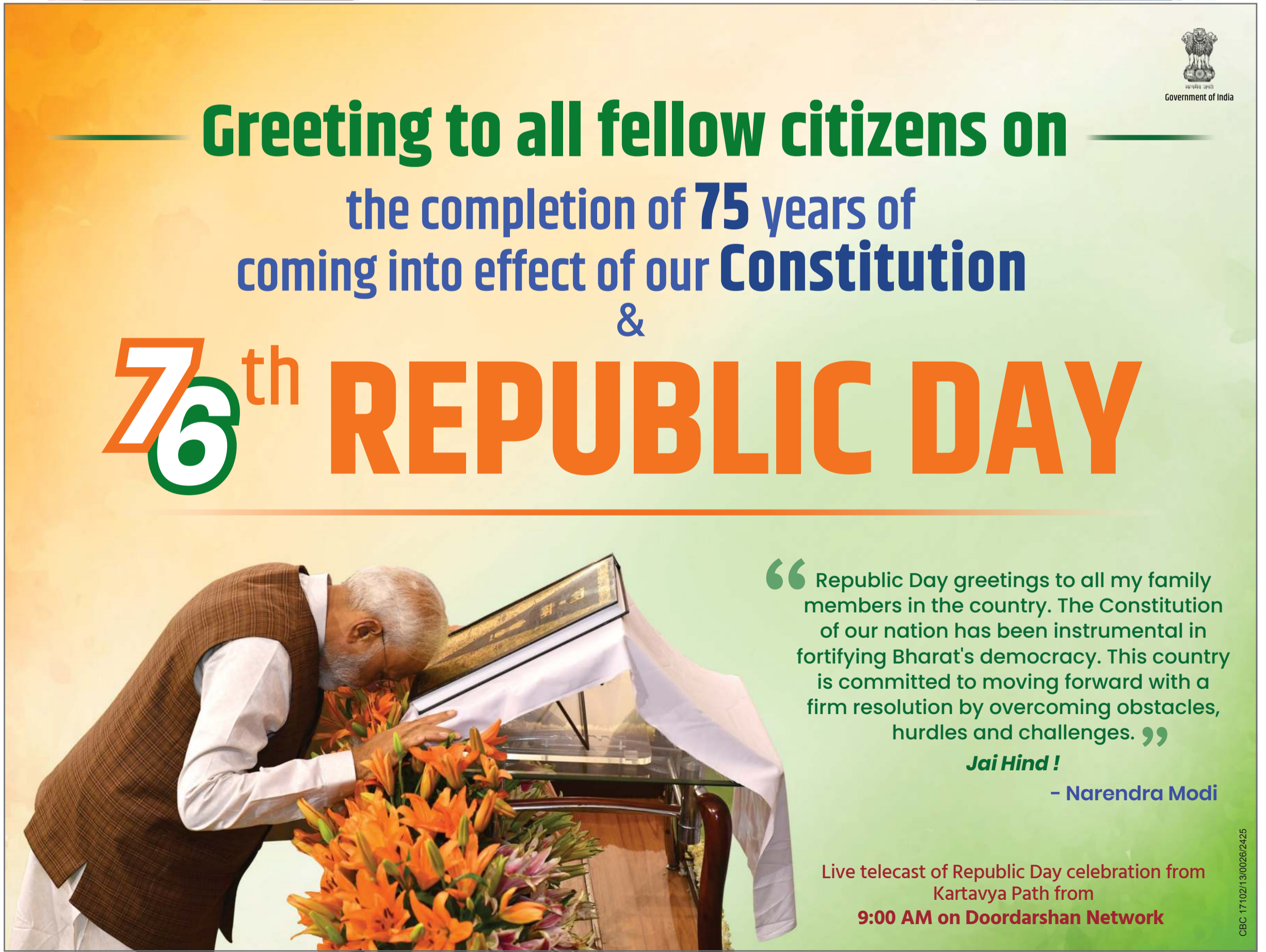


A large graphic for Republic Day. At the top left, the Indian national flag waves on a pole. In the center, a large blue '75' is superimposed over a faint Ashoka Chakra. The '5' contains the Ashoka Chakra. To the right of the '5' is 'TH'. Below this, the text 'REPUBLIC DAY' is written in large, bold, blue letters. Underneath, it says 'GREETINGS TO THE PEOPLE OF JAMMU & KASHMIR'. At the bottom, two portraits are shown: on the left, an elderly man with white hair and a mustache, wearing a pink shirt and a dark checkered vest; on the right, a younger man wearing a blue patterned cap, glasses, and a blue quilted vest over a white shirt. A blue banner at the bottom contains the text 'GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR'. The background is a soft, painterly sky with a sunburst effect.

75TH
REPUBLIC DAY
 GREETINGS TO THE PEOPLE OF
 JAMMU & KASHMIR
 GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

DIPK-DIPK-11235/24 DT 25-01-25



A large graphic for Republic Day. The background is a gradient of orange and green. At the top right is the Government of India logo. The main text is centered: 'Greeting to all fellow citizens on the completion of 75 years of coming into effect of our Constitution & 76th REPUBLIC DAY'. The '76th' is in large, stylized font, with '7' in orange and '6' in green. 'REPUBLIC DAY' is in large, bold, orange letters. At the bottom left, a photograph shows Narendra Modi in a brown vest and white shirt, bowing to kiss a large bouquet of orange flowers. At the bottom right, a quote from Narendra Modi is displayed in green text, followed by 'Jai Hind!' and his name. At the very bottom, it says 'Live telecast of Republic Day celebration from Kartavya Path from 9:00 AM on Doordarshan Network'. A small vertical text 'CBC 17102/13/0026/2425' is on the far right.

Greeting to all fellow citizens on
 the completion of **75** years of
 coming into effect of our **Constitution**
 &
76th REPUBLIC DAY

Government of India

“ Republic Day greetings to all my family members in the country. The Constitution of our nation has been instrumental in fortifying Bharat's democracy. This country is committed to moving forward with a firm resolution by overcoming obstacles, hurdles and challenges. ”
Jai Hind!
 - Narendra Modi

Live telecast of Republic Day celebration from
 Kartavya Path from
9:00 AM on Doordarshan Network

CBC 17102/13/0026/2425



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Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: L'Oréal India for Young Women in Science Scholarship 2024-25

Description: L'Oréal India invites applications for the 'For Young Women in Science Scholarship 2024-25' from young women who have passed Class 12 and wish to pursue higher education in the field of science.

Eligibility: Open to female students only. Applicants must be pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate, or PhD studies in scientific fields such as Technology, Science, Pharma, Life Sciences, Biotechnology, etc.

- Prizes & Rewards: UG students: INR 62,500
PG and PhD students: INR 1,00,000
Last Date to Apply: 31-01-2025
Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/ob-server/LIF10
QR Code: https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/l-oreal-india-for-young-women-in-science-scholarship-2024-251736921374.png

Scholarship Name 2: J N Tata Endowment Loan Scholarship for Fall 2025 to Spring 2026

Description: The J N Tata Endowment invites loan scholarship applications from Indian students who wish to pursue higher studies overseas. Students who are selected for the loan scholarship may be recommended for a partial 'Travel Grant' and a 'Gift Award' which is linked to their academic performance in their overseas studies at the sole discretion of the Trustees of the concerned Trusts.

Eligibility: Open for Indian citizens who have completed at least one undergraduate degree OR students who are in the final year of any undergraduate programme at a recognised university/college/institu-

tion in India. Candidates must be interested in pursuing Post-graduate/Doctoral/Postdoctoral studies abroad. The course for which candidates are admitted must be recognized as a Graduate Program (post-graduate in Indian terminology). Candidates who did not get selected in the previous year/earlier for the J N Tata Endowment loan scholarship and candidates who could not avail

fall-2025-to-spring-20261736494251.png

Scholarship Name 3: 'LIFE'S GOOD' Scholarship Program 2024

Description: LG Electronics India Private Limited invites applications from students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses at se-



of the loan scholarship when they were selected, are eligible to apply afresh. Candidates who are already pursuing post-graduate studies overseas may apply either at the end of their 1st of studies or at the commencement of the 2nd year, provided there is a minimum of one full academic year (12 months) remaining to be completed at the time of the loan scholarship award, typically in July of any calendar year. Candidates must have scored at least 60% marks on average in their undergraduate or post-graduate studies. Candidates must not be older than 45 years as on June 30, 2025.

- Prizes & Rewards: Loan scholarship of upto Rs. 10 lakhs
Last Date to Apply: 07-03-2025
Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/ob-server/JNT9
QR Code: https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/j-n-tata-endowment-loan-scholarship-for-

lect colleges/institutes across India.

Eligibility: Students must be pursuing undergraduate/postgraduate courses (any academic year) from select colleges/institutes across India. First-year students must have scored a minimum of 60% marks in their class 12th examinations, while students in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years must have achieved a minimum of 60% marks in the previous academic year. Preference will be given to meritorious students, female students and students with an annual family income of not more than INR 8 lakh.

- Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 100,000 for one year
Last Date to Apply: 31-01-2025
Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/ob-server/LIGIS1
QR Code: https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/life-s-good-scholarship-program-20241734417085.png

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub.Application of Saleema Begum D/o Ghulam Mohi uddin Mir R/o Mamoosa for obtaining legal hair certificate of her father namely Ghulam Mohi uddin Mir.
Public Notice
Regarding the subject cited above applicant's father's legal hair certificate is under process in this office in this matter report was sought from Patwari concerned which reveals that applicant's father died on 03/12/1972 and legal heirs of deceased are as under.

The Jammu And Kashmir Board Of School Education
New Campus Bemina Srinagar
I have passed/appeared in Secondary School Examination (Class- 10th) under Roll No. 505861 Session: Annual Regular Year 1985 through the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. Due to the error committed by the concerned School/parent/ Board, my Name has been recorded as Afriza Akhtar Instead of Afroza Akhter

Now, I have applied for correction/rectification of error in the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. New Campus Bemina. Srinagar, if any person has any objection in this regard, may file the same in the office of the Assistant Secretary, Certificates-KD within seven days from the date of Publication of this notice, after the expiry of said period no objection will be entertained.
Name: Afroza Akhter
F/N: Ab Majeed Mir
M/N Zohra
DOB 07-07-1969
Residence: Bugam Kulgam
Mobile: 7006185961

University Of Kashmir
Srinagar J&K India -190006
NAAC Accredited Grade A
RESULT NOTIFICATION DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
Irfan Ahmad Mir S/o Gh Hussain bearing University Registration No. 41799-5-2008 who pursued Integrated Ph.D Programme on Whole Time basis in the discipline of Clinical Biochemistry, Department of Biotechnology, School of Biological Sciences submitted thesis titled 'Role of Pyruvate dehydrogenase kinase 1 (PDK1) and anti-PDK1 microRNAs in stress induced autophagy' under the Supervision of Prof. Mahboob Ul Hussain, Department of Biotechnology, University of Kashmir, Srinagar is declared qualified for the award of Ph. D degree on 06-11-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
I want to transfer my shikara licence bearing Regd No: JKSB00001614 Dated: 01-04-2018 to my Nephew Namely Owais Lateef Kaloo S/o Mohammad Lateef Kaloo R/o Abi Buchwara Dalgate Srinagar. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Dy Dir. Tourism Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Mohammad Ayub Kuloo
S/o Ghulam Nabi Kuloo
R/o Jogi Lanker Rainawari Srinagar

PUBLIC NOTICE
I want to transfer my shikara licence bearing Regd No: JKSB00000736 Dated: 1-4-2019 to my Grand Son Namely Mohammad Waseem Sheikh S/o Mohammad Amin Sheikh R/o Sheikh Mohalla Rainawari Srinagar. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Dy Dir. Tourism Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Mohammad Ismail Sheikh
S/o Abdul Gani Sheikh
R/o Ishber Nishat Srinagar

DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMER'S WELFARE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF AGRICULTURE GANDEBAL
(Mini-Secretariat Duderhama)
Subject: Engagement of Krishi Udyami (KU)/Agricultural Entrepreneur in District Ganderbal.
Ref: Final Merit List issued by Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal's Office vide No. DCG/Estt/F-573/2025 Dt: 17-01-2025
ORDER
CAOG/ESTT/04 OF 2025
DATED: 23-01-2025
Pursuant to the Final Merit List of the prospective candidates for selection of Krishi Udyami issued by the Chairman, District Level Selection Committee (Addl. Deputy Commissioner) Ganderbal through Public Notice issued vide No. DCG/Estt/F-573/2025 Dt: 17-01-2025, the following candidates are hereby engaged as Krishi Udyami for the Panchayats shown against each.


Government of Jammu & Kashmir
Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir
e-mail: ddtreg123@gmail.com
Subject: - Change of title of the Travel Agency from "S.R.Sunrise Tour & Travels" to "Al-Muaraf Travels".
Public Notice.
Whereas, Mr. Hamid Rashid Bhat S/o Haji Abdul Rashid Bhat has applied this office for change of title of his Travel Agency under the name and style from "S.R.Sunrise Tour & Travels" to "Al-Muaraf Travels" under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.
Whereas, the unit is registered with this office vide Registration No:-Reg/247/DT/48/L-4 dated 12.05.2007 and was renewed upto 31.03.2021.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Directorate of Libraries and Research, J&K, Jammu / Srinagar
Notice inviting applications for Descriptive Catalogues/ Abstracts of Books & Reading Material for the F.Y 2024-25
The Department of Libraries & Research, J&K invites applications for descriptive catalogues/abstracts of books and other reading material published during the last two financial years (2022-23, 2023-24) and the current financial year. The copy of the Notice along with the application form can be obtained from the office of the Deputy Director Libraries, Jammu/Kashmir or downloaded from the departmental website www.jkpubliblibraries.nic.in.

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BOOK APPOINTMENT

Me'raj Holiday Postponed To Jan 28

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday postponed holiday on account of Shab-e- Me'raj from ensuing Monday to Tuesday.

"In partial modification of Government Order No. 2193 JK(GAD) of 2024 dated: 29.12.2024, it is hereby ordered that the holiday on account of Shab-i-Miraj shall now be observed on 28th of January, 2025 (Tuesday) instead of 27th of January, 2025 (Monday), in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir," reads an order.

The order follows Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board's communication to the Secretary to the Government, Revenue (Haji & Auqaf) Department, for postponement of holiday on account of Shab-i- Miraj.

The communiqué by Chief Executive Officer followed a communication by Administrator 'Aasar-i-Sharif Hazratbal' Srinagar that the Meraj-un-Nabi (SAW) shall be celebrated on 27th of Rajab, which falls on 28-01-2025 (Tuesday) instead | [More on P10](#)

J&K Celebrates 76th Republic Day Amid Tight Security

LG, CM, & Ministers To Lead Major Events

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir regions are all set to celebrate 76th Republic Day on Sunday amid heightened security arrangements.

Stringent security measures have been put in place in and around Maulana Azad Stadium, the main venue of the function, in Jammu.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha will preside over the main function in Jammu and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will be



the Chief Guest on the occasion. An official said, "The security wing of the Jammu and Kashmir Police have taken control of the

stadium and sanitisation of the main venue and its surrounding areas has been completed." He said that | [More on P10](#)

15 Gallantry Medals Among 27 Awards For JKP

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Police personnel have been honored with 27 awards on the occasion of Republic Day 2025, including 15 Gallantry Medals, two President's Medals for Distinguished Service, and 10 Medals for Meritorious Service.

Among the recipients are Anand Jain, Additional Director General; Nitish Kumar, CID chief and former IGP Kashmir; Vijay Kumar and former SSP Srinagar Rakesh Balwal.

