# KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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#### **6 IAS Officers Transferred**

**Observer News Service** 

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Government on Friday ordered transfer and posting of six Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers.

Shantmanu, IAS (AGMUT: 1991), awaiting orders of posting in GAD is transferred and posted as Financial Commissioner (Additional Secretary), Education Department relieving Dr. Rashmi Singh, IAS of the additional charge.

Shantmanu shall also hold the additional charge of the post of Administrative Secretary, Information Technology relieving Santosh D. Vaidya, IAS of the additional charge, the order reads.

According to the der, "Shailendra Kumar, IAS (AGMUT:1995) ,Principal Secretary to the Government, Agriculture Production Department shall hold additional charge of Administrative Secretary, Floriculture, Parks and Gardens Department with effect from Jan-01-2025, in addition to his own duties.

Sanjeev Verma, IAS (AGMUT: 2001), Commissioner Secretary to the Government, General Administration Department is transferred and posted as Commissioner Secretary to the Government, Social Welfare Department.

Raju, IAS (AGMUT:2005) awaiting orders of posting in the General Administration Department, is posted as Commissioner Secretary to the Government, General Administration Department. He shall also hold additional charge of Administrative Secretary, Information Department till further orders, reads the order. The order | More on P6

## Season's First Snowfall **Blankets Kashmir**

Dry Weather From December 29-31: MeT

#### **Observer News Service**

Srinagar: Several parts of Kashmir received fresh snowfall, including the season's first in many areas, on Friday, with a slight increase in the minimum temperatures at most places in the valley, officials

western disturbance hit Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, bringing light snowfall in many areas of the valley, the officials said.

Snowfall was recorded in the famous ski-resort of Gulmarg, tourist resorts of Sonamarg and Pahalgam, Gurez, Zojila axis, Sadhna Top, Mughal Road, and many areas in Bandipora, Baramulla, and Kupwara districts, the officials said.

They said the season's



Ganderbal, Kulgam, Shopian, and as well.

snowfall was also recorded districts. There are reports in the plains of Srinagar, of fresh snowfall in other Anantnag, higher reaches of the valley

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said under the influence of the western | More on P6

### **A Mixed Bag** Of Joy & **Disruptions**

he much-awaited snowfall arrived in Kashmir turning the valley into a winter wonderland. The season's first snowfall ended an extended dry spell, lifting spirits across the region and stabilizing tempera-tures. The snowfall brought a festive charm to iconic locations like tourist spots like Dal Lake, where snow-laden houseboats and shikaras added to the picturesque landscape. Tourists flocked to the Boulevard Road, capturing the serene beauty of the snow-clad surroundings. "This is my first time seeing snowfall, and it's like a dream come true," said Priya, a tourist

#### **Roads Closed**

he snowfall disrupted traffic, leading to the suspension of movement on several key routes, including Srinagar-Jammu Highway, Mughal Road, Srinagar- | More on P6

#### **Flights Cancelled**

he snowfall also disrupted air travel, with several flights to and from Srinagar Airport delayed or canceled. Passengers were advised to check flight schedules | More on P6

#### **Nearly 3% 11KV Lines Down**

ollowing the snowfall across Kashmir valley, at least one 33KV and 37 lines of 11-KV power feeders were down across Kashmir. Kashmir | More on P6

#### **KU Postpones Exams**

he University of Kashmir has postponed all examinations scheduled for Saturday, due to inclement weather conditions. A notice | More on P6

#### **350 Vehicles Stuck Along NH**

t least 350 vehicles have been stuck along National Highway after the fresh snowfall forced the closure of the only road, connecting the | More on P6

#### **Kandar Tsout' Prices Revised**

**Observer News Service** 

Srinagar: In view of growing public resentment against unilateral & abrupt decision of price hike of local bread by Bakers(Nanwais), Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri on Friday held a detailed meeting with the representatives of association to settle the issue.

While giving the interim relief to address the crises, the meeting amicably agreed to fix the price of one Roti (approx. 42 gm) at Rs 7 and the price of 3 Rotis at Rs 20 till the Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs department conducts analysis of the market and submits the report.

Meanwhile, the Divisional Commissioner advised them to ensure the availability of Rotis across the division.

The Food Safety Department in collaboration with the ICLC, conducted surprise inspections of Nanwaei shops (Kashmiri roti vendors) and Harissa ven-

dors in Srinagar.
Officials said the inspections aimed to ensure compliance with hygiene and sanitary standards mandated by the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act.

During the drive, the team collected food samples for laboratory analysis and identified nine Food Business Operators (FBOs) for non-compliance under Section 69 of the FSS Act. A fine of Rs.3,000 was imposed on violators.

Assistant Commissioner Food Safety Srinagar stressed the importance of maintaining high hygiene and sanitation standards at food business premises. He warned that failure to adhere to the regulations would | More on P6

## **Panel To Address MLA Housing Issues**

**Observer News Service** 

Srinagar: The Speaker of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Friday constituted an 11-member House Committee to address issues related to residential accommodation and other facilities for Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). The panel, headed by the Speaker, includes five MLAs from the National Conference, two from the Bharatiya Janata Party, one each from the Congress, Peoples Democratic Party, and Peoples Conference, and an independent MLA supporting the National Conference-led government.

According to a notification, the committee members

Kumar Sharma (BJP), Ghulam Ahmad Mir Ahmed (Congress), Nazir Khan (NC), Shamim Firdous Surjit Singh Salathia Ali Muhammad Dar (NC), Sajad Gani Lone (PC), Hussain Baig (NC), **Iavid** Choudhary Muhammad Akram (Independent), and Waheed-Ur-Rehman Parra (PDP).

As per Clause (1) of Appendix I of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the J&K Assembly, the committee will address all questions related to residential accommodation for MLAs. It is also mandated to consider matters connected with facilities for accommodation, food, medical aid, and other amenities | More on P6

### Campus On 600 Acres

### **NIT Pulwama Land Acquisition Sparks Debate**

**Syed Mohammad Burhan** 

Srinagar: The government's decision to procure nearly 4834 kanals of prime agricultural land for the establishment of a new National Institute of Technology (NIT) campus in Pulwama has sparked widespread controversy, with political leaders and netizens raising serious concerns over the scale and implications of the project.

Leaders from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) have expressed strong opposition, calling the acquisition excessive and unjust. PDP leader and Pulwama MLA Waheed-ur-Rehman Para criticized the move on social media platform X, writing, "Pulwama welcomes the establishment of an NIT, but seizing 4834 kanals of



File photo of NIT Srinagar

land is unacceptable. Without fair compensation and guaranteed jobs for locals, this project will face strong resistance."

Iltija Mufti, daughter of PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti, joined the chorus of criticism, accusing the government of disguising land grabs as development. "Pray tell what's the need to seize 5.000 kanals of prime agricultural land in Pulwama to establish a NIT? If education was such a priority, why have a lopsided reservation in the first place?" she questioned on X.

#### **Concerns Over Scale and** Sustainability

Academics and experts have also weighed in, questioning the necessity of acquiring such a vast expanse of land. Tahir Firaz, a postdoctoral fellow, pointed out the disproportionate scale of the project. "The proposed NIT Pulwama spans approximately 600 acres, double the size of University College Dublin, Europe's largest urban campus, and triple MIT's 168-acre footprint. | More on P6

## **Omar's U-Turn On Smart Meters Triggers Public Backlash**

**Syed Mohammad Burhan** 

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has come under sharp criticism after two videos highlighting contradictory statements on electricity metering went viral. The footage has ignited widespread criticism, with residents and netizens accusing him of backtracking on promises and ignoring the struggles of ordinary consumers.

The first video, recorded during an election campaign, shows Omar Abdullah advocating for consumer rights and pledging that his party would reconsider the installation of electricity meters if voted into power. He assured voters



that their concerns would be addressed and seemed to oppose the indiscriminate use of metering. However, in the second video, Omar Abdullah is seen taking a starkly different stance. He criticizes some consumers for misusing electricity, claiming that households registered for minimal usage, such as four bulbs, | More on P6

## Tributes Pour In For Dr Singh, To Be Cremated Today

**I&K Govt Orders** 7-day State Mourning

**Press Trust Of India** 

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among the top dignitaries who paid homage to former prime minister Manmohan Singh at his residence here on Friday.

Several leaders cutting across party lines, including Union ministers and Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, also paid their tributes to the former



two-term prime minister who died on Thursday night.

President Murmu and Vice President Dhankhar visited the residence of Singh and paid their last respects to | More on P6

#### **Epitome Of Simplicity:** PM Modi

rime Minister Narendra Modi today paid tribute to former PM Manmohan Singh who died last night. Dr Singh, India's 14th PM and one of its most respected economists, died at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi. He was 92. "Manmohan More on P6

#### A Friend. **Philosopher & Guide: Sonia**

escribing former prime minister Manmohan Singh's death as a "personal loss", Congress **Parliamentary Party** (CPP) chief Sonia Gandhi on Friday said he was her friend, philosopher and guide and that in his death, the party has lost a leader who I More on P6

#### **Accomplished Economist: CM Omar**

hief Minister Abdullah said that India has lost a great son with Dr Manmohan Singh's passing. "Very sorry to hear about the demise of former PM Dr Manmohan Singh. I had many occasions to interact & learn from him. He was truly an | More on P6

#### **Nation Has Lost A Towering Politician: LG**

ammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday expressed grief over the demise of former prime minister Manmohan Singh, saying that he made extremely significant contributions to India's growth. Singh died at the All India | More on P6

### **Agriculture Projects: Minister Observer News Service**

**J&K Gets Rs 117.58 Cr** 

Jammu: "In a significant move towards transforming the agriculture profile of J&K, landmark projects worth Rs 117.58 crore have been sanctioned for agriculture infrastructural building in the Union Territory," informed Minister Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Departments,

laved Ahmad Dar. The Minister informed this during a meeting held here Friday which was

attended by Secretary APD, Shailendra Kumar and other senior officers

The Minister stated that the approval of these

significant projects under Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and CADWM is a landmark step towards sustainable agricultural development and rural prosperity. He said that these significant projects shall not only improve agricultural infrastructure, enhance irrigation efficiency but also ensure sustainable agricul-

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### PUBLIC NOTICE

I Mohammad Manzoor Sheikh am holding 1000 of shares of J&K Bank under Folio JKB015138 where my name has b een inadvertently recorded as Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh which is incorrect whereas my actual name is Mohammad Manzoor Sheikh In this regard I am applying for correction of name under my Fokio. If anybody has any objection ma contact j&k Bank Corporate Headquarters within seven days from the publication of this notice after whihc no objection shall be entertained.

## **NOTICE**

I have changed my name from (old name) Marib Rameez to (new name) Marib Rameez Wani. In future i will be known as (new name) Marib Rameez Wani. If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact passport office Srinagar within 7 days. After that no objection will be accepted.

#### THE JAMMU & KASHMIR **BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION** NEW CAMPUS, BEMINA SRINAGAR **PUBLIC NOTICE**

I have passed/appeared in SSE (class 10th) under Roll No. 819248, Session: Annual (Regular) Year: 2001 through The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. The error has been committed by the School Authorities against my name as Imtivaz Ahmad, in-



stead of Imtivaz Ahmad Sangoo. Now I have applied for correction in the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education, New Campus, Bemina, Srinagar. If any person has any objection in this regard may file the same in the office of the Assistant Secretary, Certificates Kashmir Division within Seven Days from the date of publication of this notice, after the expiry of said period, no objection will be en-

This is published for the information of the general public. The correction particulars be recorded as under:

Name: Imtiyaz Ahmad Sangoo. Fathers Name: Bashir Ahmad Sangoo. Mothers Name: Mehbooba. DOB: 06.10.1984.

Residence: Koolipora Aqilmir Khanyar Srinagar. Mobile No. 9622741313

عنوان: \_ درخواست منجانب اجرائی OBC سرٹفیکیٹ بذمرہ تجام بحق معراج الدین حجام ولدمحمد رمضان حجام ساكنه موضع اوسن كهوئي تخصيل يبثن

اشتهار برخاص وعام معامدرین سائل نے ایک درخواست بغرض OBC سرٹفیکیٹ بذمرہ تجام پیش کی ہے جو کہزیر کاروائی ہے اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس ہے عمال ہے کہ سائل واقعی کمار ذات سے تعلق رکھتا ہے۔ اور سائل اوس کو کھوئی تحصیل پٹن میں رہائش یذیر ہے اور بھی بھی ترک سکونت نہیں کی ہے سائل مذکور OBC سرٹھنیکیٹ حاصل کرنے کا خواں ہے سرٹفیکییٹ زیر بحث اجراءکرنے میںاگر 💎 کہا گرکسی شخص کو 🛮 کوئی عزر یا عتراض ہوتو وہ بعد مشتہرا خبارسات دن کے اندراندرآ یے عذریاعتراض ودالت ھذاکو دفتری ادقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔بعد گزرے میعاد کو بی عذریاعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدارکلنتره بااجلاس نائب تحصیلدارکریری درخواست منجانب سائل عبدل صدروار ولدمجر مقبول وارساكنه ناكبل تحصيل كريري بمرادحصول RBA سرُّفْیکیٹ تحت ایس اراو . 126 / 294 بحق پسرزییراحمد ڈار

اشتہار بمرادآ گاہی ہرخاص وعام

معامله مندرجه عنوان الصدرمين درخواست سائل عبدل غني مير داماد محمد صحان صوفي ساكنشيخيوره وفتر ہذامیں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت رپورٹ پٹواری سے عیاں ہوتا ہے سائل کا کمنبہ (07 ) افراد پر شتمل ہے کنبہ کی سالانہ کی سالانہ آمدانی ۔ 100000 تک ہے سائل کے افراد خانہ مندرجہذیل ہے

> صاحبه کنبه 56سال مزدوری عبدل صد ڈار زوجه 55سال گھریلوکام دختر 20سال زیرتعلیم 8سال \_\_

اسكےعلاوہ كوئى بھى افرادنيں بتلا يا گيا ہےلہازاتمام عوام خاص وعام كوبزر يعداشتہارمطالع كياجا تا ہے کہ اگر کسی کو سرٹیفیکٹ نکالنے میں کوئی عزریااعتراض ہوتووہ اپناعزریااعتراض ساتھ دن کے اندراندر پیش کریں معاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئ عزریااعتراض قابل قبول نیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار کریری

## Which Infectious Disease Is Likely To Be **Biggest Emerging Problem In 2025**

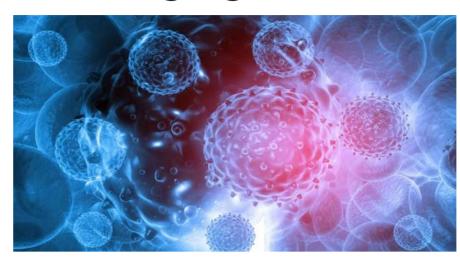
The Conversation

OVID emerged suddenly, spread rapidly and killed millions of people around the world. Since then, I think it's fair to say that most people have been nervous about the emergence of the next big infectious disease - be that a virus, bacterium, fungus or parasite. With COVID in retreat (thanks to highly ef-

fective vaccines), the three infectious diseases causing public health officials the greatest concern are malaria (a parasite), HIV (a virus) and tuberculosis (a bacterium). Between them, they kill around 2 million people each year.

