28 year of publication

# **KASHMIR OBSERVER**<sup>®</sup>

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sub-division of Rajouri dis-

trict, where 16 members of

three families have died since

December last year - seven of

Authorities have sealed three

houses belonging to the af-

fected families and shifted 21

of their close relatives to gov-

ernment accommodation to be

Deputy Commissioner Dil Mir

carried out the operation, with

security personnel deployed at

the sites, | More on P6

A team led by Additional

kept under strict monitoring.

them since Sunday.

# **Rajouri Grapples With Unidentified Killer**

16 Lives Lost, No Answers So Far



#### **Observer News Service**

Srinagar: A mysterious illness that has taken 16 lives in a small village here has confounded authorities, which remain clueless about the cause of the deaths even two months after the first casualty.

Jatti Begum, 60, who perished from unknown causes on Friday is the latest casualty in the series. Another girl still battles for her life.

The victims belong to Badhaal village in the Kotranka

#### **Rain, Snow Likely From Jan** 20-22: MeT

#### **Observer News Service**

Srinagar: The minimum temperatures at most places in Kashmir have fallen after snowfall as the meteorological department forecast mainly dry weather over the next three days, officials said on Friday. The higher reaches of

Kashmir as well as some areas in the plains of the valley received snowfall on Thursday. Following the snowfall,

cold conditions are prevailing in Kashmir as the night temperatures decreased at most places, they said. The minimum tempera-

ture in Srinagar settled at minus 2 degrees Celsius on Thursday night, half a degree up from the previous night's minus 2.5 degrees Celsius. The tourist resort of Gulmarg

in north Kashmir recorded a minimum temperature of minus 7 degrees Celsius. Pahalgam recorded a low

of minus 11.8 degrees Celsius, over seven degrees down from minus 4.2 degrees Celsius the night before. The minimum tempera-

ture was minus 2.4 degrees Celsius in Qazigund, minus 2 degrees | More on P6

**KO Web Desk** 

# Working With Centre Doesn't **Mean Agreement With BJP: CM**

Says Development First, Conflicts Only If Necessary Scheduler Content Finding Balance:CM

This cutting-edge

technology effectively reduces dark spots, melasma, and sun damage, revealing a radiant complexion

with minimal downtime

#### **Observer News Service**

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has emphasized the need for pragmatic relations with the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre, saying that collaboration does not imply unconditional agreement.

Speaking to India Today, he highlighted that unnecessary confrontation with the central government would hinder progress in the region.

"It is unnecessary to pick a fight with the Centre when there is no need for one. Pragmatic relations are essential to ensure development and progress in Jammu & Kashmir," Omar said. He clarified that working with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government does not mean he endorses all its policies. "If a conflict becomes inevitable, I will not shy away from it. However, starting on an antagonistic note serves no purpose," he added.

The Chief Minister reiterated



#### Minister have assured their support, and I am optimistic that statehood will be restored soon," Omar remarked.

**THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN** over the years should be

statehood. | More on P6

He described the current governance model in the Union Territory as challenging due to dual power centers. 'The Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister share powers, creating a complex and often messy situation. It's a new experience for both sides, requiring adjustments," he noted. Omar expressed hope that this arrangement is temporary, citing commitments from the Centre to reinstate

#### **Imran Khan Jailed For 14 Years**

#### Agencies

Islamabad: Former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have been convicted in a 190 million pounds (\$232 million) land corruption case involving the Al-Qadir Trust, local media reported on Friday.

According to ARY News and Dawn, an anti-corruption court in the northern city of Rawalpindi sentenced Khan to 14 years in prison and Bibi to seven years, with the verdict being announced at Adiala Jail.

Khan and Bibi have also been fined \$3,600 and \$1,800, respectively, with the failure to comply carrying an additional imprisonment term.

The Al-Qadir Trust case centers on allegations that Khan and Bibi were involved in a quid pro quo scheme that saw the politician and his wife receive land worth millions of dollars from a property mogul during the establishment of an eponymous university in

exchange for legal protection. The former Pakistani prime minister has denied the charges, calling them "politically motivated." Before the verdict, Khan said the case lacked | More on P6

### **Republic Day Function** LG To Take Salute, Omar **Abdulllah As Chief Guest**

#### **Expedite Probe Into Mysterious Deaths: CM**

hief Minister Omar Abdullah convened a meeting to discuss the mysterious illness in Budhal village of Rajouri district, where 16 people have died. He directed health and police authorities to expedite their investigations and identify the cause of the fatalities. "The unexplained nature of these deaths is

# PM To Distribute Property Cards In J&K Today

Will Interact With Beneficiaries Virtually

and physically distribute property cards among some

**DETAINED WITHOUT** 

**SUBSTANTIAL** charges

considered for release.

It's a necessary step to

his commitment to the resto-

ration of Jammu and Kashmir's

progress, and statehood res-

toration are interlinked. The

Prime Minister and Home

statehood.

"Development,

foster reconciliation."

**TESTS WERE CONDUCTED AT REPUTED INSTITUTIONS**, including the National Institute of Virology (Pune), the National Centre for Disease Control (New Delhi), and others."

# J&K Budget Session To Begin Next Month

#### Agencies

Srinagar: After a hiatus of seven years, Jammu & Kashmir's annual budget will be presented in its assembly next month. The budget estimates for 2025-26 and revised estimates for 2024-25 will be presented in the Assembly likely around mid-February.

"The Union Territory's cabinet led by Omar Abdullah would soon recommend to the

Transfer Of ACB Official

#### **Mehbooba Questions Govt's Commitment To Accountability**

#### **Observer News Service**

Srinagar: Peoples' Democratic Party chief Meĥbooba Mufti said Friday the transfer of an Anti-Corruption Bureau official, who was probing a case, exposes a "nexus" between the corrupt and most powerful, and raises questions about the Jammu and Kashmir government's commitment to justice and accountability.

The government has ordered the repatriation of ACB SSP Abdul Wahid, designated as Assistant Inspector General (AIG), to the Home Department as part of a rejig in the anti-graft body.

Wahid was investigating alleged corruption in the Srinagar Smart City Project and recently booked two of its | More on P6

Prime Minister Srinagar: Narendra Modi will hand over 65 lakh property cards in 10 States and two Union Territories including Jammu and Kashmir among the people of rural areas in the afternoon of January 18 virtually through a function being held in New Delhi.

"A total of 65 lakh property cards will be distributed in 52,455 villages of 237 districts in 10 States and two Union Territories by the Prime Minister at a function at 12.30 PM on January 18 under SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages & Mapping with Improvised Technology in Villages Areas) Scheme,"



officials told the Excelsior. A large number of people in different villages of Jammu and Kashmir will get the

property cards. Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Dr Jitendra Singh will attend the function at Kathua

THE SCHEME IS INTENDED TO REDUCE PROPERTY disputes by providing accurate land records while boosting financial liquidity. The scheme aims to streamline planning and revenue collection, as well as ensuring that residents are informed of property rights in rural areas."

villagers, Excelsior reported.

The Prime Minister will interact with a few beneficiaries through video conferencing, the officials said.

The property cards distribution function was originally scheduled to be held on December 27, 2024 but was deferred due to national mourning following the demise of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. It has now been rescheduled to January 18.

Officials said SVAMITVA is a Central Sector scheme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj which provides 'Record of Rights' to | More on P6

#### **Observer News Service**

Srinagar: The Lieutenant of Jammu and Governor Kashmir, Manoj Šinha, will preside over and take the salute at the main Republic Day function at MA Stadium in Jammu. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will be the chief guest at the event.

According to an official communiqué, a copy of which is in possession of Kashmir Observer, the Lieutenant Governor will

preside over and take salute at the main Republic Day function at MA Stadium, Jammu.

Chief Minister Deputy Choudhary Surinder and Cabinet Ministers Javid Ahmad Dar, Sakina Itto, Satish Sharma, and Javed Rana will take the salute at functions in Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag, Kathua, Udhampur and districts. respectively.

# **Govt Simplifies LCO Registration** With Online Process

#### Agencies

Srinagar: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Friday issued a notification be conducted entirely online with the Ministry itself as their registering authority.

According to the Associated News Bureau, upon successful verification of applicant details, including Aadhaar, PAN, CIN, DIN etc., LCO registration certificates will be issued in real-time. Also, a provision for appeal against the denial of registration or renewal for LCO registration has been added. Earlier, LCO Registration

process was carried out at the local head post office of the area in which the office of the LCO is situated in an offline mode with Head Postmaster as their registering authority. The manual registration process was cumbersome and time consuming. Also, the area of operations upon obtaining registration was limited to specific areas.

The salient features of the amended Rules in respect of LCO Registration are:-

LCOs shall apply for new registration or renewal of registration online on the Broadcast Seva Portal of MIB (www.new.broadcastseva.gov. in) and the registration certificate shall be issued online.

LCO registrations shall be granted or renewed for a period of five years; The processing fee for | More on P6

In the remaining 14 districts, the respective | More on P6 **J&K Govt Employees Defer DA Protest** 

Administration Agrees To Hold Talks

**Press Trust Of India** 

Srinagar: An organisation representing Jammu and Kashmir government employees Friday deferred a scheduled protest programme to press for their demands, including the release of the pending Dearness Allowance (DA) and GP fund.

The decision was announced by Fayaz Shah, president of the Jammu and Kashmir Employees Coordination Committee (JKECC), at a press conference here.

Fayaz said about 7000 employee leaders and volunteers from various districts of the valley were ready to hit the streets on Friday "as part of our mega protest programme".

"I got a call | More on P6

# **AIIMS Awantipora To Be Functional By Nov 2025: Chief Secy**

#### **Observer News Service**

LG to summon the Assembly,'

sources said. Sources disclosed

that the budget session is likely

to start somewhere between

February 10 to 15 and would

Minister

Abdullah, who is also the min-

ister in-charge of the Finance

department, will present the

budget. This would be the first

time Omar Abdullah would be

presenting the budget. In six

years of | More on P6

Omar

last for three to four weeks.

Chief

Jammu: All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Awantipora is expected to be made functional by the end of November this year, Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo said on Friday.

Dulloo held a joint meeting of the authorities of AIIMS, Awantipora, Health & Medical Education, PWD, Ial Shakti and CPWD regarding early completion of this vital health facility in the region. Those who attended the

meeting included Executive Director, AIIMS, Awantipora, Commissioner, Divisional Kashmir, Secretary, PWD, Secretary, H&ME, Deputy Pulwama, Commissioner, Chief Engineer, CPWD, DG,

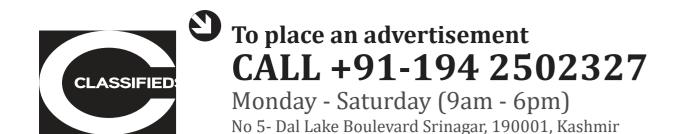


Budget besides others.

The Chief Secretary assessed the status of physical infrastructure raised at the site, so far, along with proposed dates of its completion. He enquired about the current status of labourers available for execution of work there and impressed upon the agency to enhance their number immediately after the winter season is over. He also reviewed the water supply scheme and the approach road leading to the institute. He directed the Jal Shakti Department to complete the first phase of the WSS including 3 bore wells and other allied works by May this year for providing adequate water supply to the hospital to become functional. Dulloo further assessed

the additional land and other requirements for future expansion of | More on P6

amending the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 (the Rules), to streamline the Local Cable Operator (LCO) registration process. Effective from today, LCO registrations will



# KASHMIR OBSERVER® 2

# Nutritional Support To Half Of TB Households Could Prevent 4.5% Deaths

#### Press Trust Of India

Providing nutritional support to half the households with individuals undergoing tuberculosis (TB) treatment could prevent roughly 4.5 per cent TB-related deaths and 2.2 per cent of disease episodes by 2035, a modelling study has found.

The study, published in The Lancet Global Health journal, estimated that more than 3.6 lakh deaths and over 8.8 lakh TB cases could be averted through such intervention.

Typically, about 24 households would need to be treated of tuberculosis to prevent one death, while 10 would need to be treated to prevent one case, researchers, including those from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT), Chennai, estimated.

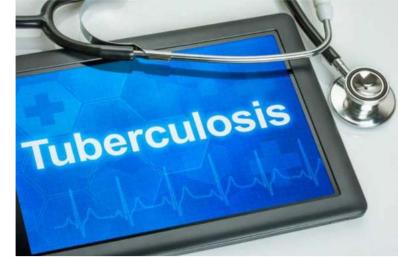
The nutritional intervention could have an additional cost of about \$ 1,349 million on the health system, with potential benefits of \$ 167 for every disability-adjusted life-year averted, they projected.

