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**BOOK APPOINTMENT**

## WINTER HAZARD

# 6 Of Family Killed In Kathua Fire

Observer News Service

Jammu: A tragic fire in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district has claimed the lives of six family members, including a former deputy superintendent of police (Dy SP) and his three-year-old grandson. The devastating incident occurred early Wednesday morning when the family was trapped inside their rented accommodation, suffocating from thick smoke that quickly engulfed the house.

Four other people injured in the incident are undergoing treatment in a hospital.

According to police, locals noticed the house on fire around 2:30 am and rushed to rescue its occupants. The house was filled with thick smoke, suffocating its occupants in their sleep, they said.



The victims were shifted to the Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital in Kathua where six of them, including two minors, were declared 'brought dead', officials said.

The deceased have been identified as 81-year-old former deputy SP Avtar Krishen Raina, his daughter | [More on P6](#)

## LG, CM Express Grief

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha expressed grief over the tragic loss of six lives in a devastating fire incident in Kathua district. "Extremely saddened by the loss of lives due to a tragic fire in Kathua. My thoughts are with the bereaved families. I wish the injured a speedy recovery," the office of LG & J&K wrote on X. | [More on P6](#)

## Govt Confirms Lithium, Titanium Reserves In Reasi

Agencies

Srinagar: The Union Government has confirmed that the Salal-Haimana area in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district holds significant resources of lithium and titanium.

According to the Ministry of Coal and Mines, G. Kisshan Reddy,

the Geological Survey of India (GSI) conducted preliminary exploration (G3 stage) primarily for bauxite, during which additional resources of lithium and titanium were also identified.

The GSI has submitted mineral samples to the Indian Bureau of Mines, Nagpur, and the Institute of Minerals | [More on P6](#)

## 'Terror Attacks, Undetected Infiltrations'

# HM To Review J&Ks Security Grid Today

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday is likely to review the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the first such meeting after the last assembly elections held in September-October, sources said.

As Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha heads the Unified Command (UHQ), he would represent various stakeholders operating in the valley.

Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Director of Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka, Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, Director General of CAPFs, Chief Secretary, DGP of Jammu and Kashmir, will attend the meeting.



"The home minister will review the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir. He will be briefed about the prevailing situation in the Union Territory (UT) and the situation along the border areas,"

sources said.

This will be Shah's first meeting after the assembly elections conducted in the UT where a National Conference (NC) government, headed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah

assumed charge.

After the abrogation of the Article 370 and bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two UTs in 2019, the law and order is the direct responsibility of the central government.

The home minister is likely to have a detailed discussion on the security roadmap ahead for 2025, the sources said.

Sporadic incidents have been continuing in Jammu and Kashmir. On October 20, seven people were killed in a terror attack in central Kashmir. Before that, there were attacks on outsiders working in Kashmir.

Sources said the security forces operating on the ground have prepared detailed presentations to explain the new | [More on P6](#)

## J&K Contributes 0.8% To National GDP

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is making a proportional contribution to the country's economy, with its share in the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) standing at 0.8 per cent, according to the government data.

According to data, this aligns closely with J&K's population share of 0.98 per cent in the country.

The report states that J&K's economic growth has been steady, with the tertiary sector contributing 61 per cent, followed by the secondary and primary sectors.

For the financial year 2023-24, the Union Territory's Real Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is projected to grow by 7.41 per cent, with a Nominal GSDP estimated at Rs 2.46 lakh crore.

J&K's share | [More on P6](#)

## Muslim Daughter Cannot Be Expelled From Father's Inheritance: HC

M Ahmad

Srinagar: Observing that Quran bestows right of inheritance first to female then to male survivor, the High Court of J&K and Ladakh has said that a Muslim daughter cannot and could not be expelled by any excuse or pretext to inherit the property of her father.

A bench of Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul made the observations while dealing with a "pathetic" case of a woman, who sought share from her father's property being biological daughter some forty-three (43) years back but died midway. Her children stepped her in that race who are also still dreaming to have had their mother's right matured and plucked albeit having a Division Bench judgement in her favour, the court said.



**QURAN BESTOWS RIGHT OF Inheritance First To Female And Then To Male Survivor"**

"The parties hereunto this controversy are Muslims. They are practising in daily and routine life all rituals of Islam strictly in accordance

with Quranic injunctions and Ahadith, which include ablation for performing daily prayers; celebrations of Eids; performing Hajj and sacrifice of lamb/camel; paying Zakah; burying of dead body in strict accordance with Islam," the court said, adding, "All these acts and activities are being performed by parties strictly in conformity with Quranic commandments and Shariat, but it has been seen when it comes to giving share to daughter/sister, certain individuals come up with a pretext of Custom." Such a practice, the court said, is even deprecated by Islam.

"It is worthwhile to mention here that Surah An-Nisa, Verse 11, of Holy Quran, stipulates inheritance laws, specifically distribution of inheritance amongst inheritors," the court said, adding, | [More on P6](#)

## Shah's Ambedkar Remarks

# Oppn Seeks HM's Sacking, PM Counters Attack

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: A massive political row erupted on Wednesday as the Congress and other opposition parties launched an all-out attack on Home Minister Amit Shah for his remarks on B R Ambedkar and demanded his sacking, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other top BJP leaders rallied to his defence and said he has exposed Congress' "anti-Ambedkar" stand.

As opposition parties

unitedly protested against Shah and stalled both houses of Parliament, alleging that his remarks had insulted Ambedkar and demanding his apology, Shah said that the Congress had distorted his comments under a malicious campaign after the discussion on the Constitution "established" that the opposition party was against Ambedkar and reservation.

Prime Minister Modi hit out at the Congress, saying its "rotten ecosystem" | [More on P6](#)

## Omar Denies Meeting HM

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday denied reports of meeting the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, clarifying that no such meeting has taken place yet. He, however, stated that given the current circumstances in which J&K is a Union Territory, the Home Minister has a | [More on P6](#)

## SMVDSB MEET

# Safety Of Pilgrims Our Top Priority: LG



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also the Chairman of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, reiterated the commitment of the Shrine Board to offer enriching experience to the visiting pilgrims by improving transparency and efficiency of all services.

He directed for detailed analyses of the services, security & disaster management; strengthening of mobile connectivity and enhancing pilgrim feedback mechanism.

Sinha chaired the 73rd Meeting of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), Wednesday at Raj Bhawan.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor inaugurated and dedicated various pilgrims-centric facilities including Yatri Facilitation Centre at Railway Station Katra and Yatri Facilitation cum Staff Accommodation Complex (Shubhra Bhawan) at Banganga.

He laid e-foundation stone of the new Exit Track at Bhawan aimed at decongesting the Bhawan area | [More on P6](#)



## KASHMIR'S HARASSED HUSBANDS

SCAN TO WATCH THIS ON KASHMIR OBSERVER











### ITMS OERATIONALIZED IN SRINAGAR

## Nearly 200 E-Challans Issued On Day One

#### Agencies

Srinagar: With the start of the Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) officially going live in Srinagar, the e-challans have been issued to about 200 traffic violators on its first day of operation on Wednesday.

Officials from Srinagar Traffic Police said that the start of the ITMS system in Srinagar marks a major shift toward a technology-driven approach to traffic regulation and law enforcement.

They said the system, launched by the Traffic Police, uses high-resolution cameras and radar sensors to monitor vehicle movements, detect violations, and issue e-challans automatically.

They said on the first day of ITMS, about 200 e-challans have been issued all over the city, and the initiative is just a beginning as today is the first day of the ITMS system.

Moreover, Muzaffar Shah, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Traffic City said, "The system minimizes human interface and ensures law enforcement is evidence-based, transparent, and efficient."

He said this is a regular process and with the introduction of ITMS, the system will monitor traffic movement and various traffic violations while the software generates challans in real-time.

In the meanwhile, the locals have welcomed the move, calling it a positive step toward safer roads and improved traffic management.

Tahir Ahmad a local said, with the introduction of e-challans, the drivers will now be more cautious. "This is a much-needed initiative. It will reduce congestion and ensure everyone follows traffic rules," he said.

Another local said the ITMS system is a game-changer. It uses modern technology to address old traffic problems, and this will lead to better coordination and safer roads.

The ITMS uses advanced technology, such as high-resolution cameras and radar sensors, to monitor intersections and highways.

By collecting real-time data and analyzing it through advanced computer algorithms, ITMS provides instant insights into traffic violations and patterns—(KNO)

## Amar Singh College Organises Lecture On Payment Systems In India

#### Observer News Service

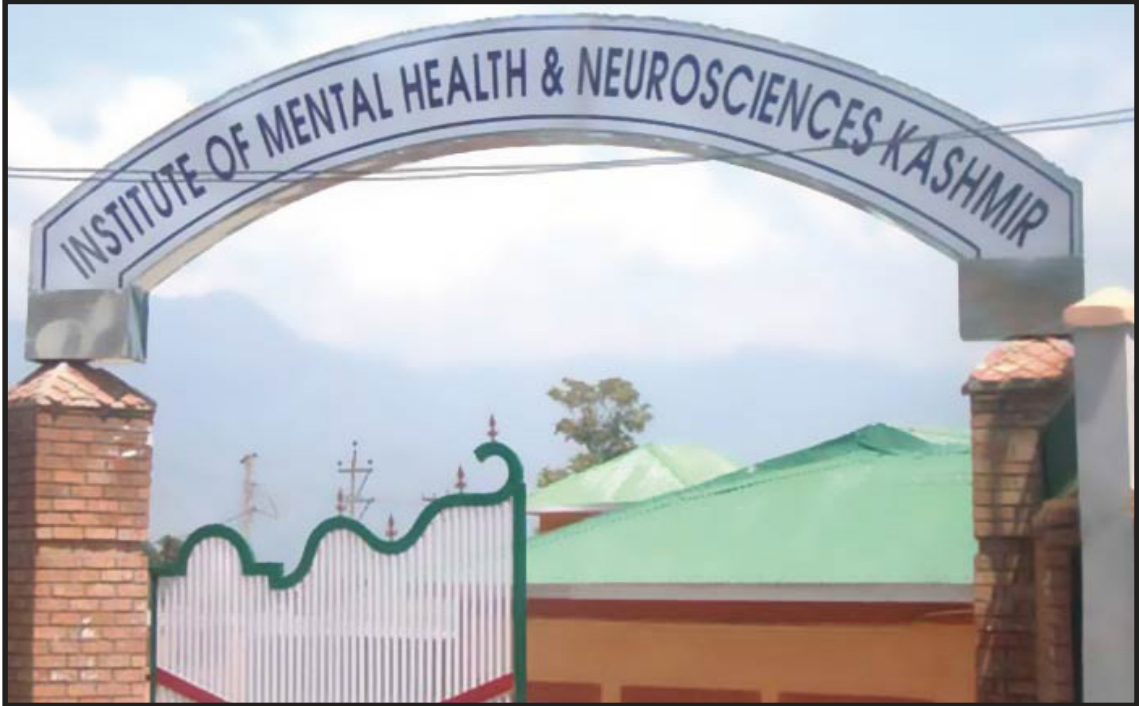
Srinagar:Amar Singh College Cluster University Srinagar, hosted a special extension lecture titled "Payment and Settlement Systems in India". The lecture was delivered by Prof. Nisar Ahmad Khan, former Head of the Department of Economics and former Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Aligarh Muslim University. The event witnessed the participation of the Dean Academic Affairs, Registrar, Controller, and Deans of various faculties from Cluster University Srinagar, along with a large number of students and faculty members from Amar Singh College.

Prof. Ajaz Ahmad Hakak, Principal of Amar Singh College, delivered the welcome address. He highlighted the importance of guiding students towards innovative knowledge and research opportunities beyond the confines of traditional classroom instruction to better prepare them for future challenges. He reaffirmed Amar Singh College's commitment to maintaining academic excellence in the years ahead.