And then there are the watchlists of priority pathogens – especially those that have be-come resistant to the drugs usually used to treat them, such as antibiotics and antivirals. Scientists must also constantly scan the horizon for the next potential problem. While this could come in any form of pathogen, certain groups are more likely than others to cause swift outbreaks, and that includes influenza viruses.

One influenza virus is causing great concern right now and is teetering on the edge of being a serious problem in 2025. This is influenza A subtype H5N1, sometimes referred to as "bird flu". This virus is widely spread in both wild and domestic birds, such as poultry. Recently, it has also been infecting dairy cattle in several US states and found in



horses in Mongolia.

When influenza cases start increasing in animals such as birds, there is always a worry that it could jump to humans. Indeed, bird flu can infect humans with 61 cases in the US this year already, mostly resulting from farm workers coming into contact with infected cattle and people drinking raw milk. Compared with only two cases in the Americas in the previous two years, this is quite a large increase. Coupling this with a 30% mortality rate from human infections, bird flu is quickly jumping up the list of public health officials' priorities. Luckily, H5N1 bird flu doesn't seem to transmit from person to person, which greatly reduces its likelihood of causing a pandemic in humans. Influenza viruses have to attach to molecular structures called sialic receptors on the outside of cells in order to get inside and start replicating.

Flu viruses that are highly adapted to humans recognise these sialic receptors very well, making it easy for them to get inside our cells, which contributes to their spread between humans. Bird flu, on the other hand, is highly adapted to bird sialic receptors and has some mismatches when "binding" (at-

taching) to human ones. So, in its current form, H5N1 can't easily spread in humans. However, a recent study showed that a single mutation in the flu genome could make H5N1 adept at spreading from human to human, which could jump-start a pandemic. If this strain of bird flu makes that switch and can start transmitting between humans, governments must act quickly to control the spread. Centres for disease control around the world have drawn up pandemic preparedness plans for bird flu and other diseases that are on the horizon.

For example, the UK has bought 5 million doses of H5 vaccine that can protect against bird flu, in preparation for that risk in 2025. Even without the potential ability to spread between humans, bird flu is likely to affect animal health even more in 2025. This not only has large animal welfare implications but also the potential to disrupt food supply and have economic effects as well. Everything is connected

This work all falls under the umbrella of "one health": looking at human, animal and environmental health as interconnected entities, all with equal importance and effect on each other.

By understanding and preventing disease in our environment and the animals around us, we can better prepare and combat those diseases entering humans. Similarly, by surveying and disrupting infectious diseases in humans, we can protect our animals and the environment's health too.

#### Office Of Advocate Yakoob Hussain Sofi J&K High COURT SRINAGAR

CHAMBER NO. 07 MUNSIFF/JMFC AT MAGAM Cell No. 9906517553, 9419068005

IN THE CASE OF Mushtaq Ahmad Hajam aged 47 years S/0 Mohammad Akbar Hajam R/O Kanihama Tehsil Magam

...Caveator

...Non-caveators

Versus PUBLIC AT LARGE

Caveat Petition in terms of Section 14H A of C.P.C. The Caveators have reasons to believe/apprehension that non-Caveator (s) may file a suit/applicadon/petition or any other type of proceedings before the Hon'ble High Court, District Courts, Revenue Courts or any other forum and may succeed in obtaining some relief/order at their back/ex-parte against the caveator and in such eventuality, the caveator will be put to an irreparable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveator may be given an opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble Court before passing any order or direction.

Yakoob Hussain Sofi bmg **Advocate** 



The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited B/U: B.P Batmaloo (Saifco Complex) **Srinagar-190009** 

#### **Possession Notice**

Notice under Section 13 (4) of the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 read with Rule 8 (1) of the Security (Enforcement) Interest Rules, 2002

Whereas Mr. Ajaz Ahmad as the Authorized Officer of the Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notice dated 03-10-2024 thereby calling upon M/S Rafiq & Co. Proprietor Mr. Mohammad Rafiq Lone S/O Mr. Mohammad Shaban Lone R/O H. No. 16, Sector F, Gulshan Colony Alochi Bagh Srinagar Kashmir (Borrower-cum-Mortgagor) (previously at Lachmanpora Batamaloo Srinagar) to repay an amount of Rs.16,04,844.56 (Rupees sixteen lacs four thousand eight hundred forty four and paisa fifty six only) being the balance outstanding as on 30.09.2024 in the accounts of the Borrower outstanding at Branch B.P. Batamaloo, Srinagar within 60 days from the date of the said notice together with the future interest and other charges thereon.

The said Borrower having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the said Borrower in particular and the public in general that the undersigned being authorized officer of the J & K Bank Ltd. has taken symbolic possession of the mortgaged property described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on me under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules, on this the 24th December, 2024.

The said Borrower-cum-Mortgagor and Guarantors(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned against dealing with the said property in any manner whatsoever and any dealings with the said property will be subject to the charge of the J&K Bank Limited for the amount aggregating to Rs. 16,37,311.56 (Rupees Sixteen Lacs Thirty Seven Thousand Three Hundred Eleven and Paisa Fifty Six only) being outstanding in the above said account/s together with future interest thereon from 01-12-2024 and other charges incurred to be incurred.

The Borrower-cum-Mortgagor's/Guarantors attention is invited to the provisions of Sub- section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of the time available, to redeem the secured assets.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE MORTGAGED PROPERTY**

Three storeyed residential house with attic along with a piece of proprietary land underneath measuring 06 Marlas (1632 Sq. Ft.) falling under Khasra No. 1287min of Khata No. 1789 and Khewat No. 403 situated at H.No. 16. Sector-F Gulshan Colony Allochi Bagh Tehsil Khas and District Srinagar standing in the name of Mr. Mohammad Rafiq Lone

Dated: 24.12.2024

**Place: Srinagar** 

**Authorised Officer** 

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL **ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS (BOPEE)** 

Tele/Fax: 0194-2433590, 2437647 (Srinagar): 0191-2479371, 2470102 (Jammi Website: www.jkbopee.gov.in E-mail: coejakbopee@gmail.com/helpdeskjakbopee@gmai

Subject: Conduct of Second/Mop-Up Round of Counselling (Physical) for admission to (Post MBBS/Post MBBS Diploma/Post Diploma) DNB Courses 2024 in various Government Medical

Reference: Notification No. 197-BOPEE of 2024 Dated: 19-12-2024.

Notification No. 199-BOPEE of 2024 Dated 26-12-2024

To fill up the seats which have remained unfilled, it is hereby notified for information of all the concerned candidates that the Board shall conduct the Second/Mop-Up Round of counselling (Physical) as per the schedule given as below:

S. No.	Date / Day of Counselling	Rank	Remarks
1	30-12-2024 (Monday)	01-21 (Post MBBS DNB / Post MBBS Diploma) 01 (Post Diploma DNB)	Candidates including Reserved Category Candidates

The Board shall first conduct the counselling of all the category candidates during 2<sup>nd</sup> /Mop Up Round of Counselling Process and if any category candidate(s) is not available, then the same category seat(s) shall be converted into OM as provided under Section 09 (2) of J&K Reservation Act, 2004 and shall be allotted based on merit cum preferences.

The following procedure shall be followed during Second/Mop-Up Upgradation/Allotment Round of

- 1. The eligible and willing candidates must report at the BOPEE offices Jammu / Srinagar for Registration/Attendance & fulfillment of other formalities, from 9.30 am to 10.30 am on the
- 2. All the participating candidates are advised to bring the following documents in original at the

  - b. NOC from Health and Medical Education Department
  - c. NEET-PG / PDCET Score Card 2024
  - d. MBBS degree/Diploma wherever applicable e. Any other document, as may be required by the College Authorities.
- 3. It is enjoined upon all the eligible candidates that they shall visit/ attend counseling only after

checking the Seat Matrix available on the official website of the Board and if the seats of their choice(s) are available in their respective categories, they shall participate in the counseling.

- 4. Those candidate(s) who have been allotted seat(s) during the First Round of Counseling and have joined against the said seat/College, if, interested for upgradation are eligible to participate in the  $2^{nd}$  / Mop-Up Round of Physical Counseling with the condition that he/she shall have to produce his/her fee deposition receipt of the concerned allotted College at the time of Registration/Attendance on his/her day/date of counseling.
- 5. The Candidate(s) who have not been allotted any seat during the First Round Counseling are also eligible to attend the Second/Mop-Up Round of physical counseling.
- 6. The candidates who failed to participate in the First Round of counselling due to one or the other reason shall also be eligible to participate in the counseling subject to the condition that they shall have to deposit counseling fee of Rs.2000/- physically, through POS Machines kept available at the BOPEE offices Jammu/Srinagar on their day/date of counseling
- 7. The Board has decided to allow such candidate(s) if any, to participate in this 2<sup>nd</sup>/Mop-Up round of counselling who have been allotted Seat(s) during the First Round of counseling but have failed to join against the said allotted seat/College due to one or the other reason.
- 8. This notification is issued without any prejudice and subject to outcome of the writ petition, if
- 9. The Board reserves the right to notify such changes as may become necessary in view of any
- technical difficulty or the reasons beyond its control.

The Tentative Seat Matrix shall be uploaded on the website of the Board separately in due course of time which shall facilitate the candidates to decide about their participation in the Upgradation/Allotment Round of Counseling.

The other Terms and Conditions shall, however, remain the same as notified by the Board in the e-Information Brochure / Notifications/Notices issued from time to time in this regard.

E & O E

DIPK-NB-2982/24 dated: 27-12-2024

Sd/-(Gurvinder Raj Verma) **Controller of Examinations** J&K. BOPEE

No: BOPEE/Exam-68/2024(7607232)

Dated 26-12-2024

### RTO Conducts Surprise Inspection At Parimpora Bus Stand

Agencies

Srinagar: The Regional Transport Officer (RTO) Kashmir conducted a surprise inspection at the Parimpora Bus Stand in Srinagar on Friday.

During the visit, he appealed to drivers to exercise caution and drive slowly, as snowfall has made roads slippery and hazardous.

Speaking to the media during the inspection, RTO Kashmir Qazi Irfan Rasool Zargar urged people to prioritize safety, emphasizing the importance of slow driving in snowy and slippery conditions.

He said the enforcement teams are actively deployed in every district, particularly in Srinagar. "They have been instructed to ensure there is no jumbling or violation in public transport operations," he said.

The RTO further said that strict action would be taken against violators under the law. He encouraged the general public to report traffic-related issues through the dedicated helpline number 103. "For other grievances, citizens can contact us using the numbers provided on the official RTO Kashmir website," he added—(KNO)

## **City Witnesses Manhole Cover Thefts, Misuse Of Footpaths**

Agencies

Srinagar: Miscreants stealing manhole covers and people turning footpaths into parking spots have emerged as new challenges for the officials of Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) project.

An SSCL official said that the theft of manhole covers and the misuse of footpaths for vehicle parking in key areas like Residency Road, Maulana Azad Road are "defeating the very idea" of turning Srinagar into a "Smart City."

"We are battling the continuous theft of manhole covers, particularly during night. This has become a recurring issue, posing serious risks to pedestrians and commuters. Such acts not only endanger public safety but also hinder our efforts to maintain the city's infrastructure," he said.

ructure," ne said. Another official said that the misuse of footpaths, constructed to facilitate pedestrian movement, is another pressing issue. "Footpaths are being used for vehicle parking, which goes against their intended purpose. This creates inconvenience for pedestrians and compromises road safety," the official added.

He said that the SSCL officials are working with the law enforcement agencies to prevent manhole cover thefts and prevent manholes from being turned into parking spots. "Public awareness campaigns will also be launched to encourage responsible use of public property," the official said.

Meanwhile, the SSCL has urged citizens to play an active role in maintaining civic infrastructure by reporting suspicious activities and avoiding actions that disrupt public utilities—(KNO)

### Snow Makes Tourists Dance, Lal Chowk Turns Winter Wonderland

Agencies

Srinagar: As Kashmir plains received the first snowfall of the season on Friday, city centre Lal Chowk transformed into a winter wonderland, captivating tourists and locals alike.