The honors include 15 Medals for Gallantry (GM), 2 President's Medals for Distinguished Service (PSM), and 10 Medals for Meritorious Service (MSM).

The awardees for the Medal for Gallantry (GM) on the occasion of Republic Day 2025 are including Azhar Rashid, Deputy Superintendent of Police; Maajid Afzal Wani, Head Constable; Safer Lone, Constable; Shahnawaz Ahmad Deedad, Constable; Suresh Kumar Bhat, Assistant Sub-Inspector; Aqib | [More on P10](#)

MYSTERY ILLNESS IN RAJOURI

Leaves Of Doctors, Paramedics Cancelled

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Authorities have cancelled all leaves of doctors and paramedics in the wake of a medical alert following the deaths of 17 people from Badhaal village in Rajouri district due to a mysterious illness.

The number of people sent to quarantine has risen to 230.

Union minister Dr Jitendra Singh said the initial investigation conducted by the toxicology laboratory in Lucknow concluded that the cause was not any infection, virus or bacteria but a toxin.

Principal of Rajouri Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital, Dr Amarjeet Singh Bhatia, on Friday addressed a | [More on P10](#)

NHRC Admits Petition

The NHRC has admitted a petition filed by a Jammu-based RTI activist over the mysterious deaths of 17 people from three Scheduled | [More on P10](#)

Schools Banned From Forcing Students Into Political Rallies

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday banned the education department from passing any directions to students or staff for participation in political programmes or rallies.

The ban, issued through a circular by the School Education Department, comes after the government faced criticism from various quarters over an education department circular directing Poonch authorities to participate in a Tiranga rally of the RSS-affiliated ABVP.

The circular was issued by the Poonch Chief Education Officer, who directed heads of several schools to send 40-50 students and two teachers to the rally.

The circular attracted criticism from the PDP which alleged the government was using education as a "propaganda tool".

"It is enjoined upon all

the Officers including Chief Education Officers, Zonal Education Officers and Head of Institutions of all the schools under School Education Department to not to grant any permission or give direction to students or staff (including all categories of teachers) to participate in any political programme, rally etc. organized by any political party/organization," the latest circular read.

The circular was posted on X by Jammu and Kashmir Education Minister Sakina Itoo.

It instructed all chief education officers to "strictly monitor" that no directions from any district authority is in contravention to the circular.

"In case of any such deviation, the Chief Education officer concerned shall immediately bring the same into the notice of respective Director School Education for further instructions," it said.

On Friday, PDP leader Waheed Para | [More on P10](#)

LG Addresses People On 76th Republic Day 'Whole-of-Govt Approach To Break Terror, Drug Chains'

Observer News Service

Jammu: Centre is implementing a "whole of government approach" to eliminate co-terror networks and drug syndicates in Jammu and Kashmir, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said on Saturday.

Addressing people on the eve of 76th Republic Day from the Raj Bhawan here, Sinha extended his deepest tribute to the valiant soldiers of the Army, paramilitary forces and the Jammu and Kashmir Police. Sinha said that beyond safeguarding the borders, they stand as pillars of peace and stability for the people of the Union Territory.



"The Government of India is implementing a 'whole of government approach' to eliminate co-terror networks and drug syndicates, ensuring

that future generations are freed from the vicious cycle of drug addiction.

"For this purpose, the National Action | [More on P10](#)

J&K's Economy Records Growth Rate Of 9.5%

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said the local economy has recorded a growth rate of 9.5 per cent, while the GSDP is estimated at Rs 2.45 lakh crore for 2023-24, up from Rs 2.20 lakh crore in 2022-23. Addressing people on the eve of | [More on P10](#)

R-Day Reminder Of Freedom Fighters' Sacrifice: CM

Observer News Service

Srinagar : Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Saturday extended Republic Day greetings to the people, saying the day serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by our freedom fighters.

"The 26th of January holds immense significance in our nation's history, as we commemorate the establishment of free India as a Republic founded on the principles of justice and equality," Abdullah's party the National Conference quoted him as saying.

"This day serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by our freedom fighters and the visionary efforts of our founding fathers, who bestowed upon



us a nation where our dignity and individual freedoms are safeguarded by a progressive Constitution," he added.

The party said NC president Farooq Abdullah also greeted the people.

"In the seven decades since our country | [More on P10](#)

Gets Official X Handle

The Jammu and Kashmir chief minister has now got an official handle on popular microblogging website X, his office said on Saturday. "Official announcement. We are delighted to share that the office of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir is now officially on X!" | [More on P10](#)



Kashmir Welcomes Vande Bharat Train

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Years of hard work and dedication, and some

engineering marvels later, the dream of Kashmir's rail connectivity finally came true as a specially-designed Vande

Bharat Express train arrived here on Saturday, completing its trial run. The train, on its maiden | [More on P10](#)

Man Gets 20-year Jail For Raping Minor In 2020

Says Such Crimes Have Devastating Effect On Society, Victim's Family

M Ahmad

Srinagar: A fast track court here has sentenced a man to 20 years of imprisonment for raping a minor girl in 2020.

The Court Of Presiding officer fast track court, Aarti Mohan, announced the sentence after convicting the accused Fazil Saleem Bhat of Batwara Srinagar for the offences under 3/4 of under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

As per the prosecution, the case was registered following a complaint on 9 March 2020 by a resident that his 9-year-old daughter was sexually assaulted after she went to buy biscuits from Bhat's shop.

The victim's father in his statement before the court stated that as soon as his

daughter reached Bhat's shop, he told her that the biscuit was in the room upstairs the shop and subsequent raped her there.

After hearing prosecution and counsel representing Bhat, the court convicted and sentenced Bhat, observing that prosecution has succeeded in proving its case against the accused beyond reasonable doubt.

Subsequently, the court sentenced Bhat to simple imprisonment of twenty years (20 years) along with a fine of Rs 10,000 under section 4 of POCSO Act.

"In case he fails to make the payment of a fine, he shall undergo further imprisonment for 03 months," the court said, adding, "The amount of fine if realized shall | [More on P10](#)

Nasir Sogami For Budgam? NC Leadership Reaches Out To Ruhullah

Nida Sadiq

Srinagar: Amid increasing speculation that National Conference will be fielding Nasir Aslam Wani, Advisor to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, for the upcoming Budgam bypolls, Wani, along with Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary met Member of Parliament Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi at his residence.

The meeting took place at a time when serious differences seem to have emerged between NC and Ruhullah Mehdi after the latter staged a protest outside CM Omar Abdullah's residence over the issue of the reservation policy. Sources indicate that



Ruhullah, who has represented the Budgam segment thrice in the Assembly, is not averse to the fielding of Wani from the Budgam seat.

"We visited Aga Ruhullah at his home for a cup of tea," Choudhary told reporters, after the meeting. "I am proud to meet Aga Ruhullah, who is both a political leader and a religious cleric."

The Budgam | [More on P10](#)

India, Indonesia Decide To Boost Defence And Trade Ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Prabowo Subianto, President of Indonesia with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad house in New Delhi on Saturday. Tribune photo: Mukesh Aggarwal

India and Indonesia on Saturday decided to work jointly in defence manufacturing and supply chains, diversify two-way trade basket

order in the region and that freedom of navigation must be ensured in accordance with international laws.

The assertion came amid China's growing military muscle-flexing in the South China Sea as well as in the Indo-Pacific.

The Prime Minister also said that both sides emphasised on cooperation in maritime security, cyber security, counter-terrorism and radicalisation.



and boost maritime security ties with Prime Minister Narendra Modi describing the Southeast Asian nation as an "important partner" of New Delhi in the Indo-Pacific.

Following wide-ranging talks between Modi and visiting Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, at least five pacts providing for cooperation in areas of health, maritime security, culture and digital space were signed.

In his media statement, Modi said both sides are committed to maintain peace, security and a rules-based

Subianto, who arrived here on Thursday night primarily to grace the Republic Day celebrations as the chief guest, said Indonesia's partnership with India is "very important" and that he has issued directives to his officials for accelerating the bilateral economic engagement.

In his remarks, Modi said both sides also decided to further strengthen mutual cooperation in areas such as Fin-Tech, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things and digital public infrastructure.

Republic Day Eve Address President Murmu Bats For 'One Nation, One Election'

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu addresses the nation on the eve of the 76th Republic Day, in New Delhi on Saturday. Video grab

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday advocated for the "one nation, one election" initiative, asserting it has the potential to redefine "good governance" in the country by promoting consistency in governance, preventing policy paralysis, mitigating resource diversion, and alleviating financial burdens on the state.

In her address to the nation ahead of the 76th Republic Day, she emphasised the government's ongoing efforts to "eliminate remnants of a colonial mindset that have lingered in the country for decades" and cited the replacement of the British-era criminal laws with three new modern laws.

"We have been witnessing concerted efforts to change that mindset... Reforms of such magnitude require an audacity of vision," she said. Highlighting the signifi-



cance of the proposed Bill aimed at synchronising election schedules across the country, Murmu noted, "The 'one nation one election' plan can offer numerous benefits, including enhanced governance and reduced financial strain."

In discussing legal reforms, she pointed out the need to replace the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Indian Evidence Act with new laws reflective of Indian traditions.

She mentioned the introduction of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, which prioritise the delivery of justice over mere punishment and place a strong emphasis on addressing crimes against women and children.



Four female Israeli soldiers released by Hamas as part of a ceasefire and a captives-prisoners swap deal [Dawoud Abu Alkas/Reuters]

4 Israeli Soldiers, 200 Palestinians Released In Gaza Ceasefire Deal

Agencies

Jerusalem: Hamas has released four female Israeli soldiers held in Gaza and 200 Palestinian prisoners have been released from Israeli jails as part of the ceasefire agreement that halted more than 15 months of war.

The International Committee of the Red Cross confirmed on Saturday that it had transferred 128 Palestinian detainees to Gaza and the West Bank while local authorities handled the release and transfer of the remainder, completing the second exchange under the deal that took effect last Sunday.

Ahead of the release in Gaza City's Palestine Square, scores of masked Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad fighters gathered at the scene where a large crowd of Palestinians also congregated.

The four women - Karina

Ariev, Daniella Gilboa, Naama Levy and Liri Albag - were marched onto a podium and waved and smiled - likely under duress. They were then led into ICRC vehicles, which transported them to Israeli forces.

Later on Saturday, buses carrying released Palestinian prisoners were seen departing from the Israeli Ofer military prison in the occupied West Bank, soon after the captives were freed. Israel's Prison Service said all 200 prisoners were released in line with the list published by Hamas.

The releases on either side were welcomed by cheering crowds of Palestinians in the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank and Israelis in Tel Aviv.

Unreleased captive

Israel also said a female civilian captive, 29-year-old Arbel Yehud, who has been expected to be freed on Satur-

day, was not.

She was abducted with her boyfriend from their home in the Nir Oz settlement in Israel, during the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023.

An Israeli military spokesman said it was a breach of the truce. A Hamas official told Al Jazeera that Yehuda is alive and will be released next Saturday.

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Palestinians in Gaza will not be allowed to cross back to the northern part of the territory until the issue is resolved.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been displaced from northern Gaza during the war and many are expected to return from Sunday.

Israel is also expected to open the Rafah border crossing in the south for more humanitarian aid and other commercial supplies to enter.

Palestinians Prisoners Released In Ceasefire Deal Arrive To Celebrations In West Bank

Agencies

Jerusalem: Thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank city of Ramallah celebrated the arrival of buses carrying dozens of prisoners released as part of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire.

Israel said it released a total of 200 prisoners after Hamas freed four young, female Israeli soldiers.

Thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank city of Ramallah celebrated the arrival of buses carrying dozens of prisoners released as part of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire.

Israel said it released a total of 200 prisoners after Hamas freed four young, female Israeli soldiers.

The prisoners include 120 who were serving life sentences after being convicted of deadly attacks on Israelis. Around 70 were released into Egypt.

Hamas militants handed over four captive female Israeli soldiers to the Red Cross in Gaza City on Saturday af-

ter parading them in front of a crowd. Israel followed with the release of 200 Palestinian prisoners or detainees as part of the fragile ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

The four Israeli soldiers smiled broadly as they waved and gave the thumbs-up from

Thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank city of Ramallah celebrated the arrival of buses carrying dozens of prisoners released as part of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire

a stage in Gaza City's Palestine Square, militants on either side of them and a crowd of thousands watching before they were led off to waiting Red Cross vehicles.

They were likely acting under duress, with previously released hostages saying they were held in brutal conditions and forced to record propaganda videos.

Israel's Prison Service later said it had completed the release of 200 Palestinians. They

include 120 who had been serving life sentences after being convicted of deadly attacks against Israelis. Around 70 were released into Egypt, according to Egypt's state-run Qahera TV. Egypt had served as a key mediator in the talks that led to the truce.

US Under Trump Cuts All Foreign Aid Except To Israel, Egypt

Agencies

Washington: The US State Department has cut all foreign aid, except to the Israeli regime and Egypt, days after President Donald Trump issued a sweeping executive order to freeze assistance worldwide.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio sent an internal memo Friday, days after Trump took office vowing an "America First" policy of tightly restricting assistance overseas.

"No new funds shall be obligated for new awards or extensions of existing awards until each proposed new award or extension has been reviewed and approved," said the memo reported by news agencies.

It came after Trump on Monday issued multiple orders for executive action, including putting a hold on all US foreign assistance for 90 days.

The sweeping order appears to affect everything from development assistance to military aid, including to Ukraine, which received billions of dollars in weapons under Trump's predecessor Joe Biden in its war with Russia.

The order by the US State Department, however, provides a waiver for foreign military aid to the Israeli regime and Egypt.

Last year, the US Congress

passed a whopping \$95 billion aid package for the Israeli regime, Ukraine, and Taiwan.

There was no mention of Ukraine and Taiwan in the waiver. In his executive order, Trump stated that the US "foreign aid industry and bureaucracy are not aligned with American interests and in many cases antithetical to American values."

In an interview aired Thursday night, Trump suggested that Ukraine under President Volodymyr Zelenskyy should not have fought with Russia.

"Zelenskyy was fighting a much bigger entity, much bigger, much more powerful," Trump told Fox News. "He shouldn't have done that, because we could have made a deal."

Biden, who was in office when the war started, consistently emphasized his alliance with Ukraine, pushing for aid packages for the country and praising Zelenskyy's leadership.

There is about \$3.85 billion in congressionally authorized funding for any future arms shipments to Ukraine and it is now up to Trump to decide whether or not to spend it.

The Biden administration also provided over \$22 billion in aid to the Israeli military after it launched a massive onslaught on the Gaza Strip on Oct. 7, 2023.

How Iran's Economy Will Deal With Trump's Return



Agencies

Tehran: Donald Trump's return to the White House, besides ushering in another turbulent four-year term with serious implications for trade, global conflicts and the future of US foreign alliances, has raised concerns about the future of Iran's economy.

Reports say Trump's staunch pro-Israel nominees for cabinet and coterie of top advisers plan to reinstate his trademark "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran with the aim of choking off the Islamic Republic oil income by "going after foreign ports and traders who handle Iranian oil".

Trump adopted the strategy during his first term as he took a dim view of a six-nation agreement with Tehran known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in the hope of architecting a new deal which could bring in American companies from the cold into Iran's ripe market of many opportunities.

While it is too early to know what approach Trump might take in his new tenure given his mercurial nature and unpredictable policy-making style, the Iranian economy is not what it was in 2018. It has developed a level of flexibility and resilience that stricter sanctions can no longer threaten growth and development in a big way.

