



Government of
Jammu & Kashmir



**Viksit Bharat
Viksit Jammu & Kashmir**



Inauguration of

6.4 km Sonamarg Tunnel

worth over ₹2700 crore

- Uninterrupted connectivity from Srinagar to Sonamarg throughout the year boosting local trade and tourism
- Enhanced access to Thajiwas Glacier & whitewater rafting on Sind river
- Reduced travel time between Srinagar & Leh
- Strategically important project providing all weather connectivity throughout the year
- Includes Main Tunnel, Parallel Escape Tunnel and a ventilation tunnel

by

Shri Narendra Modi

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Sonamarg, Ganderbal | January 13, 2025

Live Telecast on
DD News



Research Discovers New Skeletal Tissue With Potential For Regeneration: Study

ANI

An international research team has discovered a new type of skeletal tissue that offers great potential for advancing regenerative medicine and tissue engineering. An international research team led by the University of California, Irvine has discovered a new type of skeletal tissue that offers great potential for advancing regenerative medicine and tissue engineering. Most cartilage relies on an external extracellular matrix for strength, but 'lipocartilage', which is found in the ears, nose and throat of mammals, is uniquely packed with fat-filled cells called 'lipochondrocytes'.

It provides super-stable internal support which enables the strength of tissue. It makes to remain soft and springy -- similar to bubbled packaging material. The study, published in the journal Science, describes how lipocartilage cells create and maintain their own lipid reservoirs while remaining constant in size. Unlike ordinary adipocyte fat cells, lipochondrocytes never shrink or expand in response to food availability. "Lipocartilage's resilience and stability provide a compliant, elastic quality that's perfect for flexible body parts such as earlobes or the tip of the nose, opening exciting possibilities in regenerative medicine and tissue engineering, particularly for facial defects or injuries," said corresponding author Maksim Plikus, UC Irvine professor of



developmental and cell biology. "Currently, cartilage reconstruction often requires harvesting tissue from the patient's rib -- a painful and invasive procedure. In the future, patient-specific lipochondrocytes could be derived from stem cells, purified and used to manufacture living cartilage tailored to individual needs. With the help of 3D printing, these engineered tissues could be shaped to fit precisely, offering new solutions for treating birth defects, trauma and various cartilage diseases." Dr. Franz Leydig first recognized lipochondrocytes in 1854, when he noted the presence of fat droplets in the cartilage of rat ears, a finding that was largely forgotten until now. Now with modern biochemical tools and advanced imaging methods, UC

Irvine researchers comprehensively characterised lipo cartilage's molecular biology, metabolism and structural role in skeletal tissues. In their research, they also uncovered the genetic process that suppresses the activity of enzymes that break down fats and reduce the absorption of new fat molecules. When stripped of its lipids, the lipocartilage becomes stiff and brittle, highlighting the importance of its fat-filled cells in maintaining the tissue's combination of durability and flexibility. In addition, the team noted that in some mammals, such as bats, lipochondrocytes assemble into intricate shapes, like parallel ridges in their oversized ears, which may enhance hearing acuity by modulating sound waves.

New Study Of Supernovae Calls Dark Energy's Existence Into Question

The Conversation

By looking at light from distant exploding stars called supernovas, in 1998 astronomers discovered the universe isn't just expanding -- its expansion is speeding up. But what's behind this acceleration? Enter dark energy. It's one of the most debated and intriguing missing puzzle pieces of modern physics -- a mysterious form of energy believed to uniformly permeate all of space. In the current most accepted model of modern cosmology, dark energy is what drives the accelerated expansion of the universe. But what if there's another explanation that doesn't involve dark energy? A recent study using data from supernovas hints there might indeed be one, and it's called the Timescape model. This finding could profoundly challenge our understanding of the cosmos, so let's dive in.

What is dark energy?

The backbone of modern cosmology is the Lambda-Cold Dark Matter (Lambda-CDM) model. It describes a universe where a dark energy -- denoted with the Greek letter Lambda -- is the driving mechanism behind the universe's accelerating expansion. Under this model, galaxies are dancing together under the effect of an invisible dark matter web made of heavy particles that don't interact with anything. The effects of this cold dark matter can only be observed through gravity. Dark energy accounts for nearly 70% of the universe's total energy budget, but its exact nature remains one of the greatest mysteries in physics. Some interpretations suggest dark energy could be linked to the energy of the vacuum, while other studies have attempted to describe it as a new, evolving energy field spread across space. And a recent study from the international DESI collaboration that traces the universe's expansion hinted dark energy may be weakening over time. It's also possible that our current theory of gravity (Einstein's theory of general relativity) is incomplete. Perhaps it requires an extension to describe gravitational interaction at cosmological scales -- distances on the order of millions to billions of light-years.

What is the Timescape model? Matter -- dark matter, gas, galaxies, star clusters and super clusters -- is not uni-

formly spread throughout cosmos. But for the Lambda-CDM model, we assume the universe is homogeneous and isotropic. This means that, on cosmic scales, the distribution of matter appears smooth and uniform. Any clumps and gaps we might find can be considered insignificant due to the grand scale of the entire thing. By contrast, the Timescape model takes the uneven distribution of matter into account. It suggests our intricate cosmic web -- made up of galaxies, clusters, filaments and vast cosmic voids -- directly affects how we interpret the expansion of the universe. This would mean the universe isn't stretching out evenly. According to the Timescape model, the universe's expansion rate varies across different regions, depending on how dense they are. The key parameter in the Timescape model is the "void fraction": it quantifies the proportion of space occupied by expanding voids. Gravity dictates that voids expand faster than denser regions -- they have less matter to hold them back, allowing space to stretch more freely. This creates an average effect that can mimic the accelerated expansion attributed to dark energy in Lambda-CDM. In short, the Timescape model suggests it might only appear to us that the universe's expansion is speeding up. The expansion speed depends on where you are in the universe.

What did the study find? The authors of the new study looked at one of the biggest collections of Type Ia supernovas, called the Pantheon+ dataset. These supernovas are a reliable standard used to test cosmological models. The team compared two major models: the standard Lambda-CDM (our "vanilla" recipe of the universe), and the Timescape model. When looking at nearby bright supernovas, the Timescape model explained things better than our standard model. This was only statistical though, with the statistical analysis showing a "very strong" preference. Even when they examined more distant supernovas, where things should be more evenly spread out, Timescape still held up slightly better than the usual model. The takeaway? The Timescape model, which focuses on how cosmic "clumps and gaps" change the way we see the universe growing, might be better at capturing the true nature of our universe's expansion. This would be especially so for the nearby universe -- we have a lot of voids and filaments near us, which would affect how we see the expansion.

NOTICE FOR GENERAL PUBLIC

This is information for the general public that in my old passport bearing No K0676867 my mothers name was wrongly entered as SAFOORA KHANUM. While as per Qualification certificate her name is SAFORA KHAN. Now i want its correction, in this regard If any body having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

UMREEN W/o MEHRAN KHAN mcb
 R/o LANE J, Alamdar colony Rawalpura Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Yasmeena Rashid D/o: Abdul Rashid Kumar R/o Redwani Balla is applying for OBC Category certificate. If anyone has any objection they should submit the same to the office of Tehsildar Qaimoh within 7 days and no objection will be accepted thereafter. inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

Khatona bano w/o mohammad qasim dar R/o rakh doslipora tehsil singhpora distt baramulla declare on oath as under that my name has been wrongly shown as Khatona Begam instead of Khatona bano in my bank account bearing account no 0227040860002571 at jk bank singhpora now I want make correction in my bank account and if any body have objection he/she may contact to jk bank singhpora within seven days after that no objection will be accepted. fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my my 8th pass certificate. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Mohammad Samer Ganai msl
 S/o Altaf Hussain Ganai
 R/o Mullashulla

The Jammu And Kashmir Board Of School Education New Campus Bemina Srinagar

I have passed/appeared in SSE/HSE-I/HSE-II (Class- 10th) under Roll No. 229206 Session: Annual Year 2000 through the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. Due to the error committed by the School/ Board/ Parents against my Father's Name as Gh Mohamad Dar Instead of Ghulam Mohamad Dar Now, I have applied for correction/rectification in the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. New Campus Bemina, Srinagar, if any person has any objection in this regard, may file the same in the office of the Assistant Secretary, Certificates-KD within seven days from the date of Publication of this notice, after the expiry of said period no objection will be entertained. This is published for the information of the general public The correction particulars be recorded as under

Name: Aijaz Ahmad Dar
 Father's Name : Ghulam Mohamad Dar
 Mother's Name: Raja Bano
 DOB : 26-02-1985
 Residence: 9906855058 fko

Office of the Islamic Educational Institute Sadunara.

Fee Structure for the year 2025

S No	Class	Monthly Fee
01	5th	500
02	4TH	460
03	3rd	410
04	2nd	380
05	1st	350
06	U.K.G	330
07	L.K.G	310
08	Nursery	300

fko_r

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AWANTIPORA, KASHMIR.

Tele: 01933-247954/247955. Website: www.iust.ac.in

Re-Tender Notice INVITING E-TENDERS

IUST/EST/TEND/Shops/Kiosks/25/1091(Dated: - 10 -01-2025)

For the tender issued Vide No. IUST/EST/TEND/Canteens/Shops/Kiosks/24/1062 Dated 23-12- 2024. Re-tenders are invited Vide No. 1008C to 1013C. For and on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, Islamic University of Science and Technology, Awantipora, J&K UT, E-Tenders (in Two cover system) are invited for running the following facilities in the University Campus / Constituent Colleges:

S.No.	Name of the Facility	Location
01	Kiosk	IUST Campus III, Awantipora
02	Kiosk	Alamdar Memorial College of Nursing and Medical Technology, Charar-e Sharief, Budgam.
03	Documentation Cum Stationery Shop	Multiuse Facility Centre (First Floor) IUST Main Campus
04	Provisional Store	
05	Fresh Fruit Shop	
06	Salon	

The detailed E-Tender Notices can also be downloaded from the website at https://jktenders.gov.in_or www.iust.ac.in

Start Date: 10-01-2025 Closing Date: 20-01-2025 up to 6:00 PM

Opening Date: 21-01-2025 at 10:00 AM
 DIPK-NB-3140/24 dated: 10-01-2025 Sd/- Deputy Registrar Estates

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

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

Subject: Inviting the offline applications for admission to NEET MD/MS/PGD Courses-2024 in various Government/Private Medical Colleges/Institutions of UT of J&K w.e.f. 10-01-2025 to 12-01-2025 after lowering the Merit of NEET PG Courses.

Reference i) Notification No. 194-BOPEE of 2024 dated 18-12-2024.
 ii) Notice No. U-12021/05/2024-MEC dated 04-01-2025 from MCC, GOI.

