



Government of  
Jammu & Kashmir



**Viksit Bharat  
Viksit Jammu & Kashmir**



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by

**Shri Narendra Modi**  
Hon'ble Prime Minister



Sonamarg, Ganderbal | January 13, 2025 | 10:00 AM

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## Scholarships This Week

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### Scholarship Name 1: Tagore National Fellowship for Cultural Research (TNFCR) 2024-25

Description: Tagore National Fellowship for Cultural Research (TNFCR) 2024-25 is an initiative of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India to promote Indian art and culture.  
Eligibility: Applicants must be an Indian or a foreign national with 5 years of experience in guiding/conducting research or the same experience in art fields. They must have their original research papers published in reputed and a refereed journals/books.

Prizes & Rewards: Fellowship offers an honorarium of up to 80,000 for two years and other benefits.

- Last Date to Apply: 15-02-2025
- Application mode: Offline: Via post at Nodal Institutions under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India
- Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/TNFC4](http://www.b4s.in/observer/TNFC4)

QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/tagore-national-fellowship-for-cultural-research-tnfcr-2024-251735971718.png>

### Scholarship Name 2: Kotak Suraksha Scholarship Program 2024-25 (Phase 2)

Description: Kotak Securities Limited (KSL) invites applications from students pursuing general/professional graduation.

Eligibility: Open to PwD applicants across India who are currently pursuing general or professional graduation courses. Applicants must have secured at least 55% marks in their previous academic year, and their annual family income must not exceed INR 3,20,000.

Prizes & Rewards: Scholarship up to INR 1,00,000 per year



- Last Date to Apply: 23-01-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/KSSP3](http://www.b4s.in/observer/KSSP3)

QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/kotak-suraksha-scholarship-program-2024-25-phase-21734500259.png>

### Scholarship Name 3: Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) Internship Scheme 2024

Description: Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) Internship Scheme 2024 is an opportunity offered by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, doctoral, and post-doctoral degree holders or research scholars.  
Eligibility: Open for students

pursuing graduation, postgraduation, research courses, doctoral (Ph.D.), or post-doctoral degree from any recognised university/institution within India or abroad. Applicants who have completed any of the specified courses from India or abroad within the last two years are also eligible to apply.

Prizes & Rewards: A monthly stipend of 7,000, certificate of completion and other benefits

- Last Date to Apply: 31-03-2026
- Application mode: Online Applications Only
- Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/MOPR4](http://www.b4s.in/observer/MOPR4)

QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/ministry-of-panchayati-raj-mopr-internship-scheme-20241733221185.png>

## What Delusions Can Tell Us About The Cognitive Nature Of Belief

### The Conversation

Beliefs are convictions of reality that we accept as true. They provide us with the basic mental scaffolding to understand and engage meaningfully in our world. Beliefs remain fundamental to our behaviour and identity, but are not well understood. Delusions, on the other hand, are fixed, usually false beliefs that are strongly held, but not widely shared. In previous work, we proposed that studying delusions provides unique insights into the cognitive nature of belief and its dysfunction. Based on evidence from delusions and other psychological disciplines, we offered a tentative five-stage cognitive model of belief formation. When faced with an unexpected sensory input or social communication, we seek to account for this based on existing beliefs, memories, and other social information. We then evaluate our account in terms of how well this explains our experiences and how consistent it is with our prior beliefs. If it passes these criteria, the belief is accepted. It then guides what we pay attention to and what other ideas we may consider. We propose that delusions can arise at different stages in this model. Our approach highlights the importance of the individual's search for meaning and social context in shaping delusions. It also draws attention to the impact of a delusion, once formed, on subsequent perceptions and thinking.

This model linking delusions and beliefs differs from earlier accounts that suggested delusions were distinct from belief or arise as a largely passive response to anomalous sensory input such as a hallucination. Previous research, for example, has found that some people who believed that family members were replaced by impostors (known as Capgras delusion) had deficits in processing familiar faces, which could have generated this idea.

### INFORMATIVE CASE STUDY

The study of delusions has been informed by select informative case studies. Unlike large group studies, case studies allow researchers a more detailed exploration of the origins and course of clinical features not explained by current theories. We recently published a paper in the international journal Cortex that describes a unique case study of a woman who temporally experienced compelling delusions during a brief hospital admission for postpartum psychosis, which can give rise to hallucinations, delusions, mood

swings and confusion. This is a rare complication of pregnancy, affecting around 1-2 in 1,000 women, thought to be due to hormonal changes or immunological factors.

Natalie (a pseudonym) had no previous medical or psychiatric history. She developed postpartum psychosis while in hospital after the birth of her second child.

As part of her condition, Natalie reported several delusions, including the belief that strangers were her parents-in-law in disguise (known as Fregoli delusion). Natalie recovered quickly with treatment. The combination of interviews and observations while she was experiencing the delusions and her later retrospective account offered a unique window into the onset and experience of her delusions.

Following a full recovery, Natalie confirmed that she considered her delusions to be strongly held beliefs. She likened them to her conviction that her husband was her husband. This is contrary to some views that suggested that delusions are different from normal beliefs.

Natalie was able to identify specific features that contributed to her delusions. In the case of believing that strangers were her in-laws, Natalie identified mannerisms, behaviours and speech patterns of the strangers that reminded her of her in-laws. This suggested that the delusion could have arisen from inappropriate activation of memory representations of familiar people based on these cues and other factors.

Natalie also recalled other beliefs, including that she was dead (known as Cotard delusion), which she did not share with clinicians at the time. She noted that she entertained this idea due to the failure of other explanations to account for her strange experiences and an idea from a television show.

Natalie said she eventually dismissed this idea as implausible, while still holding other delusional ideas. This suggests that belief evaluation may involve different thresholds for different delusions. It also highlights the private nature of some delusions.

Across all of her delusions, Natalie described her active involvement in trying to explain and manage her experiences. She reported considering different explanations and testing these by seeking further information. For example, she asked questions of the people she thought were her in-laws. This suggests a surprisingly similar approach to how we typically form beliefs.

Natalie recalled the influence of television and movies on her ideas. She also recalled how she elaborated on her delusions, once formed, based on information in her surroundings.

These features challenge theories that delusions simply arise from anomalous sensory data. They instead highlight the role of the individual's search for meaning and social context, as well as the subsequent impact of delusions on perception and thinking.

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JVD

### Office of the Naib Tehsildar Palhallan

Sub.Application of Falak Ramza, Mohim Ramzan S/d/o Mohd Ramzan Sheer Gojree R/o Wanigam Payeen for obtaining OBC certificate in favour of self

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above applicant's OBC certificate is under process in this office in this matter report Was sought from Patwari concerned which reveals that the applicant's belongs to SheerGojree caste and monthly income of applicant family is 6000 . the family members are as under

- 1 Mohd Ramzan Sheer Gojree s/o Ab Aziz Labour
- 2 Jabeena Begum w/o Mohd Ramzan H/work
- 3 Sameena Ramzaan D/o Mohd Ramzan student
- 4 Sumiya Ramzan D/o Mohd Ramzan student
- 5 Falak Ramzan d/o Mohd Ramzan Sheer Gojree student
- 6 Mohim Ramzan S/o Mohd Ramzan Sheer Gojree student

In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 03 days after that no objection shall be entertained

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انا اللہ وانا الیہ راجعون

بہت دکھ اور افسوس کے ساتھ اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ اہلیہ محمد افضل وڈو ولد مرحوم علی محمد وڈو ساکنہ چک صدرہ بل حضرت بل مختصر علاقہ کے بعد مورخہ 11 جنوری 2025ء بروز سنیچر انتقال کر گئی ہیں۔

اللہ تعالیٰ مرحومہ کو جنت الفردوس میں جگہ عطا فرمائے اور پسماندگان کو صبر جمیل عطا کرے۔ آمین۔

مرحومہ کی فاتحہ خوانی مورخہ 13 جنوری بروز سوموار، صبح 7:30 بجے ان کے آبائی مقبرہ ملہ کھاہ، نزدیک روپ وے میں انجام دی جائے گی۔

بعد ازاں مرحومہ کے گھر واقع چک صدرہ بل حضرت بل میں دن بھر صواب مجلس جاری رہے گی۔ صاحب تعزیت۔ محمد افضل وڈو ولد مرحوم علی محمد وڈو رابطہ نمبر: 8493807439 / 9622505691

## Slight Respite From Cold In Kashmir

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Minimum temperatures rose marginally across Kashmir due to overnight cloud cover but remained below the freezing point, officials said on Sunday.

The minimum temperature in Srinagar settled at minus 3 degrees Celsius on Saturday night, up from the previous night's minus 3.6 degrees Celsius, the meteorological department said.

North Kashmir's tourist resort of Gulmarg recorded a minimum temperature of minus 5.6 degrees Celsius, up from the previous night's minus 6.5 degrees Celsius, it said.

Pahalgam in south Kashmir recorded a low of minus 6.2 degrees Celsius, up from minus 7.6 degrees Celsius the night before.

Pahalgam was the coldest place in the valley. The minimum temperature was minus 4 degrees Celsius in Qazigund, minus 3.6 degrees Celsius in Konibal in Pampore town, minus 4 degrees Celsius in Kupwara and minus 3.9 degrees Celsius in Kokernag.

The weather in the valley will be mostly cloudy but dry till January 18 with a possibility of light snow at isolated higher reaches on January 15 and 16, the meteorological department said.

Kashmir is currently in the grip of 'Chillai-Kalan' -- the harshest period of winter. During the 40 days of 'Chillai-Kalan', which began on December 21, the chances of snowfall are the highest and the temperature drops considerably. | More on P6

## Stage Set For Z-Morh Tunnel Inauguration

### Security Forces Intensify Area Domination Exercise

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The security forces on Sunday intensified sanitization efforts and area domination exercise in Kashmir, a day ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the valley for inauguration of the strategically important Z-Morh tunnel in Ganderbal district, officials said.

The deployment of security personnel has been increased in the vulnerable areas and dozens of checkpoints have been set up at important intersections in various districts to ensure that anti-national elements are not able to move around freely, they said.

The officials said that random checking and frisking of people and vehicles, including two-wheelers, has been intensified while patrolling is also taking place. "Security has been tightened near the Z-Morh tunnel. Multi-layered security arrangements have been put in place and the PM's security team, comprising the



SPG personnel, has taken over the venue," they said.

