

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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Vintage Mall, 2nd floor Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar

This cutting-edge technology effectively reduces dark spots, melasma, and sun damage, revealing a radiant complexion with minimal downtime



3 Trains **To Connect Srinagar Daily**

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The new winter timing for trains to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra (SVDK)-Kashmir valley section was approved by Northern Railway, Divisional Railway Manager. An order

in this regard was issued on Wednesday.

As per the order, newly introduced trains, Vande Bharat will depart from SVDK at 8:10 am and will arrive at Srinagar Railway Station (SINA) at 11.20 am, Mail/ Exp will depart from SVDK at 9:50am and will arrive at SINA at 1:10 pm and an-Mail/Exp will depart from SVDK at 3 pm and will arrive at SINA

at 6:20 pm The train to Kashmir is expected to be launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi any time around January However,

Inspection Of

The

Administration Department

(GAD) of Jammu and Kashmir

has issued a directive requiring IAS officers to submit their

annual Immovable Property

Returns (IPR) online by January

31, 2025. This initiative aims

to enhance accountability and

date and

Agencies

Srinagar:

VANDE BHARAT EXPRES Departs Katra (SVDK)

8:10 AM **Arrives Srinagar** 11:20 AM

MAIL/EXPRESS (MORNING) Departs Katra

> 9:50 AM **Arrives Srinagar**

MAIL/EXPRESS (AFTERNOON)

1:10 PM

Departs Katra 3:00 PM **Arrives Srinagar** 6:20 PM

Katra-Reasi Section On Jan 7-8

he Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) is set to con-

the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link on January

duct the final inspection of the Katra-Reasi section of

Northern Railway's Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO)

7 and 8, as part of the effort to complete the rail link from

Himanshu Shekhar Upadhyaya said the CRS | More on P6

J&K IAS Officers Asked To File

Property Returns By Jan 31

General

Kashmir to Kanyakumari, officials said.

place for inauguration haven't been finalized so far.

The 17-km Katra-Reasi section's final phase, including the challenging T-33 tunnel, has been completed. The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail project, initiated in 2005-

06, includes several sections: the 118 km Qazigund-Baramulla section (2009), the 18 km Banihal-Qazigund (2013), and the 25 Udhampur-Katra (2014). In February, a suc-cessful electric train trial run was held on the 40 km Banihal-Sangaldan track, and normal train operations are currently running

on this section. The railway line features 38 tunnels, including the T-49, India's longest at 12.75 km, and 927 bridges, including the world's highest railway arch bridge over the Chenab River and the only cable-stayed rail bridge in India

over the Anji River in Reasi.

GOI Vows 'Terror-Free J&K' With 'Innovative Tactics'

Agencies

Srinagar: Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has stated that the government is committed to crushing terrorism by using innovative ways.

YEAR-END REPORT

The 2024 annual report of the MHA states, "The government is committed to setting an example by cracking down on terrorists through innovative means. In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Tolerance Policy against terrorism, the goal of 'terror free Jammu and Kashmir' will be achieved at the earliest."

"PM Modi led government is building a terror-free J&K. While the security forces

Reservations

Among Major

Achievements'



are waging a full-blown war against terror on the ground, the MHA is empowering them by banning individuals and organizations involved in terror

of the PM Modi led government. Under the vision | More on P6

and anti-India activities." The report states that due to the sustained and coordinated efforts of the Union

he Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has listed empowering Pahari ethnic group, Padari tribes, Koli, and Gadda Brahmin in Jammu and Kashmir among the major achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government. The 2024 annual report of the MHA states. "Peace in Jammu and Kashmir has been a priority

'Era Of **Recommendations** Over In J&K'

he Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has stated that the era of recommendations in Jammu and Kashmir is over and now all appointments are made on merit basis. The 2024 annual report of the MHA states. "Instead of terrorism, bomb blasts, firing, stone pelting, and strikes, now education, technical institutions, industries, and infrastructure are being seen in Jammu & Kashmir."

The MHA report stated that the recruitment processes in J&K have become transparent and clean. "The Union Home Minister distributed more

ACB Transitions To E-challan System

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) of Jammu and Kashmir is taking a significant step towards enhancing transparency and efficiency in its operations by transitioning to a

fully electronic challan system. "All ACB branches will discontinue the use of manual registration of FIRs and submit their respective challan electronically through the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS) from January 1," an agency spokesperson said.

He said this initiative aims to streamline the challan filing process, improve record-keeping and facilitate faster case management.

All investigating officers within the ACB will be required to submit specific forms within the CCTNS system for each case challan, the spokesperson added.

To facilitate this transition, CCTNS labs have been established in all eight ACB police stations across Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

"Additionally, 18 officials have undergone training to ensure smooth operation of the CCTNS platform. | More on P6

Meeting On Framing Business Rules

Agencies

'New

4 MLAs Skip

Jammu: Four MLAs on Wednesday skipped first meeting of a committee set-up by the Speaker of Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly to frame Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the House.

The House panel, which was set-up by the Speaker last week, met in Jammu and held discussions on how to proceed ahead with its task.

Sources said that Mir (MLA Trehgam), Saifullah Justice (retd.) Hasnain (MLA Pampore), Masoodi Muzaffar Iqbal Khan (MLA Rajouri) and RS Pathania (MLA Udhampur East) didn't attend the meeting of the panel which was chaired by the Speaker himself.

The committee has seven members from the ruling alliance and two from BJP. No MLA from Kashmir-based opposition is part of the panel.

The committee is likely to finalise the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Jammu and Kashmir | More on P6

By-polls To 2 J&K Seats Likely With Delhi Assembly Elections

ECI To Issue Notification Shortly, Uncertainty On 4 RS Seats

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: By-elections to two vacant Assembly seats in Jammu and Kashmir are likely to be announced by the Election Commission of India along with Delhi Assembly elections scheduled to be held in the beginning of February next year. However, there was uncertainty on when elections to four vacant seats of Rajya Sabha will be held in the UT as two and half months have passed since the Assembly was constituted.

Budgam Assembly seat in Kashmir division and Nagrota Assembly segment in Jammu region are vacant in the 90-member Legislature.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah quit Budgam seat while retaining Ganderbal having won the election from both Assembly constituencies in the polls held in September-October. Nagrota seat in Jammu fell vacant after sudden demise of BJP stalwart Devender Singh Rana.



NC's strength in the Assembly is presently 41 while the BJP has 28 MLAs. NC is the single largest party in the House followed by the BJP. Third largest party-the Congress is way behind with just six seats followed by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) with three MLAs.

Official sources told the Excelsior that the Election Commission of India has obtained entire data pertaining to two vacant seats and is likely to announce the bypoll along with Assembly elections to Delhi. Term of current Delhi Assembly is ending on February 15, 2025 and the elections for 70-seat House are expected to be held in early February.

The by-elections will take the Assembly strength to 90 which has presently come down to 88. However, there is a provision for nomination of five MLAs by the Lieutenant Governor which hasn't been done so far. This will take the Assembly to its full strength of 95. The nominations include two women MLAs, two Kashmiri migrants including one woman and | More on P6

HC Quashes PSA Of Magbool Bhat's Brother

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has quashed the debrother of the founder of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), and ordered his release, if not needed in any other case.

"The legal position is well settled that resort to preventive detention has to be taken only in cases where there is an urgent need to detain a person so as to prevent him from indulging in activities which are prejudicial to the maintenance of public order or security of the State," a bench of Justice Sanjay Dhar while quashing detention order dated 28 June 2022 passed by District Magistrate, Kupwara against one Zahoor Ahmad Bhat of Mirpora Trehgam Kupwara.

"When there is unsatisfactory and unexplained delay in executing the order of detention, such delay would throw considerable doubt on the genuineness of the subjective satisfaction recorded by the detaining authority," the court said, adding, "This would lead to a legitimate inference that the detaining | More on P6

'No Free Gas, Electricity, Jobs'

NC Govt Fails to Deliver On Promises: BJP

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The BJP on Wednesday alleged Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah-led government has "failed on every front" and existed only on paper.

"It has almost been three months that the NC government has been in power, but they have failed on every front. They have failed to keep their guarantees which they had mentioned in their manifesto like providing 12 free gas cylinders, 200 units of free electricity, 10 kgs rice, one lakh jobs and regularising daily wagers," BJP's J&K spokesman Altaf Thakur said at a press conference here.

Referring to the snowfall in the plains of the valley, including Srinagar last week, Thakur said there was "light snowfall, but even on the fourth day today, link roads are still closed".

ensure compliance with the

All India Services (Conduct)

In an order issued on

Wednesday, the GAD em-

phasized that failure to file

the IPR within the stipulated

deadline would lead to dis-

ciplinary action. The depart-

ment reminded officers that

this requirement | More on P6

Rules, 1968.

"NC (government) made huge claims, but they were only statements. They cleared the snow from the roads only on paper, provided electricity only on paper. Abdullah has run the government through statements only and they have failed on ground zero. There are viral videos in which people are saying snow be cleared from the roads, and electricity be provided," he added.

Thakur accused the chief minister of making | More on P6

J&K Bank Rolls Out 'Special **One Time Settlement Scheme'**

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In line with its ongoing efforts to reduce Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) while addressing the genuine challenges faced by borrowers in repaying their loans, J&K Bank Wednesday rolledout its scheme titled 'J&K Bank's Special One Time Settlement Scheme for NPAs/RLAs (KARZ SE MUKTI)'.

MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee formally unveiled the scheme in the presence of Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, General Managers and other senior officers here at a ceremony held at the Bank's Corporate Headquarters.

Notably, the scheme has been tailored to provide an opportunity to the borrowers with NPA accounts classified as Doubtful-I, Doubtful-II. Doubtful-III & Loss/RLAs Principal NPA/RLA outstanding balance

upto Rs 5 Crore as on September 30, 2024. Speaking on the occasion, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "JKB Special OTS -2024 Scheme reflects our commitment to extend a helping hand to the borrowers who are unable to repay their loans on time due to genuine constraints. This attractive scheme provides an excep-

tional opportunity for eli-

gible borrowers | More on P6

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has said that public interest must be prioritized over private interest in matters of tenders.

'The scope of interference by the Constitutional Courts in tender matters is minimal and confined to the extent when there is arbitrariness, irrationality, and unreasonableness, mala fide or bias," said a bench of Wasim Sadiq Nargal while dismissing a petition by two transporters regarding tender notice floated by public sector undertaking regarding transportation of petroleum products and LPG gas through J&K as well as in other States.

"....the conditions of the tender cannot be tailor made to suit the eligibility of a party, who is ineligible in terms of the tender conditions and such party has no vested



Prioritise Public Interest Over Private In Tenders: HC

right to challenge the terms and conditions being ineligible.'

The court underlined the fact that the tender making authority has an expertise in technical and administrative field, thus, is the best person to frame the terms and conditions.

"The Court having no expertise cannot direct the tender making authority to frame the conditions in a way to suit the eligibility of a particular party who is being ousted from the consideration zone by virtue of being ineligible," the court said.

The court also held that while individual interests in a tender matter such as fairness, contractual rights and due process are important and must be safeguarded, they should not override the public interest. Public procurement, the court

said, must be conducted in a manner that serves the public good, ensuring transparency and efficiency.