Notification No. 001-BOPEE of 2025 Dated 09-01-2025

It is hereby notified for the information of all the candidates concerned that as per decision taken by MoHF in consultation with NMC, the percentile for NEET PG counselling 2024 has been lowered and the eligibility is as follows:

- Open Merit (including JKPM/CDP/ Sports)/EWS=15 percentile and above will be eligible to participate in counselling
- SC/ST/STII/OBC/ALC/IB/RBA (including JKPM/CDP/Sports)=10 percentile and above will be eligible to participate in counselling

The candidates who fall within the ambit of said revised percentile and are willing to participate in the subsequent round of counseling against the seats that have remained unfilled during previous round of counseling or the seats that are vacant due to resignations are advised to apply as per Annexure-A to this Notification and submit all the requisite documents as mentioned in Notification No. 121-BOPEE of 2024 dated 27-09-2024 physically at BOPEE office Jammu/Srinagar w.e.f. 10-01-2025 to 12-01-2025. The eligible candidate, who has not registered earlier vide Notification No. 121-BOPEE of 2024 dated 27-09-2024 but wants to be considered himself/herself against the unfilled seat/seats may also submit their documents physically at BOPEE office Jammu/Srinagar for registration within the prescribed time schedule indicated here in above.

Note:

- Mere registration by the candidates does not confer any right on them to have a claim on any vacant seat(s) which as of now are to be filled up based on the merit/preference from the eligible/registered candidates.
- The candidates should go through all relevant Notifications/Notices along with the e-Information Brochure notified by the Board.
- The candidates who are already registered vide Notification No. 121-BOPEE of 2024 dated 27-09-2024 need not to apply afresh.
- Seat Matrix shall be uploaded a day before the start of counseling.
- The other terms and conditions remain the same as contained in the e-information Brochure, Notifications/ Notices issued by the Board from time to time in this regard.

E & O E

DIPK-NB-3138/24 dated: 10-01-2025 Sd/- (Prof. Gurvinder Raj Verma) Controller of Examinations J&K BOPEE

No: BOPEE-EXAM/12/2024

Dated 09-01-2025



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BOOK APPOINTMENT

J&K Faces Driest Year In 5 Decades

5th Straight Year Of Rainfall Deficit

Observer News Service

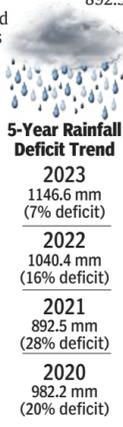
Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir experienced its driest year in five decades in 2024, with rainfall levels plunging to just 870.9 mm against the normal annual average of 1232.3 mm - a significant deficit of 29%.

According to independent weatherman, Faizan Arif, this marks the fifth consecutive year of below-normal precipitation in the Union Territory, raising serious concerns about water scarcity and its impact on agriculture, hydropower, and the overall environment.

A closer look at the rainfall trends over recent years highlights the alarming pattern: 2023 recorded 1146.6 mm (7% deficit), 2022 witnessed 1040.4

mm (16% deficit), 2021 saw 892.5 mm (28% deficit), and 2020 experienced 982.2 mm (20% deficit). With the 2024 figures nearing the previous low of 802.5 mm recorded in 1974, the region's precipitation levels continue to dwindle, pointing towards a concerning long-term trend.

The data reveals that January recorded a staggering 91% shortfall, while February and March saw deficits of 17% and 16%, respectively. Although April offered some respite with a 48% surplus, it was the only month to witness excess rainfall. Deficits resumed from May onwards, with shortfalls of 67% in May, 38% in June, 36% in July, and



Cameras, Escape Tunnels & More Kashmir Rail Link Set To Roll Amid Tight Security



File Photo

Agencies

Srinagar: Security will be paramount in Kashmir's new rail network, with cutting-edge measures implemented to safeguard passengers and infrastructure.

Cameras have been installed every 50 meters inside the tunnels, linked to a state-of-the-art central control room for real-time monitoring of security and operational data. Additionally, the project includes 67 km of escape tunnels, ensuring enhanced safety during emergencies. These features are part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL)

project, a monumental effort to connect Jammu with Kashmir.

Officials privy to the development said that the tunnels, including the 12.77 km-long T-50—the longest in the section—were constructed using Himalayan tunneling technology instead of traditional methods. Ballastless tracks, akin to those used in metro systems, ensure smoother and more efficient train operations. Anti-vibration seismic equipment further fortifies the rail infrastructure, making it resilient against earthquakes.

Reports inform that the installation of cameras every 50 meters inside

Z-Morh Tunnel Inauguration Security Tightened Ahead Of PM's Visit

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Preparations are in full swing for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Jammu and Kashmir on January 13, during which he will inaugurate the much-awaited Z-Morh tunnel in Ganderbal district. Security measures have been heightened across the valley, with the

Special Protection Group (SPG) taking charge of the innermost protection ring. A senior security official said that Jammu & Kashmir Police, along with paramilitary forces, have established additional checkpoints and enhanced surveillance, particularly in central Kashmir, to ensure a secure and smooth event.

"Standard | More on P6



CM Launches J&K RTI Online Portal

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday launched the Jammu & Kashmir Right to Information (RTI) Online Portal at the Civil Secretariat, marking a significant step towards enhancing transparency and accountability in governance.

The launch event was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Cabinet Ministers Sakeena Itoo, Javed Ahmad Rana, and Javed Ahmad Dar. Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, administrative secretaries and senior officers were also present.

In his address, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah congratulated the officers involved in developing the portal, emphasizing its transformative potential in simplifying the RTI application process for citizens.

"This initiative will provide easy access to government information under the RTI Act, empowering citizens with a faster, more transparent, and cost-efficient mechanism," he stated.

The Chief Minister also urged the concerned authorities to ensure widespread

Light Snowfall Expected Today

Jammu and Kashmir would likely experience a fresh snowfall on Saturday as the weatherman has predicted light rains and snow at isolated higher reaches of both the divisions of Jammu and Kashmir. Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad has stated that there is a possibility of light rain in plains of Jammu and snow at isolated higher reaches of Jammu division & Kashmir division. However, no significant weather activities are expected till January 18 | More on P6

Infant Deaths Double At Lal Ded Hospital In 2024

Agencies

Srinagar: Lal Ded Hospital, Srinagar's key maternal and child healthcare facility, reported a troubling surge in infant mortality in 2024, with 297 newborn deaths compared to 142 in 2023—marking a nearly twofold increase.

Over the past five years, the hospital has recorded approximately 900 infant deaths, reflecting a steady upward trend.

The spike in fatalities has raised alarm among locals and

health experts, who attribute the issue to staff shortages, inadequate resources, and insufficient neonatal care equipment.

The data highlights a deficit of around 140 staff members across various roles, further straining the hospital's capacity to provide quality care.

The hospital has also experienced a significant rise in patient load, with outpatient visits increasing from 142,088 in 2020 to 221,163 in 2024, and inpatient admissions growing from 29,757 to 37,908 | More on P6

'Luxury Lifestyles, Dubious Deals' 2 Srinagar Smart City Officials Under ACB Scanner

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Anti-Corruption Bureau on Friday booked two senior officers of Srinagar Smart City Limited in disproportionate assets (DA) cases here, officials said.

The Bureau also conducted searches at seven different locations in connection with these cases in the valley.

"ACB has registered DA cases against Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Sajid Yousef Bhat and Executive Engineer Zahoor Ahmad Dar of Srinagar Smart City Limited," Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of ACB Abdul Waheed Shah told reporters here.

Searches are currently underway at seven locations associated with these cases, the AIG said.

He revealed that the ACB



conducted a preliminary verification into allegations that both the CFO and the Executive Engineer, presently posted in Srinagar Smart City Limited, had accumulated assets disproportionate to their lawful sources of income.

Both suspects are also reportedly leading a lavish and luxurious lifestyle, the officer said.

During the investigation, it was found that Bhat owns

a commercial property in Srinagar's Rambagh with an actual price significantly higher than the value recorded in the sale deed, he said.

Additionally, multiple bank accounts with suspicious transactions were also discovered, Shah said.

A case has been registered at Police Station ACB Srinagar, he said.

Similarly, Dar was found to own a lavish multi-storied house in Srinagar's Shalteng, a sedan car, and bank accounts with suspicious transactions involving both his personal accounts and those of his spouse, Shah said.

There is evidence of the acquisition of 'benami' properties and significant assets in the form of fixed deposit receipts (FDRs), the AIG said, adding that a | More on P6

'No Direct Train To Kashmir' Traders, Political Leaders Oppose Transshipment At Katra

Observer News Service

Srinagar: With train services set to begin between Kashmir and New Delhi, it has been confirmed that all trains traveling to Srinagar or returning to New Delhi will halt at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi (SMVD) Railway Station in Katra, Jammu, for transshipment.

Railway officials, citing security concerns, have confirmed that Katra station will be the point where passengers will need to change trains.

"Trains either coming from Srinagar or returning to New Delhi will stop at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Railway Station in Katra, Jammu, where passengers will have to board another train to complete their journey," ETV Bharat quoted officials as saying.

The Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers Cum Dealers Association (KVFGDU) on Friday said that the announcement of indirect train services from Kashmir to Delhi has dashed their hopes and have sought attention of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in this regard.

Bashir Ahmad Basheer Chairman KVFGDU told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the union, which is an elected umbrella body of all fruit growers associations of the Valley viz Srinagar, Sopore, Baramulla, Handwara, Chari-Sharif, Shopian, Pulwama, Gulgam, Anantnag, Jlablipora, P a c h a h a r , and Zaran Ganderbal were jubilant | More on P6



Only Industrial Tribunal Can Adjudicate JKB-Workman Dispute: HC

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The J&K and Ladakh High Court has held that only the labour court or Industrial Tribunal, established by the Central Government, shall have power to adjudicate an industrial dispute between the Jammu & Kashmir Bank and its workman.

However, a bench of Justice Rajnesh Oswal said that the Central Government may refer the dispute to the labour court or Industrial Tribunal established by the State Government and in that eventuality only, the labour court or Industrial Tribunal established by the State Government shall have jurisdiction to adjudicate the same.

On 13 March 2019, Industrial Tribunal Cum Labour Court J&K at Srinagar had rejected the preliminary objection raised by the



J&K Bank by holding that the State Government was the 'appropriate Government' for the bank and the Industrial Tribunal or Labour Court established by the State Government shall have the jurisdiction to adjudicate a dispute between the bank and its workman. The bank had assailed the order before the High Court.