With snowflakes gently blanketing the streets, tourists couldn't contain their excitement, some even breaking into impromptu dances and cheers in front of the historic clock tower (Ghanta Ghar).

The snowfall brought joy across Kashmir, with the historic clock tower becoming the center of attraction, as tourists were seen enjoying the snowfall.

Simran, from Delhi, said, "The snowfall is magical. It is like a dream come true to experience Kashmir in its winter glory. Lal Chowk looks breathtaking with the snow covering every inch of the city. This experience will stay with you forever."

In Shopian, the land was dusted with white, making it a perfect spot for winter sports enthusiasts. "We have come here for the first time, and the view is incredible," said Mohammad Imran, a visitor from Gujarat.

Also, in Anantnag, the old town was adorned with a thick layer of snow, adding an old-world charm to its streets. "The snow in Anantnag has made everything look so peaceful. It is the perfect winter escape," said Amir from Mumbai.

Pulwama, also known for its lush fields and orchards, was all draped in white—(KNO)

## Preparations For Republic Day 2025 Reviewed

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Dr. Owais Ahmed Friday chaired a high-level meeting at the SMC Central Office, Karan Nagar to review the preparations for the upcoming Republic Day celebrations in Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by senior officials of the corporation and Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) to ensure seamless coordination and meticulous planning for the event.

Dr. Owais issued detailed instructions to all departments to ensure that the city reflects the spirit of the occasion. He directed the Electric Wing to repair all non-functional streetlights and enhance city illumination, focusing on key locations. He also emphasized decorating electricity Poles of flyovers with tri-

color lighting and festive embellishments to foster a patriotic ambiance.

Highlighting the significance of maintaining a pristine environment, the Commissioner instructed the Sanitation Wing to intensify citywide cleanliness drives. Special attention was directed towards prominent locations and event venues.

With snowfall anticipated, Dr. Owais directed the Mechanical Engineering and Transport wing to keep snow clearance machinery and personnel on standby. Priority will be given to the main event venue and its adjoining areas to ensure

smooth movement.

The City Drainage Circle SMC was tasked with ensuring the functionality of all dewatering pumps and deploying mobile units at strategic locations to address any waterlogging issues that may arise.



# **Commissioner SMC Inspects Snow Clearance & Dewatering Operations**

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Dr. Owais Ahmed IAS Commissioner SMC, conducted a thorough inspection of snow clearance and dewatering operations in Srinagar City on Friday evening.

During his visit, the Commissioner reviewed the effectiveness of ongoing snow clearance activities, ensuring that all roads, lanes, bylanes, pathways, and walkways are being cleared effi-

ciently to facilitate safe travel for residents. He assessed the allocation of resources and the collaboration among the teams involved in these operations.

In addition to snow clearance, the Commissioner visited permanent dewatering stations to evaluate their functionality. These stations are vital for managing waterlogged areas during periods of snowmelt and rainfall, particularly in low-lying areas. Commissioner emphasized the importance

of maintaining these facilities to ensure they are prepared for any stormwater challenges.

Expressing his appreciation for the efforts of the SMC staff, the Commissioner encouraged residents to cooperate by taking necessary precautions during adverse weather conditions. He urged anyone facing issues related to snow clearance or waterlogging to reach out to the SMC's 24/7 Control Room for assistance.

## J&K Congress Condoles Ex-PM's Demise

Observer News Service

Srinagar:President Jammu & Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee Tariq Hameed Karra has expressed deep shock over the sad demise of Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh ji and said that the country has lost a great son,it's greatest economist, a great statesman, most humble and gentleman Prime Minister.

In a condolence message,

In a condolence message , Shri Karra said that Dr Singh has made immense contributions to the country in different capacities especially in the field of economy, as the Finance Minister in a most difficult period and twice as Prime Minister.

He brought great honour to the nation as a great economist and as a Prime Minister for ten years. He will always be remembered as a great, humble , honest and capable Prime Minister of the country.

During UPA 1& 2 under his

prime ministership ,J&K received a huge financial package and economic boost and all round infrastructure development in every sphere besides major political initiatives for peace and normalcy.

Meanwhile JKPCC Chief Spokesperson Mr Ravinder Sharma has conveyed heartfelt condolence to the family on behalf of the entire rank and file of the party & prayers for peace to the departed soul.





TRAFFIC POLICE: 9419993745, 01998-266686 PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883

PDD: 0194-2450213 FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES: 2479488,2452222,2452155 CAPD: 18001807011 SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081

Ambulance: Kashmer EMS Service: +919484100200

### AIRPORTS SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

#### **HIGHWAY STATUS**



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

**PRAYERS** 

6:06

12:32

3:51

5:33

6:58

**FAJR** 

**ZUHR** 

**ASR** 

Magrib

**ISHA** 



## This Day In History

- 418- St Boniface I begins his reign as Catholic Pope 457- Roman armies proclaim Majorian Emperor of the Western Roman Empire
- 801- Louis the Vrome occupies Barcelona
- 1065- New church devoted to St Peter the Apostle built by Edward the Confessor - later called the 'west minister' consecrated in London (rebuilt mid 13th century)
- 1308 The reign of Emperor Hanazono, Emperor of Japan, begins
- 1612 First observation of Neptune Galileo observes and records a "fixed star" without realising it is a planet
- 1614 Sperm whale beached at Noordwijk
- 1732 1st known ad for "Poor Richard's Almanack" (Pennsylvania Gazette)
- 1781 Comte de Rochambeau and Nicolas Luckner are the last generals to be made Marshal of France by Louis XVI before the Revolution
   1828 - 6.8 earthquake strikes Echigo Japan, 30,000
- killed

  1832 John C. Calhoun becomes 1st VP to resign
- (differences with President Jackson)
  1877 John Stevens, applies for a patent for his
- flour rolling mill.

  1904 1st daily wireless weather forecasts
- published (London).1908 Earthquake strikes Messina, Italy, killing
- nearly 80,000.

  1914 Turks are repulsed by the Russians after
- fighting in Armenia for weeks.

   1926 Imperial Airways begins England-India mail
- & passenger service.1948 US announced a study to launch an Earth
- satellite.
   1950 Chinese troops cross 38th Parallel, into
- South Korea.

  1957 USSR performs atmospheric nuclear test.
- 1962 UN troops occupies Elizabethstad Katanga.
- 1968 Israeli assault on Beirut Airport.
- 1970 -Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) adopts
- 1973 US President Nixon signs Endangered Species
- Act into law.

  1973 Comet Kohoutek at perihelion.
- 1974 6.3 earthquake strikes Pakistan: 5200 killed. 1975 - Earthquake in Pakistan, 4,000 die.
- 1983 US say they will leave UNESCO on Dec 31,
- 1985 Warring Lebanese Muslim & Christian leaders sign peace agreement.
- 2001 OPEC oil ministers meeting in Cairo agree to reduce their crude oil output quotas by a combined 1.5 million barrels per day.
- 2007 Nepal declared a federal democratic Republic by interim parliament, abolishing the monarchy
- 2009 43 people die in a suicide bombing in Karachi, Pakistan, where Shia Muslims were observing the Day of Ashura.
   2013 - Early signs of Ebola epidemic: 2 year old child
- in Guinea dies of an unidentified haemorraghic fever; mother, sister and grandmother soon follow.
  2014 Indonesia AirAsia Flight QZ8501 crashes in
- bad weather in the Java Sea, killing all 162 people on board.
  2015 Japan and South Korea reach agreement over WWII "comfort women", Japan apologies and
- pays 1bn yen compensation.
   2017 -Iranian woman Vida Mohaved arrested for protesting against policy of compulsory hijab, sparking other protests
- 2017- Protests in Mashhad, Iran against price rises and corruption
- 2018- British New Year's honours list include Knights for author Philip Pullman and comedian Michael Palin, a Dame for Twiggy and a Order of the Companions of Honour for Margaret Atwood
- 2018- UFC bantamweight champion Amanda Nunes of Brazil moves up in weight and KOs dominant featherweight Cris "Cyborg" Justino just 51 seconds into the opening round at the Forum, Inglewood, CA; first female to win UFC titles in multiple weight classes

## One Nation, One Election

# A Flawed and Impractical Vision

der the concept of '(Election' (ONOE).

4

Frequent elections. therefore, allow for regular public engagement and debate. Simultaneous elections would shrink this space for participation without offering any alternative mechanisms to deepen democracy. The public's ability to hold governments accountable would be reduced, weakening India's democratic fabric

Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi

n Tuesday, the government introduced a constitutional amendment bill in the Lok Sabha to synchronise national and state elections in India under the concept of 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE).

To explore its feasibility, the government had established a committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind to examine the scope of ONOE, the constitutional amendments required, and the steps to implement this vision.

While the concept may appear efficient at first glance, a closer examination reveals significant practical, logistical, and democratic concerns.

Supporters of ONOE argue that it will reduce the financial cost of conducting frequent elections, free political parties from a perpetual election mode, and allow them to focus on governance. These arguments, however, crumble under scrutiny.

When the numbers are analysed, the actual financial savings are minimal. Critics also point out that the real issue lies in the recent trend of national leaders and Delhi-based politicians devoting significant time and energy to state election campaigns.

If the concern is that frequent state elections hamper governance, the solution is simpler than synchronising elections: state elections should primarily be fought by state party units, while national leaders focus on governing the country.

Unfortunately, India's increasingly centralised and presidential style of campaigning makes this solution unlikely.

#### Logistical and Constitutional Challenges

The logistical challenge of holding simultaneous elections across the entire country is staggering. Even state elections currently occur in multiple phases for security and administrative reasons. Coordinating both national and state elections would exacerbate these difficulties.

A more critical issue lies in the incompatibility of a rigid election schedule with the principles of parliamentary democracy. India's constitution demands that a government must always enjoy the confidence of the House. If a government loses this confidence, it must resign and seek a fresh mandate.

While simultaneous elections were the norm in the 1950s, the sys-



tem was disrupted when Article 356 was used to impose President's Rule in states under exceptional circumstances. Synchronising elections today would require undermining this fundamental principle of parliamentary democracy.

Even if national and state elections are synchronised for one cycle, the system will collapse the moment a government falls prematurely. Two proposed solutions to this problem create more harm than good:

1. Imposing President's Rule: If a state government falls, the state would remain under President's Rule until the next synchronised election cycle, potentially for years. This undermines federalism and denies the people their right to elect a new government.

2. Shortened Assembly Terms: Fresh elections would be held in the affected state, but the new assembly would serve only until the next synchronised election. This creates instability and undermines the very justification for reducing election costs and campaigning fatigue.

These solutions also increase the likelihood of political manoeuvring to avoid the fall of a government, even if it has lost the House's confidence. Despite the Tenth Schedule's anti-defection provisions, 'horse-trading' has remained rampant, with politicians exploiting loopholes and judicial in-

tervention to retain power.

ONOE also poses a fundamental threat to Indian federalism. Indian federalism is not just a matter of administrative convenience but a recognition of linguistic, cultural, and ethnic aspirations. State-level democracies allow regional issues, identities, and demands to be represented effectively.

Synchronising elections risks blurring these distinct arenas of democracy. State-level issues may be subsumed by national narratives, diluting regional voices. This undermines federalism's role as a check on the concentration of power at the centre.

The federal structure, supported by the Rajya Sabha and plural democratic contests at the state level, prevents the centralisation of authority. ONOE risks eroding this balance and creating a system where power becomes dangerously concentrated.

## Shrinking Democratic Participation

Elections are the primary means of public participation in India's constitutional framework.

Unlike other constitutions that guarantee public participation in lawmaking or provide tools like the right to recall, the Indian system relies almost entirely on elections to hold representatives accountable.

Frequent elections, therefore, allow for regular public engagement and debate. Simultaneous elections would shrink this space for participation without offering any alternative mechanisms to deepen democracy. The public's ability to hold governments accountable would be reduced, weakening India's democratic fabric.

In conclusion, the administrative benefits of ONOE are overstated at best and illusory at worst. Meanwhile, the costs are substantial, both in terms of implementation and the principles it compromises.

ONOE undermines federalism, weakens parliamentary democracy, and reduces opportunities for public participation.

The idea of 'One Nation, One Election' is fundamentally flawed, impractical, and carries significant risks to India's democratic and federal structure. For these reasons, it is an idea that should remain in the realm of discussion, not implementation.

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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t is something of a tradition every December to take stock of the year that is ending and consider what might lie ahead. This is true on a personal level: in my family, we tend to do this around the dinner table. But it is also true more broadly, with the time of year inviting an examination of the intersection of economics, national politics, and global geopolitics.

You would be forgiven if, as a starting point, you expected these three areas to be in alignment. After all, they are deeply interconnected, which suggests self-reinforcing dynamics. But 2024 brought some unusual dispersion in this relationship that actually widened, rather than narrowed, over the course of the year.

Begin with geopolitics. In 2024, Russia secured a greater advantage in the Ukraine war than the consensus forecasts of a year ago anticipated. Similarly, the human suffering and physical destruction resulting from the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza exceeded most observers' already-grim expectations, and spread to other countries, such as Lebanon. The apparent impunity of the strong, together with the absence of effective means of preventing dire humanitarian crises, has deepened the sense for many that the global order is fundamentally imbalanced, and lacks any enforceable guardrails.

As for domestic politics, upheaval has been the order of the day in many countries. Governments have collapsed in both France and Germany – Europe's largest economies – leaving the European Union without political leadership. And following Donald Trump's victory in last month's presidential election,

## A Baseline Scenario For The Global Economy In 2025

Mohamed A. El-Erian

the United States is preparing for a political transition that is likely to bring a significant increase in the political influence of a new "counter-elite."