In his presidential remarks, Mohd Mubeen,

Vice-Chancellor of Cluster University Srinagar, emphasized the importance of conducting regular extension lectures to enhance students' domain knowledge. He called on stakeholders to actively promote innovation and skill-based education within higher education institutions. The Vice-Chancellor also announced the establishment of a dedicated cell at Cluster University to facilitate ongoing extension lectures across various disciplines.

Prof. Nisar Ahmad Khan, in his special lecture, provided a comprehensive analysis of both the historical and contemporary payment systems in India. He highlighted the transformative impact of digital payments on banking and marketing practices, showcasing their benefits for individuals across diverse sectors of society. He also stressed the importance of raising awareness about the risks associated with digital payments and advocated for enhanced regulatory frameworks to ensure secure digital transactions. Furthermore, Prof. Nisar called for the removal of barriers impeding the progress of digital literacy in India.



## IMHANS Registers 1200 Drug Abusers In Last 9 Months

#### Agencies

Srinagar: A shift is being witnessed among drug abusers in Kashmir as they prefer to use pharmaceutical drugs over heroin, which they procure through illegal routes, the health experts said.

A top psychiatrist at GMC Srinagar said that the trend of drug abuse continues to rise and every day new patients are being brought to the hospital for treatment.

He said that the majority of the drug abusers are the heroin users and over 50 per cent of them are being tested positive for Hepatitis C.

The psychiatrist said that around 1200 drug abusers were registered at the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) Kashmir in the last 8-9 months and 90 per cent of them are heroin addicts and inject-

able drug users.

He, however, said that a shift has been witnessed amongst the drug addicts as the heroin abusers are using pharmaceutical drugs that include Pregabalin, Topentadol and Tramadol.

The psychiatrist added that Pregabalin, a medication commonly prescribed for epilepsy, neuropathic pain, and anxiety, has seen a significant increase in misuse, particularly among individuals using opioids like heroin.

He added that heroin users are turning to prescription medications like pregabalin to enhance or modulate the effects of opioids.

Meanwhile, the officials said shift is being witnessed due to the high cost and scarcity of heroin, and the abusers find it easy to procure the pharmaceutical drugs by using illegal ways.

They said that Tramadol is a

painkiller and a good drug while doctors prescribe it for their patients but it is being misused, adding that there is a need to focus on mental health support for youngsters in the valley to combat the root causes of substance abuse.

"The shift from illicit drugs like heroin to prescription medications poses new challenges for public health and law enforcement. These pharmaceutical drugs, while legal when prescribed appropriately, can lead to serious health complications when misused. The combination of these medications with other substances, intentional or accidental, further elevates the risk of overdose and death," they added.

Officials said that the parents need to play their role effectively by keeping more vigil on their children to combat this challenge—(KNO)

## Kashmiri Artisans Craft Handmade Christmas Wonders

#### Agencies

Srinagar: As Christmas approaches, Kashmiri artisans are crafting unique handmade art pieces that are set to take center stage in celebrations this year.

From intricate paper ornaments to elegant decorations, the valley's skilled craftsmen are

showcasing their creativity and talent through festive treasures that blend tradition and artistry.

These artisans have been working tirelessly to bring something special for Christmas.

An artisan from Srinagar shared that the papier-mâché artworks were specially designed for Christmas, aiming to bring the

joy of Kashmiri traditions to holiday celebrations everywhere.

Among the handmade creations are meticulously crafted stars, angels, and wreaths, using techniques passed down through generations. These works uniquely highlight Kashmir's rich artistic heritage while incorporating festive themes.(KNO)

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Catalogue No.	Auction Start	Name of work
EAFZR-SLR24-88	03.01.2025 at 11:00 hrs.	Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR Compartment: 14612-F1, 12014-F1, 14508-R1, 22430-F1, 14508-F2, 12030-F1, 22486-F1, 14508-F1, 14654-F1, 12266-F1, 14654-F2 & 19326-F1

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**CONDOLENCE MEETING**

The Staff and the students of this college place on record their grief and sorrow on passing away of **Khawaja Sheikh Fazal Ikram, the uncle of Prof. (Dr.) Seema Naz Nodal Principal**, Kashmir Division Colleges, who passed away on 16th December, 2024 after a brief illness.

A condolence meeting was held in the college on 18th of November, 2024 at 2:30 pm to offer Fateha for the departed soul. The members also prayed to Almighty to bestow courage to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

Sd/= Prof. Mohd Ashraf. Wagi  
Staff Secretary

Sd/= Prof. Nazir Ahmad Bhat

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**HIGHWAY STATUS**  
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Mughal Road - (Open)  
Srinagar- Leh- (Open)

**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
16 Jumada al-Sani  
1446

**PRAYERS**

FAJR	6: 02
ZUHR	12:27
ASR	3: 48
Magrib	5:29
ISHA	6: 54

## This Day In History

- 1448 - Pope Nicholas V appoints Rudolf of Diepholt, Bishop of Utrecht, as cardinal.
- 1522 - Suleiman the Magnificent accepts surrender of the surviving Knights of Rhodes, who are allowed to evacuate. Eventually settle in Malta, become known as the Knights of Malta.
- 1585 - English fleet & Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, reach Vlissingen.
- 1626 - Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II and Prince of Transylvania Gabor Bethlen sign Peace of Pressburg (Bratislava).
- 1661 - Corporation Act enforced in England.
- 1669 - 1st jury trial in Delaware; Marcus Jacobson condemned for insurrection & sentenced to flogging, branding & slavery.
- 1688 - Prince William of Orange's troops arrive in London.
- 1694 - Frederik van Brandenburg flees Schweiben
- 1699 - Russian Tsar Peter the Great ordered Russian New Year changed from Sept 1 to Jan 1.
- 1780 - Britain declares war on Holland.
- 1790 - 1st successful US cotton mill to spin yarn (Pawtucket, RI).
- 1830 - Great Britain, France, Prussia, Austria and Russia recognize Belgium.
- 1860 - South Carolina secedes from the Union (US Civil War).
- 1879 - Tom Edison privately demonstrated incandescent light at Menlo Park.
- 1880 - Battle at Bronker's Spruit, Transvaal: Farmers beat Britten.
- 1892 - Pneumatic automobile tire patented, Syracuse, NY.
- 1900 - Giacobini discovers a comet (will be 1st comet visited by spacecraft).
- 1915 - Russian troops overrun Qom, Persia
- 1917 - Cheka formed - Soviet state security force and forerunner to the KGB, under Felix Dzerzhinsky after decree by Lenin.
- 1922 - 14 republics form Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).
- 1924 - Adolf Hitler freed from jail early.
- 1933 - Bolivia & Paraguay sign cease fire
- 1941 - Adolf Hitler takes complete command of German Army
- 1943- Military coup in Bolivia
- 1946 - War breaks out in Indochina as Ho Chi Minh attacks French in Hanoi
- 1950 - Tibet's Dalai Lama flees Chinese invasion
- 1961 - Indonesian President Sukarno proclaims general mobilization
- 1972 - Apollo 17 (last of Apollo Moon landing series) returns to Earth
- 1978 - Indira Gandhi ambushed in India
- 1980- Iran requests \$24 billion in US guarantees to free hostages
- 1983 - The original FIFA World Cup trophy, the Jules Rimet Trophy, is stolen from the headquarters of the Brazilian Football Confederation in Rio de Janeiro.
- 1984 - UK signs agreement with China to return Hong Kong to China in 1997
- 1986 - OPEC reaches an accord that would cut production by 7 percent for the first six months of 1987 and would raise prices immediately toward a target world oil price of \$18 per barrel
- 1988 - NASA unveils plans for lunar colony & manned missions to Mars
- 1988 - Unexploded WW II bomb found in Frankfurt, Germany-5,000 evacuated
- 2012- Park Geun-hye wins the South Korean presidential election to become the nation's first female president
- 2014 - The Guardian newspaper calls 2014 'The year the people stood up'
- 2016 - At least 48 people die after drinking bath lotion in Irkutsk, Siberia, thinking it contained alcohol
- 2018- Drones flying over Gatwick airport, England, causes delays and cancellations for 800 flights and 110,000 people
- 2018- First use of a drone to deliver vaccines - to island of Erromango, Vanuatu, by Unicef
- 2018- US President Donald Trump announces victory over the Islamic State and planned



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KO VIEW

Diljit's 'Sukoon'  
In Kashmir

Punjabi singer and global celebrity Diljit Dosanjh, amid his Dil-Luminati tour, has been enjoying the serene beauty of Kashmir. Sharing moments of peace, he has posted videos from Srinagar, showing its spiritual ambience with soulful Sufi tracks playing in the background. Dosanjh also embraced Kashmir's unique charm on a Shikara ride, savoring kehwa offered by a local vendor. This has won hearts not just in Kashmir but also in the rest of the country, wowing also millions of his fans.

The portrayal of Kashmir in the videos is not essentially touristic but will certainly play a role in bringing more tourists to Kashmir. Not that Kashmir has been short of tourists in recent years but Dosanjh's promotion of the beauty of the Valley is certain to draw tourists from far and wide. The return of Bollywood to the valley in recent years, spurred by the Competitive Film Policy, has created a vibrant film ecosystem, drawing prominent filmmakers to the Valley. Their projects showcase Kashmir's breathtaking landscapes and contribute to a growing film tourism trend.

Over the last four years, tourism in the Valley has thrived. Every year, upwards of one crore tourists have visited Jammu and Kashmir, which has given a leg up to UT's economy. December, despite being the coldest month, attracts a large number of tourists. Snowfall is the biggest draw with holiday makers from the mainland India, for most of whom it is a novelty. This year, the UT government has planned New Year celebrations at four destinations including Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg and Srinagar, which will be an added attraction for tourists. The ski resort of Gulmarg and other scenic destinations typically experience a surge of tourists during Christmas and New Year, as visitors from across the country gather at these picturesque locations to celebrate the festive season.

The connecting of Srinagar with Delhi through train will give a further leg up to tourism, a key driver of Kashmir's economy. The scenic rail route, passing through Chenab Valley, Anantnag, Awantipora, Pampore, and other stations, presents a unique opportunity to highlight the natural beauty of the region. The prospect of a Vande Bharat Express running through this picturesque landscape adds an extra dimension to the tourist experience, making Kashmir more accessible for travelers, otherwise held back by the high-priced air tickets. That said, we have to ensure that the growing tourist arrivals do not strain the pristine yet fragile nature of the Valley, a glimpse of which Dosanjh has shown in his social media videos. Responsible tourism is the only way forward to protect Kashmir's beauty while reaping the benefits of enhanced tourism resulting from increased connectivity.



Did you know?

Navigating Bear Markets:  
Strategies for Long-term Success

Irshad Mushtaq

Market downturns often unsettle investors and traders, leading them to perceive a bleak economic future. However, market corrections are a natural phenomenon and are sometimes essential for long-term health. Historically, market declines can last several months, which is considered normal. During market downturns, a staggered investment approach is advisable. Hastily investing in a market that's plummeting, known as "catching a falling knife," can be risky. However, these periods offer opportunities to invest in high-quality shares, ETFs, and mutual funds. Although immediate returns are unlikely in a bearish market, and your investment might further decrease in value, it's important to remember that this presents a chance to accumulate more assets over time. Quality investments prove their worth over extended periods. Several factors such as economic shifts, government policies, international issues, wars, and elections can drastically influence the market. Even a market drop of 20% is possible. However, if your portfolio is diversified, containing high-quality stocks, well-managed funds, and low leverage, you are less likely to face significant issues in the long term. Sound money management and disciplined investing will protect your investments. In times of market uncertainty, it's tempting to sell and then re-buy. While it's possible to trade on half of your portfolio, aiming for profits, timing the market is complex and often unsuccessful. Investors should focus on maintaining a diversified, high-quality portfolio and adhere to a disciplined investment approach. In summary, market declines should be viewed as opportunities rather than setbacks. By investing wisely in quality assets and maintaining discipline, long-term investors can weather market fluctuations and potentially achieve substantial returns. Conclusion Market downturns can be unsettling, but they're a natural part of economic cycles. Instead of rushing to sell, consider a staggered investment approach—this is an opportunity to accumulate quality assets that thrive over time. Diversification and disciplined investing will help protect you through uncertainty. Remember, downturns can be doors to future profits. Stay strong and focused on long-term goals!