"Public interest generally takes precedence, in the context of tender process," the court said, adding, "Thus public interest must be prioritized over private interest. Therefore the Courts are tasked with ensuring that the decision made by public authorities align with the broader goals of public welfare and any interference must be justified by clear demonstration of public interest."

While dealing with the issue of whether a | More on P6

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm) No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

KASHMIR OBSERVER® Srinagar | Thursday | 02-01-2025

Study Links Coffee, Tea Consumption To Lower Risk Of Head, Neck Cancer

ecent research has suggested that drinking coffee and tea may lower the risk of developing head and neck cancer, a group of cancers that includes cancers of the mouth, throat, and larynx.

The findings, published in the peer-reviewed journal CANCER by the American Cancer Society, offer new insights into the potential protective effects of these popular beverages.

A new pooled analysis combining data from 14 studies has revealed promising results for coffee and tea drinkers. The research, conducted by the International Head and Neck Cancer Epidemiology Consortium, examined over 9,500 patients with head and neck cancer and more than 15,700 cancerfree controls.

The findings suggest that individuals who consume coffee and tea regularly may experience a reduced risk of developing head and neck cancers.

The study found that individuals who drank more than four cups of caffeinated coffee daily had 17 per cent lower odds of developing head and neck cancer compared to non-coffee drinkers.

Furthermore, regular coffee drinkers showed a 30 per cent reduced risk of oral cavity cancer and a 22 per cent lower risk of throat cancer.

Specifically, consuming 3-4 cups of caffeinated coffee daily was associated with a significant 41 per cent reduction in the risk of hypopharyngeal cancer, a type of cancer located at the bottom of the throat.

Even decaffeinated coffee appeared to have a protective effect. Drinking decaf coffee was associated with a 25 per cent lower risk of developing oral cavity cancer.

In addition, tea consumption was linked with a 29 per cent lower risk of

IANISAR NEWS ACENCY



hypopharyngeal cancer.

The study also found that drinking one cup or fewer of tea daily was associated with a 9 per cent reduced risk of head and neck cancer overall, and a 27 per cent lower risk of hypopharyngeal cancer.

However, drinking more than one cup of tea daily showed an increased risk of laryngeal cancer, with a 38 per cent higher chance of developing this can-

The analysis highlights the complex relationship between coffee, tea, and various subtypes of head and neck

While caffeine and tea are widely

believed to offer health benefits, the study indicates that their effects vary depending on the type of cancer. Specifically, decaffeinated coffee showed a positive impact, suggesting that factors beyond caffeine may contribute to the protective effects.

Despite the promising results, researchers caution that more studies

are needed to better understand how coffee and tea affect cancer risk. Senior author Yuan-Chin Amy Lee, PhD. of the Huntsman Cancer Institute and the University of Utah School of Medicine, emphasized that these findings support the need for further data on the impact of coffee and tea consumption on cancer prevention.

'Coffee and tea habits are fairly complex, and these findings support the need for more data and further studies around the impact that coffee and tea can have on reducing cancer risk," Lee said.

While coffee and tea may offer protective benefits against head and neck cancers, more research is required to understand the full extent of their im-

The latest study provides a compelling argument for the inclusion of these beverages in a balanced diet but highlights the need for ongoing scientific inquiry into their potential role in cancer prevention.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Tanveer Ahmad Yatoo Son Of Abdul Majeed Yatoo ,Resident Of Wasoora Tahsil Litter applied for fertilizer and pesticides licences .If anybody has any objection. He /she may contact Horticulture Or Enforcement Department Pulwama within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained

Office of the Naib-Tehsildar Pattan

Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth

Public Notice

The registar Births and deaths (EO Municipal Council Pattan/ Block Development Officer Lolpora) has submitted a case file pertaining to Birth of Farhaan Hussain S/o Abdul Hameed Pandith R/o Rakhi Dashipora Tehsil Sighpora District Baramulla with vertified date of event (birth) as 12-05-2022 occurred at

In this connection, if anybody having any objection to the issuance of said registration may contact this office within seven (07) days, after which no objections shall be entertained. **Executive Magistrate 1st Class** Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib-Tehsildar Pattan

Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth

Public Notice

The registar Births and deaths (EO Municipal Council Pattan/ Block Development Officer Lolpora) has submitted a case file pertaining to Birth of Mohammad Haris Bhat S/o Showkat Ahamd Bhat R/o Lohren Khag Tehsil Khag District Baramulla with vertified date of event (birth) as 26-08-2020 occurred at

In this connection, if anybody having any objection to the issuance of said registration may contact this office within seven (07) days, after which no objections shall be entertained. Naib Tehsildar Pattan

IAPM Department, Zonal Office Srinagar,

M. A. Road, (Opposite Women's College).

0194-2452658, Ext.:132 ;iapmd.kmr@jkbmail.com

Srinagar-190001, Kashmir.

The Jammu and Kashmir **State Board Of School Education**

New Campus Bemina Srinagar Notice for General Public

The applicant/ candidate whose photograph is published in this notice and claiming to have lost her qualification certificate/s issued under as per below mentioned details:-

Roll No: 924215 Class 10th Year & Session 2012 Registration: N11320600051 Name: Aaqib Rashid Father's Name: Abdul Rashid Dar Mother's Name : Razia Date of Birth: - 26-03-1998 Residenc:- Chewa Safapora



According the candidate concerned has approach to this office for issuance of Duplicate Qualification /Marks Certificate/s, so before the same is processed and provided to the candidate, under rules, anybody having any objection in this regard, shall bring into the notice of Assistant Secretary of Certificate as well as Assistant Secretary Examination Unit I & III KD within the period of 7 days respectively, from the date of publication of this notice.

Besides the above referred "Qualification / Marks Certificate/s" bearing No: 12ARKAM-7029826 be treated as "CANCELLED")

No: F(Cer is-I-DQC)B/KD/ Dated -01-2025

Assistant Secretary Certificates, KD.

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Sariwarpora

Sub: Application of Gh Mohi Uddin Kumar S/o G Mohd Kumar R/o Sariwarpora for obtaining OBC certificate in favour of self

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above applicant obc certificate is under process in this and report was sought from Patwari concerned which reveals that the applicant is residing in village Sariwarpora with his father and belongs to Kumar caste. The family members of applicant are as under

1 Gh Mohammad Kumar 2 Sundari Begum 3 Gh Mohi Uddin Kumar. 4 Jameela Begum

Retaire Govt employ H/ work . Nyc employ H/ work

Student 5 Amira Mohi Uddin 6 zaira Mohi Uddin Student 7 Bashair Mohiuddin Student

The monthly income of applicant family is 19713 In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he May contact to this office within 03 days after that no objection shall be entertained

Naib Tehsildar Sariwarpora

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that I, Mohd Waseem, holder of Driving License No. JK-1620110002968 issued by the assistant Regional Transport Office (ARTO) Ganderbal, Kashmir, have applied for the correction of my name in the said license. The correct name should read as, Mohd Waseem instead of Mohd Waseem Malik

Any objections or concerns regarding this correction should be submitted in writing to the said ARTO within 7 days from the date of this notice. After the stipulated period, the correction will be deemed final.



AT FOLLOWING PLACES

JANISAR NEWS AGENCY	ANANTNAG
REYAZ NEWS AGENCY	ANANTNAG
RESHI NEWS AGENCY	ANANTNAG
BUDROO NEWS AGENCY	BIJBEHARA
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LOORI NEW AGENCY	SANGAM
IRSHAD NEWS AGENCY	KOKERNAG
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JAVAID NEWS AGENCY	KULGAM
MALIK NEWS AGENCY	AERWANI
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RAYEES NEWS AGNECY	AWANTIPORA
PAMPORE NEW AGENCY	PAMPORE
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GAZI KHURSHEED NEWS AGENCY	PULWAMA
MANZOOR NEWS AGENCY	PUWLAMA
ALTAF NEWS AGENCY	PULWAMA
MANZOOR NEWS AGENCY	NORPORA
JAVAID NEWS AGENCY	AWANTIPORA
LONE NEW/ADVT AGENCY	RATNIPORA, PULWAMA
BOOZE NEWS AGNECY	AWANTIPORA
3 WAY TRAL NEWS AGENCY	TRAL
SYED MAQBOOL NEWS AGNECY	TRAL
DAR NEWS AGENCY	PULWAMA
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REYZ NEWS AGENCY	PAMPORE
QUDOOS NEWS AGENCY	SHOPIAN
TURRAY NEWS AGENCY	SHOPIAN
FAROOQ NEWS AGENCY	KAKAPORA PULWAMA
JAVAID NEWS AGENCY	QAZIGUND
NISAR NEWS AGENCY	BANIHAL

The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited **J&K** Bank

Description of the mortgaged

E-AUCTION NOTICE (Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules)

The undersigned inexercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act. 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 notify the sale of the secured assets detailed herein-below for realization of the dues, on "as is where is", "as is what is", "whatsoever there is" and "nocomplaint" basis.

Reserve Price

Rs.35.67 Lacs (Rupees Thirty Five Lacs and Sixty Seven Thousand Only)
MasnazRahid Bhat & Nissar Ahmad Bhat (Housing Loan Account) and M/s Boston Pharmaceuticals Distributors (Cash Credit Account)
10% of reserve priceby way of Demand Draft/Payment Order favoring the Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited drawn on any Nationalized/Scheduled Bank payable at Srinagar
Rs.5.00 Lacs (Rupees Five Lacs Only)
Branch Balgarden, Srinagar
01.02.2025 (5 PM)
03.02.2025 (3 PM) to (4 PM)
THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR BANK LIMITED Business Unit: Balgarden, Srinagar, IFSC CODE: JAKAOGARDEN

The interested bidders shall submit their offer along with EMD details through website https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.netand can obtain user ID and password free of cost by registering on the website. The detailed notice containing all the terms and conditions are available at Bank's website https://www.jkbank.com/pdfs/eauction. For any guery related to the said auction, the interested bidders may contact Branch Manager Branch Balgarden, Srinagar (Phone No.:0194-2480719).

Date: 02.01.2025 (Authorized Officer)

ازدفتر نائب تحصیلدار کریری عنوان: درخواست از جانب شکیله بیگم زوجه جاویدا حمد شخ ساکنه موضع دوده بوگ نسبت اجرائی ژبینپڈنٹ سرٹھنیکٹ اشتہار بمرادآگا ہی معاملہ عنوانالصدر میں درخواست سائلہ ہے کہ اس کا شوہرمتونی جاویدا حمد شخ ساکنہ دودھ بوگ مورخہ 17 -01-2024و فوت ہو چکاہے اس نسبت سائل خواہاں ہے لہ اسکے حق میں ڈیپیٹڈنٹ سڑٹھیکیٹ اجراء فرمائی جائے۔ بروےرپورٹ پٹوار حلقه متوفی کنیمه بذیل افراد پرمشمل ہے

ازدفتر نائب تحصيلدار زونيمرسر ينكر عنوان: درخواست از جانب گلثن زوجه مرحوم محمد یاسین شاه ساکندلالباز ارسته بونی نسبت اجرائی ژبینیژنٹ سرٹھنیک اشتہار بمرادآ گاہی

معامله عنوان السدرمين درخواست سائل ہے كهاس كا شوہرمتوفی محمد ياسين شاه ساكنه نة بوني لالبازار مورخه 2024-10-18 كو فوت بوجكا بياس نسبت سائل خواہاں ہے کہ اسکے حق میں ڈیینڈنٹ سرٹھنکیٹ اجراء فرمائی جائے۔ بروے رپورٹ ہ ہے۔ بٹواری حلقہ متوفی کنہمہ بذیل افراد پر مشمّل ہے

مرمن شاه بلاشادی شده 29 سال پسر

Extortion Case Solved, 3 Accused Held

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant achievement. Police in Srinagar on Wednesday said to have solved a case of extortion and physical assault with the arrest of three individuals involved in the commission of crime.

