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BOOK APPOINTMENT

Glacier Melt: A Water Crisis Brewing In Kashmir

Aafaq Hussain

Srinagar: On a crisp winter morning, people stood at the edge of Dal Lake in Srinagar. "This lake is a shadow of its former self," one

old man murmured, tracing a line with his hand where the water used to reach.

Kashmir, celebrated as the 'Paradise on Earth,' is witnessing a stark transformation. The glaciers that fed its rivers for centuries are

retreating at alarming rates, directly impacting water availability across the region.

Recent research reveals that the Kolahoi Glacier, the largest in the Kashmir Valley, has lost approximately 23% of its mass over the past few decades due to rising temperatures. Jammu

Kashmir, and Ladakh, home to nearly 18,000 glaciers, are witnessing accelerated melting.

This glacial melt is directly contributing to declining water levels in major rivers like the Jhelum. Jhelum river is witnessing one of its all-time lowest water levels this

season, causing the shortage of drinking and irrigation water.

Measurements at key points indicate a severe drop in water flow, unprecedented for this time of year. The Lidder Nallah and Rambiara Nallah are also facing critical lows, further exacerbating the water scarcity issue.

A top official of the Irrigation and Flood Control department said, "The River Jhelum is witnessing below zero flow. Main source of Jhelum are glaciers but unfortunately these are losing sheer due to Kashmir witnessing prolonged dry spells."

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, Director MeT, warned that water scarcity will likely become a frequent occurrence in the coming years, impacting various sectors. He highlighted a significant | [More on P6](#)



PHE Stresses Efficient Water Use

Chief Engineer of Public Health Engineering (PHE) Kashmir, Brahmajyoti Sharma, reaffirmed the department's dedication to managing water

resources efficiently and addressing public concerns despite challenges like low precipitation. Sharma acknowledged the critical role of public

Trump Announces US Withdrawal From WHO

Press Trust Of India

Washington: President Donald Trump has signed an executive order beginning the process of withdrawing America from the World Health Organisation, the second time in less than five years that the US has made a move to withdraw from the world body.

It was among dozens of executive actions he signed after being sworn in on Monday for a second term, on issues ranging from immigration to foreign policy to climate change.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) came under intense criticism from Trump in 2020 for its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which grew into a worldwide health crisis during the final year of his first term.

"That's a big one," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office of the White House when an aide presented to him an executive order on this to be signed by him.

"We paid USD 500 million to World Health when I was here, and I terminated it. China, with 1.4 billion people, has 350 dependents... Nobody | [More on P6](#)

Simultaneous Polls: JPC To Meet On Jan 31

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The second meeting of the joint parliamentary committee examining the two bills for simultaneous elections will be held on January 31, according to the schedule posted on the Lok Sabha website.

The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill were introduced in Lok Sabha during the recent Winter Session and referred to the committee.

According to the Lok Sabha website, procedure and modalities for examination of the amendment bills will be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

The panel held its first meeting on January 8, where representatives of the Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department) briefed the members.

A robust exchange of contesting views had marked the first meeting of the parliamentary panel with opposition members criticising the concept as an attack on the basic fabric of the Constitution and federalism, and BJP MPs hailing it as reflective of popular opinion.

All MPs were given a trolley carrying over 18,000 pages, including one volume of the Ram Nath Kovind committee report each in Hindi and English, and 21 volumes of annexure, besides a soft copy as well.

Headed by BJP MP PP Chaudhary, the 39-member joint committee | [More on P6](#)

Republic Day Celebrations

Multi-tier Security In Place In J&K



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Multi-tier security arrangements will be put in place for the smooth conduct of the Republic Day celebrations in Kashmir, Inspector General of Police V K Birdi said here on Tuesday.

The main Republic Day function will take place in Jammu which will be presided over by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as the chief guest.

"The security preparations

for January 26 are in full swing. Multi-tier security arrangements will be in place so that the people will enjoy the function and parade," the IGP said.

In the Kashmir valley, the main event is scheduled at Bakshi Stadium here where deputy chief minister Surinder Choudhary will preside over the function.

"Sanitization and area domination exercises are being carried out by security personnel to ensure the | [More on P6](#)

Entry Free For All: Div Com

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, V K Bidhuri, Tuesday assured that this year's Republic Day celebrations will be more organized and enjoyable, with arrangements surpassing those of last year.

Bidhuri highlighted the meticulous planning undertaken to ensure a smooth event. "We have taken last year as our benchmark and improved upon it. Special attention has been given to seating arrangements, | [More on P6](#)

6 DRONES AND HIGH-RESOLUTION CCTV CAMERAS, have been deployed to monitor event venues and surrounding areas."

Indus Water Treaty

Neutral Expert Backs India's Stand Over Pakistan

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: A World Bank-appointed neutral expert has backed New Delhi's position on the framework to resolve certain disputes between India and Pakistan on Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects.

While India has been pressing for resolution of the issues by the neutral expert as mandated under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) between the two countries, Pakistan has been backing the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague to resolve them.

India and Pakistan signed IWT on September 19, 1960 after nine years of negotiations with a sole aim to manage issues relating to cross-border rivers.

India welcomed the ruling by the neutral expert, International Commission of Large Dams president Michel Lino.

On Monday, Lino ruled that he is competent to render a decision on the "merits of the Points of Difference" between India and Pakistan on the two hydropower projects.

"India welcomes the decision given by the Neutral Expert under Paragraph 7 of Annexure F to the Indus Waters Treaty, 1960," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

"The decision upholds and vindicates India's stand that all seven questions that were referred to the neutral expert, in relation to the Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects, are differences falling | [More on P6](#)

Mystery Behind 17 Rajouri Deaths Will Be Resolved Soon: Omar Abdullah

Says Our Priority Is To Stop Cycle Of Deaths

Observer News Service

Jammu: Asserting that a probe is underway to unravel the mystery behind 17 deaths in this village of Rajouri district, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today assured people that all questions will be answered soon.

Talking to reporters during his visit to the village to express sympathy with the bereaved families, Omar said building big hospitals everywhere is not possible but inadequacy in the health sector at district levels will be addressed to provide better healthcare facilities to people



Chief Minister during a visit to Badhaal village, where 17 people, including 13 children, died under mysterious circumstances in the past one-and-a-half month, in Rajouri. PTI Photo

in remote pockets. Seventeen

persons, including 13 children, belonging to three | [More on P6](#)

Central Team & SIT Widen Probe

Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district have resealed a house in Badhal village after collecting fresh samples for investigation,

following the tragic deaths of multiple family members, leaving the local community in shock and grief. These deaths form part of a larger, enigmatic tragedy that

has claimed the lives of 17 villagers over the past one and a half months. The decision to reseat the house was made under the guidance of Kotranka's | [More on P6](#)

CS Orders Strict Containment Measures

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Tuesday directed the health and the police departments to take stringent containment measures to ensure no further loss of lives in the remote Badhaal village of Rajouri district. Dulloo passed the directions during a meeting of divisional and district administrations, | [More on P6](#)

NC-PDP Trade Accusations Over Recruitment Scams

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The ruling National Conference (NC) and opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) entered into a verbal brawl on the recruitment scams in Jammu and Kashmir, with leaders from both parties targeting each other for irregularities in examinations.

Itija Mufti, daughter of PDP chief and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, said, "The JKSSB has conducted two recruitment exams for telecommunications and photographer but there are discrepancies in both the exams as the candidates who have topped in these exams have failed to in the recent Jammu and Kashmir Police Constable



examinations."

"I want to ask the JKSSB as well as the government how the candidates who have performed poorly in two exams have topped in the Police constable examination and those who have worked hard didn't even make the list. Are not you (government & JKSSB) able to conduct exams | [More on P6](#)

J&K's Chinars Get A High-Tech Lifeline

Geotagging, QR Codes Boost Conservation Efforts

Agencies

Srinagar: As part of a move towards the conservation of its iconic Chinar trees, Jammu and Kashmir has embarked on a unique initiative that combines modern technology with traditional conservation efforts.

The Jammu & Kashmir Forest Research Institute (JKFRI) and the Jammu & Kashmir Forest Department have successfully geotagged over 28,000 Chinar trees across the Union Territory for the past four years, creating



a database that ensures the preservation of these cultural and ecological treasures.

According to details, the initiative, which began in 2021 and is expected to continue until 2025, involves the use of GIS and QR codes to monitor and conserve the Chinars.

Each tree is geotagged with vital information such as height, | [More on P6](#)

Custodial Torture Case

HC Quashes SHRC's 2008 Order, Cites Lack Of Fair Hearing

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has set aside a 2008 order passed by the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) in a custodial torture case, citing a violation of natural justice.

The case in question involved a man, who claimed he was tortured by police officers while in custody at Darhal Police Station.

The SHRC had recommended



compensation of 1 lakh rupees for the victim, but the High Court found that the accused police officers had not been given an opportunity to present their side of the case.

A Bench of Justices Sanjeev Kumar and Puneet Gupta

observed that the SHRC had issued its order without issuing notice or providing a hearing to the police officers accused of torturing the man.

The court stated that the SHRC had failed to adhere to the principles of natural justice. The judges said, "Before condemning the petitioners and imposing a penalty upon them, it was incumbent upon the Commission to summon all the petitioners and provide them with an adequate | [More on P6](#)

J&K Higher Reaches Receive Fresh Snow

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The tourist resorts of Gulmarg and Sonamarg were among some areas in the higher reaches of Kashmir which received fresh snowfall overnight even as the minimum

temperature across the valley improved, providing relief to the residents from intense cold conditions, officials said here on Tuesday.

Snowfall was also recorded along the Zojila axis on the Srinagar-Leh national highway.

The meteorological department has forecast a possibility of light rain or snow at scattered places on Tuesday and Wednesday, while it said there is a possibility of very light rain or light snow at isolated places a day after.

The overcast conditions led to an increase in the night temperatures across the valley.

The minimum temperature in Srinagar settled at 1 degree Celsius on Monday night, up from the previous night's minus 3.2 degrees | [More on P6](#)

Drug Trafficking Network Exposed In Karan Nagar Operation : Police

Agencies

Srinagar: In a major crackdown on illegal drug trafficking, Srinagar Police claimed to have seized a significant consignment of illegal drugs being transported through a courier service in Karan Nagar. The operation was carried out at the Chota Bazar office of Shree Maruti Courier Service based on specific intelligence inputs, said a spokesperson while sharing details with Associated News Bureau.

A thorough search of the courier premises, conducted in compliance with legal protocols, led to the recovery of a substantial cache of drugs. The seized items include: Mavrix-T Codeine: 220 bottles, Spasproxoyvon: 15 boxes (each containing 7 strips), Pregabalin: 60 strips

A case has been registered under FIR No.

01/2025 at Police Station Karan Nagar under relevant sections of the law. The police have launched a detailed investigation to trace the supply chain of the contraband, both upstream and downstream, he said.

Additionally, a manhunt is underway to apprehend those involved in the trafficking network. The Srinagar Police have reiterated their commitment to combating the drug menace in the city and have appealed to the public to report any suspicious activities.

"This operation underscores our resolve to ensure a drug-free community. We urge citizens to be vigilant and support us in this fight against the drug trade," police spokesperson added.

The action has sent a strong message to traffickers and is expected to serve as a deterrent against the misuse of courier services for illegal activities. (ANB)



Div Com Assesses Preparations For Celebration Of Republic Day-2025

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In view of ensuing Republic Day celebrations, Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, convened a meeting on Tuesday with officials from civil departments and security agencies to assess the final arrangements and facilities for the national event.

During the meeting, the Div Com reviewed the facilities for the participants and emphasized on overwhelming participation in the Republic Day celebrations.