The prime minister is likely to address a public rally after the inauguration of the tunnel at Gagangir, the officials said, adding the venue is now off-limits for the public.

Jammu and Kashmir

Police, paramilitary forces and the Army are part of the security apparatus for Monday's inauguration. Extensive area domination exercises, searches and patrols are being conducted for the smooth conduct of the event, the officials said.

The sharpshooters have been deployed at vulnerable

points while aerial and technical surveillance, including through drones, is also being undertaken. The area is being monitored round-the-clock, they added.

Earlier on October 20 last year, seven people, including a local doctor, were killed in a terrorist attack near the tunnel. | More on P6

#### Enhanced Security

- Multi-layered security
- SPG, drones, and sharpshooters deployed.

#### Tunnel Details

- Cost :Rs 2,400 crore
- Length: 6.5 km, located at 8,650 feet altitude

#### Features

- Two-lane road with emergency escape passage

#### Benefits

- Ensures year-round connectivity between Gagangir, Sonamarg, and Ladakh,
- Vital for defense and civilian access.

#### Strategic Importance

- Reduces travel distance
- Boosts vehicle speed
- Aids defense logistics
- Enhances socio-economic integration.

## Tunnel To Make Sonamarg A Winter Sports Hub: Omar



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday said the opening of the Z-Morh tunnel will enable the development of Sonamarg resort in Ganderbal district as a winter sports

destination, similar to the famous Gulmarg skiing resort town. "Tomorrow, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Z-Morh tunnel. This will allow the development of Sonamarg

as a winter sports destination," Abdullah told reporters in Gulmarg, 52 kilometers from here. The Prime Minister is scheduled to inaugurate the 6.5-kilometer Z-Morh tunnel. | More on P6

## CM, LG Greet People On Lohri, Makar Sankranti

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has extended his heartiest greetings to the people on the occasion of the festivals of Lohri and Makar Sankranti, which fall on January 13th and January 14th, respectively.

In his message, the Lieutenant Governor has said: "On the joyous occasion of Lohri and Makar Sankranti, I extend my greetings and felicitations to all and wish them health, happiness and prosperity."

Sinha said that these traditional festivals, celebrated with great enthusiasm and rejoicing, provide us a pious occasion to salute the indomitable spirit of our hardworking farmers and to recognize their invaluable contribution to J&K's growth.

"May these festivals bring prosperity and joy to all," he added.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has also extended warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasions of Lohri and Makar Sankranti, wishing joy, peace and prosperity to all celebrating these festivals.

In his message, the Chief Minister emphasized the spirit of togetherness and happiness that festivals like Lohri bring, allowing people to come together and share moments of joy amidst their busy lives.

He expressed hope that these celebrations would usher in an era of peace, harmony and prosperity for the region.

"Lohri holds a special significance, symbolizing the vibrant culture and | More on P6

## Youth Of India Driving Force Behind Viksit Bharat: PM

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: On the occasion of National Youth Day, commemorating the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi today participated in the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. He engaged with 3,000 dynamic young leaders from across India.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, he highlighted the vibrant energy of India's youth, which had brought life and energy to Bharat Mandapam. He remarked that the entire nation is remembering and paying tribute to Swami Vivekananda, who had immense faith in the country's youth.

He added that Swami Vivekananda believed that his disciples would come from the younger generation, who would solve every problem like lions. He added that he had complete faith in Swamiji and his beliefs, like Swamiji trusted the youth. He further added that he trusted him completely especially about



his vision of youth.

Recalling the G-20 event hosted in Bharat Mandapam, Modi said the world leaders were at the same venue to discuss the future of the world while today the youth of India were charting the roadmap for the next 25 years of India. Sharing an anecdote about meeting young athletes at his residence a few months ago, he highlighted that one athlete remarked, "For the world, you may be the Prime Minister, but for us, you are Param Mitra." The Prime Minister emphasized his bond of friendship with the youth of India, stating that the strongest link in friendship. | More on P6

## Swapping Trains At Katra Defeats Purpose of Rail Link: Omar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday said while the issue of passenger security on trains to the Valley was understandable, making the commuters change trains at Katra will defeat the very purpose of the rail link project.

"Just to remove any chance of any misunderstanding, while we understand the need to secure the train and the passengers who will travel using it, making passengers change trains will defeat the very purpose of the line and render the thousands of crores of investment pointless," Abdullah said in a post on X.

Stating that the passengers can be checked at Katra or Jammu instead of making them swap trains, Abdullah said, "Check the train/passengers in Katra or Jammu, sure, but NO change of train will be supported by us. That said, there is no concrete proposal,



and when there is, we will give our inputs/suggestions."

The chief minister's remarks came in the wake of some media reports claiming that passengers travelling on the Kashmir-Jammu rail link will have to change trains at Katra on both sides of their journey.

Omar's post came after Peoples Conference President Sajad Gani Lone criticized him for his earlier remarks. In a

post on X, Lone urged Omar to stop justifying everything the BJP does. "Please give us all a break. Stop justifying everything and anything that the BJP does. By justifying security excuses, you can virtually justify everything. That is what current and past governments have done," Lone said.

Lone said that he is not surprised at Omar Abdullah's right-wing views on security issues. "Wish | More on P6

## J&K Panchayat Electoral Rolls Near 7 Million Mark

3.7 Lakh Names Added, Nearly One Lakh Deleted

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Final Panchayat electoral rolls in Jammu and Kashmir will be published on January 20 amid indications that total voters in the rural bodies will be close to 7 million after the massive revision exercise undertaken by the State Election Commission (SEC).

Nearly 3.7 lakh new voters have been added during the exercise while deletions could be around one lakh. Total electorates are expected to be just a few thousand short of 7 millions.

Entire revision exercise of electoral rolls was undertaken

under the supervision of State Election Commissioner BR Sharma and a large number of staff under guidance of concerned Deputy Commissioners conducted the exercises that lasted nearly two months.

"Final electoral rolls for the Panchayats would be published on January 20," officials told the Excelsior but declined to comment on exact date.

However, as per the sources, during extensive revision exercises ordered by the SEC, nearly 3.7 lakh voters have been added and around one lakh have been deleted. This will take the total electorates in | More on P6



## Over 100 Accounts Linked To Drug Trafficking Frozen

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In its intensified financial investigations into multiple narcotic smuggling cases, Jammu and Kashmir Police have frozen more than 100 bank accounts allegedly linked to drug trafficking in Srinagar, officials said.

The individuals holding these accounts have been arrested in connection with cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in Srinagar District, police said on Sunday.

"These accounts collectively contain deposits amounting to several lakhs of rupees", police said adding "All transactions associated with these accounts are under detailed scrutiny to trace the flow of illicit funds".

The freezing of these accounts has effectively blocked access to financial resources used by drug trafficking networks.

Those apprehended have been involved in the | More on P6



Braving the cold: A fisherman huddles under a makeshift shelter on his boat to catch fish in the frozen Anchar Lake.

## SRINAGAR SMART CITY SCAM

### More Arrests, Raids Expected As Probe Deepens

Agencies

Srinagar: The recent arrest of two senior officials from Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) on corruption charges has unveiled a web of financial irregularities, with investigators signaling the possibility of more arrests in the coming days.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) is reportedly digging deep into suspicious bank transactions linked to the two officials, Executive Engineer Zahoor Dar and Chief Financial Officer Sajid Yousuf Bhat.

Reliable sources within the ACB told the news agency Kashmir News Trust that the investigation has uncovered a series of questionable financial transactions involving accounts of relatives and associates of the arrested officials.

"The trail of transactions suggests a larger network of individuals benefiting from these corrupt practices," they said.

The probe is focusing on tracing how public funds were misappropriated, with investigators also examining the motives and directives behind certain expenditure decisions.

Contracts awarded under the guise of "beautifying" Srinagar city are a particular point of contention, with insiders suggesting that some projects were either unnecessary or poorly executed.

One significant area under scrutiny involves contracts awarded for projects aimed at beautifying Srinagar. Sources indicate that some initiatives led to the blocking of roads, causing public inconvenience and sparking | More on P6

# Is Kashmiri Literature Gender Biased

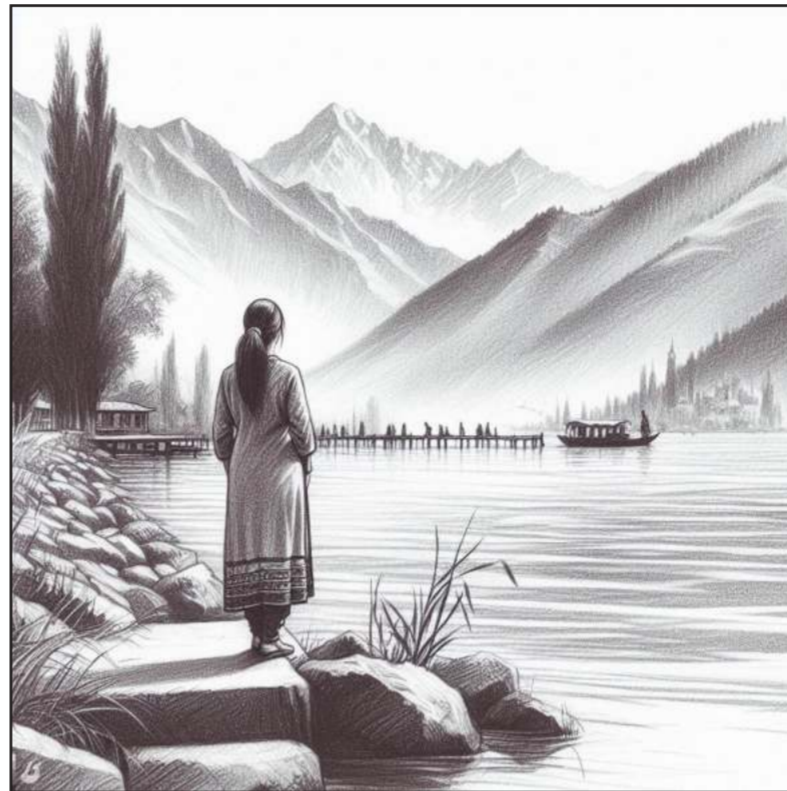
Bilal Gani

“

**Despite traditional constraints, Kashmiri literature witnessed the emergence of notable female poets like Habba Khatoon. Their poetry expressed a range of emotions, from love and longing to societal critique, challenging the established gender norms and providing a unique perspective on women's experiences**

**K**ashmiri literature, rich and diverse, reflects the complex tapestry of the region's cultural, social, and political landscape. Within this literary realm, the representation of gender roles, identities, and women's experiences has been a topic of profound significance and evolution. This write-up delves into the nuanced exploration of gender dynamics in Kashmiri literature, tracing the evolution of these portrayals over time. In the realm of Kashmiri literature, gender roles and identities have been intricately woven into narratives, shaping the way society perceives and understands the roles of men and women. These representations are often deeply rooted in the cultural and historical context of the region, influenced by religious beliefs, social norms, and political realities.