Meanwhile, an "axis of convenience" – comprising China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia – is seeking to challenge the Western-dominated international order. Other recent developments – from the now-impeached South Korean president's abrupt declaration of martial law (which was quickly reversed) to the collapse of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria – have reinforced the impression that we are living at a time of exceptional geopolitical and political volatility.

The last year also brought some worrisome macroeconomic developments. Europe's malaise has deepened, as countries grapple with low growth and large budget deficits. And China has failed to respond credibly to the clear and present danger of "Japanification," with unfavorable demographics, a debt overhang, and a prolonged property-market downturn undermining growth, economic efficiency, and consumer confidence.

And yet, stock markets have remained relatively stable and delivered

As for domestic politics, upheaval has been the order of the day in many countries. Governments have collapsed in both France and Germany – Europe's largest economies – leaving the European Union without political leadership

high returns, including almost 60 record-high closes for the S&P index. The US economy's exceptional performance is a major reason why. Far from weakening, as most economists expected, the US pulled even further ahead. Given the amount of foreign capital the US is attracting, and the scale of its investment in the future drivers of productivity, competitiveness, and growth, it is likely to continue outperforming other major economies in 2025.

One consequence of this success is that the US Federal Reserve did not deliver the soothing 1.75-2-percentage-point interest-rate cuts that markets were pricing in a year ago. This trend, too, is set to continue: at December's policy meeting, the Fed signaled fewer cuts in 2025, and a higher terminal (long-run) rate.

But political and geopolitical upheaval – and the limited prospects for significant improvements – does pose a risk to the endurance of US economic exceptionalism. Even if the US continues outperforming its peers, as expected, the range of possible outcomes, in terms of both growth and inflation, has widened. In fact, global economic and policy outcomes as a whole are now subject to a larger possibility set, both because the downside risks have grown and because upside innovations – such as in artificial intelligence, life sciences, food security, health care, and defense – could transform sectors and accelerate productivity gains.

Absent a major policy reset, my baseline scenario for the US includes a somewhat lower immediate growth rate, even as the economy outperforms its peers, and sticky inflation. This will present the Fed with a choice: accept above-target inflation or attempt to bring it down and risk tipping the economy into recession.

Globally economic fragmentation

Globally, economic fragmentation will continue, pushing some countries to diversify their reserves further away from the US dollar and explore alternatives to Western payment systems. Yields on US ten-year government bonds – a global benchmark – will edge higher, trading mostly in the 4.75-5% range. As for financial markets, they might find it more challenging to maintain their status as the "good house" in a challenging geo-economic neighborhood.

This is how things appear now. But, beyond recognizing the wider dispersion of possible economic outcomes in 2025, it will be crucial regularly to test whichever baseline one embraces against actual developments.

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

## **My First And Last Brothel Experience**

She was a beautiful girl rather than a prostitute, whose virginity of soul was inaccessible to those who had plundered her body



**Farooq Shah** 

**66**It's said: 'Curiosity killed the cat,' but it is curiosity alone that has helped mankind unravel the deepest and most mysterious secrets of life. If curiosity were to become extinct, the entire gamut of civilisation would be in serious jeopardy. My curious nature has often led me into circumstances that I have regretted afterwards, but there is definite significance to them in terms of my understanding of the world. I have had an experience in my life when I was raw and too young, and today, after many years, I thought I would share it with you."

I travelled to Delhi for the first time when I was 23. My uncle, who lived near the Ajmeri Gate in Old Delhi, was a shawl vendor at the time. I would accompany him on his daily business trips to various parts of the city. A strange hustle in the area on our way home in the evenings would immerse the neighbourhood in a mysterious hue.

Many a time, I would hear women jutting their heads out from the windows high above, shouting to my uncle: "O Khan Sahib, aa jao na." My uncle

would act as if he didn't hear anything and paid them no heed at all. It was a riddle to me why on earth a woman would shout out to a stranger in this manner until I learned we were passing through Delhi's infamous red-light area. It did arouse an interest in me, and since my hormones were young and tantalizing, I decided to check the area out myself.

On a Sunday evening, when my uncle was away, I quietly slipped out of the house and, after zigzagging through the narrow labyrinthine lanes of Old Delhi, emerged from the Ajmeri Gate right onto G.B. Road. Unsure of what I was up to, I walked nonchalantly along the edge of the road until I heard what I had been looking forward to: "Aay chikne, aata hai..."

A bevy of girls in the building to my left was constantly waving at me. Their hints were lewd and enticing to a young heart. I felt as though my heart would leap out of my chest. I rushed to the door, quickened my steps, and my breath came in spurts as I gingerly climbed the dark, betel-stained stairs toward their rooms.

There were plenty of them,



She told me how poverty and affliction had wreaked havoc on her life. She was from a village in Nepal and shared her dream of becoming a teacher. She described her beautiful village, surrounded by mountains with rivers flowing through it. Kashmir was much the same, and I felt as though I were talking to someone familiar

and by the time I could fix my gaze on someone attractive, a woman pushed me into a room where a petite young girl was waiting on her charpoy. She ordered me to sit close to her. I was confused and cursed myself for having landed in this awkward situation. Trembling with fear, I asked her name. "Meenu," she murmured softly. "How old are you?" I doubled my query. "21," she replied. Her short nose prompted me to ask where she came from.

Her answer left me slightly confused when she said, "I'm from Nepal." She had been smuggled into India by fleshtrade racketeers and had passed through many hands before landing in the brothel in Delhi. My hormones had subsided, and I was more interested in her story now.

She told me how poverty and affliction had wreaked havoc on her life. She was from a village in Nepal and shared her dream of becoming a teacher. She described her beautiful village, surrounded by mountains with rivers flowing through it. Kashmir was much the same, and I felt as though I were talking to some-

She probably understood my

naivety and did not force me into anything. I pulled out a fifty-rupee note—the only one I had brought with me-and handed it to her. Her brilliant little eyes shone with love and respect. She was only paid by her customers after they had exploited her body. I, however, had glimpsed her soul, and it was the most profound moment

As I left the room, she said, "Brother, had it been my house, I'd have asked you for a cup of tea." Her words moved me to tears, but my mind was too unseasoned to fully comprehend her plight.

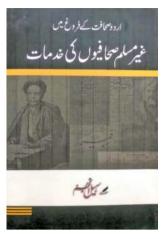
Her body might have been devoured by many, but her soul remained untouched. To me, she was a beautiful girl rather than a prostitute, whose virginity of soul was inaccessible to those who had plundered her body. Nobody had claimed her virgin heart.

I left her room as briskly as I could, descended the stairs hastily, and ran back to my place. I never visited a brothel

The Author is an academic and can be reached at mfshah@gmail.com

**BOOK REVIEW** 

### On the Contribution of Non-Muslim Journalists in **Promotion of Urdu Journalism**



**Asad Mirza** 

enior journalist, Suhail Anjum is a renowned name in Urdu journalism. During his career spanning more than 35 years he has been associated with leading Urdu publications like, Weekly Blitz, Weekly Akbar-e Nau, Weekly Hamara Qadam and from 1995 to 2008 he was associated with the oldest multi-edition Urdu newspaper Qaumi Awaz as a Sub Editor. From 2002 he has been working as VOA's Urdu Correspondent from India.

Suhail has penned more than 40 book in different genres over the years, and out of them 12 have been focused on different aspects of the Urdu Journalism.

His latest work, focusses on the role and contribution of non-Muslim i.e. Hindu, Sikh and Christian journalists in promoting Urdu journalism in India. This aspect of Urdu journalism also exposes the misconception that Urdu is a language of the Indian Muslims, which has been promoted by successive governments of the day. Thus, any work related to promotion of Urdu by them was seen as part of their appeasement policy, which has been used by the opposition parties in targeting the Muslims and underplaying the part of the Urdu language, in recent days.

Suhail's contribution I this regard is praise worthy, as he histhorough research has even bought out the contributions of lesser-known Hindu journalists to the promotion and growth of the language in the country. In this well-researched and curated book Suhail provides pen sketches of 54 Hindu journalists from Harihar Dutt and Sada Sukh Lal to Kuldip Nayar, Vijay Kumar Chopra, Shanti Ranjan Bhattacharya, Fikr Taunsavi, GD Chandan and Jamna Das Akhtar.

However, one is unable to comprehend why Suhail has ignored Munshi Premchand from this list. Premchand (1880-1936) started his career as one of the most prominent Indian authors of the 20th century in Urdu. His change towards Hindi was gradual, and he continued to write in Urdu until his death. Maybe this is due to the fact that Premchand is much better known as a novelist and short story writer.

The book is a must read particularly for those who harp on the theme of Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb or the mixed syncretic culture of north India, as the book proves the point that Hindu journalists from not just UP and Bihar but from Punjab and even Bengal played a key role in the promotion of Urdu language in India. Thus, to link it to a particular religion would be a great disservice to the nation's diversity and cultural ethos. And when we write about the history of Urdu Journalism, we can not ignore the role and contribution of Hindus to Urdu Journalism, from the start of the first Urdu newspaper Jam-e Jahan Numa in 1822 by Hari Har Dutt, till date.

It would be a great work indeed, if the book is translated into English and Urdu, so as to reach those readers who can't read it in Urdu, and also to highlight the rich diversity and assimilation of Urdu by all irrespective of their religion.

## Changing Faces of Familiar Questions: Are You Human?

Irfan Mehmood

**Kamran Mahroof** 

**T**ou're running late at the airport and need to urgently access your account, only to be greeted by one of those frustrating tests "Select all images with traffic lights" or "Type the letters you see in this box". You squint, you guess, but somehow you're wrong. You complete another test but still the site isn't satisfied.

"Your flight is boarding now," the tannoy announces as the website gives you yet another puzzle. You swear at the screen, close your laptop and rush towards the gate.

Now, here's a thought to cheer you up: bots are now solving these puzzles in milliseconds using artificial intelligence (AI). How ironic. The tools designed to prove we're human are now obstructing us more than the machines they're supposed to be keeping at bay.

Welcome to the strange battle between bot detection and AI, which is set to get even more complicated in the coming years as technology continues to improve. So what does the future look like?

Captcha, which stands for Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart, was invented in the early 2000s by a team of computer scientists at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. It

was a simple idea: get internet users to prove their humanity via tasks they can easily complete, but which

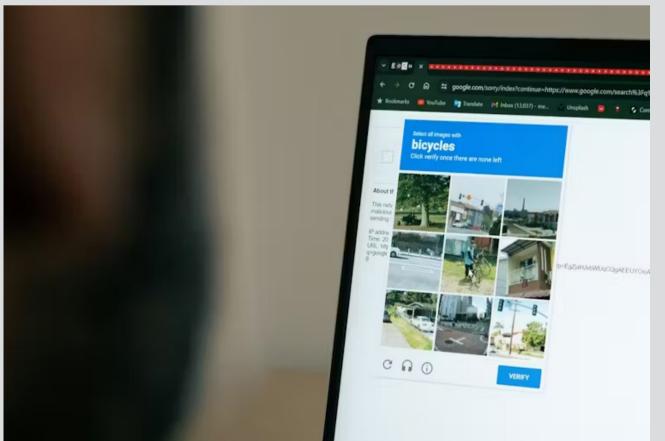
machines find difficult. Machines were already causing havoc online. Websites were flooded with bots doing things like setting up fake accounts to buy up concert tickets, or posting automated comments to market fake Viagra or to entice users to take part in scams. Companies needed a way to stop this pernicious activity without losing legitimate

The early versions of Captcha were basic but effective. You'd see wavy, distorted letters and type them into a box. Bots couldn't "read" the text the way humans could, so websites stayed protected.

This went through several iterations in the years ahead: ReCaptcha was created in 2007 to add a second element in which you had to also key in a distorted word from an old book.

Then in 2014 – by now acquired by Google - came reCaptcha v2. This is the one that asks users to tick the "I am not a robot" box and often choose from a selection of pictures containing cats or bicycle parts, or whatever. Still the most popular today, Google gets paid by companies who use the service on their website.

How AI has outgrown the



Today's AI systems can solve the challenges these Captchas rely on. They can "read" distorted text, so that the wavy or squished letters from the original Captcha tests are easy for them. Thanks to natural language processing and machine learning, AI can decode even the messiest of words.

Similarly, AI tools such as Google Vision and OpenAI's Clip can recognise hundreds of objects faster and more accurately than most humans. If a Captcha asks an AI to click all the buses in a picture selection, they can solve it in fractions of a second, whereas it might take a human ten to 15 seconds.

This isn't just a theoretical problem. Consider driving tests: waiting lists for tests in England are many months long, though you can get a much faster test by paying a higher fee to a black-market tout. The Guardian reported in Iuly that touts commonly used automated software to

book out all the test slots, while swapping candidates in and out to fit their ever-

changing schedules. In an echo of the situation 20 years ago, there are similar issues with tickets for things such as football matches. The moment tickets become available, bots overwhelm the system -

bypassing Captchas, pur-chasing tickets in bulk and reselling them at inflated prices. Genuine users often miss out because they can't operate as quickly.

Similarly, bots social media platforms, ecommerce websites and online forums. Fake accounts spread misinformation, post spam or grab limited items during sales. In many cases, Captcha is no longer able to stop these abuses.

#### What's happening now?

Developers are continually coming up with new ways to verify humans. Some systems, like Google's ReCaptcha v3 (introduced in 2018), don't ask you to solve puzzles anymore. Instead, they watch how you interact with a website. Do you move your cursor naturally? Do you type like a person? Humans have subtle, imperfect behaviours that bots still struggle to mimic.