'Disability-adjusted life-year' is a metric that helps measure overall burden of disease.

The researchers said that about a fifth of the world's tuberculosis incidence is attributable to undernutrition, with the ratio increasing to more than a third in India.

A 2023 study, published in The Lancet journal, by the same research team had enrolled household contacts of 2,800 patients with tuberculosis across 28 units of the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme in four districts of Jharkhand.

The patients received food rations of 1,200 kilocalories (52 grams of protein per day with micronutrients) for six months, with their household



contacts receiving monthly food rations and micronutrients having 750 kilocalories (23 grams of protein per day with micronutrients).

Results showed that over a two-year follow up period, tuberculosis incidence in a household dropped by 39-48 per cent, simply by extending nutritional support to household contacts of the infected. In this study, the researchers used the

In this study, the researchers used the 2023 study's model to inform estimates of the impact and costs of nutritional support.

"We found that if India can deliver a nutritional intervention to 50 per cent of households in which individuals are receiving tuberculosis treatment, nearly 9,00,000 episodes of tuberculosis would be averted, and nearly 4,00,000 deaths, at a cost of \$ 167 per disability-adjusted life-year averted," the authors wrote.

Providing nutritional support is likely to have substantial health and economic benefits among the households

willing to pay, even at the national level, they said.

A higher fraction of the tuberculosis burden could be averted by focussing on states having high levels of undernutrition, further improving the value for money, the authors added.

"Considering the equity and health benefits beyond tuberculosis, our study likely underestimates both impact and cost-effectiveness," the authors wrote.

A December 2024 study, published in the journal PLoS Medicine, estimated over 62 million cases of tuberculosis and eight million deaths in the two decades up to 2040, along with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) loss of more than \$ 146 billion.

However, improving case detection rates and meeting the World Health Organization's End-TB target of 90 per cent could reduce disease burden by 75-90 per cent, and macroeconomic burden by \$ 120.2 billion, the study projected.

# Eye's Retina Can Indicate Risk Of Stroke Without Lab Tests, Study Suggests

#### **Press Trust Of India**

B lood vessels in the eye's retina can help predict risk of stroke as accurately as known risk factors, such as high cholesterol, without requiring invasive lab tests, according to a research.

The study, published in the journal 'Heart', described a 'vascular fingerprint', comprising 29 indicators of blood vessel health.

Researchers, including those from The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, Australia, explained that the intricate network of blood vessels in the retina The researchers added that previous studies have not fully explored the retina's potential in predicting the risk of stroke due to reasons including variable findings and inconsistent use of 'fundus photography' – a specialised imaging technique for the back of the eye. For the study, the team analysed fundus images of 68,753 individuals in the UK Biobank dataset with respect to five characteristics of the blood ves-

the UK Biobank dataset with respect to five characteristics of the blood vessel network in the retina, including density, twistedness and complexity of veins and arteries. Over an average follow-up period of

Over an average follow-up period of 12.5 years, nearly 750 participants were found to have had a stroke.

blood vessels), while one was related to twistedness.

A change in the density of the blood vessels in the retina was related with a 10-19 per cent increase in stroke risk, while a change in calibre with a 10-14 per cent increase.

Further, a decrease in complexity and twistedness of the retina's vascular network was associated with an increase in stroke risk by 10.5 per cent to almost 20 per cent.

"Retinal vascular analysis, a non-invasive screening approach for stroke risk assessment, performed better than traditional risk stratification models," the authors wrote.

#### Office of the Naib-Tehsildar Pattan Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth

#### Public Notice

The registar Births and deaths (EO Municipal Council Pattan/ Block Development Officer Lolpora) has submitted a case file pertaining to Birth of Liyana Binti Tanveer D/o Tanveer Ahmad Sofi R/o Bagi Rehmat Iqbalnagar Sopore Tehsil Sopore District Baramulla with vertified date of event (birth) as 27-10-2020 occurred at SDH Pattan

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

#### Office of the Naib-Tehsildar Pattan Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth

#### Public Notice

The registar Births and deaths (EO Municipal Council Pattan/ Block Development Officer Lolpora) has submitted a case file pertaining to Birth of Ammad Malik S/o Malik Jamsheed Ahmad R/o Palhallan Tehsil Pattan District Baramulla with vertified date of event (birth) as 08-07-2019 occurred at SDH Pattan

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

#### Office of the Naib-Tehsildar Pattan Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth

#### **Public Notice**

The registar Births and deaths (EO Municipal Council Pattan/ Block Development Officer Lolpora) has submitted a case file pertaining to Birth of Kashif Javeed S/o Javeed Ahmad Najar R/o Model Town Sopore Tehsil Sopore District Baramulla with vertified date of event (birth) as 07-06-2021 occurred at SDH Pattan

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

#### Office of the Naib-Tehsildar Pattan Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth

#### **Public Notice**

The registar Births and deaths (EO Municipal Council Pattan/ Block Development Officer Lolpora) has submitted a case file pertaining to Birth of Zihra Mushtaq D/o Mushtaq Ahmad Sheikh R/o Panjipora Khoie Tehsil Khoie District Baramulla with vertified date of event (birth) as 22-06-2021 occurred at SDH Pattan In this connection, if anybody having any objection to the issuance of said registration may contact this office within seven (07) days, after which no objections shall be entertained. Executive Magistrate 1st Class fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan Subject:- Grant Of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & Style "M/S The Serene Hospitality situated at Al Sheikh Plaza Main Chowk Peerbagh New AirPort Road Srinagar J&K-190014

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas I, Mr. Ishfaq Mohammad Sheikh S/O-Mr Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh R/O-Peerbagh New AirPort Srinagar J&K-190014 intend to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under the name & style of M/S TwoThe Serene Hospitality situated at Al Sheikh Plaza Main Chowk Peerbagh New Air-Port Road Srinagar J&K-190014 KASHMIR under tourist trade act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will submit state subject / Domicile certificate , Qualification Certificate, pan cardr \ Experience Certificate( Minimum 5years). Police character certificate, Bank statement (minimum balance 10000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent deed duly attested by sub Registrar, printing material (Latter head / Visiting card ) Photograph of the unit (indoor and outdoor) and Two passport size photographs to the department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist I Prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency. / Adventure Tour Operator Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12) befre my

row as per Jack Registration or Jourist (Trade Act 19/8/82/2011/12) befre my case is processed for my registration by the Competent Authority, the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/ Financial institutions/Bank/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration(email id; ddtregl23@gmail.com) within a period of 7days from the publication of this notice in a leading newspaper/newspapers of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained. IRD

Subject:- Grant Of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & Style "M/S The Serene Hospitality situated at Al Sheikh Plaza Main Chowk Peerbagh New AirPort Road Srinagar J&K-190014

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas I, Mr. Ishfaq Mohammad Sheikh S/O-Mr Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh R/O-Peerbagh New AirPort Srinagar J&K-190014 intend to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under the name & style of M/S TwoThe Serene Hospitality situated at Al Sheikh Plaza Main Chowk Peerbagh New AirPort Road Srinagar J&K-190014 KASHMIR under tourist trade act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will submit state subject / Domicile certificate , Qualification Certificate, pan cardr \Experience Certificate(Minimum Syears). Police character certificate, Bank statement (minimum balance 10000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent deed duly attested by sub Registrar, printing material (Latter head / Visiting card ) Photograph of the unit (indoor and outdoor) and Two passport size photographs to the department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist I Prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency. / Adventure Tour Operator Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12) befre my case is processed for my registration by the Competent Authority, the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/ Financial institutions/Bank/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration (email id; ddtregl23@gmail.com) within a period of 7days from the publication of this notice in a leading newspaper/newspapers of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained.

Subject:- Grant Of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & Style "M/S Travel With Grace Tour and Travel situated at Main Market Gulmarg Road Mangloora

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas I, Mr. Maroofa Nazir D/o Nazir Ah Shah R/o Takiya Batpora Kun-Zer intend to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under the name & style of M/S Travel With Grace Tour and Travel situated at Main Market Gulmarg Road Mangloora under tourist trade act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will submit state subject / Domicile certificate , Qualification Certificate, pan card \ Experience Certificate(Minimum 5years). Police character certificate, Bank statement (minimum balance 10000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent deed duly attested by sub Registrar, printing material (Latter head / Visiting card ) Photograph of the unit (indoor and outdoor) and Two passport size photographs to the department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist I Prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency. / Adventure Tour Operator Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/2) befre my case is processed for my registration by the Competent Authority, the matter is

case is processed for my registration by the Competent Authority, the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/ Financial institutions/Bank/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration(email id; ddtregl23@gmail.com) within a period of 7days from the publication of this notice in a leading newspaper/newspapers of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained.

shares common physical features with those in the brain.

Therefore, the retina's blood vessels are an ideal candidate for assessing the damage caused due to chronic ill-health, such as diabetes, and the approach is implementable and wellsuited for primary healthcare and lowresource settings, they said. The researchers found a total of 118 measures that could serve as indicators of stroke risk, of which 29 were significantly associated with risk of experiencing stroke for the first time. Of the 29 indicators of stroke risk, more than half pertained to the density characteristic, eight to complexity, three to calibre (length, diameter of

"Given that age and sex are readily available, and retinal parameters can be obtained through routine fundus photography, this model presents a practical and easily implementable approach for incident stroke risk assessment, particularly for primary healthcare and low-resource settings," they wrote.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the number plate of my Auto bearing Regd no: JK22C 4473 while travelling from Nagbal to Shopian. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO Shopian within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Zaffar Bashir Thoker S/o Bashir Ahmad Thoker R/o Nowpora Imam Sahib Shopian

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TARIQ NEWS AGENCY	M.K. CHOWK	MUZAMIL NEWS AGENCY	SOURA	
GULZAR NEWS AGENCY	SOURA	SUBHAN NEWS AGENCY	SKIMS SOURA	
HASAN NEWS AGENCY	SOURA	NISAR NEWS AGENCY	LAL BAZAR	
BASHIR NEWS AGENCY	BUCHPORA	BASHIR NEWS AGENCY	HAZRAT BA	
AIJAZ NEWS AGENCY	HAZRAT BAL	YASIR NEWS AGENCY	ZAKOORA	
FOR ANY QUERY, CALL CIRCULATION DEPTT. : 0194-2502327				

<b>GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU &amp; KASHMIR</b>
<b>OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI</b>
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class) Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.
PUBLIC NOTICE
The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD DANIYAL BHAT S/O GHULAM MO- HAMMAD BHAT R/O HAIL JAGEER Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 05/02 /2005 and event has been shown tobe occured at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection. if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

#### Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri

#### **Public Notice**

fko

I have applied for the issuance of DOB certificate in favour of my son Mohammad Moazim who was born on 16-04-2020. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/ her objection in the office of the BDO Wagoor or Tehsil Office Wagoora within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Tariq Ahmad Hajam F/o Mohammad Moazim R/o Vizer FKO

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fko



# KASHMIR OBSERVER<sup>®</sup> Srinagar | Saturday | 18-01-2025

### **KU Secures 4 Star Rating In AICTE IIC 6.0**

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: The University of Kashmir's (KU) Centre for Innovation, Incubation, and Entrepreneurship (CIIE) acting as Institution Innovation Cell (IIC) has achieved a notable 4-star rating in the AICTE Innovation Council (IIC) 6.0 for the academic year 2023-24.

Institutions with 4-stars are considered to be best performing institutions having streamlined innovation and entrepreneurship campus ecosystem.

KU Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Nilofer Khan congratulated the entire CIIE team for their consistent efforts and remarkable progress.

"This achievement is a reflection of the varsity's commitment to building a robust ecosystem for innovation and research. We will continue to support initiatives that encourage creativity and entrepreneurship among our students and faculty," she said.

Over the last four years, the University has steadily improved its rating from two stars to the esteemed four-star status, reflecting its growth in innovation-driven activities.

