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BOOK APPOINTMENT

'Zero Tolerance For Terrorism' Union Home Secretary Reviews Security Situation

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan on Monday called on the top security brass to work towards achieving the goal of 'terror-free Jammu and Kashmir' at the earliest.

The Union Home Secretary arrived in Srinagar this morning and chaired a high-level security meet at SKICC on the banks of Dal Lake here.

Sources privy to the meeting, which commenced at 2:30 pm, said that the Union Home Secretary emphasized on the need to act tough against the terrorists, their supporters and anti-national elements.

He reiterated the government's resolve about zero tolerance towards terrorism.

The Union Home Secretary appreciated the security agencies for working in close coordination



with each other in the decisive action against the terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and emphasized on the implementation of "Area Domination Plan" and "Zero Terror Plan" in mission mode.

Sources said that other issues that came up for discussion during the meeting included anti-terror operations and infiltration threats along the Line of Control (LoC).

The meeting was attended by the top officers, including General Officer Commanding of Srinagar based Chinar Corps | [More on P6](#)

Kashmir Set For Snowy Start To New Year

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Kashmir Valley is set to receive more snowfall on New Year as weatherman on Sunday said that two Western Disturbances (WD) in quick succession are likely to affect J&K and adjoining areas from January 1 onwards.

A meteorological department official said while generally dry

ON JANUARY 1ST & 2ND, A FEEBLE WD WOULD AFFECT J&K and under its influence, generally cloudy weather is expected with possibility of light snow at scattered places."

weather is expected till the end of this year, a feeble western disturbance on January 1-2 is expected to hit J&K. "Generally cloudy

(weather is expected) with light snow at scattered places during January 1st evening/night to 2nd morning".

From January 3-6, he said, a moderate WD was likely to J&K and weather is expected to be generally cloudy with possibility of light to moderate snow at many places of Kashmir Division and scattered places of Jammu Division. The weather office has also issued an advisory for cold wave at | [More on P6](#)



29% Deficit Rainfall Recorded In 2024

Jammu and Kashmir has recorded a total deficit rainfall of 29 per cent so far with the highest deficiency recorded in the month of January 2024 at 91 per cent. The year-long deficit rainfall data has revealed that against the normal precipitation of 1232.3 mm, J&K saw a rainfall of only 870.9 mm in the last 12 months of 2024 till December 29. The only pre-Monsoon season, as per the data, has recorded close | [More on P6](#)

Cold Wave Intensifies In Gulmarg, Pahalgam

Cold wave conditions intensified in Gulmarg and Pahalgam in Kashmir where mercury plunged several degrees below the freezing point, even as the rest of the Valley experienced extended relief from the harsh winter, officials said on Monday. Gulmarg recorded a night temperature of minus 10 degree Celsius, down 2 degrees compared to the previous night, the meteorological department said. Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 9.2 degree Celsius, down from minus 8.5 degrees Celsius the previous night, the weather office said. In Srinagar, night temperature dipped | [More on P6](#)

No New Year Celebrations This Year

Observer News Service

Srinagar- There will be no celebration at any place on the occasion of New Year in Jammu and Kashmir due to 7-day mourning declared by the Union government over the death of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, official sources said.

Official sources said that due to the declaration of 7-day national mourning over the death of former PM Manmohan Singh, none of the departments in Jammu and Kashmir won't observe New Year celebrations this year.

They also said that the tourism department will celebrate events as part of the winter carnival, starting on January 2, 2024 in Pahalgam.

"In mid January, we will celebrate the Gulmarg winter carnival. National Tourism Day events will also be celebrated in Srinagar, while several events will | [More on P6](#)

TERRORISTS KILLED	TERRORISM RELATED INCIDENTS	LOCAL RECRUITMENT
2024: 68	2024: 60	2024: 7
2023: 73	2023: 46	2023: 22
2022: 187	2022: 251	2022: 100
2021: 180	2021: 129	2021: 125
2020: 221	2020: 126	
2019: 157	2019: 153	



Lowest Local Terrorist Recruitment In 2024

The year 2024 saw the wiping out of local terror outfits in Jammu and Kashmir and predominance of Pakistani terrorists. According to the official data, the local recruitment dropped to less than 10 in 2024.

"The number of local terrorists operating in Kashmir is now in single digits. Local recruitment has declined since 2021, when 125 youths joined terrorist ranks. | [More on P6](#)

HC Seeks Response To Petitions On Reservation By March 6

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir has sought response by March 6 to the petitions challenging the validity of amended reservation Rules 2005. The court has already held that any appointment made under amended reservation Rules 2005 would be subject to the outcome of the pleas.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Rajnesh Oswal and Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani also allowed a few applications including one from a Pahari group seeking impleadment as party respondents.

The main plea has been filed by Zahoor Ahmad Bhat, Ishrat Nabi, Ishfaq Ahmad Dar, Shahid Bashir Wani and Amir Hamid Lone who have submitted that due to the amendments in the Reservation Rules of 2005, there is decrease in the percentage in Jammu & Kashmir Government



Recruitment posts and seats in educational institutions for open merit from 57% to 33%, Resident of Backward Area (RBA) from 20% to 10% while there is increase in reservation in scheduled tribe (ST) from 10% to 20%, Social Caste from 02% to 08% and ALC from 03% to 04%, PHC from 03% to 04%. Besides, they said the amendment in the rules have added new categories like Children of Defence personnel and kept 03% reservation for them, Children of police personnel by keeping 1% and 2% for candidates possessing performance in sports.

The petitioners have challenged amendment in Jammu & Kashmir reservation rules

of 2005 by authorities by way of issuance of S.O No. 176 dated 15.03.2024 and S.O No. 127 dated 20.04.2020, S.O 305 DT: 21-05-2024, Advertisement Notification No. 04-PSC (DR-P) of 2024 dated 26.07.2024, Advertisement 02 of 2024 dated 22.11.2024, Corrigendum dated 29.07.2024 in Advertisement No.02 of 2024/RR/RC dated 09.05.2024, Advertisement No. 04 of 2024/RR/RC of 2024 dated 29.07.2024 and Advertisement No. 06 of 2024/Psy dated 28.08.2024, in terms whereof the authorities have decreased the percentage in favour of open merit and RBA candidates and increased the reservation for ST, SC, ALC and PHC candidates as well adding new categories in favour of Children of Defence personnel (3%), Children of police personnel (1%), sports category (2%) and said that same were ultravires to the constitution. The petitioners said | [More on P6](#)

Chatterjee Takes Over As MD, CEO Of J&K Bank

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Amitava Chatterjee on Monday took over as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Jammu and Kashmir Bank.

Chatterjee took over from Baldev Prakash after the latter's three-year term came to an end. With an experience of 34 years in the industry, Chatterjee said he would focus on continuing the growth story of the J&K bank.

In a formal function held at the Bank's corporate headquarters, Amitava Chatterjee - a seasoned banker with over three decades of experience at State Bank of India (SBI) - was welcomed by the outgoing MD & CEO Baldev Prakash along with Bank's Executive Director Sudhir Gupta and top management functionaries.

After taking charge, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee expressed his gratitude and enthusiasm. "I feel honoured to have this opportunity to lead J&K Bank - an institution with



a rich legacy of trust and excellence. I look forward to working with the talented team to build upon the strong foundation laid by my predecessor, Baldev Prakash, and to drive the Bank's vision of financial empowerment with sustainable growth and innovation."

"My focus will be on continuing the good work done by the Jammu and Kashmir Bank for the past few years. There is always room for growth and that's what we will be looking at," Chatterjee said. | [More on P6](#)

'Axing 1000 Trees & Diversion Of Stream' NGTs Issues Notice To J&K Govt

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued notice to Government of Jammu & Kashmir through Chief Secretary, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Block Development Officer Lalpora Tangmarg and other officers for allegedly axing more than 1000 trees in village Sonium Lalpora and allowing diversion of a local stream for paving a way for setting up of a playground in the village.

The Block Development Officer, Lalpora and the then Sarpanch of village Sonium had axed 1000 trees and started diversion of Badyari stream for setting up a playground. The land was levelled and stream diverted partly in violation of the Jammu and Kashmir Preservation of Specified Trees Act, 1969 & National Water Policy 2012.

Out of 1000 trees felled in the village included 600 willow trees, 300 poplar trees, 100 acacia & rubina trees plus 10 walnut trees. | [More on P6](#)

Excluding Local Holidays: J&K 2025 Holiday List Sparks Row

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The ruling National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir has expressed disappointment over the lieutenant governor's decision to not include days commemorating 1931 martyrs and party founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in the list of holidays for 2025.

"Today's list of holidays and the decision reflects the BJP's disregard for Kashmir's history and democratic struggle," National Conference (NC) chief spokesman Tanvir Sadiq said in a post on X on Sunday night.

Notably, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had earlier this month hinted that holidays removed after abrogation of Article 370 will be

restored. "While we had hoped for the inclusion of holidays commemorating leaders like Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the martyrs of July 13th, their absence does not diminish their significance or our legacy. These holidays will be restored one day," Sadiq said in the post.

July 13 was observed as a public holiday in Jammu and Kashmir to commemorate the 23 men who fell to the bullets of Dogra Maharaja's soldiers in 1931.

December 5 was also marked as a public holiday to commemorate the birth anniversary of NC founder Sheikh Abdullah.

Both the holidays were scrapped by the LG administration after 2019, when Article 370 | [More on P6](#)

Rats Roam GMC Anantnag Ward, Viral Photos Spark Outrage

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Photos of rats roaming the hospital ward at Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag, have gone viral on social media, sparking widespread outrage. The images show rats scurrying across beds highlighting a significant hygiene issue at the facility.

Patients and their attendants have talked about the infestation and it angered netizens as well calling for accountability from the hospital administration.

Many described sleepless nights as rats gnawing on bedding, food, and even personal belongings. Some even reported instances of rodents crawling onto their beds, causing distress and alarm.

The infestation is believed to stem from poor waste management and the hospital's aging infrastructure, which provides ideal conditions for rodents to thrive. The hospital administration has acknowledged the issue.



Principal GMC Anantnag, Dr. Rukhsana Najeeb, said, "This is unacceptable, and patient care remains our top priority. We have formed a committee and submit findings within 24 hours. There will be no compromise on sanitation, and those responsible will face consequences."

Dr. Najeeb attributed the problem partly to food brought in by attendants and the increased rush during winter. She assured the public that immediate measures are being taken, including holding the pest control contractor

accountable. "This should not have happened, and we will ensure it does not happen again," she added.

She further said that the administration has constituted a committee under the supervision of Dr Zain and they will give us the inputs within 24 hours.

"This should not happen and this is unacceptable and patient care remains our priority. We have given responsibility to all officials that this thing should not happen again and we won't spare those who are responsible."

Dr Najeeb further said that there will be | [More on P6](#)

'Digital Arrest' Scam Court Rejects Bail Plea Of Punjab Resident

KO Correspondent

Srinagar: A local court in Srinagar on Saturday rejected the bail application of a resident of Punjab, accused of defrauding a senior citizen of Rs four lakh through a "digital arrest" scam.