He also instructed for hassle-free entry of participants at the venue, and directed concerned departments to appoint nodal officers

to facilitate them.

He called for the illumination of key government buildings and institutions to foster a festive atmosphere.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Director of Agriculture, and heads of all divisional and district offices.

Later, the Div Com also visited Bakshi Stadium to assess the arrangements for the seamless execution of the Republic Day celebrations.

During this visit, he inspected the availability of drinking water and electricity, installation of LED screens, sound systems, seating arrangements, sanitation, and toilet facilities.

On the occasion, he directed the

Roads and Buildings department to install four LED screens at the stadium for live broadcast of the celebration proceedings.

He also urged the relevant authorities to ensure adequate heating arrangements for guests and enjoined the Srinagar Municipal Corporation to deploy mobile toilets at the venue.

During the visit, the Div Com was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, SSP Srinagar, SSP Traffic, ASP Security and officials from various departments, including PHE, KPDCL, R&B, Information, MED, Traffic Police, YSS, AACL, Sports Council, and Hospitality & Protocol, and others.

DC Reviews Implementation Of PMAY-U

Observer News Service

Srinagar: To review the progress of implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) in Urban and Rural areas of the District, a meeting of the Officers of line Departments was held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, here.

At the outset, the DC took a detailed appraisal about the implementation of the PMAY-Urban scheme in the District. He also assessed the status of

registration made under the PMAY-U scheme and directed the concerned authorities to organize special awareness camps across the district so that all eligible beneficiaries get benefitted from the scheme.

The DC asked all the concerned Officers after undertaking proper demand survey in the district it should be ensured that not a single genuine beneficiary is left out from the scheme. He also stressed on maintaining utmost transparency and accountability in addition to timely disposal of cases.

Awareness Programme On 'Red Rice' Held

Observer News Service

Srinagar: An awareness cum training programme on 'Red Rice' under HADP Project, (promotion of niche crops in the UT of J&K), was held at agriculture complex Lalmandi Srinagar.

The programme was organised by an advanced research station for saffron and temperate seed spices, SKUAST-K.

Speaking on the occasion, Joint Director Agriculture highlighted

the importance of different niche crops including Red Rice. He enumerated the different initiatives by the department in this direction.

He said that our niche crops would play an important role in the economic growth and sustainability of the agriculture sector in the region. He said under the holistic agriculture development program (HADP) government has approved a multi-crore prestigious project to promote the niche crops in the region.

The Jt. Director said the different interventions under HADP project, (Promotion of niche crops) like establishment of nurseries/seed villages, would generate job opportunities for unemployed youth working in niche sectors.

Earlier head of the research station, Prof. Dr. Bashir Ahmed Allie presented a detailed scenario of different initiatives by the advanced research station, SKUAST-Kashmir for the promotion of niche crops like Red Rice.

NOTICE

The Grue Kashmir Tour & Travels bearing Registration Number: JKEA00001370 is undergoing to change its ownership from Rimsha Rashid D/o Mr. Adul Rashid Dar R/o 90 Feet Road Soura Behind Police Station to Sakhi Abbass Khan S/o Tasaduq Hussain Khan R/o Nabdipora Gasiyar Zadibal.

If anybody have any objections in this regard may contact the concerned authorities within a period of seven days after publication of this notice. After that no objection will be entertained.

Subject:- Grant Of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & Style "M/S Appaluse Kashmir Tour & Travels situated Budran Magam

Public Notice

Whereas I, Mr. Sarwar Golbaidan S/o Gh Mohd Dar R/o Arpanthan intend to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under the name & style of M/S Appaluse Kashmir Tour & Travels situated Budran Magam under tourist trade act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will submit 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 (Letter head / Visiting card) Photograph of the unit (indoor and outdoor) and Two passport size photographs to the department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist / 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 before 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: ddtreg123@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.

bmg.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr. DST/E/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders on <https://www.ireps.gov.in> against Tender Notice No. 433-Sig-T-44-24-25 Closing Date/Time 13/02/2025 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like Net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Name of Work	Annual Repair Contract (ARC) of 5 Watt & 25 Watt Walkie Talkie sets over Firozpur Division for Three (03) years.
Tender closing Date & Time	13/02/2025 15:00
Advertised Value (Rs.)	3427995.00
Earnest Money (Rs.)	68600.00
Date Time of Uploading Tender	20/01/2025 13:10
Bidding Start Date as per IREPS	30/01/2025
Period of Completion	36 Months

Tender Notice No: 433-Sig-T-44-24-25 Date: 20/01/2025
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 222/25

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
Public Works (R&B) Department
Civil Secretariat, J&K

Subject: Final Selection List for the post of Junior Engineer (Civil), Public Works (R&B) Department, advertised vide Notification No. 06 of 2022 dated 11.11.2022-Regarding.

- Reference:**
- No. JKSSB-Scry/2/2024-03 [E-7390977] dated 29.10.2024 from J&K Service Selection Board.
 - Notification No. issued vide endorsement No. JKSSB-Scry/2/2024-03 dated 20.12.2024 by the J&K Service Selection Board.

NOTICE

The following candidates who have been recommended by the J&K Service Selection Board for appointment against the post of Junior Engineer (Civil), advertised vide Notification No. 06 of 2022 dated 11.11.2022 under wait list are hereby informed to submit their email id and mobile number in the Establishment Section of the Public Works (R&B) Department, Civil Secretariat, Jammu/ Srinagar in person or on email id cleralhallrnb121@gmail.com within a period of twenty one (21) days positively for registering them on the Employee Verification System (EVS) Portal, failing which the candidates shall forego their right to the appointment without further notice:-

S. No.	Roll No.	Candidate's Name	Parentage	DOB	Selection Category	Address
1	2180378	Aamir Farooq Dar	Farooq Ahmad Dar	09/12/1997	OM	New Colony Khrew, Pampore, Pulwama-191103
2	2010264	Faheem Qadir	Ghulam Qadir Bhat	28/02/1993	OM	SK Colony, Qamarwari Karannagar, Srinagar - 190010
3	1050024	Faiz Arshad	Ibne Arshad Iqbal	06/03/1997	EWS	H.No. 140, Ward No.11, Birshalla, Doda-182202
4	2110212	Sameer Ahmad Bhat	Ghulam Ahmad Bhat	10/03/2000	EWS	Bunpora, Madergam, Kulgam-192231

DIPK-11072/24
dated: 21-01-2025

No: PWD-NGAZOCIV/217/2024-05 [E-7550628]

(Hamid Hameed)
Under Secretary to the Government
Dated: 15-01-2025

• TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
• PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
• PDD: 0194-2450213
• FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
• CAPD: 18001807011
• SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
• Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
21 Rajab
1446

PRAYERS	
FAJR	6: 07
ZUHR	12:42
ASR	4: 12
Magrib	5:53
ISHA	7: 17

This Day In History

- 871 - Battle of Basing: Danish invasion army beats Saxon Ethelred of Wessex
- 1528 - England & France declare war on Emperor Charles V
- 1760 - Battle at Wandewash India: British troops beat French
- 1771 - Spain cedes Falkland Islands to Britain
- 1879 - Battle of Rorke's Drift: British garrison of 150 holds off 3,000-4,000 Zulu warriors. Eleven Victoria Crosses and a number of other decorations were awarded to the defenders.
- 1925 - Albania Republic proclaimed under President Achmed Zogu
- 1931 - Sir Isaac Isaacs is sworn in as the first Australian-born Governor-General of Australia
- 1946 - US President Harry Truman sets up the Central Intelligence Agency
- 1957 - Israeli forces withdraw from Sinai Peninsula
- 1965 - US launches TIROS 9 weather satellite
- 1968 - Apollo Lunar Module is launched to Moon; unmanned lunar module tests made
- 1969 - Orbiting Solar Observatory 5 launched into earth orbit

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE
DEN/HQ/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date- 10.02.2025 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on www.ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft Banker Cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information logon to www.ireps.gov.in.

Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System				
Open	Works	Single Packet System				
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time				
16.01.2025 & 17.01.2025	27.01.2025	10.02.2025 15:00 Hrs.				
S. No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender				
1.	284-2024-25-ADEN-1-FZR	Renovation of control office chambers of DRM office Firozpur along with Misc. work related to control under ADEN-1/FZR.	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
			1,15,97,747.58	2,08,000.00	60 Days	09 Months
Special Technical Criteria: "Any civil work other than track work".						
2.	297-2024-25-DEN-HQ-FZR	Replacement of 32 Nos i.e. (25 Nos. 60 Kg 1 in 12 turnout), (1 Nos. 60 Kg 1 in 8.5 turnout) in c/with "Firozpur Division-TTR (FS CS CMSC)-13 sets, TTR (TWS WCMS)-38 sets, TTR (CMS)-61 sets & TTR (CS CMSC)-17 sets" & (1 Nos. 60 Kg Diamond Crossing D/S) (1 Nos. 60 Kg Diamond Crossing S/S) (4 Nos. 60 Kg scissor x-over 1 in 8.5) in c/with "TTR(FS CS CMSC)-56 sets, CS CMSC-18 sets, FS TWS WCMS-44 sets, WCMS-4 sets, DS-2 sets & TWS WCMS-4 sets on PSC sleepers" in GNA, CBX, GJUT, RLS, KKP, KBU, FZR, TWB & PHS yards in the section of ADEN-1/FZR & ADEN-2/FZR under jurisdiction of DEN-HQ/FZR.	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
			1,97,48,743.60	2,48,800.00	60 Days	09 Months
Special Technical Criteria: "CTR/TRR/TFR/TTR including raising of Track, screening, distressing of track, pre & post work for track maintenance machine like Tamping Machines/Ballast Screening/Regulating Machines and TTR by T-28".						
3.	298-2024-25-ADEN-1-FZR	Repair and maintenance of Level Crossings including road surface, speed breakers in the section of ADEN-1/FZR under DEN-HQ/FZR.	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
			44,99,963.26	90,000.00	60 Days	07 Months
Special Technical Criteria: "NIL".						
4.	299-2024-25-ADEN-1-FZR	Repair & maintenance of bridges in the section of ADEN-1/FZR under DEN-HQ/FZR.	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
			29,28,959.11	58,600.00	60 Days	07 Months
Special Technical Criteria: "NIL".						
5.	300-2024-25-ADEN-1-FZR	Crossing of 600 mm internal dia Water Supply carrier Pipe Line passing through 900 mm internal dia D.I. encasing pipe K-7 and 1200 mm dia M.S. heavy duty casing pipe under the Railway Track near Level crossing no. A-2 at Km 2/0-1 (2.014) on KKP-FKA section under ADEN-1/FZR.	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
			41,64,108.98	83,300.00	60 Days	05 Months
Special Technical Criteria: "NIL".						