In his campaign for a second term, Trump signaled a more conciliatory approach to Iran, stating that he "would like to see Iran be very successful". He further expressed a hope for improved relations: "I'm not looking to be bad to Iran, we're going to be friendly, I hope."

The New York Times even reported a meeting between Iran's ambassador to the UN and Elon Musk, the tech billionaire closely allied with Trump, in a bid to defuse tensions in the new administration, but the Iranian foreign ministry "categorically denied" it and was "surprised" by the coverage in US media.

NEWS MAKERS

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis denounced an era of "disinformation and polarization" on Friday in a message for World Communications Day, as he criticized powerful social networks creating "fanaticism and even hatred."

In saluting journalists, he spoke of their collective responsibility working "in these our times, characterised by disinformation and polarization, as a few centers of power control an unprecedented mass of data and information."

The 88-year-old pope - who has warned in the past of the dangers of new technologies, including social media and artificial intelligence - did not cite Facebook or X by name, but his target was evident.

"Too often today, communication generates not hope, but fear and despair, prejudice and resentment, fanaticism and even hatred," the pope wrote in his message.

"All too often it simplifies reality in order to provoke instinctive reactions; it uses words like a



Pope Francis Warns Of 'Fanaticism, Hatred' In Social Media

razor; it even uses false or artfully distorted information to send messages designed to agitate, provoke or hurt."

The pope's admonition comes as X, owned by Elon Musk, has been accused of spreading false informa-

tion while interfering in European politics, in particular for attacking leaders including German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

The billionaire also used his platform and vast wealth to help propel

Donald Trump to the White House.

Meta has also come under fire after its chief Mark Zuckerberg said this month that Facebook would end its third-party fact-checking program in the United States, in what critics warned would further fuel false information online.

In a speech quoting Martin Luther King Jr., Francis said he dreamed of "communication that does not peddle illusions or fears, but is able to give reasons for hope."

He warned, however, of algorithms that feed social media users information that is specifically catered to their interests and prejudices.

Such "digital systems... by profiling us according to the logic of the market, modify our perception of reality," he said.

"As a result, we witness, often helplessly, a sort of atomization of interests that ends up undermining the foundations of our existence as a community, our ability to join in the pursuit of the common good, to listen to one another and to understand each other's point of view."

US Supreme Court Clears 26/11 Convict Tahawwur Rana's Extradition To India

The US Supreme Court has turned down a review petition by terror accused Tahawwur Rana, dismissing his last legal challenge against his extradition to India in connection with the 2008 Mumbai attacks that killed 166 people.

"Petition DENIED," the Supreme Court said. The apex court's order came on January 21, a day after Donald Trump was sworn in as the US President.

Earlier, Rana lost legal battles in several federal courts, including the US Court of Appeals for the North Circuit in San Francisco.

Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, on November 13 filed a "petition for a writ of certiorari" before the US Supreme Court to review the lower court's ruling.

Rana, who is currently detained at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles, is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

Headley obtained Rana's consent to open an office of First World Immigration Services as a cover for his activities in India.



Earlier, the US government had argued in the court that the petition for a writ of certiorari should be denied. US Solicitor General Elizabeth B Prelogar said this in its filing before the Supreme Court on December 16.

She said Rana was not entitled to relief from extradition to India in this case.

In his petitions for a writ of certiorari to review the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Rana argued that he was tried and acquitted in federal court in the Northern District of Illinois (Chicago) on charges relating to the 2008 terrorist attacks on Mumbai.

"India now seeks to extradite him for trial on charges based on the identical conduct at issue in the Chicago case," it said.



Dal Lake's Boat Race Marks National Voters' Day

Agencies

SRINAGAR: As part of the "unique celebration" of National Voters' Day, Srinagar witnessed a different sight on Dal Lake, with a special boat race flagged off by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar and the officers to promote the importance of voting.

The race brought excitement to the beautiful waters of Dal Lake, with students, locals, and officials participating in the celebrations.

While taking the voter's pledge with students, DC Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat highlighted the need for greater voter participation, especially among the youth.

"The target and focus should be young voters, and they should be made to understand how voting is important. Every single vote matters and can bring change. It's crucial that we encourage young people to

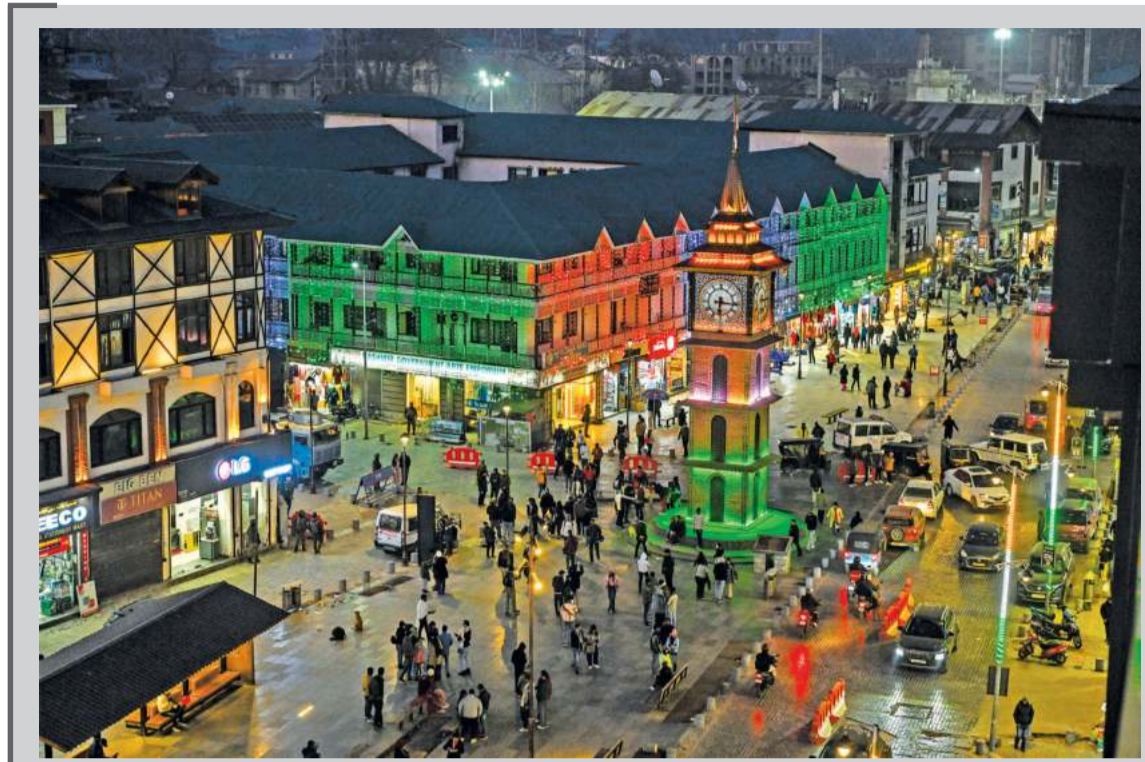
become active participants in democracy," he said.

Similarly, the boat race added an offbeat charm to the occasion. "The boat race through the lake drew cheers from pedestrians and locals, who praised the creative approach to spreading voter awareness."

"This is something different. Using Dal Lake to send a message about voting is a wonderful and unique idea. It connects with people on a personal level," said Riyaz Ahmad, a local who stopped to watch the race.

Meanwhile, for many other participants, the event was more than just a celebration. "This is my first time taking part, as I will soon be eligible to vote, and it feels special," said another local student who attended the event.

Notably, the celebrations concluded with calls for strengthening voter awareness campaigns, with a focus on first-time voters in the region—(KNO)



SRINAGAR'S ICONIC clock tower illuminated on the occasion of Republic Day.

KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

15th National Voters Day Celebrated At Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: On the occasion of 15th National Voters Day, a grand function was organized by the District Election Office, Srinagar here to mark the foundation day of the Election Commission of India, established on 25th January 1950.

The function was presided over by the Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, while Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat who is also the District Election Officer attended the function as Guest of Honor.

Speaking on the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir said that the National voters Day serves as a reminder to all the eligible voters of their responsibilities to participate in the electoral process, to strengthen the democratic setup. He also expressed appreciation for the hard work of the BLO, Electoral Registration Officers, the Election Department staff, Election icons, and all the stakeholders for their unwavering dedication in keeping our democracy vibrant and thriving.

The Div Com also highlighted the contribution of Election machinery and all the stakeholders who exhibited commendable capability in ensuring successful Lok Sabha and J&K Assembly Elections in 2024 with a remarkable increase in voter turnout in both the Elections. He stressed on responsibility to vote besides the right to vote to

strengthen the democratic setup. He said responsible voting is the key in the development of any nation and urged the participants, particularly youngsters, to become an active part of the electorate process.

DC/DEO Srinagar in his inaugural address said the significance of National Voters Day is to create awareness and to encourage youngsters, who have attained the age of 18 years, to participate in the electoral process, by enrolling or registering themselves in electoral rolls and to exercise their franchise.

The DC/DEO said it is equally important that the newly registered electors are imparted with the knowledge about the importance of their newly acquired power to select the right representatives to fulfil their demands besides address their developmental issues.

The DC/DEO also appreciated the electoral team of District Election Authority Srinagar including Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), BLOs and other stakeholders who put in their best efforts by reaching to the last voter for registration during Special Summary Revision to become part of coming elections.

The DC said during Special Summary Revision-2024, the District Election Office has worked hard to widen the ambit of electoral literacy by holding awareness programmes in City Schools and Colleges and other prominent public places.

During the programme message

of Chief Election Commissioner of India, Rajiv Kumar was telecast through virtual mode.

On the occasion, participants were administered pledge regarding National Voters Day.

Later, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir and Deputy Commissioner Srinagar handed over Electoral Photo Identity Cards (EPICs) among newly enrolled voters.

They also felicitated Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers, Election Nodal Officers, Officials, BLOs and Election Icons for ensuring smooth elections process for Lok Sabha and J&K Assembly Elections in 2024

Notably, the Election Commission of India has chosen the theme "Nothing like voting, I vote for sure" for this year's National Voters' Day reflecting the core philosophy of universal adult suffrage and the empowerment that comes with exercising the right to vote in a democratic society.

Additional District Development Commissioner, Sheikh Gulam Hassan, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria, Nodal Principal Colleges, Seema Naaz, Deputy District Election Officer, Srinagar, Mir Intiyaz Ul Aziz, Electoral Registration Officers, Assistant Electoral Registration Officers, Election Nodal Officers, Officials of District Election Office, Srinagar BLOs, newly registered voters, Election Icons and other concerned Officials were present on the occasion.

Fire Advisory Issued Amid High-Risk Forest Fire Alert

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The authorities on Saturday issued a "fire advisory" following the forest fire alert from the Forest Survey of India (FSI), highlighting a high-risk forest fire situation in the region from January 23 to January 30, 2025.

The warning stresses on the critical need for caution especially in the fire-prone areas.

"The Division Forest Officer (DFO) for Urban/Social Forests, Srinagar, is tasked with ensuring that forest staff, local authorities, and emergency responders are well-prepared with necessary firefighting equipment. These teams must be ready for prompt action should an emergency arise," reads an advisory issued by the office of the District Magistrate Srinagar, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer.

It reads as Aapda Mitra Volunteers, integral to the District Disaster Management framework, have been urged to remain vigilant and act as first responders in case of fire outbreaks. These volunteers are also encouraged to spread awareness and immediately report incidents through the provided emergency contacts.

The advisory also reads as fire safety guidelines with residents have been advised

to take necessary precautions: Keep emergency contact numbers for the District Emergency Operation Centre, Fire Service Department, and local forest authorities readily available.

If a fire is noticed, stay calm and alert others around you, avoiding panic. Find water sources if trapped by fire, and remain there until it subsides. Avoid unattended fires in or near forest areas, extinguishing them completely.

About the precautionary measures the advisory reads as "avoid using or refueling lanterns, stoves, or heaters near forests. Do not discard cigarettes, matches, or any flammable items near forested areas. Avoid burning waste in areas near forests."

Meanwhile, for immediate assistance, the public can contact as per advisory reads as Police Control Room Srinagar: 112, District Emergency Operation Centre (DEOC): 0194-2483651, 0194-2457552, 0194-2457543 and Fire Control Room Srinagar: 101.

Moreover, the residents have been urged to stay informed through local TV and radio broadcasts for further updates. By following these safety measures, the community can work together to prevent fire hazards and ensure safety during this high-risk period.

'Awareness Efforts Key To Increased Voter Turnout'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin on Saturday said the awareness campaigns that have contributed to increased voter turnout in recent elections.

Speaking on the occasion of the 15th National Voters Day, he highlighted the efforts made to educate citizens and encourage their participation in the electoral process.

Dr. Bilal stated that the year 2024 saw extensive electoral activity, including parliamentary and assembly elections, with a significant increase in voter turnout compared to previous years. He credited initiatives like the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaigns for their role in raising awareness and ensuring that citizens, especially young voters, understand the value of their vote.

"Our focus has been on young voters, and we have consistently conveyed the message that registering and exercising their right to vote is the most important

way to strengthen democracy," he said. He pointed out that during the special summary revision in Srinagar, nearly 35,000 new voters were added, accounting for almost 50% of the total additions in Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr. Bilal also highlighted the improvement in the Elector-Population (EP) ratio, which has risen from 55 to over 60, attributing this progress to extensive outreach in schools and colleges. "We have established Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) in educational institutions to engage students through interactive programs and activities to emphasize the significance of voting," he added.

The National Voters Day celebrations were held at various levels, including district, ERO, and BLO levels. A central event took place at the College of Education, where the Regional Commissioner of Kashmir served as the chief guest. Programs were conducted at 932 polling stations across Srinagar to encourage eligible citizens to participate in the democratic process. (KNS)

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER
8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

I did wash my hand ... but... did I clean it enough? ?Wash it again? is it clean now?

It's not just RECURRENT HANDWASHING AND CHECKING BUT UNSEEN PAIN, myths and stigma, distress associated with OCD

KASHMIR Kashmir American Society of Healthcare, Medical Education & Research in collaboration with HPVT - Help Poor Voluntary Trust! is initiating a free 8 weeks Group therapy for the individuals suffering with OCD by a team of counselling clinical psychologists led by leading consultant clinical psychologist of J&K.

If you or some one you know is experiencing symptoms of OCD, seeking professional help is crucial.

You do not have to fight your battles alone.

There is no need for referral, simply call us for registration.