The court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar Aadil Mushtaq while rejecting the bail petition of the accused, observed that the cyber crimes are on rise at an "alarming rate" and that the interest of society outweighs that of an individual.

Singh, a resident of Kataria Niwas Patiala Punjab, was arrested by the cyber police station Kashmir in connection with FIR No 26 of 2024 under section 66-D of IT Act, 3(5), 61(2), 111(3), 318(4) AND 351(2) OF BNS earlier this year.

The court also said that there is potential for the accused (Singh) to tamper with evidence or abscond if released on bail. "There is genuine apprehension of the petitioner (Singh) tampering with the | [More on P6](#)



Study Links Social Inequality To Dementia-Related Changes In Brain

Press Trust Of India

Social inequality is directly linked with changes in the brain, known to be related to ageing and dementia, a study has revealed. As dementia cases are projected to rise in the years to come, especially in low and middle-income countries, the findings stressed that interven-

in an environment of societal inequality may worsen neurodegeneration in ageing populations. The researchers said that the links persisted despite adjusting for individual factors such as education, age, sex and cognitive ability. The result highlighted the independent role of macro-level social factors in shaping brain health, they said. "Our findings emphasise the urgency of integrating not only individual



tions targeted at addressing the local socioeconomic landscape are needed for treating the root causes of brain health disparities, said researchers, including those from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. They looked at the relationship between structural inequality—as measured by national indices—and brain volume and connectivity. Over 2,100 individuals with neurodegenerative conditions, including Alzheimer's disease, and healthy ones from Latin America and the US were recruited. Socioeconomic disparities measured by country-level indices were directly linked to changes in brain structure and connectivity, especially in regions essential for memory and cognitive function, which are known to be affected with aging and dementia. "Greater structural inequality was linked to reduced brain volume and connectivity, with stronger effects in Latin America, especially in the temporo-cerebellar, fronto-thalamic and hippocampal regions," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Nature Aging. Latinos with Alzheimer's disease were found to experience the most severe impacts, suggesting that growing old

social determinants of health into global brain health research but also macro-level exposure factors such as social and physical variables," said first author Agustina Legaz, Latin American Brain Health Institute (BrainLat), Chile. "These findings pave the way for future studies exploring the biological mechanisms linking aggregate inequality to aging and neurodegeneration," Legaz said. Demonstrating the far-reaching consequences of societal disparities on one's brain, the study sheds light on how societal inequities can become biologically embedded, particularly in underrepresented populations across Latin America and the US, the authors said. "This research highlights the critical role of structural inequality in shaping brain health. Considering dementia rates rise particularly in low and middle-income countries, our findings emphasise the need for targeted interventions to address the root causes of brain health disparities, which appear to be specific to each region," said corresponding author Agustín Ibáñez, a professor of global brain health at Trinity College.

“Greater structural inequality was linked to reduced brain volume and connectivity, with stronger effects in Latin America, especially in the temporo-cerebellar, fronto-thalamic and hippocampal regions

Why There's No Such Thing As Normal In Child Development

The Conversation

For parents, carers and teachers, it's often tempting to base our thinking on a child's development around what we understand as "normal". Much of the time we do this without thinking, describing a child as "doing well" in one subject and "behind" in another. Whenever we make this sort of comparison, we have some sort of mental benchmark or yardstick in our head: for example, a toddler should be able to climb on furniture by age two. Increasingly, child development researchers are arguing that the same thing happens in child development research — the study of how behaviours and abilities such as language develop. Many of the studies that claim to research child development either implicitly, or explicitly, claim that their findings are universal. There could be many reasons for this. Sometimes there's a temptation to oversell conclusions, sometimes it might be the way findings are interpreted by readers or the media. The upshot is that what's been found in one group of children is then taken as the standard — the yardstick against which future research is compared.



Most of the research into how children develop comes from wealthier, western countries, in particular the US, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany and France. Chances are, if you've heard of milestones in child development, they were developed in one of these countries. This is so much so that it can be challenging to do basic research on child development in developing countries, as peers and reviewers will ask for or demand comparisons to western populations to put findings from these regions in context. Of course without realising it, these peers and reviewers have set up western chil-

dren as a norm. But is it fair to make these comparisons? One of the tricky things about researching child development is that it occurs within a cultural and social context it can't be removed from. But this context is often messy. Differences in physical environment, parenting styles, location, climate and so on all interact to shape how children grow. Besides these differences, there is individual variation as well. These could be, for instance, curiosity, shyness and neurodiversity, which can all frame how a child shapes their own learning environment.

Take for example the field of motor development in infancy — the study of how children learn to move. Many parents in particular might be familiar with charts showing when they can expect their child to sit, crawl, stand and run. The existence of these charts make it seem pretty universal, and often a child's motor development is judged accordingly. This makes sense. Early research was preoccupied with finding out what was normal, and it makes sense to try to support children who might be at risk of falling behind. The timing and order investigated back then led to the norms and scales we still use today. Is something like motor development timing universal? It's easy to imagine that it might be. When there are no physical or cognitive barriers we all learn to sit and stand, so on the surface it seems fair to say this could be. But it turns out that the context that children develop in plays a huge role even in something as seemingly universal as this. In countries and cultures where babies routinely receive firm massages from caregivers, such as in Jamaica, motor development is accelerated. It's clear that a norm developed in one culture might not translate well to another. Beyond norms

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No:-770-W/169/WA/FZR/2024-25 Date: 30.12.2024
 Sr.DEN-IV/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date 16/1/2025 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offers received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on www.ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft/Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information logon to www.ireps.gov.in.

Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System
Open	Works	278-2024-25-MCTM-DRM-FZR is Two Packet System & 279-2024-25-MCTM-DRM-FZR is Single Packet System
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time
25/12/2024	02/01/2025	16/01/2025/ 15:00 Hrs

S. No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender
1.	278-2024-25-MCTM-DRM-FZR	Provision of 10.20 km long RCC B/wall and 48.10km metal beam crash barrier fencing along the track to prevent CRO over Vande Bharat Route under SSE-W/UHP in JAT-SVDK (RCC B/wall 2:1 km, 1.0 km wire mesh fencing & Metal Crash Barrier 33.00 km) Advertised Value (Rs.) 215623296.50 Earnest Money (Rs.) 1228100 Validity of Offer 90 Days Period of Completion 12 Months Similar nature of work:- "Any civil work other than track work"
2.	279-2024-25-MCTM-DRM-FZR	Provision of 10.20 km long RCC B/wall and 48.10km metal beam crash barrier fencing along the track to prevent CRO over Vande Bharat Route in JAT-SVDK under SSE-W/SVDK (RCC B/wall 1.0 km & Metal Crash Barrier 14.160 km, wire mesh fencing 2km) Advertised Value (Rs.) 95916784.56 Earnest Money (Rs.) 629600 Validity of Offer 60 Days Period of Completion 12 Months Similar nature of work:- "Any civil work other than track work"

Note 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against the tender. 3974/2024

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04687	Banihal	Budgam				26

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From the office of Advocate Ishfaq Rasool sheikh and Associates

In the case of Gh Rasool sheikh S/o: Ab Ganie Sheikh R/o: Tantraypora Palhallan Pattan Baramulla (Caveator) V/s Public at large In the Petition in terms of Section 148-A

The caveators have reason to believe that Non-Caveator may file any Application, Petition, Ap- peel, Suit or any other type of proceeding before the Hon'ble Court and on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story and may seed in obtaining some relief/order at their back/in exparte against the caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put in irreparable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveators be given an opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble court before passing any order. fko Sd/advocate

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I, Shayista Nazir, resident of Palhallan, Pattan, am applying for a license to deal in pesticides and fertilizers. If anyone has any objections in this regarding he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Plant Protection Officer Lalmandi Srinagar or Chief Agriculture office Baramulla within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. fko

Office Of The Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub.. Application of Shahid Rashid s/o Ab Rashid Najar R/o Paatan for obtaining OBC certificate in favour of self

PUBLIC NOTICE

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 1 Shahid Rashid Govt employ nn
 2 Mehmoona Akhter H/ work
 3 Faheem Shahid Student

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Missing Since 8 Days, Man Found Dead In Ramban

Agencies

Srinagar: A man, hailing from Central Kashmir's Nowgam area of Srinagar, was found dead inside a Thar vehicle near Gandool, Ramban, on Monday.

An official said that the man from Srinagar, who had reportedly been missing since December 22, was found dead inside a Thar ve-

hicle near Gandool, Ramban.

He said the body was spotted this afternoon, and police have arrived at the scene and took the body into their custody.

He was later identified as Umer Yaseen Shah, a resident of Railway Colony, Nowgam, Srinagar.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident—(KNO)

Privilege Health Card Launched For Imams

Agencies

Srinagar: Mirwaiz Muhammad Umar Farooq on Monday called for making the healthcare sector efficient and people-friendly at both government and private levels.

He said that in their service to humanity that doctors and medical staff offer, they must follow in the spirit of compassion and care.

During his visit to the Ujala Group of Hospitals, known as Ujala Cygnus Healthcare Service in Nowgam, on the invitation of its management, Mirwaiz officially launched the hospital's Privilege Health Card, which offers free medical check-ups, diagnostics, specialist consultations and access to advanced hospital facilities, specifically for Imams of mosques of Jammu and Kashmir, irrespective of sect or ideology.

While lauding this initiative as a first of its kind, Mirwaiz expressed hope that the benefits will also be extended to the families

of Imams.

He said the establishment of this hospital has brought a new dimension to the healthcare sector in Kashmir. He expressed hope that this hospital would continue to be people-friendly in every way and continue its efforts to provide high-quality healthcare services to those in need at minimal cost.

The hospital management informed Mirwaiz that they plan to expand their services by establishing branches across the length and breadth of the valley to provide healthcare access to a larger population. The management added that they are considering organising free medical camps in urban and rural areas, for which they sought Mirwaiz's cooperation and support.

When Mirwaiz arrived at the hospital he was warmly welcomed by senior hospital officials, including Dr Parvez Ahmad Sofi, Dr Shakeel Ahmad and Adnan Fayaz, along with their entire team—(KNO)

Police Solves Theft Cases, 2 Accused Arrested

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Police in Srinagar solved theft cases and arrested 2 accused persons involved in the commission of crime & recovered stolen property from their possession.

Police Station Harwan received a complaint from one individual namely Muhammad Azhar Gilkar son of Zahoor-u-Din resident of Chandpora, Harwan stating therein that during the intervening night of 18/19-11-2024, some unknown thieves have barged into his residential house at Chandpora and stolen some jewellery/ other items.

Subsequently, a case vide FIR No. 65/2024 under relevant sections of law was registered at Police Station Harwan and investigation initiated.

During the course of the investigation, based on CCTV footage and technical evidence, some suspects were called for questioning and identification of suspects involved in the commission of crime. Meanwhile, one suspect

namely Umar Shafi Dar resident of Ghat, Shalimar was called for questioning, who after monitoring the CCTV footage disclosed the identity of the accused as Adil Shabir Khan son of Shabir Ahmad Khan resident of Kumar Mohalla Ishber Nishat.