**Observer News Service** 

Deputy

Srinagar: The District

Election Officer (DEO)/

Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-

Ud-Din Bhat on Friday

chaired a meeting at Meet-

ing Hall of DC Office Com-

plex here to review the

plans and preparations for

celebration of 15th Nation-

al Voters' Dav-2025 to be

celebrated on January 25.

trict Election Officer, the

meeting was attended by

all the Electoral Registra-

tion Officers (EROs) and

Besides Deputy Dis-

Commissioner

**DEO Srinagar Finalizes** 

**Of National Voters Day** 

**Preparations For Celebration** 

While congratulating the entire CIIE team, Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal said, "This accomplishment shows the University's dedication to developing innovation and creating opportunities for our students and faculty to excel."

Director, IoT Zakura campus KU, Prof. M. Tariq Banday, who is also the Chairman CIIE KU while congratulating the team said, "The 4-star rating is a collective achievement that highlights our teamwork and dedication. The CIIE team remains dedicated to advancing research, creativity, and enterprise to make impactful contributions to society."

The University also acknowledged the efforts of Dr. Bilal Ahmad Malik, Coordinator CIIE KU, the entire team at CIIE and the teaching and non-teaching staff whose commitment and hard work have been instrumental in this success.

This prestigious recognition reflects the University's dedication to developing innovation and entrepreneurship and reaffirms the varsity's position as a leading hub for innovation and entrepreneurship in the region—(KNO)

AEROs of eight Assembly

Constituencies of Srinagar

District and all concerned

DEO/DC discussed in detail

the preparations to be made

and the activities to be con-

ducted on the occasion of

15th NVD-2025. It was decid-

ed that the celebrations will

be held at various locations

across the District. There

will be a main District lev-

el function, besides there

will also be celebratory

events across various As-

sembly Constituencies of

the District.

During the meeting, the

District level Officers.



Braving severe cold, gardeners sowing tulip bulbs in Tulip garden. KO Photo Abid Bhat

# **Concerns Rise Over Private Maid Agencies In City**

#### Agencies

Srinagar: The growing reliance on private human resource agencies for domestic helpers in Srinagar has raised serious concerns following repeated incidents of theft and other crimes involving non-local maids. These agencies, which supply domestic helpers, maids, and babysitters to

Kashmiri families under formal agreements, must be now under scrutiny for their operational practices and the safety risks posed to households. In the latest incident, Sri-

nagar Police successfully solved a burglary case involving a non-local maid accused of theft in Umerabad, Srinagar. Acting promptly on the complaint, the police arrested the suspect and recovered

stolen jewellery worth lakhs of rupees from her possession. In recent years, the demand for domestic helpers has surged in Srinagar, driven by changing lifestyles and increasing household responsibilities. To meet

hiestyles and increasing household responsibilities. To meet this demand, hundreds of private placement agencies have sprung up across the Valley. These agencies enter into formal agreements with families, outlining terms that include bearing the general

inf

expenses of maids, including health costs.

While these agreements aim to provide a structured and transparent process, the lack of stringent regulations has led to lapses in accountability. Many agencies fail to conduct comprehensive background checks or provide sufficient details about the helpers they recruit, leaving families vulnerable to risks.

The burglary case is not an isolated incident. Srinagar has witnessed several cases in recent years involving domestic helpers accused of theft, fraud, and even violent crimes. These incidents have prompted calls for stricter monitoring of private placement agencies and better verification processes for domestic workers.

Experts and activists have emphasized the urgent need for a regulatory framework to oversee the functioning of private placement agencies in Kashmir. "These agencies operate in a largely unregulated environment, which creates room for exploitation and criminal activities," said Dr. Shabir Ahmad, a sociologist talking with the Associated News Bureau. "The government must introduce guidelines to ensure accountability and protect both families and domestic helpers." Proposed measures include mandatory registration of agencies, detailed documentation of employed workers, and regular audits by relevant authorities. Public awareness campaigns can also play a crucial role in educating families about verifying the credentials of domestic helpers before employing them.

The public reaction to these incidents has been one of growing apprehension. Many families are reconsidering their reliance on private agencies, with some opting for personal referrals instead. "We need domestic help, but the lack of trust in these agencies is a big concern," said Shahina, a Srinagar resident.

"The government must step in to regulate this sector and restore confidence."

The swift resolution of Umerabad, Srinagar burglary case by Srinagar Police is commendable, but it underscores the broader issue of safety and trust in employing domestic helpers. The growing industry of private placement agencies in Kashmir requires urgent oversight to prevent such incidents and ensure the well-being of families and workers alike. Stricter regulations, coupled with public awareness, can create a safer environment for all stakeholders involved. (ANB)



### This Day In History

1446

1884 - General Charles Gordon departs London for Khartoum

**ISHA** 

7:15

- 1896 British troops occupy Kumasi, West Africa
- 1913 Turkish-Greek sea battle near Troy 1919 - The Paris peace conference (aka the Versailles peace conference) opens to draw up the treaties formally ending the Great War (WWI)
- 1941 World War II: A counter-offensive is launched by the British against the Italians in East Africa
- 1943 Soviets announce they have broken the long siege of Leningrad by Nazi Germany
- 1943 US rations bread & metal banning presliced bread reduce bakery demand for metal parts
- 1943 The first Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
- 1945 Soviet troops capture Krakow, Poland.
- 1945 Soviet Armed Forces enter Krakow and push Germans out only to eventually occupy entire country.
- 1947 Small river steamer sank on Yangtze River, kills 400
- 1959 Ruth Jessen wins LPGA Tampa Golf Open
- 1960 US & Japan sign joint defense treaty
- 1960 Capital Airlines Flight 20 crashes in Virginia, killing all 50 people on-board
- 1968 USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalitinsk USSR
- 1969 Expanded 4 party Vietnam peace talks began in Paris
- 1969 United Airlines Flight 266 crashes into Santa Monica Bay, killing all 38 people on-board
- 1974 Israel & Egypt sign weapons accord

#### PET Scan Available

#### At SKIMS For Rs 14.5K, For Poor At Rs 10K'

#### Agencies

Srinagar: The Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) in Srinagar offers Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scans at a standard rate of Rs 14,500 per patient.

Medical Superintendent Dr Farooq Ahmad Jan said that for economically disadvantaged patients, SKIMS provides PET scans at a reduced rate of Rs 10,000.

Replying to a query about private diagnostic centre charging Rs 18,000 at par with SKIMS, he said that it is wrong as SKIMS charges only Rs 14,500 per PET Scan while for poor patients, the charges are just Rs 10,000 and in case of second PET Scan for all patients only Rs 10,000 are charged.

He said that SKIMS is committed to provide better health care facilities with latest diagnostic facilities at minimal charges. It is important to note that SKIMS is currently the only government hospital in Kashmir equipped with a PET scan machine—(KNO)

### Wani Family Bereaved

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of Wife of Gh. Rasool Wani resident of Soura near Sabzi Mandi, who passed away on 16th January,2025. The congregational Fateh Khwani will be held on Sunday, 19th January, 2025 at their ancestral graveyard situated at Malik Sahib Soura at 11AM *Note:* Ladies are requested not to bring any eatables alongwith.

Bereaved Family G R Electricals, Zahid Enterprises Mujeeb Mushtaq, Dr. Arshid Wani

7006151988 7006744416 9796333353

NORTHERN RAILWAY					
on behalf of	E-AUCTION NOTICE e Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/FS, Northern Railway, Firozpur for and behalf of President of India invites E-Auction from eligible and registered bidders the following works over Firozpur Division:				
Catalogue No.	Auction Start	Name of work			
EAFZR- SLR25-11	31.01.25 at 11:00 Hrs.	Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 15212/F1, 14630/F1, 14504/F1, 19226/F1, 19226/R1, 14630/R1, 12414/R1, 13152/F1, 19416/F1 & 19612/F1.			
For other details and registration, please visit Railway website www.ireps.gov.in					
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 183/25					

### RASM-E-CHAHRUM

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved Sanaullah Khan S/o Ghulam Ahmad Khan R/o Gutlibagh, Ganderbal, on 15th January 2025. May Almighty Allah (sWT) bestow His choicest blessings on the departed soul. Fateh Khuwani will be observed on Sunday, 19 January 2025 at Sheri Bhat, Opposite Hanfiya Mosque, Alamgari Bazar, Srinagar.

> Bereaved: Arif Ali Khan Contact: 9596940348





With profound grief we announce the sad demise of Mrs Ghulam Mohamad Rishi of Alamdar Colony Lalbazar Srinagar on Friday (17th of January 2025) after brief illness. Ijtimaye Fateha Khwani shall be held on Sunday 20th of January 2025 at 11.00 AM at our ancestral graveyard near Gani Memorial Stadium, Rajorikadal Srinagar. After that a Duaiya majlis will be held at our residence Alamdar Colony ( C ) Al-Farooq Lane near Boys RP School, Lal Bazar Srinagar, Inshallah.

Ladies are requested not to bring any kind of eatables with them.

**BEREAVED** 

Rishi Family 9796137530 | 9419094265

- 1977 Imran Khan takes 12 wickets in match for
- Pakistan win at the SCG 1977 - Scientists identify a previously unknown bacterium as the cause of the mysterious Legionnaires' disease.
- 1977 Australia's worst rail disaster occurs in Sydney, killing 83 people
- 1978 Geoff Boycott captains England for the 1st time, v Pakistan at Karachi
- 1978 Thiokol conducts 2nd test firing of space shuttle's SRB
- 1981- Iran accepts US offer of \$7.9 billion in frozen assets
- 1983 IOC restores Jim Thorpe's Olympic medals 70 years after they were taken from him for being paid \$25 in semipro baseball
- 1988 Airliner crashes in SW China, killing all 108 on board
- 1989 Astronomers discover pulsar in remnants of Supernova 1987A (LMC)
- 1989 IBM announces earnings up 10.4% in 1988
- 1990 South Africa says it is reconsidering ban on African National Congress
- 1991 Iraq launches SCUD missiles against Israel
- 1991 US acknowledges CIA and US Army paid Manuel Noriega \$320,000 over his career
- 1991 Eastern Air Lines goes out of business after 62 years, citing financial problems.
- 1993 Martin Luther King Jr. holiday observed in all 50 states of the USA for 1st time

From KO Archives

## Child Back After 12 Years

#### **Observer News Service**

ARAMULLA -A child who had crossed over to the other side of the line of con¬trol (LoC) at the age of five has returned to his home at Keran in the border district of Kupwara after turning 17. Identified as Babu Bhat s/o Taj Din Bhat, he crossed the LoC Thursday to the pleas¬ant surprise of his grieving family.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 18 January, 2001)

# *Think* Opinion, Analysis, Essays

Send your write ups and feedback at editpage.ko@gmail.com





# Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

### While the J&K RTI portal is a step forward, significant gaps remain, including the exclusion of key public authorities, technical issues, and lack of user support

# RTI Goes Digital in J&K But With Flaws

inally, the RTI has gone online in Jammu & Kashmir. As campaigners for the Right to Information Act (RTI), it has been our long-pending demand. My colleagues and I have been advocating for this for many years. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah recently launched the online RTI portal, which aims to enhance transparency and accountability in governance while simplifying access to information. The portal was formally launched on January 10, 2025, at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu. The Chief Minister was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, several Cabinet Ministers, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, and other senior officials.

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

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

#### Flaws in the Portal

As an RTI campaigner, I, along with my colleagues, have noticed that the RTI portal is not user-friendly and lacks many features that could make it more effective. The J&K RTI portal is not modeled on the national RTI portal, which is used to access information from central government offices.

Within days of its launch, the portal developed a technical snag and stopped working. Though the issue was later rectified, such faults in a newly launched RTI portal demoralize applicants who have waited years for RTI to go online in J&K.

Many district officers designated as Public Information Officers (PIOs) are missing from the portal, including Chief Education Officers (CEOs), Chief Executive Officers, and Executive Officers of Municipal Councils and Committees. Key positions such as Chief Horticulture Officers, Chief Agriculture Officers, and Block Development Officers (BDOs), who frequently receive RTI applications offline, are also not included. Moreover, applicants cannot seek information from CEOs of various Tourism Development Authorities.

It is perplexing that if Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) are included in the portal, why are Chief Education Officers (CEOs), Chief Horticulture Officers (CHOs), and Chief Agriculture Officers (CAOs) excluded?

J&K Bank, KU, JU Not Included Several significant public authorities, in-



cluding J&K Bank, Kashmir University (KU), Jammu University (JU), and others, are missing from the portal. This omission prevents applicants from accessing information from these institutions under the RTI Act.

The portal also lacks a mobile-friendly version. Unlike other websites that automatically adjust to cell phone browsers, this portal faces significant usability issues.