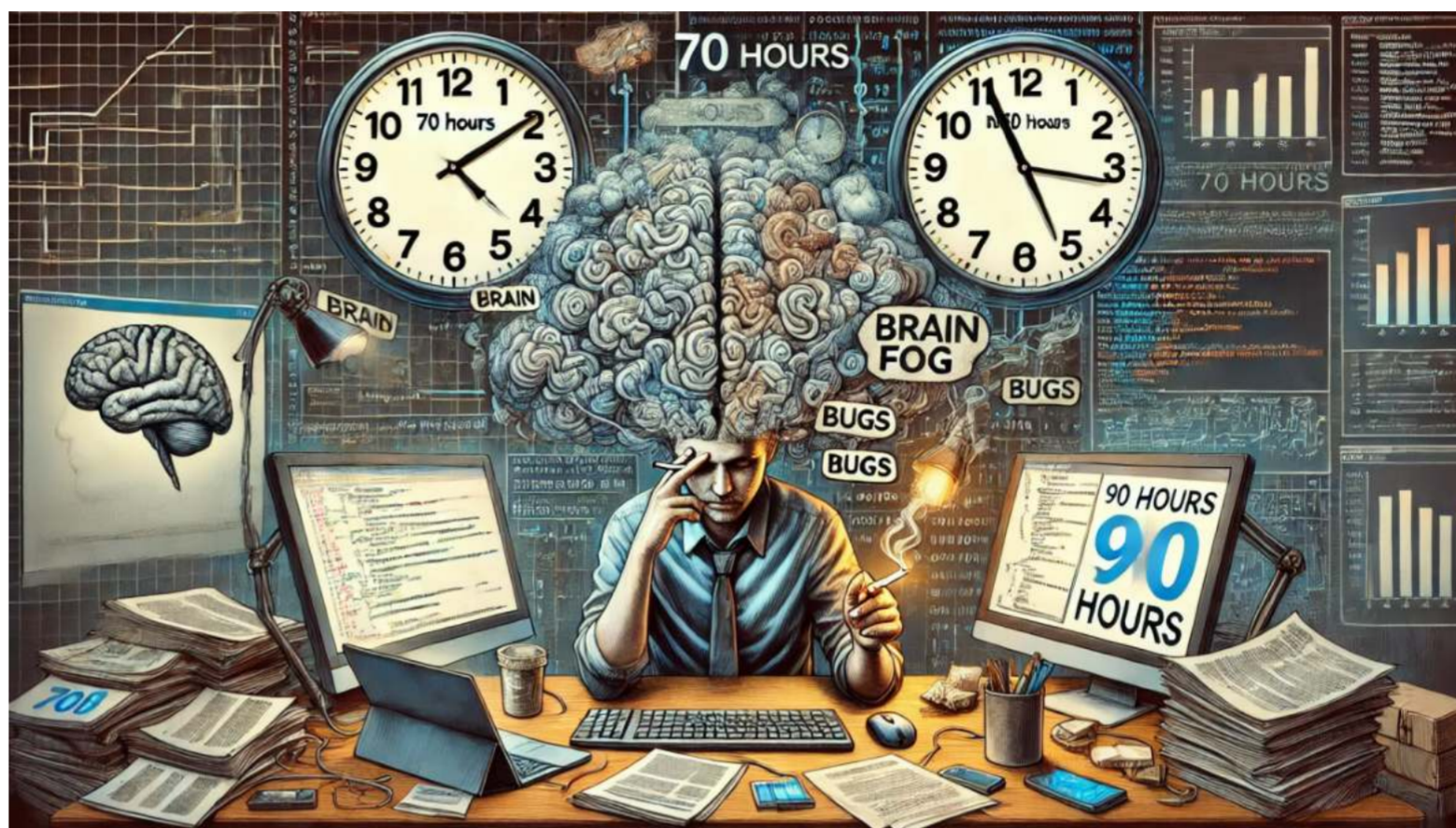
Note1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender.
No.: 284, 298, 299 & 300-2024-25-ADEN-1-FZR & 297-2024-25-DEN-HQ-FZR
Date: 17.01.2025 215/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

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The 90-Hour Work Week Hullabaloo



KO VIEW

Melting Glaciers

The glaciers in Kashmir that feed our rivers are melting at an alarming pace. Rising temperatures and changing weather patterns are behind this shift, and it spells trouble for the valley's farming communities. The Jhelum river, a key source of water for irrigation, is flowing at some of its lowest levels in recent memory. As a result, crops like rice, apples, and saffron are struggling to survive. With less water available, farmers are facing lower yields.

Recent years have witnessed an overall decline in precipitation. In 2024, Kashmir had its driest year in half a century, with rainfall levels 29% lower than average. This is the fifth year in a row of below-average rainfall, which is becoming a worrying trend. The Valley's winter snowfall, which is crucial for replenishing glaciers, has also been decreasing. This lack of snow is preventing glaciers from getting the ice they need to survive, further limiting the region's water supply.

Glaciers are a natural water storage system, holding snow in the winter and releasing it in the summer. Kashmir has 18,000 of them, and most of them are gradually receding. In recent decades, the Kolahoi glacier, the largest in Kashmir, has lost 23% of its mass. This decline is tied to erratic rainfall, longer dry spells, and rising temperatures that are now the norm in Kashmir.

In the Valley, the impact of climate change on agriculture is further exacerbated by the shrinking paddy lands. According to official figures, over the past seven years, Kashmir has lost a staggering 6,000 hectares of paddy land, reducing the total land under paddy cultivation from 1,35,000 hectares to 1,29,000 hectares. Although there has been a significant increase in rice yield, this threatens both food security and the livelihoods of the people.

The shrinking glaciers are also affecting the region's power supply. Hydropower plants, which rely on river water for energy, are struggling to produce as much electricity. More so in winter when discharge in water bodies reduces to a trickle. This adds to the ongoing power shortages in Kashmir.

To tackle this growing problem, urgent action is needed. Efforts should focus on protecting the glaciers, improving how water is managed, and supporting farming practices that can survive with less water. Policymakers must also address the root causes of climate change and ensure communities are ready to face these challenges. The retreat of Kashmir's glaciers is a stark reminder of how interconnected nature and human life are. If action isn't taken soon, both the environment and the livelihoods of a large section of the population in the Valley will be at risk. The time to act is now.



Did you know? Why Saving and Smart Investing are Essential for Building Wealth for Your Children's Education and Future

Irshad Mushtaq

Events Like Weddings Financial planning is vital for achieving a secure future and making sure we can support our loved ones when they need it most. Let's dive into why it's important to save and invest wisely, how double-digit returns can significantly contribute to wealth creation, and the benefits of creating a robust financial portfolio.

The Importance of Saving: Saving money is crucial for various reasons:
Building a Safety Net: Having a reserve allows you to handle unexpected expenses, ensuring you won't be caught off guard by financial emergencies.
Investment for Goals: Whether it's for your children's education or a wedding for your daughter, saving money prepares you to meet these significant life events without stress.

Why Invest Wisely?

Investing wisely is equally important for long-term wealth creation. Here's how:
Potential for High Returns: Investments often yield returns higher than traditional savings accounts. Aiming for a return of 10% to 20% is realistic with mutual funds, letting your money work for you.
Compounding Benefits: The earlier you start investing, the more you benefit from compounding. Over time, even modest investments can grow significantly.

The Significance of Double-Digit Returns

Achieving a double-digit return on your investments is essential for wealth creation because:
Accelerated Growth: A return of 10% to 18% can rapidly increase your wealth, helping to fund goals like education or weddings.
Long-Term Financial Security: Consistent returns contribute to a stable financial future, allowing you to worry less and enjoy life more.

The Best Investment Vehicles: Mutual Funds One of the easiest and most effective methods for long-term investment is through mutual funds.
Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs): Investing a fixed amount regularly through SIPs creates a habit of saving and helps mitigate market volatility.

Lump Sum Investments: If you have a significant amount to invest, lump sum contributions to mutual funds can also yield great returns, particularly in well-regarded funds.

Crafting Your Financial Future

1. Choose the Right Funds: It's essential to select mutual funds that align with your financial goals. Research and seek out trusted advisory services for expert guidance.
2. Maintain Discipline Through Market Fluctuations: Market volatility is normal, but a long-term investment strategy will help you stay calm. Don't panic during downturns; instead, remain focused on your objectives.

3. Quality Over Quantity: Invest in good quality funds that have proven track records, which leads to more predictable returns over time. Create a Culture of Smart Investing Adopting a disciplined approach to savings and investments fosters a positive culture around financial planning.

Saving Regularly: Make it a habit to put away money every month. This builds a cushion for the future.
Long-Term Focus: Understand that not all investments will yield immediate returns. Patience is key for reaping the benefits of quality portfolios.

Conclusion

In the long run, saving and investing wisely are instrumental in alleviating financial pressures associated with major life events like children's education and weddings. With the right strategies, you can secure your family's future and create a sustainable second source of income. Financial planning is more than just managing money; it's about ensuring peace of mind today and a brighter tomorrow. Start your journey towards a secure financial future today by investing in mutual funds and consulting with trusted financial advisors!

Learn from the insights of @Irshad Mushtaq, Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of M.I. Securities! Connect for valuable financial advice at miscurities@ip.sharprekhan.com
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Peerzada Mohsin Shafi

“Rather than focusing on the controversial comments made by CEOs, the focus should shift to addressing the systemic issue of long working hours in the industry. There needs to be a shift in how we approach worker welfare, both for manual labourers and for professional staff

In recent times, the topic of long working hours has been a subject of considerable debate in India. The latest headlines feature statements from high-profile figures like Infosys CEO and L&T Chairman. Infosys's CEO earlier suggested that employees in the tech industry should work up to 70 hours a week, while the Chairman of L&T went a step further, proposing a 90-hour workweek. These comments have ignited a storm of criticism, with many arguing that such expectations are unreasonable and even exploitative.

The Hype and Criticism

The idea of a 90-hour workweek has sparked a great deal of controversy. Critics argue that it is an unrealistic and harmful demand, particularly in a country where labor laws are designed to protect workers from excessive working hours. In India, the Factories Act, the Shops and Establishments Act, and the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Act set clear guidelines for working hours, mandating that employees should not work more than 48 hours a week, with overtime compensation for extra hours worked.

The backlash has been fierce, with many questioning the ethics behind such proposals. While I do not endorse the statement made by the L&T Chairman, I can acknowledge one thing: he is a man with clear ideology. Unlike others who may quietly adhere to such practices behind closed doors, he openly expressed what others may be thinking or doing. For that, at least he deserves recognition. However, this doesn't change the fact that his suggestion is out of touch with the reality of labor laws in India, which are specifically designed to protect workers' rights and prevent exploitation. The government and labor commissioners are aware of these concerns, but enforcement remains a critical issue. In fact, there have been very few instances where action has been taken against companies for violating these labor laws, especially when it comes to professionals like engineers and other executive staff working long hours without overtime compensation.

The Reality in Construction Projects

While the debate about 70 or 90-hour workweeks is ongoing, it's essential to look at the situation on the ground. In most mega construction projects across India, workers both labourers and professional often work more than 90 hours a week. These projects operate around the clock, with day and night shifts running for 12 hours each. Even more alarmingly, Sundays, which should be a day of rest, are frequently worked to meet tight deadlines.

Construction workers are compensated for their overtime, which is a standard practice, but

the situation for engineers and other professionals is quite different. Engineers and executive staff often work alongside the labourers in these 12-hour shifts, making their workdays extend to 84 hours a week. Add to that the time spent commuting to and from construction sites, which are often located in remote areas far from accommodations, and it's not uncommon for these professionals to clock in at 91 hours per week. Yet, these professionals rarely receive overtime pay. The fact that many professionals in the construction industry work under these conditions speaks volumes about the discrepancy between public statements like those of the L&T Chairman and the reality faced by workers on the ground. The construction industry has become accustomed to long hours as a norm, with little to no accountability or regulation on how much is too much.

The Legal Framework: Is It Being Enforced?

Indian labor laws are clear on the matter. The Factories Act, for instance, states that no worker should work more than 48 hours

“While labor commissioners are aware of the situation, the lack of robust enforcement means that companies continue to make their engineers and executive staff work long hours without due compensation

a week, and any work beyond that should be paid at an overtime rate. The BOCW Act, which specifically governs construction workers, also lays down guidelines for working conditions. However, these laws are often overlooked or not enforced, especially when it comes to professionals in the construction sector.

