the upcoming School National Games.

## Divisional Level Yoga Competition Begins In Baramulla

### Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: The UT-level Inter-District Yoga Competition for all age groups officially started at Government Higher Secondary School Baramulla on Friday.

Organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports, the prestigious event is being hosted by the DYSS Baramulla.

The inaugural session of the competition featured the participation of boys in the Under-14 category, with teams from 15 districts across Jammu & Kashmir converging in Baramulla to showcase their skills in the ancient practice of yoga.

The event was inaugurated by the Principal of GHSS Baramulla, who extended a warm welcome to

the participants and inspired them to embrace the discipline of yoga, highlighting its significance in maintaining physical and mental well-being.

DYSSO Baramulla also welcomed the participants and expressed his gratitude to YSS for entrusting Baramulla with the responsibility of hosting this major competition.

The first day of the competition witnessed enthusiastic participation and a display of remarkable talent from the young athletes, setting the stage for an exciting series of events in the days to come.

The Yoga competition will continue with participation from all age groups, fostering a spirit of camaraderie, discipline, and healthy competition among the youth.



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