"...this court is of the considered view that in case of industrial dispute between the Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd. and its workman, the appropriate Government would be 'the Central Government'," the court

said and accordingly decided an issue framed by it as to whether in case of industrial dispute between Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd. and its workman, the Central Government or the State Government i.e. Government of UT of J&K is the 'appropriate Government' in terms of Section 2(a) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

To another issue whether the Industrial Tribunal-Labour Court established by the State Government of J&K, now Government of UT of J&K, has the jurisdiction to adjudicate the industrial dispute between the J&K Bank Ltd. and its workman?, the court said: "As this court has arrived at the conclusion that the central government is appropriate government in case of an industrial dispute between the petitioner (J&K bank) and | More on P6

KO IMPACT Govt To Push For Snow Clearance Under MG-NREGA

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has decided to approach the Union Ministry of Rural Development with a proposal to include snow clearance work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MG-NREGA). This move comes after persistent advocacy by Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat, an RTI activist and writer, whose recent article in the Kashmir Observer outlined the urgent need for such an initiative.

MLA Bijbehara, Bashir Veeri, acknowledged Dr. Bhat's role in bringing the issue to the forefront. Veeri revealed that he had discussed the proposal of dovetailing snow clearance with MG-NREGA with

several ministers and legislators. He added that the Rural Development Department (RDD) Minister, Javid Ahmad Dar, had agreed to liaise with the Union Ministry on the matter, marking a crucial step forward. Veeri also praised Dr. Bhat's extensive work in this field, noting that his writings and advocacy had inspired many to take up the cause.

Dr. Bhat's article underscored the critical challenges faced by residents of snow-bound regions during the winter months. Heavy snowfall often blocks roads and disrupts daily life, creating chaos and hardship. With a shortage of proper snow clearance machinery, the administration resorts to hiring JCBs and other earth-moving | More on P6

'Kashmir Separatist Group's Money Exchange' SC Dismisses PIL Against RBI

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a PIL alleging the RBI exchanged Rs 30 crore-worth defaced currency notes belonging to a Kashmir separatist group.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh dismissed the PIL, which sought a CBI probe into the allegations, after the RBI said petitioner Satish Bhardwaj was fired from the RBI and he had suppressed the fact before the court.

"He appears to be a disgraced employee of a bank," the bench told senior advocate Jaideep Gupta, representing the RBI.

Gupta submitted there was no basis for Bhardwaj's claim. Bhardwaj, appearing in person, referred to a newspaper report on the issue and said the RBI was denying the allegations

five years after the PIL was filed. Justice Surya Kant told the petitioner he was the one who concealed the relevant facts in his petition.

After Bhardwaj admitted he was dismissed by the bank, the bench said, "We are not inclined to entertain this writ petition purportedly filed in public interest. The same is accordingly dismissed. However, the issues, if required to be adjudicated, shall be gone into in an appropriate case."

On January 7, 2020, the top court asked the Centre to look into the PIL saying "the issue may be of national importance".

Bhardwaj alleged in 2013 the Jammu branch of the RBI exchanged the currency notes which belonged to a separatist group called "Kashmir Graffiti". He said he had approached the CBI to probe | More on P6

The Quiet Statesman

Former prime minister Manmohan Singh's vision of 'breakfast in Amritsar, lunch in Lahore, and dinner in Kabul' remains a wistful reminder of what could have been

RIYAZ WANI

When former prime minister Manmohan Singh visited Jammu and Kashmir in September 2017 as the head of a Congress delegation, he evoked some nostalgia about his tenure, a period during which a solution to the Kashmir issue had seemed within reach. Singh went about his activities in his familiar inconspicuous way. He chose to only listen and not issue any statement, nor talk to the media. But he struck a chord as a throwback to a time when centre apparently tried to be sensitive if not accommodative towards the issues facing J&K.

Singh's ten years at the helm - 2004-2014 - had witnessed the most promising peace process between India and Pakistan which had nearly culminated in a resolution of Kashmir. At one point of time as the Kashmir solution seemed close at hand, Singh had famously talked of a time when people in India would be able to have "breakfast in Amritsar, lunch in Lahore and dinner in Kabul".

There was some public criticism of Dr Singh too. Some people argued that despite making attempts and starting many initiatives on internal and external fronts to resolve Kashmir, Singh had balked at taking these to their logical conclusion. Besides holding substantive negotiations with Pakistan over the then Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf's four point formula for Kashmir resolution, Singh had also set up five working groups and the three-member group of interlocutors to evolve a comprehensive response to the then state's problems but none of their recommendations was followed through.

Now that Dr. Singh is no more, his passing marks not just the loss of a former prime minister but also the end of an era and a missed opportunity—one that, if seized, could have reshaped the history of Kashmir and the subcontinent. We can only look back wistfully at what seemed so close at hand but couldn't be accomplished.

In his book, 'In Pursuit of Peace,' the late Indian diplomat S K Lambah provides a comprehensive account of the behind-the-scenes efforts led by Singh and his then Pakistani counterpart Pervez Musharraf to secure peace between India and Pakistan by resolving Kashmir. The "accord" being worked out between the two countries on Kashmir aimed to make borders irrelevant without redrawing them, with key elements such as bus services between two parts of Kashmir already in play during Singh's tenure.

Lambah's book also highlights the possibilities for peace that presented themselves over the past quarter century, including the Delhi-Lahore bus service that began in 1999, the visit of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Islamabad in 2004, General Pervez Musharraf's visit to India in 2005, and the near-reopening of consulates in Mumbai and Karachi, among others.

Earlier, another book on the Singh-Musharraf's Kashmir initiative by the then Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Kasuri, 'Neither Hawk, Nor Dove' also provided a detailed account of the ambitious transformation underway at the time.

Kasuri writes that by the time Musharraf was ousted from office, Pakistan and India had made progress on the last of the contentious points of his four point settlement formula for Kashmir which had brought the two countries tantalizingly close to a solution. This was about creating a joint consultative mechanism between the divided parts of Jammu and Kashmir. The two countries had agreed that such a mechanism would consist of a specified number of elected members from each of the two units. There was also an agreement on "the principle of the presence of Pakistanis and Indians" in this mechanism. What was still under discussion was "the manner of the presence and association" of the two countries with the arrangement.

However, the current state of affairs is far from promising, with no direct flights, hardly any visas issued, and no bus or train services between

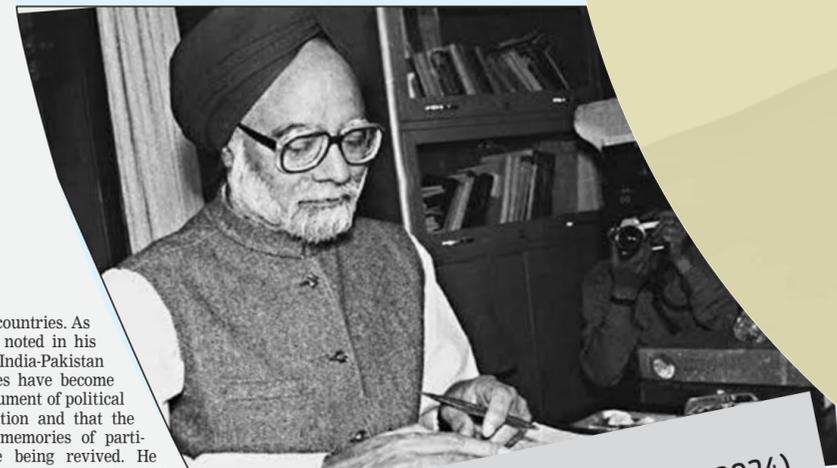
the two countries. As Lambah noted in his book, India-Pakistan hostilities have become an instrument of political mobilization and that the painful memories of partition are being revived. He pointed out that hate is the guiding political philosophy of both countries today, and as long as this remains the case, no channel, front or back, will work.

The situation has considerably transformed since, and in almost every sense: regionally in terms of the growing power disparity between India and Pakistan, and in J&K too, which has since been divested of its special status and downgraded into two federally controlled units, in other words, two union territories. This, in turn, has altered the complexion of the Kashmir issue as we understood it.

And if at all the two countries return to dialogue in the near or medium future, it seems hardly probable that they will revisit the Four Point Proposals. But should the two countries choose to go back to them as a broader framework for settlement, they will need to adapt it to the new reality. But again, getting to that point won't be easy.

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

Ex-Pakistan president General Pervez Musharraf and then PM, Dr Manmohan Singh wave to spectators before the start of a one-day international cricket match between India and Pakistan in New Delhi, April 17, 2005. Kamal Kishore/Reuters



Dr. Manmohan Singh (26 September 1932 - 26 December 2024)



The late CM of Jammu & Kashmir, Shri Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, receiving the late Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, upon his arrival at Srinagar Airport on November 17, 2004.



Dr. Manmohan Singh travelling in the train from Banihal to Qazigund after inaugurating the rail line, in Jammu and on June 26, 2013

“ Now that Dr. Singh is no more, his passing marks not just the loss of a former prime minister but also the end of an era and a missed opportunity—one that, if seized, could have reshaped the history of Kashmir and the subcontinent

“ He chose to only listen and not issue any statement, nor talk to the media. But he struck a chord as a throwback to a time when centre apparently tried to be sensitive if not accommodative towards the issues facing J&K.

HMPV: New Virus in Town

Waseem Hassan Dar

As Jammu and Kashmir has entered the colder months of season, a lesser-known respiratory virus, Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV), is becoming a public health concern. At least eight HMPV cases have been reported across India so far. This virus, which often mimics the common cold, can cause severe respiratory illnesses, particularly in vulnerable groups. While there are not any reported cases of this virus in Jammu and Kashmir, understanding and taking steps to prevent HMPV is essential to safeguard the health of our community.

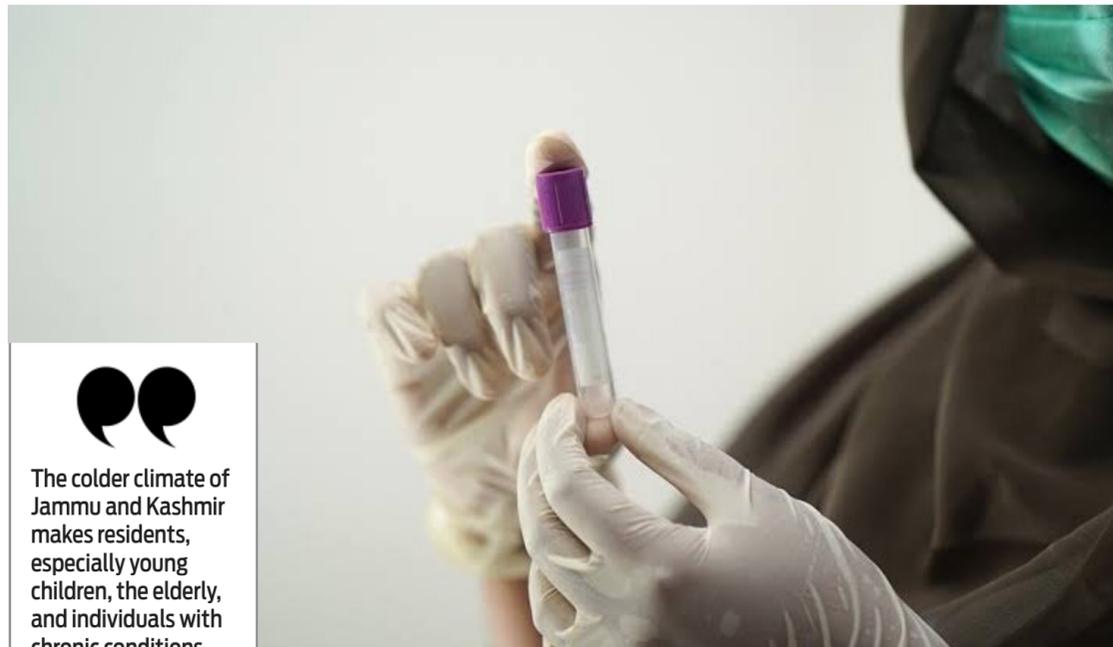
What is HMPV?