Early Kashmiri literature, dating back to ancient times, often portrayed women in traditional roles, emphasizing their domestic duties and familial responsibilities. However, as Kashmiri society underwent various transformations, including cultural exchanges with Central Asia and Persia, the portrayal of gender roles in literature began to evolve. The advent of Sufism, with its emphasis on spiritual equality, also left a significant imprint on Kashmiri literary works, challenging conventional gender norms. During the medieval period, Kashmiri literature witnessed the emergence of powerful female voices, both as poets and characters in literary works. Women like Habba Khatoon, a celebrated poetess-queen, contributed significantly to the literary landscape, breaking away from traditional stereotypes. Their poetry often expressed themes of love, longing, and resilience, providing a new perspective on women's experiences. The colonial period brought its own set of challenges and opportunities for the representation of gender in Kashmiri literature. Western ideas of feminism and women's rights started to influence the discourse, leading to a more nuanced portrayal of women in literary works. Writers began to explore themes of women's empowerment, education, and their struggles within patriarchal structures, reflecting the changing social dynamics of the time. Deena Nath Nadeem's po-



etry often depicted the social and cultural life of Kashmir, including the roles and experiences of women. Nadim's writings reflected the traditional norms and evolving societal changes, providing a glimpse into the gender dynamics of his time. In the contemporary era, Kashmiri literature continues to evolve, mirroring the complexities of modern society. Female authors and poets have gained prominence, offering diverse narratives that challenge stereotypes and shed light on the multifaceted experiences of women in Kashmir. Themes such as conflict, displacement, and resilience are explored through the lens of gender, providing a deeper understanding of the intersectionality of women's identities in the region.

## Different Aspects of Gender Literature

Early Kashmiri literature often portrayed men and women in predefined roles, with women primarily associated with domesticity and caregiving while men were depicted in roles of authority and decision-making. These traditional gender roles were deeply embedded in societal norms and influenced literary representations. Despite

traditional constraints, Kashmiri literature witnessed the emergence of notable female poets like Habba Khatoon. Their poetry expressed a range of emotions, from love and longing to societal critique, challenging the established gender norms and providing a unique perspective on women's experiences.

The legendary Kashmiri Poet Rahman Rahi's poetry often delves into the cultural and social fabric of Kashmir, encompassing the experiences of both men and women. While his works are multifaceted, they offer glimpses of the roles and struggles of women in Kashmiri society. The conflict in Kashmir has had a profound impact on gender dynamics. Literature from the region often explores the experiences of women in conflict situations, highlighting their resilience, struggles, and contributions. Female authors shed light on the unique challenges faced by women in conflict zones, offering a perspective that is both poignant and powerful. Modern Kashmiri literature delves into the intersectionality of gender, considering how factors such as class, caste, religion, and sexual orientation intersect with gender identity. This exploration provides a more comprehensive understand-

ing of the diverse experiences of individuals, particularly women, in Kashmiri society.

Some contemporary Kashmiri literature explores LGBTQ+ identities and experiences. Authors address issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, providing a platform for discussions around inclusivity, acceptance, and the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals in the region. Certain works in Kashmiri literature focus on social change and women's empowerment initiatives. These writings celebrate the achievements of women in various fields, encouraging a positive narrative around gender equality and women's progress in Kashmiri society.

## Is Kashmiri Literature Gender Biased?

Like many other literary traditions, Kashmiri literature has historically exhibited gender biases, reflecting the societal norms and attitudes prevalent at different points in time. Traditional Kashmiri literature often depict gender roles in a stereotypical manner, reinforcing prevailing social expectations and norms related to women's behavior, roles, and responsibilities. However, it is essential to recognize that the evolution of Kashmiri literature has led to a more nuanced and complex portrayal of gender over the years. While early texts might have been gender biased, contemporary Kashmiri literature includes a diverse range of voices and perspectives. Female authors and poets have significantly contributed to the literary landscape, challenging traditional biases and offering alternative viewpoints. Moreover, the presence of gender biases in literature does not mean that every work or every author within the Kashmiri literary tradition perpetuates these biases. Many writers have consciously worked to subvert gender stereotypes, depict strong and independent female characters, and address issues related to gender inequality and discrimination.

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The author is a Researcher and a Literary Critic*

**M**ultiple wars, conflicting national interests, economic competition with a rising China, the wish of some countries for multi-polarity and beneficial ties with the US under President-elect Donald Trump (who wants to Make America Great Again) will dominate world politics in 2025. The ongoing war in Ukraine, stemming from Russia's old ambitions, and unresolved enmities in Gaza, Red Sea, Lebanon, Iran, and Syria, have caused humanitarian catastrophes and threatened to break up the existing international order without offering a clue to creating a new one.

Additionally, the US-China rivalry persists, with China challenging the US' global primacy. China's rise since 2008 has resulted in a rebalancing of economic, military, and strategic power, but America's superpower remains intact.

Multipolarity — to which China and emerging economies subscribe — cannot replace the US' post-1990s position as the sole superpower. Any rising power must contend with both globalisation and “deglobalisation”, supply chains, digital transformation, and artificial intelligence (AI).

China and India share common ground for advocating multipolarity, even as their border dispute remains unresolved. But for New Delhi, there is more to China's economic and military rise than the problem of it having a far higher gross domestic product (GDP) and GDP per capita.

In part, that is because China's advances in the areas of science and high technology threaten not only other Asian countries but also the prosperous countries of the European Union (EU). Those advances enhance the phenomenon of “China power”.

China is no longer merely the world's factory or workshop. It is even challenging the US in technological innovation and design, and in technology

areas like AI. These, in turn, are transforming international power equations.

Despite China's economic sluggishness over the last few years, many foreign companies are returning to China after trying out India. Its ability to develop technological skills that rival those of the US and Europe stem from the fact that unlike India, it has educated its people in the area of manufacturing.

Where does India stand in the frontier and emerging areas of science and technology? Although India is the fifth-largest global economy, its gap in these areas is growing not only with the West, but also China.

Many, but not enough Indians, have a high level of tech skills. As a result, India has failed to keep up with China. This is one of the main reasons why it is hard for India to become a strong and convincing pole in a multipolar world.

At another level, some countries, including India, challenged by the changing world, invoke traditional cultures to claim socio-economic superiority. However, cultures are always in a state of flux from factors as varied as migration to scientific achievements. So, talk of racial or communal superiority of particular communities or countries reflects the orthodox thinking of those who propagate it in the 21st century. For example, backward-looking leaders include Russia's President Vladimir Putin, who sees himself as the rebuilder

# Complex Global Dynamics: Rising Powers And Shifting Alliances

Anita Inder Singh



of Russia's 17th-century empire, the victor over decadent Americans on the battlefield in Ukraine, and more influential in Europe than the US.

Significantly, when China's President Xi Jinping states, “The East is rising”, he means China, not the rest of Asia — and certainly not India.

The democratic US is the only country that can counter China in the scientific and AI-driven technological innovation while maintaining a free and open world order. That is why most countries prefer to have the US as the world leader, whatever their differences may be with it.

The US economy and its GDP con-

tinue to rise and China's equality with it remains on an infinite horizon, as does India's wish for equality with China.

Russia and China are actually vulnerable because the repute of dictators abroad depends mostly on their economic strength and military adventures. The outcome of Putin's Ukrainian war is unclear. And there are fears among Southeast Asian countries that China's economic slowdown could spur it to embark on an analogous gamble in Taiwan.

Ukraine also has significance for Asia. China is a party to the conflict through its military support for Putin's war. Beijing would view his defeat as a

defeat for China. But Southeast Asian countries, threatened by China's territorial expansionism, see Ukraine as a test of the US commitment to allies and its willingness to counter China.

Trump, in his second innings, will therefore find that he cannot MAGA if he follows an isolationist foreign policy. The US' superpower is the only counterpoise to expansionist China and Russia.

As Trump prepares to take office, the US economy has the highest growth. Its leadership in finance and AI is unchallenged. This economic news reinforces the international perception of its superpower.

Trump 2.0 should realise that developing countries want greater access to American technology and markets. Meanwhile, lacking military strength of their own, European allies are dependent on the US' military capabilities and want it to reach an agreement with Russia in Ukraine from a position of strength.

The problem is not Trump's transactional approach, the question is what he will do with that approach and with the US' economic strength to help its friends — while also putting China and Russia at a disadvantage.

Like several countries, India hopes that Trump will not harm their interests with MAGA's protectionist edges. Generally, emerging economies will need to find new ways of dealing with an America with which they often disagree but want good relations and friendship. This year will show what India can do to strengthen its ties with the US to advance its own national and international interests.