Not everyone likes Re-Captcha v3 because it raises privacy issues – plus the web company needs to assess user scores to determine who is a bot, and the bots can beat the system anyway. There are alternatives that use similar logic, such as "slider" puzzles that ask users to move jigsaw pieces around, but these too

By arrangements with The Conversation

can be overcome.

#### **Season's First**

disturbance, light rain is possible in the plains of Jammu and light snowfall in the higher reaches of the Chenab valley and Pir Panial range

Light snowfall over middle and higher reaches, particularly over south and central Kashmir, is also most likely during the evening/night, it said.

As per the details, two inches of snowfall was recorded in Srinagar while the highest accumulation till this evening was recorded at Peer Ki Gali, Sinthan Top, Baltal Pahalgam where nearly 10-12 inches of snow accumulated.

At Chiranbal Kulgam, 8 inches of snow accumulated while Qazigund recorded 5 inches, Main town Kulgam 4 inches, Main town Shopian 3 inches, Mir Bazar Kulgam 4 inches, Anantnag 3 inches, Hakura Anantnag 5 inches and Dialgam Anantnag 5 inches.

The snowfall was continuing at multiple places when this report was filed.

The fresh snowfall led to the closure of the Srinagar-Leh Highway and the Mughal Road, the officials said.

Meanwhile, intense cold wave-like conditions prevailed across Kashmir as the minimum temperatures continued to settle several degrees below the freezing point, even as there was a light increase in the night temperatures at most places of the valley.

Both the minimum and maximum temperatures have been staying below normal for this time of the season.

The low temperature has led to the freezing of water supply lines and a thin layer of ice has covered the surface of several water bodies, including the Dal Lake.

Srinagar recorded a low of minus 7.3 degrees Celsius on Thursday night, slightly down from the previous night's minus 7 degrees Celsius, the MeT department said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 6 degrees Celsius, the same as the previous night, the department added.

Pahalgam registered a minimum temperature of minus eight degrees Celsius, slightly up from the previous night's minus 8.6 degrees Celsius.

Qazigund logged a minimum temperature of minus 6.9 degrees Celsius, while Konibal, a hamlet in the Pampore area, was the coldest recorded place in the valley at minus 9.5 degrees Celsius.

Kupwara, in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 6.4 degrees Celsius, while south Kashmir's Kokernag, registered minus 4.8 degrees Celsius.

The weather is expected to remain mainly dry from December 29-31 and light snowfall is possible at isolated places in Kashmir from January 1-5.

The MeT Office said there is a likelihood of some increase in temperatures till Monday.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chillai-Kalan' -- considered the harshest period of winter -- which began on December 21.

During the 40 days of Chillai-Kalan, the chances of snowfall are the highest and the temperature drops considerably.

It ends on January 30 next year, but the cold wave continues even after that in the valley. The 40 days are followed by a 20-day 'Chillai-Khurd' (small cold) and a 10-day 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

#### A Mixed Bag

Delhi. Her sentiments were echoed by many others who shared their delight on social media, dubbing Srinagar a "paradise on earth" in winter.

Local residents expressed gratitude for the snowfall, viewing it as a blessing for the valley's agriculture and water resources. "This snowfall is vital for replenishing our water bodies and ensuring a good harvest in the coming months," said Mohammad Shafi, a farmer from downtown Srinagar.

Despite the joy, the snowfall brought its share of challenges. Roads became treacherously slippery, causing long traffic jams in many areas, including Lal Chowk. Municipal authorities sprang into action, deploying workers to clear snow from maior thoroughfares.

"We advise people to avoid unnecessary travel and drive with caution," said a traffic department official, noting that the snow removal process was ongoing but would take time to reach interior roads.

#### 6 IAS Officers

further said that Sheetal Nanda, IAS (AGMUT:2006) Commissioner Secretary to the Government, Social Welfare Department is transferred and posted as Commissioner Secretary to the Government, Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment relieving Shailendra Kumar, IAS of the additional charge.

According to GAD order, Rehana Batul, IAS (AGMUT:2010) Secretary to the Government, Information Department is transferred and posted as Director, Jammu and Kashmir Institute of Management, Public Administration and Development.

#### **Roads Closed**

Sonamarg-Gumri (SSG), Gurez, Zojila, and Sinthan Pass.

The authorities closed the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, Mughal Road and SSG Road as a precautionary measure.

An official said that Sinthan Pass along NH-244 has been closed for all vehicular movement until further notice due to heavy snowfall. Snow clearance operations will commence soon, he said.

The official added that other roads, including Gurez, Zojila, and Mughal Road, have also been closed by the administration.

Meanwhile, another official stated that the Karnah road is expected to be closed by

#### **Flights Cancelled**

before heading to the airport. The Director of Srinagar Airport said that while operations had been running smoothly earlier, snow accumulation disrupted evening flights. "So far, five flights have been cancelled. I urge passengers to check the status, as the ongoing snowfall is affecting operations, as the ongoing snowfall is affecting operations," he said.

The heavy snowfall and reduced visibility have impacted both incoming and outgoing flights, leaving many passengers stranded.

Airport officials stated that snow buildup on the runway, along with dense cloud cover, has made it unsafe for aircraft operations. "The safety of passengers and crew remains our top priority, and operations are heavily dependent on weather conditions," an airport spokesperson said.

The local meteorological department has predicted intermittent snowfall to continue over the next 24 hours, particularly in higher altitudes, which could lead to further accumulation.

#### **Nearly 3% 11KV**

Power Development Corporation Limited (KPDCL) said that out of the total 1277, 11KV lines, at least 1240 were functioning normally while 37 feeders of 11KV were down

It also said that in the case of 33KV lines, only one out of 134 feeders was down.

In the meantime, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri told KNO that the administration was continuously monitoring the situation.

"We are working on the damaged lines and we assure the public that we will restore the damaged lines soon," Bidhuri said.

#### **KU Postpones**

issued by the Assistant Controller of Examinations said: "The examinations scheduled on December 28, 2025, stand postponed due to inclement weather. Fresh dates for the postponed papers will be notified separately."

Pertinently, on December-18, the university had announced winter break for main and its satellite campuses January-01 to February-23.

The varsity however had said that the departmental offices shall function normally and the heads, directors and coordinators of the departments of satellite campuses and centers shall ensure that the examinations if any and other activities are conducted as per schedule.

#### 350 Vehicles

Valley with the rest of the country. Following inclement weather conditions, authorities suspended the traffic on Srinagar-Jammu National Highway.

Inspector General of Police Traffic. Suleman Choudhary said, "Traffic on the highway has been suspended in Qazigund due to slippery road conditions. Around 350 heavy motor vehicles (HMV) are stranded between Qazigund to Nayug Tunnel."

The IGP said that small vehicles are being cleared and no fresh traffic is being allowed to ply from Udhampur. "Traffic will resume on Saturday morning, subject to road conditions," he added.

The IGP advised the commuters to avoid travelling on the highway until weather improves and the road is cleared.

Meanwhile, officials of the Border Roads Organization (BRO) stated that traffic through the Jawahar Tunnel has also been suspended due to heavy snowfall. "We have suspended traffic as a precautionary measure through Jawahar Tunnel due to snowfall on both sides of the tunnel," a top BRO official said.

#### 'Kandar Tsout'

result in strict action under the provisions of the FSS Act.

The department reiterated its commitment to ensuring public health by regulating food safety standards and urged all food business operators to comply with the prescribed norms.

#### Panel To Address

provided to MLAs in residence and MLA hostels. According to the rules, the functions of the panel shall be advisory in nature.

It was reported that the Speaker was considering forming a House Committee to examine the demand for reducing the rentals of MLA hostels. Sources in the Legislative Assembly Secretariat clarified that this new committee is separate from the House Committee already set up to frame the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Assembly. "There has been no change in the composition of the House Committee on Rules," they said.

#### **NIT Pulwama Land**

Why such an immense scale for an engineering college in an ecologically sensitive area?" he asked. Firaz also highlighted the potential ecological impact, noting that previous infrastructure projects in Kashmir have already consumed vast swathes of fertile land.

#### **Administrative Silence Amid Public**

Despite the growing opposition, the district administration in Pulwama has moved forward with the land transfer process. According to official sources, 4,834 kanals and 19 marlas of state land have been identified for the project, and a team of revenue officials has been tasked with expediting

the preparation of documents. Repeated attempts by Kashmir Observer to contact Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Basharat Qayoom for clarification went unanswered.

#### **Divided Public Opinion**

While many criticize the project, a section of netizens has defended the government's decision. Danish Bhat, a vocal commentator, accused mainstream political parties of undermining development initiatives. "The mainstream parties oppose every move by the central government, even

when such decisions serve the people's best interests. Their aim has been to instill doubt and portray the Indian state as an adver-

sary," he posted. Others expressed frustration with the perpetual criticism of government initiatives in Kashmir. "Why do most Kashmiris behave in a weird manner? They have a negative comment to make on every big or small step the government takes. One person tweets against it, and a flock follows," remarked another user on X.

As the government pushes forward with plans for the NIT Pulwama campus, the scale of land acquisition, combined with ecological and political concerns, has left many questioning whether the benefits of the project outweigh its costs. Meanwhile, calls for greater transparency and public consultation continue to grow louder.

#### Omar's U-Turn

were operating multiple electrical appliances. He argued that metering was the only viable solution to address persistent power issues in the region.

This apparent reversal has drawn sharp criticism from the public, with many accusing the Chief Minister of betraying his preelection commitments.

Online discussions have called him inconsistent and more focused on enforcing policies than helping the public. "Before elections, he was on the side of the people, but now he seems to have forgotten his promises," one user remarked on social media.

"Omar Abdullah hypocrisy exposed! Promised 200 units of free electricity but now blames voters for "overuse" and insists on meters to curb consumption. Is this what his election manifesto stood for? Empty words, broken trust," another user wrote.

Another user posted, "A complete U-Turn? When Out of Power He opposes meters and as a CM Omar Abdullah He States Meters are a Must ensure Electricity. Seems he was unaware of Reality. What Happened to his Election Manifesto?'

Pertinently, people had staged protests in Jammu and Kashmir against the installation of smart electricity meters. Locals still have been expressing outrage over skyrocketing bills attributed to these meters, which they argue have placed an unbearable financial burden on already struggling households.

Despite the public outcry, authorities have remained resolute in their stance. Kashmir Power Development Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has maintained that smart metering is essential for improving billing accuracy and energy management. In some instances in the past, the protests had led to confrontations, with FIRs being lodged against demonstrators accused of damaging meters or disrupting installations. (KNT)

#### **Tributes Pour** him and met his wife and other family

members. Prime Minister Modi, who also laid a wreath, described his predecessor's death as a big loss to the nation, asserting that

his commitment to the people and for the country's development would always be respected. In a video message, Modi recalled Singh's life journey after his family migrated to India following Partition and noted that he

left everything behind but his numerous achievements since then were no mean feat. Singh, the architect of India's economic reforms and a consensus builder in the

rough world of politics, died at AIIMS, Delhi, late on Thursday. He was 92.

He is survived by his wife and three

daughters. The Union cabinet at its meeting held under PM Modi also condoled Singh's passing and hailed him as an eminent statesman and a distinguished leader who left an imprint on national life.

During a meeting chaired by Modi, the cabinet observed a two-minute silence in honour of the departed soul and adopted a Condolence Resolution in the memory of

"Dr Manmohan Singh has left his imprint on our national life. In his passing away, the Nation has lost an eminent statesman, renowned economist and a distinguished leader," the resolution read.

The government has announced a sevenday State mourning as a mark of respect to the former prime minister.

Draped in the Tricolour, Singh's body was brought to his 3, Motilal Nehru Road, residence -- the sprawling bungalow in Lutyens' Delhi that served as his retirement abode for the last over 10 years ever since he relinquished charge as prime minister.

Several leaders paid their last respects to the former prime minister in the presence of his wife Gursharan Kaur and other family members.

Singh would be cremated on Saturday and his final journey will commence from the AICC headquarters at 9.30 am on Saturday, Congress general secretary K C Venugopal said. Modi said Singh's life would always

serve as a lesson for the future generations on how someone can rise above deprivation and struggles to attain the heights of Noting that he served in various capacities in the government, the prime minister said Singh put the country on a new eco-

nomic path as finance minister in the government headed by P V Narasimha Rao. "As prime minister, his contribution to the country's development and progress will always be remembered," he added.

Union ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh, and BJP president J P Nadda also paid their tributes to Singh. Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, former Delhi

chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav also paid their last respects to Singh. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat and general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale condoled his passing,

saying his contributions to Bharat would

always be remembered.

Born to Gurmukh Singh and Amrit Kaur on September 26, 1932 in Gah village of the Punjab province of undivided India (now Pakistan), Singh passed his matriculation examination in 1948. His family migrated to Amritsar after Partition in 1948 after living shortly in Haldwani.

Singh completed his intermediate and graduation in economics from the Hindu College here before moving out of the city to pursue higher studies in Panjab University's Hoshiarpur campus.

His academic career took him from Punjab to the University of Cambridge, UK, where he earned a First Class Honours degree in Economics. Singh followed this with a DPhil in Economics from Nuffield College of Oxford University.

Singh's half-brother Surjit Singh Kohli said the former prime minister had deep affection for his grandmother, who raised him following his mother's death when he was very young.

After migrating to India, the Singh family settled in a small rented house in Amritsar till he graduated.

A few years ago, Singh attended the convocation-cum-alumni meet of the Hindu College in Amritsar as chief guest and interacted with the staff like an ordinary person, reminiscing old memories, retired Hindu College professor Rajinder Loomba said.

Raj Kumar (71), an Amritsar resident, said that Singh used to live in Petha Wala Bazaar near the Golden Temple. The house where the Singh family lived is in a dilapidated state now. Kumar said.