HMPV is a respiratory virus that spreads through droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. It can also spread through contaminated surfaces and direct contact with infected individuals. While most cases result in mild symptoms, it can lead to severe complications, such as pneumonia and bronchiolitis, in certain high-risk groups.

Who is at Risk?

While anyone can contract HMPV, the following groups are especially vulnerable:

- Young children under 5 years, especially those born prematurely.
- Older adults over 65 years of age.
- People with chronic respiratory conditions like asthma or COPD.
- Individuals with weakened immune systems due to conditions such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, or autoimmune disorders.



The colder climate of Jammu and Kashmir makes residents, especially young children, the elderly, and individuals with chronic conditions, more vulnerable to respiratory infections like HMPV. Parents should take extra care to protect children under 5 years, while older adults are advised to consult healthcare providers at the first sign of respiratory symptoms

Symptoms to Watch Out For:

HMPV symptoms can range from mild to severe and include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Stuffy nose
- Cough (dry or productive)
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Wheezing or difficulty breathing (in severe cases)
- If untreated, HMPV can lead to complications like pneumonia, severe asthma flare-ups, or bronchiolitis.

When to Seek Medical Help?

It's crucial to seek immedi-

ate medical attention if you or a loved one experiences:

- Difficulty breathing
- Persistent high fever (lasting more than three days)
- Bluish skin, lips, or nails
- Severe dehydration symptoms (dry mouth, dizziness, reduced urination)
- Worsening of pre-existing health conditions

Diagnosis and testing:

Doctors can diagnose HMPV based on symptoms and confirm it through an RT-PCR test using a nasal or throat swab. In severe cases, additional tests like chest

X-rays may be required.

How to Prevent HMPV?

Protect yourself and your family by following these measures:

- Maintain Good Hygiene
- Wash hands frequently with soap for at least 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitizers when soap and water are unavailable.

Cover Coughs and Sneezes

- Use a tissue or your elbow to cover your mouth and nose.
- Dispose of tissues properly and wash your hands afterward.

Avoid Close Contact

- Stay away from sick individuals and avoid crowded places during outbreaks.

Clean and Disinfect Surfaces

- Regularly sanitize frequently touched items like phones, doorknobs, and toys.

Wear Masks

- Use masks in crowded public spaces or during outbreaks.

Avoid Smoking

- Smoking weakens the respiratory system and increases vulnerability to infections.

Special Care for Jammu and Kashmir Residents

The colder climate of Jammu and Kashmir makes residents, especially young children, the elderly, and individuals with chronic conditions, more vulnerable to respiratory infections like HMPV. Parents should take extra care to protect children under 5 years, while older adults are advised to consult healthcare providers at the first sign of respiratory symptoms. Those with compromised immunity should closely monitor their health and seek timely medical attention to avoid severe complications.

By staying informed and taking preventive steps, we can protect ourselves and our loved ones from HMPV this season. Let's work together and spread the information to ensure a healthier, safer winter for everyone in Jammu and Kashmir.

The author is a PhD Neurobiology, Department of Life Sciences, School of Natural Sciences, Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence

Devaluation Of Teachers

Aabid Kubravi

Education has long been the linchpin of human advancement, and teachers are the visionary architects who meticulously craft the blueprint of a society's future. With unwavering dedication, they kindle the flame of curiosity, nurture creativity and instill timeless values that sculpt the character of generations to come.

The symbiotic relationship between a nation and its educators is profound, with the strength and potential of a nation often mirrored in the esteem and value it places upon its teachers. A nation that fails to cherish its educators is, in essence, a nation poised on the precipice of decline – a decline that reverberates far beyond academic achievement, permeating the very fabric of its culture, society and economy.

Teachers embody a profound impact that transcends the boundaries of mere knowledge transmission. As mentors, guides and beacons of moral guidance, they play a transformative role in shaping the minds and characters of future generations. Through their selfless dedication, teachers empower individuals to unlock their innate potential, crystallize their aspirations and cultivate critical thinking skills that foster a lifelong pursuit of wisdom.

The lessons imparted by teachers extend far beyond the confines of textbooks and examinations, permeating the very fabric of a society's values, norms, and future trajectory. A nation that neglects to acknowledge and reward the noble profession of teaching risks squandering its most precious resource: the intellectual, creative and innovative potential of its people.

When a society neglects to valorize its teachers, the consequences reverberate throughout the education system, compromising the quality of instruction that students receive. Teachers who are undercompensated and undervalued often succumb to disillusionment, overwork and eventual burnout, thereby diminishing their effectiveness in the classroom. In such an environment, the pursuit of knowledge is eclipsed by the struggle for survival, as educators are forced to prioritize their own well-being over their passion for teaching. Moreover, students may intuitively sense this



Teachers must be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve and their rights must be protected. This includes ensuring that they are not assigned tasks that are not related to their core responsibilities as educators

dearth of respect, leading to a corresponding decline in their enthusiasm for learning and thus perpetuating a vicious cycle of educational stagnation.

The devaluation of the teaching profession also has a profound impact on the recruitment and retention of talented educators. When prospective teachers behold the lack of appreciation, meager salaries and limited career advancement opportunities, many are deterred from pursuing a career in education, instead opting for professions that offer greater financial rewards or prestige. Consequently, the education system suffers from a dearth of high-caliber educators, imperiling the future of the nation and undermining the very foundations of a knowledgeable and enlightened society.

A nation that fails to cherish its teachers risks severing its connection to its cultural roots, leaving subsequent generations disconnected from their ancestral heritage. Moreover, the erosion of respect for teachers can precipitate a decline in the moral fabric of society. When educators, who shape the minds and characters of future leaders, are treated with disdain or apathy, it conveys a perilous message to students regarding the significance of knowledge, diligence, and integrity.

In such a society, time-honored values like reverence, honor and accountability may lose their resonance, culminating in the

disintegration of social cohesion and stability. The repercussions of undervaluing teachers can be far-reaching, ultimately imperiling the very foundations of a nation's character and citizenship.

The exploitation of private school teachers has reached alarming proportions, with some school administrations forcibly assigning them tasks that are far removed from their primary role as educators. One such example is the assignment of teachers as bus attendants, a task that not only undermines their professional dignity but also impacts their ability to effectively discharge their teaching duties. This trend is not only demoralizing for teachers but also has far-reaching consequences for the education system as a whole.

The assignment of private teachers as bus attendants is a clear violation of their rights and a blatant disregard for their professional training and expertise. Teachers are trained to educate and inspire young minds, not to supervise students on bus rides. Private schools want to save money, so they overload them with extra duties. This task is not only beneath their dignity but also takes away from the time and energy they can devote to their core responsibilities as educators. Moreover, it creates a sense of confusion among students, who begin to question the authority and expertise of their teachers. This can have long-term consequences for the teacher-student relationship and the overall learning environment.

The impact of this trend on the teaching profession is devastating. Teachers who are forced to take on tasks that are not related to their core responsibilities begin to feel undervalued and

unappreciated. This can lead to high levels of stress, burnout and turnover, ultimately affecting the quality of education. Moreover, the lack of respect and dignity afforded to teachers can have a ripple effect on the entire education system, discouraging young and talented individuals from pursuing careers in teaching. This can have far-reaching consequences for the future of our education system and our society as a whole.

In India, there is no specific law that permits private schools from assigning teachers the role of bus attendants. However, there are several laws and regulations that govern the employment of teachers and the operation of private schools like:

1. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009:- This Act mandates that teachers shall be engaged in teaching and related activities only.
2. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Bye-Laws:- The CBSE Bye-Laws state that teachers shall be responsible for teaching, mentoring and other educational activities.
3. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) Regulations:- The NCTE Regulations specify the roles and responsibilities of teachers, which do not include tasks like bus attendance.

In 2019, the Delhi High Court also ruled that private schools cannot assign teachers non-teaching duties, including bus attendants. The court stated that teachers are hired to teach and not to perform other tasks.

Therefore, it is imperative that school administrations and policymakers take immediate action to address this issue. Teachers must be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve and their rights must be protected. This includes ensuring that they are not assigned tasks that are not related to their core responsibilities as educators. Moreover, teachers must be provided with a safe and supportive working environment, where they can focus on teaching and inspiring their students without fear of exploitation or mistreatment. Only then we can ensure that our children receive the high-quality education they deserve and that our teachers are able to thrive and flourish in their roles.

Matamal's Legacy: Faith, Food and Family

Dr. Masoon A. Beig

My maternal village - Matamal, holds a special place in my heart – a place where rich heritage and deep spirituality come alive every January coinciding with the 7th day of any Islamic Calendar in the form of the Urs of Peer Hassan Bab. In the chilly month of "Phogh or Magh," when snow blankets the earth and the biting cold tests every soul, the warmth of faith, love, and tradition fills the air. The Urs at Mondhol, Kulgam, is not just a religious event but a profound celebration of spirituality, heritage, and love. It's a time when the community gathers to honour the legacy of a revered saint, embracing traditions that go beyond rituals to touch the core of human connection.

At the heart of this Urs lies a culinary tradition that is as unique as it is meaningful. A special dish—Boiled pumpkin with curd, cheese, and walnut kitties—is prepared with great care and devotion. The choice to abstain from meat during this sacred occasion speaks volumes about the community's reverence for simplicity and purity. This dish, unique in its ingredients, is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, representing a bond between the people and their shared heritage.

What makes this tradition truly unique is the way it fosters human connection that recipes can't be shared through speed post, courier, or social media apps like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram or X - (Twitter), the recipes are sent in the most heartfelt manner—brothers personally visit their sisters' homes, carrying a box of this dish. Though the quantity might be small, the gesture carries immense love, respect, and affection. In this era dominated by technology, where a text or a video call often replaces physical visits, this tradition is a poignant reminder of the value of face-to-face connections. It underscores



the belief that some emotions cannot be captured in words or emojis; they must be felt in the presence of loved ones. The personal visit, the exchange of smiles, the warmth of a shared moment—all these create memories that transcend time. Historically, even when daughters of the village were married across national or international borders, their parents would brave distances to deliver this dish, reinforcing bonds of love and connection. Remarkably, this tradition endures today, as villagers who migrate temporarily to other states of India also celebrate and prepare this special recipe in distant corners of the country. This unique practice transcends physical and cultural boundaries, serving as a beautiful reminder of sharing, caring, and the enduring ties of family and community.