In practice, action is rarely taken against companies that violate these laws. While labor commissioners are aware of the situation, the lack of robust enforcement means that companies continue to make their engineers and executive staff work long hours without due compensation. The reality is that in the construction industry, professionals are working 12-hour days, and yet there is little to no significant action taken by law enforcement agencies to address this. As the Kashmiri proverb goes, "Iss hamam mein saaray nangay hain" In this bathroom, everyone is naked. This aptly applies to the situation in the industry. It's not just the Chairman of L&T advocating for a 90-hour workweek; it's a common expectation across the sector. Some employers speak openly about it, while others choose to hide behind closed doors, but the underlying aspirations remain the same. This reflects the wide-

spread normalization of such practices, where both employers and employees—who often have no other choice—quietly accept long working hours, often at the expense of their well-being and personal lives.

The Bigger Picture

The reality is that long working hours in the construction industry are nothing new. Projects are often large-scale and time-sensitive, leading to the expectation that workers—especially professionals—will sacrifice their time to meet deadlines. However, the growing trend of endorsing even longer workweeks, as suggested by figures like the L&T Chairman, brings to light a much larger issue: the imbalance of power in the workplace and the lack of proper labor rights enforcement.

Rather than focusing on the controversial comments made by CEOs, the focus should shift to addressing the systemic issue of long working hours in the industry. There needs to be a shift in how we approach worker welfare, both for manual labourers and for professional staff. These are the real concerns that should be

at the forefront of any discussion about working hours in India's construction industry.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the 90-hour workweek proposal made by the L&T Chairman has generated considerable discussion, the real issue lies in the everyday reality of construction professionals in construction projects across India. The harsh truth is that many professionals are already working more than 90 hours per week, often without any compensation for overtime. Rather than creating unnecessary fuss over public statements, we should address the root causes of this issue and demand better enforcement of existing labor laws to ensure fair working conditions for all employees regardless of their role in the organization.

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

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Things Fall Apart!

Let us be the change we want to see

Bilal Ahmad Khanday

W e all, in one way or another, aspire to change, but we never "be the change" we want to see and flourish.

"Things Fall Apart" is one of the famous novels by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, which I skimmed way back in 2012. Now, after a decade, I hardly remember the primary message of the novel. However, yesterday, while scrolling through social media, I came across a Facebook post by a user who had written a beautiful and touching reflection on her perception and understanding of the events and processes of day-to-day life. The phrase "things fall apart" in her post caught my attention and inspired me to reflect on its relevance in the present-day context in this part of the world.

Well, as the phrase suggests, "things fall apart" is used when something doesn't go your way—when you want something to happen, but the opposite occurs; when you aim for something, but it eludes your grasp; when you aspire to achieve something, but it falls into someone else's lap without them even trying; when you give your best for your dreams, only to discover those dreams were not meant for you; when you plan meticulously, yet something unplanned takes over. This is when you realize that you are merely human, subject to human pitfalls and shortcomings. And then, you must bow to the divine plans running beneath everything.

Now, coming to the contemporary context of this phrase, I believe we see this "things fall apart" scenario everywhere and in every sphere of life—social, political, economic, moral, and



religious. However, discussing this scenario in every sphere would be neither proper nor feasible at this moment. So, let us restrict ourselves to the social and administrative spheres for now.

As far as society is concerned, we witness "things fall apart" scenarios everywhere and in every walk of life. From the individual to the family to society at large, it seems as though things have fallen apart and continue to do so at an alarming pace. At the individual level, individuality is being sacrificed; at the familial level, relationships appear to be disintegrating; and in the social setup, norms, traditions, rituals,

and customs are either on the verge of extinction or being replaced by so-called modernity and advancement.

In all these perspectives and scenarios, no one takes or owns responsibility. Instead, we engage in blame games, passing the ball into someone else's court. Unfortunately, while we all aspire to change, we fail to embody the change we wish to see. We expect others to take the first step but seldom dare to begin with ourselves.

Isn't it true that we all desire changes in the present status quo across all aspects of life—those that constitute the lifelines of peaceful and prosperous

existence? Yet, we are unwilling to begin with ourselves. If each of us, at an individual level, played our part, things would be entirely different. Not only would our familial and social institutions thrive peacefully, but our administrative and governmental machinery would also present a far better picture. Unfortunately, the current scenario paints a dismal image, one we are all too familiar with.

Consider sectors like education, healthcare, tourism, and public works. These are meant to address the problems faced by the common masses. Yet, from the people's perspective, these sectors operate based solely on

their own whims and wishes. The masses often must go from pillar to post to have their genuine demands addressed. If these problems are resolved, it is seldom on time and only after repeated requests and visits.

The point is that, in almost every sector and department, things have quietly and gradually fallen apart over time, often unnoticed or ignored. Unfortunately, the situation has now become so grave that things are falling apart rapidly and with greater intensity. There appears to be little hope of restoring order in the near future, given the current ground realities. This has become the status quo of society.

As the saying goes, unless you feel pain, you will not think of seeking treatment. Similarly, we have not truly realized the gravity of the problems, and without that realization, it is impossible to think of solutions. Even if we do realize the issues, we tend to expect others to take the initiative, neglecting our own responsibility.

When a society reaches such a stage, it gradually becomes hollow from within. Its roots weaken day by day as everyone indulges in their own whims and desires, making its fall inevitable sooner or later.

So, before things fall apart further, let us pledge to act now. Otherwise, we risk becoming nothing more than a page in history.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The author can be reached out for feedback at: khandaybilal12@gmail.com

CONSIDER SECTORS LIKE EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE, TOURISM, AND PUBLIC WORKS. These are meant to address the problems faced by the common masses. Yet, from the people's perspective, these sectors operate based solely on their own whims and wishes. The masses often must go from pillar to post to have their genuine demands addressed

Psychology's "Chicken or the Egg" Problem

Which comes first—the thought or the feeling?

Jeffrey Nevid

In psychology, the classic chicken-or-egg conundrum boils down (sorry) to the question of whether thoughts precede feelings or feelings precede thoughts. That is, do feelings generate thoughts or do thoughts determine feelings?

Do We Feel First and Think Second?

It may seem that feelings precede thoughts in the natural order of things. But this may be a case of the tail wagging the dog. We feel sad or anxious and then become aware of the sad or anxious thoughts bouncing around in our head. Although you might first become aware of the feeling, the order of operations may actually be the reverse—you think depressing or anxious thoughts, triggering the accompanying feeling states. Understandably, you might first notice a feeling state, as feelings are difficult to ignore. Feelings also tend to linger, but thoughts are fleeting things—ephemera that drift in and out of consciousness. But were you to scratch a disturbing feeling, you'd likely find an underlying negative thought driving it.

Why does it matter whether thoughts or feelings come first? The distinction is important, as learning to manage your emotions depends on identifying how your thoughts trigger your emotional reactions. Emotions are tethered to our thoughts, but we may not recognize the threads of the tether that bind them. The lesson here is clear: to better manage our emotions, we need to catch the underlying thought triggers and practice thinking differently. But there's a catch: How do we catch such a slippery target as



a passing thought?

Emotions Don't Exist in a Thought Vacuum

To test for yourself the connection between your thoughts and feelings, you can try a little exercise I do with my students. Try to make yourself angry while keeping your mind blank. Go ahead and try it out (no one is looking). I expect you'll be unable to feel real anger unless there are thoughts or images rummaging through your mind—typically of people or institutions you feel have mistreated you or done you wrong. Yes, you might feel some muscle tension if you clench your muscles while keeping your mind blank, but I think you'll agree that it is not the same feeling as real anger.

Emotions do not exist in a thought vacuum, any more than

The relationship between thoughts and feelings is not a one-way street. Thoughts and feelings form a bidirectional relationship in which thinking affects feelings and feelings influence how we think. In cognitive behavior therapy, we identify the triggering thoughts and the disturbing feelings in this feedback loop so that people can change how they think, how they feel, and what they do

fire can exist in an oxygen vacuum. Troubling emotions are the residue of the excess meanings we impose on events we experience. When our interpretations of events, which we express in the form of our self-talk, become twisted and distorted, our emotions become twisted and distorted as well. By focusing on our inner speech, we can become aware of misconceptions and misstatements and correct them by substituting rational alternatives.

Scratch a feeling and you'll find a thought lurking beneath it. As a cognitive behavior therapist, my role is to guide patients through a process of identifying the thought triggers that make them miserable and help them substitute more rational or adaptive ways of thinking. The conceptual model of CBT is

grounded in a philosophy called stoicism, which traces its roots to ancient Greece and Rome. As the Roman stoic philosopher Epictetus taught some 2,000 ago, we are not influenced by events themselves, but by our thoughts, beliefs, opinions, and interpretations about the events we experience.

While thoughts can trigger feelings, feelings don't necessarily depend on a precedent thought. Imprinted in our brains is an alarm system that alerts us to a perceived threat. Say you are walking in the woods and encounter a curved object in your path. Even before you can articulate the thought, "Oh, my God, it's a snake," your fight-or-flight response is triggered, summoning you to fend off the impending threat or flee from it, so you may find yourself reflexively jumping out of fear. A few seconds later, the thinking part of your brain kicks in, and having now evaluated the perceived threat and finding it to be but a harmless stick, you have a good laugh at yourself for reacting so strongly. In effect, when it comes to a potential threat, feeling (fear in this case) can precede thinking.

Thoughts and Feelings: A Two-Way Street

The relationship between thoughts and feelings is not a one-way street. Thoughts and feelings form a bidirectional relationship in which thinking affects feelings and feelings influence how we think. In cognitive behavior therapy, we identify the triggering thoughts and the disturbing feelings in this feedback loop so that people can change how they think, how they feel, and what they do.

Say you are awaiting the results of your latest medical tests and begin thinking the worst, which

strengthens your anxiety level soaring. Your emotions, fear and worry, strengthen your worst thoughts, potentiating them, which in turn further reinforces your anxious feelings. Similarly, for depression, thinking self-damning or catastrophizing thoughts can put a damper on your mood, and feeling down can bring negative thoughts more readily to mind.

What Is the Egg and What Is the Chicken?

As applied to psychology, the chicken-or-egg problem is predicated on a false dichotomy between thinking and feeling. Let's get this straight. Thoughts and feelings are as closely intertwined as the two sides of the same coin. Thoughts trigger feelings, but feelings, like fear, can trigger thoughts that might allay the fear ("it's only a stick") or strengthen it, as in the face of an actual threat ("I better get out of here, pronto"). We can also use our feelings as a guide to our troubling thoughts. For example, when feeling worried or apprehensive, you can survey your mind to find the underlying anxious or worrisome thoughts on which the feeling hinges.

The takeaway message is that how we think affects how we feel and how we feel affects how we think. We can learn from our feelings by using them as a guide to identify triggering thoughts and change our thoughts to change how we feel. As for the more general question of which comes first, the chicken or the egg, I once read that the answer, of course, is that it depends on who's serving the meal. (Hmmm).

The article was originally published by Psychology Today

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Glacier Melt: A Water

precipitation deficit and a dramatic acceleration in glacier retreat, four times faster than previously observed, and said that while some recent precipitation occurred, it was insufficient to offset the ongoing water crisis.

Regarding the immediate weather forecast, Dr. Ahmad predicted wet conditions until January 22nd, followed by a dry spell from January 23rd to 29th. He anticipated light precipitation after January 29th, but emphasized that the overall weather pattern would remain relatively unchanged, with occasional light rain, snow, and dry spells, but no major weather events.

According to Dr. Pervez Ahmed, HOD, Geography and Disaster Management, University of Kashmir, the changing climatic patterns over a longer period of time have contributed to the water shortages in the Kashmir valley. "Rising temperatures and declining precipitation, particularly crucial winter snowfall, are disrupting the delicate balance of the region's climate. This disruption is directly impacting the health of glaciers, vital reservoirs of water. Glaciers are shrinking in size and mass, exhibiting a 'retreating' trend that signals a decline in their overall health," Dr. Pervez said.