Some locals recalled Singh as someone who always took pains for Amritsar, saying the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government he headed sanctioned several projects for the holy city.

His passing also witnessed people from various fields sharing their anecdotes about him. The social media was flooded with pictures that people posted along with the former prime minister and shared their memories with fondness and nostalgia.

Actor and Jawaharlal Nehru University (INU) alumna Swara Bhaskar recalled how the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) intervened to prevent the administration from acting against students who had displayed black flags at him during a campus event.

Uttar Pradesh minister Asim Arun, who served as Singh's close protection officer for nearly three years during his tenure as a Special Protection Group (SPG) officer, shared his experiences and insights into Singh's personality, emphasising his simple lifestyle and connection with the common man.

One anecdote Arun shared reflected Singh's simplicity -- his attachment to his personal car, a modest Maruti Suzuki 800. Despite having a fleet of high-security vehicles, including a luxurious BMW for official travel, Singh would often express his preference for the modest car.

Singh, who steered the country for 10 years from 2004-2014 and helped set up the country's economic framework as finance minister before that, was a renowned name in the global financial and economic sectors. His UPA government introduced path-

breaking initiatives such as the Right to Information Act, Right to Education Act and Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir government has ordered seven days of State

mourning as a mark of respect to the former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, who passed away on Thursday evening. According to an order, seven days of State Mourning shall be observed from 26th

December, 2024 to 1 January, 2025 (both

days inclusive) throughout the country. The National Flag shall fly at half-mast during the mourning on all buildings and places where it is flown regularly and there shall be no official entertainment during the

#### Mourning," the order reads. **Epitome Of Simplicity**

Singh's contribution to the development of India will always be remembered," PM Modi said. "Manmohan Singh's life was a reflection of his honesty and simplicity. He was a distinguished parliamentarian. His life will always be a lesson on how a person can attain success by rising above deprivation, and struggle."

"He will always be remembered as an honest man, a great economist and a leader who dedicated himself to reforms. As an economist, he provided a lot of services to the nation. During a challenging time, he served as RBI Governor...when he was Finance Minister in the cabinet of former PM Bharat Ratna PV Narasimha Rao, he gave the country that was reeling under economic crisis, a new direction in terms of economy," PM Modi added.

In a video message, PM Modi recalled Singh's life journey after his family's migration to India, leaving behind everything following Partition, as he noted that his numerous achievements since then were no mean feat.

His life will always serve as a lesson for future generations on how someone can rise above deprivation and struggles to attain the heights of success, he said.

Noting that he served in various capacities in the government, the prime minister said Dr Singh was the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor during challenging times and put the country on a new economic path as finance minister in the government headed by PV Narasimha Rao.

PM Modi said despite being educated at the world's prestigious institutes and occupying leading positions, the former prime minister and Congress leader never forgot the values of his normal background.

#### A Friend, Philosopher

was the epitome of wisdom, nobility and humility.

In her message on Singh's demise, Sonia Gandhi said he leaves a void in the national life that can never be filled. "We in the Congress party and the people

of India will forever be proud and grateful

that we had a leader like Dr Manmohan Singh whose contributions to India's progress and development are immeasurable," she said.

"In Dr Manmohan Singh's passing, we have lost a leader who was the epitome of wisdom, nobility and humility, who served our country with all his heart and mind. A luminous and beloved guiding light for the Congress party, his compassion and vision transformed and empowered the lives of millions of Indians," the former Congress president said.

Singh was loved by the people of India for his pure heart and fine mind, Gandhi said, adding that his advice, "wise counsel" and views were eagerly sought and deeply valued across the political spectrum in the country.

"Respected and admired by leaders and scholars all over the world, he was hailed as a statesman of immense wisdom and stature. Dr Manmohan Singh brought brilliance and distinction to every high office that he held. And he brought pride and honour to India," she said.

"For me, Dr Manmohan Singh's death is a deeply personal loss. He was my friend, philosopher and guide. He was so gentle in his manner but so resolute in his deeply held convictions.

"His commitment to social justice, secularism and democratic values was deep and unwavering. To spend any time with him was to come away enlightened by his knowledge and sagacity, moved by his honesty and integrity, and awed by his genuine humility." Sonia Gandhi said.

Earlier in the day, the CPP chairperson paid homage to Singh at his residence where his mortal remains are kept for people to pay their last respects.

She also attended a Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting convened to pay tributes to the former prime minister. Meanwhile Congress MP Rahul Gandhi

grieved the loss of "a mentor and guide" late Thursday after confirmation of the death of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, In an emotional message on X, Gandhi, in Karnataka's Belagavi to attend a meeting of the Congress Working Committee,

said, "Manmohan Singhji led India with

immense wisdom and integrity. His humil-

ity and deep understanding of economics inspired the nation." "I have lost a mentor and guide. Millions of us who admired him will remember him with the utmost pride," Mr Gandhi said, "My heartfelt condolences to Mrs Kaur

(Singh's wife) and the family." "Manmohan Singh Ji led India with immense wisdom and integrity. His humility and deep understanding of economics in-

spired the nation."

Manmohan Singh emerged as one of Rahul Gandhi's gurus in his nascent years in Indian politics, particularly after the assassination of his father, ex-Prime Minister Rajiv

Gandhi, in May 1991. Rahul Gandhi's sister, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, also posted a heartfelt message.

"Few people in politics inspire the kind of respect Sardar Manmohan Singhji did. His honesty will always be an inspiration for us, and he will forever stand tall among those who truly love this country... as someone who remained steadfast in his commitment despite being subjected to unfair and deeply personal attacks by his opponents,"

the Wayanad MP said. "Few people in politics inspire the kind of

#### respect that Sardar Manmohan Singh ji did."

**Accomplished Economist** intellectual giant, an accomplished economist but above all he was a thorough gentleman, a giant among pygmies. India has lost a great son with his passing. Rest in peace sir & thank you for everything," Omar Abdullah wrote.

eoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief and former J&K chief minister, Mehbooba Mufti said Dr. Singh worked tirelessly to advance the peace process and usher in a new era of development in Jammu and Kashmir. "I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Manmohan Singh & I am certain that he was one of the most humble and gentle souls I've encountered - an extremely rare trait in politicians today. His humility & kindness were evident even during his double tenure as Prime Minister when he would personally return calls. Despite the challenges he faced. Dr. Singh worked tirelessly to advance the peace process and usher in a new era of development in Jammu and Kashmir. He was a man of few words whose welfare schemes brought relief to millions of Indians cutting across caste, creed & religion," Mehbooba

Mufti wrote. Peoples Conference (PC) Chairman, Sajad Gani Lone said that the economist Prime Minister will be known for his pioneering reforms. "A great human being and a gentleman Prime Minister passes away. The economist Prime Minister will always be know for his pioneering reforms and liberalisation.

May he rest in peace," Sajad Lone wrote. President of Apni Party and former minister Syed Altaf Bukhari said that the former PM dedicated his entire life to serving the nation. "Dr. Manmohan Singh, a visionary economist, academic, and one of India's longest-serving PMs, dedicated his entire life to serving the nation. As Finance Minister in 1991, he ended the Licence Raj, transforming India's economy. His legacy will inspire generations. May his soul rest in peace," Altaf Bukhari wrote.

Apart from the mainstream politicians in J&K, Hurriyat Conference leader and Jamia Masjid's head cleric, Mirwaiz Umar Faroog expressed grief over his demise, calling him a statesman committed to harmony and resolution. "Saddened by the demise of Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji. I recall our meetings, both during his tenure as PM and before, where his sincerity towards dialogue on Kashmir and fostering people-to-people contact across borders was evident. He believed in open borders and lasting peace

with neighbors and engaged with us in Hurriyat with an open mind. A statesman committed to harmony and resolution. Condolences to his family, May his soul rest in peace," Mirwaiz wrote.

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Friday expressed grief over former prime minister Manmohan Singh's demise, saying his biggest legacy was that he tried to keep India united and spread love across the nation. "Singh was an excellent economist. His

biggest achievement was that he tried to keep India united. He opened the economy. Today, when we talk of a trillion-dollar economy, it is because of Singh," Abdullah, who was Singh's cabinet colleague, told reporters here. Singh wanted friendly relations with our

neighbours and "God willing, that time will come", said Abdullah, who was the Minister for Renewable Energy in the second United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government

He noted that the economy was opened during the rule of Rajiv Gandhi and Narasimha Rao and said that today we can happily see that our economy is progressing.

"I was a minister in his cabinet, and for the first time in India, someone recognised renewable energy. On behalf of my family and my party, I pay my tributes to Singh and hope that we, and others, complete the work he left unfinished and take this country forward while maintaining brotherhood," he said. Remembering Singh's efforts for peace

and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir, the NC chief said his government took the biggest step of trying to bring back Kashmiri Pandits and address their difficulties in "Over 3,000 Kashmiri Pandits returned

here, and their children were provided jobs. Colonies like Jagati were established for them so they could live comfortably until they return to their homes," he added. Abdullah said not many like Singh are

born and while they do a lot of work, they also face criticism. "I pray to God to give strength to his family -- his wife and children -- to bear this pain. They should not forget that the sacrifices Singh made for this country will

never go to waste," the former Union minister said He added that both the present government and future governments should learn

from Singh's example. To a question on whether the Congress party would find it difficult to fill his void, Abdullah said finding such a leader would be very difficult, not just for the Congress

party, but for the whole country. "There are not many like him. There was no other Gandhi, no other Nehru or Sher-e-Kashmir (Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah)," he said.

#### **Nation Has Lost**

Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, on Thursday night. He was 92.

"My heartfelt condolences to the family members and admirers. May God give them the strength and courage to bear this irreparable loss. Om Shanti," Sinha said on X.

"As Prime Minister, he took bold steps for nation building. In his passing away, the nation has lost a towering politician and a distinguished luminary," he added.

#### **J&K Gets Rs 117.58 Cr**

ecosystem across Jammu and Kashmir. He said that among other key projects approved under NABARD included 12 projects of Animal Husbandry which included construction and upgradation of eleven veterinary hospitals and one training institute, with a sanctioned budget of Rs. 4067.04 lakh. The projects included construction of District Veterinary hospitals at Bandipora, Ganderbal and Anantnag besides upgradation of District Veterinary Hospitals at Kishtwar, Bhaderwah, Samba, Kathua, Gujjar Colony Jammu, Kalakote, Pargwal

and in the districts. Besides, construction of Para-Vet Training development Shalteng in Srinagar is also one among the key projects approved in the

Animal Husbandry Sector. The Minister said that the development of additional infrastructure including state of the art hostels at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Jammu (SKUAST-J), and Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir (SKUAST-K) at the cost of Rs. 3051.65 lakh have also been approved and sanctioned in the Agriculture sector.

In order to ensure infrastructure development in Command Area Development & Water Management (CADWM), 14 CAD projects have been approved at the Rs. 4639.31 lakh across various districts, focusing on irrigation and rejuvenation of field channels. The projects included tapping perennial natural water sources in Udhampur, construction of field channels in Kathua, Baramulla and other districts. Besides, rehabilitation of existing irrigation systems in Kulgam, Pulwama, and Srinagar.

laved Dar underscored that these projects aim to improve rural infrastructure, enhance irrigation efficiency and support farmers with modern facilities for training, veterinary care, and resource management. He directed the concerned to ensure timely work execution and completion of projects dedicating them to the public at the earliest.

"These projects underline our unwavering commitment to growth and development of agriculture and allied sectors in Jammu & Kashmir. We aim to empower our farmers with the best facilities and create a sustainable agricultural ecosystem for future generations, maintained the Minister."

Earlier, Secretary APD, Shailendra Kumar, stated that the approval and sanctioning of these significant projects will enhance agricultural productivity, improve irrigation supply, and empower the farming community. He also remarked that these projects are of prime importance and will play a pivotal role in optimizing the utilization of resources across agricultural and allied sectors.

## Promises Of JKBOSE Turn To Dust In Delivering Textbooks On Time

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Even after two weeks of winter vacation, the students enrolled in government-run-schools are yet to receive free textbooks from the authorities—thus raising a question on the functioning of IKBOSE.

The delay in delivering the textbooks has left thousands of students at the receiving end as the School Education Department has failed to distribute the course books on time.

Besides, the Chief Education Officers (CEOs) of Kashmir region have also raised the concerns in this regard and have requested the higher-ups that books shall be made available by JKBOSE at the earliest.

the CEOs in a meeting with DSEK informed that they have submitted actual requirements of books as per the enrollment for the session 2024-25 to JK-BOSE. "However, the receipt of such books is awaited."

"In the meeting, all CEOs pleaded that books shall be made available by JKBOSE at

the earliest, so that distribution is completed by the end of December," an official said.

In the meantime, officials of JKBOSE informed KNO that the board has placed the order of textbooks to its publishers as per the requisition received by CEOs of Jammu and Kashmir.

"We are trying hard to deliver the textbooks at earliest. We have already placed the order of textbooks to our publishers and we are expecting to start distributing the course books by December-end." The official said.

He further said that some of the textbooks were already in the stock and the board has already initiated the process to distribute them.

Earlier, the Minister of Education Sakina Itoo had assured that the students would receive free textbooks immediately after the culmination of annual exams.

The minister had ordered and instructed the JKBOSE to ensure that the board will deliver free textbooks on time— (KNO)

## Utilize Jammu's Tourism Potential: CM

Urges Officials To Divert Vaishno Devi Pilgrims To Other Attractions

**Observer News Service** 

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has called for strategically utilising Jammu's tourism potential and directed officials to devise plans aimed at channeling the vast influx of Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrims towards exploring other tourist attractions in the region.

The Chief Minister said Jammu's annual footfall of nearly one crore Vaishno Devi pilgrims presents a good opportunity to boost the region's overall tourism.