Not only this but the Urs has deep spiritual, culturally and religious significance, bringing the community together in faith, remembrance, and love. The shrine of Hassan Bab, located within the village graveyard, becomes a sacred site where people gather to offer prayers (Faithwa) for their deceased loved ones. This act of visiting graves not only honours the departed but follows the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), reminding everyone of the transient nature of life and the importance of prayers for those who have passed. The Madrasa located in the vicinity of the

shrine where from every year a good number of students irrespective of gender do Arabic course as well as do "Hafiz" of Holy Quran.

From medical perspective, Pumpkin is a highly nutritious and versatile vegetable, rich in beta carotene, vitamins A, C, and E, and minerals like potassium and magnesium. It supports heart health, regulates blood pressure, improves eye health, aids digestion, and may help manage diabetes. Low in calories and high in fiber, pumpkin promotes a healthy weight and overall well-being. Cooked walnut kitties are a delicious and nutrient-rich dish offering numerous health benefits. Walnuts are packed with omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and essential minerals like magnesium and phosphorus, promoting heart health, brain function, and strong bones. They are also high in fiber, supporting digestion and gut health. So the Urs is having significance from medical angel also.

Finally let me conclude that The Urs is not just a celebration but a living testament to the heritage of my "Matamal"—a place where faith meets family, where tradition embraces modernity, and where the coldest of winters is warmed by the love and prayers of a devoted community. It is a time when memories are made, connections are rekindled, and the soul is reminded of the beauty of belonging.

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2024 Becomes Warmest Year On Record, 1st To Breach 1.5 Deg C Guardrail

NEW DELHI, Jan 10: The year 2024 was the hottest year on record, and the first with a global average temperature 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, European climate agency Copernicus confirmed on Friday. Every month from January to June 2024 was the warmest ever recorded for those months. From July to December, except for August, each month was the second warmest on record, behind 2023, it said.

According to scientists at the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), 2024 was the hottest year since global temperature tracking began in 1850.

The average global temperature was 15.1 degrees Celsius — 0.72 degrees above the 1991-2020 average and 0.12 degrees higher than that in 2023, the previous record-holder.

Scientists noted that the average temperature in 2024 was 1.60 degrees Celsius above the 1850-1900 baseline, the period before human activities like burning fossil fuels began significantly impacting the climate.

This is the first time the average global temperature has remained 1.5 degrees Celsius above the 1850-1900 average for an entire calendar year.

However, a permanent

breach of the 1.5-degree Celsius limit specified in the Paris Agreement refers to long-term warming over a 20- or 30-year period.

That said, experts feel that the world is now entering a phase where temperatures will be consistently above this threshold.

Harjeet Singh, climate activist and the founding director of Satat Sampada Climate Foundation, said the world is entering a new climate reality — one where extreme heatwaves, devastating floods, and intense storms will become increasingly frequent and severe.

"To prepare for this future, we must urgently scale up adaptation efforts across every level of society — redesigning our homes, cities, and infrastructure, and transforming how we manage water, food, and energy systems," he said.

Singh said the world must move from fossil fuels to clean energy quickly and fairly, making sure no one is left behind, and that rich countries have a bigger responsibility to take bold steps.

C3S scientists said that in 2024, greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere hit their highest annual levels ever recorded. Carbon dioxide levels were 2.9

parts per million (ppm) higher than in 2023, reaching 422 ppm, while methane levels rose by 3 parts per billion (ppb), reaching 1897 ppb.

Sea ice extent in the Arctic and around Antarctica, which is an essential indicator of the stability of Earth's climate, reached "record or near-record low values" for the second year in a row.

The year 2024 will also be remembered as the year developed nations had their last big chance to prevent the world from permanently crossing the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold by funding climate action in the Global South, but that didn't seem to materialise.

Relentless warming fuelled record-breaking heatwaves, deadly storms, and floods that devastated lives and homes by the thousands in 2024. Millions were displaced, and all eyes turned to the UN climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, hoping for a climate finance package capable of ramping up action in the Global South.

A study published in 2023 estimated that developed countries owe around USD 170 trillion for their excessive emissions, having consumed 70-90 per cent of the total carbon budget since the industrial era.

Nissan Launches 'Bold For The Brave' Republic Bonanza for Defence, Central Paramilitary & State Police Forces

Srinagar: Nissan Motor India (NMIPL) has launched its 'Bold For The Brave' Republic Bonanza offer to commemorate Republic Day this month, for all Defence (Indian Army, Indian Air Force & Indian Navy), Central and State Police personnel on its bestselling SUV the New Nissan Magnite. The bonanza and tax benefit available under CSD can be availed by booking the SUV via the CSD AFD portal (www.afd.cs-dindia.gov.in). Nissan has also extended benefits to all personnel from Central Paramilitary & State Police forces across India.

The Nissan Magnite has remained a popular B-SUV offering in its segment since its India launch in December 2020 having crossed cumulative sales of 1.5 lakh units across domestic and export markets. This remarkable milestone reaffirms the Nissan Magnite's position as a game-changer in the Indian automotive market. The New Nissan Magnite has already crossed over 10,000 bookings since its launch in October 2024.

Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India, said at the launch of the 'Bold For The Brave' Republic Bonanza, "As we celebrate 76



years of being a republic this month, Nissan is honoured to offer the New Nissan Magnite, our flagship SUV to our Armed Forces, Central Paramilitary and State Police Forces at special prices only for them. This special 'Bold For The Brave' Republic Bonanza is a testament to our respect and gratitude for the tireless dedication and sacrifice of the real heroes who protect our nation. The Magnite has been tested in bold and extreme conditions which makes it an ideal companion for all our forces. Through this initiative, we aim to make the New Nissan Magnite more accessible to those who safeguard

our freedom selflessly."

Customers can contact the Nissan Motor India 'Bold For The Brave' Republic Bonanza Defence & Security Forces 24x7 Exclusive Helpdesk Contact at +91 1800-209-3456.

Nissan has designed the 'Bold For The Brave' Republic Bonanza offer as a gesture of gratitude and respect for the unwavering commitment, sacrifice, and dedication of the Indian Armed Forces, Central Paramilitary and State Police Forces in safeguarding the nation's security. To facilitate this initiative, Nissan has set up a dedicated 24x7 helpdesk to fast-track bookings and deliveries, ensuring seamless

access and peace of mind for customers considering the daily pressures of the security forces.

The Nissan Magnite has been one of the most competitive SUVs in its segment and has consolidated Nissan's position in both India and global markets ever since its launch in 2020. Recently, Nissan Motor India introduced the globally refreshed New Nissan Magnite. This model seamlessly blends Japanese design excellence with efficient production in India, embodying Nissan Motor India's 'Make-in-India, Make-for-the-World' philosophy while reinforcing its strong commitment to customer satisfaction.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K Faces

2% in August. The situation worsened toward the end of the year, with deficits of 41% in September, 74% in October, 69% in November, and 58% in December.

"The impact of such deficits is already visible across the region. Reduced water availability is severely affecting agriculture, impacting crop yields and livelihoods of farmers. Hydropower generation, a crucial source of energy for the region, has been significantly impacted due to decreased water flow in rivers," Faizan said.

"Moreover, the dwindling water resources are raising concerns about drinking water availability and sanitation in several areas."

Experts have attributed the declining rainfall to climate change, with rising global temperatures impacting weather patterns. The prolonged dry spells have emphasized the urgent need for climate adaptation measures and comprehensive water management strategies in Jammu and Kashmir.

Light Snowfall

Director MeT further said that the weather would remain generally dry from January 12-14 while generally cloudy weather is expected with possibility of light snow at isolated higher reaches on January 15 & 16.

On January 17 & 18, the weather would remain generally cloudy, he said.

Meanwhile, Kashmir valley continued to be under the grip of cold conditions on Friday, with minimum temperatures settling several degrees below the freezing point, officials said.

Due to clear skies, Kashmir continued to experience sub-zero night temperatures, with the minimum temperatures remaining several degrees below freezing, officials said.

They said that most parts of the Kashmir valley have been experiencing clear skies with bright sunshine during the day over the past few days, which contributed to the drop in night temperatures.

The minimum temperature in Srinagar settled at minus 4.3 degrees Celsius, slightly up from the previous night's minus 4.4 degrees, officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 8.1 degrees Celsius, up from the previous night's minus 9.6 degrees.

In Pahalgam, the minimum temperature settled at minus 10 degrees Celsius, up from minus 10.4 degrees the night before, according to the weather office.

Pahalgam was the coldest recorded place in the valley.

Qazigund logged a low of minus 7.6 degrees Celsius, while Konibal in

Pampore town also recorded a minimum temperature of minus 6.2 degrees.

Kupwara in north Kashmir recorded a minimum of minus 5.6 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag in south Kashmir saw the mercury settle at minus 5.7 degrees Celsius.

Moreover, the MeT has issued an advisory, predicting cold wave at isolated places and advising the tourists, travellers and transporters to follow administration and traffic advisory.

Kashmir Rail Link

the tunnels provides round-the-clock surveillance, ensuring passenger safety and operational oversight. Escape tunnels offer an additional layer of security, allowing for quick evacuation if needed.

With final safety trials completed and a thorough inspection by the Railway Safety Commissioner, the long-awaited direct train service to Srinagar is expected to launch in 2025. This service will include the Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express, a train specially designed to operate smoothly in extreme cold, with features like heated windshields and plumbing systems to prevent freezing.

The USBRL project, started in 1995-96 but accelerated after 2015, represents a Rs 43,000 crore investment, with Rs 33,000 crore allocated to the challenging Katra-Banihal section.

The project is set to transform rail connectivity, enhance security, and significantly reduce travel time, marking a historic milestone for Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

Security Tightened

Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been implemented and will remain in effect until January 13. These include the deployment of additional police and paramilitary personnel, installation of CCTV surveillance, and the setup of checkpoints and frisking points," the official said.

In Sonamarg, security arrangements have been intensified with the coordinated efforts of the police, paramilitary forces and the Army. These measures include area domination exercises, thorough searches, and regular patrols to ensure the safety of the event and its attendees.

The 6.5-kilometre Z-Morh tunnel, which will be inaugurated by the PM, is a critical infrastructure project under the larger Zojila project. The tunnel will connect Ganderbal's Gagangir area to Sonamarg and provide year-round connectivity to the region, which has been historically isolated during winter due to heavy snowfall. The project is seen as a boost to both civilian and military mobility in the region.