Happy & Healthy minds Office, HPVT Building (First Floor), Daresah Kadal Chowk, Srinagar
9070806160

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS
SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

<p>HIJRI CALENDAR 25 Rajab 1446</p>	PRAYERS	
	FAJR	6:06
	ZUHR	12:42
	ASR	4:17
	Magrib	5:58
	ISHA	7:21

This Day In History

- 66- 5th recorded perihelion passage of Halley's Comet
- 1340- English king Edward III proclaimed king of France
- 1500- Vicente Yáñez Pinzón becomes the first European to set foot in Brazil
- 1531 - Lisbon hit by Earthquake; about 30,000 die
- 1589 - Job is elected as Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia
- 1654 - Portuguese troops conquer last Dutch base on Recife
- 1666 - France declares war on England & Munster
- 1697 - Isaac Newton receives Jean Bernoulli's 6 month time-limit problem, solves problem before going to bed that same night
- 1699 - Venice, Poland & Austria sign Treaty of Carlowitz with Ottoman Empire
- 1748 - Britain, Netherlands, Austria & Sardinia sign anti-French treaty
- 1797 - Russia, Prussia and Austria sign treaty
- 1862 - Lincoln issues General War Order #1, calling for a Union offensive, General George McClellan ignores order
- 1905 - World's largest diamond, the 3,106-carat Cullinan, is found in South Africa
- 1913- Jim Thorpe relinquishes his 1912 Olympic medals for playing 2 seasons of semi-professional baseball before competing in the Olympics
- 1914- Vatican punts Belgian Nobel winner Maeterlinck's works in their index
- 1924- American skater Charles Jewtraw claims the first ever Winter Olympic gold medal; wins 500m speed skating event in 44.0s at the Chamonix Games in France
- 1929- Indian National Congress proclaims goal for India's independence
- 1934 - Nazi Germany & Poland sign 10-year non-aggression treaty
- 1939 - Francisco Franco's troops conquer Barcelona
- 1940 - Nazis forbid Polish Jews to travel on trains
- 1942 1st US force in Europe during WW II go ashore in Northern Ireland
- 1945 - Soviet forces reach Auschwitz concentration camp
- 1952 - At least 20 people have been killed and 100s injured during riots in Cairo against the British
- 1956 - Porkkala military base returned to Finland by USSR
- 1958 - H Laskow replaces Moshe Dayan on as Israeli minister of Defense
- 1958 - Japanese ferry Nankai Maru capsized off southern Awaji Island, Japan, 167 killed.
- 1959 - Italy government of Fanfani resigns
- 1961 1st woman personal physician to a US President - Janet G. Travell (to John F. Kennedy)
- 1962 - US launches Ranger 3, misses Moon by 22,000-mi (37,000-km)
- 1965 - South Vietnam military coup under general Nguyen Khanh
- 1968 - Israeli submarine Dakar sinks in Mediterranean Sea, 69 die
- 1976 - Israel opens "Good Fence" to Lebanon
- 1978 - Strikers riot in Tunisia, killing about 40
- 1980 - Israel & Egypt establish diplomatic relations
- 1989 - US computer security expert warns of catastrophic virus
- 1995- With a record 6,254,427 ballots cast by fans in NBA All-Star Voting, Detroit's Grant Hill becomes the first rookie to lead all NBA players in All-Star votes received, earning #1 on 1,289,585 ballots
- 1998- Intel launches 333 MHz Pentium II chip
- 2001- An earthquake hits Gujarat, India, causing more than 20,000 deaths.
- 2004- Mydoom, the most destructive computer worm (so far), first sighted on computers in North America. Goes on to cause \$38 billion in damages.
- 2004- President Hamid Karzai signs the new constitution of Afghanistan
- 2005- Condoleezza Rice is sworn in as U.S. Secretary of State, the first African American woman to hold the post
- 2006- Western Union discontinues its telegram service.
- 2010- The World Health Organization rejects claims that it overstated the severity of the swine flu pandemic under pressure from vaccine companies
- 2013- Miloš Zeman wins the Czech Republic's presidential election
- 2016- Leader of Oregon militia occupying Malheur wildlife refuge arrested and another killed in shoot-out with Federal agents

Omar's Tough Balancing Act

Caught between a dominant Centre and a disillusioned Valley, Omar strives to balance survival politics with regional aspirations

RIYAZ WANI

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There's thus little hope that statehood will be restored anytime soon. Although Omar did ask for its reinstatement at Z-Morh event, and the prime minister did assure him of his promise to do so, little is expected to change

When Chief Minister Omar Abdullah delivered his address during the prime minister Narendra Modi's inauguration of Z-Morh tunnel on January 13, the contrast with the late chief minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed's speech during PM Modi's visit in 2015 couldn't have been starker. Mufti then sought an Indo-Pak dialogue and resurrection of Vajpayee-Musharraf peace process, and Omar sought restoration of statehood to the now union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Mufti's tone was assertive and Omar's conciliatory. But there's hardly any scope for value judgement here. Between the context of the two speeches, their tone and tenor, there is a world of difference: Mufti was the chief minister of a constitutionally empowered state of Jammu and Kashmir including Ladakh and Omar that of a union territory where his elected government is subservient to Lieutenant Governor. And there's little that he can do without the cooperation of the central government and the LG.

What's more, the BJP is the largest opposition party in the Assembly with 29 seats. Backed by its government at the centre, the party will always be looking for an opening to form the government. Only thing that prevented the saffron party from forming the government in the union territory was that the voters in Kashmir largely rallied around the National Conference that got 42 seats. The NC-Congress-CPI(M) have 49 seats between them. And in the event of any unlikely defection in the NC in future, the BJP could very well be forming J&K's first Jammu-dominated elected government, led probably by a Hin-



PM Narendra Modi with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah during the inauguration of the Z-Morh tunnel, in J&K. PTI.

du chief minister. However, even otherwise, the BJP-led central government is a de-facto ruler in the existing hybrid arrangement with power being shared between the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and the NC-Congress alliance - albeit unequally in favour of the former. The arrangement suits the BJP and it may prefer to stick with it for an indefinite time. This reality is likely to keep the NC-led government's urge to assert itself in check, lest it antagonize the centre.

This has drastically narrowed the maneuvering space of the NC government. And it is unlikely to change as long as the BJP remains a dominant force at the centre, and which looks certain until an indefinite period. In fact, the chances are that the party may become even

stronger in near future. Assembly elections in New Delhi and Bihar will be keenly watched. The BJP will try to win New Delhi and retain the Nitish-led government in Bihar. Both prospects look very much possible, more so after the saffron party's stunning win in Maharashtra. Over the past decade, the BJP has recurrently sneaked from behind to snatch electoral victories from the jaws of defeat, like in Haryana and Maharashtra. So much so that this has made it challenging to take the party's setbacks at their face value.

On the contrary, the opposition INDIA Bloc which got some wind back in its sails following a surprising turnaround in the Lok Sabha polls has again lost its momentum. Maharashtra loss has already caused rumblings within the

bloc. Another electoral loss, and the alliance could come apart at the seams. This puts the elected J&K government apparently allied to the opposition alliance on a sticky wicket. It is not a part of the ruling BJP but is reliant on it for everything. And the BJP, which is a condescending benefactor here, will hardly make things easier except on its terms. The saffron party would also be loathe to alter this favourable arrangement by granting an early statehood to J&K. More so, when there also are far bigger reasons to withhold it. Centre, it is believed, is unlikely to let go of control on the security agencies and the allied security related matters, lest it unravel the gains made in recent years. The recent rise in militancy-related violence is likely to further dissuade

the central government from handing over complete control over the region to an elected government. Should this happen, a future governor will continue to wield a strong say in the affairs of J&K.

There's thus little hope that statehood will be restored anytime soon. Although Omar did ask for its reinstatement at Z-Morh event, and the prime minister did assure him of his promise to do so, little is expected to change. For example, the prime minister in his speech once again stayed short of a timeline, nor did he specifically mention statehood.

That said, it will be politically unsustainable for Omar to continue to play the role of a conciliatory and subservient chief minister. Already his praise for the PM has lent some ammunition to his opponents in the Valley, who have termed it an appeasement of the BJP that goes contrary to the spirit of his anti-Hindutva mandate. Also, while people in the Valley have generally been understanding of the CM's predicament, his Z-Morh speech was seen as a little more yielding than needed. It makes Omar's job challenging, requiring him to perform a delicate balancing act - appeasing the Centre to ensure his government's survival while addressing the sentiments of his core constituency still reeling from the loss of Article 370 and downgrading of the once empowered state.

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

The international community has long recognized the urgent need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and shift to renewable energy, and in recent years many governments have pledged to reach net-zero greenhouse-gas emissions, albeit over extremely long timeframes. But they will never get there so long as they treat electricity, which is central to the clean-energy transition, like any other market good.

The green transition is driven by several factors, such as energy intensity, investment flows, consumption patterns, and distribution systems. But its success hinges on humanity's ability to move away from "dirty" fossil fuels toward clean, renewable energy sources, particularly solar and wind. And that requires a profound transformation in how electricity is generated, distributed, and consumed.

Economists and policymakers have long framed the energy transition as a question of relative prices. In recent decades, wind and solar costs have plummeted, driven by technological advances - especially in China, where government interventions have helped scale up green industries and drive down the so-called levelized cost of energy (LCOE). According to this widely used metric for comparing power sources, renewables have consistently outperformed fossil fuels, even before external shocks like the Ukraine war sent oil and gas prices soaring.

In theory, these developments should have expedited the global transition away from fossil fuels. In practice, however, renewable-energy sources merely supplement the total power supply. Meanwhile, both developed and developing countries continue to increase fossil-fuel production and invest heavily in exploring new reserves.

The discrepancy cannot be fully explained by market forces or rela-

tive prices. Over the years, many have blamed political leaders for the lack of climate progress, especially after climate-change denialists rose to power in countries like the United States and Argentina. But this explanation, too, is incomplete.

As economic geographer Brett Christophers argues in his book *The Price is Wrong: Why Capitalism Won't Save the Planet*, the real problem lies in the failure to confront two fundamental truths about the limitations of open markets. First, the driving force behind private-sector investment and production is not output prices but relative profitability. Second, the nature of electricity makes it ill-suited to being "governed by the market," inevitably leading to suboptimal outcomes in the absence of massive government intervention.

Electricity, Christophers notes, aligns with economic historian Karl Polanyi's definition of "fictitious commodities." In his seminal work *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi argued that land, labor, and money were not intended to function within market systems. Unlike conventional goods explicitly produced for trade, the commercialization of fictitious commodities leads to inefficient and unstable market transactions and inevitably results in economic and social distortions.

To operate, these markets rely on extensive public intervention in the form of laws, regulations, social norms, and subsidies - both explicit

Decommodify Electricity

Jayati Ghosh

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To facilitate the green transition, they must reclaim that responsibility. The expected private-sector profits from renewable-energy generation are simply not sufficient to drive the necessary transformation, despite the urgent global demand

and implicit. Such interventions create the illusion of a functioning market, even though prices and profits are ultimately shaped by public and social mechanisms.

For much of its existence, Christophers notes, electricity was treated as essential public infrastructure, with its production and distribution operating outside the market. In recent decades, the pursuit of profits has fueled a global push to unbundle and commercialize generation, distribution, and consumption. But, despite the façade of competitive markets, the sector still depends heavily on various forms of state intervention.

Electricity's unique characteristics pose significant challenges for the clean-energy transition. Wind and solar power are inherently intermittent, resulting in fluctuating output and price volatility. Compounding the problem, public subsidies for "green" investments can lead to overcapacity during periods of low demand, while their withdrawal often causes investors to exit the sector.

Moreover, although renewable energy has become cheaper than fossil fuels, the profits it generates are low and unreliable. Christophers vividly describes this self-cannibalizing dynamic, highlighting how it has played out across different economies, from the US and Norway to India.

Instability undermines the "bankability" of green projects, making it harder to secure financing for renewable energy. It should be no surprise, then, that the much-hyped Glasgow Alliance for Net Zero, launched in April 2021 at COP26 and championed by former Bank of England Governor

and UN Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance Mark Carney, has already begun to falter after the six largest US banks withdrew from it in quick succession. This was before Donald Trump's return to the White House further disincentivized such investment by issuing an Executive Order that effectively terminates efforts to achieve a Green New Deal in the US.

But the solution is not to subsidize green capitalism by derisking investments, although such measures are unavoidable if renewable energy is to remain viable. Instead, the key is recognizing that electricity is not a commodity. Consequently, we must restructure all aspects of energy production and distribution, encompassing renewables and fossil fuels alike.

Most importantly, achieving true decarbonization requires governments to adopt a more proactive approach. Instead of acting as behind-the-scenes market facilitators, policymakers must take direct responsibility for producing and distributing renewable energy.

Such an approach is far from radical. Before the rise of neoliberalism, governments played a pivotal role in building and managing critical infrastructure, including energy systems. To facilitate the green transition, they must reclaim that responsibility. The expected private-sector profits from renewable-energy generation are simply not sufficient to drive the necessary transformation, despite the urgent global demand. Until policymakers come to terms with this reality, their efforts to accelerate the shift to renewables will continue to fall short.

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

The article was originally published by Project Syndicate

Breaking Free From Comparison

CS Krishnamurthy

Meet Arvind Kumar, a bank retiree who spends his days scrolling through social media feeds. He has a behavioural issue. He struggles to accept his peers' successes, succumbing to jealousy. His constant habit of nit-picking and self-comparison leave him restless and sad. Sound familiar?

In the complexities of life, we all have our unique threads that shape our stories together. Yet, it's human nature to compare our themes with others.

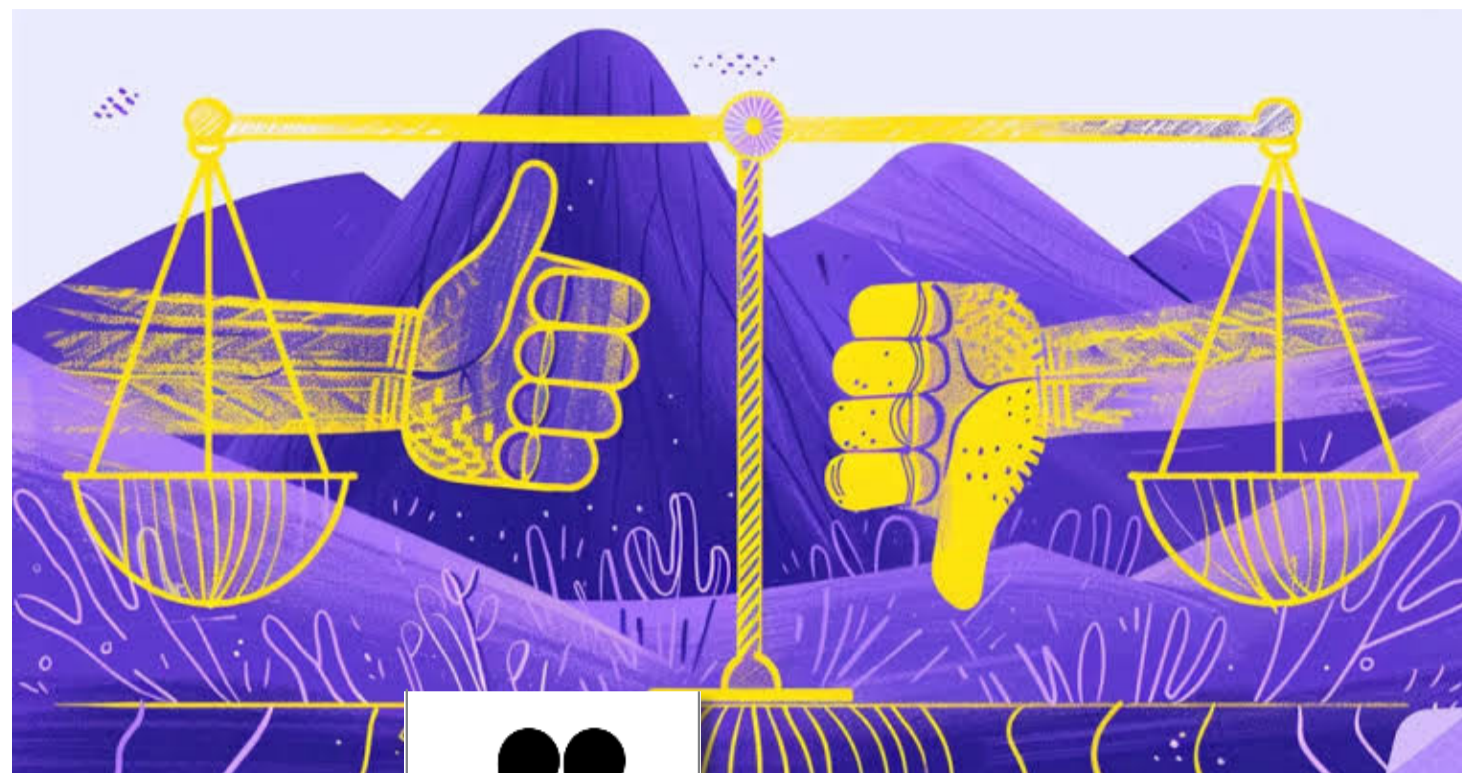
Arvind fails to recognise that the digital platforms present curated versions of events and images, often creating a distorted perception of reality. The constant exposure to others' "highlight reels" can erode self-esteem, fostering feelings of self-doubt. As the saying goes, "Comparison is the thief of joy." But why do we compare, and how do we stop?