"On 23/12/2024, an individual namely Gh Mohiuddin son of Gh Hassan Sheikh resident of Firdous Abad approached Batamaloo, PS Maisuma in an injured condition and submitted a written complaint stating therein that on 21st/22nd December, at around 0200 hours, while he was enroute to Budshah Chowk for sanitation work, he was wrongfully restrained by a group of assailants. The miscreants physically assaulted him and forcibly took some cash from his wallet before fleeing the scene," a police spokesman said in a statement.

Accordingly, police said that a case under FIR number 30/2024 under relevant sections of law was registered in PS Maisuma and investigation initiated.

"Through meticulous efforts, including analysis of CCTV footage and other technical evidence, the investigating team arrested the individuals involved in the commission of crime. They have been identified as Ishfaq Ahmad Dar son of Khursheed Ahmad Dar resident of Nishat Khaki Mohalla, Srinagar, Tahir Ahmad Mir, son of Sonaullah Mir resident of Bangladesh Colony Rainawari, A/P Palpora Noorbagh, Srinagar and Arsalan Mushtaq Wandroo, son of Mushtaq Ahmad resident of Hasibath Rainawari, Srinagar," police said.

The timely and effective response from J&K Police underscores their commitment to maintaining law and order in the region and ensuring the safety and security of the public, police said.

Dal Lake Freezes, Livelihoods Impacted Amid Harsh Winter

Agencies

Srinagar: The freezing temperatures gripping Kashmir have transformed parts of Dal Lake into a sheet of ice, disrupting the livelihoods of thousands of locals dependent on the lake for their daily sustenance.

As temperatures plummet during the ongoing Chillai-Kalan—the harshest 40-day winter period spanning December 21 to January 31—a section of the iconic Dal Lake has frozen, creating both a picturesque spectacle for tourists and immense challenges for the local population.

Mohammad Sultan, a shikara owner, has been forced to stay home for over five days. "The ice is more than an inch thick. It's impossible to row the shikara. Many tourists are disappointed, and so are we," he said.

He is just one among over 40,000 individuals, including houseboat owners, vegetable growers, traders, and fisherfolk, whose livelihoods depend on the lake.

Tourism, agriculture, and fishing—the economic backbone of this community—have been severely impacted. For many, a frozen lake means not just lost earnings but added struggles to carry out basic daily tasks.

Shabir Ahmad, a Kashmiri handicraft dealer, recounted his ordeal of navigating the frozen lake: "It took me more than 90 minutes to break through the ice to reach the market—a journey that usually takes just 15 minutes.

Vegetable vendors, who operate at the floating market early in the mornings. are among the hardest hit. "More than 300 sellers used to gather here daily, but now only a handful manage to break through the ice," said a vegetable grower. He said that many vendors have resorted to selling their produce, including tomatoes, carrots, turnips, and nadru (lotus stems), from their homes at reduced prices.

The reduced tourist activity during the freeze has further strained the community, leaving many wondering how long they can endure these harsh conditions. (KINS)

BJP Holds Membership Review Meeting With Mahila Morcha

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) conducted a Membership Review Meeting with the BJP Mahila Morcha at its party office in J-53. Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar.

In a press statement, the BJP said that the meeting was chaired by Arif Raja, BJP Membership Incharge for Kashmir, and Mudasir Ahmad Wani, a senior BJP leader.

The discussion centered on evaluating the progress of ongoing membership drives across Kashmir and highlighting the pivotal role of the Mahila Morcha in strengthening the party's grassroots presence. Both leaders lauded the efforts of Mahila Morcha members in mobilizing women and encouraging their active involvement in BJP's political and social initiatives

Arif Raja emphasized the importance of expanding the party's membership base, underscoring it as a key strategy for building stronger connections with the people. "The success of any political movement relies on its ability to connect with citizens. Membership drives are a vital step in this direction," he said.

Mudasir Ahmad Wani acknowledged the dedication of the Mahila Morcha and reassured them of the party's unwavering support in overcoming challenges. He noted, "Women are the backbone of both society and our party. Their active participation in politics is essential for inclusive growth and strengthening democracy.'

NORTHERN RAILWAY (Construction Organization USBRL Project) **PRESS NOTIFICATION**

CRS INSPECTION OF NEW LINE FROM KATRA-REASI SECTION OF FIROZPUR DIVISION

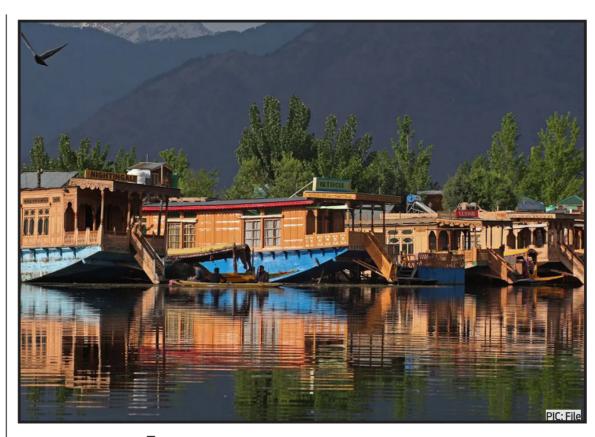
Newly constructed line in Katra-Reasi section (16.501 Kms) of Firozpur Division will be opened with electric train operation shortly. High speed trial of the section by special train will be conducted by Commissioner of Railway Safety on 08.01.2025 after trolley inspection on 07.01.2025. Thereafter, new line train operation will start soon in between Katra-Reasi Stations of USBRL Project.

General public is informed to stay away from Railway lines in above section. Crossing the track at any location is trespassing and is a punishable offence and liable for prosecution under Railway Act. No: DyCE/C/JAT/CRS/Corrigendum Dated: 01.01.2025

Northern Railway Construction Organization

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

USBRL project



Houseboat Occupancy Plummets On New Year

Agencies

Srinagar: The tourism footfall in the Kashmir valley has witnessed a noteworthy decline this year, with a stark difference in houseboat bookings, as 90 to 95 percent of houseboats remained vacant during the New Year celebrations, compared to 70 to 75 percent occupancy in the previous year, said Manzoor Pakhtoon, President of the Kashmir Houseboat Owners Association (KHBOA).

Pakhtoon noted that travel advisories and other factors have impacted the influx of tourists to the valley, while houseboat owners also suffered during this vear's New Year celebrations.

He said that focusing on the New Year period, a stark difference in houseboat bookings was noted, with 90 to 95 percent of houseboats remaining vacant. compared to 70 to 75 percent occupancy in the previous year.

"The decline in tourism was evident, with houseboat owners struggling to fill their boats during the peak season, especially during New Year celebrations,' he said.

He said the tourism downturn may be attributed to several reasons, including the impact of travel advisories and the ongoing economic challenges, or the "economic crunch" faced by both the country and the state. "The lack of a strong tourist flow has affected houseboat owners and other stakeholders in the tourism industry," he said.

'We used to have a 90-day tourism season, then 120 days, but for the past two or three years, we have been seeing a year-round flow. However, this year, the valley has seen a decline in tourism flow," he said. He said the "economic crunch" within the country and state might be a cause for the decline in tourism here, along with the high unemployment rate among youth and other factors that discourage travel, all contributing to the drop in tourists visiting the valley.

He added that they have also seen a decline in tourism in other parts of the country as well and are expecting the government to play an important role in its revival. "Kashmir is a brand in itself, and people love to travel here. They want to visit here, and the government must intervene and work on increasing tourist footfall," he said.

"As the valley is about to be connected by train, domestic travelers are also expected to arrive here, and we are expecting high tourist numbers in the coming time," he added. (KNO)

Three-Decade-Old Bunker Removed In Braripora

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Built almost 30 years ago in 1990's, a security bunker was dismantled at the Braripora area of downtown Srinagar.

Officials said the bunker, located

at Braripora, Safakadal, was originally set up by the Border Security Force (BSF) in the early 1990s. For many years, it remained operational, even as other bunkers in the city were removed in the last decade.

"This bunker, located in Brar-

ipora, Safakadal, was originally set up by the Border Security Force (BSF) in the early 1990s.For many years, it remained operational, even as other bunkers in the city were removed in the last decade," officials said.





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HIGHWAY STATUS



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



PRAYERS FAJR 6:08

ZUHR 12:34 **ASR** 3:53 Magrib 5:35 ISHA 7:00

This Day In History

- 69 Roman Lower Rhine army proclaims its commander, Vitellius, Emperor
- 533 John II begins his reign as Catholic Pope
- 1235 Emperor Joseph II orders Jews of Galicia Austria to adopt family names
- 1492 Muhammad XII, the last Emir of Granada, surrenders his city to Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabel I of Castile, ending both the Reconquista and centuries of Muslim rule in the Iberian peninsula
- 1570 Tsar Ivan the Terrible's march to Novgorod
- 1585 Spain & Catholic France sign Saint League of Joinville
- 1602 Spanish force in Ireland surrender to the English army at Kinsdale
- 1757 British troops occupy Calcutta India 1776 - Austria ends interregation torture
- 1818- The British Institution of Civil Engineers is founded.
- 1839- First photo of the Moon, taken by French photographer Louis Daguerre
- 1863- Battle of Murfreesboro (Stone's River) ends 1879- Australian fast bowler Fred Spofforth dismisses 3 English batsmen with consecutive deliveries during the 3rd Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground for Test cricket's first "hat-trick"
- 1879- British battleship Thunder explodes in Gulf of
- 1882- Because of anti-monopoly laws, Standard Oil is organized as a trust
- 1883 Battle of Boschberg takes place in South

Africa as part of the Mapoch War

- 1905 Elara, a satellite of Jupiter, discovered by Charles Dillon Perrine in San Jose, California
- 1905 Japanese troops capture Port Arthur from Russia, a blow to national morale and causing further discontent within Russia
- 1905 American anarcho-syndicalist union known as the Industrial Workers of the World forms
- Invention
- 1913 Mahatma Gandhi leaves the Tolstoy Farm in Transvaal, South Africa
- 1919 Lithuania gains independence
- 1941 World War II: German bombing severely damages the Llandaff Cathedral in Cardiff, Wales
- 1942 World War II: the 28 nations at war with Axis powers pledge to make no separate peace deals
- 1960 John Reynolds sets age of solar system at 4,950,000,000 years
- 1979 Gavaskar gets twin tons for India for the third time (v WI)
- 1984 Riot in Tunis kills over 100
- 1984 Major-General Muhammadu Buhari is declared Head of State in Nigeria, following a military coup
- Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak reappoints Coptic pope Shenuda III
- 1992 Test debut of Shane Warne, v India at Sydney 1994 - Battles between army & rebellious indians in South Mexico, kill 57
- 1995 Most distant galaxy yet discovered found by scientists using Keck telescope in Hawaii (est 15 billion light years away) 1999 - A brutal snowstorm smashes into the
- Midwestern United States, causing 14 inches (359 mm) of snow in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and 19 inches (487 mm) in Chicago, where temperatures plunge to -13°F (-25°C); 68 deaths are reported. 2004 - Stardust successfully flies past Comet Wild
- 2, collecting samples that it will return to Earth two years later 2014 - 30 people are killed after a bus plunges off a
- cliff and falls 400 ft in Malshej Ghat, India
- 2014 Raul Castro gives a speech commemorating the 55th anniversary of the Cuban revolution and warns of "neo-liberal and neo-colonial thinking" entering the country 2015 - The Economist lists Daniel Kahneman as the
- 7th most influential economist in the world
- 2016 Saudi Arabia executes 47 persons, including
- Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr
- 2017 US House Republicans vote to gut the independent Office of Congressional Ethics, a public uproar forces them to back down the next day

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📏 KO VIEW

On The Right Track

rime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate five new train services connecting Delhi to the Kashmir Valley in January, a development of profound significance for the region, which otherwise had so far only a road and air connectivity with the rest of the country. Equipped with advanced heating systems, a first for Indian Railways, these trains aim to ensure smooth operations and convenience during the Valley's harsh winter months. The trains will use modern technology to handle extreme weather conditions, including snow and cold.