"The process of firnification, where snow transforms into glacial ice, is hindered by reduced snowfall during critical winter periods. Consequently, snowfields, crucial for glacier replenishment, are not adequately sustained. This decline in glacier mass and snowpack directly translates to reduced water availability, evident in the decreasing discharge of rivers and streams across the region."

Alarming Trends In Precipitation

Rainfall data underscores the gravity of the situation. Kashmir experienced its driest year in 2024, marking the most severe dry spell in five decades, with rainfall levels plunged to just 870.9 mm against the normal annual average of 1232.3 mm – a significant deficit of 29%. According to independent weatherman, Faizan Arif, this marks the fifth consecutive year of below-normal precipitation in the region raising serious concerns about water scarcity and its impact on agriculture, hydropower, and the overall environment.

In 2023, Kashmir recorded 1,146.6 mm of rainfall, a 7% deficit. The preceding years saw even greater deficits: 1,040.4 mm in 2022 (16%), 892.5 mm in 2021 (28%), and 982.2 mm in 2020 (20%).

The situation has worsened over the last five winters," Faizan said, adding that a sharp reduction in precipitation has contributed to the unprecedented shrinkage of glacier extent.

"Winter precipitation has consistently fallen below normal over the past decade, while spring heatwaves have intensified. These factors have accelerated glacier melting, threatening Kashmir's hydrological systems and freshwater reserves. Without intervention, the region's delicate water ecosystem may face irreversible damage."

PHE Stresses

cooperation in mitigating water scarcity and expressed hope for continued snowfall and rainfall to sustain water supply. He emphasized the department's efforts to judiciously manage available water, ensuring no disruptions for farmers or irrigation-dependent individuals.

Sharma encouraged the public to use the department's online platform for updates on tenders, work progress, and alerts, assuring that his office remains open to address grievances and queries.

Regarding the Jal Jeevan Mission, he noted significant progress, with a remaining 12% deficit due to supply challenges for electro-mechanical components. He expressed confidence that the project would meet its revised completion deadline of March 31, 2025.

On tackling illegal mining, Sharma commended media efforts in raising awareness and highlighted the collaborative work of the irrigation department, mining authorities, district administration, and law enforcement in significantly reducing such activities. He urged continued public and media support to sustain and enhance these efforts.

Trump Announces

knows what we have because so many people came in illegally. But let's say we have 325 (million people). They (China) had 1.4 billion people. They were paying USD39 million. We were paying USD500 million. It seemed a little unfair to me," he said.

"That wasn't the reason, but I dropped out (of WHO). They offered me to come back for USD39 million. In theory, it should be less than that, but, when Biden came back, they came back for USD500 million. He knew that you could have come back for USD39 million. They wanted us back so badly. So, we'll see what happens," he said.

The order said Trump was sending a presidential letter to the United Nations secretary-general to formally notify him of the US plan to withdraw.

The US noticed its withdrawal from WHO in 2020 due to its mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic that arose out of Wuhan, China, and other global health crises, its failure to adopt urgently needed reforms, and its inability to demonstrate independence from the inappropriate political influence of WHO member states, said the executive order.

"In addition, the WHO continues to demand unfairly onerous payments from the United States, far out of proportion with other countries' assessed payments. China, with a population of 1.4 billion, has 300 per cent of the population of the United States, yet contributes nearly 90 per cent less to the WHO," it said, adding that the US intends to withdraw from the WHO.

The global health body stands to lose hundreds of millions of dollars in funding following Trump's order.

Reacting to Trump's move, WHO in a

statement on Tuesday said it "regrets the announcement".

"WHO plays a crucial role in protecting the health and security of the world's people, including Americans, by addressing the root causes of disease, building stronger health systems, and detecting, preventing and responding to health emergencies, including disease outbreaks, often in dangerous places where others cannot go," the statement said.

It said for over seven decades, WHO and the US have saved countless lives and protected Americans and all people from health threats. Together, they ended smallpox, and brought polio to the brink of eradication. American institutions have contributed to and benefited from membership in WHO.

"With the participation of the United States and other Member States, WHO has over the past 7 years implemented the largest set of reforms in its history, to transform our accountability, cost-effectiveness, and impact in countries. This work continues.

"We hope the United States will reconsider and we look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue to maintain the partnership between the USA and WHO, for the benefit of the health and well-being of millions of people around the globe," the statement said.

This is Trump's second attempt to withdraw the US from the WHO.

In July 2020, he sent a letter to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus notifying him of the US intention to withdraw within a year. Trump accused the WHO at the time of helping China mislead the world about the spread of Covid-19.

But Trump was defeated in that year's election, and when President Joe Biden took office in January 2021, he reversed Trump's decision.

This time, Trump will still be in office when the withdrawal goes into effect.

The Executive Order also calls for establishing directorates and coordinating mechanisms within the National Security Council apparatus as he deems necessary and appropriate to safeguard public health and fortify biosecurity.

Simultaneous Polls:

comprises members from all major parties, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from Congress, Sanjay Jha from JD(U), Shiv Sena's Shrikant Shinde, AAP's Sanjay Singh, and Kalyan Banerjee and Saket Gokhale from Trinamool Congress.

The government decided to increase the committee's strength from 31 to 39, as more political parties expressed their desire to be part of the exercise to examine the two draft legislations on simultaneous elections.

Former Union ministers Anurag Thakur, Parshottam Rupala and Manish Tewari and several other lawmakers, including Anil Baluni, Bansuri Swaraj and Sambit Patra, are also members of the committee.

The panel has 27 members from Lok Sabha and 12 from Rajya Sabha.

Multi-tier Security

safety of the people," an official said.

"The security has been beefed up in 20 districts, particularly in the border areas. Enhanced security measures, include road blockades, vehicle checks, security cordons, and search operations," the official added.

He said there is an extensive deployment of police and paramilitary forces along the International Border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC). "Senior officers have reviewed security arrangements in sensitive border areas to ensure effective coordination between various agencies," he added.

"To further bolster security, advanced surveillance technologies, including drones and high-resolution CCTV cameras, have been deployed to monitor event venues and surrounding areas," he said, adding that checkpoints have been set up in Srinagar and other district headquarters, particularly at key entry points.

"Random vehicle checks and frisking operations are being conducted to prevent the movement of subversive elements," he added.

Entry Free For

with comfortable chairs set up for attendees. Additionally, high-quality LED screens have been installed to enhance the experience for everyone," he said.

He further said that refreshments will be provided, keeping in mind the cold winter mornings. "We have ensured that all necessary arrangements are in place for the comfort of the participants," he added.

He also urged the relevant authorities to ensure adequate heating arrangements for guests and enjoined the Srinagar Municipal Corporation to deploy mobile toilets at the venue.

Bidhuri invited everyone to join the celebrations and take part in what he called "their own festival."

"There are no passes or restrictions. The event is completely free for all, and everyone is welcome to attend. I urge the public to participate wholeheartedly," he stated.

NC-PDP Trade

transparently," she said.

Iltija alleged that all the recruitment exams held since 2019 have irregularities. She said agencies like Aptech are tasked with the responsibility of conducting the exams. "There seems a nexus between those who are at the highest position in power and the agencies conducting exams," she said, asking if the government that "rose to power by making lofty promises has conveniently washed their hands off any accountability".

Responding to her allegation, the NC spokesperson, Ifra Jan targeted PDP for what she termed as the biggest recruitment scam in J&K Bank. "Iltija Mufti belongs to the party that is responsible for the biggest recruitment scam of J&K Bank. We are not answerable to PDP but to the people of J&K," she said.

Ifra further added that these exams have

been conducted by the Lieutenant Governor-led administration and instead of raising fingers on the elected government; she should have posed this question to the BJP and LG administration.

"PDP has been raising questions on the NC government only. We have nothing to do with these exams," the NC spokesperson said, adding that the investigation should be held if the BJP and LG administration have done anything wrong in the recruitment process.

Ifra asked Iltija to muster the courage to ask this question to the LG administration rather than "sabotaging the elected government like the way they have been sabotaging the fight for the restoration of statehood".

PDP leader Waheed Para also said that the Jammu and Kashmir government needs to fix responsibility for the alleged scam in recruitment of constables in the telecom wing of police.

"With each passing day, it's as if a war has been waged on the youth of J-K and their aspirations. Yet another scam in JKSSB's constable (telecom) exam is shocking," Para said in a post on his X handle. The way candidates scoring below 10 marks in one exam are securing top position in another, singularly points towards the continued "murder of merit".

He alleged that the government was shielding the officials responsible for it.

"The way the govt has been conveniently shielding the responsible with transfers needs to stop, heads have to roll. And it's clear that this mess goes far beyond JKSSB," he further said.

The aspirants, who appeared for the JKP Constable Telecommunication and Photography exams, have reportedly cried foul, alleging major irregularities and questioning the transparency of the selection process.

According to aspirants, those who topped the Telecommunication and Photography exams had alarmingly poor scores, some even in the negative marking zone, in the earlier JKP (Executive/Armed/SDRF) paper, which they described as easier in comparison.

J&K's Chinars

girth, health, canopy size and its geographical location. This data is being compiled using the Chinar Tree Record Form (CTRF-25), designed to standardize the documentation process.

Dr Syed Tariq, Project Coordinator at JKFR, said the efforts by the institute and the forest department have led to several significant discoveries. "A Chinar in Ganderbal has been identified as the largest in Asia, measuring 22.25 meters in girth and standing at a height of 27 meters. Another Chinar in Baramulla has earned a place as the third-largest in the world," he said, adding the transplantation of two large Chinars has been completed by Forest department.

Dr Tariq said Chinars are an integral part of Kashmir's cultural and historical landscape, with many trees dating back to the Mughal era. "Emperor Akbar is believed to have planted over 1,200 Chinars at Naseem Bagh, many of which still stand today," he said. Notably, the town of Bijbehara, known as the "Town of Chinars", is home to one of the oldest Chinars in Padshahi Bagh, Bijbehara.

In addition to geotagging, the conservation efforts also include the distribution of saplings to schools, government institutions and security forces.

"A Vegetative Multiplication Garden (VMG) has been established for the sustained production of high-quality saplings, and the transplantation of mature Chinars, including the iconic Char Chinar at Dal Lake, is underway," an official of the forest department said, adding that the integration of QR codes on geotagged Chinars has made it easier for the public to access real-time data on the health and status of these trees.

"The QR codes, which are attached to specialised plates designed to allow the tree to grow without obstruction, can be scanned by citizens to learn more about each tree's condition," he added.

Moreover, Dr Tariq highlighted public awareness as an essential aspect of the project. He said the forest department has been actively engaging in educational programmes, releasing documentaries, and celebrating initiatives such as "Chinar Day" (March 15) and the "Chinar Fall Festival" (October 15) to encourage community participation in the conservation efforts. (KNO)

Mystery Behind

related families died under mysterious circumstances here between December 7 and January 19.

"Why this happened? We need an answer to this question. It's not a disease, so a police investigation is underway. They have formed a special investigation team and will complete their probe.

"The Centre has also deputed a team which is collecting samples and doing their activities. I want to assure all that the joint efforts of civil administration, police and the government of India will find out the answers to all questions about what had happened," the chief minister said.

He said his government responded immediately on getting information about the tragedy.

"The health department mobilized its teams and also involved other departments...the district administration also tried to understand the reasons (behind the deaths).

"First, the focus was to know whether this is the result of any disease and in case it is a disease our biggest responsibility was to ensure that it does not spread. All the tests were conducted and the results revealed that there are no bacteria or viruses," the chief minister said.