Understanding "Comparionitis"

Comparison is an innate, unconscious mental habit. Have you ever caught yourself scrolling through social media, only to feel a sudden pang of inadequacy? This phenomenon, aptly named "comparionitis," is a sneaky intruder. It strikes when you encounter someone who seems "better" in some way—more successful, attractive, or accomplished.

Social media amplifies this tendency, with its endless stream of filtered images and staged moments. Arvind, for example, agonised over his relatively small follower count, oblivious to the fact that behind those polished posts lay untold struggles and imperfections. This relentless comparison erodes mental well-being, triggering anxiety, overthinking, and even depression.

Comparionitis creeps in uninvited, whether during a casual



chat or a random walk down the street. Spotting someone you view as more capable sets off a torrent of unhealthy apprehension. You're left feeling inadequate, even worthless. But you're not alone—many, like Arvind, face this silent struggle.

In essence, comparionitis is the compulsion to measure your achievements against others, ignoring their unseen battles. Let's pause and remind ourselves: behind every triumph lies a story of effort and resilience.

Today, comparison ensnares even children. Growing up digitally, kids are exposed to unrealistic standards early, fuelling pressures that perpetuate dissatisfaction. Comparison begins through milestones, grades, and career achievements. While benchmarks offer context, they usually spark unhealthy competition.

The "perfect" lives online are often illusions, yet they tempt

We might admire someone's professional success without seeing the sacrifices they've made. We're quick to notice the surface without understanding the depth of another's journey. This illusion only deepens our discontent

us to emulate others, furthering inferiority. Conversely, feeling superior by possessing what others lack stems from the same fragile ego seeking validation. Both extremes are bad. Historically, status, appearance, possessions, and talents have prompted comparisons, perpetuating emotional distress. Recognising the futility of this cycle is essential for cultivating inner peace.

The paradox of plenty

Imagine a person who has an overflowing wardrobe but feels compelled to shop for more every weekend. This abundance dilemma exemplifies how constant comparison creates discontent. No matter how much we have, the desire for more—sparked by seeing others who seem to "have it all"—leaves us feeling wanting. This cycle traps us in a never-ending chase for 'self-importance'. Remember, this insatiable

desire can rob us of contentment.

You've probably heard the age-old advice that it's not healthy to compare yourself to your neighbours or others, because you'll wind up bitter; since you'll always come up short of one person but ahead of another.

Also, comparisons invariably distort our perceptions. We might admire someone's professional success without seeing the sacrifices they've made. We're quick to notice the surface without understanding the depth of another's journey. This illusion only deepens our discontent. Don't forget, everyone has their own set of challenges, setbacks, and moments of doubt that they chose not to share.

Embrace your uniqueness

Overcoming the comparison trap calls for a mindset shift:
► Firstly, admire your individuality. Your journey, ex-

periences, and aspirations are yours alone. Success isn't a universal formula; it's deeply personal. Instead of measuring yourself against others, focus on your progress. Reflect on how far you've come, celebrate small victories, and set goals that align with your values. Be your cheerleader.

► A practical approach is to shift your comparisons inward. Compete with yourself. For instance, Arvind could focus on improving his skills instead of obsessing over the number of "likes" his posts received. By striving to outdo your past self, you nurture growth without the emotional toll of external comparisons. See comparison as a way to grow.

► Gratitude is another powerful tool. Taking time to appreciate life's blessings—a loving family, supportive friends, or even the simple pleasures of a morning coffee—helps shift the focus from what you lack to what you have. Gratitude not only boosts happiness but also reduces the urge to compare.

► Taming "Comparionitis" begins with mindfulness, grounding you in the present through meditation, hobbies, or nature. These activities help you savour the moment.

► "Unfollow" accounts that spark envy, and follow those promoting positivity and growth. Simplify your life and focus on what truly matters to find peace amidst societal noise.

So, are you ready to stop measuring your life against others and start living it on your terms?

The author is a retired banker and a freelance writer

Is Social Media Making Us Grumpy?

Lynn Zubernis

There are few contemporary behaviors more common—and at the same time more controversial—than social media. The vast majority of adolescents and adults use some type of social media regularly, with different age cohorts preferring specific platforms from Facebook to Instagram, Reddit to X, Tumblr to TikTok.

The Upside: Social Media and Community

As someone who studies fandom, I've written about the value of online communities as a way for fans to find other like-minded people and share their enthusiasm. There are active fan communities on all the social media platforms, with people creating social connections that help us live longer, manage stress better, and experience greater happiness. The feeling of belongingness that comes from being part of a fandom (or any community) also improves well-being and reduces loneliness. Having fun with others, whether in person or online, is a form of leisure; research shows engaging in leisure fosters empathy, reduces stress, increases optimism, and even gives the immune system a boost.

In spite of those benefits, there has been concern over the impact of social media since its inception, and the various online platforms are all, to some extent, controversial. There has been controversy about everything from who controls the flow of information and disinformation, to how each platform's algorithm decides what each of us sees, to the extent of personal data collected on users. Last week's threatened ban of TikTok had users scrambling, concerned that the platform on which they had established a community was about to disappear. The emotional response of TikTok users is an indication of just how much many people value the platform they consider their social media "home."

There have also been concerns about the mental health impact of social media use. Daily life for many people is different than it was 30 years ago, with a significant amount of time often spent interacting with others online or scrolling an online platform for information about what's going on in the world. For fans, spending time in the virtual fandom community is a way to keep in touch with other fans as well as a place to get the most up-to-date news about a favorite celebrity, show, band, or team. But can that

social media time have a downside? Unfortunately, yes.

The Downside: Social Media and Mental Health Outcomes

Earlier research has found that high levels of social media use are associated with depression and a lower sense of subjective well-being in adolescents and adults. A study published this month in JAMA Network Open expands our understanding of social media use even more, finding a complex relationship between social media use and another important mental health aspect—irritability.

Irritability is defined as an emotional process characterized by negative affective states which lead to people being more prone to anger or annoyance. Irritability can feel difficult to control and an emotional response can occur with minimal provocation. The irritability scale used for this study asked participants, for example, whether they've been grumpy, feeling like they might snap, bothered by things more than usual, or feel like other people are getting on their nerves. While it may sound relatively benign, irritability has an impact on daily functioning, especially social relationships and success in employment. Most of us can recall interacting with irritable people, so those associations will not be surprising. Higher levels of irritability have also been associated with more serious outcomes, including risk of violent behavior and suicidal thoughts.

The researchers in this study found that frequent use of social media was associated with significantly higher scores on an assessment of irritability, especially for people who posted often. That is, there was a "dose-response relationship" in that more time spent online, especially frequent posting and active engagement, as opposed to passively consuming information without posting, was related to more irritability. When users reported being on a social media platform for "most of the day," the relationship was particularly strong. There was also a stronger association when users engaged in frequent discussions about politics online (as opposed to passively consuming news, including political news). No matter how politically engaged an individual considered themselves to be, it was the amount of posting and active discussion about politics that was associated with irritability.

The study was careful to account for other mental health symptoms, including depression and anxiety, but it

was a correlational study that cannot speak to social media causing irritability, only that there's a relationship between certain types of social media use and level of irritability.

Maximizing the Benefits of Social Media

Especially now, in the midst of sociopolitical upheaval worldwide, many of us would probably endorse feeling more "grumpy" than usual or "about to snap" from time to time. What we may not be aware of is how our social media use might be exacerbating those emotions. On the other hand, there are mental health benefits for fans in being part of the online communities that reside on social media. How can we retain those benefits while limiting the irritability that could negatively impact our relationships and success?

The study itself provides some helpful hints. Frequency and duration of social media use matters. Instead of picking up the phone to check social media every few minutes throughout the day, set aside a time (or times) to enter the online community you're a part of. Research shows that when leisure is consciously chosen, and when we can enjoy it without feeling guilty, the mental health benefits are greatest. Setting aside some social media time and considering it planned leisure allows that time to be experienced as fun. Chat with other fans. Watch some reels of your favorite celebrities or clips from a beloved show or film. Sing along to songs and videos that bring you joy. Catch up on the latest news in the fandoms you're a part of. These activities reduce stress and increase a sense of well-being.

Many of us do get at least some of our news, political and otherwise, from social media. Unfortunately, the platform algorithms virtually ensure that we all see perspectives we don't agree with, and that can be stressful. Limiting time spent scrolling can help the sheer amount of emotionally charged information be less overwhelming. As the study found, merely consuming political information was less associated with irritability than active engagement through posting—in other words, if you feel compelled to argue with everyone who is "wrong on the internet," more time on social media will be related to more irritability. I think most of us have experienced how difficult it can be not to engage, even if you suspect you might be fighting (fruitlessly) with a troll.

The article was originally published by Psychology Today

A Tribute to Raja Jehangir Ali

A Lawyer, Writer, and Guide

Sama Zehra

In the heart of the Valley, where ancient traditions interweave with modern aspirations, we bid farewell to Raja Jehangir Ali—a luminary whose life embodied the perfect fusion of legal brilliance and literary passion. His passing not only marks the end of a life remarkably lived but also the end of an era that witnessed a harmonious blend of scholarly pursuits and cultural preservation. As an eminent member of the Raja family of Kashmir, his legacy cannot be circumscribed to his professional achievements alone. This tribute is a failed attempt at capturing the essence of a man who was not merely a lawyer but a philosopher by nature, a linguist by passion, and, above all, a light of wisdom for generations to come.

Nestled in a tightly-knit community in Srinagar for the last century, we have been guardians of our rich cultural heritage, language, and traditions. I personally believe that it is history that still dictates the decisions we make and the career paths we undertake. Due to this, law for some members of my family is a subject chosen by default—because, what else if not law? The journey started with my grandfather, Raja Mohammad Abbas, who vehemently believed that "law" resonated with our family values, thereby setting a precedent for generations to follow. When my uncle, Raja Jehangir Ali, chose to follow in these footsteps, he not only embraced our family's legal tradition but elevated it to greater heights.

Today, as I write an obituary for him, I find it impossible to sum up his essence in mere words. What was he not? An extraordinary lawyer, an eloquent orator, a man of exceptional personality and legal acumen, and a lover of literature. A polyglot who spoke six to seven languages fluently and beautifully. As I reflect on his remarkable journey, I find myself thinking about what truly defined him. I have come to realize that there is no straightforward answer to it. The essence lies in understanding that each facet of his character complemented the others, collectively creating a personality as remarkable as his.

Raja Jehangir Ali was the great-grandson of Raja Azur (Uzur) Khan, the ruler of Nagar Valley of Gilgit, whose lineage traces back to Nowsherwan-e-Adil of the Sassanian Empire of Iran. During the early days of his youth, he was chairman of the Hunters Club of Kashmir and showcased his leadership skills for almost a decade. While he briefly tried his hand at polo, the sport never captured his interest. He was more of a writer at heart and wrote abundantly for the state newspapers and magazines. His works on Imam Hussain and the Story of Karbala are eye-opening reminders of the transient nature of life, and exhaustive explainers of how the story of Karbala is



OBITUARY

misunderstood as only a "heart-wrenching" piece of history narrated every Muharram, when in reality, it is a teaching that touches upon every aspect of our lives.

Beyond law and literature, he had a profound interest in Islamic history. He was fortunate and blessed enough to pass away on the birth anniversary of Imam Ali, the personality he admired the most. I cannot recall a single conversation where he did not quote the Holy Quran and Imam Ali. His Quran was not just read but studied, with highlighted verses and detailed notes throughout.

During the early years of his career, he pursued litigation and dealt with some of the paramount cases of the valley. Renowned for his linguistic and oratory skills, his speech carried an element of sweetness, whether in the native language, Urdu, or English. I remember he often engaged me in impromptu vocabulary games, asking me the meanings of various terms without giving any prior warning or disclaimers. If I failed, he would explain it by using the term in a sentence, thereby allowing me some level of mental application and, at the same time, recording it into my memory using the example-driven approach. Now that I think of it, this makes me realize that among the myriad roles he played in life, he could have also been an amazing teacher.

Though teaching was not one of the feathers in his cap, he was a guide to many of us. My uncle, Raja Tasleem Abbas, now a sessions judge, tells me that on the first day of his judgeship, Jehangir uncle stood like a support wall with him, took him to his office, introduced him to lawyers and other judges. Though my uncle was already well-versed in the narrow alleys of the legal fraternity, Raja Jehangir was a support wall he could always seek guidance from.

My law school journey started during the COVID lockdown, with the first two years continuing virtually. I had ample time to spend with family, and I started visiting him more frequently than before. Spending time with him, listening to his fascinating stories, and learning from his experiences was always a delight. During our conversations, my father would often be left out as my uncle and I got lost in endless discussions about law, books, and poetry. From debates on how Taras Bulba is an amazing read to discussing an obscure author whose books required a dictionary to comprehend, his fascination for the intricacies and complexities of language fascinated me. While I argued that simpler language makes for better books, and though he would agree, his excitement still resided with those writers who gave their readers a tough time. Our conversations would stretch for so long that his wife would have to intervene and say, "Let her father join the discussion now—enough of your books and literature!"

Once, he called me over and gifted me part of his collection of books and Parker pens—a gesture that made me feel truly appreciated. Along with the books, he included Taras Bulba, the first-ever book he read as a young lawyer. He often told me how hopeful he was for my future and how much he loved that I had a blend of interest in both literature and law. He encouraged me to carry this passion forward, to never let law distract me from other forms of knowledge. He always said that to truly understand law, one must also delve into sociology, philosophy, and social sciences.

Post-COVID, college started offline, and I moved to Delhi. Moving away did lessen our conversations, but every visit during the holidays still felt just as interesting and exciting. During one summer vacation, I visited him and, as always, found him impeccably dressed in a perfectly ironed white salwar suit with a black waistcoat, a book in his hand, and a smile on his face. I asked him, "Don't you ever get tired of reading?" He smiled and said, "A person should never stop reading or writing."

It's hard to believe that two years have passed since that conversation. It's even harder to believe that it has been almost six years since he was battling the disease. And now, weeks after his passing, reality still feels so unreal. Through thick and thin, I have seen him fight the disease with unparalleled bravery and hope. He refused to lose hope, clung to every thread of optimism, and met his destiny with courage on his face. Though he is no longer with us, leaving an abyss in so many hearts, his wisdom remains a beacon of light for us to follow and admire.

The author is a final year law student at NLU Delhi

J&K Bank Opens New Branch At Wakad In Mumbai

Part of plan to strengthen our presence in the growing and upcoming business centres across India : MD Chatterjee

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In line with its strategic vision to expand footprint across the high-growth regions in the country, J&K Bank has commissioned a new branch at Wakad, Pune in Mumbai.