Details regarding the schedule, stops, and ticket bookings are expected to be announced soon by the Railway Ministry. Part of the ambitious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, these new trains will boost connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of the country. Unlike road travel, the train journeys will be both comfortable and economical. So, in a sense, it will be a boon for tourism and, as a result, for the economy.

Tourism, a key driver of Kashmir's economy, stands to benefit more from the operationalization of the railways. The scenic route, passing through Anantnag, Awantipora, Pampore, and other stations, presents a unique opportunity to highlight the natural beauty of the region. The prospect of a Vande Bharat Express running through this picturesque landscape adds an extra dimension to the tourist experience, making Kashmir more accessible for travelers, otherwise held back by the highpriced air tickets.

In the short term, more visitors could also pose challenges for the government. The Valley's existing tourism infrastructure is not in a position to accommodate a disproportionately enhanced inflow of tourists. So, while the tourist infrastructure needs to be upgraded and expanded, an unregulated flow of visitors will not be advisable for the Valley's fragile ecology. But the government can be hoped to take care of any adverse fallouts of the increased inflow of people to Kashmir.

However, not just tourism, trains will be a bigger boost for the local economy. Train is expected to not only reduce the cost of ferrying goods to the Valley but also connect the region directly to other parts of the country, offering more avenues for business for the local traders and businessmen. The train to and from Kashmir must go hand in hand with policies that prioritize sustainable development, ensuring that the region's unique identity and fragile ecosystem are preserved while it embraces new opportunities.



Nurturing the Dreams of Our Future: A Path to Success for the Younger Generation

Irshad Mushtaq

'n a world brimming with endless opportunities, the younger generation stands a the crossroads of their future. Yet, many are ensnared by a common misconcep tion—that education solely signifies passing academic classes, knowing how to read and write, and earning a degree. In reality, education encompasses much more; it is a vital weapon for success that needs to be wielded wisely

The Foundation of Financial Literacy
From an early age, children should be equipped with the fundamental knowledge. edge of managing finances. Teaching them how to control their earnings, make responsible spending decisions, and understand the dynamics of saving can set them on a path to prosperity. Imagine, if as children, they grasp the significance of money and time, how empowered they would feel to tackle future challenges!

Engaging in hard work is another essential building block toward success. By gaining early experiences through part-time jobs or internships, young individuals develop critical skills that go far beyond academics. Hard work instills a sense of commitment and responsibility, teaching them that success is not handed to them but

Breaking the Chains of Distraction

Today's youth often find themselves distracted by the allure of video games, on-line earning games, and shortcuts that only lead to disappointment. Instead of sinking precious hours into fleeting pleasures, they should focus on essential elements: education, part time hard work concepts , savings, and small investments. By cultivating habits that prioritize these aspects, they will learn to respect time and money, paving the way for a fruitful future.

The Crucial Role of Parents

Parents play an irreplaceable role in guiding their children through the maze of life. They have the opportunity to instill solid financial principles, fostering an appreciation for hard work and ethical behavior. By educating their children on financial matters and teaching them to respect money, parents lay a strong foundation

The Heart of the Matter

Ultimately, the journey toward success is anchored in understanding that educa tion is more than grades. It encompasses financial literacy, the value of hard work, and the wisdom of making sound choices. If young people approach life with honesty and humility, embracing the challenges ahead while cherishing their humble beginnings they can emerge from the shadows of uncertainty into a world filled with promise.

Let us foster a generation that understands the true essence of education—one that values ethics and responsibility, spends wisely, and is eager to learn. By guiding them with love and wisdom, we can empower our youth to seize their future and avoid the regrets often linked to a lack of foresight. In the journey of life, let us remind them that slow and steady wins the race, and that integrity is the cornerstone upon which they should build their dreams. Together, let us nurture the dreams of our future ensuring that every child, with the right tools and values, becomes the architect of their own success story.

Learn from the insights of @Irshad Mushtag Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of M I Securities! Connect for valuable

financial advice at misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com

Can SMC Clear 11 Lakh Metric Tonnes of Legacy Waste?

Let Omar Abdullah's government resolve to address this issue in 2025

Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

he Commissioner of Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), in response to the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) notice, submitted a report recently which revealed that more than 11 lakh metric tons of legacy waste have been dumped at this landfill site for 30 years now.

During the recent hearing on December 12, 2024, the three-member NGT bench reprimanded the SMC Commissioner and issued orders to the J&K Pollution Control Committee (JKPCC) to initiate action against these violations. As per SMC's report, more than 11 lakh metric tons of legacy waste are dumped at the Achan Saidapora locality, which is actually a wetland used as a landfill site. Under the Wetland Conservation & Management Rules, 2017, this landfill site is illegal as wetlands like Anchar and Shalbugh are located in its catchment area.

Achan Saidapora People Want

The Achan Saidapora landfill site is set up on 123 acres (984 kanals) of wetland nambal/agriculture land. The locals cultivated paddy on this land for centuries. In the late 1980s, SMC took it over and started using it as a landfill site. Even 10 to 15 years ago, paddy was still being cultivated by the locals of Achan Saidapora in the surrounding agricultural land located outside the boundary wall of the landfill site. However, this land has become uncultivable due to constant seepage of leachate from SMC's 11 lakh metric tons of legacy waste.

On a regular basis, SMC collects 600 tons per day (TPD) of municipal solid waste, which is also dumped at Achan unscientifically. SMC claims they treat 150 tons of waste and landfill 450 tons, but the reality is that not even 50 tons of municipal solid waste are treated. Ironically, the magnetic disintegration machine set up by SMC around seven years ago is also lying defunct, despite crores of rupees spent on its installation.

NGT's Order

On December 12, 2024, the NGT's three-member bench-comprising Justice Prakash Shrivastava (Chairperson), Justice Sudhir Agarwal (Judicial Member), and Dr. A. Senthil Vel (Expert Member)—heard this case, filed by this author earlier this year. The bench stated:

"As per the report filed by the Commissioner, the current generation of waste is 600 TPD, which is projected to increase to 918.04 TPD by 2028. The composition of the said



To manage Srinagar's municipal solid waste scientifically and to give justice to the victims of the Achan landfill site, the Omar Abdullah government cannot simply state that J&K is a Union Territory and thus cannot act. The government must rise to the challenge and resolve to clear 11 lakh metric tons of legacy waste, whether through a waste-to-energy project or other means

daily generation includes wet waste of 360 TPD (60% of the total waste) and 240 TPD of dry waste (40% of the total waste). Presently, the waste processing capacity in Srinagar is insufficient. Only 150 TPD is pro-

ity of 100 tons per day, was found to be out of order, forcing workers to rely on inefficient manual segregation. Additionally, all three leachate treatment plants (LTPs), with a combined capacity of 120 KLD, were non-operational, as were borelations under relevant rules and laws. The JKPCC is likely to impose environmental compensation (EC) on SMC under the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP).

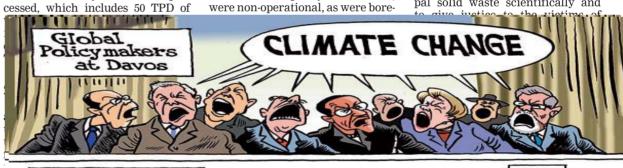
What Is the Polluter Pays Principle?

The Polluter Pays Principle is a globally recognized environmental law under which the party responsible for causing pollution is held accountable for paying for the damage done to the natural environment. This principle is also used to put the costs of pollution prevention on the polluter. The background of PPP lies in the Stockholm Declaration of 1972 at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.

The declaration urged countries to develop international laws for compensating victims of pollution and other environmental damage. It also included principles for sustainable development and human-centric policies. After signing the Stockholm Declaration, India began integrating its national and regional policies with international environmental standards. The Polluter Pays Principle was first applied in India in the 1996 case Indian Council of Enviro-Legal Action vs. Union of India.

Conclusion

To manage Srinagar's municipal solid waste scientifically and





Srinagar visited the site. This petitioner was also present during that visit. The visiting team was shocked and found massive lapses on the part of SMC. The committee submitted a detailed report to the NGT. A part of this detailed report

reads as follows: "A critical issue identified during the inspection was the complete non-functionality of several key waste processing facilities. The mechanical segregator, with a capacby the authorities. The effluent discharge is directly entering the streams and the river. Hence, there is complete violation of MSW rules, including the Water Act of 1974."

The NGT directed the Commissioner of Srinagar Municipal Corporation to provide a time-bound action plan to mitigate the situation on a mission mode. Additionally, the J&K Pollution Control Committee (JKPCC) was directed to initiate action against the viovise a proper plan to ensure that 11 lakh metric tons of legacy waste are cleared from the Achan landfill site.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow and Chairman of J&K Climate Action Group



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Pulwama NIT Campus: Take All Stakeholders on Board

few days ago, the inhabitants of Newa and its adjoining villages in district Pulwama staged protests against the government's proposal to establish an NIT campus in the area. The residents were informed by the district and tehsil administration through a notice that the government was planning to set up a new NIT campus, for which around 4500 kanals of state land under their possession needed to be evacuated to pave the way for the construction.

The inhabitants of the area are in a state of panic and grievance, as they have been cultivating this land for many decades. Many qualified youth, while expressing their anger against the government's proposal, stated that the land they and their forefathers cultivated for ages belonged to them and that they had ownership rights over it.

The area where the government is proposing to construct the new NIT campus is full of apple orchards, almond, pear, and other trees. The qualified youth of the area have planted high-density apple orchards on this land, which serves as their only source of livelihood.

These qualified youth, who have taken loans from banks, are opposing any move by the government to construct the campus. Many politicians, social activists, and academicians have expressed their concern over the issue.