He said the investigation is ongoing and so far no concrete reason was found about the unfortunate deaths in the three families, mostly of children.

Asked about opposition criticism of his government over the handling of the situation, Omar said he would not like to do politics on

such a happening.

"...Had we worked in haste and taken any wrong step, then you would have blamed us (for the deaths). The administration responded to the situation in a right way and the local MLA (Javaid Iqbal Choudhary) was there on the ground, taking the people into confidence and keeping them informed.

"We took time because we failed to establish the reason for the deaths. But we will expose the truth though it will take two or three more days and we have no issues with it," he said, adding "we will come out with the answers to all the questions".

The Chief Minister said he had talked to the deputy commissioner and the MLA who have given some suggestions which will be implemented soon.

Responding to another question about the need to improve health infrastructure, the chief minister said you cannot build big hospitals everywhere, which are sanctioned as far as need, population, requirement and situation.

"Big hospitals cannot be built in remote areas but we will try to address any shortcoming in community health centres, public health centres and sub-district hospitals with the passage of time," he said.

Dulloo Orders

along with health experts and police, a spokesperson said.

The meeting was convened to assess the measures taken to identify the real causes behind the mysterious deaths of 17 members of three families in the village during the past one-and-a-half months.

The chief secretary impressed upon the health and the police officials to take stringent containment measures in consultation with the divisional administration to ensure no further loss of lives, the spokesperson said.

He advised the officials concerned to frame a proper standard operating procedure for monitoring the village population and also asked them to deploy sufficient manpower to enforce the guidelines.

Dulloo urged the divisional and the district administration officials to not let their guard down and allow only tested edibles and non-edibles to be used by persons under quarantine.

Till the actual causes of these deaths are known, police and health professionals should carry on their investigations, as required, the chief secretary said.

He also urged them to study the reports received from the national diagnostic institutions that had taken samples from the village.

Dulloo directed them to take every possible measure to protect the villagers' lives till the toxicology reports pointing out the actual causes of the deaths were received.

He took note of the work done so far by the special investigation team constituted by the police and the other investigation agencies, including an inter-ministerial team sent by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

He asked the experts about the possible preventive measures that could be taken to check further damage, the spokesperson said.

Health and Medical Education Secretary Syed Abid Rashid Shah informed the meeting that every measure had been taken to isolate the families and provide them with food and water after testing.

Health teams are stationed at the village to keep an eye on symptoms appearing in any person, he added.

The meeting was informed that the local Public Health Centre and the Community Health Centre were kept ready.

It is also being ensured that no eatables are exchanged as the families have been removed from their homes and kept under continuous monitoring to safeguard their lives.

In a related development, officials said 24-year-old Aijaz Ahmad of Badhaal village has been hospitalised after his health deteriorated on Tuesday evening.

Ahmad was screened by a team of doctors in the village and referred to Government Medical College Associated Hospital, Rajouri, they said.

Central Team

Additional District Magistrate, Dil Mir, following a detailed investigation by a high-level inter-ministerial team.

The team conducted an extensive survey of the premises, collecting samples for further analysis.

The Magistrate, Dil Mir told reporters, "As you know, eight people in this house have lost their lives. The search was carried out to inspect the edible items. All the samples have been taken, and we have sealed the house again. This was routine; as of now, there is nothing new. The house was already sealed, and after collecting the samples, it has been resealed."

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of senior police officers and medical experts to probe the deaths. An inter-ministerial team was also stationed in the village, working closely with locals.

The SIT is analyzing medical purchases, reviewing food and medicine consumed by the affected families, and investigating possible poisoning due to local rivalries.

The home, which housed deceased family members, has now become a grim focal point of the unfolding mystery.

The impact on the grieving family and the wider community has been profound, with fear and uncertainty spreading as villagers grapple with the lack of answers.

The unexplained circumstances have raised suspicions and deepened anxieties, as residents demand clarity and safety.

The series of deaths, unprecedented in its scale and nature, has prompted significant attention from local and central authorities.

After forming the inter-ministerial team, sources said that Home Minister Amit Shah is monitoring the investigations, while LG Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah are coordinating with the authorities for a

transparent probe.

Medical experts SIT and investigators are working tirelessly to uncover the cause behind this catastrophic series of events.

Initial investigations have ruled out commonly known causes, adding to the enigma surrounding the case. The involvement of a multidisciplinary team reflects the gravity of the situation, as officials leave no stone unturned in their quest for answers.

The Government and Local leaders have expressed their condolences to the affected families, while also urging calm and patience as investigations continue.

The district administration, Police have assured the public of transparency and swift action based on the findings of the expert team.

As the investigation progresses, the villagers of Badhaal await answers with bated breath, hoping for clarity and a resolution to a tragedy that has shaken the entire Jammu and Kashmir. (KINS)

Neutral Expert

within his competence under the treaty," it said on Tuesday.

In 2015, Pakistan sought the appointment of the neutral expert to deal with its objections to the two projects. However, a year later, Islamabad demanded that the objections be handled by the court of arbitration.

India has been cooperating with the neutral expert but stayed away from proceedings of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

New Delhi considers the start of the two concurrent processes to resolve the dispute a violation of the provision of the graded mechanism prescribed in the IWT.

"It has been India's consistent and principled position that the neutral expert alone has the competence under the treaty to decide these differences," the MEA said in a statement.

"Having upheld his own competence, which comports with India's view, the neutral expert will now proceed to the next (merits) phase of his proceeding," it said.

The MEA said this phase will culminate in a final decision on the merits of each of the seven differences.

"Being committed to preserving the sanctity and integrity of the treaty, India will continue to participate in the neutral expert process so that the differences are resolved in a manner consistent with the provisions of the treaty, which does not provide for parallel proceedings on the same set of issues," it said.

"For this reason, India does not recognize or participate in the illegally constituted Court of Arbitration proceedings," it added.

The MEA said India and Pakistan also remain in touch on the matter of modification and review of the Indus Water Treaty.

HC Quashes

opportunity of being heard. The impugned order of the Commission is, therefore, in violation of the principle of natural justice and cannot sustain."

The court considered remanding the case back to the SHRC for fresh adjudication, allowing the accused officers a chance to be heard. However, the Bench was informed that the SHRC no longer exists in Jammu and Kashmir following the reorganisation of the region in 2019. Consequently, the High Court closed the case.

The order stated, "We could have sent back the case to the Commission for fresh consideration after providing the opportunity of being heard to the petitioners but we are told that the State Human Rights Commission does not exist. It is because of this reason, we are inclined to close the matter."

The case stemmed from a 2008 order issued by the erstwhile SHRC, which had directed that rupees 1 lakh be paid to a man who alleged that he was tortured by the Station House Officer of Darhal Police Station and other unidentified police personnel.

The man had been arrested under Section 364 (kidnapping) of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) and subjected to prolonged interrogation concerning his alleged involvement with militants. He claimed to have been tortured during his custody.

A preliminary investigation into the case found enough grounds to proceed with the registration of an FIR under Section 330 (causing hurt to extort confession) of the RPC. However, the investigating officer concluded that the torture allegations could not be substantiated and filed a closure report.

Dissatisfied with this outcome, the arrested man approached the SHRC, which ultimately found the police officers guilty of custodial torture. The SHRC ordered that the man be compensated for the alleged torture.

The accused officers filed a writ petition before the High Court, challenging the SHRC's order. After considering the arguments, the Court allowed the petitioners' plea and set aside the 2008 SHRC order. (KNO)

J&K Higher

Celsius, the meteorological department said. Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius, over four degrees up from minus 6.4 degrees Celsius the night before.

The tourist resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir recorded a minimum temperature of minus 3.2 degrees Celsius -- up from minus 5.4 degrees Celsius.

The minimum temperature was minus 1.6 degrees Celsius in Qazigund, minus 0.6 degrees Celsius at Konibal in Pampore town, 1 degree Celsius in Kupwara and minus 1.4 degrees Celsius in Kokernag.

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 mercury 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).

Side Event At IUST Highlights The Impact Of Melting Glaciers

Observer News Service

AWANTIPORA: In a significant contribution to the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation (IYGP 2025), the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Glacial Studies, University of Kashmir, hosted a side event titled "Himalayan Cryosphere: Major Research Gaps and Shaping the Roadmap Ahead."

The event brought together researchers, faculty, students, and policymakers to discuss the far-reaching implications of climate change and melting glaciers on critical sectors such as energy, water, and food security. Held at the Rumi Library, IUST, the event emphasized the urgent need for raising



awareness and addressing the challenges posed by the rapidly depleting Himalayan cryosphere.

In the lead talk, Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Vice-Chancellor of IUST and Head of the National Cryosphere Lab, University of Kashmir, highlighted the alarming loss of approximately 30% of glacial mass over the past six decades and the significant decline in streamflow since

the 1990s. Prof. Romshoo stated, "The melting of glaciers under a changing climate is not only a scientific challenge but also a pressing policy issue that affects water availability, energy generation, and food production in South Asia. It is imperative that researchers, governments, and stakeholders work together to address these challenges."

Experts explored the

impacts of depleting stream flows, changing precipitation patterns, and prolonged dry spells on regional livelihoods and economies. Participants stressed the importance of strengthening observational networks, enhancing data sharing mechanisms, and fostering transboundary collaborations for effective cryosphere research.

The event also featured discussions on integrating advanced technologies like high-resolution climate models and AI/ML approaches to improve the understanding of glacial dynamics and their impact on the Indus Basin system.

The event concluded with a call to action for interdisciplinary and collaborative research efforts to protect the cryosphere and ensure sustainable development in the region.

J&K Bank Organises High-Density Plantation Camp



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As part of its commitment to promote sustainable agriculture and economic growth, J&K Bank today organised a High-Density Plantation Camp at Town Hall Anantnag.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Syeed Fakhruddin Hamid (IAS) inaugurated the camp in the presence of Bank's General Manager & Divisional Head (Kashmir) Shabir Ahmad, Zonal Head (Anantnag) Khurshheed Muzaffar, DGM Rakesh Magotra, Cluster Heads of Anantnag and Kulgam, District Horticulture Officer and District Agriculture Officer.

Commending the Bank for its proactive role in serving the people of the region, DC Anantnag particularly appreciated the efforts of Team Anantnag led by its Zonal Head. "The Bank's initiatives, such as this High-Density Plantation Camp, demonstrate its dedication to empowering the farming community," he said.

Divisional Head Shabir Ah-

mad appreciated MD (Qul Fruit Wall) Khurram Mir for his vital contributions to the success of the camp. "This initiative underscores our commitment to agricultural development and rural prosperity. By supporting high-density plantation, we are helping farmers unlock their potential and contribute to the region's economic progress," he said.

Speaking to the farmers, Zonal Head Khurshheed Muzaffar said, "J&K Bank High-Density Plantation Scheme for Progressive Farmers is a scheme designed to transform your lives by enabling you to establish modern, high-yielding orchards. I urge everyone to visit their nearest branch and avail the benefits under the scheme."

The Bank's HD Plantation scheme for progressive farmers is a grower friendly scheme which offers collateral free loans upto Rs 5 lac, remarked DGM Rakesh Magotra. Besides, the rate of interest under the scheme is quite competitive, he said.

Mother, 6 Month Old Baby Killed In Cylinder Explosion

Agencies

JAMMU: A mother and her child lost their lives in a cylinder explosion on Tuesday in the remote Jandrola area of Block Sathra in Tehsil Mandi of Poonch district.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that a mother and her 6-month-old child lost their lives in a cylinder explosion in

the remote Jandrola area.

