

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Clarity in the Chaos

www.kashmirobserver.net • twitter.com / kashmirobserver • facebook.com/kashmirobserver • Postal Regn: L/159/KO/SK/2014-2016



www.elitepluscentre.com

ElitePlus

DENTAL & DERMA CENTRE

+91-9797703533 | Vintage Mall, 2nd floor Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar

This cutting-edge technology effectively reduces dark spots, melasma, and sun damage, revealing a radiant complexion with minimal downtime



BOOK APPOINTMENT

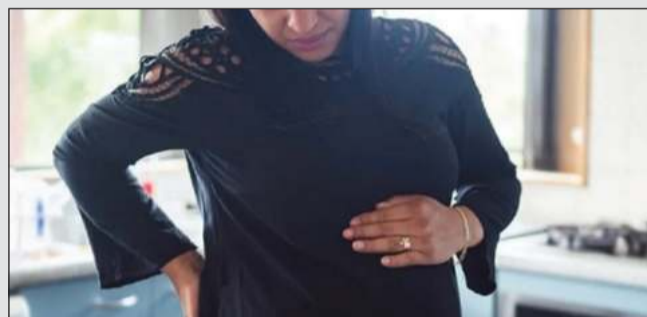
THE WOMB'S BURDEN

Infertility, Pregnancy, & Postpartum Challenges For Kashmiri Women

Nida Sadiq

Srinagar: Afeefa, 28, from Shopian, spent several months trying to conceive before seeking medical assistance. She was diagnosed with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), a hormonal disorder that disrupts ovulation and is becoming increasingly common among women in Kashmir. "I had never heard of PCOS before. The doctor informed me that my weight and thyroid issues were making it harder for

me to conceive," she said. The emotional toll was overwhelming. "Neighbours and relatives made hurtful comments, even though my family was supportive. In our society, a woman's worth often feels tied to her ability to bear children." In Kashmir, motherhood is often regarded as the ultimate measure of a woman's worth. As a result, many women silently struggle with issues such as infertility, pregnancy complications, and postpartum



While health crises, childbirth is celebrated, the pain and challenges that come before and

after this event remain largely unseen. Women frequently face these medical and emotional hardships on their own, with limited support from healthcare providers and family members.

Rising Reproductive Health Concerns

The latest Indian National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), published in December 2020, found that 60% of

Kashmiri married women report at least one reproductive health problem far higher than the national average of 40%. The region's total fertility rate (TFR) the average number of children a woman gives birth to in her lifetime has dropped to 1.4, below the replacement level of fertility. These statistics highlight a growing crisis in women's reproductive health. For many, the struggle begins long | More on P6

J&K Was Better Off With Art 370: Ruhullah In LS

Says Autonomy, Not Just Statehood, Is Justice for J&K



Observer News Service

Srinagar: National Conference MP Aga Ruhullah on Monday called for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's pre-1953 status, asserting that mere statehood was insufficient. He also criticised Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi for failing to mention the plight of Muslims in his parliamentary speech. Speaking during the debate on the President's address in Parliament, Ruhullah pointed out that while Gandhi spoke about his vision for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and highlighted concerns of OBCs and backward classes, he overlooked Muslims. "Are Muslims only meant to be frightened by the BJP for votes? I want to make it clear that Muslims are not afraid of anyone," he said. Ruhullah insisted that Jammu and Kashmir's full autonomy must be reinstated. "Not just Article 370, but the pre-1953 status must be restored. Many people are hopeful about statehood, but true | More on P6

Kulgam Terrorist Attack

Ex-Armyman Killed, Wife & Niece Injured



Observer News Service

Srinagar: In the first non-combatant killing of the year, terrorists shot dead an ex-serviceman and injured his wife and 13-year-old niece in an attack in South Kashmir's Kulgam district on Monday, officials said here. Details so far indicate that two terrorists armed with pistols arrived at the residence of Manzoor Ahmad Wagay in

Beehi Bagh, approximately 10 kilometers from the district headquarters, and opened fire on his family members, which included his wife and niece. According to initial statements recorded by police and army officials, Wagay, a former member of the Territorial Army, sustained additional bullet wounds while attempting to protect his niece. The terrorists, | More on P6