Now the question arises: If the government wants to set up an NIT campus in the area, isn't it the government's responsibility to take these stakeholders into confidence?

The construction of such a large campus, requiring 5000 kanals of land that is productive and provides livelihood to a significant number of local farmers, amounts to snatching their livelihoods and, at the same time, destroying the natural biodiversity of

According to the inhabitants, the land is a rich Karewa, best suited for agriculture and horticulture purposes. Setting up the NIT campus here means disturbing the natural topography of the area, snatching livelihoods, reducing the cropped area, and triggering a disaster that will involve cutting down thousands of apple, almond, and other trees. This will undoubtedly disturb the natural ecology of the area.

It has been reported that the land under the cultivation of local farmers is state land. However, this does not mean that the government has the sole authority to seize it from the locals and render them unemployed. It is the government's responsibility to ensure public welfare.

We are already witnessing a rat race for developmental and construction activities, which have consumed a large area of land, thereby reducing the cropped area and posing challenges to the environment and biodiversity.

The Kashmir Valley is already grappling with the challenge of land degradation due to rapid commercial and construction activities. These have consumed our agricultural and horticultural land, depriving us of rich local produce.

Both rural and urban areas of the valley are witnessing a surge in construction activities, including the construction of residential houses business complexes, roads, flyovers,

and railway tracks.

The need of the hour is to encourage vertical construction practices, which will preserve our productive land and, at the same time, promote sustainable development.

The government must ensure a developmental model that suits the needs and aspirations of the region. It is not necessary that a development model suitable for other states of the country will suit the geographical and economic factors of the valley.

Snatching land from poor farmers without taking them on board and allowing a mega project on such rich and productive Karewas is not just an injustice; it may also have economic and environmental consequences in the long run.

Let the government take all genuine stakeholders on board, particularly the local farmers, and arrive at a consensus so that our rich Karewas do not fall prey to unplanned and undesirable construction activities.

> Peerzada Aarif aarifpeerzada1@gmail.com

ONLINE GAMBLING

An Alarming Trend in Kashmir

Zahid Ahmad Lone

The rise of online gambling is a global phenomenon, intricately woven into the fabric of digital economies. The global online gambling industry, valued at over \$80 billion, continues to grow annually. Mobile apps and cryptocurrencies have revolutionized this sector, making gambling accessible to anyone with a smartphone. In regulated markets, governments attempt to balance revenue generation with measures to curb addiction, yet rising levels of debt and mental health crises persist. In developing nations, lax regulations and widespread internet access allow illegal gambling platforms to thrive, exploiting vulnerable populations. This broader international reality provides context for understanding the unique and devastating impact of online gambling in Kashmir.

Kashmir's economy has long been precarious, relying heavily on agriculture, handicrafts, and tourism. Political instability and frequent shutdowns have further stifled growth, leaving many, particularly the youth, disillusioned. In this environment, online gambling has emerged as an attractive yet perilous escape.

Social media platforms and messaging apps are rife with advertisements for online gambling platforms. These platforms often masquerade as "investment opportunities," promising quick and significant



Jammu and Kashmir lacks a coherent policy framework to tackle this issue. Anonymity on digital platforms and the use of cryptocurrencies make it difficult to track and regulate gambling activities, allowing this menace to proliferate unchecked

returns. Teenagers and young adults, desperate to escape the financial constraints of their



reality are the primary victims. The initial wins often engineered by the platforms themselves entrap users, leading them down a path of addiction and financial ruin.

The economic consequences of online gambling in Kashmir are manifold. Firstly, there is a significant drain of wealth. Unlike traditional industries that circulate money within the lo-cal economy, online gambling funnels wealth out of Kashmir. Most platforms are hosted offshore, and the money spent on

gambling rarely benefits the local economy, enriching foreign operators instead. Secondly, household debt has become a growing crisis. Families often borrow money intended for essential needs like education or healthcare, only to see it squandered on gambling platforms. Thirdly, the loss of productivity among addicted individuals worsens unemployment, further weakening the economy. Finally, the social costs family

conflicts, mental health issues, and even criminal activities are deeply destructive.



Gambling is explicitly prohibited in Islam, considered haram due to its exploitative nature. Yet, the surge in online gambling indicates a disconnect between cultural values and individual behaviors

One of the most alarming aspects of online gambling in Kashmir is the lack of regulatory oversight. The central laws governing gambling in India, such as the Public Gambling Act of 1867, are outdated and inadequate for addressing the complexities of online platforms. Jammu and Kashmir lacks a coherent policy

framework to tackle this issue. Anonymity on digital platforms and the use of cryptocurrencies make it difficult to track and regulate gambling activities, allowing this menace to proliferate unchecked.

Kashmir's predominantly Muslim population adds another layer of complexity to the issue. Gambling is explicitly prohibited in Islam, considered haram due to its exploitative nature. Yet, the surge in online gambling indicates a disconnect between cultural values and individual behaviors. This contradiction can be attributed to the pervasive influence of technology and the desperation born out of economic hardships. Cultural stigma associated with gambling further exacerbates the problem, as addiction often goes unreported and untreated. Families are reluctant to seek help, fearing social ostracism, which allows the issue to fester and affect entire communities.

Addressing the issue of online gambling in Kashmir requires a multi-faceted approach. First, the government must update and enforce gambling laws to include online platforms, targeting offshore operators through

cybercrime initiatives. Banning advertisements for online gambling on social media platforms is another crucial step. Second, financial literacy campaigns are essential to educate the youth about the risks of gambling and promote better financial habits. Schools, colleges, and community centers can play a significant role in these campaigns. Third, support systems for addiction need to be established. Helplines, support groups, and involvement from religious and community leaders can help de-stigmatize addiction and encourage affected individuals to seek help. Fourth, providing alternative economic opportunities is critical. Skill development programs, entrepreneurship initiatives, and investments in local industries can offer constructive outlets for youth aspirations. Finally, internet service providers should be mandated to block access to known gambling platforms, and cyber security measures must be enhanced to detect and dismantle illegal platforms operating in the region.

international collaborations or

The rise of online gambling in Kashmir is a stark reminder of the unintended consequences of digital globalization. While technology holds immense potential to drive economic growth and social progress, its misuse can lead to devastating outcomes. For a region like Kashmir, already reeling from political and economic challenges, online gambling is an economic cancer threatening to erode the social fabric.

However, this is not an insurmountable problem. With concerted efforts from the government, community, and civil society, Kashmir can confront this issue head-on. The key lies in addressing the root causes of economic despair and lack of opportunities while implementing robust regulatory and support mechanisms. Only then can the region hope to reclaim its economic and social stability, steering its youth away from the perilous lure of online gambling.

The author is a Ph.D Scholar University of Kashmir

Hopes and Aspirations for a New Year

Are they the same for everyone? Deborshi Gautam

idding farewell to an old year and welcoming a new one is a moment filled with joy and celebration for everyone. As we let go of the past and dream of a bright future, we embrace the novelty with great enthusiasm. The desire for renewal stirs the hearts of everyone, filling them with excitement. However, in a developing country like India, the question remains: is it possible for everyone to partake in the plans and celebrations that come with welcoming the new year?

Amidst the radiant dawn of a new year, does everyone truly find the essence of freshness and hope? While people yearn to immerse themselves in the novelty of the season, there are many in our society who spend every single day searching for the very essence of renewal. In the bustling metropolises of our nation, where grand and luxurious arrangements are made to welcome the new year, a starkly contrasting reality also exists.

While some indulge in extravagant celebrations, others-homeless individuals-spend their days and nights on the streets, driven by the pangs of hunger.

For such individuals, there is no difference between December 31st and January 1st. As the night of December 31st ends, the day of January 1st begins as just another ordinary day. These individuals neither dwell on gains and losses nor harbor lofty aspirations. Their only concern is surviving, with two meals a day and a piece of cloth to shield themselves from shame being their sole source of happiness. Matters of the old year or the new year rarely touch their lives.



While we stay awake at night in anticipation of the first dawn of a new year, many spend sleepless nights hoping for a morsel of food or a piece of clothing to survive the next day. In our celebrations, we should aim for inclusivity, ensuring that the joy of welcoming a new year becomes possible for all. It is our moral responsibility to make an effort, however small, to bring smiles to the faces of those deprived of such celebrations.

Instead of spending money on fireworks for our enjoyment, if we allocate that money to help the needy, it could light up their lives and bring smiles to their faces. Perhaps, the homeless on the streets could dream of starting a new life in the new year. Although such dreams may seem unattainable for them, we-those who organize extravagant celebrations—can think of their needs and contribute a bit towards their happiness.

Welcoming a new year with joy is not wrong, but alongside our celebrations, we should spare a thought for those less fortunate. By sharing our joy, we can help bring smiles to many faces. A new year signifies new hopes, new plans, and stepping forward towards new successes. May this new year bring rays of hope not just for us but also for our society and country—that is a wish shared by all.

The author is Executive Editor of Assamese E-Magazine Sobdobak

Will AI Save the Planet?

Jo Lindsay Walton

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

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

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

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

But one of its methods for investigating this is to allocate a slice of the carbon footprint from all human activities (eating cows, catching planes and so on) to the creative activity. By this logic, there would be the same

carbon emissions from an hour's work by an artist, a dairy farmer, a billionaire CEO, or an ecologist restoring a wetland.

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

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

When we looked closer we found this figure was based on the emissions of one year's AI server sales by Nvidia - the biggest manufacturer of such hardware as estimated in one analysis. This prediction hasn't been verified, and if it is accurate, it wouldn't include AI being run on servers installed in previous years.

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

Another study reviewing AI's sustainability benefits cited several other articles that, in our view, appeared to feature mistakes – like referring to studies to back up their claims which did not contain relevant information. AI systems sometimes make mistakes - known as "hallucinations" - like when Micro-





WHENEVER AI IS CELEBRATED FOR AMAZING ACHIEVEMENTS, LET'S REMEMBER THAT IT HAD SOME

HUMAN HELP. What time, effort, energy and other resources were invested in the project? Could similar results have been achieved using more traditional data collection and analysis, potentially at a lower environmental cost?

soft Copilot accused a journalist of committing the crimes he had reported on.

So we asked the authors if they had used an AI to write the article. They dismissed this idea and stood by the integrity of their review. They agreed that not all of the AI sustainability solutions their review referred to can be supported by existing studies. But they said that they had also included predictions about what AI might one day be capable of, based on their own expert judgement, which they said was standard practice.

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

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

Questions to ask about AI

Meanwhile, we should avoid lumping all kinds of AI together.

There are in fact diverse forms of AI: big, small, discriminative, generative, machine learning, symbolic and more. I can be excited about an AI that excels at counting carrots, and helps farmers to plant them more effectively, without offering a blanket en-dorsement of all AI systems.

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

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

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

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

By arrangements with The

CONTD. FROM **FRONT PAGE**

Inspection Of

(Northern Circle) is expected to inspect the 16.501 km Katra-Reasi section under the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla New BG Rail Link Project before January 15.

The chief PRO said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually inaugurate the Jammu Railway Division from New Delhi on January 6.