Shazia Kousar, a 28-year old woman, wife of Sajad Hussain, was working in the kitchen when the gas cylinder suddenly exploded, leading to the on-the-spot deaths of both the mother and child, they said.

Meanwhile, Police have taken cognizance of the incident while further investigations taken up—(KNO)

Man Shot Dead In Jammu, ADGP Rules Out Terror Angle

Agencies

JAMMU: In a shocking incident, a 37-year-old man was shot dead in broad daylight at the busy Jewel Chowk in Jammu City on Tuesday.

An official said that at around 12.40 in the afternoon, a person identified as Sumit Jandial, son of Om Parkesh of Vijaypur, Samba was traveling in an SUV bearing registration number JK21G-0770 was attacked by unidentified persons in Jewel Chowk area.

Eyewitnesses said that the unidentified gunmen arrived in a car and started firing indiscriminately at Jandial, who was driving the Red colour Thar Jeep.

"The attackers fired six to seven rounds at the driver, injuring him seriously. The shooters managed to flee from the spot after leaving the man in a pool of blood," they said.

"The injured was rushed to the Government Medical College and Hospital, Jammu for treatment where he succumbed to injuries," said an official.

Meanwhile, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Jammu Anand Jain along with Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range, Shiv Kumar Sharma visited the spot to assess the situation.

Speaking to media men, ADGP Anand Jain said, "It is a gang war. He (Jandial) belonged to the Gataru gang of Vijaypur. Members of a rival gang fired on him. It is not a terrorist incident, but a case of rivalry."

He added that police have launched an operation to track down the attackers.

Police Issue Statement
Police in a detailed statement urged the people to remain calm and refrain from speculation, awaiting official updates from the police.

"A firing incident occurred this afternoon in the Jewel Chowk area, under the jurisdiction of Police Station Nowabad. Upon receiving the information, ADGP Jammu, along with senior police officers, arrived at the scene," said police in a statement. —(KNO)

Newly Built Drain At Tangmarg Damaged Within Days

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: The residents of Rahipora Tangmarg in Wailoo block have raised serious concerns over the use of substandard materials in the construction of a drain, which got damaged just a few days after its completion.

Locals, who expressed disappointment, said that the drain, built in December, was sanctioned to address the long-standing issues faced by them.

"The contractor failed to deliver as expected. The construction lasted only a few days and there seems to be no cement used in the work. It is a complete failure," Mushtaq Ahmed Khan, a local, said.

The locals accused officials of hand-in-glove with the contractor, claiming that

proper inspections were not carried out. "Officials should have ensured quality work, but it seems they are only concerned with clearing bills," a local alleged.

"The project was sanctioned after long standing demand by the residents, who faced significant hardships due to the lack of proper drainage. However, the damage in the drainage has left them frustrated," the locals added.

Meanwhile, in response to the allegations, Sub-District Magistrate (SDM), Gulmarg assured that an inquiry would be initiated to investigate the matter. "We will conduct a thorough probe and ensure accountability," the SDM said, adding that he will be visiting spot personally to assess the situation and those found guilty won't be spared—(KNO)

Holding Assembly Session In March Would Be Inconvenient For MLAs: Sajad

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Amid reports that the Jammu & Kashmir government has recommended holding an Assembly session in March, Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone on Tuesday said that holding the session during the holy month of Ramadan would be inconvenient for the majority of MLAs.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, Lone, a prominent opposition figure, voiced his opposition to the government's plan of summoning the Assembly session from the first week of March.

"A humble reminder to the elected government: It is Ramadan in the month of March. Holding the Assembly session in March would be inconvenient for a majority of the MLAs," Lone said.

Lone expressed his opposition to the timing of the session a day after the J&K government recommended holding the Assembly session in the first week of March.

Police Arrest 2 Drug Peddlers In Bla, Handwara

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Continuing its relentless drive against the menace of drugs, police on Tuesday said to have arrested two drug peddlers in Baramulla & Handwara and recovered contraband substances from their possession.

A police party of Police Station Baniyar headed by SHO PS Baniyar at a checkpoint established at Hundi Nowsheera intercepted one suspicious person. During the search, 10 grams of Heroin-like substance was recovered from his possession. He has been

identified as Malik Sajad son of Nazir Ahmad resident of Pandithpora. He has been arrested and shifted to a police station where he remains in custody, a police spokesman said in a statement.

Similarly in Handwara, a police party at a checkpoint established at Qalamabad Chowk, intercepted a suspicious person. During the search, 25 grams of contraband Charas-like substances was recovered from his possession. He has been arrested and has been identified as Javid Ahmad War son of Gh Nabi War resident of Lach Mawar, police said.

Respect Govt Decision On Replacing Hina Bhat As KVIB Chairperson: BJP

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has reacted to the J&K government's decision to replace Dr Hina Shafi Bhat with Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary as the chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Khadi

and Village Industries Board (KVIB), terming it a government prerogative that must be respected.

BJP spokesperson Altaf Thakur said, "This is a decision taken by the government, and we respect it. Everyone must honour and accept such decisions."

Thakur further said there is a need for transparency and accountability in governance. "If there are any irregularities, it is the responsibility of the government and concerned agencies to look into them. Transparency and accountability have always been

the BJP's priority," he said. Dr Hina Shafi Bhat, a senior BJP leader, was appointed as the chairperson of KVIB in 2018. She was replaced by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary in a late-night order issued by the government on Monday.

(GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR)

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL GANDERBAL

Tel. 0194-2416090 Fax: 0194-2416090 E-mail: eomcganderal@gmail.com

Subject: Auction of Adda Entry / Terminal Tax at Municipal Council Ganderal for the year 2025-26 & 2026-27 for a period of 02 years (w.e.f 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2027)

Reference : Director Urban Local Bodies Kashmir Circular Number : DULB/G/560/2025/7630622/856-956 Dated : 10-01-2025.

e-AUCTION NOTICE

E - NIT No: MC/Gbl/2025/01 | Dated: -18/01/2025

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory and as per the directions from Urban Local Bodies Kashmir vide above referred circular Number duly approved by the Administrator Municipal Council Ganderal (Deputy Commissioner Ganderal) certifying all the conditions / criteria's, e-tenders (in single cover system) are invited from the interested persons / parties / firms / Companies for the auction of Adda Entry / Terminal Tax of Municipal Council Ganderal for a period of 02 Years (w.e.f 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2027). The Minimum reserve bid is fixed as Rs. 4,0785112/- (Rupees Four Crores Seven Lacs Eighty Five Thousand One Hundred And Twelve Only) as per the below mentioned breakup on the following Terms & conditions :-

S.No	Year	Reserve Bid Fixed
01	2025-26	1,94,21,482/-
02	2026-27	2,13,63,630/-
Total Reserve Bid for 02 years :-		4,0785112/-

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- The aspiring / interested bidder must be bonafide person / party with sound financial back ground holding PAN and Income Tax returns and should submit bids in two covers. The first cover should contain the following documents as qualifying criteria.
 - Audited balance sheet duly authenticated by a Chartered Accountant for the last three years with minimum turnover of Rs:-50,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Lacs only) yearly.
 - Income tax returns of the last two years
 - Latest GST return for the year 2024-25.
 - Copy of PAN with last two years Income Tax returns.
 - An Affidavit duly registered before the Court / Public Notary certifying that there is nothing outstanding on account of the Adda Entry Fee / Terminal Tax of any Municipal Body of Urban Local Bodies Kashmir.
 - The second cover should contain financial bid duly offered in a neat and clean manner recorded in both words and figures with a paste of transparent tape upon the level of offered bid.
 - While opening the bids the Auction Committee will in the first step open the cover of qualifying criteria bid. Once the qualifying criteria cover is found upto level then the financial bid will be opened.
- The Contract of collection of Adda Entry Fee / Terminal Tax shall be for the (02 years) commencing from the date of handing over of possession of Tool Posts.
- The minimum reserve bid of the above auction period has been fixed Rs. 4,0785112/- (Rupees Four Crores Seven Lacs Eighty Five Thousand One Hundred And Twelve Only) The intending bidder shall be bound to accompany Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) for an amount of Rs. 816000/- (Rupees Eight Lacs Sixteen Thousand only) from any Nationalized / Scheduled Bank pledged to Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council, Ganderal without which no bid document can be issued.
- Bids must accompany with the cost of tender document fee amounting to Rs :- 5000/- (Rupees Five Thousand only) in the shape of Bank Challan / Bank receipt (credited to Account No. 0560040500000202 of Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council Ganderal)
- After finalization of auction proceedings, the highest bidder shall have to deposit 10% of the total bid as Bid Acceptance Token on spot and 65% of the total bid amount shall have to be deposited before taking over the possession of the Adda Entry Fee / Terminal Tax Collection Posts and rest 25 % balance of bid amount has to be deposited by the allottee within 03 Months.

S.No	Percentage of payment to be deposited as per the DULB(K) Circular	Date.
1	65 % of total Contract amount	Before taking over the possession
2	25 % of total Contract amount	Within 03 Months

However, the contractor has to deposit post dated cheque for the 25% installment at the time of taking over possession from his own bank account which will be confirmed from the bank before its acceptance, for which he will submit Bank Guarantee also . The post dated cheques from any other person cannot be accepted.

- In case the successful bidder fails to deposit the token amount of (10%), the CDR of the earnest money deposited by the aspirant shall be forfeited.
- That the past defaulters are banned for participating in the bid process. If any such person who participated in the bid and later on the outstanding surfaced before the department / Municipal Council, his contract shall be cancelled with all deposits.
- The interested bidder shall have to present earnest money in the shape of Call Deposit Receipt.
- In order to avoid defaulters for their participation, the interested bidder shall have the experience (at least One year) in the contract of Adda Entry Fee / Terminal tax (experience certificate be uploaded), which should be issued by any Municipal Council / Committee.
- The interested bidder shall upload the character certificate from the local Police Station.
- The successful bidder shall be bound to execute an agreement duly registered in the Court of Law with the undersigned after receipt of the allotment and before taking over the possession of the collection posts for the contract.
- The successful bidder shall be bound to collect entry fee from the check posts of this Municipality viz 01. Beehama near Gulbal 02. Near Giraj Ganderal 03. Near Police Station Kheerbawani , & 04. Near Ziyat Lassa sahib Bamloora strictly as per approved schedule (gazette) of the Govt. which is recast as under:

S No	Particulars	Scheduled Rate
1	Terminal Tax (Sand, Bajri Earth & Stone)	Rs: 30 per trip
2	Tourist Buses / Trollers (above six tyres)	Rs: 100 per day
3	Tourist Sumo / Tempo / Innova / Winger	Rs: 100 per day
4	Tourist Vehicles viz. Swift Desire , Amaze , Etios , Alto	Rs: 50 per day
5	Service Buses all type	Rs: 20 per day
6	Local Sumo	Rs: 10 per day
7	Entry Fee Trucks, Tippers and Tankers with load other than defense / home department	Rs: 50 per trip
8	Load Carrier (4 wheeler) with load	Rs: 20 per trip
9	Load Carrier (4 wheeler) without load	Rs: 10 per day
10	Load Carrier (3 wheeler) with load	Rs: 10 per trip
11	Load Carrier (3 wheeler) without load	Rs: 10 per day
12	Entry Fee Trucks, Tippers and tankers without load other than defense / home department	Rs: 10 per day
13	Private School Buses / Winger / Vans	Rs: 30 per day

The tippers who are paying terminal tax are exempted from entry fee.
All defense vehicles police vehicles / Govt. vehicles are exempted from entry fee.