It is worth noting that the State Administrative Council and J&K State Information Commission (SIC) declared J&K Bank a Public Authority many years ago, yet the bank remains reluctant to provide information under the RTI Act. The government must ensure J&K Bank complies with transparency requirements and provides information through the portal.

#### Lack of Support from GAD Team

The General Administration Department (GAD) is the nodal agency responsible for implementing the RTI Act in J&K and managing the online RTI portal. However, there is a lack of coordination and support from the GAD team.

An official email address, gadit6648@gmail. com, has been provided for portal-related queries. Despite sending multiple emails, my colleague Syed Adil and I have received no response. On January 13, 2025, when the portal was down, numerous users contacted GAD via email but did not receive even an acknowledgment.

The Secretary of GAD and the Chief Secretary must address this issue seriously. A dedicated WhatsApp number could be introduced to provide real-time assistance for technical issues related to the RTI portal.

#### Issues with Non-J&K Cell Numbers

Another significant issue is that cell phone numbers registered outside J&K do not receive OTPs when filing RTI applications. Under the RTI Act, every Indian citizen has the right to access information from public authorities in J&K, just as they do in other states and union territories. This technical oversight excludes J&K residents living outside the UT, who may have phone numbers registered in Delhi, UP, Bangalore, or elsewhere.

#### Conclusion

Filing online RTI applications offers numerous benefits. Applicants no longer need to travel to government offices or purchase Indian Postal Orders (IPOs), which are often unavailable in post offices. Moreover, the online portal ensures that PIOs cannot claim non-receipt of RTI applications, enhancing transparency and accountability.

While the J&K RTI portal is a step forward, significant gaps remain, including the exclusion of key public authorities, technical issues, and lack of user support. The GAD must address these shortcomings to make the portal a truly effective and accessible tool for citizens in Jammu & Kashmir.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is Chairman & Founder of Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement

# Putting the 'A' (accountability) in AI

#### Rameesh Kailasam & Ankur Jain

he emergence and development of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare signifies one of the biggest shifts in modern medicine. From early diagnosis and detection to personalised treatment plans, AI is pushing the limits of healthcare and opening up new possibilities which look promising.

However, to quote an oft-used line, "With great power comes an even greater responsibility." To make sure that innovation does not outpace accountability, especially in a field with as high stakes as healthcare where lives hang in the balance, the promise of transparency, ethics, and trust must anchor every step of the journey. Trust is the bedrock of healthcare, and accountability is how AI should ideally earn it here. Without these, the promise that AI brings risks being overshadowed by doubt, inefficiency, and unintended consequences.

#### Transparency: The pillar of trust

Picture this: Treatment for a critical illness is delivered by an AI system. Would you accept its judgement without knowing how it reached that conclusion? Transparency is essential for fostering trust in such high-stakes scenarios. A recent Wolters Kluwer survey found that 90% of consumers believe clinicians need to be transparent about their use of AI in healthcare decisions, underscoring the critical role of "explainability" in patient acceptance.

Traceable AI systems ensure that every choice made is explainable, reproducible, and open to scrutiny. This isn't just about adhering to regulations like the European Union's (EU) AI Act or FDA guidelines for AI/machine learning in medical devices; it's about building trust in a technology that is crucial for human health. Without transparency, AI risks turning into a "black box", which, in healthcare, is not just a technological challenge but also a moral imperative. The survey further noted that nearly four in five consumers are concerned about generative AI being used in medical diagnosis, reflecting the importance of accountability to mitigate errors and ensure ethical AI deployment.



#### AI as a partner, not replacement

AI lacks intuition, contextual understanding, and the ability to empathise — qualities that are fundamental in healthcare decision-making. According to EY's 2024 survey, while 96% of healthcare executives acknowledge AI's potential to improve efficiency, 83% express reservations about its role in tasks like personalising medical plans or assisting in diagnosis. Moreover, 91% stress the importance of human oversight to ensure ethical and effective outcomes.

This underscores the necessity of integrating human supervision at every stage of AI decisionmaking. AI excels at analysing vast data sets and identifying patterns that are imperceptible to the human eye. However, it must remain a tool and not become an autonomous decision-maker. The healthcare systems of the future will derive their strength from collaboration, where AI enhances human expertise without replacing the compassion and ethical judgement that only humans can provide. In this synergy lies AI's true potential — as a partner, not a replacement — empowering healthcare systems to deliver care that is ef-

#### Treatment for a

critical illness is delivered by an AI system. Would you accept its judgement without knowing how it reached that conclusion? Transparency is essential for fostering trust in such high-stakes scenarios. A recent Wolters Kluwer survey found that 90% of consumers believe clinicians need to be transparent about their use of AI in healthcare decisions, underscoring the critical role of "explainability" in patient acceptance ficient, ethical, and personalised.

#### Safeguarding patient data

Equally, accountability also demands an unwavering focus on data privacy and security. In healthcare, data isn't just raw information. It's a deeply personal story of a patient's health journey, often reflecting their most vulnerable moments. With cyber threats on the rise, safeguarding this data is more than a regulatory checkbox — it's a moral obligation.

Compliance with global privacy standards like the US' Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation or India's proposed Digital Private Data Protection Act provide a foundation, ensuring AI systems adhere to strict guidelines for safeguarding sensitive information. But accountability doesn't stop at compliance. It requires proactive measures such as advanced encryption, strict anonymisation protocols, and governance systems that guarantee patient data is safe and used only to enhance AI-driven care. If we lose the trust, we risk losing the very progress we aim to achieve.

#### The path forward

As AI continues to redefine the healthcare landscape, its long-term impact depends on how responsibly we build and deploy it. Accountability must be more than an abstract principle — it must be a practice embedded at every stage of the journey, from development to deployment. When transparency, human collaboration, and data privacy form the core of AI systems, the technology can transform healthcare into a trustworthy, smarter, and more compassionate ecosystem.

The "A" in AI will then stand for more than "artificial"; it will stand for "accountability". In this lies the blueprint for a future where technology serves humanity — not just with intelligence, but with integrity, thereby empowering healthcare systems to deliver results more efficiently.

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

KASHMIR OBSERVER® Srinagar | Saturday | 18-01-2025



# **Feats of a Kashmiri Polymath**

### Dr. Sohail Nasti: A Rheumatologist, Rescue Pilot, and Changemaker

#### Nazir Ganaie Dabirah Hassan

ORN in the quiet village of Sarnal in Anantnag, Dr. Sohail Nasti's Din Allanting, Die Sont Continents and professions. As Kashmir's first research scientist in rheumatology, a rescue pilot, a cricketer and a global philanthropist, he has redefined what it means to live a life of purpose. In this insightful interview with Kashmir Observer, Dr. Nasti reflects on his diverse career, his efforts to revolutionize healthcare in Kashmir, and his mission to empower the next generation while leaving an enduring legacy of hope and progress.

#### KO: Welcome to Kashmir! It was a pleasure checking out your profile and seeing all the amazing hats you wear.

Dr. Sohail: Thank you for inviting me to Kashmir Observer. I am very glad to be a part of this world that people call 'paradise on earth'. You can see the artistry of Allah here, and truly, this is paradise on earth.

#### KO: You have been brought up in a small village in Sarnal, Anantnag. Tell us about your journey from your native village to Srinagar and beyond?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: I did my schooling at Hanafia School in Anantnag. Alhamdulillah, I had a good childhood. However, due to my naughtiness, I was shifted to a higher secondary school, where I completed my education before joining SKIMS Medical College. I was inclined towards medical science, and my parents too wanted to see me as a doctor. Ultimately, it was my fate that made me one. I studied at SKIMS Medical College and completed my internship in 2000. I was selected through the Public Service Commission and got my first posting in 2001.

#### KO: But why did you leave the government job?

ve it's not a person who chooses his

part of rescue missions in Japan, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Pakistan

KO: So, were you the first Rheumatologist from Kashmir?

Dr. Sohail: No, I was the first research Scientist in Rheumatology from Kashmir.

#### KO: From doing an MBBS to specializing in a specific field, and then deciding to switch gear. Surely, there were people who supported you, and perhaps others who didn't?

Dr. Sohail: Absolutely. My teachers were instrumental, but above all, my mother was a major influence. She would always tell me: "Be someone the world will remember. Never hide behind brands or designer things because they don't define who you are. True value comes from within." I still recall a moment in Dubai. I was inside a swimming pool and someone recognized me in that state saying, "Oh, you're Captain Sohail." That's when my mother's words resonated with me: "If you've built yourself into something of substance, that's your brand not your expensive clothes."

#### KO: Any anecdotes from your young age which made you take radical decisions?

Yes. I was once heading home from college in Srinagar and sought a lift from a rich relative (a well respected doctor) who snubbed me saying 'get used to traveling in a bus'. Alhamdulillah I now own a fleet of

paths one can take in aviation, but I was drawn to rescue missions. I was also interested in working in narcotics control. During my time in Haiti, I collaborated with the American Marines as a border control specialist. Displacement often leads to increased activity by drug mafias, and I was able to counter this effectively.

Drug mafias destroy communities and youth, so I pledged to work against them, especially in border regions. I believe one should lead a challenging and meaningful life.

Later I joined various departments in the UK to deliver my professional skills which I gained working across the world. Later I was trained as a pilot, which was like the cherry on top. I feel fortunate to have flown various aircraft, including the Cessna, R22, R44, R66, LongRanger, Puma and AS350Squirrel.

While working with the United Nations in Syria, our convoy was ambushed in Aleppo. My driver died in my lap and I sustained serious injuries. I was in a coma for two months. Alhamdulillah, I recovered. I believe Allah has given me a second chance in this world and since then. I've taken life very seriously. I want to make the most of my time and leave a meaningful legacy, living boldly and purposefully.

KO: Having spent significant time in the West and other countries. how does it feel to return to Kashmir? What is the biggest difference you see in the medical profession





WHERE CESAREAN DELIVERIES OUTNUMBER NATURAL BIRTHS. This unnatural trend raises concerns about the future stability of our community. Labor pain is part of the natural process, and by bypassing it, we are challenging the will of God

KO: You referred to labor rooms in Kashmir hospitals negatively. Given the patient rush in government hospitals, don't you think there's a nexus forcing people toward private hospitals for cesarean deliveries?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: It's true that government hospitals are overwhelmed, but blaming the government entirely is not fair. We need to change our attitudes. In the UK, people volunteer to clean hospitals, but here, we litter them.

Moreover, private hospitals exploit patients by directing them away from government facilities. Government hospitals have become dens of bribery. We must work together to address these issues instead of passing the blame.

#### KO: Tell us about your philanthropy. What led to the founding of Mother Helpage?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: Mother Helpage was born out of a personal loss-my mother passed away in 1994. At that time, I was playing cricket and idolized Imran Khan, who also lost his mother and started his charity. I found solace in following a similar path. While in medical college, I began doing charity work, partly to honor my mother and partly to spend my time productively. Today, Mother Helpage operates in over 35 countries.

KO: There are around 12,000 NGOs registered in Kashmir, some of which have been deregistered. How is Mother Helpage different from others?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: First of all, you need a clear vision and mission. Charity should make a real impact. For instance, we have installed over 9,000 water wells in India and abroad. We could boast about providing a

By leveraging our contacts in over 50 countries, we aim to revive Kashmiri culture and handicrafts and give it a global market.

#### KO: You were felicitated by an organization associated with Imran Khan. When did that happen, and what were the reactions?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: I was awarded by Imran Khan before he entered politics. At that time, we were both working for our mothers. Imran told me it was easier for him as he was a World Cup winner and a global brand. He appreciated my journey, acknowledging that I came from a small place without a big name. He gave me the Shaukat Khanum International Award, which was a great honor.

KO: Recently, Kashmir Observer reported a significant rise in cancer patients. Don't you think there's a need for an organization to support these patients financially? Should you consider partnering with SKIMS to assist cancer patients?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: I think the government needs to step in here. While people in Kashmir donate generously online, there's a lack of transparency, leading to wastage of funds. The government should create a mechanism where donations go into official accounts, ensuring the money benefits patients directly. For example, if a patient receives donations of ₹70 lakh but passes away, the remaining money often stays with the family instead of being returned. Transparency is crucial. The government could also start schemes offering discounts to cancer patients based on the stage of their illness.