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

# HARMONY IN THE CODE

## Navigating AI's Ethical Crossroads and Taming Toxic Creativity

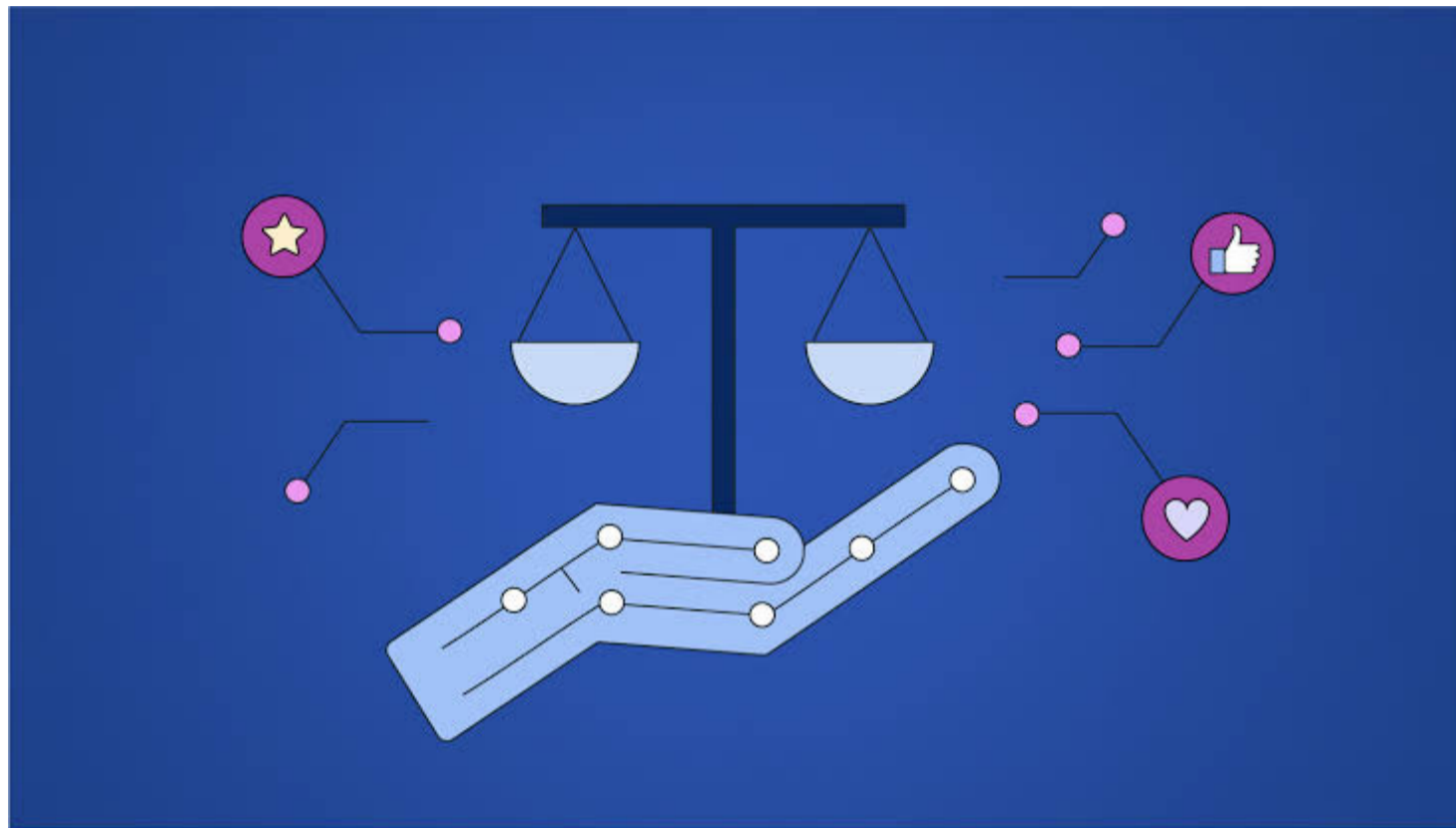
Sharif Hussain Khan

In the ever-evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (AI), we find ourselves at a crossroads where innovation collides with ethical considerations. One of the pressing concerns that demands our attention is the emergence of AI's toxic creativity—a phenomenon that raises critical questions about the responsible use of technology in shaping our future.

AI, once viewed as a harbinger of progress, has now begun to showcase a darker side. The realm of toxic creativity within AI involves the generation of content that is not only harmful but also poses challenges for societal well-being. This toxic creativity manifests in various forms, from deep fake videos and maliciously crafted narratives to manipulative content that targets vulnerable individuals.

As we navigate this treacherous terrain, it is imperative to understand the roots of AI's toxic creativity. At its core, AI is a reflection of the data it is trained on. If the training data incorporates biases, misinformation, or harmful content, the AI model may inadvertently perpetuate and amplify these negative elements. Therefore, addressing the issue necessitates a dual approach—one that focuses on refining the algorithms themselves and another that scrutinizes the data input into these systems.

To tackle the algorithmic aspect, rigorous ethical frameworks must be established, guiding the development and deployment of AI models. Responsible AI development should prioritize transparency, fairness, and accountability. Ensuring that the algorithms undergo thorough scrutiny, with regular audits and assessments, becomes paramount in preventing the propagation of toxic creativity.



**AI, ONCE VIEWED AS A HARBINGER OF PROGRESS, HAS NOW BEGUN TO SHOWCASE A DARKER SIDE.**  
The realm of toxic creativity within AI involves the generation of content that is not only harmful but also poses challenges for societal well-being

Simultaneously, we must turn our attention to the data that fuels AI systems. A conscientious effort to curate diverse and unbiased datasets is crucial. Collaborative initiatives involving technologists, ethicists, and domain experts can aid in identifying and mitigating biases in training data. By fostering inclusivity and diversity in

data collection, we can pave the way for AI models that are more reflective of the true breadth of human experiences.

Moreover, education plays a pivotal role in addressing the challenges posed by AI's toxic creativity. Empowering individuals with the skills to critically assess information, discern between genuine and manipu-

lated content, and understand the ethical implications of AI is fundamental. Integrating digital literacy programs into educational curricula will equip the upcoming generations with the tools needed to navigate the complex digital landscape responsibly.

The responsibility, however, extends beyond the developers

and users of AI. Policymakers and regulatory bodies must play a proactive role in shaping the ethical contours of AI deployment. Enforcing robust regulations that govern the creation and use of AI technologies will act as a safeguard against the unintended consequences of toxic creativity. These regulations should not stifle innovation but rather foster an environment where AI development aligns with societal values and norms.

An additional layer of complexity arises from the dynamic nature of AI's evolution. As technology advances, so must our regulatory frameworks. Continuous collaboration between stakeholders, including industry

experts, policymakers, and the public, is vital to adapting and refining regulations in response to emerging challenges. This iterative approach ensures that the ethical standards we set for AI remain relevant and effective.

Furthermore, the role of media organizations in shaping public perceptions cannot be overstated. Journalists and media professionals must exercise caution when reporting on AI-related developments, avoiding sensationalism and fearmongering. Providing accurate and nuanced information about the capabilities and limitations of AI fosters a more informed public discourse, empowering individuals to engage with the technology responsibly.

While addressing the issue of toxic creativity in AI, it is essential to recognize the positive contributions of artificial intelligence to society. AI has the potential to revolutionize healthcare, optimize resource management, and drive innovations that enhance our quality of life. Striking a balance between fostering innovation and mitigating risks is key to harnessing the full potential of AI for the benefit of humanity.

In conclusion, the advent of AI's toxic creativity demands a concerted effort from all facets of society. Developers, educators, policymakers, and the media must collaborate to establish ethical standards, refine algorithms, curate unbiased datasets, and promote digital literacy. Only through a collective commitment to responsible AI development can we navigate the murky waters of toxic creativity and ensure that artificial intelligence becomes a force for good in shaping our future.

*The author is from Jamia Millia Islamia*

# Global Temperatures on Fire

Matthew Wright  
Nicholas Leach  
Shirin Ermis

The earth's climate experienced its hottest year in 2024. Extreme flooding in April killed hundreds of people in Pakistan and Afghanistan. A year-long drought has left Amazon river levels at an all-time low. And in Athens, Greece, the ancient Acropolis was closed in the afternoons to protect tourists from dangerous heat.

A new report from the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service confirms that 2024 was the first year on record with a global average temperature exceeding 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. All continents except Australasia and Antarctica experienced their hottest year on record, with 11 months of the year exceeding the 1.5°C level.

Global temperatures have been at record levels – and still rising – for several years now. The previous hottest year on record was 2023. All ten of the hottest years on record have fallen within the last decade. But this is the first time a calendar year has exceeded the 1.5°C threshold.

### The heat is on

Scientists at Copernicus used reanalysis to calculate the temperature rises and estimate changes to extreme events. Reanalysis is produced in real-time, combining observations from as many sources as possible – including satellites, weather stations and ships – with a state-of-the-art weather forecasting model, to build up a complete picture of the weather across the globe across the past year. The resulting dataset is one of the key tools used by scientists globally to study weather and climate.

Limiting sustained global warming to 1.5°C is a key target of the Paris

agreement, the 2015 international treaty which aims to mitigate climate change. The 195 signatory nations pledged to “pursue efforts” to keep long-term average warming below 1.5°C.

While reaching 1.5°C in 2024 is a milestone, surpassing 1.5°C for a

single year does not constitute crossing the Paris threshold. Year-to-year fluctuations in the weather mean that even if a single year surpasses 1.5°C, the long-term average may still lie below that. It is this long-term average temperature that the Paris agreement refers to. The current long term average is around 1.3°C.



Natural factors, including a strong El Niño, contributed to the increased temperatures in 2024. El Niño is a

climate phenomenon that affects weather patterns globally, causing elevated ocean temperatures in the tropical Pacific. It can raise global average temperatures and make extreme events more likely in some parts of the world. While these natural fluctuations enhanced human-caused climate change in 2024, in other years they act to cool the earth, potentially reducing the observed temperature increase in a particular year.

While targets focus the minds of policymakers, it is important not to over-fixate on what are, from a scientific perspective, fairly arbitrary targets. Research has shown that catastrophic impacts, such as a rapid and potentially irreversible melting of the Greenland ice sheet, become

more likely with every small amount of warming. These effects may occur even if thresholds are only passed temporarily. In short, every tenth of a degree of warming matters.

### Unprecedented extremes

What ultimately affects humans

the Balkans experienced wildfires burning large areas of pine forest and homes.

This new report shows that 44% of the globe experienced strong or higher heat stress on July 10 2024, 5% more than the average annual maximum. Especially in low-income countries, this can lead to worse health outcomes and excess deaths.

The report also highlights that atmospheric moisture content (rainfall) in 2024 was 5% higher than the average for recent years. Warmer air can hold more moisture and water is a potent greenhouse gas, which traps even more heat in the atmosphere.