In the event of violation, noticed or reported the same shall invite legal course of action against contractor, including cancellation of the contract. The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (BOQ) set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in, as per the schedule of dates given below:

1	Date of issue of Tender Notice	20.01.2025 10:00 AM
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 20.01.2025 to 26.01.2025
3	Bid submission Start Date	20.01.2025 from 10.00 AM
4	Bid submission End Date	26.01.2025 upto 3.00 PM
5	Date & Time of opening of Bids (Online)	30.01.2025 at 11.00 AM in the office of the Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Ganderal.
6	Submission of CDR.	The bidder shall be bound to accompany his bids offers with Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) of Rs. 816000/- (Rupees Eight Lacs and Sixteen thousand only) from any Nationalized bank, pledged to the Executive Officer, Municipal Council Ganderal, (without which offers shall be liable for rejection)
7	Mode of Payment	a) 65 % of total Contract amount before taking over the possession. b) 25 % of total Contract amount within 03 Months.

- The bids offered by the bidders shall be inclusive of all applicable taxes.
- The successful bidder shall have to provide/ arrange manpower, furniture, toilet, stationery, electricity charges and drinking water & toolbars and also beautify the tool post at his own level and at his own expenses without claiming any compensation thereof from this institution and also shall maintain the tool Posts properly.
- The contractor while offering the bids shall be responsible to visualize all conditions/ circumstances like Hartals, unfavorable circumstances, unrest etc. well in advance. Later on, no claim for relaxation/ relief in the contract shall be entertained at any stage.
- After expiry of the contract period the successful bidder shall handover the possession of entry fee collection posts to the Municipality in its original position without any damage.
- The authorized contractor is bound to engage well versed persons who are not involved in any kind of criminal activities for collection and must be with proper uniform during collection of Entry Fee / Terminal Tax at the entry posts and the realization of the entry fee / terminal tax shall be collected in a public friendly manner without causing any inconvenience to the public.
- The contractor is bound not to charge any entry fee from the VIPs / Government Vehicle / Vehicles of Security Forces.
- In case of any dispute arising between the parties with respect of any of the conditions as laid down here in above or any ambiguity the same will be referred to the arbitrator (I.e) Director Urban Local Bodies Kashmir and the decision of the Arbitrator shall be final and binding upon both the parties.
- The successful bidder shall be bound not to subcontract to any other person / parties / firm.
- The contractor is bound to collect revenue with friendly attitude. In case of any confrontation by the driver the contractor shall not take law in his hands. However he will report to the Municipal Council for taking the cognizance.

Instructions to the Bidders regarding E- Tendering process:

- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendor.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid.
Note: - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.
- The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
- Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of Bank Receipt/ challan in favour of Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Ganderal and bid securing declaration must be uploaded with the bid.
- The Bidder must have to upload (soft copies) of the following documents (Photostat/ Original should be clearly seen in all respect with Ink Signed and Seal):-
 - Valid original Bank Challan / Receipt
 - Call Deposit Receipt (CDR)
 - BID Securing Declaration on stamp paper duly attested by Notary.
 - Valid GSTIN / PAN Card No.
 - The Bidder should upload the Tender Document form attached below .
- Bidder must ensure to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents including
- BID Securing Declaration and tender documents fee in terms of soft copies with technical bid. No document (s) which has / have not been uploaded shall not be entertained in the form of hard copy. However, in case of any clarification the bidders shall have to produce original documents in support of soft copies if need arises.
- The Highest Bidder will have to submit hard copies of all documents uploaded on e-tendering portal before issuance of Allotment.
- The e-tenders has been floated as per the circular instruction of Director Urban local bodies Kashmir vide above referred No. & date. Further details can be had from the office of undersigned on any working day during office hours.

Sd/= Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council, Ganderal.

No: MC/Gbl/Tax/2025/325-32
Dated: 18-01-2025
DIPK-NB-3239-24
DT: 21/01/2025

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Closing Date/Time: 17/02/2025 15:00

Sr. DSTE/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders on <https://www.ireps.gov.in> against Tender Notice no. 433-Sig-T-21-24-25 Closing Date/Time 17/02/2025 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money **only through online payment modes** available on IREPS portal like Net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Name of Work	S&T work in connection with provision of RGM/TTM siding at VJPJ, JRC, DDL, KWJ, GHA, KKP, GJUT, GNA, LKW, BPRS over Firozpur division.	Tender closing Date & Time	17/02/2025 15:00	Date Time of Uploading Tender	20/01/2025 17:40
Advertised Value (Rs.)	35278797.52	Bidding Start Date as per IREPS	03/02/2025		
Earnest Money (Rs.)	326400.00	Period of Completion	12 Months		

Tender Notice No: 433-Sig-T-21-24-25 Date: 21/01/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 234/25

1st T20I: Suryakumar-Led India Eye Fresh Start Against England Tonight

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: Fit-again pacer Mohammed Shami's comeback would be keenly watched when the Suryakumar Yadav-led Indian T20 team takes on an evenly-matched England in a five-match series starting here on Wednesday, aiming to make up for the recent Test disasters that have caused considerable turmoil and heartbreak.

The white-ball rubber, comprising five T20s and three ODIs after that, presents an ideal platform for both the teams to experiment with combinations and assess form before next month's Champions Trophy.

Shami, despite missing four matches, emerged as India's leading wicket-taker in the ODI World Cup 2023 with 24 scalps,



including a sensational 7/57 in the semifinal against New Zealand at the Wankhede.

Interestingly, the pacer has claimed the same number of wickets -- 24 at an average of

29.62 -- in his limited T20I career and will aim to improve on that while proving his fitness.

Shami was sidelined after the lost final against Australia on November 19, 2023 due to

an ankle injury that required surgery. The recovery from that was followed by swelling on his left knee during the domestic comeback some weeks back.

Following his inclusion in India's Champions Trophy squad, Shami's return will garner national attention. All-rounder Axar Patel will debut as India's vice-captain in the T20I format.

He has been rewarded for his stellar all-round contributions in India's triumphant T20 World Cup campaign in the Caribbean last year.

For the Jos Buttler-led England, the series marks a new chapter under head coach Brendon McCullum, who signed a three-year contract following Matthew Mott's resignation following their T20 World Cup exit. England will miss key play-

ers Reece Topley, Sam Curran, and Will Jacks, but promising 21-year-old Jacob Bethell, who impressed in the ODI series against the West Indies last year, will look to shine.

Teams (from)

India: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Axar Patel (vc), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Rinku Singh, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammad Shami, Varun Chakaravathy, Ravi Bishnoi, Washington Sundar and Dhruv Jurel (wk).

England: Jos Buttler (c), Harry Brook (vc), Phil Salt (wk), Jacob Bethell, Liam Livingstone, Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Ben Duckett, Jamie Overton, Adil Rashid, and Mark Wood.

Match starts: 7pm.

Short TAKES

J&K Carrom Assoc To Hold Srinagar, Budgam & Baramulla C'Ships

The J&K Carrom Association, in collaboration with its district units and J&K Sports Council, is set to host several district-level and UT-level carrom championships for the 2024-25 season. On Tuesday, it announced the following district-level championships across three age groups—Sub-Junior, Junior, and Senior—for both boys and girls.

District Srinagar Championship

Dates: 29th & 30th January 2025
Venue: SKISC, Srinagar

District Budgam Championship

Dates: 4th & 5th February 2025
Venue: Indoor Stadium, Budgam

District Baramulla Championship

Dates: 7th & 8th February 2025
Venue: Indoor Stadium, Khujabagh, Baramulla

Interested players, schools, colleges, and institutions can register via email at jkcarrom@gmail.com or contact: 9906767529, 9070000093.

Additional Security, Seating For Rohit's Ranji game v J&K

Additional security and increased seating arrangement for as many as 500 people will be put in place for India captain Rohit Sharma's first Ranji Trophy appearance for Mumbai in a decade here.

Mumbai, the defending champions of Ranji Trophy, will resume the second leg of the premier domestic competition here at the Sharad Pawar Cricket Academy in BKC against a formidable J&K side starting on Thursday.

With Rohit named in Mumbai's 17-member squad along with fellow Test opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, a significant crowd turnout can be expected on the match day here at Mumbai Cricket Association's BKC facility.

However, seating arrangements can be made for only up to 500 people where Mumbai side has been regularly playing its league games in the Ranji Trophy.

Mumbai are placed third behind table-leaders Baroda and second-placed J&K in Elite Group A and will need to find their best in order to progress in the competition.

ICC Chairman Jay Shah Meets IOC Chief Thomas Bach

International Cricket Council chairman Jay Shah held discussions with International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach ahead of the Extraordinary IOC Session in Lausanne from January 30, as the sport's inclusion at the Summer Games beyond the 2028 edition continues to gather pace.

The ICC posted images from the meeting of the two leading administrators on social media on Tuesday.

"Momentum continues to build around cricket's inclusion as an @Olympics sport at the @LA2028 Games and beyond, with ICC Chair Mr. JayShah meeting International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Mr. Thomas Bach in Lausanne, Switzerland this week," the ICC posted on X.

Shah attended a seminar involving LA 2028 International Federations at the Olympic House here. He was joined by ICC Chief Executive Geoff Allardice with the "meeting focusing on key areas of collaboration between the ICC and the IOC in the build-up to the Los Angeles Games".

Pulwama Girl Wins Gold At Thang-Ta National Championship



Agencies

PULWAMA: A young girl from South Kashmir's Pulwama district has brought laurels to the whole of Jammu and Kashmir by winning a gold medal in National Thang-Ta Championship 2025.

Sheebu Ashraf (20), a resident of Kakapora area of Pulwama, a B A student, won the gold medal in 30th sub junior and senior national championship 2025 held at Haridwar Uttarakhand.

Sheebu said that she was interested in sports since her childhood and started practicing for Thang-Ta when she was 11.

"I got inspired towards this game from one of my friends," she said, adding that her parents had supported her while her coach Sajad Ahmad Dar has helped her to excel in this game. "Day by day, achieving my goal is becoming easier," she said.

"I have taken part in several national games including two in Delhi, Chandigarh, J&K, Kanyakumari and many other places where I have won several medals," she said.

She said that for the 30th Thang-Ta Championship, there was a camp in Srinagar for 21 days following which she visited Uttarakhand this month where she managed to win the gold medal.

"Winning a medal at any level always encourages you to work hard and do better in coming events and winning the gold is always special and I am hopeful that I will excel further in upcoming events," she said. Sheebu, who belongs to a financially weak family, said that parents' support is must to achieve any goal and they must support their children to make their future bright.

"Jammu and Kashmir is grappling with drug menace and engaging the younger generation in sports activities will help us to keep them away from drug and other anti-social activities, so there is need to engage more and more youth in sports activities," she added. (KNO)

2nd Course Of YSS Skiing Training Begins With 50 Girl Students



Observer News Service

GULMARG: The Department of Youth Services and Sports launched its second Skiing Training Course for girls from various districts of J&K in Gulmarg. The course started on Tuesday, following the successful completion of the inaugural course for 50 boys earlier this week.

This new initiative, aimed at training young girls in the adventurous sport of skiing, marks another milestone in the Department's ambitious plans to promote winter sports across J&K.

The training, taking place amid Gulmarg's world-renowned skiing slopes, offers a unique opportunity for students from districts like Udhampur, Reasi, Kuth-

ua, Ramban, Samba, Kupwara, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Bandipora, and Budgam, to develop their skiing skills under professional guidance.

Commissioner Secretary YSS Sarmad Hafeez, and Director General YSS, Rajinder Singh Tara, have played pivotal roles in shaping and executing these training programmes.

"Our goal is not just to introduce these young students to the sport of skiing but to imbue them with a sense of responsibility towards the environment and their surroundings," the DG said.

This initiative is part of a larger plan by YSS to organize five specialized skiing courses this season, catering to both boys and girls from various districts.

28th year OF PUBLICATION

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