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)

Misuse of Law: Are Gender Rights Only Women's Rights?



Aqib Ul Ahad Wani

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) seeks to modernize and unify various legal frameworks in India. Notably, Sections 85 and 86 of the BNS mirror the provisions of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which pertains to the issue of cruelty inflicted upon married women by their husbands or relatives. This mirroring serves to maintain continuity and strengthen the legal safeguards for women. The misuse of Section 498A IPC (Now Sections 85 and 86 of the BNS ) is not merely anecdotal; it has been substantiated, as instances have emerged where false allegations have been made under this provision, leading to unjust consequences for husbands. Furthermore, there is a lack of legal recourse for men facing abuse from women, and it has been observed that Section 498A IPC (Now Sections 85 and 86 of the BNS ) is frequently misused in cases across district courts. The cases remain unresolved, and the obligation of husbands to provide maintenance to their wives does not imply that they are solely responsible for all financial obligations and benefits.

In societal contexts, women are often perceived as engaging in deceptive practices more so than men. This legal provision is frequently exploited by wives as a means to extract financial resources from their husbands. It is evident that Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code is misused by women against their husbands and in-laws. While Section 498A was instituted to safeguard women, it has, in many instances, resulted in harassment of husbands and their families by their spouses. The societal implications of this misuse are profoundly detrimental. The Law Commission has acknowledged the concerns surrounding the abuse of this provision in its 243rd report on IPC Section 498A. The commission has proposed that the offence should only be made compoundable with the court's consent, emphasising the need for safeguards prior to granting such permissions. Nevertheless, the commission has suggested that the offence should not be entirely abolished. The existence of abuse does not negate the importance of laws that serve the broader public interest.

The recent Suicidal Death of Atul Subhash, a 34-year-old deputy general manager based in Bengaluru, has shed light on the pressing issue of domestic violence perpetrated against men in India. In a detailed 24-page suicide note, Subhash implicated his wife, her relatives, and a judicial official in acts of harassment and corruption. He disclosed that his wife had lodged numerous unfounded allegations against him, including accusations of murder, sexual misconduct, and demands for dowry. This unfortunate incident under-



Imposing strict penalties on those who file false claims could serve as a deterrent. Furthermore, decisions regarding child custody should focus on the child's best interests, rather than succumbing to gender biases. The case of Atul Subhash should act as a catalyst for reform, ensuring that true victims receive protection while preventing the exploitation of the law to harm innocent parties

scores the increasing apprehension that legal measures intended to safeguard women from abuse, such as Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, may be exploited, resulting in wrongful accusations directed at men.

The case of Shubhash Atul serves as a stark illustration of the potential for legal provisions to be misapplied, leading to catastrophic outcomes. The unfortunate demise of Atul Subhash highlights the harsh realities embedded within our societal framework. This framework frequently appears to favor women, even in instances where men are the ones enduring significant hardship. Cultural norms often compel men to suppress their emotional struggles, promoting an image of stoicism that can mask profound inter-

nal suffering. Had a woman experienced the same circumstances as Atul, it is likely that the male counterpart and his family would have faced immediate legal repercussions. However, Atul's identity as a man resulted in his pleas for assistance being overlooked. He was left to navigate his suffering in isolation, ultimately leading him to a tragic decision. This situation transcends mere injustice; it embodies a profound inhumanity. It compels us to reflect on whether we are fostering a just society or one that penalizes men solely based on their gender. The very laws designed to offer protection are being manipulated in ways that devastate innocent lives. Atul's narrative reveals a societal indifference to male suffering, even as it drives individuals to the brink of despair. This scenario does not represent justice; rather, it is a manifestation of cruelty masquerading as equity.

This situation is not an isolated occurrence. In recent times, numerous men have experienced similar challenges that could have been prevented through timely intervention and a more balanced legal framework, leading to tragic outcomes such as suicides. Critics argue that laws like Section 498A, originally designed to protect women from abuse, have been misapplied, resulting in unwarranted harassment of innocent individuals. This case necessitates a thorough examination of how such laws are enforced and calls for greater accountability for those who misuse them. The influence of the media in shaping societal views should also be acknowledged.

To tackle these concerns, legal reforms are essential. Imposing strict penalties on those who file false claims could serve as a deterrent. Furthermore, decisions regarding child custody should focus on the child's best interests, rather than succumbing to gender biases.

The case of Atul Subhash should act as a catalyst for reform, ensuring that true victims receive protection while preventing the exploitation of the law to harm innocent parties. Striking this balance is vital for fostering a just and equitable society. Legal professionals have raised alarms about this misuse, with the Supreme Court characterizing it as "legal terrorism." As a lawyer, I witness the severe repercussions of such false accusations, which often inflict considerable financial and emotional strain on men and their families. Additionally, the prevailing bias favoring mothers in custody disputes further marginalizes fathers.

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

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Perils of Urbanisation

The fast rate of urbanisation is currently posing substantial problems for major cities across India. The enormous population expansion in these cities is one of the biggest and most urgent problems they face. Also, the lack of buildable land has led to skyrocketing costs. High-tech satellite towns have emerged as a possible way to address these issues and promote sus-

tainable urban settings. By decentralising urban growth and spreading people, these cities have the potential to create balanced and equitable urban development across the nation. Another trend that is popular among satellite cities is the development of mixed-use areas. This involves creating areas that have a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces. This allows for a more lively

and vibrant city center that can attract more people and businesses.

While satellite cities offer many advantages over living from the crowded centre of a metropolis, they have their own set of challenges too, like lack of amenities and job opportunities, rendering them as isolated suburbs. Despite these challenges, satellite cities continue to be popular places to live for those who want

to be close to a major metropolitan area but don't want to deal with all the hustle and bustle. Overall, the future of satellite cities is looking very bright. With the continued development of smart city technology and the rise of mixed-use areas, these cities are becoming more sustainable, and attractive places to live and work.

Perils of Urbanisation



# Milking Their Passion

Kashmir's dairy farmers are in a stiff competition to record highest dairy production

Peer Muhammad Amir Qureshi

Kashmir's dairy farmers are currently engaged in a friendly yet intense competition as they aim to outperform each other and secure the prestigious title of top milk producer. Their unwavering dedication and expertise are driving the region's dairy industry to unprecedented levels. Anantnag district has now surpassed Pulwama district in terms of milk output, earning the moniker 'New Anand of Kashmir'.

Anand, a true 'land of milk and honey,' is a lush district in the Indian state of Gujarat that is well-known for producing an abundance of milk. Interestingly, Anantanag, Kashmir, has experienced a similar situation where a 'white revolution' has made the area a dairy powerhouse, earning it the nickname 'Anand of Kashmir'. This striking similarity draws attention to the common wealth and success that these two far-off places have in common. Anantnag currently produces 7.29 lakh litres of milk per day. Officials claimed that the district's yearly milk production is roughly 266.35 thousand tonnes, exceeding Pulwama's annual milk production of 262.95 thousand tonnes.

Other districts reported varied amounts of milk production, including Budgam (240.70 thousand tonnes), Baramulla (199.85 thousand tonnes), Kulgam (161 thousand tonnes), Kupwara (153.95 thousand tonnes), Bandipora (119.98 thousand tonnes), and Srinagar (100.410 thousand tonnes). Ganderbal and Shopian had the lowest milk production, with 96.37 thousand tons and 72.96 thousand tonnes per year, respectively. The district's animal husbandry department officials stated that Anantnag farmers have adopted modern practices, such as sophisticated breeding methods and improved dairy cattle nutrition.

These initiatives have resulted in an increased milk output per cow, which has contributed to overall production growth, they stated. "Government policies supporting the dairy industry, including subsidies on cattle feed, veterinary services, and financial assistance for infrastructure development, have played an important role in encouraging farmers to invest in their dairy operations.

**Shudh Dairy Farm Anantnag: Where Milk Flows Abundantly**

Shudh Dairy Farm, a trailblazing venture in the picturesque village of Krensgoo Mattan, Anantnag, where milk flows abundantly. Sartaj Ahmad Khanday's vision has transformed the dairy industry since 2021, harnessing the expertise of the Department of Veterinary and the revolutionary Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS). As I spoke with the visionary, Sartaj Ahmad Khanday, he shared his pearls of wisdom: "The IDDS proved to be a game changer for Mr. Sartaj Ahmad, allowing me to start a dairy



farming business. With the government's assistance and the expertise of the Department of Veterinary Services, I successfully imported eight high-quality cows from Punjab of Breed HF, setting the groundwork for a prosperous business."

He added, "Embarking on the journey appeared challenging at first,

**The government of Jammu and Kashmir must facilitate the smooth transportation of cows from other states to Kashmir, putting an end to the extortionate demands of officials who fleece dairy farmers at every turn**

but I strongly advise aspiring dairy farmers to immerse themselves in a month-long apprenticeship on a functional farm to grasp the intricacies of this industry, where experience is the sole currency that matters." He continued: "After a few months, I diversified my herd by introducing six Jersey breed cows, complementing my existing HF breed, a strategic move

that has yielded remarkable results."

My endeavor to introduce six Jersey breed cows has resulted in a notable increase in milk production as well as a notable improvement in milk quality overall. I'm happy to announce that my business is doing well as a result, bringing me a healthy monthly income of Rs 50,000.

My accomplishments have not only allowed me to support my family but also three other families with a steady income, which has positively impacted their prosperity and well-being.

The government of Jammu and Kashmir must facilitate the smooth transportation of cows from other states to Kashmir, putting an end to the extortionate demands of officials who fleece dairy farmers at every turn. Furthermore, subsidized Soilage and Feed are required to ensure a profitable income for dairy farmers. To optimize income, potential entrepreneurs should choose high-yielding cows that produce 30-40 kilograms of milk each day, which is a big increase over the modest 15-20 kilos. Although the promise of vermicompost has yet to be realized due to site limits, he remains hopeful about its ability to create significant cash.

His clarion plea to youth: avoid

unemployment, leverage government schemes, and embark on profitable economic operations like dairy farming that not only empower your family but also help provide job opportunities for others. Become job creators rather than seekers.

**Chinar Dairy**

Chinar Dairy is an innovative venture launched by Rumais Bhat, 32, an MBA graduate from Pune University, and his cousin Umar Bashir, 38, a bachelor's degree holder from Gandhi College, Srinagar. In late 2020, they embarked on this entrepreneurial journey in the quaint hamlet of Babusipora, Ganderbal, establishing both packaging and processing units. Dahi, or curd, commonly known as "Zamdoth" in Kashmiri holds a cherished place in Kashmiri cuisine. It is a staple ingredient in various traditional dishes, adding a distinctive tang and creamy texture. Kashmiri households use dahi in popular dishes like Yakhini, a yogurt-based mutton. No wazwaan is complete without a big bowl of Curd or Zamdoth to cool down the celebration!