Accordingly, the accused was arrested and his involvement in the instant case as well as his involvement in case FIR No. 24/2024 under section 457, 380 IPC and FIR No. 39/2024 under section 331(3), 305 BNS of this Police Station was ascertained.

Upon his disclosure, another accused (receiver of stolen property) namely Muhammad Maqbool Dar son of Abdul Karim resident of Sethargund, Pulwama, (goldsmith running his shop under the trade name Al-Maqbool Jewellers) situated at Bakal Complex, near Fire service, Samboora Road Kakapora, Pulwama was arrested. From his possession, golden items weighing around 84.02 grams, worth Rs. 5,71,000 were recovered.

Locals Demand Setting Up Fire Service Station In Lal Bazar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Locals from Lal Bazar, Nowshera and other adjacent areas said that they are under severe threat in absence of fire and emergency services.

"There is an urgent need to set up a Fire Service Station in the area to address any eventuality, particularly growing fire incidents. Govt is required to address the public concern, on priority to ensure safety of life and property," they said.

Meanwhile, J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) General Secretary Irfan Naqib expressed grave con-

cern over the absence of appropriate fire and emergency services in Lal Bazar or in its adjacent areas despite the fact Lal Bazar and Nowshera areas are densely populated, which could have invited the attention of the authorities with respect to setting up of fire service station, but that has not happened, as yet. People are feeling scared whenever any unfortunate fire incident happens, Naqib said and added that there is a fire service station in Hazratbal with two fire brigades, but that is neither a solution nor enough to cover Lal bazar, Nowshera and other adjacent areas.



Serenity on the Jhelum: Two boats glide through the misty chill of Srinagar City on Monday. KO Photo Abid Bhat.

Chief Justice Virtually Inaugurates Additional Court At HC Complex

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Justice Tashi Rabstan, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, on Monday virtually inaugurated the Additional Court at the High

Court Complex, Srinagar. This initiative marks a significant step towards enhancing judicial accessibility and expediting justice delivery for the people of the region.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Justice reiterated the judi-

ciary's commitment to ensuring that the public has access to efficient and timely justice. He further acknowledged the efforts of all stakeholders who contributed to the successful establishment of the Additional Court.

From Pushing Cars To Saving Lives: Police Shine During & After Snowfall

Agencies

Srinagar: Police personnel extended helping hands to commuters stranded on snow-covered roads during and after a recent snowfall across Srinagar city and other districts of Kashmir.

Police personnel including officers were seen pushing vehicles stuck on slippery surfaces and guiding drivers to safety.

Photographs and videos capturing these acts of kindness have gone viral, showcasing policemen braving harsh conditions to ensure smooth travel for citizens.

"We must appreciate the good work of anybody wheth-



er that is an individual, organization, or any department. Police did a commendable job during and after snowfall," a scribe said.

In one heartwarming instance, officers helped patients reach hospitals in time. Additionally, the police facilitated the

relocation of some vulnerable residents to makeshift tents, providing temporary shelter and ensuring protection from the freezing temperatures.

The proactive efforts of the police have drawn widespread appreciation from both locals and tourists on social media. [KNT]



OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

I did wash my hand ... but... did I clean it enough? Wash it again? Is it clean now?

It's not just RECURRENT HANDWASHING AND CHECKING BUT UNSEEN PAIN, distress, myths and stigma associated with OCD

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If you or some one you know is experiencing symptoms of OCD, seeking professional help is crucial.

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There is no need for referral, simply call us for registration.



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- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

 HIJRI CALENDAR 28 Jumada al-Sani 1446	PRAYERS FAJR 6: 07 ZUHR 12:33 ASR 3: 52 Magrib 5:34 ISHA 6: 59
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This Day In History

- 535 - Byzantine General Belisarius completes the conquest of Sicily, defeating Ostrogothic garrison of Syracuse, and ending his consulship for the year
- 1600 - British East India Company chartered
- 1669 - France & Brandenburg sign secret treaty
- 1670 - France & England sign Boyne-treaty
- 1744 - English astronomer James Bradley announces discovery of Earth's nutation motion (wobble)
- 1756 - Russia joins the Alliance of Versailles
- 1758 - British expeditionary army occupies Goree (Dakar) Senegal
- 1775 - Battle of Quebec in American Revolutionary War; Americans defeated trying to take British stronghold
- 1783 - Import of African slaves banned by all of the Northern US states
- 1805 - End of French Republican calendar; France returns to Gregorianism
- 1861 - 22,990mm of rain falls in Cherrapunji Assam in India in 1861, a world record
- 1862 - Battle of Stone's River (Battle of Murfreesboro), Tennessee in American Civil War
- 1901 - In the first election under their new constitution, Cuba elects a Congress and their first president, Tomas Estrada Palma
- 1924 - Italian Fascist Mussolini orders the suppression of opposition newspapers
- 1942 - Battle of the Barents Sea between British Navy and German Kriegsmarine off North Cape, Norway
- 1944 - Japanese army evacuates harbor city Akyab
- 1944 - World War II: Hungary declares war on Germany.
- 1946 - US President Harry Truman officially proclaims end of WW II
- 1951 - 1st battery to convert radioactive energy to electricity announced
- 1952 - Danny Nardico stops former world middleweight champion Jake LaMotta in 7 rounds in a light heavyweight non-title bout in Coral Gables, Florida; LaMotta is knocked down for the only time in his career, his corner stopping fight after the round
- 1955 - The General Motors Corporation becomes the first U.S. corporation to make over \$1 billion USD in a year.
- 1961 - Failed coup by Syrian group in Lebanon
- 1961 - Marshall Plan expires after distributing more than \$12 billion
- 1964 - Donald Campbell (UK) sets world water speed record (276.33 mph)
- 1964 - Indonesia proclaims expelled from the UN
- 1974 - Popular Electronics displays Altair 8800 computer
- 1977 - Amir Sheikh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir Al Sabah becomes leader of Kuwait
- 1977 - Cambodia drops diplomatic relations with Vietnam
- 1978 - Iran shah names Chapour Bakhtiar premier
- 1978 - Taiwan's final day of diplomatic relations with US
- 1980 - After being struck by an orange thrown from the crowd West Indian fast bowler Sylvester Clarke knocks out a spectator with a brick during 4th Test against Pakistan in Multan
- 1983 - Brunei gains complete independence from Britain
- 1983 - Nigeria's National Assembly dissolves after military coup
- 1983 - President Shagari of Nigeria is overthrown in a military coup and Major General Muhammadu Buhari is installed as Head of State
- 1986 - Russian TU-144 flies for 1st time faster than sound
- 1990 - Iraq begins a military draft of 17 year olds
- 1997 - Intel cuts price of Pentium II-233 MHz from \$401 to \$268
- 1997 - Microsoft buys Hotmail email service for \$400 million and re-launches it as MSN Hotmail
- 1998 - Exchange rates between the euro and legacy currencies in the Eurozone become fixed.
- 1999 - Boris Yeltsin resigns as President of Russia, leaving Prime Minister Vladimir Putin as acting President

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Fundamental Rights and Personal Freedoms

A Case for Veiled Advocates in Courtrooms

Suhail Farooq

The recent order by the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh prohibiting veiled women lawyers from appearing in court has ignited a significant debate regarding individual freedoms, religious expression, and professional norms. This judicial decision, rooted in the Bar Council of India (BCI) rules, raises concerns about its alignment with the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Indian Constitution. This article explores the complexities of this issue, focusing on the intersection of dress codes, identity verification, professionalism, and inclusivity, while advocating for a more progressive interpretation of these principles.

The Intersection of Dress Codes and Rights

India's Constitution guarantees its citizens the right to religious freedom under Article 25. This fundamental right enables individuals to freely profess, practice, and propagate their religion, subject only to considerations of public order, morality, and health. For many Muslim women, wearing a veil is not merely a cultural or aesthetic choice but an intrinsic aspect of their religious identity and personal modesty. The veil, often associated with deeply held beliefs, represents a form of self-expression that is integral to their way of life. The Bar Council of India's dress code, which prescribes specific professional attire for lawyers, aims to ensure uniformity and decorum within courtrooms. However, it does not explicitly prohibit religious garments such as the veil. Interpreting these rules in a manner that excludes veiled advocates effectively disregards their constitutional rights. This approach not only undermines the spirit of Article 25 but also risks setting a precedent that could erode India's pluralistic ethos.

Identity Verification: An Overstated Concern

One of the primary justifications for barring veiled advocates from courtrooms is the purported difficulty in verifying their identity. The court's decision in the recent case of Advocate Syed Ainain Qadri hinged on this concern, as the judge declined to recognize her appearance due to the inability to confirm her identity. While the need for identity verification in legal proceedings is undeniable, it is crucial to recognize that there are multiple ways to address this issue without mandating the removal of the veil. Practical solutions include private identity verification conducted in the presence of female court officials or the use of government-issued photo identification documents. Such measures are already employed in various public and private sectors, including airports, educational institutions, and government offices, to accommodate individuals who wear veils for religious reasons. Implementing similar protocols in courtrooms would respect religious sentiments while ensuring procedural fairness. The insistence on unveiling as the sole means of identity verification reflects a lack of willingness to explore inclusive alternatives. This rigidity not only alienates veiled advocates but also reinforces stereotypes about their professional capabilities and commitment to legal ethics.

Professionalism vs. Inclusivity

Critics of veiled appearances in court often argue that professional decorum necessitates uniformity in attire. According to this perspective, the BCI's dress code serves as a unifying standard that underscores the impartiality and integrity of the legal profession. However, this argument overlooks the fact that true professionalism is rooted in competence, ethical conduct, and respect for diversity rather



This image is AI generated. For representational purposes only

than rigid adherence to a specific dress code. Legal professionals from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds bring unique perspectives to the judiciary, enriching its capacity to deliver equitable justice. Imposing a narrow interpretation of dress codes risks marginalizing capable lawyers who choose to wear veils as an expression of their faith. Such exclusion not only undermines the principle of equality but also deprives the legal profession of valuable talent. Inclusivity is a cornerstone of democratic societies, and the legal system, as a pillar of democracy, must lead by example. By accommodating

ing the BCI rules in a manner that upholds constitutional principles rather than undermining them. Courts must recognize that the exclusion of veiled lawyers from courtrooms is not merely a matter of dress code compliance but a broader issue of social justice and equality. To achieve this balance, the judiciary and the Bar Council of India should consider revising the existing dress code to explicitly accommodate religious garments, including veils. Such revisions could outline clear guidelines for identity verification and courtroom decorum, ensuring that professional standards are maintained without in-

The judiciary plays a pivotal role in safeguarding fundamental rights and setting the tone for a more inclusive society. In the context of veiled advocates, this responsibility entails interpreting the BCI rules in a manner that upholds constitutional principles rather than undermining them

veiled advocates, the judiciary can reaffirm its commitment to upholding fundamental rights and promoting a more inclusive legal profession.