KO: People in Kashmir often ribe medicin

path; it's the blessings of our creator. I'm thankful for being endowed with certain qualities. I consider myself an innovative person-I don't like staying at one place for



I've proven wrong the saving. "Jack of all trades. master of none." I'm a professionally gualified doctor, a certified pilot, and I've played firstclass cricket representing J&K in Ranji. Acting wasn't something I was born into, but one of my films was shortlisted for the Cannes Film Festival. As for singing, I collaborated with the legendary singer Naseebo Lal for my first song

too long. Coming from a family of 42 doctors, I felt I was getting lost in the crowd and wanted to do something different. While working with the government. I soon realized that I was a misfit in the system, as I was suspended multiple times during that period. In those days of lawlessness some people with influence would stop you in the corridor and demand prescription on cigarette covers. I would not obey. I was not satisfied with the kind of work I was doing. I believe

Kashmir has immense

talent, but the system

After completing

a one-year house job

in radiodiagnosis, I

pushes you down.

decided to leave Kashmir and qualified for exams abroad. My research on post-trauma stress-related inflammatory bone diseases took me to the University of Chicago and American College of Rheumatology. From there I traveled to various troubled places, including Afghanistan, and Syria, and worked with different militaries. Their dedication and discipline fascinated me and gave me new impetus to move beyond mere sitting at clinics and prescribing medicine to patients.

As adventure is perhaps in my DNA, I took a new plunge and qualified for civil aviation exams and became a rescue pilot. This career shift shocked my parents, as many members of our family-as I said around 40 of them-are doctors. I became the "odd one out." But I realized it's essential to pursue your passion.

Subsequently, I joined the Disaster Response Unit in the UK, US and a few more countries and served for many years. I was

#### and system?

KO: So you fly planes now. How do you feel up there?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: When we qualify as pilots, we have to fly solo. During my first solo flight, I flew at an altitude of 5,000 to 10,000 feet over London. Seeing the entire city from above made me feel so small and insignificant. I thought to myself, «If I can see everything from here, how much more can the Creator see?» That experience instilled in me a deep sense of humility and reinforced my belief in the oneness of Allah. It also taught me that no matter how high you soar, you must eventually return to the ground. Humility is essential; ego suits only the Almighty.

helicopters in the UK and several expensive

cars. But I remain true to my conscience

and in submission to my creator.

KO: You are a medical doctor, turned rescue pilot, a renowned philanthropist and also a musician. Amazing feat. You also were joined by distinguished Pakistani classical singer Naseebo Lal in one of your Sufi renditions.Which profession is closest to your heart? Is it medicine, being a rescue pilot, acting, or singing? Because your critics often say, "Sohail Nasti wants to be everything." Which one defines you the most?

Dr. Sohail: Passion is what truly defines a person, whether it's in medicine, flying, or playing cricket. Alhamdulillah, with Allah's blessings, I've proven wrong the saying, "Jack of all trades, master of none." I'm a professionally qualified doctor, a certified pilot, and I've played first-class cricket representing J&K in Ranji. Acting wasn't something I was born into, but one of my films was shortlisted for the Cannes Film Festival. As for singing, I collaborated with the legendary singer Naseebo Lal for my first song.

#### KO: You have a rank of captain. Could you tell us something about your association with various militaries?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: There are several

Dr. Sohail Nasti: In the UK, doctors compete professionally to achieve excellence, whereas in Kashmir, the competition seems more focused on financial gain. I must apologize to my colleagues, as I am also part of the medical fraternity here, but I feel we are not working together to set the system right.

For example, Kashmir is perhaps the only place in the world where cesarean deliveries outnumber natural births. This unnatural trend raises concerns about the future stability of our community. Labor pain is part of the natural process, and by bypassing it, we are challenging the will of God. The proliferation of private nursing homes has created a nexus that promotes cesareans, and I believe people should not compromise on this. Mothers should provide the best foundation for their children through natural processes.

#### KO: Cesarean deliveries are common in Kashmir. You mentioned it is rare in the UK. How does the government there handle this, and tell us something about "bathtub deliveries"?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: In the UK, pregnant women are encouraged to lead active lives and maintain healthy diets. I've seen women going to the gym during pregnancy. In Kashmir, however, it's the opposite-expecting mothers are told to rest completely.

In 2019, Alhamdulillah, I was blessed with twins. In the UK, families are encouraged to be present during childbirth. The labor rooms there are more comfortable than five-star hotels in India. Mothers are advised to relax in labor baths. Interestingly husbands are encouraged to be by the side of their wives in labour. It's a natural and beautiful experience.

In contrast, I've witnessed horrifying practices in Kashmir. At one hospital, the nurses refused to hand over a newborn to the mother, saying, "We need chai" (a bribe). Such cruelty, where a child is withheld for money, is appalling. We need to address these issues collectively as a community.

specific number of liters of water daily, but for me, that's not success. True impact lies in thoughts? Dr. Sohail Nasti: Self-medication



reducing diseases through such initiatives. Whatever we do, it must be in collaboration with the government. Mother Helpage has partnered with the United Nations for many years. While some charities faced discrepancies, leading to government bans that affected others, Alhamdulillah, everything is getting back on track.

#### KO: What kind of work does Mother Helpage focus on?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: Our work is region-specific and based on the needs of the people. In Africa, we tackle one set of problems, while in Kashmir, we address entirely different issues. From 2025 onwards, we aim to make Mother Helpage fully sustainable. We're planning to establish skill centers, partner with startups, and provide stability through employment and skills.

For instance, if we help someone build a well, we'll ensure they also develop a kitchen garden nearby, enabling them to grow their own food rather than relying on handouts.

#### KO: You've initiated skill development projects. Could you elaborate on those?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: We've opened skill development centers and trained around 500 girls so far. Our goal is to provide dignified livelihoods and make them stakeholders in their ventures.

is a form of addiction. When some of my relatives visit UK from Kashmir, their briefcases often contain more medicines than clothes. This is a very bad habit in Kashmir. You don't see such rampant use of medicines in other parts of the world. Even if you cross the Banihal Tunnel, you won't find as many medical stores as in Kashmir. Buying a pain killer in the UK is like getting a driving licence in Kashmir.

#### KO: You've produced popular music videos and have worked in films. Do you think Kashmir needs its own film industry?

Dr. Sohail Nasti: I've only watched one Kashmiri film, Habba Khatoon in my entire life. However, I believe Kashmir is brimming with talent. We need our own film industry to tell our stories and also to provide a platform for our younger generation to showcase their talent.

#### What would you tell people back home in Kashmir?

Dr Sohail Nasti: In our journey to rebuild, develop, and uplift Kashmir, remember that each small step counts. Whether you're involved in agriculture, technology, education, or social services, your contributions are vital. It's time to break free from the constraints of the past and build a new narrative for Kashmir-one of unity, resilience, and progress.

# News

### Putin Touts Landmark Russia-Iran Agreement

#### Agencies

Russian: A new strategic partnership deal between Moscow and Tehran will propel bilateral ties to new heights, President Vladimir Putin has told his Iranian counterpart, Masoud Pezeshkian.

Speaking in front of reporters in Moscow on Friday while welcoming Pezeshkian, Putin said the Iranian president's visit was of "special significance," given that the two are poised to sign the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement. According to Russian and Iranian officials, the landmark document will designate Moscow and Tehran as "strategic partners" and will cover numerous areas, including cooperation in defense, counterterrorism, energy, finance, transport, industry, agriculture, culture, science, and technology.

Putin noted that the two sides had been working out the details of the agreement for a long time.

# a-Iran Agreement "I am very pleased that this work has been completed. This is im-

has been completed. This is important because it will... give additional impetus to almost all areas of our cooperation." Pezeshkian echoed those re-

Pezeshkian echoed those remarks, while calling Russia a "brotherly and friendly nation" and stressing that the document will serve as a "solid foundation" for expanded cooperation. He also expressed hope both sides would be able to finalize an agreement related to the construction of a nuclear power plant in Iran. Pezeshkian also said that he took great pains "to have all problems on our side solved by today."

Russia has been Iran's key partner in the civilian nuclear sphere. In 2014, Tehran and Russia signed an agreement to build two new nuclear reactors at the Bushehr site, with construction started in 2017. The two new units are expected to be completed in 2024 and 2026, respectively.

# **Rebranded Women's March returns before Trump's inauguration as progressives seek to regroup**

Washington, Jan 17: When Elisabeth Bramble and her sister stepped off the Washington Metro to join the massive crowds during the 2017 Women's March, she counted it as one of the most powerful moments of her life.

On Saturday, she will board a 2 am bus full of North Carolinians headed to the nation's capital as the Women's March returns before President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration under a new name: The People's March. "We're marching once again

for our daughters and our granddaughters," Bramble said. "We're marching for our immigrant community. We're marching for our LGBTQ community." Organisers say the rebranded

and reorganised march has absorbed criticism and moved past the internal tumult that consumed the movement after the hugely successful march eight years ago on the day after Trump's first in augustion

Trump's first inauguration. Now, with Democratic political leaders across the country searching for ways to reconnect with voters after the party's devastating election losses last fall, People's March organisers are hoping to broaden their base, stake out a new direction and move beyond a single day of action to help progressive voters find a political home.

Saturday's march is expected to draw as many as 50,000 people, far fewer than the Women's March in 2017. It's one of several protests, rallies and vigils focused on abortion, rights, immigration rights and the Israel-Hamas war planned in advance of inauguration Monday.

The People's March will focus on a broader set of goals around women's and reproductive rights, LGBTQ rights, immigration, climate and democracy, rather than more narrowly on Trump himself, as the Women's March did before his first inauguration, said Tamika Middleton, managing director of the Women's March.

Under the protest's new name, the group also is attempting to broaden support and reflect the priorities of a larger coalition of organisations.

"We're recognising the necessity of having a really broadbased coalition that is bringing people in," Middleton said. "We're asking ourselves how we build a big tent that allows for the kind of multiracial, multi-class, multi-gender mass movement that can make a difference politically in the coming years."

The Women's March launched in 2017 as a grassroots group of women outraged over

Trump's 2016 presidential win. The rally brought over 500,000 marchers to Washington with millions more demonstrating in cities throughout the country, marking one of the largest single-day demonstrations in US history.

Photos of women in pink in pussyhats and with megaphones announcing calls for public action became the enduring image of the inaugural march. But this year, organiswers and political analysts have described a more sombre moment of reflection after Vice President Kamala Harris' loss. th Middleton acknowledged fe exhaustion among many ab

progressives. The general malaise on the left is felt across the country as Democrats and progressives enter a period of political soulsearching following Trump's decisive win and Republicans

winning control of Congress. A post-election ebb in enthusiasm for politics and government has led about two-thirds of US adults to say they have recently felt the need to limit media consumption of both topics because they were feeling overloaded, according to a December survey from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The drop-off is more pronounced with Democrats but also is reflected among Republicans, according to the poll.

Democrats also are less likely than Americans overall to be feeling "happy" or "hopeful" about 2025, according to an AP-NORC poll conducted in December. Instead, about 4 in 10 Democrats said "stressed" described their feelings extremely or very well, while roughly one-third of Democrats said that about "gloomy."

#### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### **Rajouri Grapples**

officials said.

Meanwhile, an 11-member SIT, headed by Budhal Superintendent of Police (Operations) Wajahat Hussain, has been formed to investigate the deaths.

Jatti Begum's husband, Mohd Yousuf died three days ago in a hospital.

Yasmeen Kouser, 15, the daughter of Mohd Aslam, remains critical and is on ventilator support at SMGS Hospital in Jammu, officials said.

Of the six children of Mohd Aslam admitted to SMGS Hospital on Sunday, five have died.

"The situation is being fully monitored on all fronts. Many health and testing agencies are already involved in the investigation to determine the cause of these deaths," Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo told reporters in Jammu.

"There is no evidence of viral, bacterial, or fungal infections so far. Further investigations are ongoing to identify the cause. To explore any possible criminal angle, an SIT has been formed," he said.

Dulloo ruled out a health emergency, stating that only three families in the area were affected.

Investigators will examine all food items and medicines consumed by the families of Fazal, Mohd Rafiq, and Mohd Aslam, and samples will be sent to laboratories for testing, officials said.

The SIT has started its probe, examining the circumstances in the village, reviewing medical purchases from local chemists, and questioning residents.

A central team comprising experts from premier health and testing institutions is camping in the village.

"All samples have tested negative for any viral or bacteriological cause," Dulloo said.