The inauguration ceremony will see the presence of prominent dignitaries, including Union Minister for Surface Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

In preparation for the event, the Jammu and Kashmir government has issued directives to ensure uninterrupted administrative functioning. Fourteen Administrative Secretaries will remain stationed at the Civil Secretariat in Srinagar from January 10 to 13 to oversee various functions related to the event.

Built at a cost of Rs 2,680 crore, the Z-Morh tunnel is a state-of-the-art, 6.5-kilometre-long, two-lane road tunnel equipped with advanced features such as an escape tunnel, ventilation systems and culverts designed to withstand the harsh weather conditions of the region. The project is expected to boost winter tourism in Sonamarg and significantly improve connectivity to Ladakh.

Meanwhile, traffic on the Kargil-Srinagar highway, including the Zoji La Pass, will remain suspended from January 11 to January 14 due to icy road conditions and inclement weather.

Officials said that maintenance work will be carried out during this period, and traffic is expected to resume on January 14, subject to weather conditions. However, the suspension of traffic is also being interpreted as part of the security arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit.

CM Launches

publicity of the initiative so that citizens across Jammu & Kashmir become aware of its benefits.

Developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) Jammu and Kashmir, the portal introduces a shift from manual to online RTI applications. This transition enables citizens to submit RTI requests, track their status, and receive responses electronically, eliminating the need for physical visits to government offices.

Earlier, Secretary General Administration Department (GAD), M. Raju, delivered a presentation on the portal's features, highlighting its accessibility, convenience, speed of processing, cost efficiency and role in promoting accountability.

He outlined the portal's key functionalities, including its user-friendly interface, streamlined RTI workflow, and robust documentation features.

A unique feature of the portal is the issuance of a registration number to applicants via SMS and email for future reference, enabling easy tracking of RTI applications.

The portal integrates 61 government departments, 272 nodal officers/public authorities, 720 First Appellate Authorities (FAAs), and 3,419 Central Public Information Officers (CPIOs) and Public Information Officers (PIOs), ensuring comprehensive coverage and making the citizens informed about the activities of the Government.

Infant Deaths

in the same period.

Health experts and locals are calling for an urgent review of hospital operations and immediate intervention by the Jammu and Kashmir Health Department to address the crisis, restore public trust, and ensure better outcomes for newborns. (KNT)

2 Srinagar Smart

case has been registered against Dar at Police Station ACB Srinagar.

Both the suspects were found to be involved in corrupt practices, which prima facie constitute an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act for possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of lawful income, he said.

Sajid Yousuf Bhat owns a commercial property at Rambagh Srinagar having actual price significantly higher than the value of sale deed paid by suspect, besides multiple bank accounts with suspicious transactions. In this way, the public servant namely Sajid Yousuf Bhat S/o Mohammad Yousuf Bhat R/o Namblabal Pampore, A/p Doulatabad Khanyar Srinagar, presently posted as Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Srinagar Smart City Limited, has enriched himself illicitly by indulging in corrupt practices which attract commission of offence under section 13(1) (b) r/w 13(2) of Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 for possession of assets disproportionate to his known sources of lawful income," a statement by ACB reads.

Accordingly, the statement reads that a case under FIR number 01/2025 has been registered in Police Station ACB Srinagar.

"Zahoor Ahmad Dar owns a lavish multi-storied house at Lane No. 5, Galibabad, Shalteng Srinagar, one Sedan car, suspicious bank transactions in personal accounts & accounts of his spouse, acquisition of Benami properties & huge assets in the form of FDRs. In this way, the public servant namely Zahoor Ahmad Dar, S/o Ab. Razak Dar R/o Takinwaripora Srinagar A/p Galibabad Lane No. 5 Shalteng, Srinagar, presently posted as Executive Engineer, Srinagar Smart City Limited, has enriched himself illicitly by indulging in corrupt practices which prima-facie attract commission of offence under section 13(1)(b) r/w 13(2) Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 for possession of assets which are prima-facie disproportionate to his known sources of lawful income," the ACB said.

Traders, Political

knowing introduction of direct "Vanda Bharat Express Trains" between Kashmir and Delhi in order to strength the region's connectivity with rest of the country.

He said that the Valley based fruit growers and dealers were expecting that the introduction of "Vanda Bharat Express Trains" will help address logistical challenges, stimulate economic growth and promote the Horticulture Industry but it is unfortunate the system finally found a joke.

"The Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers Cum Dealers Union, Srinagar, however, extends its gratitude and appreciation for Katra-Srinagar Rail connectivity and also commends the inauguration of the Z-Morh tunnel being held on 13th January 2025 recognition its significant impact on promoting tourism and improving accessibility to Leh but it initially said that the "Vanda Bharat Express Trains" will operate direct from New Delhi to Srinagar now as per announcement made on 3rd January 2025 the said train is scheduled for operation from Katra-Srinagar route only, which does not serve any fruitful result neither for Valley based passengers nor fruit growers and dealers," he said.

He added that the operation of "Vanda Bharat Express Trains" from Katra to Srinagar and vice-versa means de-boarding of passengers to another rail for Delhi destination on their arrival from Srinagar to Katra.

He further added that the fruit growers of the Valley were hopeful of operation of a separate goods train as well so that the fresh produce of Kashmir Valley could also be quickly transported direct by train from Valley to

Delhi without any transshipment but the announcement regarding operation of the said Train from Katra- Srinagar dashed all hopes of the Fruit Growers/Dealers of the Valley who were hopeful that the operation of "Vanda Bharat Express Trains" will connect Kashmir Valley direct with rest of the parts of the Country through mode of railway connectivity generating and up gradation the trade of JK (UT) particularly will boost Horticulture sector with the advantage of direct and smooth transportation of fresh Fruits/ Vegetables to and fro simultaneously generating the gateway for economic resources for Railway Authorities as well.

The Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers Cum Dealers Union feels that the operation of "Vanda Bharat Express Trains from Katra-Srinagar does not mean any suitable facility for transportation of their fresh produce unless and until there is direct rail connectivity from Valley to Delhi which exclusively will serve fruitful results for smooth and direct transportation of fresh Fruits/ Vegetables from valley to rest parts of the country and vice versa.

They requested Lieutenant Governor JK (UT), Chief Minister JK (UT) and Chief Secretary to intervene and take up the matter with Ministry of Railways Authorities, Government of India for operation of "Vanda Bharat Express Trains" direct from Valley to Delhi instead of Valley-Katra in the interest of general public and Valley based fruit growers and dealers as well.

Meanwhile, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has also criticised the measure, saying it undermines the much-touted promise of convenience for Kashmiris.

"For years, we were told that train services to Kashmir would benefit the common masses and ease travel. This latest directive proves that Kashmiris are far from experiencing travel convenience. The train services inaugurated amid great fanfare are turning out to be nothing more than a facade," PDP General Secretary, Mohammad Khurshid Alam, said. Alam described the arrangement as an additional burden on travellers, particularly the elderly and those travelling for medical treatment. "This decision subjects common people to unnecessary hardships. Security concerns should not be used as an excuse. Adequate checks can be conducted at the start of the journey. Forcing passengers to disembark midway and board another train in the name of security is both humiliating and impractical," Alam said. Congress, the party supporting the National Conference-led government, said that trains must stop at the main destination of Jammu. "Jammu is the capital city; we want its importance to be maintained. There should be no inconvenience to the passengers, whether they are from Kashmir or Jammu. The main destination should be Srinagar and Jammu," Congress chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma told ETV Bharat. He said that for pilgrims of Shri Mata Vishu Devi Shrine (SMVD), trains stop at Katra station, but for other passengers bound for Jammu and Delhi, the main station must be at Jammu.

Only Industrial

its workman, therefore as a natural consequence, the Industrial Tribunal-Labour Court, established by the central government ordinarily shall have the jurisdiction to adjudicate the industrial dispute between the petitioner bank and its workman."

Elaborating, the court said that proviso to section 10 of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 reveals that the dispute, where the Central Government is the appropriate Government, it shall be within the competence of that Government to refer the dispute to a labour court/Industrial Tribunal, as the case may be, constituted by the State Government.

"Thus, the Central Government can refer the dispute to a labour court or Industrial Tribunal, constituted by the State Government, but otherwise the Industrial Tribunal/Labour Court, established by the central government ordinarily shall have the jurisdiction to adjudicate the industrial dispute between the

(J&K) bank and its workman," the court said, adding, "Accordingly, it is held that in case of an industrial dispute between the J&K Bank Ltd. and its workman, only the labour court or Industrial tribunal, established by the Central Government, shall have power to adjudicate the same but the Central Government may refer the dispute to labour court or Industrial Tribunal established by the State Government and in that eventuality only, the labour court or Industrial Tribunal established by the State Government shall have jurisdiction to adjudicate the same."

Govt To Push

equipment, which, while effective at clearing snow, damages road surfaces and adds to the repair burden.

Dr. Bhat argued that incorporating snow clearance into MG-NREGA would address these challenges while simultaneously providing much-needed employment to rural residents during the harsh winter season.

In addition to highlighting the gaps in service delivery during snowfall, Dr. Bhat pointed out the lack of economic activity in snowbound areas during winter. He noted that MG-NREGA, a flagship employment guarantee scheme, is underutilized during these months in regions like Jammu and Kashmir, where life comes to a virtual standstill. By integrating snow clearance into the scheme, the government could ensure livelihood generation for thousands of rural workers, fulfilling the program's primary objective of providing income support to the poorest segments of society.

Dr. Bhat also drew attention to successful precedents set by other states. He cited the example of Kinnair district in Himachal Pradesh, where local authorities included snow clearance under MG-NREGA over a decade ago. This move not only streamlined snow management but also demonstrated the feasibility of adapting the scheme to meet local geographic and climatic needs. Dr. Bhat urged the Jammu and Kashmir administration to learn from such examples and push for similar measures in the Union Territory.

Pertinently, Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat has been advocating for this issue for years.

In 2022, he persuaded former Baramulla MP Mohammad Akbar Lone to write to the Government of India, urging the inclusion of snow clearance in MG-NREGA not only for Jammu and Kashmir but also for other hill states and Union Territories like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Ladakh, and Sikkim. His call for action was supported by other prominent legislators, including MLA Banihal Sajad Shaheen and MLA Sumbal Sonawari Hilal Akbar Lone, who have raised the issue at various forums.

With the J&K government now poised to formally present this proposal to the Union Ministry, there is growing optimism that the initiative could become a reality.

Observers say if approved, it would not only provide a sustainable solution to snow clearance challenges but also set a precedent for other snowbound regions across India.

SC Dismisses

the matter but nothing came of it. "Act of Jammu branch of Reserve Bank of India to exchange the defaced/imperfect Indian currency notes worth Rs 30 crore that too which was done by a separatist group of Kashmir with the main aim of destabilising peace and harmony in the region of Jammu and Kashmir and to create an environment of tension and terror in the minds of common residents of the region is illegal and worth of interference of this court," his plea alleged.