Beyond its culinary uses, dahi is also valued for its digestive benefits and is often consumed on its own or with rice. Chinar Dairy's innovative packaging in earthen pots enhances this traditional food, preserving its authentic taste and evoking a sense of nostalgia. This traditional packaging keeps the curd cool and supports local potters, thus reviving an age-old craft of Pottery which used to be on the verge of extinction. Rumais Bhat emphasized, "Plastic is detrimental not only to human health but also to the environment. Although switching to plastic packaging could increase our sales sixfold, we refuse to compromise our environmental values.

Rumais Ahmad Added "It's not possible to meet our daily target of earthen pots (matkas) locally, so we have to source from outside vendors."

The dairy sources its milk from local farmers who follow sustainable and ethical practices. The milk is then carefully processed and packaged in a state-of-the-art facility to ensure freshness and purity. Chinar Dairy takes pride in using traditional methods and recipes to create authentic Kashmiri dahi.

In addition to Dahi, Chinar Dairy also offers a range of other dairy products such as paneer or cheese. These products are made with the

same commitment to quality and taste.

Since its establishment, Chinar Dairy has gained a loyal customer base and has become a trusted name in the dairy industry in Kashmir. The venture has not only provided employment opportunities to the local community but has also contributed to the promotion of sustainable agriculture practices. With their passion for dairy products and dedication to excellence, Rumais Bhat and Umar Bashir continue to expand Chinar Dairy's product line and reach. They aim to bring the taste of authentic Kashmiri dairy products to a wider audience, both within and outside the region.

Rumais Bhat and Umar Bashir not only provide financial support to local families but also create job opportunities for over twenty families from Ganderbal, Bandipora,

**Muhammad And Masroor Cow Park Private Limited**

Masroor Ahmad, a dynamic 26-year-old from District Ganderbal and an MBA graduate from the University of Kashmir, embarked on his entrepreneurial journey just a few months ago. Located amidst the serene landscape of Serch, Ganderbal, his dairy farm is complemented by a sprawling orchard adorned with plum and apple trees, where I was greeted by shimmering butterflies and the sweet melodies of birds. Masroor Ahmed oversees a herd of 15 cows, featuring a blend of 6 Punjab and 9 indigenous Kashmiri breeds, including the prized Holstein Friesian HF special.

His passion for dairy farming not only reflects in the care he dedicates to his animals but also in the livelihoods he supports—currently



and Kupwara, both directly and indirectly.

Additionally, they pioneered the introduction of glass bottles for dairy products in Kashmir, offering doorstep delivery that is hundred percent natural with no hormones and no adulteration. Chinar Dairy caters to bulk orders for weddings, hotels, restaurants, and various functions, recognizing that Kashmiri weddings are incomplete without dahi. They have unveiled a special edition of Kulhad Dahi, enriched with raisins, walnuts, almond kernels, cashews, coconut, pomegranate, and Kashmir's prized saffron.

Moreover, they offer personalized packaging, scribing the names of the bride and groom on the containers. According to Rumais, this initiative has garnered an enthusiastic response from the public, adding an elegant and memorable touch to celebratory events.

Rumais stated, "It's an open market with no competition when it comes to our quality. We are proud of our processing unit, but government intervention is necessary, though the process is often cumbersome. Consequently, we have financed everything ourselves, and it has proven to be a profitable venture." He also highlighted the ample opportunities available beyond government employment.

providing for three families. Masroor Ahmad emphasized the robust support he receives from the government, particularly highlighting the Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS). Through this initiative, the government subsidized 50% of the cost for the six Holstein Friesian cows he acquired from Punjab. Additionally, he has been promised assistance in establishing a vermicompost unit, which he believes will generate substantial revenue.

The government has also offered to cover 50% of the costs if he decides to venture into milk processing and packaging. However, Masroor is content with his current focus on dairy farming. He noted that within three months of starting, he faced no competition and began generating revenue. With 15 cows, he now sells over two quintals of milk on a daily basis, earning an estimated income of Rs. 80,000 to Rs. 100,000. Masroor also addressed the common perception of unemployment in Kashmir, urging the youth to leverage government schemes. He believes that by doing so, they can secure their livelihoods and create job opportunities for others.

*The author is a columnist and feature writer based in Ganderbal. He's on @peer mohd amir*

## Will AI Save The Planet? Why The Evidence Is Flawed

Jo Lindsay Walton

Optimistic advocates for AI say this environmentally costly technology will become more sustainable with time. We can use AI more efficiently, and explore less energy-intensive designs inspired by the human brain. We can build data centres more sustainably, using wood or low-carbon concrete and steel. The heat from the data centres can warm homes in the local area.

Of course, if we start using AI systems too widely (including where we don't really need them), the growth might outweigh any of these potential gains in efficiency. But recently, I've been hearing another argument: that AI itself is tackling climate change. AI can help to model wildfires, optimise energy consumption to stabilise the grid, accelerate the development of low-carbon materials, and much more.

My research team recently published a report that digs into these claims – and found some cause for concern.

As it turns out, it's difficult to compare the environmental impacts of asking AI to carry out a task versus asking people. Take writing and making art. One study says that it is much more environmentally friendly for AI to do these creative tasks than humans.

But one of its methods for investigating this is to allocate a slice of the carbon footprint from all human activities (eating cows, catching planes and so on) to the creative ac-

tivity. By this logic, there would be the same carbon emissions from an hour's work by an artist, a dairy farmer, a billionaire CEO, or an ecologist restoring a wetland.

A related paper acknowledges the simplification and instead allocates carbon just for the electricity a human consumes. The authors say this is a practical approach to carbon accounting. Establishing a fair comparison between human and AI work is hard because the tasks may look alike, but their underlying processes are fundamentally different.

What about the current total carbon impact of AI? Another paper, partly funded by Microsoft, mentioned that AI is today responsible for just 0.01% of global carbon emissions.

When we looked closer we found this figure was based on the emissions of one year's AI server sales by Nvidia – the biggest manufacturer of such hardware – as estimated in one analysis.

This prediction hasn't been verified, and if it is accurate, it wouldn't include AI being run on servers installed in previous years.

When contacted for comment, some of the authors said that this estimate wasn't the article's main focus. Assessing the climate impacts of AI is complicated because we don't know how future AI models will be built, operated and used, they added.

Another study reviewing AI's sustainability benefits cited several other articles that, in our view, appeared to feature mistakes – like referring to studies to back up their claims which did not contain relevant information. AI systems sometimes make mistakes – known as "hallucinations" – like when Microsoft Copilot accused a journalist of committing the crimes he had reported on.

So we asked the authors if they had used an AI to write the article. They dismissed this idea and stood by the integrity of their review. They agreed that not all of the AI

sustainability solutions their review referred to can be supported by existing studies. But they said that they had also included predictions about what AI might one day be capable of, based on their own expert judgement, which they said was standard practice.

The authors also pointed out that their work has been widely shared without complaint. But the fact that articles can be read widely without eliciting alarm is exactly the issue. Would every reader assume that the article was predicting what AI might one day do, rather than explaining what AI can already do?

Overall, how reliable is current research on AI and sustainability? We're not sure. We haven't yet had the chance to conduct a more comprehensive investigation. But assessing AI's future potential requires a clear understanding of its achievements to date.

Such an investigation is urgently needed. Questions to ask about AI

Meanwhile, we should avoid lumping all kinds of AI together. There are in fact diverse forms of AI: big, small, discriminative, generative, machine learning,

symbolic and more. I can be excited about an AI that excels at counting carrots, and helps farmers to plant them more effectively, without offering a blanket endorsement of all AI systems.

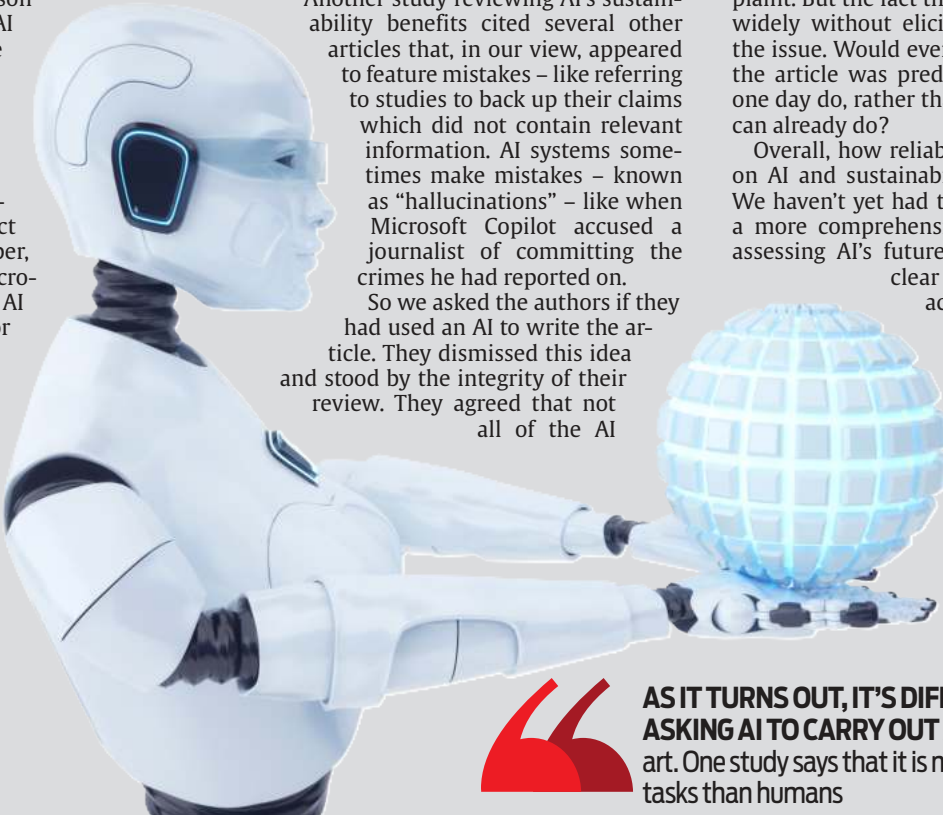
There are different types of climate action too. Climate mitigation is about getting carbon emissions down to net zero to stop global warming. Climate adaptation is about learning to live and thrive in a warmer world. We need both.

AI for climate adaptation is very welcome indeed (say, helping us to increase carrot yields, despite more volatile weather). But it doesn't simply offset the carbon cost of AI. It would be like comparing apples with oranges (or carrots). It's a tricky calculation to make, one with political and ethical dimensions.

Whenever AI is celebrated for amazing achievements, let's remember that it had some human help. What time, effort, energy and other resources were invested in the project? Could similar results have been achieved using more traditional data collection and analysis, potentially at a lower environmental cost?

The authors of our report have mixed views on AI. None of us are against it, or against using it to solve environmental problems. But to properly govern AI's net impact on the climate, its benefits must not be overstated.

*By arrangements with The Conversation*



**AS IT TURNS OUT, IT'S DIFFICULT TO COMPARE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF ASKING AI TO CARRY OUT A TASK VERSUS ASKING PEOPLE.** Take writing and making art. One study says that it is much more environmentally friendly for AI to do these creative tasks than humans



## 10th IQAC Meeting Held at IUST

Awantipora, December 18: The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) today convened its 10th meeting of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC). The meeting was chaired by Prof. Shakil A. Romshoo, Vice Chancellor IUST, and coordinated by Dr. Peer Bilal Ahmed, Director DIQA.

The meeting addressed several significant issues aimed at enhancing the academic and administrative environment at the university. Key discussions focused on the digitalization of services, the implementation of advanced student and scholar support systems, the development of a comprehensive feedback mechanism, and the establishment of a tribal museum to promote cultural heritage and inclusivity.

The meeting was attended by university officials, including the Dean Academic Affairs, Registrar, Dean Research, Controller of Examinations, Dean Students, Dean Outreach,



Finance Officer, and External members, including representatives from industry and academia, also participated.