"Tests were conducted at reputed institutions, including the National Institute of Virology (Pune), the National Centre for Disease Control (New Delhi), and others," he said. The first incident was reported on December 7 last year when a family of seven fell ill after a community meal, resulting in five deaths. the team. The samples collected will also be sent for testing. The team also had cross questioning with members of the affected families. It has been learnt that some mischief over some old enemity over land or other domestic issues can not be ruled out in the instant case. The police were working on all the angles.

#### Expedite Probe

deeply concerning. The government is fully committed to uncovering the root cause and ensuring the safety of our people. All departments must collaborate and leave no stone unturned to resolve this issue," Omar said in the meeting.

The CM assured the public that the administration has given the matter top priority.

"The health and safety of our people remain our top priority. We are committed to resolving this crisis and ensuring justice for the bereaved families," Omar said.

Among other top state officials, the meeting was attended by Health Minister Sakeena Itoo and Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo.

Secretary Health and Medical Education briefed Omar on the measures taken so far.

He said that health department teams had conducted door-to-door surveys of over 3,000 residents in the affected area, collecting and testing samples of water, food, and other materials.

"All test results, including those for influenza and possible contaminants, have come back negative," he said.

He added that additional testing by premier national institutes, including ICMR, the National Institute of Virology, the National Centre for Disease Control, CSIR, DRDO, and PGIMER-Chandigarh, also failed to determine a definitive cause for the deaths.

Police officers informed the meeting that the fatalities were confined to three families residing within 1.5km of each other.

substantial charges over the years should be considered for release. It's a necessary step to foster reconciliation," he stated.

On being asked if the Lieutenant Governor is giving him a hard time, Omar said, "It's been a period of adjustment for both of us. It's a new experience for him also. The first four years, he was the sole authority. Now he has to share power with an elected government. But we're making it work."

Responding to a question about his approach toward the Centre, the Chief Minister said, " I'm not soft towards the centre. Please understand, working with the government of India does not mean that I accept everything they do. It does not mean that I accept what the BJP does."

"It does not mean that there is any common meeting ground whatsoever between the position of the National Conference on issues that matter to Jammu and Kashmir and what the BJP has done."

He said that there is no meeting of minds on these things. "But if we are agreed that Jammu and Kashmir needs to progress, that development needs to take place, that statehood needs to be restored, should I pick a fight where at the moment there isn't the need for one?"

#### Imran Khan Jailed

evidence and would embarrass the authorities. "My sentencing is being sought in a case where neither have I derived a single penny of personal gain, nor has the government suffered a single penny of financial loss," he said.

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party condemned the ruling, calling it a "black verdict," while sharing a video purportedly showing protests against the decision outside the National Assembly.

A cricketer-turned-politician, Khan served as prime minister from 2018 to 2022, when he was ousted from office in a no-confidence vote, with the opposition accusing him of mismanaging the economy and foreign policy. Khan however, claims that he was overthrown as a result of a US conspiracy. He has been embroiled in numerous legal battles, with looming charges of corruption. In 2023, he was found guilty of illegally buying and selling state gifts he had received during his premiership, although the sentence was suspended. One year later, he was also sentenced to ten years for leaking state secrets, a charge he has denied. His earlier arrests and sentences sparked nationwide protests, some of which turned violent.

#### LG To Take Salute

District Development Council (DDC) chairpersons will take the salute at the main functions to be held at the district headquarters.

Senior civil and police officers reviewed the arrangements for the upcoming Republic Day celebrations at the Maulana Azad Stadium — the venue of the main function in Jammu and Kashmir, a spokesperson said.

Divisional Commissioner of Jammu Ramesh Kumar, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) of the region Anand Jain and senior officials were apprised of the preparations made by different line departments as per their roles and responsibilities.

The officers took a detailed stock of security arrangements, traffic management, seating arrangements, decoration, power and water supply, sanitation, medicare, convenient parking spaces, shuttle service for citizens, barricading, frisking points and fire emergency, the spokesperson said.

Rehearsals for the Republic Day parade would commence this week with the participation of armed forces contingents, school children, bands and troupes taking part in cultural programmes, he said.

The divisional commissioner directed the departments concerned to complete their tableaux by January 20.

#### J&K Budget

NC-Congress rule from 2009 to 2014, the annual budget was presented by then Finance Minister Abdul Rahim Rather.

This would be after a gap of more than seven years that J&K's annual budget would be presented in its assembly. The last budget was presented in the Assembly on January 11, 2018, when Haseeb Drabu was the finance minister of the erstwhile state.

After the collapse of the PDP-BJP government, the budget for 2019-20 was approved by then J&K Governor as head of the State Administrative Council. After the downgrading of J&K into a UT in August 2019, all its budgets were presented in the Parliament. As many as five budgets of J&K were presented and approved by the Parliament as legislative powers of the J&K Assembly were vested with it in the absence of an elected government in the UT.

#### **Govt Simplifies**

registration or renewal is Rupees five thousand only;

LCO Registration shall be valid for operations throughout the territory of India;

The application for renewal of registration shall be made at least 90 days before the expiry of the registration.

LCOs can make an appeal before the Appellate Authority i.e. Under Secretary (DAS) against the decision of the Registering Authority, i.e. designated Section Officer denying registration or renewal of registration within 30 days of such denial.

Existing LCO registration shall remain valid for the period mentioned in the registration certificate. In cases where the existing registration of the LCO is valid for less than 90 days, the applications for renewal, if any, shall be made immediately on the portal.

The applications made to the Post Offices for grant/renewal of registration, which are pending as on date, would be required to be withdrawn and applications have to be made on the portal.

In case any assistance is required, the helpline number available on the portal may be contacted, or an email may be sent to lco. das[at]gov[dot]in.

The registration and renewal procedure is in line with the Government's commitment to ease of doing business, as the registration/ renewal certificate shall be generated on a realtime basis upon successful verification of applicants' details online.

#### J&K Govt Employees

from some senior officers of the administration last night and was informed that the J&K government wants to hold talks with us and address our issues. So, keeping that in mind, we have deferred our programme for 15 days," he said. The meeting will be held on Monday.

He requested the government to fulfil the

On December 12, a family of nine was affected, with three deaths.

The third incident occurred on January 12, involving a family of ten, with six children hospitalised.

On Wednesday night, Zabeena Kouser, 10, another child of Mohd Aslam, died at SMGS Hospital, while her 15-year-old sister Yasmeen remains critical, officials said.

Reports suggest that the incidents are not linked to any communicable disease.

"Toxicological analysis by CSIR-IITR detected toxins in multiple biological specimens," a spokesperson said.

Notably, Minister for Health & Medical Education, Sakina Itoo on Thursday said the government is deeply committed to investigating the recent deaths in Rajouri.

Speaking to reporters in Jammu, Itoo said the matter involves precious lives. She urged that politicising the issue should be avoided.

"The government is taking the investigation very seriously, and every effort is being made to uncover the reasons behind these tragic deaths," she said.

Itoo dismissed claims of delayed action by the health department, saying the department had screened approximately 3,500 villagers in the affected areas.

Houses of 3 affected families sealed

As a part of investigation by the SIT constituted by SSP Rajouri, Gaurav Sikarwar, the District Administration Rajouri sealed all the three houses of the affected families at Badhaal village. A team led by Additional DC, Koteranka Dil Mir and Tehsildar Sahil Ali Shah along with a police team sealed these houses and deployed some forces there.

About 22 members/close relatives of these families have been kept at a Government accommodation and they are being provided food/ eatables under the supervision of a team constituted by the Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma. District Officer of ICDS Rajouri is heading this team. The investigation team will check all the food items and other medicines etc being consumed by family members of Fazal, Mohd Rafiq and Mohd Aslam kept in their houses. Some items will be sent for testing in the Labs.

The SIT led by SP Ops, Wajahat Hussain today visited many Medical/ Chemist shops near Badhaal village and Kotranka from where these people had purchased medicines after illness. Some medical professionals also accompanied Investigations are underway to establish any potential links or causes behind the incidents.

The health department has maintained an active presence in the area for over the past 40 days, when the first death took place, providing ambulances, medicines, and essential facilities to manage emergencies, officials said.

Jatti Begum, 60, who perished from unknown causes on Friday is the latest casualty in the series. Another girl still battles for her life.

The victims belong to Badhaal village in the Kotranka sub-division of Rajouri district, where 16 members of three families have died since December last year – seven of them since Sunday.

Authorities have sealed three houses belonging to the affected families and shifted 21 of their close relatives to government accommodation to be kept under strict monitoring.

A team led by Additional Deputy Commissioner Dil Mir carried out the operation, with security personnel deployed at the sites, officials said.

An 11-member SIT, headed by Budhal Superintendent of Police (Operations) Wajahat Hussain, has been formed to investigate the deaths.

#### Rain, Snow

Celsius at Konibal in Pampore town, minus 2.7 degrees Celsius in Kupwara and minus 2.4 degrees Celsius in Kokernag.

The meteorological office has forecast mainly dry weather in Kashmir till January 19, with a possibility of light rain or snow at scattered places from January 20 to 22.

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.

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

#### Working With

Addressing the issue of reservations, Omar said the matter is being tackled on two fronts: a Cabinet sub-committee is examining it, and the courts are deliberating on it. He emphasized the importance of following due process, acknowledging the inherited complexities of the situation. "The final resolution will likely come from the Supreme Court, and the government is committed to ensuring fairness in this matter," he said.

Omar also spoke about the need for amnesty for political prisoners without serious charges. "Those who have been detained without

#### PM To Distribute

village household owners with the issuance of legal ownership cards (property cards/title deeds) by mapping land parcels using drone technology.

"The Scheme helps creation of accurate land records for rural planning and reducing property-related disputes. This will bring financial stability to the citizens in rural India by enabling them to use their property as a financial asset for taking loans and other financial benefits. This will also help in determination of property tax, which would accrue to the GPs directly in States/UTs where it is devolved or else, add to the State exchequer," the officials said.

The Scheme is also aimed at support in the preparation of a better-quality Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) by making use of GIS maps, they said and described it as a reformative step towards the establishment of clear ownership of property in rural inhabited areas.

As per the officials, there are about 6.62 lakh villages in the country which will be eventually covered in this scheme. They said the households belonging to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), Low Income Group (LIG) and Middle Income Group (MIG) category with an annual income of up to Rs 3, 6 and 9 lakhs respectively are eligible to avail benefits of SVAMITVA Scheme.

The Scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 24, 2020, as a Centralsector scheme to promote socio-economic empowerment and a more self-reliant rural India.

The initial phase of the scheme was implemented during 2020-21 in the select villages of some States and has now gradually been expanded to more States and Union Territories.

"The scheme is intended to reduce property disputes by providing accurate land records while boosting financial liquidity. The scheme aims to streamline planning and revenue collection, as well as ensuring that residents are informed of property rights in rural areas," the officials said. The Union Territory's annual budget for the ongoing fiscal was presented in the Parliament in July this year. (KNO)

#### Mehbooba Questions

senior officers in disproportionate assets (DA) cases.

"The removal of Abdul Wahid & his colleagues from the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) highlights the risks faced by officials who challenge corruption. It exposes nexus between the corrupt & most powerful," Mufti said in a post on X.

She said the act of "punishing the whistleblower" has revealed the government's true intentions behind using various agencies including the ACB to raid properties of Kashmiris "under the guise of corruption investigations".

"Raises questions about the government's commitment to justice and accountability," the former chief minister added.

#### **AIIMS Awantipora**

this project. He enquired from the Executive Director about any of the pending issues deserving administrative support and simultaneously assured him of all possible assistance.

Executive Director (ED), AIIMS Awantipora, Dr Sachidananda Mohanty, provided an overall scenario of the readiness of this facility along with the possible dates of completion of each block. He revealed that the institute has achieved overall physical progress of about 61% on all the 57 blocks to be raised here. He gave out that the institute is expected to be made functional by the end of November this year.

The meeting was further apprised of the detailed labour force deployed in completion of each block. It was said that due to cold weather conditions the labourers had migrated and only internal works are currently going on with the presence of around 850 skilled/semiskilled/unskilled labourers which earlier used to be around 2400-2500 under fair weather conditions.

It was further disclosed that the work is going on all the 6 hospital blocks, 4 academic blocks, 16 residential blocks, 12 hostel blocks along with Ayush block besides night shelter and guest house, which are part of this medical college and hospital of national repute.mu demands of the employees on a fast track basis, warning that in case of failure to address the issues of the employees, JKECC "will strongly respond and the responsibility will lie on the shoulders of the Government".