The Bank's MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee inaugurated the branch along with the Director on Bank's Board Anand Kumar in the presence of Divisional Head (ROI) Rajesh Gupta, Zonal Head

"With this branch, we aim to provide world-class banking products and services, tailored to meet the diverse financial needs including personal banking, SME solutions and digital banking services", he added.

Reiterating the Bank's commitment to empowering customers, Director Anand Kumar said, "With a renewed focus to deliver customer-centric banking services that contribute to the financial well-being of people across the country, we urge resi-



(Mumbai) Irfan Anjum amid a gathering of prominent customers, local dignitaries and other senior officials of the Bank. The event witnessed an enthusiastic response from the local community.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "The opening of this branch is part of plan to strengthen Bank's presence in the growing and upcoming business centres across India. Wakad, as a bustling hub of professionals and businesses, is a natural choice for our expansion."

dents and businesses in and around Wakad to avail the benefits of Bank's wide range of products and services."

Divisional Head (ROI) Rajesh Gupta expressed gratitude to all the guests and customers who graced the occasion. He emphasized the Bank's commitment to maintain customer satisfaction and support financial growth in the region. Notably, the Bank remains focused on its goal of 'serving to empower' by delivering quality financial services that cater to the evolving needs of its customers.

Leasing Of Retail Space In 2025 To Surpass Levels Of 2023: JLL

'Top 7 cities to add 9 million sq ft'

ANI

New Delhi: The top 7 Indian cities are set to see the addition of nearly 9 million sq ft of new retail space in 2025, with gross leasing volume expected to surpass 2023's 8.7 million sq ft, according to the commercial real estate and investment management company, JLL India.

Despite continued interest from international retailers, domestic retailers dominated the gross leasing with more than 80 per cent share, leasing approximately 6.5 million sq ft in 2024, the report said.

The top seven cities are Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai, Pune, and Hyderabad, as per the report.

The report added that the

gross leasing volume in 2025 will surpass the 2023 levels of 8.7 million sq ft easily on the back of continued interest from international brands coupled with healthy space taken up by domestic retailers.

The retailers, in 2024, leased 8.1 million square feet of space in shopping centres and well-known thoroughfares in India's top seven cities in 2024, JLL India said in the report.

Retailers continued to grow their footprint across retail formats throughout the year, and gross leasing only moderated by 6 per cent over 2023, as the retail sector maintained its momentum despite the restricted inflow of new spaces of exceptional quality, as per the report.

Oil, Gas Prices To Remain High For Time Being: GAIL Chairman



Press Trust Of India

Davos- Expecting the second term of US President Donald Trump to be overall good for the energy sector, public sector major GAIL India's chairman Sandeep Kumar Gupta has said that any softening in oil and gas prices may still take some time.

Speaking with PTI here during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, Gupta also said GAIL is looking to scale up its capital expenditure in the next 3-5 years to Rs 10,000-12,000 crore as work is underway on several gas pipelines and other projects.

He also expected that the Union Budget would give relief on compression charges on CNG and some steps are taken to bring natural gas under the GST coverage.

Asked about the impact of Trump's second presidency, Gupta said, "President Trump is committed to more energy for the US. He has already declared an energy emergency whereby he wants more oil and gas to be explored so that there is energy efficiency in the US."

"While this bodes well for oil and gas sector with more availability of oil and gas which will definitely ease

pressure on the prices but this will take time because presently all the Liquefied natural gas (LNG) export facilities were on pause by the Biden administration.

"So lifting those pauses and putting these projects will take time. So the softness in the prices will take some time. For the time being these higher prices will rule," Gupta said.

Talking about his company, Gupta said, "We are the largest natural gas pipeline of the country and we have already laid lion's share of the existing natural gas pipeline of the country. In the current year also, we are completing many pipelines."

Gupta also exuded optimism about GAIL's growth, as he talked about the company's projects in the pipeline.

"We are working on Kochi-Mangalore-Bangalore pipeline where the Tamil Nadu section was pending. Work on the Gurdaspur-Jammu pipeline is on. A lot of pipeline projects are underway."

"We have presence in petrochemicals too. Our project at Usar is the country's first Propane Dehydrogenation Polypropylene unit will hopefully get completed this year. We have acquired PTA facility from erstwhile JBF pet-

rochemicals at Mangalore, which is a 1.25 million tonne PTA project. That will also get commissioned this year. Then we will have 3 million tonne petrochemical capacity in the country," Gupta said.

Besides, we have a declared net-zero plan and we have actually advanced that from 2040 to 2035, entailing an expenditure of Rs 38,000 crore, the chairman said.

"Put together, the present capex which is about Rs 8,000-10,000 crore a year, we will scale it up to about Rs 10,000-12,000 crore in the next 3-5 years," he said.

Talking about his expectations from the Union Budget to be presented on February 1, he said, "As a natural gas company, my first expectation would be removal of compression charges on CNG activity. We believe that it is not a manufacturing activity and it is a great burden on us and ultimately on the consumers. So I expect the 14 per cent excise duty on compression is removed immediately."

"While the coverage under GST is not in purview of budget but under the GST Council, I hope some steps must be taken so that natural gas can be covered under GST," he said.

ESIC Adds 16.07 Lakh New Members In November

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has added 16.07 lakh new workers enrolled under the ESI scheme in November, about one per cent higher as compared to the year-ago month, according to the latest payroll data released on Friday.

The ESIC had added 15.92 lakh new members in Novem-

ber 2023, a labour ministry statement said.

According to the statement, the year-on-year analysis shows a growth of 0.97 per cent in net registrations compared to November 2023.

The provisional payroll data of ESIC reveals that 16.07 lakh new employees have been added in November 2024, it stated.

As many as 20,212 new es-

tablishments have been brought under the social security ambit of the ESI Scheme in November 2024, ensuring social security for more workers.

The statement said that out of the total 16.07 lakh employees added during the month, 7.57 lakh employees, amounting to around 47.11 per cent of the total registrations belong to the age group of up to 25 years.

India Puts Up Big Show At Davos, Returns With Rs 20 Lakh Cr Investment Commitments

Press Trust Of India

Davos- As the five-day World Economic Forum Annual Meeting ended on Friday, Indian leaders said they could see trust for India in eyes of all global leaders and that was reflected in investment commitments totalling over Rs 20 lakh crore with Maharashtra grabbing the biggest pie of almost 80 per cent.

Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who led the largest ever Indian delegation of five Union ministers and several leaders from states including three chief ministers, said trust and talent are the biggest factors attracting the world to India.

All states and central government departments shared space for the first time at two India Pavilions and a joint press conference was held for the first time by state and Union ministers, coming from half a dozen different parties to put up a unified 'Team India' face.

"We are in Davos at a very important juncture in our global geopolitical and geo economic scenario. Despite all the disruption and all the issues the world is facing, India has emerged as a very trusted country which respects IP rights, a

country where democracy is vibrant," Vaishnaw said.

"We have clearly demonstrated to the world that under all circumstances, this is the country which believes in peace, growth for everybody and inclusive development," he added.

Maharashtra delegation, led by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, signed 61 MoUs worth Rs 15.70 lakh crore, with the potential to generate 16 lakh jobs.

Telangana delegation, led by CM Revanth Reddy, secured 20 MoUs worth Rs 1.79 lakh crore, focusing on data centres, green energy, and cutting-edge technologies, which they said are expected to generate nearly 50,000 jobs.

Kerala emphasized its transformation into an industrial hub driven by progressive government policies. Kerala Industries Minister P Rajeev held over 30 one-to-one meetings at the Invest Kerala Pavilion and showcased the state's investment potential across diverse sectors.

Uttar Pradesh showcased its ambitious vision to transform into a USD 1 trillion economy and secured investment commitments of several thousand crores of rupees.

Govt Urges Artisans, Weavers To Avail Subsidized Loans Under Credit Card Scheme



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Reaffirming its commitment to safeguard the interests and welfare of the highly-skilled craftsmen, the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, Saturday urged the registered artisans and weavers to apply online for availing the soft loans under its Credit Card Scheme, which offers interest subvention of 7% for a five-year payback period, on a loan of Rs.2.00 lakh.

Nearly 97,000 artisans and weavers have already availed the loan facility to meet their credit requirements of both investment and working capital in a flexible and cost-effective manner. The department has borne an expenditure of Rs.5.62 Cr as interest subvention, payable to the banks and

other financial institutions, in a bid to support the artisans and weavers to set up independent units.

Highlighting the main takeaways of the scheme, an official spokesperson from the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, stated that the beneficiary's contribution against a loan of .2.00 lakh shall only be .20,000 and no collateral security is required to be deposited in the financial institution. "The selection of the beneficiary artisan and weaver is made by a District-level Committee, headed by the concerned General Manager of the District Industries Centre," he said, adding that the beneficiary shall be issued a Photo Card indicating therein the sanctioned limit and validity period of the credit facility.

5 Economic Forces That Could Shape The First Year Of Trump's Presidency

Associated Press

WASHINGTON: Like most presidents, Donald Trump faces an economy that seldom bends to political ambitions.

The Republican has promised strong growth, high tariffs, income tax cuts and booming oilfields. But despite the solid job market and low 4.1% unemployment rate, he has to contend with headwinds like inflation, a budget deficit, increased tensions over trade, the fallout from his plans to curtail immigration and a persistent wealth gap.

Each of these issues could help to shape how voters feel about a president they returned to the White House with the specific goal of fixing the economy.

For his part, Trump wants to blame all the challenges before him on his predecessor, Joe Biden, who in turn blamed Trump in 2021 for the problems his own administration had to tackle.

"This begins with confronting the economic chaos caused by the failed policies of the last administration," Trump told the World Economic Forum on Thursday.

Here are five economic forces that could shape the first year of Trump's presidency:

For voters, the price still isn't right

Whipping inflation is easier said than done.

In AP VoteCast, an extensive survey of last year's electorate, 4 in 10 vot-

ers called inflation the "single most important factor" in their choice for president. About two-thirds of this group voted for Trump — a sign he owes his victory in large part to the high cost of groceries, gasoline, housing, autos and other goods.

Going forward, monthly reports on the consumer price index will be a clear measure of whether Trump can deliver. But inflation has actually increased in recent months. Consumer prices were increasing at a healthy 2.4% annual rate in September, compared with 2.9% in December. Economists say inflation could worsen if Trump imposes tariffs and uses deficit-funded income tax cuts.

Republicans often hit Biden hard on egg prices. But Democrats could use similar attacks on Trump. Over the past year, coffee costs have risen just 1% for U.S. consumers, but the International Monetary Fund has the price of the actual beans climbing 55% in a sign that lattes, espressos and plain old cups of joe could soon cost more.

Then there's housing. Voters are still frustrated by high mortgage rates and prices staying elevated due to a shortage of properties. Shelter is 37% of the consumer price index. Price increases for housing have eased, but shelter costs are still rising at 4.6% a year, compared with annual increases averaging 3.3% before the pandemic.

Trump is betting that more energy

production can cut into inflation rates, but domestic production is already near record levels, according to the government.

Which tariffs are really coming

Trump says 25% tariffs are coming for Mexican and Canadian imports as soon as Feb. 1. He's also talked about additional tariffs of 10% on Chinese goods. His stated goal is to stop illegal border crossings and the flow of chemicals used to make drugs such as fentanyl.

For Trump, tariffs are a diplomatic tool for his policy goals. But they're also a threat possibly meant to jump-start trade talks. They're also a revenue raiser that he claims could bring trillions of dollars into the treasury.

Trump did increase tariffs during his first term, with revenue collection more than doubling to an annual rate of \$85.4 billion, which might sound like a lot but was equal to just 0.4% of the gross domestic product. Multiple analyses by the Budget Lab at Yale and the Peterson Institute for International Economics, among others, say the threatened tariffs would increase costs for a typical family in a way that effectively raises taxes.

What really matters is whether Trump delivers on his threats. That is why Ben Harris, a former Biden adviser who is now director of economic studies at the Brookings Institution, says voters should focus on average tariff rates.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM KASHMIR
TRC, Srinagar, Kashmir, 190001
Tel/Fax: 0194 - 2502279, 2502281, E-mail:dydirectorpub@gmail.com

Sub: - RFP for Empanelment of Event Management Agency/Agencies for Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir.

E- Tender Notice
eNIT No. DTK/Pub/204-A/26 , Dated: 24.01.2025

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, e-Tenders are invited from Registered entities/firms/agencies for Empanelment as Event Management Agency for Directorate of Tourism Kashmir for organizing and managing events from conception to completion stage as per below details:-

Name of the Job	EMD	Cost of Tender Document
Empanelment of Event Management Agency/Agencies for Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir.	Rs. 3 Lakhs (Category A), Rs. 1 Lakh (category B) and Rs. 50,000/- (Category C) in shape of FDR/DD/CDR pledged in favour of Accounts Officer, Directorate of Tourism Kashmir. (Not Exempted)	Rs. 5000/- (irrespective of category applied for) in shape of FDR/DD/CDR pledged in favour of Accounts Officer, Directorate of Tourism Kashmir (Non-refundable) (Not Exempted)

The Request For Proposal (RFP) Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

S.No.	Information	Detail
1.	Job Title	RFP for Empanelment of Event Management Agency/Agencies for Directorate of Tourism Kashmir
2.	RFP Issue Date	25.01.2025
3.	RFP Download Start Date	25.01.2025 (12:00 PM Onwards)
4.	Pre Bid Meeting	28.01.2025 (11:30 AM) Meeting Hall, TRC Srinagar
5.	Bid Submission Start Date	31.01.2025 (11:00 AM Onwards)
6.	Bid Submission End Date and Time	21.02.2025 (04:00 PM)
7.	Date, time and venue of opening of Pre-Qualification and Technical Proposals	22.02.2025 11:30 AM
8.	Date, time and venue for the Technical Presentation	To be communicated separately
9.	Place, time and date of opening of Financial Proposals	To be declared to technically qualified bidders separately, through e-mail and through J&K e- Tendering Website https://jktenders.gov.in

In case of any eventuality, the online tender opening date will be considered on any other convenient working date.

Sd/-
Accounts Officer
Directorate of Tourism
Kashmir

DIPK-11251/24
DATED: 25-01-2025

15th National Voters' Day

Historic Voter Turnout Reflects Faith In Democracy: LG



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday attended the 15th National Voters' Day celebrations here, highlighting that the historic voter turnout in Lok Sabha and assembly elections in the Union Territory last year reflects strong faith of its people in democratic values.

Sinha congratulated the Chief Electoral Officer J&K and his team for the prestigious 'Best Performing State/UT Award' from Election Commission of India.

He expressed his deep gratitude to the people of J&K, officials of the National Election Commission and Election department, police, security forces, officials and all the stakeholders for the fair, transparent and successful conduct of Lok Sabha and J&K Legislative Assembly elections last year.

"Historic voter turnout in Lok Sabha and Assembly elections reflects strong faith of people of J&K in democratic values and a renewed spirit of civic participation and hope for a new era wherein democracy is taking root more profoundly than ever before, driven by the will of people," the Lt Governor said, addressing the function.

Highlighting the valuable contribution of the ECI, Sinha

said its meticulous planning and constant vigil have ensured that the J&K elections this time have been smooth and streamlined, with no reolls.

All political parties unanimously accepted that this was the fairest, transparent, peaceful and spectacular elections in Jammu Kashmir, he added.

"Our cultural ethos focuses on democratic values of freedom, equality and inclusiveness and gives its common citizens an opportunity to live a quality and dignified life. Will of the people in our country is an age-old concept and that's why India is called the 'Mother of Democracy'," Sinha said.