Global Perspectives on Religious Expression in Courtrooms

Courts around the world have grappled with the issue of religious attire in professional settings, often opting for accommodative approaches. In countries such as the United Kingdom and Canada, legal professionals are allowed to wear religious garments, provided they do not impede their duties or contravene procedural requirements. These jurisdictions recognize that inclusivity and professionalism are not mutually exclusive but complementary ideals. For instance, the UK's judiciary permits barristers and solicitors to wear hijabs, turbans, and other religious attire, reflecting its commitment to diversity and equal opportunity. Similarly, Canada's courts have upheld the right of individuals to wear religious symbols, emphasizing the importance of balancing institutional norms with individual freedoms. These examples highlight the feasibility of adopting inclusive practices without compromising the integrity of judicial proceedings. India, with its rich history of pluralism and constitutional commitment to secularism, has an opportunity to draw inspiration from these global practices. By embracing a more accommodative stance, the judiciary can set a precedent that harmonizes professional norms with individual rights.

A Call for Progressive Interpretation

The judiciary plays a pivotal role in safeguarding fundamental rights and setting the tone for a more inclusive society. In the context of veiled advocates, this responsibility entails interpret-

fringing on individual freedoms. Additionally, training programs for judges and court staff on cultural and religious sensitivity could foster a more inclusive judicial environment.

Conclusion

The High Court's decision to bar veiled advocates from appearing in court raises profound questions about the balance between professional regulations and fundamental rights. Denying veiled lawyers the opportunity to represent their clients effectively excludes a section of society based on their personal beliefs, undermining the principles of equality and justice. India's judiciary, as a guardian of constitutional values, must prioritize inclusivity and diversity in its practices. By adopting progressive interpretations of dress codes and implementing practical solutions for identity verification, the legal system can uphold the rights of veiled advocates without compromising procedural fairness. This approach would not only reinforce India's commitment to pluralism but also strengthen public confidence in the judiciary as an institution that values equity and justice above all. It is imperative that the judiciary rises to this challenge, setting an example for other institutions and reaffirming its role as a champion of fundamental rights. In doing so, it can pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable society, where individuals are free to pursue their professional aspirations without fear of discrimination or exclusion.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
The author is a third year law student from university of Kashmir and a writer. Suhail tweets at @Suhailfarooq105

KO VIEW

Snowfall brings hope, challenges

The heavy snowfall on Friday has altered the nature of cold weather conditions in the Valley. From a dry, harsh cold that saw night temperatures plummeting to their record lows, we now have a wet cold, which although no less severe, is a little easier to deal with. It generally doesn't lead to plumbing problems on a scale that the dry cold does. Snow has thus brought some redeeming change. For now, the temperature has slightly improved.

That said, this winter so far has been extremely harsh. In popular memory, the bone chilling cold and the recent heavy snowfall has come as a throwback to the storied old winters with their feared Chillai Kalans. It is after some years that one can witness the frozen water bodies and the long icicles hanging off the eaves.

The power situation has been a recurring problem. Although the snowfall didn't result in any major blackout, the electricity supply leaves much to be desired. In many areas, the supply reduced to a trickle, with long unscheduled power cuts the order of the day. Both metered as well as unmetered areas have already been slapped with a load-shedding schedule. The people have hopelessly been waiting for the government to review the schedule, but this is unlikely to happen anytime soon.

The government is not in a position to buy around 500 MW more electricity to plug the shortfall in the supply. But it is incumbent on the government to ensure that the power supply at least adheres to the notified schedule to minimize the inconvenience to the people. In Kashmir, electricity has now become a source of heating in winter and people are ready to pay for the consumption. Just as it is not advisable to deny power to people in Jammu and Delhi during scorching summers, it is equally unjust not to do so in the cold regions such as Kashmir during winter. It is high time the government recognizes that uninterrupted power in winter is not a luxury for Kashmir but a lifeline.

Despite the attendant difficulties, the snowfall is a boon for Kashmir. For it draws more tourists to the region, giving a boost to the economy. As winters grow harsher, the onus lies on the administration to address recurring issues such as power shortages with a long-term vision. Investments in infrastructure, renewable energy, and efficient load management are no longer optional but essential to ensure that people can withstand the cold with dignity.



Did you know?

How to Build Wealth Early: Embracing the Power of Compounding

Irshad Mushtaq

Imagine waking up one day and realizing that financial freedom is not just a dream, but a reality within your grasp. The key to achieving this lies in understanding and harnessing a powerful concept that can transform your financial future: compounding interest. This isn't just a finance term; it's the magic behind building wealth over time, especially when you start young.

A recent discussion with a financial advisor highlighted a crucial truth: many people begin investing too late, missing out on the incredible benefits of compounding. This is not just a mistake; it's a missed opportunity for wealth creation.

So, what exactly is compounding interest? It's the process where your investment earns interest not only on the initial amount you put in (the principal), but also on the interest that accumulates over time. Understanding this principle can fundamentally change your approach to saving and investing.

Let's illustrate this with a simple example. If you invest 1,000 at a 10% return in the first year, you earn 100 in interest, giving you a total of 1,100. In the second year, your interest is calculated on 1,100, not just the original 1,000. This means you earn 110 in the second year, bringing your total to 1,210. As you can see, the interest begins to snowball!

Now, let's consider a scenario that underscores the power of starting early: If you invest 10,000 every month from age 20 to 40, over 20 years, you would save a total of 48 lakh (4.8 million). With an attractive annual return of 18%, your investment could potentially grow to approximately 2.65 crores (26.5 million) by the time you turn 40.

But that's not where the story ends. Imagine making a one-time investment of 48 lakh at age 20, also yielding an 18% return over 20 years—the result could potentially soar to around 13 crores (130 million). The numbers are staggering!

The key takeaway? The earlier you start investing, the more time compounding has to work its magic. Each year that you delay truly has the power to change the trajectory of your financial future.

Take control of your wealth building today. Start your investment journey now, educate yourself about the incredible effects of compounding, and watch your wealth grow exponentially over time. Remember, your future self is counting on you to make these smart financial decisions!

Learn from the insights of @Irshad Mushtaq, Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of MI Securities! Connect for valuable financial advice at misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com

I Was Real When I Was a Kid

Arshid Qalmi

Childhood is often remembered as a time when life was pure, when emotions flowed naturally, and when we felt deeply connected to our surroundings. It was a period of unfiltered joy, genuine self-expression, and boundless imagination. For many, childhood represents the truest version of who they were, a time when authenticity wasn't a conscious pursuit but an effortless state of being. The sentiment, "When I was a kid, I was real," resonates with a universal longing for a simpler, more genuine existence. It encapsulates the idea that childhood is not just a stage in life but a template for how life could be lived, where authenticity, curiosity, and vulnerability are celebrated rather than suppressed.

As children, we existed without the burden of societal expectations. Our emotions, actions, and thoughts were raw and genuine, unshaped by the need to fit into predefined moulds. When we were happy, we laughed with abandon, the kind of laughter that bubbles up from the soul and echoes through the air, unrestrained and pure. When we were sad, we cried openly, seeking comfort without hesitation or shame. Anger, excitement, fear, every emotion was expressed without filter, without second-guessing, and without the internalized voices telling us what was "appropriate." There was no pretence, no façade, no calculated effort to present ourselves in a particular way. We simply were.

This authenticity extended beyond emotions. As children, our imaginations knew no bounds. The world was a canvas, and we painted it with our dreams and fantasies. We could be explorers of uncharted lands, rulers of imaginary kingdoms, or superheroes capable of anything. A cardboard box was not just an object; it could be a spaceship, a castle, or a secret hideout. The boundaries between reality and imagination blurred seamlessly, and in those moments, we were creators, not constrained by logic or practicality. Every day was an adventure filled with curiosity and wonder, and we approached life with an openness that allowed us to see magic in the



mundane. We were real in the truest sense of the word alive, present, and fully engaged with life as it unfolded.

But as we grow older, the innocence and authenticity of childhood begin to fade. Life introduces complexities, and society imposes its rules and expectations. We are taught to conform, to fit into certain roles, and to meet specific standards. Slowly, we begin to wear masks to navigate the world. These masks may help us gain acceptance, protect us from judgment, or allow us to fulfil responsibilities, but they come at a cost. The cost is often our truest self, the part of us that remains untouched by societal conditioning.

The pressures to conform begin early, often during adolescence, when the need to be accepted by peers becomes paramount. We learn to suppress certain parts of ourselves to fit in, to avoid standing out, or to escape criticism. We start tailoring our words and actions to align with what is expected rather than what is genuine. Over time, this suppression becomes second nature. We stop questioning whether the life we



WHEN WE CHOOSE TO BE REAL, WE HONOUR NOT ONLY THE CHILD WE ONCE WERE BUT ALSO THE PERSON WE HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME. Authenticity is not just about returning to who we were in childhood; it is about integrating the essence of that innocence and openness into the complexity of adult life

are living aligns with our inner desires and values. Instead, we focus on meeting external expectations, whether they come from family, friends, work, or society at large. The spontaneity that once defined us is replaced by caution. The curiosity that drove us is overshadowed by practicality. And the freedom to express ourselves is often stifled by fear, fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of judgment.

Adulthood brings its own set of challenges. Responsibilities, career ambitions, and societal pressures leave little room for introspection. In the race to succeed, we often lose sight of who we are at our core. The authentic self, which thrived in the simplicity of childhood, becomes buried under layers of compromise and obligation. We begin to

live not as we are, but as we think we should be. And yet, amidst all of this, there remains a part of us, a quiet, persistent voice that yearns to return to the authenticity of our childhood.

The realization that "When I was a kid, I was real" is not just a nostalgic reflection but a powerful invitation to reclaim what was lost. It challenges us to reconnect with the child within the part of us that remains untouched by external influences. While we cannot return to the innocence of childhood, we can strive to integrate its essence into our adult lives. Reclaiming authenticity begins with vulnerability. As children, we didn't fear rejection or criticism; we expressed our thoughts and feelings openly, trusting that they would be received with under-

standing. Practicing vulnerability as adults means being honest about who we are, even when it feels uncomfortable. It means allowing ourselves to be seen, imperfections and all, and embracing the courage to show up as our true selves.

Another path back to authenticity lies in rekindling our creativity and curiosity. Childhood was a time of unbounded imagination, where we created without fear of judgment. As adults, we can nurture this creativity by exploring new interests, rediscovering forgotten passions, or simply allowing ourselves to dream without constraints. Engaging with creativity helps us reconnect with the joy of self-expression and the freedom to think beyond the limits imposed by practicality or convention.

Living in the moment, a natural state for children, is another key to authenticity. Children possess an unparalleled ability to immerse themselves fully in the present, whether they are playing, exploring, or simply observing the world around them. As adults, practicing mindfulness can help us recapture this sense of presence. By focusing on the here and now, we can quiet the noise of societal expectations and tune into our inner selves.

Reclaiming authenticity also requires letting go of the masks we wear to please others. This is perhaps the hardest step, as these masks often feel like a protective shield. Yet, the act of removing them allows us to reconnect with our core values and live in alignment with our true selves. It involves embracing our uniqueness and understanding that we do not need to conform to be worthy of acceptance or love.