Prof. Romshoo emphasized the importance of adopting innovative practices to ensure quality education and efficient services. He appreciated the efforts of the IQAC team in fostering a culture of continuous improvement and highlighted the university's commitment to creating a student-centric and technologically advanced campus. The meeting concluded

with actionable strategies to streamline services and improve the overall academic and administrative framework.

During the meeting, the actions taken on previous decisions were also reviewed, highlighting the progress made. Emphasis was also placed on conducting academic and administrative audits on campus, which have already shown good progress. Furthering linkages and collaborations with society and industry was also a key point of discussion.

## IUST Hosts Two-Day Health Screening and Awareness Camp on Non-Communicable Diseases



Awantipora, Dec 18- The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) organized a two-day health screening and awareness camp in collaboration with the University Health Centre. Conducted under the IUST-PURSE project, the initiative aimed to raise awareness about non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and assess their prevalence among university employees, students, and scholars.

The camp witnessed participation from faculty, non-teaching staff, security personnel, scholars, and students. Over two days, participants were screened, blood samples were collected, and health education on the prevention and management of NCDs was provided.

This initiative highlights IUST's commitment to fostering health awareness and advancing preventive healthcare through collaborative efforts.

## Effective mechanism in place for redressal of public issues: Dy CM

JAMMU, DECEMBER 18: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said an effective mechanism has been put in place for prompt redressal of issues being faced by the public.

"Necessary instructions have been issued to the concerned officers to ensure that the public grievances are redressed on priority and developmental initiatives are speeded up", maintained the Minister.

The Deputy Chief Minister was interacting with scores of deputations who called on him today to project their issues and concerns related to their respective areas besides service related issues.

A deputation of National Youth Corps raised the issue of regularisation of their services

besides highlighting other service related issues.

Another deputation of Kashmiri PM package aspirants demanded de reservation of vacant reserve category posts.

Similarly, a deputation of National Health Mission employees of Doda district demanded honorarium enhancement besides better service conditions.

A deputation of Sainik Colony residents demanded improvement in the vicinity areas besides macadamisation of link roads.

Meanwhile, Legislators, former Sarpanchs and individuals from different areas also called on the Deputy Chief Minister and projected development and other issues of their respective constituencies and areas.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### 6 Of Family

Barkha Raina (25), son Takash (3), 17-year-old Ganga Bhagat, 15-year-old Danish Bhagat and 6-year-old Advik, a police officer said.

Those injured and undergoing treatment are 61-year-old Swarna (the wife of Avtar Krishen Raina), Neetu Devi (40), Arun Kumar (15), and a 69-year-old woman, he said.

Dr Surinder Atri, the principal of the hospital, said, "Ten people were brought to the hospital. Six were brought dead, and four others were injured."

Preliminary investigations suggest the victims died of smoke inhalation and suffocation, he said, adding that no burn injuries were reported.

"It is an unfortunate incident. Our assistant matron, who had recently retired, was living in the rented house. The incident happened between 2 am and 3 am. She called over the phone and I immediately informed the police and fire brigade," the doctor added.

Rocky Sharma, a student, said he was studying late at night when he noticed the fire and rushed to the house along with others. "The fire had engulfed the drawing room, and the smoke that seeped into other rooms resulted in the deaths," he added.

The police have registered a case and initiated an investigation into the matter.

#### LG, CM Express Grief

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also expressed deep sorrow and described the incident as deeply painful, particularly as it claimed the lives of six people and injured another four.

"It is heartbreaking to learn about this tragedy where six precious lives were lost. I pray for eternal peace to the departed souls and for the swift recovery of those injured in this unfortunate incident," he said.

The Chief Minister extended his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families, praying for strength and forbearance to help them endure this difficult time.

The fire, which broke out early Wednesday morning in a rented accommodation, led to the death of six individuals, including two minors, due to suffocation.

The victims were rushed to the Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital in Kathua, where they were declared 'brought dead'.

Four others injured in the incident are currently undergoing treatment.

The Chief Minister assured that the best possible medical care is being provided to the injured.

"I have directed the concerned authorities to ensure that the injured receive the best possible treatment for a smooth recovery," he said.

#### HM To Review

challenges ahead this coming year.

"The Home Minister is going to review the security roadmap ahead of next year, especially in light of undetected infiltrations being reported regularly by various agencies," a source said.

The meeting is expected to take note of recent terror incidents and possible steps to be taken on how to stop such attacks in the coming days, the sources said.

Data available from the Home Ministry suggests that in October and November, the maximum number of infiltration bids took place along LoC and IB.

"Even though more cordon and search operations were conducted, the ratio of terrorists caught or killed did not go up and that is one of the main worries," he further explains.

In 2019 as many as 142 terrorists were killed but this year the number is around 45. This is a cause of worry as it means that despite various efforts we are not able to eliminate them," a senior officer said, seeking anonymity.

"Civilian killings continue to remain a major concern and their safety is the prime concern of the government so in this review, this issue would also be discussed," states another official.

As per the data, as many as 50 civilians were killed in 2019 in the Union territory. While the figure came down to 14 by the first week of November this year, it is nearly three times more than what was recorded last year, when five civilians were killed by terrorists.

#### J&K Contributes

in the national economy reflects its efforts to strengthen various economic sectors while addressing challenges such as inflation and fiscal deficits, according to the report.

It adds, "The government is committed to

improving revenue performance and reducing the debt-to-GSDP ratio, reflecting fiscal discipline and efficient management."

#### Govt Confirms

and Materials Technology, Bhubaneswar, for beneficiation studies. In addition, two other preliminary exploration projects (G3 stage) for lithium are underway in the Salal East and Panasa areas of Reasi district as part of the current field season for 2024-25, he said.

Regarding the timeline for exploration and auctioning, the government has not specified a fixed period for the area to reach the G1 or G2 exploration stage, which would be necessary for the auction process and commercial mining to begin.

Efforts to reduce India's dependence on lithium imports have been a key focus. The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, has been amended through the MMDR Amendment Act, 2023, introducing major reforms in the mining sector, he said.

Reddy added the amendments include the addition of 24 critical minerals, including lithium, to the First Schedule of the MMDR Act, empowering the Central Government to auction mineral concessions exclusively for these minerals.

Also, the government has set up a joint venture company, Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), which aims to secure critical mineral assets abroad. KABIL has already acquired a 15,703-hectare area in Argentina's Catamarca province for exploration and mining of lithium, he said. (KNO)

#### Muslim Daughter

"It provides guidelines on how the estate of a deceased person should be divided, taking into account the shares for children, spouse, and other family members."

In this verse, the court said, it is ordained that the portion of the son will be two times that of the daughter.

"During the time of ignorance, the people were only giving from inheritance to their sons and daughters were being deprived of their portions completely, but in Islam such discrimination has been removed and daughters have been given their right of inheritance," the court said, adding, "The son is given two times the amount of the daughter because he (son) is required to spend from his wealth to maintain the household and fulfil the needs of his wife and children and other family members, including parents".

It is from Verse 11 of Surah An-Nisa, the court said, a duty, obligation, command, or-dain, injunction to assign and give the share to the daughter(s).

"Even its plain reading, in my opinion, bestows the right of inheritance first to a female, then to a male survivor," the court said, ordering that petitioners and/or their mother cannot/could not be expelled by any excuse/pre-text to inherit the property.

The Case It was 43 years back, i.e., in the year 1981, that mother of petitioners, filed a suit before the High Court and she was admitted to be entitled to share under Muslim Personal Law to the extent of 1/3rd but that suit was dismissed on the ground that no possession was claimed by her. Against that judgement and decree, an appeal was preferred by petitioners after the death of their mother before the Division Bench of the Court, which set-aside the Single Bench order.

The petitioners contended that they were misled by ill advice of an advocate and they instituted a suit for partition and possession on 3rd July 1996 and same was returned to them after a period of seven years on 30th December 2003, to be presented before Revenue Authority as the same was barred by Section 139 of the Land Revenue Act. Thus, petitioners presented an application under the Land Revenue Act. Settlement Tehsildar (Collector 1st Class) issued notices to other-side and after hearing parties and considering objections of other-side, attested mutation as per decree passed by the Division Bench. Brother of the deceased woman, feeling aggrieved of mutation, filed an appeal before Settlement Officer, Kashmir, who set-aside the mutation passed in favour of petitioners on "flimsy" grounds vide order dated 28th July 2009 by misinterpreting the Division Bench judgement.

Against the order of Settlement Officer, further appeal was filed before Settlement Commissioner, J&K, Srinagar, who dismissed petitioners' appeal confirming the order of Settlement Officer.

"Revenue Officers, including Settlement Officer and Settlement Commissioner, have oblivious of Muslim Personal Law, passed impugned orders. In essence and core, they have declared (woman) as not being the daughter of late (.....). As a matter of fact, she has been excluded to inherit the property of her father's property," the court said, adding, "Not only this, Settlement Officer and Settlement Commissioner have sat over the judgement of the Division Bench of this Court and have tried to show as if the judgement of the Division Bench is a mere plain paper, having no force in law."

The Division Bench, the court said, has held the woman entitled to inherit the share of property under Muslim Personal Law.

"The said judgement has long since attained finality and all that has been said and observed therein, in law, is a binding precedent and as a consequence whereof subordinate courts, which includes revenue courts, and in the present case Settlement Commissioner and Settlement Officer were under legal obligation to follow it in letter and spirit," the court said, adding, "However, they have startlingly done contrary thereto. In such circumstances impugned orders or for that matter any other order/injunction/relief passed/given by any forum/ court in contravention to the aforesaid Division Bench judgement, per se, is/isare illegal and is/are set at naught."

Subsequently, the court allowed the appeal and quashed the order dated 8th December 2010 passed by Settlement Commissioner, J&K, Srinagar as also order of Settlement Officer dated 28th July 2009.

"Respondent-Revenue Department is directed to implement the judgement of the Division Bench of this Court dated 9th February 1996 .....in letter and spirit, by giving petitioners the share of their mother, ....., in the property of (woman's father) to the extent of 69 Kanals 02 Marlas situate at Zainakote Srinagar) as per Muslim Personal Law within three months from today."

The court also made it clear that in the event, brother of the woman has created any third party interest in the property in question, then in such situation, it shall be responsibility of respondent (the brother) to give landed property at some other place(s) having equivalent market value and/or according to the market value of the property in question.

#### Oppn Seeks

and "malicious lies" cannot hide its mis-deeds and said the home minister had exposed the opposition party's "dark history of insulting" Ambedkar.

Parties like the Congress, Trinamool Congress, AAP, RJD, SP, Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Left protested against Shah inside Parliament and outside.

Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien submitted a notice to move a privilege motion against Shah in the Rajya Sabha, where the Home Minister made the remarks.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge warned that there will be a countrywide agitation if Shah does not resign.

Addressing a press conference here, Shah alleged that the Congress in the past has also misrepresented his and even PM Narendra Modi's comments to spread confusion and mislead people.

"I condemn the Congress for twisting facts. Why did it happen? It happened because BJP leaders spoke on how the NDA governments upheld the Constitution and established with facts that the Congress is anti-Ambedkar, anti-Constitution and anti-reservation," Shah told reporters.

"When all these facts came out, the Congress used its old tricks and made an effort to mislead the society by presenting twisted facts," Shah said, adding that he comes from a party that will never insult Ambedkar.

Congress president Kharge too addressed a press conference and demanded that Shah resign or else PM Modi should sack him.

Asked about Kharge's demand, Shah said in a lighter vein that he can quit if this would make the Congress president happy but it would never solve his problems. He has to remain in his chair, a reference to his party being in the opposition, for 15 more years, Shah said.