He said the theme for this year's National Voters' Day 'Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure' underlines the power of every vote and emphasizes that voting transcends all barriers, reflecting the true spirit of voting rights.

"Indian democracy is truly a festive proclamation of cooperation, collaboration, peace and collective strength of the people. India is among the select few countries where democratic ideals are strongest and foremost," he said.

"I am proud that today many countries in the Global North and Global South are learning from India the ways of conducting fair and transparent elections," the LG said.

Sinha appreciated the efforts of the Chief Electoral Officer for successful summary revision of electoral rolls, after delimitation and preparing the voters list of 89 lakh voters and ensuring that transparent and fair voting took place at all 11,838 polling stations.

He said the significant increase in the voter turnout during these elections is testament to the dedicated efforts of the election machinery of the Union Territory.

The LG emphasised that awareness campaigns should continue to make all sections of the society aware of the power of their vote.

He said the biggest objective of the celebration of National Voters' Day is to motivate the eligible youth to participate in the voting process.

He also congratulated Deputy Commissioner, Doda Harvinder Singh, and SSP Pulwama, P D Nitya who have been awarded for best electoral practices. On the occasion, Sinha administered the National Voters' Day pledge to the officials and the people.

The Lt Governor, meanwhile, flagged off a mobile vehicle "Democracy on Wheels", which will serve as an innovative tool to educate students about the importance of voting and the election process.

Refrain From Divisive Campaigning: CEC

Tashir Khan

SRINAGAR: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar on Saturday urged political parties to refrain from divisive campaigning, warning that such strategies could alienate young voters and undermine their trust in the democratic process.

During the 15th National Voters' Day celebration in New Delhi, Kumar highlighted the necessity of tackling the "dangerous trend" of misinformation and fake narratives, which he pointed out as the greatest threat to democracies globally.

"Divisive rhetoric and fake narratives can disillusion the youth and undermine the electoral process," Kumar said at the event, which was attended by President Droupadi Murmu, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, and representatives of various political parties.

Kumar assured political parties that the Election Commission (EC) would provide a written response to their concerns about the electoral process and the suggestions made to improve the system.

National Voters' Day has been observed annually since 2011 to commemorate the establishment of the Election Commission (EC) on January 25, 1950, just one day before India became a republic. This event aims to raise awareness about the importance of voter participation and to honour

newly registered voters.

In Srinagar, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat emphasized the local achievements in enhancing voter engagement. He praised the initiatives aimed at increasing voter registration, pointing out that Srinagar added 35,000 new voters during the recent summary revisions. This effort improved the district's Electoral Photo (EP) ratio from 55% to over 60%.

"The increase is a result of improved voter awareness and engagement," Dr. Bhat stated in a local news interview. He attributed the district's progress to awareness campaigns, electoral literacy clubs, and social media usage.

Dr. Bhat highlighted the success of the 2024 parliamentary and assembly elections, noting the impressive voter turnout and enthusiasm observed at polling stations. He emphasized the importance of educating young voters, especially those who are turning 18, about the significance of their vote in bolstering democracy.

Dr. Bhat emphasized the importance of new voters registering with their local Booth Level Officer (BLO) or Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) in order to exercise their right to vote. He urged eligible voters to participate in upcoming elections, from the Panchayat level to parliamentary elections, to ensure their voices are heard in the democratic process.

Member NITI Aayog Chairs Meeting To Review Unnatural Deaths At Badhal

Observer News Service

JAMMU: In response to the recent unnatural deaths at Badhal village, District Rajouri, Jammu and Kashmir, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has taken actions to address the situation. The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, is monitoring the situation and had earlier sent a multi-departmental committee to Badhal, Rajouri to assess and assist the J&K team in tackling the crisis. At the request of the Jammu and Kashmir Government, Dr. V.K. Paul, Hon'ble Member, NITI Aayog, chaired a meeting to bring together national and local expertise for resolution. The focus of the meeting was to review the ongoing management strategy, identify the root cause of the deaths, and devise measures to prevent further fatalities.

The meeting, led by Dr. Paul, included officials and experts. The participants were Shri Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary, J&K; Ms. PunyaSalila Srivastava, Secretary Health & Family Welfare, Government of India; Ms. L.S. Changan, Additional Secretary Health & Family Welfare, Government of India; Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Secretary Health & Medical Education Department, J&K; Prof. (Dr.) M. Srinivas, Director of AIIMS, New Delhi; Dr. Rajiv Bahl, Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi; Prof. (Dr.) AtulGoel, Director of the National Centre for Disease Control, New Delhi; Prof. (Dr.) VivekLal, Director of PGIMER, Chandigarh; Dr. Bhaskar Narayan, Director of CSIR-IITR, Lucknow; Dr. Surkhminder Kaur, Director of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory, Ministry of Home Affairs, Chandigarh; Dr. AtulGoel, Director General of Health Services (DGHS), New Delhi; Dr. Pratima Murthy, Director of NIMHANS, New Delhi; and Director MHA (JKL).

The technical experts included eminent scientists in the fields of Toxicology, Microbiology, Medicine, Virology, Genetics, Epidemiology, Forensic Medicine, Neurology, Pathology, Pediatrics, Pharmacology, and Immunology. These specialists brought their expertise to the discussion to ensure a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding and addressing the crisis. On the basis of different lab reports available and thread bare discussion among technical experts, it was clearly brought out that there is no infectious/communicable cause (either viral or bacterial).

The meeting emphasized that the primary focus of the government is to prevent any further incidents, review the ongoing management strategy, identify the root cause of the deaths, and devise strategies to prevent further fatalities. Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah provided a presentation on the sequence of events leading to the unnatural deaths.

Following elaborate deliberations, several decisions were made, including the establishment of a control room as a centralized point for decision-making and coordination to ensure swift responses to the crisis. Technical and national-level taskforces will be formed, involving experts from national and local institutions to analyze the situation, evaluate reports, and provide recommendations. These taskforces will meet regularly and develop a checklist to ensure a coordinated field response while improving Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The government will also launch a community awareness campaign in the affected areas to educate the local population on health safety measures and minimize potential health risks. A death audit will be conducted to ascertain the sequence of events and root causes of the fatalities. Additionally, clinical care teams will be stationed in Rajouri with support from institutions like AIIMS and PGIMER for timely intervention.

AIIMS Awantipora Misses Jan 2025 Deadline

Agencies

AWANTIPORA: The ambitious All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) project in Awantipora has missed its January 2025 deadline, with nearly 25-30% of construction work still pending. Officials now project the completion of the institute within the next 6-8 months, provided the current pace of work is maintained.

The Union Government approved two AIIMS for Jammu and Kashmir in 2019—one in Jammu and another in Awantipora. While AIIMS Jammu has been completed and was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year, AIIMS Awantipora lags behind, with only 70-75% of the work completed.

According to officials, the delay is due to multiple challenges, including land acquisition disputes over access roads critical for transporting construction materials; post-Article 370 disruptions and restrictions; issues with a nearby army base delaying certain approvals and COVID-19 pandemic impacts and erratic weather conditions slowing down progress.

Despite these setbacks, construction has gained momentum over the past two years, an official said, adding that work on four academic blocks, several hospital blocks and hostel blocks is nearing completion.

The AIIMS Awantipora project,

approved at an estimated cost of Rs 1,828 crore, involves the construction of 57 buildings, including a 1,000-bed hospital (300 speciality beds), a medical college for 100 students, a nursing college for 60 students, hostels, residential quarters, gardens with medicinal plants and sports facilities such as a football ground and tennis courts.

Residents of Awantipora and surrounding areas have urged the government to expedite the project, saying the region is in dire need of advanced medical facilities. They said patients in Kashmir face greater difficulties in accessing treatment compared to those in Jammu, who have easier access to facilities like AIIMS Delhi and PGI Chandigarh.

Locals said while both AIIMS projects were approved simultaneously, Awantipora is lagging behind in progress.

An official working on the project said, "Work is progressing at full speed and will be completed in 6-8 months. Efforts are underway to hand over the institute to the concerned authorities as soon as possible."

Once completed, AIIMS Awantipora will boost Kashmir's healthcare infrastructure by providing advanced medical services and reducing patient dependence on out-of-state facilities. Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo recently said AIIMS Awantipora is expected to become functional by November this year—(KNO)

Remote Village In Gbl Struggles Without Mobile Connectivity

Agencies

GANDERBAL: Bara Daryadin, a remote village nestled in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, remains cut off from mobile connectivity, despite being surrounded by areas with stable network coverage.

This connectivity gap persists even though the village is home to the revered Baba Darya Din (RA) shrine, a spiritual landmark, attracting hundreds of devotees on a regular basis.

The shrine, under the management of the Waqf Board, holds significant cultural and spiritual value for the region. Yet, the lack of reliable mobile network service has become a daily challenge for both residents and visitors.

"Even with such an important shrine in our village, we still can't get a stable network. We constantly face network failure notifications when trying to make calls or access the internet," a local resident said.

The absence of connectivity is not just a minor inconvenience; it has serious implications for communication, emergency services, and the ability to stay connected to the wider world. For visitors to the shrine, it further complicates matters, as they cannot rely on online navigation or easily communicate with family members.

Efforts by residents to address the issue have been met with little success. "We have been pleading with authorities for years to install a mobile tower here, but nothing has changed. This is extremely frustrating, especially in this digital era," another villager expressed.

With the growing importance of digital connectivity in daily life, the villagers remain hopeful that the relevant authorities will finally take action to address this long-standing issue—(KNO)

Woman Burnt To Death In Bandipora Fire Mishap

Agencies

BANDIPORA: A woman died while her husband suffered severe burn injuries after a fire broke out in a room they were putting up at the Beacon headquarters in the Sonerwani area of Bandipora district on Saturday.

An official said that fire broke out in the room in which the couple suffered severe burn injuries. "Soon after fire was brought under control while the couple was shifted to district hospital Bandipora," he said.

He added that the woman, identified as Anjani Devi (30) of Uttar Pradesh was declared dead on arrival, while her husband, Parmanand, is in a critical condition. He also said that the fire was brought under control with the help of police and fire tenders—(KNO)

Police Arrests Drug Peddlers In Pulwama, Bandipora

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In order to dismantle the ecosystem of drug menace, Police on Saturday said to have arrested three drug peddlers in Pulwama and eight drug peddlers during the current month in Bandipora district.

The arrested drug peddlers in Pulwama have been identified as Syed Adil son of Syed Showkat resident of Gundipora Pulwama, Aqib Rashid Yattoo son of Abdul Rashid Yattoo resident of Druoso Pulwama and Khurshid Ahmad Sheikh son of Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh resident of Gangoo Pulwama. Huge quantity of contraband including 19.20 Kgs of Bhang Patri, 359.55 grams of Charas Powder, 110.5 grams of Charas sticks and 6.14 grams of Heroin have been recovered from their possession, a police spokesman said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Police in Bandipora have

arrested Eight hard-core drug traffickers involved in the trafficking of drugs and narcotic substances in the district and recovered substantial quantities of contraband substances from their possession during the current month. The arrested drug peddlers have been identified as Reyaz Ahmad Sheikh son of Nazir Ahmad Sheikh resident of Kaloosa Bandipora, Tawqeer Ahmad Bhat son of Mohamad Arif Bhat resident of Naz Colony Bandipora, Muzafar Ahmad Lone son of Abdul Majeed Lone resident of Nusso Bandipora, Waseem Ahmad Mir son of Late Farooq Ahmad Mir resident of Magnipora Bandipora, Bilal Ahmad Sheikh son of Gulzar Ahmad Sheikh resident of Nowpora Bandipora, Ishfaq Ahmad Wani son of Gh Nabi Wani resident of Bazar Sumbal, Ishfaq Hussain Rather son of Gh Mohd Rather resident of Harinara Nowgam Sumbal and a lady drug trafficker (name withheld) resident of Sumlar Bandipora, police said.

CANCER SOCIETY OF KASHMIR

کینسر سوسائٹی آف کشمیر

4-BAGH-I-ISLAM COLONY LAL NAGAR, CHANAPORA SRINAGAR 190 015TELEFAX 0194-3500478-79 / 2441899

Website: www.cancersocietykashmir.org E-mail: cancersocietyofkashmir@gmail.com

Ref. No. CSK/DCC-66/2025/1022

Dated:-24-JAN-2025

Subject: - Notice for inviting tenders for Anticancer Drugs and other related supportive drugs etc.

(TENDER NOTICE)

1. Sealed tenders in two cover bid system affixed with Rs.10/- Revenue Stamps are invited for and on behalf of Chairman Cancer Society of Kashmir from Manufacturers/Firms/Companies/Stockists/Authorised distributors for one year W.e.f. date of approval of rate contract which must reach this office by or before **22-02-2025** for the following groups.

Group-A	Anticancer Drugs	Annexure A
Group-B	Colostomy/Urostomy / ileostomy Bags	Annexure B
Group-C	Surgical Items / Supportive Drugs	Annexure C
2. The tenders should be accompanied with Earnest Money Deposit for Group "A" of **Rs. 1.00 lac**, for Group "B" **Rs, 60,000/-** & for Group "C" **Rs, 5,000/-** in shape of CDR/FDR to be drawn on any Nationalized/Scheduled Bank pledged to the Cancer Society of Kashmir. Without which tenders shall not be entertained.
3. The tenders should be addressed to the Chairman Cancer Society of Kashmir 4-Baghi Islam Colony Lalnagar Chanapora.
4. Tenders should invariably be submitted in two Bid System containing two parts as detailed below:-

Part I	----- Techno Commercial Bid in separate sealed cover
Part II	----- Price Bid/Financial Bid for all groups in another sealed cover.

Both sealed covers to be put in outer cover.
5. Detailed tender notice along with list of drugs & containing other terms & conditions can be collect from CSK office against the cash payment of **Rs, 500/-** each on all working days from **10:00 Am to 04:00 Pm**.
6. Authorised distributor shall enclose copy of authorisation letter of the concerned company.
7. CSK reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/tenders without assigning any reason thereof. On acceptance of tender and its communication to the successful tenderer, the same shall be binding upon the successful tenderer with immediate effect.

SD/-
GENERAL SECRETARY
CANCER SOCIETY OF KASHMIR

Ranji Trophy: J&K Shock Star-Studded Mumbai By Five wickets

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Unfancied J&K continued their glorious run in the ongoing Ranji Trophy, beating star-studded defending champions Mumbai by five wickets in a Group A league match to almost confirm their knock-out berth. It was after a decade that J&K beat the 42-time champions, having last won in December 2014 at the Wankhede Stadium.

It wasn't a mean achievement with Mumbai squad comprising of India Test and ODI skipper Rohit Sharma, former captain and 80 plus Test match veteran Ajinkya Rahane, ODI regular and IPL winning skipper Shreyas Iyer, star opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, seasoned all-rounder Shardul Thakur and off-spinner Tanush Kotian.

Rohit's return to Ranji Trophy after a decade yielded only 31 runs across two knocks and he looked very much out of form, shaky and not ready to grind it out for long hours.

J&K now have 29 points from



six games and lead group A with a match left against Baroda where they need to get just one point.

On the day, needing 205 to win, opener Shubham Khajuria (45) and one down Vivrant Sharma (38) laid the foundation with a 75 runs stand for

the second wicket.

IPL star Abdul Samad (24 off 20 balls) smashed five boundaries but it was left-handed Abid Mushtaq (32 not out) who finished the match with a couple of huge sixes off Kotian. The first one was down the ground and the second was a winning

hit over 'Cow Corner' as the dug-out celebrated wildly.

The Indian skipper Rohit was seen applauding the J&K players even as he tried to hide his disappointment.