In a world that often prioritizes superficiality and conformity, the importance of being real cannot be overstated. Childhood provides a glimpse into what it means to live authentically, to express ourselves freely, and to approach life with wonder and openness. While the journey into adulthood may distance us from these qualities, it is never too late to reclaim them. By embracing vulnerability, nurturing creativity, living in the moment, and letting go of societal masks, we can reconnect with the most genuine version of ourselves.

When we choose to be real, we honour not only the child we once were but also the person we have the potential to become. Authenticity is not just about returning to who we were in childhood; it is about integrating the essence of that innocence and openness into the complexity of adult life. The greatest gift we can give ourselves and the world is our true, unfiltered selves. In being real, we find fulfilment, meaning, and the freedom to live as we were always meant to be. After all, the journey to authenticity is not about becoming something new but rediscovering who we have always been at our core.

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The Introvert Advantage

Mark Lipton

An intriguing pattern has emerged from psychological research: Introverts might have a leg up when navigating the choppy waters of aging. While extroverts have long been celebrated for their social butterfly abilities, it turns out that the introvert's natural inclinations may serve as a built-in buffer against some of aging's most common challenges. This is good news as we collectively hurtle toward our golden years.

Susan Whitbourne's longitudinal studies at the University of Massachusetts have revealed that introverts often report higher levels of contentment with their later-life circumstances compared with their more extroverted peers.

"The very qualities that define introversion—preference for quieter environments, comfort with solitude, and deeper but fewer social connections—appear to align remarkably well with the natural evolution of our social worlds as we age," Whitbourne finds. Who knew that all those nights declining party invitations were early retirement training?

The Science of Social Selection

The key lies in what is known as "positive disengagement." Laura Carstensen, the founding director of Stanford's Center of Longevity, where she developed socioemotional selectivity theory, suggests that as people age, they naturally become more selective about their social interactions, preferring quality over quantity.

The transition, which can feel jarring to extroverts, often comes more naturally to introverts, who



have spent a lifetime curating smaller, more intimate social circles.

Cultural Perspectives and Anxiety Levels

Equally fascinating work by Helene Fung at the Chinese University of Hong Kong found that introverts typically experience less anxiety about the social changes accompanying aging. While extroverts may struggle with the decreased energy for extensive socializing or the natural shrinking of their social networks, introverts

often find that such changes align with their pre-existing preferences.

It's like discovering that the world has finally caught up with your preferred operating speed.

The Power of Introspection

Robert McCrae's research at the National Institute on Aging supports this "introvert advantage." His team's findings suggest that introverts' tendency toward introspection and self-reflection helps them process the existential aspects of aging.

While extroverts might seek external distractions from aging-related concerns, introverts' natural inclination to turn inward often results in better psychological adjustment and acceptance of life's changes.

The Biological Connection

The plot thickens when we consider Elissa Epel's fascinating look at telomeres, those protective caps on our chromosomes that reflect how we age at a cellular level. Her studies hint at a possible connection between introversion and stress management that might even have biological implications, preserving telomere length.

Introverts' preference for lower-stimulation environments and tendency to process experiences more deeply may result in lower levels of chronic stress, potentially affecting cellular aging. Though more research is needed, it's tantalizing to think that being an introvert might get under your skin—in a good way.

A Balanced Perspective

But it's not all quiet contemplation and smooth sailing, and nothing is conveniently binary regarding human personality and temperament. Margaret Gatz's twin studies at the University of Southern California remind us that personality type is just one factor in the complex equation of aging well.

The advantage lies not in introversion alone but in how introverted tendencies align with the natural evolution of social needs and energy levels in later life.

The Development of Coping

Mechanisms

Perhaps most compelling is the work of Klaus Rothermund, whose research on emotion regulation in aging has shown that introverts often develop more sophisticated coping mechanisms earlier in life. Such skills as comfort with solitude, the ability to self-reflect, and the capacity for deep one-on-one connections become increasingly valuable as we age.

It's as if introverts have been unknowingly practicing for their senior years all along.

Practical Implications

The implications of the findings extend beyond mere academic interest. Understanding how different personality types navigate this transition becomes increasingly crucial as the global population ages.

For extroverts reading this, don't despair—awareness is half the battle, and many coping strategies that come naturally to introverts can be learned and cultivated.

Conclusion

And for introverts? You might want to add this to your list of quiet victories. Your lifetime of preferring solitary walks, deep conversations over small talk and overcrowded parties, and quality over quantity in relationships, may have prepared you for a more graceful journey into your later years.

Sometimes, it seems, the tortoise doesn't just win the race. It may also enjoy the journey more.

The article was originally published by *Psychology Today*

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Union Home

Lt General Prashant Srivastava, GOC of Nagrota-based 16 Corps Lt Gen Navin Sachdeva, Director General of Police, Nalin Prabhat, Additional Director General (Law and Order) Vijay Kumar, Additional Director General Jammu, Anand Jain, Inspector General of Police (IGP)-Kashmir, V K Birdi, top officers of Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Intelligence Bureau and other agencies.

Top security officials, according to the sources, briefed the Union Home Secretary about the counter-infiltration grid reinforcement and coordination between security agencies.

He was also briefed about the preparations being made to ensure that upcoming Republic Day passes peacefully.

The meeting which continued till late in the evening discussed strategies to counter infiltration attempts and strengthen anti-terror operations in the Union Territory.

Pertinently, earlier this month Union Home Minister Amit Shah had chaired a high-level security meet on J&K in New Delhi.

The Union Home Minister had reiterated that in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Zero Tolerance Policy against terrorism, the goal of 'Terror Free Jammu and Kashmir' would be achieved at the earliest and all resources will be made available for this.

He had said that the PM Modi led government, with the joint efforts of all security forces, is committed to establish complete dominance over terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

He had appreciated efforts of the security agencies for a significant decline in terrorist incidents, infiltration and recruitment of youth in terrorist organizations.

Shah had said that due to the sustained and coordinated efforts of the PM Modi led government, the ecosystem of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir has almost ended.

Meanwhile, the Union Home Secretary will chair a key meeting in Srinagar on Tuesday to assess key flagship schemes funded by the Government of India.

Lowest Local

In 2022, the number of new recruits taking up arms dropped to 100. Last year, around 22 youths joined terrorist ranks, and this year, seven youth joined terrorist ranks," the data reveals.

"Of 68 terrorists killed this year, 42 were foreigners, while 26 local terrorists were eliminated," the data states, adding, "In the preceding years i.e. in 2019, 157, in 2020, 221, in 2021, 180, in 2022, 187 and in 2023, 73 terrorists were gunned down by the security forces in different encounters across Jammu and Kashmir."

Among the 42 foreign terrorists killed this year, 17 were eliminated during infiltration attempts along the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB), while 25 were killed during encounters in the interior areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

The foreign terrorists were killed in Udhampur, Kathua, Doda, Rajouri, Kupwara, Bandipora, and Baramulla districts.

North Kashmir's Baramulla district recorded the highest number of foreign terrorist casualties, with 14 being shot dead in nine encounters.

According to the data this year, 30 civilians lost their lives in terrorist initiated incidents across the Union Territory.

In 2019, 44, in 2020, 38, in 2021, 41, in 2022, 31 and in 2023, 14 civilians were killed in the terrorist initiated incidents and encounters.

This year, according to the data, 28 security forces personnel died in various terror related incidents.

According to the data 80 security force personnel lost their lives in 2019, 63 in 2020, 42 in 2021 and 32 in 2022 and 30 in 2023.

In 2024, 60 terrorism related incidents were reported in Jammu and Kashmir, while in 2019, 153, in 2020, 126, in 2021, 129, in 2022, 251 and in 2023, 46 terrorism related incidents were reported.

Kashmir Set

"isolated places" during December 30 and 31.

In view of snowfall and freezing temperature, the MeT official said icy conditions over roads were expected, both in plains and higher reaches.

"Tourists/travellers/Transporters are advised to follow Admin/Traffic advisory," he said.

During January 3-6, he said, chances of moderate to heavy spell of snow at isolated and higher reaches cannot be ruled out.

29% Deficit Rainfall

to the normal precipitation this year as only 9 per cent deficiency was recorded during the period.

The pre-monsoon season, from March to May has recorded a precipitation of 300.7mm against the normal rainfall of 330.0 mm.

In January this year, the highest deficiency was recorded at 91 per cent as the rainfall of only 8.7 mm was recorded in the first month of 2024.

However, the situation improved in the month of February when 108.4 mm rainfall was recorded, taking the deficiency for the month to only 17 per cent.

It is worth mentioning here that the previous winter season from December to February has seen a deficiency of 54 per cent.

The data shared by an independent weather forecaster, Faizan Arif Keng, had further revealed that the southwest monsoon season, from June to September, saw a rainfall of 408.5 mm against the normal precipitation of 549.1 mm, thereby recording a deficit rainfall of 26 per cent only during the

four months of this year till September.

The data however, indicated that the month of August this year, saw a good rainfall as only a 2 per cent deficit was recorded in the eighth month of the year 2024.

Furthermore, the other three months including June, July and September recorded a deficit rainfall ranging 36 to 42 per cent.

The months of October and November this year saw a deficiency of 74 per cent and 69 per cent respectively, the data reads, adding that the overall shortage for the post-monsoon period until November was 71 per cent.

Nonetheless, the post-monsoon rainfall shortage came down to 64 per cent in December due to the recent rainfall and snow spell.

According to the data, the ongoing month till December 29 has recorded a deficit rainfall of 58 per cent.

Earlier, it was reported that Jammu and Kashmir recorded a deficit of 81 per cent from October to December 25, 2024.

From October 01 to December 25, 2024, Jammu and Kashmir has recorded a deficit rainfall of 81 per cent as against the normal precipitation of 110.0 mm; the UT has recorded only 21.0 mm rainfall during the period.

However, the recent rain and snowfall has brought the deficiency down to a large extent.

Cold Wave

to minus 0.9 degrees Celsius, little more than a degree above the normal temperature for this time of the year, it said.

Qazigund recorded a minimum temperature of minus 2.8 degree Celsius, while Konibal in Parampore recorded a low of minus 1.4 degree Celsius, the weather office said.

Kupwara in north Kashmir registered a low of 0.1 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag in south Kashmir recorded a minimum temperature of minus 1.0 degrees Celsius, it said.

Kupwara was the only place in the Valley where the minimum temperature settled above freezing point.

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

Chances of snowfall are the highest during the 40 days of Chillai-Kalan, leading to considerable drop in temperature.

While the period ends on January 30, cold wave conditions continue even after that.

No New Year

also be held in Sonamarg, Doothapthri, Lolab and other places," sources said.

Former Prime Minister and Congress stalwart Dr Manmohan Singh died at the age of 92 at Delhi's AIIMS after being admitted there over age related health issues on Thursday last week.

Following his death, the Union government announced 7-day national mourning with the national flag to fly at half mast, while official functions

and celebrations were also postponed during this period.