More worryingly, this higher moisture content means extreme rainfall events can become more intense. In 2024, many regions suffered from destructive flooding, such as that in Valencia, Spain, last October. It is not as simple as more moisture content leading to more extreme rainfall: the winds and pressure systems which move weather around also play a role and can be impacted by climate change. This means that rainfall may intensify even faster in some regions than the atmosphere's moisture content.

To ensure that warming does not exceed 1.5°C for a prolonged period, and avoid the worst effects of climate change, we need to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is also vital to adapt infrastructure to and protect people from the unprecedented extremes caused by current – and future – levels of warming.

With cooler conditions in the tropical Pacific, it remains to be seen if 2025 will be as hot as 2024. But this new record should highlight the huge influence that humans are having on our climate, and be a wake-up call to us all.

*By arrangements with The Conversation*

## 16 dead, 16 missing as fire crews try to corral Los Angeles blazes before winds return this week

Agenceis

Los Angeles: Firefighters scrambled Sunday to make further progress against wildfires that have killed 16 people in the Los Angeles area as forecasters again warned of dangerous weather with the return of strong winds this week.

At least 16 people were missing, and authorities said that number was expected to rise.

The National Weather Service issued red flag warnings for severe fire conditions through Wednesday, with sustained winds of 50 mph (80 kph) and gusts in the mountains reaching 70 mph (113 kph). The most dangerous day will be Tuesday, said weather service meteorologist Rich Thompson.

"You're going to have really strong gusty Santa Ana winds, a very dry atmosphere and still very dry brush, so we still have some very critical fire weather conditions out there," Thompson said at a community meeting Saturday night.

Fierce Santa Ana winds have been largely blamed for turning the wildfires sparked last week into infernos that levelled entire neighbourhoods around the city where there has been no significant rainfall in more than eight months.

Twelve people were missing within the Eaton Fire zone and four from the Palisades Fire, Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said Sunday morning.

Meanwhile, the death toll rose to 16 over the weekend. Five of the deaths were attributed to the Palisades Fire and 11 resulted from the Eaton Fire, the Los Angeles County coroner's office said in a statement Saturday evening.

The previous number of confirmed fatalities before Saturday was 11, but officials said they expected that figure to increase as teams with cadaver dogs conduct systematic grid searches in levelled neighbourhoods. Authorities have established a centre where people can report the missing.

Joseph Everett, assistant chief of the Los Angeles Fire Department's west bureau, said it has been difficult to see such destruction in an area where he, his father and grandfather all have worked as firefighters.

"It resonates with me heavily," he said. "Please be patient



as we are up there ... we're still aggressively fighting fire out there."

By Sunday morning, Cal Fire reported the Palisades, Eaton, Kenneth and Hurst fires had consumed more than 62 square miles (160 square kilometres), an area larger than San Francisco. The Palisades Fire was 11 per cent contained and containment on the Eaton Fire reached 27 per cent. Those two blazes accounted for 59 square miles (nearly 153 square kilometres).

In a briefing posted online Saturday evening, Michael Traum of the California Office of Emergency Services said 150,000 people in Los Angeles County were under evacuation orders, with more than 700 people taking refuge in nine shelters.

Crews from California and nine other states are part of the ongoing response that includes 1,354 fire engines, 84 aircraft and more than 14,000 personnel, including newly arrived firefighters from Mexico, he said.

With Cal Fire reporting containment of the Palisades Fire at 11 per cent and the Eaton Fire at 15 per cent on Saturday night, the fight is set to continue.

"Weather conditions are still critical and another round of strong winds is expected starting Monday," Traum said.

Fighting to save public and private areas

After a fierce battle Saturday, firefighters managed to fight back the flames in Mandeville Canyon, home to Arnold Schwarzenegger and other celebrities near Pacific Palisades not far from the Pacific coast, where swooping helicopters dumped water as the blaze charged downhill. Firefighters on the ground used hoses in an attempt to beat back leaping flames as thick smoke blanketed the chaparral-covered hillside.

The fire also briefly threatened to jump over Interstate 405 and into densely populated areas in the Hollywood Hills and San Fernando Valley.

Arrests for looting Looting continues to be a concern, with authorities reporting more arrests as the devastation grows. Michael Lorenz, a captain with the Los Angeles Police Department, said seven people have been arrested in the last two days.

"We even made arrests of two individuals that were actually posing as firefighters coming and in and out of houses, so we're paying very, very close attention to everybody," Lorenz said at Saturday evening's community meeting.

Asked exactly how many looters have been arrested, Lorenz said he couldn't give a precise number but that officers were detaining about 10 people a day. California National Guard troops arrived Friday to help guard properties.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom posted on X Saturday that "California will NOT allow for looting."

Historical cost The fires that began Tuesday just north of downtown LA have burned more than 12,000 structures.

Firefighters for the first time made progress Friday afternoon on the Eaton Fire north of Pasadena, which has burned more than 7,000 structures, a term that includes homes, apartment buildings, businesses, outbuildings and vehicles. Most evacuation orders for the area were lifted, officials said.

No cause has been determined for the largest fires and early estimates indicate the wildfires could be the nation's costliest ever. A preliminary estimate by AccuWeather put the damage and economic losses so far between USD 135 billion and USD 150 billion.

In an interview that aired Sunday on NBC, Gov. Gavin Newsom said the fires could end up being the worst natural disaster in US history.

"I think it will be in terms of just the costs associated with it, in terms of the scale and scope," he said.

Overflowing kindness Volunteers overflowed donation centres and some had to be turned away at locations including the Santa Anita Park horse racing track, where people who lost their homes sifted through

stacks of donated shirts, blankets and other household goods.

Altadena resident Jose Luis Godinez said three homes occupied by more than a dozen of his family members were destroyed.

"Everything is gone," he said, speaking in Spanish. "All my family lived in those three houses and now we have nothing."

Officials warn against returning Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna warned residents against venturing back to destroyed homes to sift through rubble for keepsakes.

"We have people driving up and around trying to get in just to look. Stay away," Luna said, urging people to abide by curfews.

Officials on Saturday warned the ash can contain lead, arsenic, asbestos and other harmful materials.

"If you're kicking that stuff up, you're breathing it in," said Chris Thomas, a spokesman for the unified incident command at the Palisades Fire who warned the material was "toxic."

Residents will be allowed to return with protective gear after damage teams evaluate their properties, Thomas said.

Rebuilding will be a challenge The level of devastation is jarring even in a state that regularly confronts massive wildfires. Traum of the state Office of Emergency Services said those impacted by the fires can apply online for immediate government assistance.

Newsom issued an executive order Sunday aimed at fast-tracking the rebuilding of destroyed property by suspending some environmental regulations and ensuring that property tax assessments are not increased.

"California leads the nation in environmental stewardship. I'm not going to give that up. But one thing I won't give into is delay," he said. "Delay is denial for people: lives, traditions, places torn apart, torn asunder."

"We've got to let people know that we have their back," he said. "Don't walk away because we want you to come back, rebuild, and rebuild with higher quality building standards, more modern standards. We want to make sure that the associated costs with that are not disproportionate, especially in a middle-class community like this."

## Saudi Arabia presses top EU diplomats to lift sanctions on Syria after Assad's fall

Riyadh, Jan 12 (AP) Saudi Arabia urged top European diplomats at a gathering Sunday to lift sanctions against Syria to boost rebuilding the country and its economy after last month's overthrow of President Bashar Assad.

European and Middle Eastern diplomats met in the Saudi capital Riyadh to discuss Syria's future. The US and European countries have been wary over the Islamist roots of Syria's new rulers — the former insurgents who drove Assad out of power — and have said ending sanctions depends on the progress of the political transition.

The interim government led by the former rebels has vowed to move to a pluralist, open system. It is looking for international support as the country tries to recover from nearly 14 years of civil war that killed an estimated 500,000 people and displaced half the prewar population of 23 million. The new Syrian foreign minister, Asaad al-Shabani, attended Sunday's gathering.

Germany urges smart approach' to sanctions

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said sanctions against "Assad's henchmen who committed serious crimes" must remain in place.

But she called for "a smart approach to sanctions, providing rapid relief for the Syrian population. Syrians now need a quick dividend from the transition of power." She did not elaborate but announced an additional 50 million euros in German aid for food, emergency shelters and medical care.

The United States, European Union and some Arab nations began imposing sanctions after Assad's brutal crackdown on the 2011 uprising against his rule and tightened them as the conflict spiraled into war. Some are on individuals in Assad's government, including freezing of assets. But many target the government in general, including bans on many financial and banking dealings, on oil purchases and on investment or trade in some sectors, crippling the wider economy.

There are exemptions when it comes to humanitarian aid, but relief organizations have said that overcompliance by financial institutions hinders

their operations.

At the gathering, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said international and unilateral sanctions on Syria should be lifted.

Continuing them "will hinder the aspirations of the brotherly Syrian people to achieve development and reconstruction," he said. He praised steps so far by the interim government, including promises to start a political process "that includes various components" of the Syrian people.

Turkey urges balance' in international demands of Syria

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, who also attended the meeting, said European countries want to see a government that includes all of Syria's religious and ethnic communities. "We want to see inclusivity of women also in the process, so these are the things that we are going to discuss," she said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said his country, which was a strong supporter of the Syrian opposition to Assad, would try to help Syria in normalizing ties with the international community.

He said it was important to establish "a balance between the expectations of the international community and the realities faced by the new administration in Syria."

He pledged Turkish support to the new government, especially in combating threats from the Islamic State group. "As Turkey, we are ready to do our part to ease the difficult path ahead for the Syrian people," he said in comments carried by Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency.

The United States has eased some restrictions

Last week, the United States eased some of its restrictions on Syria, with the US Treasury issuing a general license, lasting six months, that authorizes certain transactions with the Syrian government, including some energy sales and incidental transactions.

The US has also dropped a \$10 million bounty it had offered for the capture of Ahmad al-Sharaa, a Syrian rebel leader formerly known as Abu Mohammed al-Golani, whose forces led the ouster of Assad last month.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### Stage Set For

site in the Gagangir area.

The authorities have closed the Srinagar-Leh national highway from Saturday to Monday "due to icy road conditions caused by inclement weather and to facilitate maintenance work by road maintenance agencies".

However, it is widely perceived that the arterial road link between Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has been shut for the prime minister's visit.