The separatist group in Kashmir, he said, in a statement on Facebook claimed to have stamped separatist slogans on Indian currency worth Rs 30 crore between May and August, 2013.

He argued currency notes could only be exchanged as per law and no such stamped currency could be exchanged as per RBI regulations.

Lohri Festivities Begin In Jammu



Agencies

JAMMU: The city of Jammu has come alive with the vibrant celebrations of Lohri, marking the start of the traditional harvest festival. As the bonfires are lit and the air fills with the aroma of roasted peanuts and rewari, the festive spirit is palpable among the people.

Lohri, celebrated with much fervor in northern India, symbolizes the end of winter and the beginning of longer days.

News agency KINS reported that in Jammu, the festival holds a special place in the hearts of locals, uniting communities in joyous camaraderie. Families and friends gather around the bonfire, offering prayers and seeking blessings for prosperity and happiness.

Markets across Jammu are bustling with activity, adorned with colorful decorations and stalls selling traditional items such as popcorn, jaggery, and til (sesame). Cultural programs, folk music, and dance performances have been organized in

various parts of the city, adding to the festive cheer.

Local community leaders and organizations have also arranged special events to promote the essence of Lohri. Schools and colleges are hosting celebrations to teach younger generations about the cultural significance of the festival.

"This is the time of year when we come together as a community to celebrate our heritage and express gratitude for the harvest," said Rajinder Sharma, a resident of Gandhi Nagar.

With the bonfires symbolizing new beginnings and the songs echoing the tales of Punjabi folklore, Lohri celebrations in Jammu serve as a reminder of the region's rich cultural traditions. As the festivities continue, the city is set to bask in the warmth of joy and unity.

The celebrations are expected to peak from tomorrow as families and communities come together, spreading the message of love and harmony, lighting up the winter night with their festive zeal. (KINS)

Shopian's Winter Carnival 'Heemal-Nagrai' To Begin Today

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The first-ever winter carnival organised by the Shopian administration is set to begin today at Dubjan along the historic Mughal Road. The two-day event, named Heemal-Nagrai aims to promote Dubjan as a prominent tourist destination.

The carnival will have a wide range of activities, including snow crafts, snow igloos, ice sports, competitions for children, and exhibitions showcasing local cuisine and arts.

The event seeks to highlight the rich heritage of the district by engaging locals in adventure activities, arts and cultural exhibitions. The district administration has made extensive arrangements, with various departments working in coordination to ensure the carnival's success and to boost tourism in the Mughal Road region, the Heerpora Wildlife Sanctuary and the Historic Sarais circuit.

Deputy Commissioner (DC)

Shopian, Shahid Saleem said effective planning and inter-departmental collaboration are crucial to create a memorable experience for visitors. "This event aims to promote Dubjan as a major tourist destination," he said.

Dubjan holds historical importance as the Mughal Road runs through it, connecting other notable tourist spots such as Sukh Sarai, Aliabad Sarai, Lal Ghulam, and Pir Ki Gali. The carnival derives its name from the two iconic springs, Heemal and Nagrai, located in Balpora and Safan Naman. These springs are linked to the legendary love story of Aryan princess Heemal and Naga king Nagrai.

Locals have been urged to participate in the festivities, which are expected to showcase the unique cultural and natural heritage of Shopian.

The carnival is also seen as a major initiative to highlight the region's tourism potential and provide a platform for local talent, adventure enthusiasts and small businesses—(KNO)

Reconstruction Of Khankah-e-Faiz-Panah Awaits Completion



Agencies

PULIWAMA: The reconstruction of the revered shrine of Shahi-Hamdan, Hazrat Ameer-e-Kabeer, Mir Syed Ali Hamdani (RA) in Tral remains incomplete, even 27 years after a devastating fire incident in December 1997.

The historic shrine, known as Khankah-e-Faiz-Panah, was destroyed in a mysterious fire, following which the government announced its reconstruction with a target completion date of two years. However, more than two decades later, the shrine's restoration remains unfinished, which causes inconvenience to the large number of devotees who visit daily.

Locals said that despite repeated requests and assurances, the government has failed to complete the pending works.

Manzoor Ahmad, a local, said several critical works at the shrine remain incomplete without any clear explanation. "Hundreds of people visit the shrine every day, but they face significant inconvenience due to the pending construction work,"

he said.

Locals added that they had initially offered to rebuild the shrine themselves after the fire incident but were assured by the government that the reconstruction would be completed within two years. "They have failed to keep their promises," said another resident.

Despite raising the issue repeatedly with both the government and local political leaders, the shrine's restoration remains in limbo. The people have now appealed for the intervention of higher authorities to ensure the work is completed at the earliest.

An official from the district administration told KNO that over 90 per cent of the work has already been completed. "The remaining work is pending due to certain issues, but we are actively taking up the matter with the concerned authorities. It will be completed soon," the official said.

Locals, however, remain sceptical and urge the government to expedite the remaining work to restore the shrine to its former glory—(KNO)

CM Raises Bandipora-Sumbal Highway Demand With Union Minister

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Chief minister Omar Abdullah has raised the demand of highway status to Bandipora-Sumbal-Gurez with the Union minister for Road, Transport and Highways days after MLA Bandipora Nizamuddin Bhat wrote a letter to the chief minister, seeking former's intervention.

The chief minister while reverting to the legislator, in a letter stated that the matter has been taken up by the Union ministry for consideration.

"This has reference to your D.O letter dated 20-12-2024, containing an issue relating to grant of National highway status the road from Sumbal to Gurez. The issue has been taken up with the Union Ministry vide officer letter No.HCM/



PS/2024/ND-04 for consideration," reads the letter.

Bhat has sought intervention of chief minister Omar Abdullah to have this "long pending demand duly considered for early redressal". He had stated that Bandipora's main connectivity has not been accorded highway status

from Sumbal to Gurez, despite its strategic, economic, and accessibility considerations.

Nizamuddin Bhat also raised the issue in the first session of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly in November last year, seeking intervention of the house to get this demand redressed at an earliest—(KNO)

20% Of Road Accident Deaths In JK Occur In Chenab Valley

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Chenab Valley, comprising the districts of Ramban, Doda, and Kishtwar, has become a critical hotspot for road accidents in Jammu and Kashmir, with 20% of all road accidents in the region occurring here over the last six years.

The primary reason cited for these accidents is poorly constructed roads, a fact outlined by a government-formed committee tasked with investigating the issue and recommending preventive measures.

Despite this acknowledgment, little progress has been made in improving road conditions in these districts. Factors such as overloading, speeding, unfit vehicles, and a poorly managed traffic system exacerbate the problem.

The Nashri-Ramban-Banihal-Qazigund section, declared a "black spot" by the Union Ministry of Transport and Roads, continues to witness frequent accidents.

As per the data available, from 2019 to October 2024, Jammu and Kashmir recorded 4,899 fatalities in road accidents, with 852 deaths occurring in the Chenab Valley alone.

Among these were several tragic incidents, including a bus falling into a ravine in Kishtwar in 2019, killing 35



people & a bus accident in Doda's Asar area on November 15, 2023, claiming 39 lives.

Multiple vehicles fell into ravines in Kishtwar and Ramban between 2021 and 2025, leading to significant casualties.

Experts highlight the dire state of infrastructure in the region.

In a detailed report submitted to the High Court, the committee recommended rebuilding critical roads such as Asar Road and Rigi Nala, which are prone to accidents due to faulty construction. However, implementation of these recommendations remains pending.

The High Court, in response to the alarming rise in road accidents, directed the formation of an expert committee in 2023. This panel included spe-

cialists from IIT Jammu, engineers from the Public Works Department (PWD), and road safety experts. The committee's mandate was to identify accident-prone areas and recommend solutions.

Government sources said that concerned departments have begun taking steps to address the crisis.

"Crash barriers have been installed at various locations, and some road expansions have been carried out. The Transport Department is preparing for stricter enforcement measures in collaboration with the police, traffic authorities, and district administrations. Registrations of overloaded and unfit vehicles are expected to be cancelled soon," officials said—(KNO)

Medical Interns Urge CM To Enhance Their Stipends

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The MBBS and BDS interns in Jammu and Kashmir continue to grapple with a meagre monthly stipend and have urged the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to increase their stipends by including it in the coming budget.

Interns said that despite the committee recommendations for an enhancement in the stipends upto Rs 26,350 formed via order number 538 JK-HME dated 27-06-2023, nearly one and a half year ago, to address the issue of "reasonable stipend enhancement."

The committee comprised three members, Director Finance H&ME Department; Principles of Government Medical Colleges in Jammu and Srinagar; the Director (Coordination) of New Government Medical Colleges; and Principals of Dental Colleges in Jammu and Srinagar, which submitted its report in August 2023.

It recommended an enhancement in the stipends of the interns, raising it to Rs 26,350 from Rs 12,300 based on the half of the basic pay of a Medical Officer in J&K, as per the NMC norms.

Despite the submission of the report, the matter has remained stalled in the Finance department with no progress for more than a year now.

They said that they met the CM, who assured them it will be looked into on priority, ensuring that there won't be any disparity between the interns of J&K and the rest of the country.

They, however, said that the Health Minister has disap-

pointed all the interns, who said, "The Government's financial constraints are preventing the immediate resolution of the interns' demands. However, the issue is under the consideration of the Government as the demands of the students are genuine."

The stipends of interns in J&K have not been since January 2019, when J&K was under the Governor's Rule and till now the Interns continue to be paid with the lowest stipends in the country, they said.

Surprisingly, the Stipends of Interns in the rest of the country were hiked twice to thrice in the last 5 years.

The Interns (MBBS/BDS) had hoped the committee's recommendations would bring their stipends in line with those of their counterparts in other states. However, the prolonged delay has left them disillusioned. "We work diligently, often putting in extra hours and performing every duty of a resident doctor, yet our compensation is lower than that of daily labourers," a student from Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag said.

Students at GMC Baramulla expressed frustration over the inaction. "We were hopeful that the committee's recommendations would be implemented quickly, but the prolonged delay has plunged us into despair," said a student.

He added that they hope the new government would seriously look into the matter and enhance their Stipends in the upcoming Budget Session.

They have sought intervention of CM Omar Abdullah in this regard.

Man Kills Wife, Burns Her Body Parts

Agencies

ANANTNAG: In a shocking incident, a man has killed his wife and later burnt her body parts in the Aishmuqam area of Anantnag district, officials said on Friday. The man and his mother has been arrested by the police.

An official said that police arrested a man namely Imran Ahmad Khan for killing his wife - Shabnam Akhtar in the Aishmuqam area. The crime was committed in October last year, while the man was arrested today after investigation of the case revealed the gruesome details.

He said that during investigation of the case the man confessed that he killed his wife on October 4 last year and later buried her in a cow shed.