HC Seeks Response

that they are highly prejudiced by the acts of omission and commission on the part of the authorities and as such moved the court for redressing their grievances.

Among others, they have sought the court's direction in declaring Rule 4, Rule 5, Rule 13, Rule 15, Rule 18, Rule 21 and Rule 23 of the J&K Reservation Rules, 2005 as amended through various SOs as ultra vires to the Constitution.

They have also sought direction to the authorities to issue fresh recruitment notifications in tune with Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Rules of 2005 (un-amended). They have sought appointing a commission headed by a Retired Judge of High Court with members of each community/ category to recommend and provide the reservation on the basis of population percentage in J&K, so that the reservation policy is framed on rational basis.

Besides, they have sought direction to command the authorities to apply rationality in the reservation to maintain a 50% ceiling for open merit and general category.

Chatterjee Takes

He has also served as Deputy MD of State Bank of India and MD of SBI Caps - a wholly-owned investment banking subsidiary of SBI.

He said as the core customer base of the bank is in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh regions, the focus will be on improving the services to the customers in this region.

"However, we will also explore opportunities in the rest of the country as part of the growth story," he added.

Another focus, Chatterjee added, will be on making more effective use of technology to improve operations.

"The bank has shown that it can effectively address the NPAs as it has reduced it from 10 per cent to below four per cent. We will work towards reducing it further," he added.

On a one-time settlement scheme for reducing non-performing assets, Chatterjee said, "If it has been done in the past, it cannot be ruled out in future."

Earlier, welcoming Amitava Chatterjee, the outgoing MD & CEO Baldev Prakash expressed confidence in the new leadership saying, "I am delighted to pass the baton to Amitava Chatterjee, whose caliber and experience match well with the requisites of this position. His extensive knowledge and proven track record in the banking sector, I believe, will further strengthen this institution and propel it to greater heights."

On the occasion, the Bank also organized a farewell for Baldev Prakash, who served the Bank as its first MD & CEO since December - 2021 and has led the significant transformation of the Bank.

In his farewell message, Baldev Prakash said, "Serving this great

institution has been an extraordinary honour and I sincerely thank all our stakeholders - especially the entire J&K Bank family, our esteemed promoters and the Board of Directors - for their unwavering trust, support and guidance. As a team, we have transformed the Bank into a thriving, resilient and future-ready institution."

The Bank's management and staff extended heartfelt gratitude to Baldev Prakash for his outstanding contributions and wished him success in his future endeavours. They also expressed confidence in the new MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee's leadership to steer the Bank towards its next phase of growth and excellence.

Court Rejects

prosecution evidence and absconding, if granted bail," the court said, adding, "This is a fit case for invoking exception to the general rule."

The court's ordered followed objections to the bail plea of Gurpreet Singh by prosecution, stating that he was actively involved in a scam where a senior citizen was subjected to a "digital arrest" scam where fraudsters create a false sense of fear and panic by pretending to be law enforcement officials, coercing victims into making payments under the threat of a fake online investigation or arrest. The Srinagar elderly was coerced into transferring Rs 21 lakh to scammers, according to the prosecution.

Singh's role, prosecution said, was to receive a portion of the stolen funds - Rs 4 lakh - in his account and subsequently withdraw the money through ATMs.

Rats Roam GMC

no compromise on sanitation and I take personal care about that.

"Due to winter there are a lot of attendants also visiting the hospital but that doesn't mean that we compromise in patient care, it has happened and we will ensure that it won't happen again, She said."

Dr Najeer further said that the administration has further summoned employees of the contractor who are responsible for rodenticide and said that the contractor has few months left and his contract is going to end soon.

The viral photos have drawn sharp criticism from the public, with many questioning the hospital's ability to maintain basic hygiene standards. Patients and their families have demanded swift action to resolve the issue and prevent similar incidents in the future.

Excluding Local

was abrogated. The list of public holidays announced by the LG administration for 2025 does not include these days.

Nowruz, another important festival celebrated on the spring equinox with massive cultural and religious significance, is also missing from the official holiday list.

Meanwhile, CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami also termed the administration's decision an attempt to distort history.

"Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was a towering personality, and his contributions to the freedom struggle and empowerment of the people of J-K cannot be ignored. The empowerment of people we see today came through decisions like 'land-to-tiller' without compensation, education for all, and empowerment of women, which resulted from that movement," Tarigami said in a statement.

"To downgrade such a towering personality is a distortion of history," he added.

He also said that July 13 holds immense historical significance for J&K, as it commemorates the sacrifice of those who laid down their lives protesting against autocratic rule and advocating for human dignity.

Claiming that an attempt is being made to further divide people, Tarigami said, "The administration has insulted the people of Jammu and Kashmir by making such decisions."

NGTs Issues

It is important to mention that the BDO Lalpora Baramulla had applied for No Objection Certificate (NOC) which was declined by the Assistant Executive Engineer of Irrigation and Flood Control Department vide letter dated 23.02.2024. The Assistant Executive Engineer, Irrigation Department directed the BDO Lalpora to immediately stop all unauthorized activities and restore the stream to its original position but the same was ignored. The matter was finally taken up before the National Green Tribunal -NGT by noted RTI & Climate Activist Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat.

The matter was listed before the NGT's two member bench of Justice A K Tyagi (Judicial Member) and Dr Senthil Veil (Expert Member) on December 6th

The petitioner in the case Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat told NGT through his counsel Advocate Rahul Chowdhury and Advocate Shreepuna Dasgupta that he had submitted a representation dated 14.10.2024 to the concerned authorities but no action had been taken on the same. He provided proof of the delivery of emails to the respondents Chief Secretary, Chief Engineer IFC Kashmir , DC Baramulla, Member Secretary JKPCC, BDO Lalpora.

"The averments made in the application raise questions relating to the environment arising out of the implementation of the enactments specified in Schedule I to the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010. Notices along with copies of the application and documents attached therewith be issued to the respondents requiring them to file their responses/ replies to the allegations made in the application at least one week before the next date of hearing. The applicant is directed to serve notices on the respondents by email as well as registered/speed post and to file an affidavit of service within 15 days and also file tracking reports regarding notices sent by registered/speed post at least one week before the next date of hearing. List on 01.04.2025 " reads the order.




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UNRAVEL KASHMIR

CM Reviews Winter Tourism Preparedness With MLA Gulmarg

Agencies

SRINAGAR: With the winter season in full swing, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday held a crucial meeting with Gulmarg MLA Farooq Shah to review the preparations for the anticipated influx of visitors and skiers at the picturesque ski destination of Gulmarg.

During the meeting detailed discussions were held to ensure that Gulmarg, renowned for its pristine snow-covered slopes, is ready to welcome tourists from across the globe.

Sources said the Chief Minister called the need for efficient management and seamless coordination among departments to provide world-class facilities and services to visitors.

Sources said MLA Gulmarg, Farooq Shah, apprised the Chief Minister of the ongoing efforts to enhance the region's infrastructure. Shah further highlighted that adequate measures have been taken to ensure safety and accessibility amid



predictions of heavy snowfall in the coming days.

Recognizing the economic significance of winter tourism, Omar directed officials to ensure uninterrupted electricity, sufficient water supply, and the availability of medical services. He also called for robust snow clearance mechanisms on roads leading to Gulmarg to facilitate smooth movement for both tourists and locals.

The Chief Minister expressed hope that the proactive measures being taken would boost tourist footfall, contributing to the region's economy and showcasing Gulmarg's potential as a premier winter sports destination. (KINS)

Dy. CM Directs For Adherence To Rules During Mining Operations



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary on Monday directed the officers for strict adherence to already set rules and regulations during mining operations and the need for following the environmental concerns while carrying these activities.

The Deputy Chief Minister made these remarks while chairing a meeting to review performance, functioning of the mining department at the Civil Secretariat here today.

The meeting was attended by the Director, Mining, Member Secretary FAC, other senior officers and stakeholders.

While directing for follow the rules set up for mining operations, Surinder Choudhary said that any deviation from the same would not be acceptable. He said that the district mining officers should ensure that no aberration takes place.

"The Officers should ensure that the mining operations are carried out strictly in accordance with the set norms and procedures. The lessees should also ensure that they don't flout any rules, and they should work in close coordination with the department, so that any violation taking place would be controlled and necessary action initiated against the defaulters", the Deputy Chief Minister said.

He further directed for ensuring environmental concerns be taken into consideration while doing the excavations. He said that we have to take care of the fragile ecosystem of our region and maximum care should be taken for ensuring its preservation. "We have to ensure that the development should be in consonance with the environmental needs and safeguards. Preserving our environment should also be taken into consideration", he added.

Winter Carnival Pahalgam To Be Held On Jan 2 Evening

Agencies

PAHALGAM: The J&K Tourism department has decided to celebrate Winter Carnival Pahalgam on January 2 evening to attract more tourists to the picturesque destination in the Valley.

Officials said that the winter carnival Pahalgam will be held at Pahalgam club from 4 pm on January 2 and it is expected to witness a good gathering with an aim to attract tourists in all seasons.

He said that the function is expected to attract tourists, locals and all stakeholders, adding that the government wants to keep this world famous tourist destination vibrant.

He said at Carnival, Kashmiri cuisine along with Handicrafts will be promoted so that the people will come to know

about the unique things that are available in Kashmir only.

"We are expecting a vibrant winter next year. After the recent snowfall, we are expecting a huge number of tourist footfall at the place," he said, adding that "right now, we have a good number of tourists in Pahalgam as 50-70 per cent of hotels with proper heating arrangements are packed," he said, adding that all the stakeholders of Pahalgam are ready to welcome the tourists.

"For new tourists, we are ready with passion and enthusiasm so that they give us the opportunity to serve them in a better way, he said while urging tourists to visit here and experience the atmosphere, natural beauty, hospitality of the locals and cuisine—(KNO)

LG Chairs 88th University Council Meeting Of University of Jammu



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha chaired the 88th meeting of the University Council of Jammu at Raj Bhavan, on Monday.

The meeting was attended by Ms Sakina Ittoo, Minister for Higher Education, Shantmanu, Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education Department; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu; Prof. Alok Kumar Rai, Vice Chancellor, Lucknow University; Prof. K.S Chandrasekhar, Vice Chancellor, Cluster University Jammu; Prof. AK Kaul, former Professor, Department of Sociology, BHU Varanasi; Dr Neeraj Sharma, Registrar, Jammu University and other members of the council.

Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary, Planning, Monitoring and Development Department; Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor, Kashmir University and Prof. Mohd Mohin, Vice Chancellor Cluster University Srinagar joined through virtual mode.

The University Council deliberated on various matters

of academic and administrative importance to further improve the overall functioning of the university.

The meeting accorded in-principle approval to various agenda items and proposals including adoption and inclusion of several provisions as per the guidelines and notifications of UGC and National Education Policy 2020.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the University for Regular Revision of curriculum and courses, besides introducing new courses in line with the emerging trends and needs of the modern-day world. The University should also give dedicated focus to promotion of local languages and culture of the region, he said.