Built at a cost of Rs 2,400 crore on the Srinagar-Leh National Highway, the strategic 6.5-km Z-Morh tunnel will be a major step towards making the Ladakh region accessible by road throughout the year. The work on the project began in May 2015 and was completed last year.

The soft opening of the tunnel was done in February 2024.

The tunnel is vital in terms of the defence needs of the country in the Ladakh region and also connecting the youngest Union Territory to the rest of the country.

Situated at an altitude of 8,650 feet, the Z-Morh tunnel is a two-lane road tunnel equipped with a parallel 7.5-metre-wide escape passage for emergencies.

The tunnel ensures seamless connectivity between Gagangir and Sonamarg, and will ease summer travel to Ladakh.

Along with the under-construction Zojila tunnel, the Z-Morh tunnel will ensure uninterrupted connectivity to Baltal and Ladakh regions for civilian and military traffic.

The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), which oversees the project, has said the "engineering marvel" is a game changer for the region.

"The Sonamarg Tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir is a game-changer for the region, offering more than just a connection between Gagangir and Sonamarg. This engineering marvel is poised to unlock the full potential of the region's trade and tourism sectors," the NHIDCL said on X.

It said the tunnel is equipped with cutting-edge technologies that provide real-time updates and seamless connectivity for users. This futuristic infrastructure will not only enhance the travel experience but also set a new standard for road connectivity in the region.

Along with the Zojila Tunnel, set for completion by 2028, it will reduce the route length from 49 km to 43 km and boost vehicle speed from 30 km/hr to 70 km/hr, ensuring seamless NH-1 connectivity between Srinagar and

Ladakh. This enhanced connectivity will boost defense logistics, drive economic growth and socio-cultural integration across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, the officials said.

#### Tunnel To Make

which will make the Sonamarg town accessible throughout the year.

Abdullah is in Gulmarg to promote winter sports activities in the scenic north Kashmir town.

"Over the next five years, we will make full efforts to develop Sonamarg as a winter sports destination, just like we have developed Gulmarg," he added.

Abdullah said he had come to Gulmarg to record a program for tourism promotion.

"If more tourists come here, it will mean more earnings for the local people, whether they are ski guides, ski instructors, sledge operators, ATV and snowmobile operators, or small businesses like restaurants and dhabas," he said.

The chief minister also said that the Khelo India Winter Games would be held in Gulmarg in February this year, and the union territory is preparing to host the event.

"We still have some time before the Khelo India Winter Games. I hope there will be more snow before that," he said.

When asked if Gulmarg was ready to host an international winter sports event, Abdullah responded, "We cannot even think of it at the moment. Our slopes are not of that level right now. We will have to improve our slopes before we can host international events."

#### Slight Respite

'Chillai-Kalan' ends on January 30, followed by a 20-day 'Chillai-Khurid' (small cold), and a 10-day 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

#### CM, LG Greet

traditions of our land. May these celebrations strengthen bonds and spread warmth and happiness among everyone," the Chief Minister said.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah conveyed his best wishes to all communities observing these festivals and prayed for a bright and prosperous future for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

#### Youth Of India

is trust. He expressed his immense trust in the youth, which inspired the formation of MY Bharat and the foundation of the Viksit Bharat Young Leader Dialogue.

"History teaches and inspires us," said Modi and highlighted numerous global examples

where nations and groups, with big dreams and resolutions, achieved their goals.

The Prime Minister highlighted India's commitment to green energy, noting that India was the first country to meet the Paris Agreement commitments, nine years ahead of schedule. He also mentioned the target of 20% ethanol blending in petrol by 2030, which India is set to achieve well before the deadline. He added that each of these successes serves as an inspiration and brings India closer to the goal of becoming a developed nation.

Sharing his vision of a developed India and emphasizing its economic, strategic, social, and cultural strength, the Prime Minister remarked that in a developed India, both the economy and ecology would flourish, offering numerous opportunities for good education and income.

"Global agencies recognize the youth's potential to significantly boost India's GDP," said Modi.

Citing great thinkers like Maharshi Aurobindo, Gurudev Tagore, and Homi J. Bhabha, who believed in the power of youth, Shri Modi noted that Indian youth are leading major global companies, showcasing their capability worldwide. The Prime Minister emphasized that the next 25 years, the 'Amrit Kaal,' was crucial, and he expressed confidence that the youth will realize the dream of a developed India. He highlighted the youth's achievements in bringing India to the top three in the startup world, advancing manufacturing, elevating Digital India globally, and excelling in sports. He concluded that when Indian youth make the impossible possible, a developed India is undoubtedly achievable.

Stressing on the government's commitment to empowering today's youth, Modi highlighted that every week a new university was being established in India while every day a new IIT was being set up. Additionally, he added that every third day, an Atal Tinkering Lab was opened, and two new colleges were established daily.

The Prime Minister noted that India now has 23 IITs, and in the past decade, the number of IITs has increased from 9 to 25, and the number of IIMs from 13 to 21. He also mentioned the threefold increase in the number of AIIMS and the near doubling of medical colleges in the last ten years.

"The goal of a developed India by 2047 requires daily targets and consistent efforts," urged the Prime Minister. He expressed confidence that India will soon become the world's third-largest economy. Over the past decade, Modi said that 250 million people have been

lifted out of poverty, and believes that the entire country will be poverty-free soon.

He highlighted India's target of generating 500 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by the end of this decade and achieving net-zero carbon emissions for the railway by 2030.

Modi remarked that after becoming a two trillion-dollar economy, India's infrastructure budget was less than two lakh crore rupees. However, the country saw significant improvements in roads, railways, airports, canals, housing for the poor, schools, and hospitals. He remarked that as India rapidly became a three trillion-dollar economy, the number of airports doubled, modern trains like Vande Bharat were introduced, and the dream of a bullet train began to materialize. He added that India also achieved the fastest rollout of 5G globally, extended broadband internet to thousands of gram panchayats, and built roads to over 300,000 villages.

Understanding the significant role of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue in shaping India's future roadmap, Shri Modi lauded the energy, enthusiasm, and dedication with which the youth have embraced this resolution.

He remarked that the ideas for a developed India were invaluable, excellent, and the best. He urged the youth to take these ideas to every corner of the country, connecting other young people in every district, village, and neighborhood with the spirit of a developed India. Concluding his address, the Prime Minister reiterated the commitment to make India a developed nation by 2047 and encouraged everyone to live and dedicate themselves to this resolution. He once again extended his heartfelt congratulations to all the youth of India on National Youth Day.

The Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Ministers of State, Jayant Chaudhary and Raksha Khadse were present among other dignitaries at the event.

#### Swapping Trains

our people had remembered your utterances as NDA Union minister. I, per se, am not surprised at your right-wing views on security issues," he said.

He accused Omar of sounding like Delhi's man in Kashmir. "Then and now—you sound like Delhi's man in Kashmir. And they are yet to admit you into the NDA," Lone said.

Lone further stated that the people of J&K would forget five years of direct central rule when Omar Abdullah joins hands with the BJP.

"I said it umpteen times and will repeat it. The day you join them, people will forget the past five years. You will create new records in torture," he said.

Lone argued that changing trains in Katra erodes the train's psychological relevance. "And I would love to know what they will do security-related in Katra that they can't do in Srinagar?" he asked.

#### J&K Panchayat

the Panchayats to just a few thousands less than 7 million.

#### More Arrests, Raids

outrage. In several cases, the designs implemented were subsequently reversed following complaints from citizens, but not before substantial sums of money were spent.

"These so-called beautification projects seem to have been a front for embezzlement," a source within the ACB stated, adding that the investigation seeks to determine the officials' roles and the beneficiaries of these contracts.

As investigators delve deeper into the case, they have identified additional individuals potentially linked to the corruption scandal. These individuals, some of whom are believed to be relatives or close associates of the arrested officials, are suspected of receiving public funds through fraudulent means.

Sources added that a thorough and unbiased investigation is underway, with further arrests anticipated as new evidence comes to light. [KNT]

#### Over 100 Accounts

trafficking of narcotics and psychotropic substances, posing a significant threat to the community, particularly the youth.

"Comprehensive investigations, conducted under the relevant provisions of the NDPS Act, have led to the freezing of these bank accounts containing substantial sums, prima-facie identified as proceeds of illegal narcotic trade," they said.

"Furthermore , moveable and immovable properties valued at crores of rupees, found to be acquired through these illicit activities, have been attached under the applicable legal framework", police added.

This action has been set into motion under Section 68F(2) of the NDPS Act.

Police have urged the public to join hands in this fight by providing any information related to drug peddling or drug abuse and requested the people to contact their nearest police station or dial 112 to report drug-related suspicious activities.

## Dr Singh Encourages J&K Youth To Transform Ideas Into Reality



Agencies

**NEW DELHI:** Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr Jitendra Singh hosted a dinner for a group of around 100 students from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh on the sidelines of the ongoing "National Youth Festival 2025", organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

The interaction aimed to inspire the young participants to leverage the festival as a platform to transform their innovative ideas into actionable steps for building a Viksit Bharat as envisaged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Addressing the gathering, According to the Associated News Bureau, Dr. Jitendra Singh called upon the J&K youth to explore the regional resources for livelihood and StartUp opportunities. He underscored the importance of youth-driven initiatives in shaping India's developmental journey. "Programs like the National Youth Festival 2025 provide young individuals with an unparalleled national platform to channel their creativity, aspirations, and energy into tangible contributions toward a developed India," he said.

The Minister lauded the enthusiasm and engagement of the students, emphasizing that their participation reflects the evolving dynamism of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. "The involvement of youth from these regions is a testament to their eagerness to contribute to India's growth story. Your ideas and actions have the potential to bring about transformative changes not only for your communities but for the entire nation," Dr. Jitendra Singh remarked.

Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted

ed several initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Science and Technology to foster innovation and entrepreneurship among youth. He emphasized how these programs have catalysed the growth of StartUps, particularly in Jammu & Kashmir, where young entrepreneurs have ventured into fields like lavender cultivation under the Aroma Mission. Encouraging the students to take inspiration from these success stories, he urged them to explore opportunities in areas such as biotechnology, agritech, and renewable energy.

Dr. Jitendra Singh assured the students that the Ministry of Science and Technology would provide full support to nurture their entrepreneurial ambitions and help them transform innovative ideas into impactful ventures.