Cabinet To Meet On Monday

The cabinet meanwhile is set to meet on January 20 to take a final call on key administrative proposals.

Sources said that the first meeting of the council of ministers will be held under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister on Monday (January 20) at 4:00 P.M. at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu.

Sources disclosed that 10 departmental proposals will be considered in the meeting. The main agenda item of the meeting is revision of dearness allowance (DA) rates payable to government employees, pensioners, and family pensioners, effective from July 1, 2024.

The cabinet is likely to approve implementation of a 3-tier faculty structure in Government Dental College, Srinagar, and Indira Gandhi Government Dental College, Jammu, as per the norms of the Dental Council of India (DCI) on staffing patterns.

It would decide on granting administrative approval for key proposals mooted by the Housing & Urban Development Department. The proposals include dumpsite remediation through bio-mining/bio-remediation of 11.00 Lakh MTs of legacy waste at Achan dumping site, Srinagar, at an estimated cost of Rs. 60.50 crore (Rs. 33.00 crore from 14th FC and Rs. 27.50 crore from SBM 2.0), pollution abatement and conservation of River Ihelum at Chuntkul and Gawkadal areas in Srinagar, at an estimated cost of Rs. 6445.68 lakh (Rs. 6380.68 lakh under the National River Conservation Plan) and pollution abatement and conservation of River Banganga at Katra Town, at an estimated cost of Rs. 92.10 crore under the National River Conservation Plan.

The cabinet is likely to give its nod to construction of a new hospital block for the emergency operation theatre at SMHS Hospital, Srinagar.

It would also decide on dispensing with oral tests/interviews for posts in pay level-6, as recommended by the J&K Service Selection Board.

The amendments to the Jammu and Kashmir Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017, and the J&K Excise Policy 2025 would also come up for discussion in the meeting.

Sources disclosed that the cabinet would also make a recommendation to the LG for convening a session of Assembly for budget. (With inputs from PTI & KNO)

# STATE

### **IUST Secures 4-Star Ranking For Promoting Innovation** & Entrepreneurship

**Observer News Service** 

**AWANTIPORA:** In a significant achievement, the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development (CIED) at IUST has earned a 4-star ranking (out of 5) at the national level for the second consecutive year. Conferred by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, this honour recognizes IUST's exceptional contribution to promoting innovation and startups in the country, with a focus on Jammu and Kashmir.

IUST has been a pioneer in establishing a comprehensive framework and policy to promote a thriving startup ecosystem, inspiring youth towards innovation and entrepreneurship. The University has collaborated with various national organizations to realize this vision, achieving significant progress in Jammu and Kashmir.

Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo. Vice Chancellor IUST, congratulated Prof Pervez Ahmad Mir, Director CIED, and his team for this prestigious recognition. He highlighted that the scope and scale of operations of the CIED have expanded significantly over the years, with the success



stories of the CIED-supported entrepreneurs standing as a testament of their dedicated efforts. Romshoo emphasized that the focus on the training and capacity building initiatives for youth would have a multiplier effect, paving the way for a vibrant startup community in the region.

He added that India's startup journey has become a global success story, as reflected in the improved Global innovation ranking during the last decade. He urged the IUST team to encourage more youth to innovate, embrace emerging technologies in businesses and develop solutions to societal challenges.

Prof. Romshoo expressed confidence that this national recognition would further galvanize IUST's efforts to lead the community towards a prosperous future.

# LG Releases Coffee **Table Book On Assembly Election Coverage**



**Observer News Service** 

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday released the Coffee Table Book on Assembly Election Coverage by Doordarshan News Jammu. The Lieutenant Governor

extended his felicitations to Regional News Unit (RNU) of Doordarshan and the editorial team on the occasion. He commended the RNU team mem-

bers for their dedication and commitment to inform and educate the people of the region on the electoral process. The publication highlights the endeavours of Regional News Unit of Doordarshan during the Assembly elections, including awareness campaigns through social media posts, signature campaigns under SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral

programs focused on electoral awareness.

Vivek Pathak, Regional Head, Doordarshan News Jammu, also briefed the Lieutenant Governor about the operational achievements and initiatives of the Regional News Unit (RNU) Jammu and shared the efforts made by RNU in reaching remote, hardto-access areas of J&K to raise awareness about the impor-Participation), and special tance of voting.

### **'Over 3.5 Lakh Rural Households Lack Functional Water Tap Connections'**

SRINAGAR: In Jammu and Kashmir more than three lakh rural households lack functional water tap connections.w The government in a survey

tap connections "Out of 18.69 lakh rural households, 15.08 lakh which

been provided with functional tap connections," it reads.

veal that under the scheme, the in completing full coverage in Srinagar and Ganderbal district including 12 blocks, 438 Pan-

It also said that under the Jal Jeevan Mission, 3,256 schemes are planned at an estimated



providing potable drinking water to every household and irrigation facilities as well as taking various flood protection and mitigation measures has always remained a priority of the government.

"In 2023-24, at least 2,098 works were completed, providing 3.47 lakh household tap connections and benefiting 19.45 lakh people," it reads.

The documents further said that the government has additionally conducted 2.51 lakh water quality tests to ensure safe drinking water.

"In the irrigation and flood control sector, 199 projects stabilizing irrigation poten-tial for 0.14 lakh hectares and protecting 7,500 hectares from floods. Since 2018-19, 177 projects have been sanctioned under NABARD at Rs 782.75 Crore, with 65 projects completed and 112 targeted for completion this year," it reads. The documents further reveal

that under the PMKSY (HKKP), 396 surface minor irrigation schemes were sanctioned at Rs 1,184.41 Crore, with 199 schemes completed by March 2024, stabilizing irrigation potential for 84,720 hectares.

"For the upcoming year, 75 schemes under AIBP-PMKSY are targeted for completion, which will create and stabilize 12,817 hectares of irrigation potential. Additionally, 19 schemes under the Flood Management and Border Areas Programme were sanctioned at Rs 215.87 Crore, with 3 schemes completed by March 2024 and 16 likely to be completed in 2024-25," it reads— (KNO)

### J&K NCC Air Squadron Cadets **Undertake Inaugural Flight**



#### Agencies

JAMMU: The National Cadet Corps (NCC), cadets from the newly established 1 J&K Air Squadron NCC undertook their inaugural flight on Friday.

The maiden flight took place at Udhampur under the aegis of the NCC Directorate Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh, offering cadets an unforgettable experience and practical exposure to aviation.

The 1 J&K Air Squadron NCC, recently raised under the leadership of Wing Commander Nitin Yadav, holds the distinction of being the first and only Air NCC squadron in the region.

The unit is dedicated to promoting excellence in aviation and adventure training, preparing cadets for leadership roles in both the armed forces and civilian spheres. Equipped with microlight aircraft, the squadron provides cadets with hands-on flying training and

practical aviation experience. Cadet Siya Kotwal from SKUAST Jammu, the first cadet to take to the skies, expressed her excitement and pride: "Flying was an experience I will never forget. It's a dream come true and an opportunity I never imagined I would get. This flight has inspired me to push myself further and pursue my passion for aviation.

LEH, LADAKH: In a historic

move, Siachen Glacier, recog-

nized as the world's highest

and most inhospitable battle-

field, is now equipped with 5G

Announced on the eve of

Army Day, January 15, 2025, this

achievement promises to trans-

form communications for Indian

soldiers stationed in this extreme and isolated environment.

In collaboration with Reli-

ance Jio and the Indian Army's

Corps of Signals, troops at the

Siachen Glacier—situated at an

altitude of 16,000 feet at Kara-

koram Range—can now access

high-speed internet and cellu-

This development marks

a significant leap forward in

bridging the communication

gap in one of the most chal-

known for its subzero tempera-

tures that can plummet to -50°C,

faced difficulties with commu-

Previously, soldiers at Siachen.

lenging terrains on earth.

lar communication.

connectivity.

Cadet Aviral from Army Public School. Udhampur, shared similar sentiments: "This flying experience has motivated me

to pursue my dream of joining the Armed Forces. I will never forget this unique opportunity." Cadets Akshat Gupta from SKUAST Jammu and Bhumika Sharma from SMVDU Katra also expressed their excitement and gratitude for the chance to experience flying for the first time.

Speaking at the event, Wing Commander Nitin Yadav emphasized the importance of the naugural flight, saying: "This first flight signifies not just a technical achievement but also a new chapter in the NCC's mission to inspire and challenge the youth of our nation. We are proud to provide opportunities for cadets to explore new horizons and enhance their skills in multi-dimensional domains."

The successful event is expected to pave the way for more opportunities, further reinforcing the NCC's role in fostering a sense of adventure and discipline among India's youth.

As part of its ongoing mission, the NCC aims to expand aviation and adventure training programs, offering cadets hands-on experiences that build confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills.

The 1 J&K Air Squadron NCC, under NCC Group HQ Jammu, is poised to enhance the region's aviation training capacity, exposing the next generation of young leaders to new opportunities and preparing them to contribute to the nation's development–(KNO)



As Apple Demand Picks Up, **Growers Release Produce From CA Stores** 



#### Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Apple growers in Kashmir have been prompted to release their produce from cold storage units earlier than usual as the demand for the apples has picked up across the country.

The growers said that many of them have started releasing their produce from the cold storage units and transporting it to different markets amidst the good demand.

They said that Controlled Atmosphere (CA) storage facilities usually begin dispatching apples to the markets around mid-February. However, this year, the initiated the process in

ation was attributed to factors such as the influx of imported apples, which affected the de-

mand for local produce. However, this year the growers said that cold storage produce season has started on a high note and they are hopeful that this trend will continue the whole season.

They said that they are hopeful that the demand will continue to increase and the produce kept in cold storage units will fetch handsome returns.

They said that the cold storage units are giving them a freedom to sell their produce as per the demand in the market and there is a need for more cold

storage units so as to maintain

cold storage unit, said cold stor-

age units have come in handy

for Kashmiri apple growers as

they have given them freedom

to sell their produce as per

their will. He said that there is a

good demand of the apple cur-

rently that has prompted grow-

ers to ask for the early release

There are around 40 cold stor-

Kashmir on average produc-

age units in Kashmir and most

of them are in SIDCO Lassipora.

es over 20 lakh metric tonnes

of apples every year, a figure

that in some years touches 25

lakh metric tonnes—(KNO)

of their produce.

Shahid Ahmad, Manager of a

demand and supply chains.

# Agencies

has revealed that under the Jal Jeevan Mission, more than 3.5 Lakh households in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir were lacking the functional water

amounts to 80.64 percent have

The documents further regovernment has achieved a feat

chayats, and 1009 villages.

cost of Rs 13,000 Crore. The documents said that were completed in 2023-24,

early January to capitalize on favorable market conditions.

Mushtaq Ahmad, a fruit grower from Shopian, said that traditional apple boxes of around 10 kg are fetching around Rs 1200-1400 in market while big apple boxes containing around 16 kgs of apples are fetching around Rs 1700-1900 in market.

He said that almost all cold storage units in Pulwama and Shopian were completely filled in October 2024 as many growers preferred to keep their produce in cold storage units when demand was low.

Notably last year, around 20% of the apple produce remained unsold in cold storage, even after nine months and this situ-

### **CASO In Upper Reaches Of Kathua**

#### **Observer News Service**

SRINAGAR: The security forces Friday conducted a massive Cordon and Search Operation (CASO) in the upper reaches of Kathua district following intelligence reports about the presence of terrorists in Billawar area.

Officials said that in a coordinated effort, the special forces of the Army in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), launched the CASO in Billawar.

Security forces have cordoned off the area and were conducting extensive searches to locate the suspected terrorists.

Locals have been advised to remain indoors and cooperate with the authorities. Additional reinforcements have been deployed to track down the terrorists.

Jammu region remained disturbed in 2024 where terrorist incidents were reported in all the 10 districts including Udhampur, Kathua, Doda,

Kishtwar, Samba, Doda, Reasi, Rajouri Poonch and Ramban.

In July last year, five soldiers, including a Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO), were killed and five others were injured when a group of terrorists ambushed two army vehicles on patrolling duty near Badnota village in Billawar-Kathua district.

Later security forces killed two terrorists in Kog-Mandli village in Billawar tehsil in September 2024. The encounter also resulted in the death of a police head constable and injuries to an assistant sub-inspector.