He further asked the University to start a drive for faculty strengthening, filling up the vacant Teaching / Non-Teaching posts and resolving the promotion related matters under Career Advancement Scheme in fast-track mode.

The Lieutenant Governor also passed necessary directions to the University for streamlining the e-office and timely completion of ongoing projects.

On the occasion, members of the Council congratulated

the Vice Chancellor and faculty members and staff of University of Jammu for attaining the coveted A++ Grade from NAAC with an exceptional CGPA score of 3.72 and becoming the only A++ University in J&K UT.

The University Council also discussed the success of the Design Your Own Degree under-graduate programme.

Discussions were also held on streamlining the process of direct recruitments for various posts, on boarding of sports experts for effective implementation of Sports Policy of the University, Credit framework for Design Your Degree programme etc.

Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu presented a detailed report highlighting University's thrust on research, skill development, Internships and Start Ups, experiential learning through major projects; path-breaking initiatives of the University including digital and environment friendly initiatives, and promoting trans-disciplinary and holistic Education.

The chair was also briefed on the action taken on the directions passed during the previous meeting.

World Bank's Rs 1500 Crore J&K Project Gets 6th Extension

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a significant development, the World Bank has granted the 6th extension to the Rs 1500 crore project funded by it in Jammu & Kashmir for the reconstruction of infrastructure damaged by the devastating floods in 2014.

In a communique, the World Bank has conveyed to the Union Finance Ministry that it has agreed to extend the project till August 31, 2026.

"We refer to the Financing Agreement between India ('Recipient') and the International Development Association ('Association'), dated January 21, 2016 ('Financing Agreement'), pursuant to which the Association has provided the above-captioned Credit ('Credit') for the Jhelum and Tawi Flood Recovery Project ('Project'). We also refer to the letter from the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, DO. No. 05/06/2014-FB.VIII/V, dated November 14, 2024, requesting the Association to extend the Closing Date of the Project by twenty (20) months. We are pleased to inform you



that the Association has established August 31, 2026, as the later date for purposes of Section IV.B.2 of Schedule 2 to the Financing Agreement," reads the communique from Auguste Tano Kouame, World Bank's country director, India, to Manisha Sinha, additional secretary (OMI, Crypto & FB), Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

The WB's India director, in the letter, has stated that this extension is final and has been granted exceptionally for some specific projects. "As agreed, this is the final extension of this credit that has been granted on an exceptional basis. This extension is specifically focused on the completion of the LD Hospital in Srinagar and the construction of four bridges," the letter states.

These works, according to

documents, would have remained incomplete by the current closing date (December 31, 2024). These works notably include the Lal Ded Hospital, intended to serve as a tertiary care gynecological facility, and the construction of four bridges.

The extension was granted after the project implementing entity, in its letter dated November 9, 2024, requested another 20-month extension from the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA). The Government of India endorsed the request to extend the current project closing date from December 31, 2024, until August 31, 2026.

The project's original closing date of June 30, 2020, has undergone five extensions. In June 2020, the project was granted a one-year extension of the closing date until June 30, 2021. Additional extensions were granted in June 2021 (for 12 months until June 30, 2022), in June 2022 (for six months until December 31, 2022), in December 2022 (for 12 months until December 31, 2023), and in December 2023 (for 12 months until December 31, 2024)—(KNO)



Fire Services Department Responds To Over 6,700 Calls In 2024

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In 2024, Jammu and Kashmir received 6,752 fire calls, including 42 false alarms. There were 2,938 buildings affected, but the Fire and Emergency Department reported that property worth Rs 1,699 crore was saved.

The department said the main causes of fires were leaks from LPG, electrical overloads, short circuits and the increased use of heating devices.

According to details obtained from the F&ES Department, a total of 6,752 fire calls and 60 rescue calls were recorded throughout 2024, with 42 classified as false alarms.

Notably, 23 firefighters were injured during various operations across the valley. The data also revealed that 6,427 awareness programmes were conducted throughout the region by the end of November 2024, reaching 566,797 students, 50,713 teaching staff, 34,258 health employees, and 118,890 other participants, raising

awareness about fire safety.

Alok Kumar (IPS), ADGP and Director of F&ES, J&K, said, "99% of people want to get out of their burning houses, while we can't wait to get in to save lives. Fighting fires that threaten lives and safety is one of the most dangerous challenges we face. Our deep commitment to saving lives drives us forward. Every fire is a fierce battle, and every life we save reinforces our purpose." He added, "We Serve to Save."

The department conducted a total of 4,889 fire service audits during the year, with monthly breakdowns as: January: 446 audits, February: 441 audits, March: 453 audits, April: 410 audits, May: 509 audits, June: 440 audits, July: 527 audits, August: 494 audits, September: 333 audits, October: 394 audits and November: 442 audits.

The Fire & Emergency Services Department said it responded to 6,752 fire incidents from January to November 2024. These incidents resulted in the injury of 23 fire service personnel during operations—(KNO)

Kashmir's Craft Exports Reach ₹3,477.31 Cr In 4 Years



Agencies

SRINAGAR: The total export value of Kashmiri crafts in four years has reached Rs 3,477.31 crore.

This includes exports from four key categories including carpets, woolen shawls, paper mache, and other items (such as chain stitch, crewel, and wood carving).

According to the details available in 2020-21, the exports were significantly affected, particularly in the carpet and woolen shawl sectors, but have since rebounded.

The category of "Other items" (including chain stitch, crewel, and wood carving) showed consistent exports, with a marked rise in the last two years. The total export value reached Rs 116.29 crore in 2023-24, signalling a strong recovery.

However in 2020-21, the total exports of Kashmiri crafts were valued at Rs 635.52 crore. Carpet exports stood at Rs 299.56 crore, woolen shawls at Rs 172.53 crore, paper mache at Rs 13.27 crore, and other items at Rs 150.16 crore. The export figures

for this year reflect the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted global trade and demand for handicrafts.

In 2021-22, total exports dropped to Rs 563.13 crore, showing a decline from the previous year. Carpet exports fell to Rs 251.06 crore, while woolen shawls brought in Rs 165.98 crore. Paper mache exports were stable at Rs 13.25 crore, while other items saw a decrease to Rs 132.84 crore. This decline is largely attributed to ongoing disruptions in global supply chains due to the pandemic.

2022-23 marked a strong recovery in the handicraft export sector, with total exports rising sharply to Rs 1116.37 crore. Carpet exports surged to Rs 357.21 crore, while woolen shawls saw a significant increase to Rs 424.20 crore. Paper mache exports remained lower at Rs 8.51 crore, but the "Other items" category saw a strong rise to Rs 326.45 crore. This growth was fueled by an increase in global demand as markets began to recover from the pandemic's effects.—(KNO)

Doodhpathri Records 1.86 Million Tourists In 2024

Agencies

BUDGAM: Doodhpathri, a picturesque meadow nestled in central Kashmir's Budgam district, has emerged as one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the valley. In 2024, the serene spot attracted an impressive 1.86 million visitors, including international, domestic, and local tourists.

Riyaz Ahmad Beigh, Chief Executive Officer of the Doodhpathri Development Authority (DDA), attributed this remarkable growth to years of sustained development and promotion efforts.

"The influx of visitors is a testament to our dedication to making Doodhpathri a prime attraction for tourists from across the globe. This year, we

welcomed 1,482 international tourists, 1,182,843 domestic travelers, and 681,255 local visitors," Riyaz Ahmed said.

Beigh also highlighted how the steady rise in tourism has positively impacted the local economy, providing livelihoods for many. "Visitors not only admire the natural beauty of Doodhpathri but also spend quality time here, benefiting the local community," he said.

Known for its pristine landscapes and breathtaking views, Doodhpathri has also caught the attention of filmmakers. In 2024 alone, the DDA granted 29 shooting permissions for film, television, and music video shoots. "This is a significant boost for both the local tourism industry and global cinema,



Abid Bhat/KNO

showcasing the beauty of Doodhpathri to a wider audience," Beigh remarked.

With its unparalleled charm and increasing popularity, Doodhpathri is rapidly solidifying its position as a must-visit destination in Kashmir.

He further revealed that Doodhpathri is set to be transformed into a premier winter destination. "Following the recent snowfall, we restricted vehicle entry to Doodhpathri, allowing only those equipped with anti-skid chains or 4x4 capabilities to access the area up to the TRC," he said.

He added that "due to frost on the roads caused by sub-zero temperatures, there is a risk of vehicles skidding, which could pose a danger to visitors. To address this,

we have deployed manpower to manually clear the roads. Within a day, the route will be opened for vehicles equipped with anti-skid chains and 4x4 systems, allowing access up to Parihas Maidan and ensuring the safety of visitors."

He further revealed that for adventure enthusiasts, skiing and ATV rides would be available, offering an exhilarating winter experience.

Additionally, subject to favorable weather conditions, a ski course is planned to be inaugurated on New Year's Day, providing young skiers with an opportunity to learn and enjoy skiing at Doodhpathri.

To attract more tourists, a New Year program will also be organized in the first week of January—(KNO)

Rohit, Virat Fail Again As India Lose 4th Test By 184 Runs

Press Trust of India

MELBOURNE: India slumped to a demoralising 184-run loss to Australia in the fourth Test here on Monday with contemporary greats Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli failing to come good yet again, signalling that their walk towards the exit door is not too far.

Chasing a near improbable target of 340, both Rohit (9 off 40 balls) and Kohli (5) failed to battle their technical frailties and mental cobwebs as India lost seven wickets for 34 runs in just 20.4 overs in the final session to be all out for 155 in 79.1 overs.

Australian captain Pat Cummins (3/28 in 18 overs) was superb as usual and Scott Boland was also magnificent (3/39 in 16 overs) in his every spell.

Nathan Lyon (2/37 in 20.1 overs) took advantage of variable bounce while Mitchell Starc (1/25 in 16 overs) got the prized scalp of Kohli. This was after an 88-run fourth-wicket stand between Yashasvi Jaiswal



and Rishabh Pant.

"Pretty disappointing. We wanted to fight but we could not do it," a dejected Rohit said in the post-match presentation.

"We tried everything but they fought hard. We did not grab our chances," he conceded. Australia now lead the series

2-1 and unless India draw level in Sydney, a third successive World Test Championship final could become a distant dream. Even to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, India would need to post a win.

Save Jaiswal (84, 208 balls), whose controversial caught-

behind in which the third umpire overruled technology to adjudge him out, none of the other batters performed well enough to save the team.

"They batted well in the middle session. We knew that we had to get one breakthrough and anything can happen and

that proved to be the case.

"We had plenty of runs to play with, we had plenty of fielders with the helmet around," a beaming Cummins, who was also adjudged player of the match for his haul of six wickets, said in the presentation ceremony.

The art of saving Test matches has slowly become extinct but India would have depended on their two senior-most players, who are also fighting to save their legacy and reputation built over nearly two decades.

In case of Rishabh Pant, it was one bad shot too many after a full session in which he concentrated. He got a rank long hop from Travis Head but after a 103-ball vigil, it all came to a naught.

The defeat could have severe repercussions as there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel for skipper Rohit.