Sources in Northern Railways said that after the inauguration of the Jammu Railway Division, the CRS will conduct the final inspection on January 7 and 8. Senior officials, including the CAO/USBRL, CBE, CSE, COM-G, CEGE from HQ, DRM/FZR, and other officers, will accompany the CRS during the inspection.

Indian Railways is set to introduce a new Vande Bharat train and two Mail/Express trains for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. These trains will operate between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra (SVDK) and Srinagar railway stations and will be maintained by the Northern Railway zone

GOI Vows

the ecosystem of terrorism in J&K has almost ended.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, according to the report, has directed agencies to replicate the successes achieved in Kashmir through the "Area Domination Plan and Zero Terror Plan" in the Jammu division.

"The government is committed to setting an example by cracking down on terrorists through innovative means. In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Zero Tolerance Policy against terrorism, the goal of 'terror free Jammu and Kashmir' will be achieved at the earliest," the report

Referring to the successful back-to-back elections held in J&K in 2024 without any boycott call or fear of separatists and terrorists, the MHA report states: "Unprecedented participation of the J&K people in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections shows that they have full faith in democracy."

"In the 2024 Lok Sabha election J&K secured 35-year-high voter turnout at

58.46%. In the 2024 assembly election, J&K witnessed a meteoric 63.88% voter turnout." it added.

'New Reservations

of the Prime Minister, the MHA undertook a slew of measures to enshrine peace, equality, and justice at the center of J&K's governance and society"

"Under the aegis of this broad vision, the Parliament passed the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024, a historic bill aimed at empowering the Pahari ethnic group, Padari tribes, Koli, and Gadda Brahmin," reads the report

"The bill directly pivots the essence of social equity to the hills and valleys of Jammu and Kashmir by providing for reservations for deserving communities. The bill heralds a new sense of belonging and unity among the people." it added.

The inclusion of these communities in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Jammu and Kashmir, according to the MHA report, will have absolutely no impact on the current level of reservations available to the existing Scheduled Tribe communities such as Gujjars and Bakarwals. They will continue to get reservations like before.

'Era Of Recommendations

appointment letters for J&K Combined Examination-2024 and compassionate appointments through video conferencing from New Delhi," the report states.

Referring to the launch of e-buses the report states that to make commuting easy Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched 100 air-conditioned eco-friendly buses in Jammu region.

The report states that in pursuit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to build a developed and prosperous Ladakh, MHA decided to create 5 new districts in the Union Territory.

The new districts, namely Zanskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang, will take the benefits meant for the people to their doorsteps by bolstering governance in every nook and cranny.

"There will now be a total of seven districts in Ladakh, including Leh and Kargil. Being extremely difficult and inaccessible, at present district administration is facing many difficulties in reaching the grassroots level," the report states, adding, "After the formation of these districts more and more people have been able to take advantage of all the public welfare schemes of the Central Government and Ladakh Administration."

ACB Transitions

Supervisory officers are instructed to withhold approval of any challan until all necessary information is entered into the CCTNS," he said.

4 MLAs Skip

Legislative Assembly prior to the commencement of the ensuing Budget session (KNO)

By-polls To 2 J&K

one Pakistan occupied Jammu

Kashmir (PoJK) refugee.

Meanwhile, there has been no word yet on elections to four Rajya Sabha seats from Jammu and Kashmir which are vacant since February 2021. The elections earlier couldn't be held in absence of the Legislature. However, the new House was constituted in the middle of October and even after passage of two and half months, the Commission is yet to announce the elections.

As per the procedure, the Rajya Sabha Secretariat has to refer the vacancies to the Election Commission which has to announce the election schedule. Process for the elections is conducted by the Legislative Assembly Secretary, who acts as the Returning Officer.

The alliance of National Conference, Congress and Independents can win three out of four Rajya Sabha seats while the BJP will be safe on one seat going by numbers the major parties enjoy in the Legislative Assembly.

enjoy in the Legislative Assembly. In 2019, PDP-BJP alliance with 54 seats (PDP 28 and BJP 26) had won three seats (two PDP and one BJP) while fourth seat had gone to Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir who was with the Congress then with the support of NC and Congress, who had 27 MLAs (NC 15 and Congress 12). Four MLAs of other parties and Independents had supported Azad.

As per the past practices, the Election Commission issued three notifications for Rajya Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir. One election is held for two seats while two separate elections are held for one seat each. If the similar practice is followed, two seats on which separate elections will be held will go to the ruling Alliance which already has 54 MLAs with it. While two seats on which one election will be held will be equally divided among NC-led Alliance and the BJP.

Last election to four seats of Rajya Sabha from Jammu and Kashmir was held in February 2015 when the then BJP-PDP alliance won three seats and NC-Congress one. Fayaz Ahmad Mir and Nazir Ahmad Laway (both PDP), Shamsher Singh Manhas (BJP) and Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Chief Minister of J&K and then in Congress were elected. BJP's Chander Mohan Sharma had lost the election.

HC Quashes

authority was not really and genuinely satisfied as regards the necessity for detaining the (detainee)".

Subsequently the court ordered release of Bhat provided he is not required in connection with any other

J&K IAS Officers

is mandated under Rule 16(2) of the AIS (Conduct) Rules, which stipulates the timely submission of property returns to maintain transparency within the administrative system.

The circular also referred to Rule 3(1) of the IAS (Pay) Rules, revised through a notification dated December 30, 2021, further strengthening the obligation for officers to declare their assets

This move reflects the government's ongoing efforts to uphold ethical governance and foster a culture of transparency within the administrative

framework.

NC Govt Fails

a U-turn on his promises.

"Making U-turns has been a tradition of Abdullah and the NC governments. When out of power, they used to say we will throw (electricity) meters in Tawi (river) in Jammu and Jhelum (river) in Kashmir. But now that they are in power, they are saying round-the-clock electricity will be provided only when 100 percent metering is completed," he added.

The BJP spokesperson asked Abdullah to come up to the expectations of people, saying they have high hopes with him.

"You had made huge promises, but have failed in fulfilling them. We condemn that people had to face difficulties even due to little snowfall," he said

On the BJP's performance in Kashmir, Thakur said the assembly elections were conducted in a peaceful atmosphere without any violence or fear.

"The BJP government has put the last nail in the coffin of terrorism in Kashmir and today Kashmir is terrorfree," he added.

Thakur said Prime Minister Narendra Modi would connect Kashmir with the rest of the country through a Vande Bharat train on January 26

Bharat train on January 26. The BJP's J&K unit also said the party has added 1.75 lakh new members in

the valley in its membership drive. The BJP had 3.5 lakh members after the last membership drive in 2019.

J&K Bank Rolls

to settle their accounts with the best possible incentives and concessions. I encourage all account holders eligible under this scheme to seize this golden opportunity and benefit from this comprehensive relief package."

He further emphasized upon the proactive outreach, saying, "I urge all our teams to directly engage with borrowers, explain the scheme's benefits in detail, and work collaboratively for its effective implementation to achieve maximum resolutions."

He expressed confidence that the scheme would help borrowers resolve their liabilities and strengthen the Bank's NPA recovery efforts. Addressing concerns of various stakeholders including trade bodies, he reaffirmed the Bank's commitment to support the genuinely stressed borrowers while maintaining the Bank's strong financial performance.

Earlier, General Manager (IAPMD) Rajesh Malla Tickoo provided an overview of the Bank's NPA scenario, highlighting how the steep reduction in the Bank's GNPA ratio – from nearly 9% few years ago to 3.95% in September 2024 – underscores the Bank's focused approach to asset quality. He described the Special OTS scheme as a key step in furthering this success.

A detailed presentation outlining the scheme's features and implementation plan was also shared with participants during the launch. The function concluded with the participants expressing confidence and assuring active participation from operative levels to ensure the scheme's success.

Pertinently, valid for three months ending on 31st March - 2025, the scheme is non-discretionary and non-discriminatory, offering incentives for early repayment of OTS amount. As per the scheme, the sanction will be accorded and conveyed within 7 days from the date of receipt of application.

Prioritise Public

party who has participated in the tender process can challenge the terms and conditions of the tender, the court said that by participating in the bidding process, the bidder implicitly agrees to the rules, conditions, and requirements outlined in the tender document.

Therefore, no opportunity is left with the party to challenge the same at a later stage, as he/she accepts the terms and conditions of the same and waives off his/her right while being silent during or before participating in the tender process," the court said while underscoring that the stand of the Apex Court was clear in various authoritative pronouncements that once a party participates in the tender process without any grouse or demur, it is presumed that he/she is aware of all the terms and conditions of the document and subsequently is estopped under law to question the same.

KASHMIR VouTube OBSERVER OF PUBLICATION OBSERVER OF PUBLICATION OBSERVER OF PUBLICATION OBSERVER OF PUBLICATION OBSERVER OBS

The methods used to consume news have changed over time from newspapers, to television, to the Internet on our computers to carrying the news around with us 24/7 on smartphones in our pockets.

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OR SCAN



OUR SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

THE OTHER SIDE



VOX POP

UNRAVEL KASHMIR

KPDCL On Average 'Gets 1700 MW Power Against Regular Demand Of 1800 MWs'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Amid peak winters, Kashmir Power Development Corporation Limited (KPDCL) on an average is getting nearly 1700 Megawatts (MW) of Power against the average demand of nearly 1800 MWs.

A top official informed that "The local DISCOM on an average was receiving nearly 1700 MW of power against the peak demand of over 1800 MW."

The official further said that the highest demand of power in the ongoing winters was re-corded at 1922 MW including the enduring power curtailment schedule

In the meantime, KPDCL on its social media handle X said that some areas in Srinagar were affected due to the constraints of 220 KV transmission level of Zainakote grid.

KPDCL said, "Due to system constraints at the transmission level (220 KV Zainakote grid),the power supply to areas fed by R/S Exhibition, Bat-

maloo, Rakhi Arth, Narkara, Gangbugh, KP Bagh, Jawahar Nagar, Rajbagh and Dandarkha is affected. Power is being supplied on a rotation basis." (SIC)
The DISCOM however said

that the power situation in these areas is likely to improve on Thursday. "We regret the inconvenience caused to the general public. The situation is likely to improve by tomorrow." (SIC)

Earlier in the day, Jammu and Kashmir Power Transmission Corporation (JKPTCL) on its micro-blogging site X said, "Due to the need to rationalize load between 220/132 kV sources Delina and Zainakote, an emergency shutdown will be taken at 3:30 P.M in GSS Delina. This shutdown, expected to last approximately one hour, may result in a temporary load reduction of 100 MW."

"We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your understanding as we work to optimize our power distribution system," JKPTCL said—(KNO)

Cancer Institute Jammu Registers 1670 Patients Since April 2024

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Cancer Institute in Jammu has witnessed a rise in patient care, with approximately 7,000 patients treated in its outpatient department (OPD) since April 2024, and around 1,670 new cancer cases registered during the same period.

According to details, the institute conducted around 3,600 chemotherapy sessions between April 2024 and the present.

A senior official from the institute said that the Cancer Institute's outpatient services for specialised departments-Medical Oncology, Radiation Oncology, Surgical Oncology, Pain & Palliative Care and Preventive Oncology-commenced on February 4, 2023. During the first year of operations, approximately 8,000 patients were treated. Since April 2024, 6,682 patients have been treated in the OPD alone.