Kharge said a person becomes a minister by taking oath of the Constitution and if he insults it, he has no right to remain in the Cabinet.

"We want Amit Shah to quit his post and if he doesn't, I want to tell the prime minister that if he has even little respect for Babasaheb, he should dismiss Amit Shah from his post

before midnight," he said.

"If there is no resignation, there will be protests all over the country. Babasaheb Ambedkar ji belongs to everyone because he used to talk about every person of society including Dalits, the oppressed and the deprived. He had sympathy for everyone," he said.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said, "Baba Saheb is the architect of the Constitution, a great man who gave direction to the country. The country will not tolerate his insult or the insult to the Constitution framed by him. Home Minister should apologize!"

He later claimed, "They are against the Constitution. They had said earlier that we will change the Constitution. They are against Ambedkar and his ideology. Their whole work is to finish off Ambedkar's contribution and the Constitution. The whole country knows."

Several MPs of the INDIA bloc also held a protest in Parliament premises demanding Shah's apology for his remarks on Ambedkar.

The uproar in Parliament also spilt onto the streets of the national capital and other states like Maharashtra, Bihar and Tamil Nadu where various parties held protests.

In Delhi, AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal led a protest with hundreds of supporters outside the BJP chanting slogans of "Amit Shah maafi maango, Amit Shah sharm karo".

"Abhi ek fashion ho gaya hai - Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar. Itna naam agar bhagwan ka lete to saat janmon tak swarg mil jata (It has become a fashion to say Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar'. If they had taken God's name so many times, they would have got a place in heaven)," Shah had said in the Rajya Sabha during the debate on Constitution.

Shah had also said the BJP is happy that the Congress is taking Ambedkar's name but it should also speak about its real sentiments towards him, and went on to narrate incidents where the opposition party had denied the respect due to him.

In Mumbai, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray said, "Amit Shah's remarks on Dr Ambedkar show the party's (BJP's) arrogance and have exposed its true face."

"Prime Minister Modi should act against Amit Shah for his remarks on Dr Ambedkar and he should quit if he is not able to do so," the former chief minister said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee claimed that Union Home Minister's remarks about Ambedkar were a display of the BJP's "casteist and anti-Dalit mindset".

#### Omar Denies

crucial role in running its affairs.

Speaking to reporters, Omar said, "I don't know where these reports originate. If there is any meeting, you will be informed, either by me or by the Home Minister's office."

He, however, acknowledged the critical role of the Home Minister in Jammu and Kashmir's affairs. "Jammu and Kashmir is currently a Union Territory, and as such, the Home Minister has a significant role to play. There are several issues we need to discuss with him, and I plan to meet him in the future," he said.

Speaking about his recent comments regarding Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Omar said he had made no new statement. "I've consistently maintained that if someone has concerns about EVMs, they should express them year-round, not just when they lose elections. Complaints should persist even after victories, or else we must return to ballot papers. But have we forgotten the manipulations that occurred with ballot papers, like ballot stuffing? I experienced those issues in my early elections before EVMs were introduced," he said.

Asked about allegations from Congress leaders that some alliance members adopt a different tone after assuming ministerial roles, the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister dismissed the claims, reiterating his praise for the Congress party's leadership. "In the same interview, I appreciated Sonia Gandhi's leadership and stated that Congress has a natural role in leading the opposition, given its pan-India presence. This is not BJP's language but the truth. I won't stop speaking the truth just because I've held a leadership position," he said.

On speculation of a leadership change in the INDIA alliance, Omar said, "There is no such discussion taking place."

#### Safety Of Pilgrims

and also launched Digital initiatives of the Shrine Board including ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system and AI-enabled Chatbot

"Shakti" on the official website of the Board. Panchang Calendar 2025 and diary of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board were also released.

The Board held a comprehensive and critical review of its past decisions, ratified the actions taken after its last Meeting and took several new decisions against 25 key Agenda Items having far reaching implications for functioning of the Board and augmenting pilgrim services.

Important decisions were taken in respect of new and underway projects of the Board such as construction of Exit Track from Durga Bhawan to Manokamna (a part of the Master Plan for Bhawan area), development of helipad in collaboration with Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board in village Hutt at Katra, construction of temples in District Reasi, review of projects and status of operationalization of Medical College of the Board at Kakryal etc.

The meeting was attended by Members of the Board- Mahamandleshwar Swami Vishveshvaranand Giriiji Maharaj; Shri Baleshwar Rai, Dr Ashok Bhan, Shri Kul Bhushan Ahuja, Dr Neelam Sareen, Shri K.K Sharma, Shri Suresh Kumar Sharma and Shri Raghu K. Mehta.

Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor and Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB also attended the meeting. The Meeting accorded approval to tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and THDC India Limited (THDCIL) with an aim to identify and treat slopes that are vulnerable to landslides and rockfalls along the Yatra Route between Adhkuwari and Bhawan. The collaboration will focus on ensuring the safety of pilgrims by mitigating the risks associated with unstable slopes.

To address congestion issues near Battery Car Point at Bhawan, the Board approved measures to improve the area's infrastructure by developing a dedicated parking facility for Battery Cars opposite to Parvati Bhawan, constructed atop a 3-storey structure. This will provide a convenient and organized space for Battery Cars to operate from, reducing congestion and enhancing the overall ambience of the area.

The Board also approved the Master Plan for the Sanjichhat Area addressing augmentation of key sectors like Accommodations, Toilets, Water Points, Food Points, Queue Management, Holding Area etc.

The Board observed that the Shrine Board has significantly developed the Kakryal area by creating facilities like Hospital, University, Nursing College and Medical College and desired the CEO to explore the modalities to address educational needs of the employees associated with these facilities.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of ongoing works and emphasized on timely completion of all projects for the ease of pilgrimage. The important projects in this regard were New Vaishnavi Bhawan at Bhawan, Covered Holding Area at Adhkuwari, Exit Track & Remodelling of Manokamna Area at Bhawan, Queue Complex at Darshani Deodi, Banganga and Cottages (near Sport Stadium), Katra.

The Board appreciated façade lighting project initiated for enhancing the Shrine's aesthetics and ambience in different sector of Shrine and approved revamping of lighting at the facade of the old Gufa in the Atka area, inside the three caves and the sanctum sanctorum through a combination of LEDs and optic fibre lighting.

The Board also gave its approval to the additional Grant-in-Aid for Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Charitable Society to support the operation of the Board's peripheral institutions such as the Medical College, Hospital, Gurukul, Sports Complex, and College of Nursing, all of which are managed by the SMVD Charitable Society.

Earlier, Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB, gave a detailed presentation on varied activities of the Shrine Board and the action taken as regards the implementation of various decisions of the previous meetings of the Board.

"Shubhra Bhawan" at Banganga, Katra built at a cost of Rs. 6.50 crore includes holding area for disaster management, a comfortable and spacious waiting lounge, lactating mothers' zone, a centralized information and registration centre, souvenir shop, refreshment kiosks, Bank and Water ATMs etc. 18 modern staff quarters have also been provided in the complex. A well-equipped disaster management store is a key feature of Shubhra Bhawan that is expected to serve as a 'critical resource for emergency response and disaster mitigation'.



## USBRL PROJECT

## Rail Connectivity To Boost Kashmir's Apple Industry, Say Farmers

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project is now 100 percent complete, with railway stations in Kashmir soon connecting to the rest of the country. Stakeholders in Kashmir's fruit trade are optimistic that the project will boost the apple industry, saving valuable time and money. However, transport associations have expressed concerns about its impact on the local transport sector.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the completion of the final track work for the USBRL project on Friday, calling it a "historic milestone" in a social media post.

He wrote: "Final track work on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link is complete. The ballastless track work for the 3.2-km-long Tunnel T-33, located at the foothills of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and connecting Katra to Reasi, was successfully completed today at 2:00 AM."

Officials said that inspections and trial runs are expected to begin soon on this stretch. "The inspection will include a detailed examination of the track using a

trolley. It will cover the tracks, electrification work, tunnels and bridges," they said.

According to officials, the first train from Delhi to Srinagar is expected to commence operations within the next four months.

Aarif Husain Khatana, a student, shared his experience of a two-day journey to Srinagar, costing him Rs 2,000 to appear for exams.

"Train connectivity is the need of the hour and should be introduced as soon as possible. This rail network will bring us closer to the rest of India. It will save time, reduce costs and encourage tourism in ways we couldn't imagine before," he said.

The All Jammu and Kashmir Transporters Welfare Committee, an amalgamation of various transport associations, has expressed concerns that rail connectivity could adversely affect the local transport sector. It has called for proper norms to regulate and safeguard the interests of local transporters.

General Secretary of the Kashmir Welfare Transporters Association, Sheikh Muhammad Yusuf, said that railway connectivity from Delhi to Srinagar is going to adversely affect the local trans-



port sector in J&K. "There should be some norms that the authorities need to keep in mind. We have already suffered losses when the Banihal-Baramulla train was introduced," he said.

Yusuf said the authorities should acknowledge that for three decades, the transport sector has operated under challenging circumstances, including

hazards and other issues. "Now that the situation in Kashmir has improved, the introduction of the railway is causing the transport sector to vanish," he said, adding that the government is issuing expensive permits to vehicle owners, which should be stopped.

The KWTA leader further said that truck drivers transporting

goods to other parts of the country are going to suffer immensely. He urged the government to take measures to safeguard the local transport sector and support truckers who transport goods to other regions of the country.

Kashmir's apples, renowned for their quality and flavour, contribute to more than 75 per cent of India's apple production.

However, inefficient transportation often causes delays, spoilage and losses for farmers. Rail connectivity offers a solution.

The direct movement of apple-laden wagons from Kashmir to major markets in Delhi, Mumbai and beyond will drastically reduce transit time. "Earlier, it took us days to transport our produce via trucks. Now, train connectivity will ensure quick delivery, better shelf life and competitive prices," said Azhar Hussain, an entrepreneur from south Kashmir's Anantanag district.

He said that rail cargo facilities also mean lower transportation costs, improving profits for farmers while ensuring that Kashmiri apples reach customers in pristine condition.

Bashir Ahmad Basheer, chairman of the Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers and Dealers Union said that Kashmir's limited connectivity makes the new train service a valuable addition in the long term. "Train connectivity will help fruit growers transport their produce to other states more easily and efficiently. This will open up new markets and increase their income," he said.

Basheer said any benefit to this sector will positively affect the

economy of everyone involved. "With better connectivity, farmers will have easier access to markets, lower transportation costs and fresher produce for consumers," he said. "This development is expected to boost Kashmir's overall economy, support farmers and promote growth in the horticulture industry."

Manzoor Pakhtoon, a member of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and president of the Houseboat Association, told KNO the train connectivity is a welcome and developmental step and will boost the tourism sector in the valley.

He said many tourists were unable to visit Kashmir, which is a dream for everyone, due to high airfares during both the summer and winter seasons. "The main benefit of tourists visiting Kashmir by train is that they can manage their budget. This will mostly boost domestic tourism. Students can travel easily on a lower budget. General trade will benefit as well," he said.

Pakhtoon said Kashmir is a well-known destination within the country and abroad. "Both international and domestic tourists want to visit Kashmir at least once in their lives," he said—(KNO)

## DIPR Organizes Awareness Programme On 'Say No To Drugs'



## Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** A comprehensive 'Say No to Drugs' programme aimed at raising awareness among youth about the detrimental effects of drugs was today conducted by Cultural Unit Kashmir of Department of Information and Public Relation (DIPR) J&K at Sheikh ul Alam Memorial Degree College (SAMDC) Budgam.

The programme, designed as an edutainment symposium, was organized in collaboration with the District Information Centre (DIC) Budgam, and the host college.