The Mumbai camp looked desolate despite a fine fight-back in the second innings that

saw them get to 290, thanks to Shardul Thakur's (119) brilliant rear-guard hundred.

J&K medium pacers -- Yudhvir Singh (7 wickets), Umar Nazir Mir (6 wickets) and Auqib Nabi (6 wickets) -- scalped 19 out of the 20 Mumbai wickets on a BKC track that offered some help during first two mornings, largely due to the underlying moisture.

All J&K needed were two good partnerships -- one they got because of Khajuria and Vivrant. Also opener Yawer Hassan (24) got some quick runs. The second one was 48 runs for the sixth wicket between Abid and Kanhaiya Wadhawan (19 not out).

Brief Scores:

Mumbai 120 and 290 (Shardul Thakur 119, Tanush Kotian 62, Auqib Nabi 4/80, Yudhvir Singh 3/63).

J&K 206 and (target 205) 207/5 (Shubham Khajuria 45, Vivrant Sharma 38, Abid Mushtaq 32 not out, Shams Mulani 4/54). J&K won by 5 wickets. Points: J&K 6; Mumbai 0.

Short TAKES

CM Abdullah Congratulates J&K After Beating Mumbai

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, on Saturday, congratulated the senior men's cricket team for beating defending champions Mumbai by five wickets in a Ranji Trophy game.

This is the second time that J&K team has defeated the 42-time champions in latter's backyard.

The pacers Umar Nazir Mir, Auqib Nabi and Yudhvir Singh shared 19 Mumbai wickets amongst themselves to set up the victory and the target of 205 was achieved without much fuss.

"What a brilliant achievement by the J&K Ranji Trophy team. To defeat the defending champions & that too in their own backyard is a memorable achievement. I send my congratulations to the players, the management & support staff. We are all very proud of you," the CM said in a post on his official handle on X.

45-Day Field Archery Coaching Camp Kicks Off

The Field Archery Association of J&K, in collaboration with Firstcry Intellitouch Preschool & Day Care, Baghat Barzullah, has launched a 45-day winter field archery coaching camp at the school premises for toddlers and kindergarten students.

The primary goal of the camp is to promote both mental and physical health by guiding young learners through the discipline of professional sports.

Coach Mohammad Sufiyan, in his address, emphasized the importance of archery, noting that it is not only an Olympic sport but also a Sunnah to learn. His remarks added a cultural dimension to the camp, inspiring students and parents alike.

As of now, 15 students have registered for the camp, and the school chairman expressed hope that more students would enroll in the coming days to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

At the end of the program, all participants will be honored with certificates of appreciation, as confirmed by Mukhtar Rasool Bhat, Secretary of the Field Archery Association of J&K.

The camp provides an excellent platform for young children to nurture their physical and mental well-being through the structured practice of archery.

Arshdeep Named ICC Men's T20I Cricketer Of The Year

Indian left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh was on Saturday crowned the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year 2024 for his influential role in the team's World Cup title triumph, which cemented his reputation as one of the leading short format bowlers. The 25-year-old took 36 wickets in 18 matches last year.

He was also named in the ICC T20I Team of the Year 2024 earlier in the day alongside Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya.

In the T20 World Cup in the Americas, Arshdeep was the joint highest wicket-taker alongside Afghanistan's Fazalhaq Farooqi with 17 scalps at an average of 12.64 across eight matches.

Arshdeep's T20I record in 2024 further underscores his dominance -- 36 wickets in 18 matches at an average of 15.31 and an economy rate of 7.49.

With 97 scalps, Arshdeep is now the highest wicket-taker in the format for India.

State Units Trying To Remove AIFF President Chaubey

Trouble is brewing in Indian football administration as some state units are planning to express no confidence on All India Football Federation president Kalyan Chaubey over the controversies plaguing the national body, though there's still lack of clarity over the legal basis of such a move.

A top office bearer of a leading state unit claimed that more than 20 units (out of 36 the AIFF has) have agreed to write to the national body to call a Special General Body Meeting (SGM) to move a no confidence motion against Chaubey.

"In 10 to 15 days, we are writing to the AIFF to call a SGM and we will move a no confidence motion against the president. We will write a common letter and 24 or 25 state units will sign it," the official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"Indian football has been sliding downwards for some time, there has been controversies one after another. So, we thought it's time to act," he said.

Real Kashmir Play Dempo In I-League Today At TRC



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: After delivering an excellent performance against Sporting Club Bengaluru in their previous game, Real Kashmir FC is set to face Dempo Sports Club Goa in an I-League match on Sunday at TRC Ground here.

The match is scheduled to start at 2:00 PM, with adequate arrangements made by the team management, police, and other administrative departments.

Speaking at a pre-match press conference on Saturday, Real Kashmir head coach Ishfaq Ahmad acknowledged Dempo Sports Club's strong record in away games.

"They have a good side. We are well-prepared to face them in Sunday's match and are hopeful for a favourable result," he said.

Reflecting on the team's recent performances, Ishfaq stated the importance of maintaining consistency.

Commenting on the addition of Gnohere Krizo to the squad, he said, "Krizo's signing is a significant boost for the team."

The Snow Leopards head coach also expressed hope that more football grounds like the TRC Ground would be developed to allow young players to showcase their skills.

Real Kashmir owner Arshad Shawl has urged local fans to come out in large numbers to support the team.

"The presence of our fans motivates the players, and we hope for a strong turnout on Sunday," he said.

Meanwhile, Dempo Sports Club Goa head coach Samir Naik and player Ash-

ish Sibi also addressed the media, stating that playing against Real Kashmir on their home ground would be a challenging task.

The Snow Leopards need a win in today's game to stay in contention for a first I-League trophy. The team is currently seventh in the standings, having taken 13 points from 9 matches. They won three, drawn four and lost two thus far, scoring 12 goals and conceding nine in the process. In contrast, league leaders Namdhari FC have racked up 20 points from their 10 games. A win would lift RKFC up to fifth in the table.

Real Kashmir is the only I-League club representing J&K, with a squad that includes players from across India, including local talent from Kashmir, as well as international players.

Khelo India Winter Games: Telangana Lead Medal Tally



Press Trust of India

first loss of the Games.

LEH: Pranav Madav Surapaneni won Telangana's second gold in the Khelo India Winter Games' ice-skating competition but all attention on Saturday was on the blockbuster ice-hockey league match between Indian Army and ITBP in which the latter prevailed.

With about 10 minutes left on the clock, Stanzin Mingure scored twice in succession to script a dramatic 3-1 victory for ITBP as Army's defence collapsed in the third and final period of the contest.

On the day all roads led to the 5000-capacity NDS sports complex for the Army versus ITBP ice-hockey match. Like always, the stands were full with Armymen, dressed in their olive green attire, backing their team in big numbers.

But it was Mohammed Ismail that struck first blood for ITBP in the second minute of a match that often got a bit physical.

"Tsewang Dorjey drew level for Army with a lovely flick at the far post early in the second period, but Indian Army, the defending champions, lost control in the third period and suffered their

Pranav Win As Telangana Lead Standings

After Nayana Sri Talluri on Friday, Pranav Madav Surapaneni won Telangana's second gold of the skating competition. It came in the 500m short track for men at NDS.

Maharashtra and hosts Ladakh also won their first skating gold medals on Saturday but it's Telangana which lead the medal tally.

Ishaan Darvekar bagged Maharashtra's first gold of the skating competition by winning the 1000m short track event at the NDS.

At the end of day three of the competition, Maharashtra are third with a total haul of five skating medals (one gold, one silver and three bronze) while Karnataka are second with three medals (one gold and two silvers), all from ice skating.

Schoolboy Surapaneni clocked 56.86 seconds to win the 500m short track gold.

There was joy for hosts Ladakh at the Gupuks Pond. Shabana Zara (2:09.69 seconds) and Tasniya Shamim (2:13.95 seconds) made it a one-two for Ladakh in the 1000 metres long track for women.

PCB To Test CT Venues By Hosting Tri-Series Involving South Africa, New Zealand

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will test its newly renovated stadiums in Karachi and Lahore for the upcoming Champions Trophy by holding a tri-nation ODI series involving South Africa and New Zealand from February 8.

The PCB issued the official schedule of the tri-series on Saturday with the final slated at the National Stadium in Karachi on February 14. The Champions Trophy will be held from February 19 to March 9.

The Board, which has spent around 1.2 billion rupees on the upgrade and construction of new buildings at its two Test venues, is under scrutiny on whether the stadiums would be ready on time for the eight-team Champions Trophy.

Pakistan face New Zealand in the opening match of the Champions Trophy here.

The PCB said that the tri-



nation series will be played in a single-league format from February 8 to 14 with the first two matches at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium. The final league match and tournament final would be held in Karachi.

In preparation for the tri-series, Pakistan and New Zealand will train under the lights at Gaddafi Stadium on February 6. South Africa's first practice session at the venue will take place on the morning of February 9.

At the Gaddafi Stadium

in Lahore, the seating capacity has been increased with the addition of new chairs. Additionally, 480 modern LED lights have been installed to improve broadcast quality.

Two large digital replay screens have been added for better fan engagement. A state-of-the-art hospitality enclosure for players and officials is also nearing completion.

Similarly, the National Stadium in Karachi has been upgraded, with the addition of 350 LED lights for better

broadcast visibility, two replay screens, and the installation of 5,000 new chairs.

A new hospitality enclosure for players and officials has also been constructed at the University End.

Tri-Nation ODI Series Schedule:

February 8: Pakistan vs New Zealand (day/night)

February 10: New Zealand vs South Africa (day)

February 12: Pakistan vs South Africa (day/night)

February 14: Final (day/night).

Rohit Named Captain Of ICC's T20 All-Star XI; Bumrah, Pandya & Arshdeep Also There

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Rohit Sharma was on Saturday named captain of the ICC's T20 International Team of the Year 2024, which was predominantly Indian in its composition thanks to the side's memorable World Cup triumph in the format.

The other Indian members of the all-star XI were pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who also featured in the ICC's Test Team of the Year, all-rounder Hardik Pandya and left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh.

The standout performers from other nations to make the line-up were Australian marauder Travis Head, England's Phil Salt, Pakistan's Babar Azam, West Indies' Nicholas Pooran, Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza, Afghanistan's Rashid Khan, and Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga.

In T20 Internationals, Rohit had an unforgettable 2024, both as a leader and a batter. The seasoned opener amassed 378 runs in 11 matches at an impressive average of 42.00 and a strike rate of over 160.

Rohit played a pivotal role in India's triumphant T20 World Cup campaign in the USA and West Indies, with three half-centuries, including



sensational 92 against Australia in the Super Eight stage.

Likewise, Pandya reaffirmed his stature as one of the world's finest all-rounders, playing a crucial role in India's successful campaign. In 17 matches, he scored 352 runs and claimed 16 wickets, finishing as the top-ranked ICC men's T20I all-rounder.

Bumrah has exemplified perfection in Indian cricket this past season across formats and T20 was no different. He led India's bowling attack and claimed 15 wickets in eight matches at an astonishing average of 8.26, making him

a nightmare for opposition batters. Young left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh emerged as India's most prolific wicket-taker in 2024, scalping 36 wickets in 18 matches at an average of 13.50.

ICC Men's T20I Team of 2024

Rohit Sharma (c), Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah and Arshdeep Singh (all Indians); Travis Head (Australia); Phil Salt (England); Babar Azam (Pakistan); Nicholas Pooran (wk; West Indies); Sikandar Raza (Zimbabwe); Rashid Khan (Afghanistan) and Wanindu Hasaranga (Sri Lanka).

National Voters Day celebrated at Distt. Courts of Sgr, B'pora & Spn

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 25: 15th National Voters Day was today celebrated at District Court Complexes of Srinagar, Bandipora and Shopian to commemorate the foundation of the Election Commission of India in 1950.

The objective of the day is to raise awareness of the value of voting in a democracy and promote active engagement in the election process.

The theme for the year 2025 National Voters Day, 'Nothing Like Voting, 1 Vote for Sure' is dedicated to voters and conveys individuals' feelings and aspirations toward participation in the electoral process through the power of their vote.

At Srinagar, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar organized an awareness programme on National Voters' Day at Ahata Waqar, Chanapora Srinagar.

The event was held under the chairmanship of Jaffer Hussain Beg, Chairman DLSA Srinagar/Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar, and under the supervision of Nusrat Ali Hakak.

The programme aimed to raise awareness among senior citizens about the importance of voting and their active participation in the democratic process.

The event featured interactive sessions led by officials from Health and Medical Department, para-legal volunteers of DLSA Srinagar who emphasized the pivotal role of senior citizens in shaping the nation through informed voting.

The speakers highlighted the constitutional rights and duties of voters and the significance of electoral participation in strengthening democracy. The audience was also educated on the accessibility measures introduced to facilitate senior citizens in the voting process, ensuring their inclusion and convenience.

The programme concluded with an engaging discussion, where the attendees shared their insights and experiences, further enriching the dialogue on voter awareness.

At Bandipora, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Bandipora organized a legal awareness programme on National Voters Day.

The event was held under the chairmanship of Khalil Ahmad Choudhary, Chairman DLSA Bandipora and under the guidance of Iqbal Ahmad Akhoun, Secretary DLSA Bandipora.

Speaking on the occasion, Tasleema Jan, (Panel Lawyer) TLSC Sumbal said that National Voters' Day is celebrated to create electoral awareness amongst citizens and encourage them to participate in the electoral process.

The programme was attended by, PLVs, Staff members & students of the said institutions and other society members.

At Shopian, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Shopian today organized National Voters Day at District Court Complex Shopian.

The function was presided over by the Chairman DLSA (Principal District & Sessions Judge) Shopian, Mehmood Ahmad Chowdhary who also read pledge to the participants.

Indian Railways Celebrates Excellence with Prestigious Republic Day Honours

Observer News Service

New Delhi: On the eve of 76th Republic Day, President Droupadi Murmu conferred Shri Amiya Nandan Sinha, IG & Principal Chief Security Commissioner, North Central Railway, with the prestigious President's Medal for Distinguished Service (PSM). The award recognises his outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to the safety and security of passengers and Railway assets.

Additionally, 15 personnel of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF) were also awarded the Medal for Meritorious Service (MSM), commending their exceptional dedication, bravery and exemplary performance.

Notable recipients include senior officers such as Sachin Ashok Bhalode (Deputy Inspector General, Northern Railway), P.V. Santharam (Deputy Inspector General, South Eastern Railway) and A. Ibrahim Sheriff (Deputy Inspector General, Southern Railway).

The list of awardees also featured Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, Assistant Sub-Inspectors and constables, including Sunil Chand (Inspector, 9BN/Railway Protection Special Force), Srinivasa Rao Donthagani (Inspector, South Central Railway), Shri Chander Kant Tiwari (Inspector, 6BN/Railway Protection Special Force), Kalu Sethi (Inspector, East Coast Railway), Dinesh Choudhary (Sub-Inspector, East Central Railway), Shri Gurbinder Singh (Sub-Inspector, 7BN/Railway Protection Special Force), Rohitash Arya (Sub-Inspector, 6BN/Railway Protection Special Force), Mahmood Hasan (Assistant Sub-Inspector, Northern Railway), Alok Ranjan Mitra (Assistant Sub-Inspector, Eastern Railway), Shri Puttur Ravichandran (Assistant Sub-Inspector/Driver, South Central Railway), Uttam Kumar Brahma (Head Constable, Northeast Frontier Railway) and Smt. Asha (Lady Head Constable, Northeast Frontier Railway), all of whom have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to their duties across various Railway zones.



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