"If we can encourage even 15 percent of the pilgrims visiting Mata Vaishno Devi to explore other attractions in Jammu, we could see an influx of 15 lakh tourists — a number comparable to Kashmir's peak tourism

years," he said.

Abdullah said the region has an untapped potential for border tourism, adding that the near-completion of the artificial lake at River Tawi would be a pivotal step in drawing more

"Jammu has immense potential for border tourism, and the artificial lake on River Tawi is a landmark project that will undoubtedly enhance Jammu's appeal as a tourist destination," he said.

The CM shared his vision for transforming Jammu into a distinct tourist destination while inaugurating the open-air amphitheatre at Bagh-e-Bahu on Thursday evening. He praised the development of Bagh-e-Bahu, which has evolved into a key tourism hub featuring wa-

ter fountains, an aquarium, and a sound and light show.

"I have seen Bagh-e-Bahu grow from a modest site into a vibrant hub. The addition of this amphitheatre adds a new dimension to Jammu's cultural and tourism landscape," he said.

Omar called for the amphitheatre to be fully utilised as a platform for cultural activities and events. He suggested hosting school programmes and other events to allow students to hone their skills and showcase their talents.

"This facility should not be left underutilised. It should host a variety of events, including school activities, to foster cultural growth and community engagement," he said.

The Chief Minister advocated for the creation of a well-publicised calendar of events involving private organizations and schools, particularly those without adequate facilities.

He also shared a personal connection with the amphitheatre, saying his residence across the river gives him a direct view of its activities.

"From my balcony, I can hear the soothing sounds of the river and occasionally enjoy the sound and light show. I look forward to hearing the vibrant buzz of activities from this amphitheatre as a regular feature,"

The CM urged concerned departments to ensure continuous engagement and wide publicity for the facility. "I hope it becomes a key cultural landmark in Jammu," he expressed.

## **Snowfall: Traffic Police Issue Advisory**

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Amid the ongoing snowfall and slippery road conditions, the District Magistrate, Baramulla and Traffic Police, Rural Kashmir issued stringent travel restrictions for motorists on critical routes, including Tangmarg-Gulmarg and other hilly roads in the region.

The advisory, backed by Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, restricts heavy vehicles and buses from traveling beyond Tangmarg, while only light vehicles equipped with anti-skid chains are permitted for essential travel.

Tourist vehicles are restricted to operate only between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m, while authorities are mandated to clear snow and sprinkle salt on frozen surfaces for safer travel.

Meanwhile, the Traffic Police stressed that only 4x4 vehicles and vehicles equipped with anti-skid chains will be allowed on other key roads, such as Zojila and Mughal Road. Unauthorized parking and vehicles with invalid documents will face strict penalties, they said.

Residents and tourists are urged to adhere to these guidelines to prevent accidents and ensure smooth movement along these critical routes.

## Fire Breaks Out In Ganderbal's Wussan

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** A massive fire broke out in residential houses at Wussan area of central Kashmir's Ganderbal on Friday af-

An offcial said that a fire broke out in two residential

houses at Wussan today.

"The fire broke out from the house of Gh Rasool son of Gh Hassan Rather resident from Sofi Mohalla Wussan, an official said.

He said that fire tenders have reached the spot to douse the flames—(KNO)

#### YEAR-ENDER

# Sonamarg Attracts Over 800,000 Visitors In 2024

Agencie

**GANDERBAL:** Sonamarg, often referred to as 'the meadow of gold' and located at an altitude of 2730 metres in Ganderbal district, has seen a remarkable increase in tourist traffic throughout 2024.

With its snow-capped mountains and breathtaking clear blue skies, Sonamarg has become a top winter destination. This year, the region recorded a total of 822,857 tourists including 766,309 international visitors, 40,356 locals, and 16,191 domestic visitors, according to details.

"The beauty of Sonamarg is simply breathtaking. The snow-covered peaks and serene landscape make it the perfect getaway for nature lovers and adventure seekers alike," said Sunil Kumar from Maharashtra, a domestic tourist from India.

Emma Larson, an international visitor from the United States, added, "Sonamarg is unlike anywhere I've been before. The combination of tranquillity and winter sports makes it an



unforgettable destination."
The officials said several factors contribute to the surge in tourism in Sonamarg which include the success of last year's ice-skating event and the growing popularity of winter sports.

"Building on this momentum, the Sonamarg Development Authority (SDA) is expanding its offerings by introducing a new ice rink and additional winter sports activities, aiming to establish Sonamarg as a premier winter sports hub," he said.

G M Bhat, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Sonamarg Development Authority (SDA), told KNO, "We are fully prepared for the winter season. All necessary arrangements, including men and machinery, are in place."

"This winter, we are excited to host a range of winter games such as ice-skating, snow biking, skiing, and more," the CEO said. "We invite tourists to come and experience the unmatched beauty of Sonamarg and enjoy the thrilling winter sports we have to offer."—(KNO)

## DC Anantnag Reaches Jawahar Tunnel To Monitor Situation Amid Fresh Snowfall

**Observer News Service** 

ANANTNAG: As the slippery condition of the roads led to the traffic congestion near the Jawahar Tunnel, the district administration Anantnag on Friday evening said that they are monitoring the situation.

Deputy Commissioner (DC)

Anantnag, Syeed Fakhrudin Hamid said that the traffic movement has slowed down in wake of the slippery condition of the roads after fresh snowfall. The traffic is moving slowly and I am at the spot along with the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Anantnag and other officials. We are trying to ensure that the traffic is cleared through the Jawahar Tunnel," he said.

He added that the area has not received the heavy snowfall but the roads have turned slippery after the fresh wet spell. Moreover, SSP Kulgam, along with other officers of Kulgam Police, are also present on the Jammu-Srinagar



be given priority.

"Just spoke to DC Anantnag about the current situation of the road between Qazigund & the tunnel. The icy conditions

have caused traffic to back up. The stranded vehicles, in both directions, are slowly moving & where necessary being assisted. The DC is on the spot with his team. I've instructed him to ensure that vehicles with families & children must be given priority. If necessary arrangements for overnight shelter will be made. The DC is accompanied by an ambulance in case of any medical emergency," Omar had wrote on X.

WATER SCARICITY

## Efforts On To Prevent Disruptions: CE Jal Shakti

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Chief Engineer Jal Shakti Department Braham Jyoti Sharma on Friday assured the people that efforts were in full swing to ensure that there are no disruptions in the water supply.

Sharma said, "Our staff is working continuously in the extreme weather conditions to ensure that the taps don't turn dry."

He said the temperature

He said the temperature falling well below the freezing point has made their job difficult but his field staff is working hard to overcome the challenge.

Sharma said, "We are striving to ensure uninterrupted water supply. In cases of disruption, we immediately address complaints."

He said that the areas lo-

cated at higher altitudes often experience frozen sources, causing temporary halts in supply.

"Our workers are trained to handle such conditions. They start early in the morning to ensure the flow is restored," he added.

Sharma said with the snow-

fall in the region, all their men and machinery are ready to meet any challenge.

He said beyond the regular water supply, they have also placed water tankers in standby mode to meet any of the water supply requirements in the region.

He added that control rooms have been activated to assist residents in need. "This is not a new challenge. It happens every year, and our staff knows how to manage it. We are committed to maintaining water supply despite the harsh weather," he said—(KNO)

## Famous Springs Drying Up In Pulwama

Agencies

**PULWAMA:**The famous water springs of South Kashmir's Pulwama district are drying up again, leading to a water shortage in several villages.

As per the details, several water springs that are sources of different water schemes have dried up due to prolonged dry spell in Kashmir. Officials of PHE Tral in-

formed that the water level of the famous spring Aripal started decreasing before weeks but it dried up almost 95 per cent now.

They said that the famous spring that was acting as a drinking water source to several water supply schemes and with its drying up; it has led to water shortage in many

Meanwhile, the locals said that they have been facing a water shortage for many days



due to the low water level at Aripal spring. They said that this is for the second time in the ongoing year that the level of water at this famous spring has gone down.

Earlier in January this year, this spring had completely dried up following which the fishes in the fisheries department were shifted to Dobiwan and other places.

Meanwhile, the officials said that they are looking for alternate arrangements in this regard so that people won't suffer. They said that currently tankers have been pressed into service to ensure water to every village where supply has got affected while further steps in this regard are being taken up.

An official of Jal Shakti Department on condition of anonymity said that Aripal spring has dried up almost 95 per cent and people are facing water issues since the last 20 days.

He said that all springs in the area have exhausted and currently they are managing just 30 per cent of sources as some have frozen as well.

He said that tanker services have been put in service but the situation is very critical as only 10% roughly can be catered through tanker services. He, however, said that if there will be good precipitation in the coming time, all issues will get resolved—(KNO)

## **Industrial Pollution In Khrew Sparks Health Concerns**

Agencies

**PULWAMA:** Industrial pollution in the Khrew area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district has emerged as a serious concern as it severely impacts the environment, agriculture and public health.

Residents said the presence of multiple cement factories has led to alarming levels of dust and pollution, which is endangering not only their lives but also the local ecosystem.

"Pollution levels are rising daily, and it's taking a toll on our health, agriculture, horticulture, especially saffron cultivation," said Gulzar Ahmad, a local.

He said that Khrew, once renowned for its lush saffron fields, is now witnessing a decline in saffron production due to pollution. "Cement dust settles on the flowers, hindering their growth and reducing both the quality and quantity of the saffron yield," he added.

Locals said that pollution has severely affected agriculture and horticulture in the area. The groundwater level has largely declined, which has compounded the problems faced by residents.

Some locals alleged that for-

Some locals alleged that forests in the area are deliberately set on fire to facilitate mining activities. They accused the concerned departments of being complicit in such actions.

Locals also mentioned the degradation of the local environment, saying dust and pollutants have settled on vegetation, which hampers photosynthesis and causes stunted plant growth. They

said that wildlife in the area has been driven away due to

environmental degradation.
The rise in pollution has also led to a surge in respiratory ailments among the population. Dr Irfan, a cardiologist at SMHS Hospital, said that heart attacks, asthma, lung cancer and other respiratory diseases have increased in Khrew over the past few years.

"Previously, we would see two to three heart attack cases annually from Khrew. Now, we are seeing cases every week," he said. "While the immediate impact is evident in adults, the long-term effects of pollution on the younger generation are yet to manifest. It's a silent health crisis"

health crisis."

Both locals and experts have called for urgent measures to address the issue. Residents are demanding strict enforcement of environmental regulations, installation of pollution control technologies in the cement factories and an end to harmful practices like forest fires for

mining.

Dr Irfan warned that without immediate action, the consequences of unchecked pollution will be devastating for the region. "The concerned departments, especially the Pollution Control Board, must act now. If this continues, the long-term health and environmental impact will be

catastrophic," he said.

The residents of Khrew have expressed hope that their concerns will be addressed before the situation worsens. They have urged authorities to prioritise the health and well-being of both the people and the environment—(KNO)

## RBI's Nationwide Quiz To Be Telecasted On Doordarshan

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** To mark the 90th year of its service to the nation, Reserve Bank of India, hosted a nationwide quiz i.e., RBI90Quiz for undergraduate college students. Quiz was launched on August 20, 2024. The quiz attracted widespread interest with participation of 1,58,206 students from 13,961 colleges, spread across 734 districts of

the country. The multi-level team-based competition, which commenced with an online selection round in September 2024, followed by State and Zonal level rounds, culminated in the National Final, which was held on December 6, 2024, at Mumbai. The edited event of National Finals of the RBI90Quiz shall be telecast on Doordarshan on December 29, 2024, from 8:30 PM to 10:00 PM.

## Shutdown In Katra Against Ropeway Project Enters 3rd Day

Agencies

JAMMU: The ongoing shutdown in Katra, the base camp for the Shri Vaishno Devi pilgrimage, entered its third day on Friday, with the agitation against the proposed ropeway project intensifying as more locals joined a hunger strike.

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti, which called for a 72-hour shutdown starting Wednesday, announced the suspension of all activities in Katra during the bandh. The protest is aimed at halting the Rs 250-crore passenger ropeway project proposed between Tarakote Marg and Sanji Chhat along the 12-kilometre track to the shrine

six protesters began a hunger strike on Wednesday night, demanding the release of 18 Samiti members detained during a protest march earlier that day. Women and children have since joined the protest.

The detained members include prominent Samiti leaders Bhupinder Singh and Sohan Chand, who were taken into custody for participating in what the Samiti claims was a peaceful demonstration.

Shiva, a hunger striker whose condition deteriorated, had to be hospitalised, but other participants pledged to continue the strike, with replacements ready to step in if needed.

The ropeway project, approved by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, aims to facilitate access to the shrine, particularly for senior citizens and children who face difficulty climbing the steep track. The board had earlier shelved the project due to similar protests.

However, the Samiti, representing shopkeepers, pony operators and palanquin owners, has expressed concern that the project would devastate local livelihoods, as many residents depend on the pilgrimage economy for their income.

Shops, restaurants and other business establishments have remained closed, and vehicular movement is at a standstill in Katra. Black flags displayed across the town symbolise widespread dissent.

The bandh has caused inconvenience to the thousands of pilgrims who visit the shrine daily. Many have complained about the closure of eateries and the lack of local transport.

The Shrine Board has arranged special facilities to mitigate the impact of the shutdown. Langars at the Katra railway station, Banganga and Tarakote are providing tea and milk to pilgrims. Boarding and lodging arrangements have also been made to ensure the yatra continues smoothly.

ti criticised the administration for its lack of engagement with the protesters, saying, "Instead of initiating dialogue, the administration resorted to force by detaining our leaders. This approach is creating an unnecessary crisis."