### **Prominent Entrepreneur Manzoor Ahmad Baba Passes Away**

**Observer News Service** 

SRINAGAR: The Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) has expressed profound sorrow at the sudden passing of Manzoor Ahmad Baba, a prominent entrepreneur and owner of M/s Baba Industries in the Industrial Estate Khunmoh.

Ahmad Baba Manzoor passed away on Friday after experiencing chest pain. Despite his condition, he drove himself to a nearby diagnostic lab for an ECG, where he sadly breathed his last. His sudden demise cast a pall of sorrow over the industrial community in the valley, particularly from the industrial estate of Khunmoh.

President of FCIK Shahid Kamili expressed that the passing of Manzoor Ahmad Baba from a cardiac arrest has created an irreplaceable void, not only within his family but also in the entrepreneurial community that deeply admired his unwavering dedication, discipline, and inspiring leadership. He emphasized that Baba's loss serves as a poignant reminder of life's fragility and the importance of balancing our professional commitments with the

need to safeguard our health and well-being.

The Advisory Committee members M.D. Qureshi, Shakeel Qalander, Zahoor Ahmad Bhat, and Mohammad Ashraf Mir have expressed their deep shock and profound sorrow at the sudden passing of Manzoor Ahmad Baba. They paid rich tributes to his exceptional contributions to the industry and his inspiring legacy. The committee members reflected on his dedication, hard work, and the positive impact he had on the entrepreneurial community, acknowledging that his loss will be deeply felt by all who knew him.

The Industrialists Association Khunmoh (IAK) has expressed deep grief and sorrow at the passing of one of its prominent members. In paying heartfelt tributes to the departed soul, President of IAK, Imran Murtaza, highlighted that the late Manzoor Ahmad Baba played a crucial role in the growth and development of the Industrial Estate Khunmoh, setting a high

Murtaza further remarked that Baba was more than just a colleague as he was a true mentor and companion to many, inspiring countless young en-

trepreneurs with his vision, unwavering commitment, and exemplary work ethic. His legacy will continue to influence and guide the entrepreneurial community for years to come.

A large number of industrial leaders participated in the last rites of the deceased at Nalabal, Nowshehra which included Shakeel Qalander, Syed Fazal Illahi, Dr. Zain ul abideen, Haamid Chashoo, Fayaz Shawl, Qa isar Makhdoomi and others

FCIK and IAK have expressed their deepest condolences to the grieving family of Manzoor Ahmad Baba, including his wife, children, and close relatives, particularly his uncles, Fayaz Ahmad Kaloo, Ghulam Hassan Kaloo and Dr. Farooq Ahmad Kaloo. In this time of profound loss, both organizations have assured the family of their unwavering support from the entire industrial community and have prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul. We pray for the eternal peace

of the departed soul and the strength for his family and loved ones to bear this tremendous loss. May Allah grant him the highest place in Jannah and bless his family with patience and fortitude.

larly dipping below -40°C, transporting and installing equipment

posed a significant challenge. However, a joint effort between the Indian Army's Signallers and Jio's technical team ensured successful deployment. The Army facilitated airlifting of Jio's equipment, which was pre-

configured for quick setup. The 14 Corps shared the milestone on social media, saying, "Fire and Fury Signallers and Siachen Warriors overcame harsh terrain and extreme temperatures below -40°C to install the first-ever 5G Base Transceiver Station (BTS) at North Glacier.'

This advancement not only improves the welfare of soldiers by offering enhanced communication with their families, but it also boosts operational efficiency. With real-time data and swift communication, the troops can now perform their duties more effectively, ensuring success in high-pressure military operations.

Moreover, this technological leap aligns with India's efforts to match China's mobile network infrastructure along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), ensuring parity in digital capabilities in strategically sensitive regions.

The 5G network at Siachen Glacier represents a major step toward modernizing military communication, strengthening both soldier morale and national security–(KNO)

standard for others to emulate.

### 15 Year Old Vehicles Eligible For Scrap Subsidy: Transport Commissioner

#### Agencies

SRINAGAR: Transport Commissioner, Jammu and Kashmir, Vishesh Paul Mahajan on Friday said the transport subsidy scheme, part of a broader plan to phase out vehicles over 15 years old, is witnessing a positive response. Speaking to media persons at

Srinagar, Mahajan, said buses, matadors and minibuses in this category can apply for a subsidy by scrapping their old vehicles and providing proof of the scrap-ping process. "We have adver-tised it. The RTO has told me that about 35 applications have come to us," he said, urging more people to participate in the scheme. Mahajan said around 100 ap-



plications had been received from Jammu. He discussed ongoing efforts to improve road safety in the region, particularly during the ongoing Road Safety Month.

The Transport Commissioner called for following traffic rules and creating a safer driving environment. He urged drivers to wear seat belts and helmets, warning that violators would face strict actions, including licence cancellation and car seizures. "If someone's life is in danger because of you, then it is our duty to take action against you," he said.

Mahajan warned of severe penalties for those involved in dangerous stunts or rulebreaking, particularly if parents are unable to manage their actions-(KNO)

nication, relying on landlines and visits to regimental phone booths to reach their families. With the introduction of 4G and 5G services, soldiers will experience faster, real-time, and more reliable connectivity.

Setting up the telecommunications infrastructure in such extreme conditions was no easy feat. With temperatures regu-



# SPORTS

# **Bumrah's Fitness In Focus As Selectors Pick CT Squad Today**

#### **Press Trust of India**

MUMBAI: The selection committee, headed by Ajit Agarkar, will convene here on Saturday to pick India's squad for the Champions Trophy, and they will have to deal with two tricky scenarios - the fitness of premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah and how to fit in Yashasvi Jaiswal in the provisional 15.

Bumrah had suffered back spasms during the recent Sydney Test against Australia and did not bowl on the final day at SCG.

He has been advised "offloading" and his fitness is being monitored closely by the physios at the BCCI Centre of Excellence.

So, Agarkar and his colleagues along with head coach

Agencies

Rakesh Kumar, in New Delhi.

notably, two of the three re-

Sheetal Devi - hail from J&K.

Paralympics last year.



Gautam Gambhir and skipper Rohit Sharma will ponder deeply over Bumrah's fitness status before taking a final call on his inclusion.

J&K Para-Archer Rakesh Kumar

**Conferred Arjuna Award** 

A clarity over the vexed scenario will be given once Agarkar and Rohit address a press conference post the selection committee meeting.

That Rohit attending the press do is also the clearest indication of him retaining the captaincy in the ODIs, despite swirling speculations about his future in Test cricket after a dismal tour to Australia.

Then there has also been a clamour from all corners to include Jaiswal in the squad. The 23-year-old is in fine form right now, and he will also offer the left-hand variety at the top, reasons listed in favour of his selection.

But Jaiswal's selection could put him in direct competition with KL Rahul as Rohit, Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer are certainties as India's top four.

It could also be that Jaiswal will be given a chance against

England in the three-match ODI series, and prefer Rahul for the ICC event.

The squad for the rubber against England too will be picked on Saturday.

The primary wicketkeeper batter slot could be allotted to Rishabh Pant as Sanju Samson skipping the Vijay Hazare Trophy has not gone down well with the powers that be.

Dhruv Jurel could come into picture in that scenario as second stumper.

Senior pacer Mohammed Shami will be in the squad given that he has has played most of the domestic matches, and has also been drafted into India's squad for the five-match home T20I series against England.

**Short TAKES** 

#### Sagib Mahmood Gets Visa For **India Tour After Delay**

England fast-bowler Saqib Mahmood has finally received his visa for the team's upcoming white-ball tour of India, starting with the T20I series opener in Kolkata on January 22. Mahmood, who is of Pakistani heritage, had faced a



delay in procuring the travel document, forcing him to miss an England training camp in the UAE.

Mahmood had encountered similar issues in the past and, in 2019, he had to be replaced in an England Lions squad for the India tour due to a delay in obtaining his visa. A similar reason had prevented Mahmood from travelling to India for a Lancashire pre-season camp last year.

England will play five T20Is and three ODIs in India.

#### Neymar Says Mbappé Was **Jealous Of Messi In Paris**

🗲 triker Neymar said his former Paris Saint-Germain ) teammate Kylian Mbappé became "a little jealous" after superstar Lionel Messi joined the French club in August 2021 in a free transfer.

Speaking in a podcast hosted by World Cup winner Romário released Thursday, the 32-year-old Brazilian who plays for Saudi club Al-Hilal added that big egos affected the performances of PSG in big matches.

Nevmar made his comments after Romário asked whether Mbappé, who joined Real Madrid this season, "is annoying."

"No, he is not. I have my things with him, we had a little fight, but he was fundamental for us when he arrived. I used to call him golden boy. I always played with him, said he was going to be one of the best. I always helped, talked to him, he came to my place, we had dinner together," Neymar said.

"We had some good years of partnership, but after Messi came he was a little jealous. He didn't want to split me with anyone. And then there were some fights, a change in behavior," the Brazilian player added.

#### **Haaland Signs 10-Year Contract** With Man City Until 2034

Erling Haaland has signed a new contract at Manchester City through 2034, committing his long-term future to the Premier League champions with one of the most lucrative deals in soccer amid uncertain times for the club on and off the field.

City announced the deal – covering 10 years from the start of this season - on Friday for the 24-year-old Haaland, who has scored 111 goals in 125 games since joining the club from Borussia Dortmund in 2022 to establish himself as one of the best strikers in the world.

The deal is the longest in the Premier League, with Haaland reportedly earning around 500,000 pounds (\$600,000) per week.

The Norway striker will be turning age 34 when the contract expires.

JAMMU: President Draupadi Murmu on Friday conferred the prestigious Arjuna Award to para-archer from J&K, Kumar, hailing from Reasi district, became the third para-archer to receive the Arjuna Award, following Harvinder Singh in 2021 and Sheetal Devi in 2024 and cipients - Rakesh Kumar and

The Indian archery pair of Rakesh Kumar and Sheetal ranked compound archer in Devi had clinched the bronze India with a world ranking medal in the mixed team of No. 1. He was trained at compound event at the Paris the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board's Sports Complex and he is a native of Katra, Jammu.

Rakesh Kumar represented India at the 2020 Summer Paralympics, held in Tokyo, Japan. He won a gold medal in the men's compound open section of the 7th Fazza Para Archery World Ranking Tournament, which was held in Dubai in February 2021.

Kumar is the highest-



the nation. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also sent his "heartiest congratulations" to Paralympian Rakesh Kumar on receiving the prestigious Arjuna Award.

Meanwhile, LG Manoj Taking to X, Omar Abdul-Sinha congratulated Rakesh lah said that Rakesh has Kumar on receiving the presmade a name for himself in the field of para-archery. The tigious Arjuna Award. LG Sinha while extending CM added that Rakesh has

commendation said Rakesh served as an inspiration for has brought immense pride all the people in Jammu and to Jammu and Kashmir and Kashmir. (KNO)

### **Rohit Trains With White-Ball Ahead Of Champions Trophy**

#### **Press Trust of India**

MUMBAI: India captain Rohit Sharma has been honing his white-ball skills in preparation for the upcoming ODI series against England and the Champions Trophy.

In a video on Instagram, the 37-year-old was seen playing his signature shots, including flicks, drives, lofted hits, and pulls against the

white ball during a training session. Following a disappointing tour of Australia, during which he even dropped himself from the final Test in Sydney, Rohit has been training with Mumbai's Ranji squad.

Mumbai face Jammu and Kashmir on January 23, but Rohit's participation in the match remains in doubt.

India's Champions Trophy campaign begins on February 20 against Bangladesh in Dubai, following the ODI series against England starting February 6.

#### Kohli Named In Delhi's 22-Member **Provisional Squad**

Star batter Virat Kohli has been named in Delhi's 22-member provisional squad for their next Ranii Trophy game against Saurashtra in Rajkot but doubts remain about his

participation after it came to light that he is nursing a niggle.

It is learnt that Kohli has intimated the Delhi and Districts Cricket Association (DDCA) top brass that he has a neck niggle that he sustained in Sydney during the final Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test against Australia.

He was treated by the physio there and as of now, there is no clarity on availability for the Ranji match starting January 23.

Talismanic wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant will feature in a Ranji Trophy game after nearly seven years although it has been learnt that he has declined captaincy, which means Ayush Badoni will continue in the role.



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