The event commenced with a warm welcome address by the Principal of the college, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Amin Malik.

Cultural Officer, Burhan Husain delivered a detailed presentation, shedding light on the multifaceted aspects of drug abuse and its detrimental effects on individuals and society.

The District Information Officer Budgam, Erim Aziz pro-

vided valuable insights into the government's proactive measures in combating drug addiction, with a particular focus on initiatives undertaken within the Budgam district.

Later, a speech competition was held on the given theme, during which students showcased their eloquence and understanding of the issue.

Syeda Hina Zainab student of BA 5th semester was adjudged as First position holder in competition, while Sheeba Majeed student of BA 1st semester bagged 2nd position and Seerat Qayoom student of BA 1st semester secured 3rd position.

The symposium further engaged the audience with a thought-provoking drama and a poignant short film, both centered on the theme of drug abuse.

Today's 'Say No to Drugs' programme is part of the series of awareness programmes held on generating awareness on Drug Abuse by the Cultural Unit Kashmir of DIPR, J&K.

## Gulmarg Gondola Generates Rs 11.86 Cr In 2 Months

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The famous Gondola in Gulmarg has witnessed a significant influx of tourists over the past two months, with a staggering 1,48,357 visitors recorded in November and December so far.

The data accessed states that the cable car, one of the top attractions in Jammu and Kashmir, generated a revenue of Rs 11,86,85,600 during this period (November - December).

In November alone, the Gondola saw 93,921 tourist arrivals, while December, with its ongoing charm of fresh snowfall, attracted 54,436 visitors.

Gulmarg Gondola, operated by the Jammu and Kashmir Cable Car Corporation (JKCCC), in two phases is Asia's highest and longest cable car project, offering breathtaking views of the snow-clad Pir Panjal mountain range — the first phase connects Gulmarg to Kongdoori at an altitude of 8,530 feet, and the second phase takes visitors to the stunning Apharwat Peak at 13,780 feet above sea level.

Speaking with KNO, Managing Director, J&K Cable Car Corporation, Syed Qamar Sajjad

said that, they have increased the quota and introduced the Tatkal facility to ensure foreign tourists, especially those planning at the eleventh hour, are provided with Gondola services, irrespective of their numbers.

The Gondola capacity is already full for the next two months, which aligns with the anticipation of winter games and the snowfall season that attracts skiers in large numbers, he said.

"Our doors will remain open for everyone, even at the last moment. We are ready to augment ticketing facilities while ensuring the safety and security of tourists," Sajjad said, adding that by the end of this session, they anticipate a 10-12 per cent increase in tourist footfall. "Our revenue target is Rs 100 crore, with net taxation projected at Rs 60 crore,"

"Additionally, we are focusing on maintaining and enhancing existing assets to make them aesthetically appealing and ensuring tourists have easy access to tickets. Our goal is to elevate the overall experience for every visitor," MD Cable Car Corporation added.—(KNO)

## J&amp;K Bank Celebrates National Pensioners Day

## Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Paying heartfelt tributes to pensioners, J&K Bank celebrated National Pensioners Day across all its branches. The Bank observed the day with a series of initiatives to enhance engagement and strengthen ties with this special segment of its customers.

Reaffirming its commitment to their well-being, the Bank sent celebratory SMS messages to all pensioners as a gesture of goodwill. Additionally, a large number of branches organized special Pensioners' Meets, including family pensioners, to join in the celebration.

During these interactions, the Bank officials extended warm greetings and engaged with pensioners, listening attentively to their suggestions and addressing any grievances. The officials also shared details about various banking products and services aimed at en-

hancing financial convenience for the senior community, with a focus on improving cross-selling and providing tailored solutions to their needs.

In one such function held at the Bank's Shalimar Branch in Jammu, General Manager and Divisional Head (Jammu) Sunit Kumar inaugurated a dedicated pension counter on the ground floor, complying with the RBI guidelines for the pensioners as part of creating a comfortable atmosphere in the delivery of services.

Meanwhile, the Bank has also launched a nostalgic video series titled 'Yadoon Ki Jama Poonji' across its social media platforms. The series is a heartfelt tribute celebrating the Bank's enduring bond with its long standing customers including pensioners and its former staff members thereby reflecting a legacy of trust, commitment and mutual respect.

Commenting on the initiatives, MD & CEO Baldev

Prakash said, "At J&K Bank, we recognize and cherish the invaluable contribution of our pensioners, senior citizens, and former staff members.

National Pensioners Day is an opportunity to honour this enduring bond and express our gratitude for their unwavering trust and support. Through initiatives like the Pensioners' Meets and 'Yadoon Ki Jama Poonji', we aim to reaffirm our commitment to their needs and celebrate their role in shaping the Bank's legacy."

"Through these initiatives, we have renewed our promise to strengthen the Bank's connect with senior citizens and deliver best services while fostering a deeper sense of belonging," he added.

Notably, through 'Yadoon Ki Jama Poonji', the Bank fondly revisits stories of pride, gratitude and shared memories that form the cornerstone of its relationship with its long-standing customers.

## BIS Conducts Manak Manthan On Cricket Bats For Use With Leather Ball

## Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Jammu and Kashmir Branch Office (JKBO) organized Seminar and Manak Manthan on Cricket Bats for use with Leather Ball on Wednesday. Discussion was held on Indian Standards on Cricket Bats for use with Leather Ball (IS 828 Part 1: 2024) at Hotel Four Points, Srinagar. The objective of the discussion was to take inputs from the manufacturers of related industries and discuss the provisions of standard keeping in mind the technical as well as user perspective.

The program was organised by a team of officers from Bureau of Indian Standards from Jammu and Kashmir branch office. Sh. Pankaj Atri, Joint Director BIS JKBO welcomed the participants and gave an overview of the program. He also briefed the participants about the initiatives taken by BIS to encourage stakeholder involvement at grassroots level in all activities which will not only help in technical upgrade of national standards but will also broaden their reach to end users. He further detailed the Programme Objectives and shared his views on the related industry in various parts of the country and emphasized the importance of Make in India initiatives.

Sh. Peerzada Zulqarnain, Project Manager, District Industries Centre (DIC), Pulwama, was present in the meeting. "This initiative of BIS for Cricket Bat manufacturers has emphasised the importance of adhering to standards to enhance product quality, ensure standardisation, and meet international benchmarks. Such



efforts which aim to empower local manufacturers, improve market credibility, and open global opportunities are highly appreciated.

By fostering awareness and collaboration between our offices, we can strengthen the region's cricket bat industry, ensuring its growth, sustainability, and alignment with global standards," Zulkernain said.

From DIC Anantanag Sh. Zubair Joo attended the meeting. While appreciating the efforts of BIS towards the standardization of Bat Industry, he said, "Such meetings will significantly improve the knowledge of local bat manufacturing regarding the quality standards, encouraging them to strive towards global marketability of cricket bats from Kashmir. This initiative will help local bat manufacturers align with global standards, boosting exports and fostering economic growth in the region."

Further, BIS officials detailed the standardisation process and procedure of giving suggestions and becoming members of the various

technical committees of BIS. BIS JKBO held detailed deliberations on all clauses of the standard (IS 828 part 1) with industries. A number of technical and editorial comments were received which will be forwarded to the related technical committee for further deliberations.

In the last Various features of BIS website such as Know Your Standards, BIS website and BIS Care App were also explained. The sessions were made interactive through open house discussions by various industries in Srinagar.

In the question answer session, spokesperson of Cricket Bat Manufacturers Association of Kashmir, Fawzul Kabir highlighted issues faced by the industry and shared suggestions to be incorporated in the BIS Standard for Cricket Bat. "English willow and Kashmir Willow are at par when it comes to quality and standards. We just need to align, market and certify our Bat as per the needs," Kabir said.

The meeting was attended by participants from more than 30 different industries.

## Congress Protests For Restoration Of Statehood In J&amp;K's Twin Cities

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir Congress unit staged protests outside the Raj Bhawan in Jammu to press for its demand for the immediate restoration of statehood for the J&K, action against Adani, demand of normalcy in Manipur.

Addressing the media during the demonstration, J&K Congress Chief Tariq Karra led the protest in Jammu and tried for Raj Bhawan Ghara which foiled. Similarly congress party also held a protest demonstration held by the party in Srinagar.

The Congress party raised a range of pressing issues, including corruption, economic mismanagement, and law and order concerns in Manipur, alongside the demand for statehood.

Karra criticized the central government for failing to restore Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, a move he said was essential for the J&K's progress and dignity.

He accused the government of punishing the people by keeping the J&K in administrative limbo. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve their rightful statehood, which has been denied to them for far too long," he said.

Karra also expressed gratitude to the Supreme Court for ensuring the conduct of elections in the region but questioned the government's reluctance to restore statehood despite repeated promises in and outside Parliament.

Karra accused the central gov-

ernment of fostering a "generation of corruption," suggesting that it has turned a blind eye to rampant irregularities.

He also pointed to administrative confusion in Jammu and Kashmir, where officers are uncertain about their chain of command—whether under the Governor or the Chief Minister. "This lack of clarity has allowed the bureaucracy to exploit the situation, with some acting within the law and others blatantly disregarding it, increasing hardships for the common people," Karra alleged.

Karra called on the Prime Minister and Home Minister to fulfill the promises made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He warned that the Congress would escalate its agitation if statehood is not restored soon. "The promises made on the land of Jammu and Kashmir must be honored, or the government will face intensified protests," he asserted.

The Congress leader also took aim at the Adani Group, accusing it of financial irregularities on national and international levels vindicated by the US Justice Department.

Karra criticized the government for failing to act against the conglomerate despite allegations of fraud and misrepresentation, which he claimed were affecting small investors and damaging the economy.

He warned of the cascading effects of such economic mismanagement, citing rising unemployment as one of the consequences.

## Six Drug Peddlers Arrested In Kashmir

## Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday said to have arrested six drug peddlers in Srinagar, Kupwara, Shopian & Kulgam and recovered contraband substances from their possession.

In Srinagar, a police party of Police Station Nowhatta during routine naka checking at Malkha chowk, apprehended an individual under suspicious circumstances, a police spokesman said in a statement.

During the search, approximately 40 grams of charas like contraband substance was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Zubair Ahmad Ahanger son of Amin Ahanger resident of Kathi Darwaza.

On his disclosure, another individual namely Bilal Ahmad Sheikh son of Gh. Qadir Sheikh resident of Tugari Mohalla, was apprehended near old Malkha Chowk. Upon his personal search, approximately 80 grams of charas were recovered, police said.

In Kupwara, a police party of Police Station Kralpora at a checkpoint established at Khazanmatti, intercepted two

suspicious persons. During the search, approximately 13 grams of heroin-like substance was recovered from their possession.

They have been identified as Aasim Sultan Sheikh, son of Mohd Sultan Sheikh, resident of Trehgam, and Mujtahid Nazir son of Nazir Ahmad Lone, resident of Khumriyal. Further investigation has been initiated to establish the backward and forward linkages of the drug trade and uncover any networks involved.

In Shopian, Police Station Keller received information that one person namely Gh. Mohamad Parry son of Ab. Ahad Parry resident of Chowan Keller has concealed Charas like contraband substance in his residential house.

Acting swiftly, a police Party from Police Station Keller along with the Executive Magistrate raided the said residential house. During the search, 41 grams of charas-like contraband substances were recovered. Further investigation is underway to unearth the forward and backward linkages of the arrested individual. The operation was meticulously executed by SHO Police Station Keller under the supervision of SSP Shopian Anayat Ali Chowdhary, police said.



# Will Go To Melbourne With Confidence: Rohit Lauds Late Order Fightback

Press Trust of India

**BRISBANE:** Indian skipper Rohit Sharma hailed the resilience of the lower-order batters after his team managed to salvage a crucial draw in the rain-hit third Test against Australia here on Wednesday, saying it has given the side renewed confidence for the remaining series.