The spokesperson called for

A spokesperson for the Sami-

The spokesperson called for the project to be shelved, saying it poses a threat to the livelihoods of Katra residents. "Our demand is simple: protect the economy of Katra's residents who depend on the pilgrimage," he added.

The Shir Sena Dogra Front

The Shiv Sena Dogra Front (DFSS) expressed support for the pilgrims and urged the authorities to resolve the issue amicably. DFSS President Ashok Gupta called for building additional ropeways and enhancing amenities for pilgrims to ensure that all stakeholders, including business owners and pony operators, are considered.

"Pilgrimage, business and ponywalas are all dependent on the yatra. Prolonged disruptions will only hurt everyone involved," Gupta said, adding that his group is prepared to provide transport and food to pilgrims if the situation worsens—(KNO)

## **BGT 3rd Test: India Collapse After** Jaiswal's Terrible Run-Out

**Press Trust of India** 

MELBOURNE: A familiar collapse unfolded after Yashasvi Jaiswal's inexplicable run-out as India stared down the barrel at 164/5 against a menacing Australia on day two of the fourth Test here on Friday.

Jaiswal, who was quite fluent during his 118-ball stay that yielded 82 runs, was way short of his crease after a mix-up with Virat Kohli (36) while attempting a quick single, handing Australia the breakthrough that could prove decisive.

India are still 310 runs behind Australia's first innings score of 474 and would need another 111 runs to avoid a follow-on that should never have been a consideration on a placid batting track.

It was 153 for 2 at one stage and in four overs, another three wickets fell with Gautam Gambhir's plan of sending a night watchman in Akash Deep turning out to be one of the many poor calls that the head coach has taken in this game.



In a space of barely five minutes, cricket showed its fickle nature as Jaiswal pushed towards mid-on and called for a quick single with an assured Kohli (36) at the other end. Kohli took a step and half before retreating.

Pat Cummins swooped the ball and threw at the striker's end with a frustrated Jaiswal seen telling his idol "my call".

This moment will be one for posterity as Kohli looked down and perhaps felt that he could have at least said a loud "No" to allow Jaiswal to sprint back. The run-out broke his con-

centration and for the first time after 85 balls, he poked a delivery bowled in the corridor of uncertainty and it was the

The Jaiswal-Kohli pair had

added 102 runs and looked comfortable just like they did in the Perth second innings. The ball hardly did anything after Rohit Sharma (3) played a poor shot and KL Rahul got a ripper from Pat Cummins.

Jaiswal was in regal form, as he cut, pulled, drove and lofted the Australian bowlers stamping his authority as the next megastar of Indian batting.

Kohli, at the other end, endured boos for Thursday's runin with debutant Sam Konstas and battled his demons.

This was after Steve Smith's 34th Test hundred ensured a very good total for hosts.

Starting the day at 311 for 6, Smith added 112 and 44 runs with Cummins (49) and Mitchell Starc (15) respectively, leaving the visitors searching for back-up plans.

Smith, who was unbeaten overnight on 68 off 111 balls, took another 56 deliveries in the second morning to complete a Test ton which placed him on even keel with the legendary Sunil Gavaskar (34).

## Kerala Beat J&K To Make **Handball National Pre-Quarters**

**Press Trust of India** 

**CHANGANASSERY:** Kerala defeated Jammu and Kashmir 33-28 to make it to the pre-quarterfinals of the 53rd Senior Men's National Championship here on Friday.

Kerala recorded their third consecutive win to emerge pool toppers.

They will face Himachal Pradesh in the pre-quarterfinal on Saturday.

The other teams to en-

the pre-quarterfinals are Haryana, West Bengal, Railways, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Chandigarh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab and Services.

## **J&K Carrom Association Holds AGM & General Election**



**SRINAGAR:** The J&K Carrom Association conducted its Annual General Meeting on Thursday at Sher e Kashmir Indoor Sports Complex here. The meeting marked a significant milestone in promoting carrom and strengthening the association's foundation in the region.

President JKCA Adil Rashid Shah welcomed all members and representatives of the affiliated district units of the association. He highlighted the association's achievements, including the resolution of key issues and its expansion into a robust body of over 36 members representing various district units.

The election of office bearers was carried out under the supervision of Musbat Ismail Wani (Deputy Legal Remembrancer), appointed as the Returning Officer by the J&K Sports Council, and Dr. Altaf ur Rehman (Director of Physical Education, Islamia College, Srinagar, Retd.), who acted as the Observer on behalf

#### The newly elected office bearers are as follows: President: Adil Rashid Shah

Senior Vice President: Sameer Ahmad Vice Presidents: Advocate Adfar Jan and Ah-

Joint Secretaries: Amandeep Singh and Sheikh Mohammad Saqib

General Secretary: Mudasir Khan Asst Secretary: Dawar Rashid Gadyari Treasurer: Arif Sultan Khan

Executive Members: Jagpal Singh (Jammu), Peer Musadiq (Pulwama), Irfan Majeed (Bandipora), Faizan Mehraj (Srinagar), and Farhan Malik (Srinagar).

Working Committee Members: District Srinagar Carrom Association District Baramulla Carrom Association District Bandipora Carrom Association District Jammu Carrom Association **District Anantnag Carrom Association** District Pulwama Carrom Association

## Heartbreak For J&K As Kerala Win 1-0 To Enter Santosh Trophy Semis



**Press Trust of India** 

HYDERABAD: Naseeb Rahman rose to the occasion once again as he scored the solitary goal to help Kerala defeat Jammu and Kashmir in the quarter-final of the National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy, here on Friday.

Rahman, who scored in the 73rd minute, is now the joint secondhighest scorer of the tournament, alongside Tamil Nadu's Lijo K, with seven goals to his name.

Kerala, who have reached the tourament's semi-finals for the 31st time, will take on Manipur on De-

Kerala have been a formidable force in this season's Santosh Trophy, arriving at their quarter-finals against Jammu and Kashmir as one of the unbeaten heavyweights of the competition.

With a potent attack, Kerala's team dynamics have allowed them to score an impressive total of 29 goals while their defence has also stood firm, conceding only four times so far.

Facing such a high-performing team, Jammu and Kashmir, under the tactical guidance of former Indian defender and coach Mehrajuddin Wadoo, prepared a robust defensive strategy to counter Kerala's aggres-

They effectively closed down spac-

es in the midfield, crucial for disrupting Kerala's build-up play and tightly marked the wingers to prevent them from making impactful runs down the flanks.

The first half thus saw Kerala's players visibly frustrated as they struggled to penetrate the solid defensive setup of Jammu and Kashmir. Even when they did, Jammu and Kashmir's goalkeeper Majid Ahmad was alert and positioned himself perfectly to make timely saves.

Jammu and Kashmir themselves showed flashes of threat. In the 27th minute. Aakif Javaid dashed down the right flank and delivered a cross to Talib Nazir inside the penalty box. Despite having ample time and space, Nazir's shot sailed over the crossbar as the first half ended goalless.

Entering the second half, Kerala intensified their efforts and piled on more pressure on the Jammu and Kashmir defence. Their persistence paid off in the 73rd minute when a defensive mistake by Jammu and Kashmir provided Kerala with a golden opportunity.

Joseph Justin delivered a cross that the defenders failed to clear effectively, allowing Rahman to take control with his chest.

Rahman showed his composure and striking ability by firing a decisive volley past the goalkeeper, put-

## **Short TAKES**

### **Kohli Jeered At MCG; Pitch Invader Tries To Hug Him**

Indian batting star Virat Kohli was booed and jeered while walking back to the dressing room after his dismissal in the Boxing Day Test against Australia here, prompting him to turn around for a brief standoff with the fans on an eventful day for him.

Kohli's conduct has become a hot topic in the ongoing fourth Test where he shoulder-charged 19-yearold debutant Sam Konstas on the opening day. It resulted in a fine and a demerit point.

On Friday, Kohli batted well for his 36 before being caught behind off Scott Boland.

He was dismissed shortly after a mix-up with Yashasvi Jaiswal resulted in the opener running himself

As he entered the tunnel leading up to the dressing room, fans in that section of the MCG began booing him and also made some comments in a short clip that has since gone viral.

Kohli strode back after hearing something that was not clearly audible in the 22-second video.

The 36-year-old didn't seem pleased as he looked at the stands on his left before being escorted back to his original destination by a security personnel.

His face off with Konstas on Thursday was con-

demned as unnecessary by even former India players.

#### Pitch Invader Puts His Arm Around Kohli

Earlier, during the first session of play, a pitch invader sprinted to the ground and put his arm around

The Indian star did not resist him and walked a few steps before the unidentified man was led out by the

### **Children Turn Frozen Pond Into** 'Cricket Turf' In Sopore



Despite the severe cold gripping Kashmir, children in the rural part of Sopore in north Kashmir are proving that cricket knows no boundaries.

In Haritar, a village located about six kilometers from Sopore, children, doning Pherans, were seen enthusiastically playing cricket on the frozen ice. With frozen fields underfoot, the children's passion for the game remains unshaken.

"I've never seen anything like this before," said a 12-year-old boy, who was playing cricket. "It's cold, but we don't mind. The game is what matters." Another child added, "Even though our hands

freeze, cricket is life. The cold is just part of the game." Elderly villagers, who gather around the icy turf while expressing pride in the children's determination, say the cold might freeze everything around them, but these children's spirit is unbreakable. (KNO)

#### **Court Rejects Barcelona's Appeal To Register Olmo**

Aliga welcomed a court's decision on Friday to  $ldsymbol{oxtlesh}$ reject Barcelona's appeal for the precautionary registration of Dani Olmo for the rest of the season, which means the Spain international may not play for the club from Jan. 1.

Barcelona had signed Olmo in August for around 55 million euros (\$57.39 million) but due to the club being unable to meet LaLiga's wage cap, the attacking midfielder was registered for the first half of the

The club had managed to register Olmo after longterm injuries kept first team players out of the squad for months, which allowed Barca to allocate a portion of their wages to register the 26-year-old.

But the four-month allowance for Olmo is set to expire at the end of the month and the Commercial Court number 10 of Barcelona rejected the club's request to provisionally register him.

Olmo, who led Spain to European Championship glory earlier this year, has been an integral part of Barcelona's team this season. Barca are third in LaLiga, three points behind leaders Atletico Madrid.

## Debutant Bosch Impresses As South Africa Edges Ahead In 1st Test v Pakistan

Agencies

**CENTURION:** Fast bowler Corbin Bosch continued his strong debut with a record-breaking half century to help give South Africa the advantage in the first test against Pakistan on Friday.

Bosch's unbeaten 81 off 93 balls — the highest by a No. 9 batter on his test debut -earned South Africa a meaningful 90-run first innings lead as the home team got bowled out

Pakistan reached 88-3 and still trailed by two runs when early stumps were drawn on Day 2 because of bad light. Babar Azam was batting on 16 and Saud Shakeel was not out

South Africa needs to win one of the two test matches against Pakistan to seal a place in the final of the World Test Championship at Lord's next year with Sri Lanka, India and Australia also in the running.

The opening pair of Saim Ayub and captain Shan Masood both scored 28 runs each and counterattacked South Africa's pace bowlers before Pakistan lost three wickets for 25 runs late in the final session under gloomy skies.

Kagiso Rabada, who bowled splendidly in the first innings without getting a wicket, knocked back Ayub's off stump and Marco Jansen found the outside edges of Masood and Kamran Ghulam (4) in succes-

The 30-year-old Bosch had grabbed a wicket with his first ball on Day 1 and finished with figures of 4-63 after the visitors got bowled out for 211 with Dane Paterson (5-61) grabbing his second successive five-wicket haul.

Bosch bossed the all-out Pakistan pace attack by hitting 15 boundaries, including some meticulous cover drives and pull shots as he shared a 41-run stand with Kagiso Rabada and then contributed a further 47 runs with No. 11 Paterson.

South Africa seemed to have lost its grip when it collapsed from 178-4 to 213-8 when



Aiden Markram (89) missed out on his eighth test century

and edged Khurram Shahzad to wicketkeeper Mohammad

Rizwan down the leg side in the second session.

Naseem Shah bowled a marathon 10-over spell and picked up three wickets after initially struggling with his lengths in the first session as South Africa's middle order couldn't hang in with Markram. But Bosch batted like a sea-

soned batter on his home ground to the frustration of Pakistan's bowlers. The lead was 43 when Rabada skied Aamer Jamal's shot ball to Babar at short mid-wicket before Bosch reached his half century off 46 balls with a superb cover drive.

Paterson also showed his batting skills with a straight six off Mohammad Abbas (1-79), who is making a test comeback after more than three years. Bosch looked set for a memorable hundred but Paterson ran out of patience against the offspin of Ayub and Shahzad took a brilliant running catch over his shoulders at mid-off.

Earlier, Markram led South Africa to 180-5 in the first session after the home team resumed on 82-3. Pakistan hit back with two wickets in the

latter half of the first session with captain Temba Bavuma (31) and David Bedingham (30) both edging behind the wickets. Markram completed his half

century with an exquisite cover driven boundary off Naseem and stretched the fourth-wicket stand to 70 runs with Bayuma before Pakistan got its first breakthrough.

Jamal was rewarded for his persistent length balls to Bavuma as the South African skipper finally got a thick outside edge while going for a loose drive. Bedingham counterattacked

from the onset, smashing five boundaries in his 33-ball knock and also survived when Pakistan unsuccessfully went for an lbw television review against Naseem Shah's full pitched delivery, which television replays suggested would have missed

the leg stump. However, Naseem didn't have to wait long as Bedingham was beaten by some extra bounce and nicked it in the first slip in the penultimate over before