Apart from in-house services, the institute conducted 15 outreach programmes during which over 1,200 patients received care. The daycare services for chemotherapy, operational since February 20, 2023, are running smoothly, providing essential treatment to cancer patients.

In a significant development,

the National Board of Examinations (NBE) approved two seats in DNB Medical Oncology (Super Specialisation) for the institute in 2023, recognising its infrastructure and progress.

The official said that Ayushman Bharat (AB-PMJAY Sehat) services became available at the institute on June 26, 2023. Under this scheme, treatments worth crores of rupees have been provided to patients, with 5,376 patients registered for benefits at the institute.

inpatient department (IPD) services were launched on November 6, 2023, with operations spread across the ground, first, and second floors of the

The recent installation of a PET CT Scan Imaging system has been transformative, with 432 PET scans conducted to date. A Brachytherapy machine has also been installed, and 116 sessions have already been performed.

The official said the process for installing a Linear Accelerator (LINAC)—a machine that generates high-energy X-rays or electrons to treat cancer-has been completed. "The installation is expected shortly, marking another milestone for the institute," he said—(KNO)

Several Areas In Baramulla To Face Power Shutdown Today

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Ltd (KPDCL) on Wednesday announced that there will be power outage on January 2 in Baramulla and Sopore area to carry out maintenance and upgrade work.

As per a communique, planned shutdown to stabilize Amargarh (Sadiq Colony Tap 33KV Line) from 9 am to 3 pm will affect hospital, model town, Kapra, and Noorbagh areas of Sopore.

Similarly, Sheeri grid station (Baramulla-1 and Baramulla-II) shall remain shut from 11 am to 2 pm, to carry out replacement

of damaged poles and construction facilitation at Lalad Amargarh. The areas that will be affected include, Kanli Bagh, GMC Baramulla, Old Town and Janbazpora Baramulla.

Grid station Delina (Delina-Sopore) shall remain shut from 10 am to 3 pm to carry out maintenance work, the areas affected include, Sopore-II, Kranshivan Colony, Amargarh and Zonal Bank.

The shutdown is weatherdependent and will adhere to all safety protocols. Residents in the affected areas are advised to plan accordingly, the communique said.

BSF Opens Fire After Noticing Suspicious Movement In RS Pura

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Border Security Force (BSF) personnel opened fire upon detecting suspicious movement at the International Border in RS Pura Sector today morning, officials said.

An official said that the incident

occurred when the BSF sentry observed movement originating from the Pakistani side, prompting immediate action. He said that over a dozen rounds were fired to deter any potential intrusion.

Following the incident, a search operation was launched in the forward areas," he added.

Kashmir, Chenab Suffering, Omar **Skiing In Gulmarg: Sunil Sharma**

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Senior BJP leader and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Sunil Sharma, has strongly criticized Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for his "lackadaisical approach" in addressing the aftermath of heavy

snowfall across the region. Taking to his official account on X (formerly Twitter), Sharma condemned the Chief Minister's handling of the situation.

"Appalling dereliction of duty by CM Abdullah. As Kashmir Vallev. Kishtwar & Doda struggle with harsh winter, isolation & lack of basic amenities, our Chief Minister Mr. Omar Abdullah indulges in skiing in Gulmarg, enjoying his ministerial perks while J&K is suffering," Sharma wrote.

Kashmir's Snow-Covered Landscapes Attract Tourists Post-Snowfall



Agencies

GANDERBAL: The recent snowfall in the Kashmir Valley has transformed its scenic tourist destinations into picturesque landscapes, captivating visitors with a blanket of pristine whiteout.

Among the most soughtafter spots is the Gagangir and Sonamarg area of Gund, located in the central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, where tourists are flocking in large numbers to experience the beauty of nature in its full winter glory.

According to reports received, a couple from Mumbai shared their excitement about visiting Sonamarg for the first time. They described the sight of snow-covered mountains as a "dream come true." The availability of snow bikes, sledges, and horse rides further enhanced their experience, making their visit even more memorable.

Ajay Mishra, a tourist from Maharashtra, expressed his admiration for Kashmir's natural beauty, calling it a "paradise on earth." He added, "Kashmir is truly a stunning destination. It's a real heaven on earth, with its breathtaking natural scenery and unique culture."

Priya, a tourist from Delhi, echoed similar sentiments, saying, "Kashmir is a dream come true. The snow-capped peaks, lush green valleys, and crystal-clear lakes are beyond

Rakesh Singh, a traveler from

Mumbai, marveled at the striking beauty of Sonamarg, describing it as "a painting come to life." He praised the majestic mountains, sparkling rivers, and colorful meadows that make the region a visual treat.

A group of visitors from Bangalore also shared their awe, saying, "Kashmir's natural beauty is unmatched. The tranquil atmosphere, fresh air, and pristine landscapes offer the perfect escape from the hustle and bustle of city life.'

As the Kashmir Valley continues to draw tourists from across the country, it is clear that the region's natural wonders remain an enduring attraction, especially with the added charm of winter's snowcovered landscapes.

Meanwhile, the famous tourist destinations of Kashmir turned into winter wonderlands, resonating with joy and laughter as visitors embraced the beauty of the season. According to details, Gul-

marg had an electric atmosphere, as tourists braved the chilly weather and admired the snow-clad mountains, making the most of the pristine white Kapil, a visitor from Mumbai

said, it is like stepping into a fairytale. "The snow, the mountains, and the festive vibe make it an unforgettable experience.' Notably, other tourist des-

tinations like Pahalgam also glowed with the festive spirit, where tourists enjoyed the breathtaking surroundings.

"This place feels like heaven on earth," shared Ahmed, a visitor from Delhi. He added that he has never felt so close to nature before.

Meanwhile, hoteliers and local business owners echoed these sentiments, expressing their delight at the booming tourist season. "This is the busiest we have been in years," said Bashir Ahmad, a hotelier in Gulmarg. "It is heartwarming to see people come from all corners to celebrate in Kashmir. It brings hope to our lives, and we have been fully booked for two to three weeks now."

Nazir Hussain, another hotel owner in Pahalgam, said they witnessed a packed New Year festival with people from different parts of the Valley visiting. "We have been experiencing packed hotel bookings this New Year, and the celebrations have truly rocked the area," he said.

Moreover, the celebrations extended beyond tourist destinations. In the heart of Srinagar city, festivities were witnessed on the historical Boulevard Road, a hub for tourists and locals alike, where visitors gathered and burst firecrackers to bid farewell to the outgoing year and welcome the New Year. Fireworks lit up the sky, and cheers echoed through the

As earlier reported, Kashmir valley achieves a noteworthy tourism milestone, with tourist footfall touched 3 million till Dec 20, amidst the growing foreign tourist arrival—(KNO)

medical experts.
Dr Tawseef Ahmad, a gen-

eral physician at the Directorheart attack. "Donating blood at least once

a year improves blood flow, reduces arterial blockages, balances iron levels and may reveal potential health issues, while also lowering the risk of certain cancers," he said.

He said blood donation is critical in saving lives during emergencies, surgeries and for patients with chronic illnesses such as anaemia and cancer. It also ensures a steady supply of essential blood components like plasma and platelets in hospitals, he added.

For donors, the act of giving blood offers multiple health benefits, including reducing iron overload, which can lower the risk of heart disease; stimulating new blood cell production as the body replenishes the donated blood and encourages cell renewal; and health

Two Independent J&K MLAs Launch Signature Campaign

Observer News Service

STATEHOOD RESTORATION:

SRINAGAR: Amid ongoing political debate over the demand of restoration of statehood for Jammu and Kashmir, the two independent Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Rajouri and Surankote constituencies, Wednesday launched

a signature campaign.
The MLAs include Muzaffar Iqbal Khan representing Rajouri Assembly Constituency and Choudahry Muhammad Akram, representing Surankote AC.

On the occasion, Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, MLA Rajouri, while speaking to the media, said the initiative aims to gather one crore signatures over the next three months to present before the assembly. He said that there was a discontent in the region regarding the changes implemented after August 5, 2019.

The independent MLA said their campaign stands of democratic nature, stating, "This campaign marks the beginning of our demand that we want to present our request to the Union Government in a constitutional and democratic way," Khan said.

He also criticized claims that certain individuals who, according to him, have misled people into believing that they were happy with the current circumstances in the region.

The MLA further stated, "We want the Union Government to understand that no one in Jammu and Kashmir is satisfied with snatching of statehood and the changes imposed after August 5, 2019.'

Khan said the campaign would take the form of a constitutional movement, and that would reach every corner of Jammu and Kashmir. "We will take this campaign to the people throughout Jammu and Kashmir," he said. Khan highlighted the importance of the initiative, noting that it was a way to show that the people of the region are not happy with the changes brought after the August 5, 2019, decision.

'This is an indication that what happened to us on that day was wrong, and we are not happy with it," he said—(KNO)

'Blood Donation Helps Lower Risk Of Heart Attack'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Blood donation is a life-saving practice that benefits not only the recipient but also the donor, according to

ate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), said that blood donation can reduce the risk of

screening as before donation,

donors receive a free minihealth check, including tests for haemoglobin levels and certain infections.

Dr Tawseef outlined the requirements for donating blood: age: 18–65 years, weight at least 50 kg (110 lbs) and haemoglobin levels of a minimum of 12.5 g/dL for women and 13 g/ dL for men. He said the donors must be in good health with no significant illnesses. Men can donate whole blood every 12 weeks, while women can donate every 16 weeks, he added.

Dr Mushtaq, another doctor, said platelets can be donated every 7 days, up to 24 times a year, and plasma every 28 days, up to 13 times a year.

Those with diabetes can donate blood if their condition is well-controlled through medication, diet or lifestyle, provided they do not use insulin derived from bovine sources, which is rare but relevant in certain regions, he said.

However, certain conditions disqualify individuals from donating blood. These include uncontrolled diabetes or other serious medical conditions; recent surgeries or vaccinations; breastfeeding; and diagnosed infections such as HIV or Hepatitis B/C–(KNO)

Budgam: 56 Drug related Cases Registered In 2024

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: In a significant crackdown against drug trafficking in 2024, Budgam Police has registered 56 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and arrested 134 drug peddlers, including 14 hard-core offenders booked under the PIT NDPS Act.

As per data shared by district Police Budgam, the police also attached three residential houses and illegally gained properties worth Rs 1.28 crore linked to narco-smuggling.

Contraband and psychotropic substances valued at Rs 70.53 lakh in the black market were recovered in the last year, which include 11 grams of

heroin, 9.48 kilograms of charas, 35.205 kilograms of charas powder, 10.334 kilograms of cannabis powder, 96.101 kilograms of poppy straw, 650 grams of fuki, 124 bottles of codeine phosphate, and 1,249 Spasmo-Proxyvon tablets.

The police also intensified action against illegal poppy and bhang cultivation, registering six cases and destroying crops spread across 7 kanals and 17 marlas of private agricultural land and 20 kanals of state land. In addition to enforcement,

the district police have organized 32 awareness campaigns throughout the district, educating the public on the dangers of drug abuse and promoting a drug-free society—(KNO)

Court Issues Proclamation Notice Against Absconding Accused In Sopore failing which their movable

SOPORE: The Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Sopore has issued a proclamation under Section 82 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) against two individuals accused of evading court proceedings.