With the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy now tied 1-1, Rohit believes the team's morale will be high during the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne.

"I mean, we will take that. Obviously to have interruptions like that wasn't great, but going to Melbourne at 1-1 pretty much gives us that confidence to go out there and pull things towards us," Rohit said at the post-match presentation.

"The situation we were in just after lunch (on Day 4), needed someone to stand up and take us through, we knew with the weather, we knew it wasn't going to be a full game."

Opener KL Rahul once again shone, top-scoring with 84 be-



fore Ravindra Jadeja (77) put up a lower-order resistance.

Then the last duo of Akash Deep (31) and Jasprit Bumrah (10 not out) put on a gritty 47-run partnership to help India

avoid follow-on before they were all out for 260 in reply to Australia's big first innings score of 445.

"Credit to (Ravindra) Jadeja, the way he played and (KL)

Rahul, the way he played was magnificent at the top of the order, the fight that Akash Deep and Bumrah (gave) was great to watch, we have seen them work so hard at the nets

(on their batting)."

Despite the challenges posed by intermittent rain and lighting on the final day, India's bowlers held their own in the second innings.

Bumrah was particularly brilliant, taking 3/18, while Akash Deep and Mohammed Siraj chipped in with two wickets each.

Australia's bold approach in the second innings saw them declare at 89/7, setting India a target of 275 in 54 overs, but bad light and rain ensured no further play was possible after the early stages of the chase.

"Coming to the bowling, Bumrah was outstanding, Akash Deep is a feisty cricketer, always wants to be involved in the game, very new to international cricket, he has worked hard at the nets, still new to international cricket, but he has put in the hard yards..."

"There are people in the group to put their hand across and help him going forward. As he showed with the bat, these are the sort of characters we needed in the team," Rohit added.

## Football Roundup: J&K, Real Kashmir Steal 1-1 Draws

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** J&K football witnessed high emotions against northeast India teams in national competitions on Wednesday.

Playing in an early morning match, J&K senior men's football team secured a 1-1 draw against Manipur in the 78th National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy 2024-25 at Deccan Arena in Hyderabad, Telangana.

After starting the game on equal footing, Manipur took the lead in added time of the first half. The Mehra-

juddin Wadoo-coached team entered the second half looking to get something out of the contest, having lost two straight games in the final round of the national football championship.

Just when it seemed the team was heading to a third loss, captain Aakif Reshi scored the equaliser in the first minute of added time, eliciting strong reactions from the team. The draw helped J&K post their first points in Group A.

Meanwhile, in a late-evening I-League 2024-25 match, Real Kashmir FC took

on Aizawl FC at Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Mizoram. After a 0-0 first half, the hosts jumped to a 1-0 lead in the 56th minute. Facing a second straight away defeat, the Snow Leopards resorted to playing long balls to maximise their players' height advantage.

The move proved to be the right one, as former Downtown Heroes central defender Shahid Nazir Wani equalised for Real Kashmir in the 90th minute of the game, much to the relief of the Ishaq Ahmad-coached side.

## Had Fun But It's Time: Ashwin Announces Surprise Retirement



Press Trust of India

**BRISBANE:** India's premier off-spinner R Ashwin on Wednesday stunned the cricketing world by bidding adieu to his international career in the middle of the ongoing Test series against Australia here despite having a "bit of punch left" in him.

The 38-year-old retires from the game as the second highest wicket-taker for India in Tests with 537 scalps in 106 games, placing him only behind the great Anil Kumble (619 wickets) in the overall statistics.

In the limited-overs format, being part of the 2011 World Cup and the 2013 Champions Trophy-winning teams would count among the highlights of his career.

He will continue to play club cricket, including the IPL, where he will return to compete for Chennai Super Kings next year.

"Today will be the last day for me as an India cricketer in all formats," Ashwin said at the end of the drawn third Test here in a joint press conference with captain Rohit Sharma during which he declined to take any questions and left after making the announcement.

The series is still alive with two

more Tests to go in Melbourne and Sydney as the two teams are tied 1-1 after logging one win each.

Ashwin, who would be headed back to India on Thursday, was seen having an emotional conversation with star batter Virat Kohli in the dressing room hours before the announcement, sending social media into a frenzy.

Kohli had his arm around the senior bowler's shoulder and Ashwin was seen wiping his eyes before breaking into a chuckle.

Ashwin played the day-night Test in Adelaide and picked up one wicket. He not being a sure starter in the playing eleven over the course of the three Tests prompted him to think about his future in the team and eventually call time on a remarkable career.

Ashwin was not just the master of his craft, he was also considered one of the brightest minds in world cricket. The Chennai-based player, who holds an engineering degree, usually does well to hide his emotions but sitting alongside longtime teammate Rohit, Ashwin left the stage for the fear of getting overawed by the occasion.

Ashwin played 116 ODIs for India, claiming 156 wickets, while his 65 T20 International outings yielded 72 scalps.

## Two-Day Taekwondo Championship Begins In Bandipora

Observer News Service

**BANDIPORA:** Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Manzor Ahmad Qadri on Wednesday inaugurated a two-day Taekwondo Championship at Government Higher Secondary School Hajin.

The championship is being organized by the Taekwondo Association of Bandipora and has brought together 230 boys and girls of all age groups from across the district.

Addressing the participants, the DC highlighted the increasing participation of students from J&K in sports like Taekwondo and gymnastics. He remarked that this shift underscores the immense talent and potential of the youth in the area.



Among others the inaugural ceremony of Taekwondo Championship was attended

by Padmashree Faisal Ali Dar, SDM Sumbal, CPO, DyCEO and other concerned.

## Man United Coach Amorim Says Club Needs 'Big Talents' Like Rashford

Agencies

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester United head coach Ruben Amorim said Wednesday the club needs players like Marcus Rashford after the forward was quoted as saying he was ready for a new challenge.

Rashford was dropped from United's squad for its 2-1 win against Manchester City on Sunday.

It has led to widespread speculation about his future and Rashford discussed the possibility of leaving in an interview on Tuesday.

"For me, personally, I think I'm ready for a new challenge and the next steps," journalist Henry Winter reported him saying. "When I leave it's going to be 'no hard feelings.'"

Amorim was diplomatic when asked if he wanted to keep Rashford at the club.

"Of course, because this kind of club needs big talents and he's a big talent," he told a news conference. "So, he just needs to perform at the highest level and that is my focus. I



just want to help Marcus."

The 27-year-old Rashford is under contract until 2028.

He is a graduate of United's famed academy, which has produced many of its greatest players like Bobby Charlton, George Best, Ryan Giggs and David Beckham.

But he has struggled for form since signing his new deal in

### Short TAKES

#### India's Balcony Celebrations At Gabba Raise Eyebrows

India's animated celebrations after narrowly avoiding a follow-on at the Gabba on day four of the third Test surprised former and current Australian players including Nathan Lyon.

The Indian tail, led by Akash Deep and Jasprit Bumrah, put on a gritty 47-run stand for the final wicket to ensure Australia bat again in the game.

"After play, we spoke about that and we were surprised by some of their reactions, especially the way we've gone about this game and I think we can be extremely proud about the way we've gone about it," Lyon told Fox Cricket.

"We've driven this game and to get it into the position we find ourselves in at the moment, we feel like that's a pretty big message to us that they're feeling confident in where they are in the game. But I honestly feel like there's a lot of cricket left in this game," he said on the sidelines of day five.

Former wicketkeeper Brad Haddin and Brett Lee too expressed surprise at India's celebrations.

"That reaction surprised me; all they did was pass the follow-on, they're still a long way behind in the game," Haddin said.

"I remember that's what England said in 2005 when we played it out for the draw, when there was a bit of a celebration from us," former Australian pacer Lee said.

#### 'Sore' Head Confident He'll Be 'Fine' For Boxing Day Test

Australia's man in form Travis Head played down concerns over his fitness after appearing to struggle with a potential groin issue during the rain-marred drawn third Test against India at the Gabba here on Wednesday.

Head said he expects to be "fine" for the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne.

The five-match series is tied 1-1 going into the Boxing Day Test after the drawn affair.

"Very pleased with the way I am batting at the moment. Just a little sore, but I should be fine (before the next game)," Head, who was adjudged the player of the match, said after the game.

The 30-year-old, who has been in red-hot form with 409 runs at an average of 81.80 this series, noticeably struggled to run between the wickets during his brief innings of 17 on day five.

At times, he was seen clutching his groin, raising concerns among the commentators.

Head did not take the field during India's second innings, fuelling further speculation.

The left-hander further reflected on his approach this series, attributing his success to adapting well to challenging conditions and staying composed at the crease.

#### India To Face Pakistan In Kho Kho World Cup Opener

Hosts India will face arch rivals Pakistan in the opening match of the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup on January 13, the organisers announced on Wednesday.

As many as 24 countries have confirmed their participation in the week-long event (January 13-19), which will be organised at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in the national capital and at the Noida Indoor Stadium.

The tournament will see 21 men's and 20 women's teams competing for the top prizes.

Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) president and chairman of the tournament's organising committee, Sudhanshu Mittal announced that Bollywood megastar Salman Khan will be the brand ambassador of the World Cup.

USA, England, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and Brazil are among the teams that have confirmed their participation in the tournament.

The event will take place in a league-cum-knockout format, for both men and women.

The organisers say 615 players and 125 support staff will take part in the event. Each team will comprise 15 players, one coach, one manager and international technical officials.

## Brazil, Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr Named FIFA Men's Player Of The Year 2024

Agencies

**DOHA:** Brazil and Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr was named FIFA men's player of the year in Doha on Tuesday, with Spain and Barcelona midfielder Aitana Bonmati winning the women's award for the second year in a row.

Vinicius scored 24 goals in 39 appearances across all competitions to help Real Madrid clinch the LaLiga and Champions League double, and he also netted in their Champions League final win over Borussia Dortmund.

The Brazilian won the award ahead of Spain and Manchester City midfielder Rodri and his teammate at Real, England's Jude Bellingham.

The 24-year-old, who narrowly missed out on the Ballon d'Or to Rodri in October, was in Doha to collect the award, with Real in Qatar for Wednesday's FIFA Intercontinental Cup final against Mexico's Pachuca.

"It seemed impossible when



I played barefoot in the streets of Sao Goncalo and now I'm here," Vinicius said.

Bonmati retained the FIFA women's player of the year award ahead of Zambia's Barbara Banda and Norway's Caroline Graham Hansen, having also won the women's Ballon d'Or for the second consecutive year in October.

The 26-year-old helped her club to a domestic treble last season in a campaign in which Barca also retained the Cham-

pions League, and Bonmati scored in the semi-final and final when Spain won the Nations League in February.

"I'm very grateful for this award, but I always say that this is a team effort, with a Barca that won everything and the national team," Bonmati said.

Real Madrid's Carlo Ancelotti won the best men's coach award, after the Italian led his club to the league and Champions League double last season.

"I want to share this with the

club, with my president and with my players, those of the best club in the world," Ancelotti said.

Emma Hayes won the best women's coach award, after taking the U.S. to the gold medal at this year's Olympic Games having taken Chelsea to the WSL title last season, her fifth successive league win with the club.

Alejandro Garnacho won the Puskas Award, for best goal of the year for the Argentine winger's strike for Manchester United against Everton in the Premier League in November last year.

Brazil's Marta won the inaugural Marta Award, for the best goal in women's football, taking the prize named in her honour for her goal against Jamaica in June of this year.

The best women's goalkeeper award went to American Alyssa Naehar of the Chicago Red Stars while Emiliano Martinez of Argentina and Aston Villa took the men's award.