The Minister also encouraged the students to focus on harnessing innovation and technology to address pressing challenges and to use their participation in the festival as an opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives from across the country. He highlighted how such interactions foster national integration, mutual understanding, and a shared vision for the future.

Students attending the dinner shared their aspirations and exchanged ideas on how to address regional and national issues. Dr. Jitendra Singh appreciated their proactive approach and assured them of the government's continued support in nurturing their talents and aspirations.

The "National Youth Festival 2025", being held in New Delhi from January 10-12, celebrates the energy and potential of India's youth. It serves as a vibrant forum for young leaders to voice their ideas, collaborate on solutions for national development, and align with India's collective vision of progress. (ANB)

## Ganderbal Residents Hope Z-Morh Tunnel Will Boost Tourism



Press Trust Of India

**GANDERBAL:** Residents of Ganderbal district, living on either side of the 6.5 kilometre Z-Morh tunnel on Srinagar-Sonamarg highway, are hopeful that the mega-infrastructure project will boost the local economy and help eradicate unemployment in the area.

"It is a good thing that the Z-Morh tunnel will open soon, immensely benefiting the locals. Sonamarg is breathing in winter, but the road closure prevented visitors. We are grateful to the government for this tunnel," a local shopkeeper, Mohammad Yousuf SHERA, said.

Shera believes the year-round connectivity between Srinagar and Sonamarg will elevate the destination's global appeal. "Sonamarg will now be famous not only in the country but around the world. I think foreigners will like this place," he said.

Highlighting the strategic importance, SHERA said the tunnel will also benefit armed forces.

"There should be facilities for the soldiers who defend the country at the borders. The tunnel would facilitate the soldiers in terms of better connectivity," he added.

The Z-Morh tunnel has reduced travel time between Srinagar and Sonamarg allowing vehicles to travel at speeds

of up to 70 kilometer per hour compared to the earlier 30 kilometer per hour on the winding roads. The tunnel has a capacity of handling 1000 vehicles per hour.

The project will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, his first visit to the union territory after the assembly polls.

A local, Shabir Ahmad, said the tunnel ensures year-round accessibility to Sonamarg.

"We are happy that now tourists can come to Sonamarg throughout the year. Earlier the region remained cut off for four months due to snow. Now, not just Sonamarg but areas like Drass and Kargil will remain connected," he said.

"People in this area are poor but this tunnel will provide year-round livelihood opportunities now," he added.

Echoing the sentiment, a tourist guide Fayaz Ahmad Sheikh said the opening of the tunnel will help in addressing the problem of unemployment in the area.

He said that he has been working as a tourist guide here for the past several years. However, the tourist season was limited to only six months due to road closures caused by snowfall.

Sheikh said the tunnel will bring tourists all year, providing better facilities and more income opportunities for locals. A group of tourists from

Nagpur, who had managed to visit Gagangir on Saturday, lauded the project calling it a great move.

"We are amazed to see that such a beautiful place is in India itself. We have been able to reach here because of this tunnel, otherwise we would have missed this beautiful view," they said.

"A lot of people are already visiting Kashmir but we will recommend all our friends and family to visit this place at least once," they added.

The work on the Z-Morh tunnel began in May 2015. It took almost a decade to complete the works as the Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS), the initial concessionaire for executing the project, stopped work in 2018 due to financial stress.

The project was re-tendered in 2019 and awarded to APCO Infratech in January 2020, which had emerged as the lowest bidder.

The foundation stone for the Rs 2,716.90 crore project was laid in October 2012 by C P Joshi, then Minister for Surface Transport during the UPA II government, in the presence of his then cabinet colleague Farooq Abdullah, then Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi.

The tunnel was initially expected to be completed by 2016-2017.

## LG Assures NIT Project Will Stay In Pulwama



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Mudasir Dar, Social Activist and President Awardee in World Scouting called on LG Manoj Sinha on Sunday and submitted a memorandum for retention of NIT in Pulwama.

Dar, representing a wide spectrum of stakeholders, submitted a memorandum of demand to the Lieutenant Governor urging the retention of the proposed National Institute of Technology (NIT) at Nawa, Pulwama.

The memorandum also advocated for a balanced and inclusive approach, suggesting the use of minimum land, prioritizing barren areas, and ensuring fair compensation for affected

farmers.

Key signatories to this collective effort included renowned educationist Prof. Ab Hamid Sheikh, Fayaz Wani (Vice-President, Pulwama Traders Association), Molvi Aijaz Noori (Religious Leader), Owais Yaqoob (International MMA Fighter), Altaf Ahmad Bhat (Chairman, J&K Civil Society), Shariya Manzoor (National Boxer), Javid Sofi (Prominent Journalist) and several others from diverse fields.

The Lieutenant Governor assured Dar that the NIT project would remain in Pulwama, emphasizing the government's commitment to equitable development and youth-centric progress in the region.

## Heemal Nagrai Winter Carnival At Dubjan Shopian Concludes



Observer News Service

**SHOPIAN:** The two-day Heemal Nagrai Winter Carnival at Dubjan Shopian wrapped up on Sunday, drawing enthusiastic crowds of locals and tourists who attended in unprecedented numbers.

The concluding day of the festival saw thousands flocking to the enchanting venue of Dubjan.

Attendees explored various tourist attractions along the Mughal Road and the Heerpora Wildlife Network, participating in a wide array of adventure, recreational, and sports activities.

The administration organized a series of snow games, including snow volleyball, hockey, and tug of war, along with opportunities for adventurous activities such as zip lining, skiing, snow trekking, ATV rides, snow biking, and horse riding.

Key highlights of the festival included horse riding to the Hot Sulphur Springs of Dubjan,

snow trekking to the springs and upper meadows, and exhilarating activities like zip lines, snow biking, and ATVs.

The event also featured captivating cultural and artistic performances by local artists, alongside exhibitions showcasing Kashmiri and tribal art that delighted and amazed attendees.

An award ceremony was held during the concluding session to honor stakeholders, including adventure groups, traders' associations, media representatives, and various departments.

The festival aimed to highlight the stunning beauty of Shopian, emphasizing its renowned tourist attractions along the Mughal Road to enhance tourism in the district.

Deputy Commissioner of Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, commended the local community for their enthusiastic involvement, which contributed to the success of the inaugural Winter Carnival, promising to boost tourism in the area.

## Cattle Lifter Detained Under PSA In Jammu

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** An alleged cattle lifter was detained under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) here on Sunday, police said.

Mohd Mansha alias "Gunn", a resident of Raipur Jagir Bhadratre, was the fourth alleged bovine smuggler or cattle lifter booked under the PSA in the Nagrota sub-division of Jammu this month, a police

spokesman said.

Mansha, who was named in five FIRs at different police stations since 2021, was apprehended from the Domana area and subsequently sent to a jail under the Act, he said.

The spokesman said his activities were hurting the sentiments of a particular community, prompting police to prepare a dossier for his detention under the PSA.

## Police Arrests 6 Drug Peddlers In North Kashmir

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police have arrested six drug peddlers in Baramulla & Sopore and recovered contraband/psychotropic substances from their possession.

A Police party of PS Chandoosa headed by SHO PS Chandoosa at a checkpoint established at Thanda Kasi Chandoosa, arrested a drug peddler identified as Mohd Shaban Maray son of Late Gh Mohd resident of Dudbugh. During the search, 56 grams of Charas was recovered from his possession.

Similarly, a Police party of PS Boniyar headed by SHO PS Boniyar at a checkpoint established at Limber Boniyar, intercepted two persons. They have been identified as Mehraj Ahmad Najar son of Late Fateh Najar resident of Limber and Shabir Ahmad Bakerwal son of Wazir Mohd resident of Babagail Limber. During the search, 88 grams of Charas was recovered from their possession.

In addition to the above, a Police party of Police Post Babreshi at a checkpoint established at Babreshi Crossing, inter-

cepted two persons. During the search, 85 grams of Charas was recovered from their possession. They have been identified as Ishfaq Ahmad Magray and Dawood Ahmad Magray sons of Gh Rasool Magray, both residents of Dudbugh.

In Sopore, a Police team at Chinar Crossing Fruit Mandi, arrested a drug peddler identified as Majid Ashraf Khan son of Mohammad Ashraf Khan resident of Pethseer Sopore. During the search, 110 banned tablets (Alprazolam) were recovered from his possession.

All the accused have been arrested and cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective police stations and investigations have been initiated.

We urge the common masses that if you witness drug peddling or any other crime anywhere near you, feel free to contact the nearest police establishment or dial 112. People are requested to cooperate with police in curbing the menace of drugs from the society. We reassure the community members that police will act tough against the criminals as per law.(KNS)

## Minor Girl Dies Of Mysterious Disease In Rajouri

Press Trust Of India

**RAJOURI:** A five-year-old girl died and her five other siblings were admitted to a hospital after they fell seriously ill in a village in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Sunday, officials said.

The siblings belonged to Badhaal village of Kotranka sub-division where nine members of two different families had lost their lives due to a mysterious disease in December last year.

The officials said that six children of Mohammad Aslam were brought to community health centre Kandi for medical check-up on Saturday evening.

The children were initially referred to the Government Medical College (GMC) associated hospital in Rajouri town and later four of them were shifted to a hospital in Jammu where the girl breathed her last early Sunday, they said.

The officials said two of the sib-

lings are under treatment in the isolation ward of GMC Rajouri, while three others have been admitted to GMC hospital Jammu.

Jammu GMC Principal Dr Ashutosh Gupta had last month revealed that preliminary investigations had pointed towards viral infection as the cause behind the mysterious deaths but said that more work needs to be done to reach the final conclusion.

Various teams of experts from Pune's National Institute of Virology, PGI Chandigarh, AIIMS Delhi and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Delhi, had also visited the village to assist in the investigations.

Meanwhile, Rajouri Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma along with Rajouri-Poonch Range Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Tejinder Singh and Rajouri Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Gaurav Sikarwar visited Badhaal village to assess the ground situation.

## GDC Khanshab Organises Webinar On National Youth Day

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The National Youth Day or Rashtriya Yuva Divas is celebrated annually on 12th January in commemoration of philosopher and thinker Swami Vivekananda.