An official said that the accused, Mohammad Ashraf Mir, son of Abdul Gani Mir, a resident of Sher Colony and Mohammad Ahsan Wani, son of Ghulam Ahmad Wani, of Minpur Krankshivan Sopore failed to appear before the court despite multiple summons.

The proclamation directs both accused to appear before the court by the specified date,

and immovable properties will be attached in accordance with legal provisions. Both accused have been un-

traceable, prompting the invocation of Section 82 CrPC to compel their appearance.

"Despite multiple non-bailable warrants issued earlier. the accused failed to appear before the court. The warrants were returned with endorsements by the local police, citing that the accused was "not at home and at some unknown place", official sources said.

Meanwhile, the authorities have urged the accused to adhere to the court's directives to avoid further legal repercussions—(KNO)

Despite Rich Literary History, Bandipora Awaits Modern Library Agencies

BANDIPORA: In a land known for 'Alim (knowledge, Adab (literature) and Aab (water)', the students and aspirants in north Kashmir's Bandipora district face difficulties as there is no modern districtlevel library.

The district has a tehsil-level library, established in 1972, which operates in private accommodation with limited study materials and no internet access. Its location is unknown to some students, and many are unaware of its existence.

The lack of a modern district-level library forces civil service aspirants to travel to Srinagar for library access. Students said, "Had the fa-

cility been available in Ban-

dipora, it would save poor

students a significant amount of money. "The library consists of only two rooms, one serving as a reading area and the other for office staff. It is only open dur-

ing office hours, limiting study

time for students," they said. Since its establishment, the tehsil library has been relocated multiple times. Initially located in the main market, it was destroyed by fire in 1974. It was then moved to different locations, including near Noor Masjid and the Board office. The library lacks essential resources.

Mariya, a student, said that while some books are available, there is a need for improvements in infrastructure. During her visit, she felt it resembled an old bookshop more than a library. Although the district is

known for its historical asso-

ciation with knowledge, liter-

ature and water, the lack of an

upgraded library is a concern. Locals have requested that the library be developed with modern technology and a 24-hour reading room for students preparing for competitive exams.

Sahil Bhat, a student, said the library's limited hours and poor seating arrangements are major issues. He questioned why intellectuals had not advocated for improvements over the years. Many aspirants find it difficult to study in groups due to limited space.

Another significant problem is the lack of access to e-books and online resources. Students from the outskirts also face challenges in visiting the library and have asked for online access to books.

The library is housed in private accommodation, and the people have urged the government to find a permanent location for its establishment.

An official said that higher authorities had approved the Detailed Project Report (DPR) with a budget of 5.5 crore rupees, and construction is expected to start in March 2024. The site for the new library has already been identified, he said.

However, locals are con-

cerned about the time taken to initiate construction and request that the government prioritize a suitable location for the library.

Mushtaq Ahmad, another student, said that local ministers had neglected this issue during their tenures. He urged the government and district authorities to prioritize the construction of a modern library with modern technology.

In Hajin, a town with a history of scholars, the local library, established in 1977, operates from a rented building. The library faces challenges like an insufficient collection of new books and a lack of modern infrastructure.

The library's holdings were last updated in 2018, and there have been no additions since. The library's resources are limited to two local newspapers, excluding national newspapers that are necessary for civil service aspirants.

The absence of national papers highlights the gap in resources. The infrastructure of the library is in need of repair. The lack of resources and operational issues have forced stu-

dents like Mir to consider moving

to Srinagar for better facilities. The library's failure to meet the needs of students underlines the urgency for improvement. The absence of electricity hampers technological advancements, and the lack of cooling

or heating systems makes it difficult to study during extreme weather conditions—(KNO)

Head Coach Gambhir's Handling Of Inca Stransition Raises Eyebrows

SYDNEY: Commy cricket deals of the control of the c

The visitors will be playing the must-win fifth and final Test here from Friday.

The on-field roller-coaster is causing some off-field issues as well with murmurs of unrest in the dressing room beginning to

It is learnt that Gambhir is not on the same page with most of the players in the team and the communication isn't as good as it used to be during the time of Rayi Shastri and Rahul Drayid. Skipper Rohit Sharma has maintained that he speaks individually to the players about selection issues. But after Gambhir took charge in July, Rohit, it is said, hasn't actu-

ally given clarity to some of

the not-so-junior players about why they were being excluded at times from the side.

His own poor form hasn't helped Rohit's cause. But it is also reliably learnt that Gambhir, who is considered a more assertive person, hasn't earned a lot of confidence from the group of players, who aren't as old as Kohli or Rohit but are also not rookies like Harshit

Rana or Nitish Reddy.
"There is a Test match to be

dand then there is Champhy. If the performance
mprove, even Gautam
s position wouldn't be
enior BCCI official told
nditions of anonymity.
hir's equation with the
committee is also not
lively clear at this point.
Ire players in the team,
feeling insecure behis proclivity to experin the playing eleven. In
ong BGT, a punt like Nithas worked out bril-

But if India's performance is not drastically better in the Champions Trophy in February-March, Gambhir will certainly have his wings clipped.

the handling of Shub-

is still being debated.

"He was never BCCI's first choice (it was VVS Laxman) and some of the well-known overseas names didn't want to coach all three formats, so he was a compromise. Obviously, some other compulsions were also there," the official said.

Ahmed Taha Masoody Shines At World Pencak Silat Championship

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a proud moment for J&K, Ahmed Taha Masoody, a young martial artist from Srinagar, brought laurels to India by securing a bronze medal at the prestigious 5th Junior World Pencak Silat Championship. The championship was held from December 18 to 22 at the Sports City ADNEC Center in Abu Dhabi, UAE. The event saw participation from 1,100 athletes representing 55 countries, making it one of the most competitive tournaments in the sport.

Ahmed's incredible performance stood out among a field of highly skilled athletes from across the globe. By clinching the bronze medal, he showcased not only his talent but also the growing presence of Indian athletes in Pencak Silat on the world stage.

This achievement was made possible through Ahmed's unwavering dedication, the unflinching support of his family, and the guidance of his coaches, especially Mohd Iqbal, the Coach of the Pencak Silat Federation of India. Iqbal has been instrumental in identifying



and nurturing young talent in the country.

Ahmed's success at the world championship follows an exceptional performance in November 2024, where he secured four gold medals at two national-level Pencak Silat championships.

Hailing from the picturesque valley of Kashmir, Ahmed's journey to global recognition is a testament to resilience and determination. Despite facing challenges such as limited facilities and resources in his home state, Ahmed's passion for Pencak Silat, combined with the support of his family and coaches, has propelled him to

The championship, organized under the auspices of the international Pencak Si-

g talent in lat federation, was a grand celebration of martial arts. s at the Athletes from traditional p follows Pencak Silat powerhouses formance such as Indonesia, Malaysia 4, where Vietnam, and the Philippines d medals dominated the event.

Ahmed expressed his gratitude to his family, coaches, and Mohd Iqbal for their constant support. "Winning a medal at the world championship has been a dream come true. It wouldn't have been possible without the encouragement of my family and the mentorship of Mr. Iqbal, who has been a guiding light throughout my journey," he said.

As Ahmed continues to rise in the world of Pencak Silat, his achievements underline the importance of nurturing young talent and supporting athletes at the grassroots level.

'Rohit Has Earned Right To Walk Away On His Own Terms'

Press Trust of India

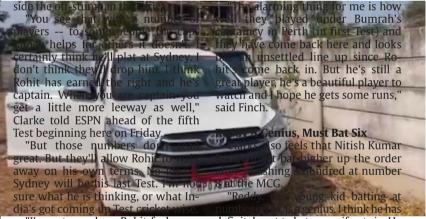
SYDNEY: Former Australia captain Michael Clarke says India skipper Rohit Sharma has earned the right to walk away from Test cricket on his own terms notwithstanding his barren run with the bat Down Under.

Pressure has been gradually building on Rohit who is yet to play a knock of significance in the three Tests he has played so far in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Another stalwart in the team, Virat Kohli, is also facing the heat for repeatedly falling to balls out-



Rohit averages 30.58 as captain but before that he scored runs at an average of 46.87.

Another former Australia captain Aaron Finch also weighed in on the debate.



"I'm not sure how Rohit feels captaincy wise..he's just had his second child so who knows what's going to happen there but I'll imagine he will certainly play in Sydney," he added.

definitely got to bat seven if not six. He has been India's leading run-scorer, 21 years of age, unbelievable. He has been underrated in the entire series," Clarke told Beyond 23 Cricket Podcast.

Short TAKES

Australian PM Meets Teams Ahead Of Sydney

Australian Prime Minsiter And Wednesday interacted with India and Australia ahead of the and effusively praised pacer Jacobies in the Border Gavaska

Australia are leading the ser come of the Sydney Test will d regain the trophy after more th

"The Australian and Indian t given us an incredible summer of cricket," Albanese commented as he posted pics with the two teams.

"When the fifth test starts on Friday, the SCG will be a sea of pink in support of the great work of the McGrath Foundation. Go Australia!," read another post from him.

According to the local media, Albanese acknowledged Bumrah's superb performance in the series. The Indian spearhead has taken 30 wickets in the series so far and also became the fastest Indian pacer to 200 wickets, achieving the feat in his 44th game.

Bumrah Eclipses Ashwin's Record In Latest ICC Rankings

India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah on Wednesday bettered spin stalwart Ravichandran Ashwin's all-time rating-point record by an Indian in the latest ICC rankings when he touched the 907-point mark.

Ashwin's highest rating was 904, achieved in December 2016. The 907 ranking points also placed Bumrah as joint-17th in the all-time list with Derek Underwood of England.

Ahead of the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne last week, Bumrah had equalled the record (904) held by Ashwin in the ranking for bowlers.

However, another superb performance at the MCG, where he got nine wickets, albeit in a losing cause, helped him consolidate his lead as the No. 1 Test bowler in the recent update.

Australia skipper Pat Cummins earned 15 rating points following his six wickets at MCG to jump a place to No. 3.

He also secured a third place in the Test all-rounder rankings after he notched up 90 vital runs across two innings during Australia's 184-run win in the fourth Test.

Pressure Mounts On Barcelona To Register Dani Olmo

Barcelona applied for new players' licences for Dani Olmo and Pau Victor with the Spanish FA (RFEF) on Tuesday, while the club denied claims of requesting any delay from governing bodies for their registrations.

The announcement was made hours before the midnight registration deadline.

Barcelona lost a second appeal to register the play-

ers for the remainder of the season on Monday, with the club unable to meet LaLiga's wage cap. Barcelona signed Olmo in August for around 55 mil-

lion euros (\$57.22 million) but the attacking midfielder was registered for only the first half of the season. The club managed to register Olmo and forward Victor after long-term injuries kept first-team players

out of the squad for months, allowing them to allocate a portion of their wages. Efforts to extend both registrations have hit repeated road blocks, with Barcelona's appeals dismissed by

LaLiga and various judicial authorities.

While Olmo and Victor will be free agents after the deadline, Barcelona could meet the economic requirements to sign them before the transfer market closes