After committing the crime, the man had filed a missing report about her wife at Aishmuqam police station and after ten days he retrieved the body from the debris of his cow shed. "He dismembered his wife's body and then burnt the parts to bury them again," the official said. The deceased woman was his second wife, and he lived with his first wife after killing her. Police said that the man's mother has also been arrested in the case.

The official said that police have recovered hair, some bones and a cell phone and they have sent for forensic investigation. "A case FIR NO 01/2025 U/S 103(1) BNS,61(2) BNS has been registered against the accused and his mother," he said—(KNO)

CGM NABARD Calls On J&K Bank MD & CEO



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief General Manager (NABARD) Bhallamudi Sridhar today called upon the MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee at J&K Bank's Corporate Headquarters.

During the meeting, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee lauded the NABARD's vital role in fostering rural prosperity and reaffirmed the Bank's commitment to extending financial support to under-served people.

While commending the Bank's pivotal role in develop-

ing the agricultural landscape of J&K through its continued financial intermediation, CGM NABARD pitched for further strengthening of the relationship between the two organisations.

He also lauded the Bank's leading role in deepening the financial inclusion at the grassroots in the union territories of J&K and Ladakh.

Opportunities for collaborative growth in promoting priority sector lending, were also discussed during the meeting, with a special focus on agriculture and rural development.

Bla Village Mourns Highway Accident Victims

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway turned fatal once again, as two brothers from Rafiabab village lost their lives after a truck they were travelling in plunged into a deep gorge at Ramban on Thursday night.

The tragedy has not only left their elderly parents grief-stricken but also rekindled painful memories of their elder brother, who met a similar fate on the same highway a few years ago.

Officials said that the incident occurred at around 10:30 PM on Thursday, following which a rescue operation, led by SDRF, police and local volunteers was launched.

The bodies were recovered on Friday morning, they

said and identified the duo as Danish Imtiyaz Khan and Yasir Imtiyaz Khan of Chijhama Rafiabab in North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

The family sources said that the siblings were the sole breadwinners of their family. The incident has shattered their elderly parents, who have lost all the three sons in the road accidents including the two, who died today.

The sudden loss has plunged not just the family but the entire Rafiabab region into mourning, with villagers braving the winter chill rushing to their home to offer their condolences.

Meanwhile, Minister Javed Dar conveyed his deepest condolences to the bereaved family, praying for strength and patience to help them cope with this irreparable loss—(KNO)

Throat-Slit Body Of Kokernag Youth Found

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A throat-slit body of a Kokernag resident was found at his rented accommodation in Amda Kadal area of Central Kashmir's Srinagar, officials said.

They said the post-mortem has been conducted, and further investigation is underway.

An official said that the body of a throat-slit youth was found at Amda Kadal area of Srinagar this afternoon.

He said the body was spotted at his rented accommodation in Amda Kadal, Srinagar, and the police soon arrived at the scene and took the body into their custody.

The deceased has been identified as Showkat Ahmad Naikoo (24), son of Gh Mohd Naik, a resident of Ahlan Gadole, Kokernag.

Meanwhile, the post-mortem of the deceased was conducted, and a thorough probe has been launched—(KNO)

State Of The Art CBCT Scan Installed At GMC Anantnag

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: In a highly significant development, Department of Dentistry GMC Anantnag has got the state of the art CBCT Scan Installed Friday. The installation was inaugurated by Principal and Dean of GMC Anantnag Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Najeeb.

HOD Dentistry Dr Sanjeet Singh Risam, Prof. ENT and HNS Prof. Sajad Majid Qazi, Medical Superintendent MMABM Associated Hospital Dr Arshad Hassan Siddiqui, Assistant director planning Peerzada Khursheed Ahmad, Chief Accounts Officer Mohd Ayoub Lone, and other eminent doctors of the department, a statement issued.

The CBCT Scan installed at GMC Anantnag will benefit hundreds of thousands of residents of south Kashmir and the adjoining areas of the Chenab valley like Banihal and Ramban and the adjacent areas.

CBCT Scan is a three dimensional high definition scan of the head encompassing all maxillofacial regions, including the neck region.

This machine not only provides a 3D CT scan of the head, but also OPG, a two dimensional X Ray of the whole mouth, with the additional advantage of very low risk of significant radiation exposure. The machine is highly advantageous for pregnant



women who are supposed to avoid high radiation exposures, reads the statement.

All the arrangements for the inauguration ceremony were made by the Department of Dentistry GMC Anantnag. The media fraternity aptly covered the inauguration ceremony for dissemination of information regarding availability of the facility at GMC Anantnag, it added.

Head, Department of Dentistry Dr Sanjeet Singh Risam GMC Anantnag. A full CBCT Scan will be done at the government fixed rate of 1200 INR, OPG at 150 and lateral Cephal at 150 respectively.

Principal and Dean of GMC Anantnag Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Najeeb congratulated the department of dentistry for getting this advanced diagnostic tool installed in the department. She hoped that this will prove a big leap in providing highly advanced dental surgical care to the patients at their door steps—(KNO)

Ashwin Says Rishabh Pant Can Score A 100 In Every Game

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Spin legend R Ashwin feels Rishabh Pant will score a century in every game if the maverick India wicket-keeper-batter is able to curb his extravagance and impetuosity as he has got "one of the best defences" in world cricket.

Hailing Pant's ability to singlehandedly turn a match on its head, Ashwin said a lot of his shots are high-risk, something that is not allowing him to realise his full potential.

Pant scored the second-fastest Test fifty by an Indian during the fifth match of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia in Sydney recently, after a hard-fought 40 in the first innings of the same game.

"We have to tell him prop-



erly what he has to do if he has to bat solid or bat with intent. He hasn't scored a lot of runs, but he didn't play like someone without runs. He has a lot of time on his hands. Rishabh

Pant is yet to realise his fullest potential," said Ashwin on his Youtube channel.

"He has all the shots -- reverse sweep, slog sweep, everything -- but the problem is that all these shots are high-risk shots. With his defence, he will surely score runs every game if he faces 200 balls.

"The point is finding that middle game. If he combines all of it, he will score 100 runs every game. He has to find that middle game," the recently-retired cricketer added.

Pant played contrasting knocks in the two innings of the SCG Test, as his 98-ball 40 in the first was followed by 33-ball 61 in the second essay. The keeper, though, could not do an encore of his exploits in the 2020-21 BGT, when he powered

India to a famous win in the series-decider at Gabba, which was until then known as Australia's fortress.

While Pant is known for his penchant to play expansive shots, Ashwin was not surprised by the keeper's tenacious innings in the first essay.

"I have always grown up hearing that you have fight it out. In Sydney, he played two different knocks in one single game. He got hit everywhere and scored a 40, it will be the least spoken innings of Rishabh Pant. It is very unfair.

"In the second innings, he scored a swashbuckling fifty, earning him a lot of praise. Everyone forgot that first innings and praised him for the second knock," Ashwin pointed out.

Short TAKES

Real Kashmir Lose 1-0 To Shillong Lajong In I-League



In a disappointing result, Real Kashmir FC fell 1-0 to Shillong Lajong FC in a 2024-25 I-League match on Friday at SSA Football Stadium in Shillong, Meghalaya. Defender Aman Ahlawat scored the only goal of the game at the 34th minute mark.

This was Lajong FC's second win of the season and sees them climb to seventh in the I-League table with nine points. The loss drops the Snow Leopards to ninth in the table having accumulated nine points. A win would have seen them go third.

The Ishfaq Ahmed-coached Real Kashmir has seen a disappointing run in their last five games, winning only once, while drawing twice and losing twice.

After a string of away games, RKFC will be back at its stronghold home ground in the next round of games. The Snow Leopards will host Sreenidi Deccan FC on Tuesday, January 14, at TRC Stadium. The game will kick off at 2:00 PM.

ICC Chairman Jay Shah To Be Felicitated By BCCI At Its SGM

Newly-elected International Cricket Council (ICC) chairman Jay Shah will be felicitated by the BCCI's state units on the sidelines of the Special General Meeting, scheduled here on Sunday.

Shah, a former BCCI secretary, became the youngest ICC chairman after he was elected unopposed in August last year and took over the prestigious post on December 1. He replaced Greg Barclay who decided not to seek a third term. Shah was the BCCI secretary since October 2019 and chairman of the Asian Cricket Council since January 2021.

Shah will, however, not be a part of the SGM as he is no longer an office-bearer of the BCCI.

The cricket administrator has been at the forefront of expanding the game's imprint globally and recently met top officials of the 2032 Brisbane Olympics organising committee to discuss the sport's inclusion in the Summer Games.

Cricket will make a return to the Olympics after 128 years when it is played in the 2028 Los Angeles Games. The sport is not yet confirmed for the 2032 edition in Brisbane.

Australian newspaper, The Age, recently reported that Shah will meet Cricket Australia chair Mike Baird and his England counterpart Richard Thompson later this month to discuss the finer points of a two-tier Test system to facilitate more series between the big three nations.

National Aerobic Gymnastics Championship Begins In Jammu



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, along with Advisor to CM Nasir Aslam Wani, inaugurated the National Aerobic Gymnastics Championship 2024-25 at the New Indoor Stadium, M.A. Stadium, Jammu, on Friday.

Being organised by the J&K Sports Council in collaboration with the Gymnastics Federation of India

and the Gymnastics Association of J&K, the event featured more than 500 athletes and officials from 20 states, union territories and boards.

Scheduled from January 10 to 13, the championship aims to promote youth engagement in sports and provide a platform for talent to shine at national and international levels.

While complimenting the organisers for hosting the

championship, the Deputy CM expressed pride in hosting a national level sports event in J&K.

Advisor to CM, underscored the immense talent in Olympic sports within J&K, including gymnastics, water sports and martial arts.

Secretary Youth Services and Sports, Sarmad Hafeez, lauded the achievements of J&K gymnasts and assured full support for making the event a success.

Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League: Spamo Enter Women's Final



Observer News Service

LEH: Maryul Spamo, the reigning champions in the women's category, stormed into the finals with a stunning 11-0 win over Humas Queens in the first semi-final of the Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League Season 2 on Friday. Captain Padma Chorol was the standout performer, scoring four goals, completing her second hat-trick of the season.

In the men's category, Humas Warriors, under the leadership of Was-eem Bilal, registered a convincing 11-3 victory to clinch a semi-final

spot. Bilal was unstoppable, scoring six goals.

Changthang Shans secured their place in the semi-finals following a hard-fought 2-2 draw against Sham Wolves. Zangskar Chadar Tamers closed their season on a high with a 4-0 victory in the final group stage game.

All three semi-finals are set to take place tomorrow.

The Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League Season 2 is being organized in partnership with the UT Administration of Ladakh and Ice Hockey Association of Ladakh at the Nawang Dorjay Stobdan Stadium in Leh.



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