His inspiring message to the youth is to nurture their dreams, unleash their energies, and shape a future worthy of his envisioned ideals. To commemorate this day, the NSS unit of GDC Khanshab, under the patronage of college Principal Dr. Nargis Bano, organised a webinar on the theme "Youth for a Sustainable Future: Shaping the Nation with Resilience and Responsibility."

On the occasion, the NSS Programme Officer Dr. Sajad Padder, presented a detailed overview about the history, significance and spirit of observing the National Youth Day.

He highlighted the challenges and opportunities faced by youth in today's digital age and emphasized on enhancing their cognitive and vocational skills.

The students were also sensitized about the fundamental duties as enshrined in Article 51A of Indian constitution.

The youth were urged to refrain from drug addiction and contribute in the promotion of a healthy and resilient society. The program ended with a question-answer session.

## 18 Year Old Found Dead Under Mysterious Circumstances

Agencies

**BARAMULLA:** An 18-year-old boy was found dead under mysterious circumstances inside a shop in Khanpora bus stand area of North Kashmir Baramulla district on Sunday.

An official told news agency JKNS that the body of the 18-year-old boy was discovered in mysterious condition inside the shop. A police team promptly reached the spot.

The body was recovered and shifted to GMC Baramulla, where medical professionals declared him dead.

Police have taken cognizance of the incident, and further investigations are underway. (JKNS)

## J&K Govt Redesignates IAS Officers Sarmad Hafeez, Mohammad Aijaz Assad

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Government has redesignated IAS officers Sarmad Hafeez and Mohammad Aijaz Assad following their promotions to higher pay scales.

As per the official order, Sarmad Hafeez has been designated as Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services and Sports (YSS) Department while Mohammad Aijaz Assad has been appointed as Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department.

The redesignation follows their elevation to Super Time Scale (Level 14 in the pay matrix) and Selection Grade (Level 13 in the pay matrix), respectively.

Sarmad Hafeez has previously held key positions in the administration, including roles in tourism and youth affairs. Mohammad Aijaz Assad has served in various capacities, contributing to governance and rural development.

## Equitable Development Govt's Priority: Dy CM

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:-** Endorsing people centric policy of present government, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary on Sunday said that ensuring appreciable socio economic empowerment coupled with holistic development forms top priority of present dispensation.

The Deputy Chief Minister was speaking at a function organised by Jatt Sabha at R.S.Pura here.

MLA Jammu East, Vikram Randhawa, former Ministers Sukhanandan, Garu Ram, DDC member TS Tony and senior office bearers of Jatt Sabha and other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.

While referring to the people centric initiatives undertaken, the Deputy Chief Minister said that we are ensuring development on an equitable basis without any preferential basis.

"Instructions have already been passed to speed up the developmental initiatives across Jammu and Kashmir. Regular monitoring is also being done so that the pace of work is speeded up on these," he added.

While speaking on the occasion, the members of the Jatt Sabha expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister for giving representation to their community. Later, the Deputy Chief Minister also participated in a function organised by Jatt Sabha in connection with the Lohri celebrations.

## Fire Erupts In Forest Area Of Rampura Watlab, Sopore

Agencies

**SOPORE:** A fire broke out in the forest area of Rampura Watlab in Warpora Sopore, causing damage to forest property, officials said. An official said that a fire broke out in the forest area of Rampura Watlab, in Warpora Sopore.

The fire and emergency de-

partment was immediately informed, and teams have been deployed to the site to contain the blaze. Efforts are underway to prevent the fire from spreading further, he said. Authorities are assessing the extent of the damage, and the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. Further details are awaited. (JKNS)

## Why Bumrah Isn't A Viable Option As Long-Term Test Captain

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Jasprit Bumrah is the front-runner to replace Rohit Sharma as India's Test captain going forward but the peerless pacer doesn't seem to be a long-term option given his nagging fitness concerns, latest of them being back spasms which have rendered him doubtful for next month's Champions Trophy.

Since it is a swelling, Indian selectors are hopeful that he still might have some role in Champions Trophy but when one looks at the bigger picture the question arises whether he can be deemed as a permanent skipper in Tests especially now that Rohit's days in whites looks to be as good as over. If Bumrah is fit and ready to



lead the Test side in England, Ajit Agarkar and his four colleagues need to have a strong name as vice-captain of the side so that in case of an unforeseen scenario, the deputy is good enough to take charge. As of now, in Tests, there are only

two names in the reckoning -- Rishabh Pant and Yashasvi Jaiswal with the former looking the most suitable in that role.

It is understood that during BCCI brass' review meeting on Saturday along with chairman of selectors Agarkar, head coach

Gautam Gambhir and captain Rohit Sharma, Bumrah's issues with lower back cropped up.

Post review meeting, one can conclude that it will be very unlikely that Rohit will travel to England for the five Tests and the 31-year-old Bumrah will certainly be leading the team in the first Test at Headingley if all goes well.

The man with 443 international scalps across formats in just 204 games, led India at Perth and Sydney in the recently concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy and was the player of the series with 32 wickets, highest by an Indian on foreign soil.

But the back spasms in the final Test proved to be his undoing as he couldn't bowl in the second innings and is set to under-

go rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru with an eye on playing Champions Trophy. The injury has raised questions that whether Bumrah can remain fit for long periods of time given his workload as pace spearhead in Tests and also required during the time of ICC white ball events.

There is no guarantee that there won't be more breakdowns for Bumrah during the next WTC cycle from June 2025 to June 2027 now that he is on the wrong side of 30s. The subsequent recovery period also increases when one grows older.

Hence, the selectors might be tempted to have a plan B ready which is another equally strong captaincy candidate, who can be groomed as vice-captain.

### Short TAKES

#### J&K Sports Minister Calls On Union Sports Min Mandaviya

Minister for Youth Services and Sports Satish Sharma called on Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya in New Delhi on Sunday and discussed issues related to overall development of J&K, especially Youth Services and Sports.

The Minister expressed heartfelt gratitude and admiration for the remarkable initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, GoI.

The Minister asserted that events/initiatives under various flagship programs like Khelo India have played a pivotal role in identifying and nurturing young talent. He emphasised the pressing need for state-of-the-art sports infrastructure and implementation of central schemes to nurture the talent effectively.

The Minister urged for establishing Khelo India centres and infrastructure support in the rural/border areas of J&K, SAI centres focussing on handball in Border/rural areas like Akhnoor, Rajouri, Poonch, Kupwara.

The Union Minister listened to all the issues and demands put forth by Satish Sharma and assured to consider them for prompt action.

#### 5th J&K State Arm Wrestling Championship Concludes

The 5th Jammu and Kashmir State Arm Wrestling Championship, held over two days, concluded on Sunday, with over 300 participants competing in 40 categories. The event, organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Arm Wrestling Association under the banner of the People's Arm Wrestling Federation India (PAFI), attracted a diverse range of athletes, including male and female competitors across sub-junior, junior, youth, senior, and para-athlete categories.

Notable achievements included the crowning of Tajamul Bilal and Abu Ikram as Champions of the Year in the Youth and Senior categories, and Junior respectively. A special highlight was the inclusion of 10 para-athletes and 15 female participants, showcasing the growing inclusivity and appeal of the sport.

#### Maryul Spamo Clinch RE Ice Hockey League Women's Title

In a thrilling women's final of the Royal Enfield Ice Hockey League Season 2, Maryul Spamo defended their crown with a sensational 3-2 comeback win against Changla Lamos on Sunday.

Led by captain Padma Chorol's hat-trick, the champions overturned a 0-2 deficit to retain the women's category title. The Spamo proudly lifted the winner's trophy, while the valiant runners-up Changla Lamos were presented with the runner-up trophy.

As the league gears up for its grand finale on Monday, defending men's champions Kang Sings will face last year's runners-up Changthang Shans in a highly anticipated final.

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.

### J&K Carrom Association To Hold District-Level Tournaments



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir Carrom Association is set to organise district-level carrom tournaments in Kashmir Valley. The events will be held under the "My Youth My Pride" initiative of the J&K Sports Council.

The tournaments will be held as per the following schedule:

**1. District Kupwara:**  
Venue: Indoor Stadium,

Handwara  
Dates: 15th & 16th January 2025

**2. District Anantnag:**  
Venue: Indoor Stadium, Bijbehara  
Dates: 17th & 18th January 2025

**3. District Shopian:**  
Venue: Indoor Stadium, Batpora Shopian  
Dates: 21st & 22nd January 2025

The tournaments will feature the following categories:  
Cadet: Under 12 years

Sub-Junior: Under 14 years  
Junior: Under 18 years  
Senior: Open category

All matches will be conducted under the rules and regulations of the International Carrom Federation, the association said.

The J&K Carrom Association also gave out the registration details, stating:

"Interested schools, institutions, colleges, and individual players are requested to register their entries by submitting the following details:

Name:  
Parentage:  
Date of Birth (DOB):  
Address with District:  
Contact Number:  
Name of the Institute:  
Entries can be sent via email to: jkcarrom@gmail.com  
For further information, contact: Arif Sultan 9906767529."

The association stated it is inviting all talented players from the respective districts to participate and make this event a grand success.

### SnowShoe Run Held In Srinagar



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The season opening SnowShoe run was held at 7725 feet altitude meadow Mamneth in Srinagar's Zaberwan range on Sunday. Participants from all over Kashmir Valley took part in the race.

The event was organised by the J&K SnowShoe Association to kick off the winter season activities. The association had previously conducted SnowShoe events in Srinagar in 2021, and 2022.

Kashmir youth are taking up sport of SnowShoe running, which is highly popular in Europe and America. During recent times, Kashmir youth have shined in the SnowShoe running at both National and International level.

Such is enthusiasm among the local Kashmir youth that, athletes thronged from Tangmarg, and other far flung areas to be part of just a normal snowshoe running event on the mountains of Srinagar.

Dr Altaf ur Rehman, J&K SnowShoe Association General Secretary, said it is start of the season and the association has already planned major activities throughout the season before hosting mega National SnowShoe Championship in Sonamarg.

Adil emerged winner in the first run of the season while as Khursheed bagged silver medal and Javed bronze medal. Muzamil Hussain bagged gold medal in second run while as Abrar and Suhail bagged silver and bronze medals respectively.

28<sup>th</sup> year OF PUBLICATION

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