As for Kohli, despite all his white-ball exploits, the problems outside the off-stump will stick out like a sore thumb.

Short TAKES

Jaiswal's Dismissal Sparks Controversy; Rohit Has His Say

Yashasvi Jaiswal's contentious dismissal on Monday might have sparked an uproar, but Indian skipper Rohit Sharma attempted to douse the fire stating that the left-hander "did touch the ball" while slipping in a terse reminder that his team often falls on the wrong side of such close calls involving technology.

Jaiswal was batting on 84 (208b, 310m, 8x4) when Aussie skipper Pat Cummins' down-the-leg snorter cramped him for the room while attempting a hook, and the home side went up instantaneously in appeal for a caught behind as Alex Carey completed a tumbling take.

On-field umpire Joel Wilson didn't relent as the Aussies resorted to DRS and third umpire Saikat Sharfuddoula ruled Jaiswal out despite no edge being registered on the Snicko, basing his decision on the available visual deflection evidence.

The Indian crowd at the MCG received the decision with rounds of 'cheater' chants.

However, Rohit was more practical in his views, than emotional.

"I don't know what to make of it because the technology didn't show anything but with naked eye it seemed like he did touch something," Rohit said at the post-match press conference.

"I don't know how the umpires want to use the technology but in all fairness I think he did touch the ball," he added.

"It's about the technology which we all know is not a 100 per cent. But again we don't really want to look too much into that," Rohit said.

"It's just that we are more often than not falling on the wrong side of it. It's been happening, so we have been a bit unfortunate," he added.

West Bengal, Kerala To Clash In Santosh Trophy Final

West Bengal and Kerala, two of India's finest teams with a rich history in the game, will clash in a blockbuster summit showdown of the National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy on Tuesday.

The two states that have rightfully earned the tags of Indian football hubs are no strangers to the pinnacle of the national championships with West Bengal gearing up for a record 47th final and Kerala standing on the verge of playing their 16th summit clash.

Both sides have shown form befitting of their stature in the tournament, winning nine of their 10 matches, while drawing one each.

Historically, Bengal have dominated at this stage, winning the tournament 32 times, while Kerala are seven-time champions.

In recent years, however, Kerala have had the edge over their eastern rivals, winning the 2017-18 and the 2021-22 titles defeating West Bengal.

In the 10 matches so far, Kerala have scored 35 goals, while Bengal netted 27 times. The former have had a number of options for their goals, Naseeb Rahman (8), Muhammad Ajsal (9), and Sajeesh E (5) leading the charts for the southern state.

Draconian Decision: Carlsen Hits Out At Anand, FIDE

World number one Magnus Carlsen on Monday criticised senior FIDE officials, including its deputy president Viswanathan Anand, for mishandling the dress code violation issue, calling them "not grown-ups" and stating that the Indian was "not ready for the job."

A couple of days after being disqualified from the Rapid event at the World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship for refusing to change into formal trousers, Carlsen was confirmed for the Blitz event following FIDE's decision to allow players to compete in jeans.

Describing the decision to disqualify him as "draconian," the Norwegian called the officials "robots" who are not capable of making independent decisions.

"Him actually being asleep when this happened meant there were no grown-ups in FIDE. You can argue whether I am or not. But there was nobody even slightly willing to have a conversation," he said.

The five-time world champion was fined USD 200 for wearing jeans, which was "explicitly prohibited" under the original tournament regulations.

Anand, himself a five-time world champion, had told Chessbase India that Carlsen "simply refused to follow the rules, left us with little choice."

J&K Clinch 18 Medals At 1st Sarit Sarak Federation Cup

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The J&K Sarit Association made a remarkable debut at the 1st Sarit Sarak Federation Cup, held in Solapur, Maharashtra, from 21-23 December 21-23. The event witnessed participation from 16 states across India.

The J&K team put up an impressive performance, securing fourth overall position in the tournament. The team's achievement was further highlighted by its impressive medal tally, winning a total of 18 medals.

The Secretary of the J&K Sarit Sarak Association ex-



tended warm congratulations to all the players and medallists who participated in the event.

The 1st Sarit Sarak Federation Cup marked a significant milestone for the sport, bringing together talented

players from across the country.

The J&K Sarit Sarak Association's success at the Federation Cup is also a tribute to the hard work and dedication of the team's coaches, trainers, and support staff.

Rainawari Boy Wins Gold At World Pencak Silat C'ship

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim, a 14-year-old boy from Rainawari, Srinagar, has made the Valley proud by clinching a gold medal in the Junior category at the 5th World Pencak Silat Championship.

The championship, held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, from December 18 to 22, saw participation from some of the best junior martial artists worldwide.

Ibrahim, under the guidance of his coach, showcased exceptional skill and determination in this traditional Southeast Asian martial art, securing the top position.

Competing against elite athletes from across the globe, Ibrahim's focus and technical mastery stood out, earning him this remarkable achievement.

"This medal is not just for me but



for the entire Valley. I dedicate it to my coach, family, and everyone who supported me. This is proof that hard work and determination can make anything possible," Ibrahim said.

His coach, Nassir Ahmad, expressed his pride in the youngster. (KNO)

Alishba Wins Bronze At Martial Arts C'ship In Abu Dhabi

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Alishba Jeelani, hailing from Srinagar, has won a Bronze medal at the 5th World Pencak Silat Championship held in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

"I've had a passion for martial arts since I was young. I started practicing martial arts in second grade, and since then, I haven't stopped. It has become a passion for me," Alishba, a student of DPS Srinagar, said.

"I'm following my passion, and if my career continues to grow in this field, I'll be more than happy. Sports has given me a platform, and it has allowed me to travel across India and

even to Abu Dhabi. Sports has kept me fit and free from health problems," she added.

"The trials for the Abu Dhabi championship were held first in Kashmir, followed by several competitions and selections across multiple states. The best players were chosen, and after that, India's team was formed for the World Championship. Our team performed exceptionally well, despite Indonesia providing a tough competition as they are experts in this sport, Alishba said.

"I am really proud of myself, and my parents are incredibly proud of me as well. Coming from Kashmir and winning an international medal means a lot to me," she added. (JKNS)

Wushu Athletes From Kashmir Shine At National Level



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Several athletes from Kashmir Valley have won medals at various national-level Wushu competitions.

Farhan Rasheed, a promising Wushu player from the PMDP Training Centre in Shopian, clinched a bronze medal at the 24th Sub-Junior National Wushu Championship held at Baba Budha Sahib Diwan Hall, Chabbal,

District Tarn Taran, Punjab. The event was held from December 1 to 6.

Similarly, women athletes from the Khelo India Wushu Centre in Handwara demonstrated their mettle at the Khelo India Wushu Women's League. Mehreen Jan secured a silver medal, while Pakeeza Qureshi earned a bronze, showcasing the depth of talent being nurtured at these centres.

Adding to the achievements, three trainees from the Khelo India Hockey Centre in Poonch have been selected for the Under-14 Boys J&K Team to participate in the 68th National School Games scheduled in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, from January 2 to 7.

The J&K Sports Council in a statement said the selection underscores its commitment to fostering excellence in team sports.

Bumrah Nominated For ICC Cricketer Of The Year Award, Featured In Test List

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Operating at a level rarely seen in the game before, India's peerless fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah was on Monday nominated for the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year award and also featured in the list for the best player in the Test format.

Bumrah, who has left the Australian batters scrambling for survival with his incredible display of fast bowling in the ongoing five-match series Down Under, has been nominated for the top award, named after legendary West Indies all-rounder Sir Garfield Sobers, alongside England's prolific duo of Joe Root and Harry Brook, with swashbuckling Australian batter Travis Head completing the list.

Besides Bumrah, who has been at the top of his game throughout 2024, Root, Brook and Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis featured in the list for the ICC Test Cricketer of the Year award.

Bumrah has been the best bowler in Test cricket in 2024

with 71 wickets from 13 matches at an average of 14.92 and a strike rate of 30.16, the best figures for any bowler.

The right-arm pacer has also been the top bowler in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with 30 wickets in a mere four Tests.

"Having returned to the Test arena following his recovery from a recurring back injury in 2023, Bumrah dominated the bowling charts in 2024. Featuring across 13 Tests in the calendar year, Bumrah delivered his best-ever annual tally - 71 wickets - finishing the year with more Test wickets than any of his counterparts," the ICC said on its website.

"Be it the pace-conducive conditions in South Africa and Australia, or tougher conditions for quicks at home, Bumrah was equally impressive through the year. However, it was on India's tour of Australia that the pace spearhead produced his magnum opus," it added.

The ICC rated Bumrah's match-defining spells at Perth, to guide India to a 295-run win, among his most memorable



performances along with his dominating show in T20 World Cup.

"Bumrah nabbed 15 wickets from eight outings - including a couple in the final against South Africa - as India went unbeaten at the 2024 T20 World Cup," the ICC said.

Head was nominated after

finishing as the leading run-scorer of the T20 World Cup and being at the forefront of Australian batting in Tests.

"Typifying an aggressive brand of batting, the southpaw brandished runs at a brisk rate in the shortest format, and finished among the leading run-getters at ICC Men's T20 World

Cup 2024. In the Test arena, Head was vital to Australia's push for defending their ICC World Test Championship title," the ICC said.

England mainstay Root has been the most dominant batter in the year, amassing 1,556 runs from 17 Tests at 55.57. The 34-year-old crossed the 1,000-

run mark in a calendar year for the fifth time in his career while scoring six tons and five fifties.

The game's global governing body said, "Across 17 Tests, Joe Root compiled his second-best annual run-tally in Tests - second only to his 1,708 runs from 2021. It was also the fifth instance of Root scoring over 1,000 Test runs in a calendar year."

"With six Test hundreds to go alongside five half-centuries, Root was a consistent performer for England - both home and away. His impressive run with the bat saw Root amass joint-fifth highest tons in Tests (36) alongside Rahul Dravid," it added.

The ICC recalled Root's career-best 262 against Pakistan at Multan, also his sixth double century in Tests, and termed it one of his best efforts.

Root's compatriot Brook is also in the list of four shortlisted players after scoring 1,100 runs from 12 Tests at 55.00 with four centuries and three fifties.

Brook is fourth in the list of highest run-scorers in 2024 be-

hind table-topper Root, India's Yashasvi Jaiswal (1,478 runs at 54.74) and England's Ben Duckett (1,149 runs at 37.06).

"A flagbearer of England's quickfire brand of batting, Harry Brook emerged as a breakthrough performer in the longest format," the ICC said.

"A noticeable trait in his performances was the fact that most of his runs (723) came away from home while playing the same number of games as he did in England (6)," it added.

Brook's "blistering" 317 off 322 deliveries was one of his top performances in the year.

Sri Lanka's Mendis, who hit 1,049 runs from nine Tests at 74.92, is also in the list after enjoying a terrific year, during which he became the joint-third quickest to score 1000 Test runs, equalling Sir Don Bradman's 13-innings mark to reach the milestone.

"Mendis averaged more than any of the batters who played more than two Tests in the calendar year - a staggering 74.92 from nine matches," the apex body said.