Haj 2025: J&K Applications Drop By Over 48%

Agencies

Srinagar: Witnessing a rapid decline from 35,000 in 2017 to as low as over 4100 applications this year, the number of Haj pilgrims continues to be dwindling in Jammu and Kashmir. The numbers, as per the officials, have further dwindled when over 700 pilgrims who applied for the pilgrimage opted to remain 'out' of Hajj 2025. As per the official details, a total of 4,100 people from Jammu and Kashmir applied for Hajj 2025, out of which 3,601 were confirmed in the first list, with 21 more added under the Mahram quota, taking the total number of pilgrims proceeding for Hajj to 3,622. Dr Shujaat Ahmad Qureshi, Executive Officer, J&K Haj Committee, confirmed to KNO that all 3,622 selected pilgrims have completed the



payment of both the first and second instalments. The top official said that as per the quota allocation, India has received a total of 1,75,025 slots for Hajj 2025, out of which 70% (1,22,550) is assigned to the Haj Committee of India (HCOI). He said that Jammu and

Kashmir has been allocated 4.89% of India's quota, along with an additional 2,000 slots, bringing the total to approximately 7,981. As per the details available, additionally, 14 private Haj Group Operators (HGOs) in Jammu and Kashmir have been allotted a total quota of

750 for this year. The Haj pilgrimage journey from Jammu and Kashmir is expected to take place from the last week of April. Notably, following a repeated low response due to rising costs for pilgrimage for Hajj applications this year in Jammu and Kashmir, authorities were left with no option but to extend dates for the Hajj 2025 applications. Despite multiple extensions for submitting Hajj 2025 forms, Jammu and Kashmir's Hajj Committee has just remained with 41,00 applications, a decrease of more than 48% from the previous year. According to the official data, 2024 received 8,147 Hajj application forms against the allocated quota of 8,200. However, as per the officials, 2023 has also recorded the highest-ever | More on P6

Rising Forest Fires In J&K Spark Climate Concerns

Tashir Khan

Srinagar: In 2023, Jammu and Kashmir lost 112 hectares of natural forest, which resulted in the release of 68.8 kilotons of carbon dioxide emissions, according to data from Global Forest Watch. In 2020, the region had 1.15 million hectares of natural forest, accounting for 11% of its land area. However, the area has been experiencing an increase in forest fires, with environmental experts attributing this trend to climate change. Between 2001 and 2023, fires caused 23% of the tree cover loss in Jammu and



Kashmir. The most significant loss occurred in 2004, when 240 hectares burned, accounting for 27% of the total loss that year. The district of Rajouri experienced the highest rate of tree cover loss due to fires,

Wet Spell Today: MeT

Under the influence of fresh Western Disturbance, the Jammu and Kashmir parts are expected to experience fresh snowfall on Tuesday with southern parts of Kashmir expected to receive moderate to heavy snowfall till February 05. As per the forecast, the Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that generally cloudy weather is expected tomorrow with the possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at many places till February | More on P6

RULES OF PROCEDURE & CONDUCT OF BUSINESS 9--member Panel To Review Modifications Proposed

Agencies

Srinagar: The nine-member committee headed by Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather will review the modifications proposed in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly tomorrow. Sources said that the panel will meet tomorrow to discuss the modifications proposed by the Assembly Secretariat in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the House. In the draft modifications, sources disclosed that

the Legislative Assembly Secretariat has deleted references to the Jammu & Kashmir Constitution, the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Council, and the Joint Select Committee. They also revealed that the Assembly Secretariat has proposed changes in the quorum of the Legislative Assembly in light of the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019. As per the modifications, the quorum to constitute a sitting of the House would be 10 members instead of 23 members. According to the Jammu & Kashmir | More on P6

J&K Gets Rs 844 Cr Allocation In Railway Budget

Delhi-Srinagar Passengers To Bridge Trains At Katra: Minister

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Monday said that passengers traveling from Delhi to Srinagar will have to bridge the trains at Katra Railway Station. Addressing a news conference here, the Railway Minister said, "The decision to bridge the trains has been taken due to temperature variations and atmospheric pressure differences in the mountainous region, necessitating special train designs. The trains that run in plains are different from the ones that traverse through the upper reaches." "In mountainous terrain, oxygen needs to be artificially generated inside the train coaches. We have studied similar models



in Switzerland. The tickets will remain the same. Passengers will have to board another train which would be standing on the opposite platform of the railway station where the bridging will take place," Vaishnaw said. He said that the practice of bridging the trains is followed across the world in the mountainous regions. "The railway system is being developed in

line with global standards." The Minister said, "Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) is an engineering marvel having two major bridges and 90 kilometers of tunnels. "All the necessary tests have been conducted successfully and commercial train services from Jammu to Srinagar will commence soon," he added. Referring to the up gradation work at Jammu Railway Station, Vaishnaw said, "To accommodate increased passenger traffic, Jammu Railway Station is being expanded from three to seven platforms. However, until the completion of this expansion, train services to Srinagar will be operated from Katra. Hopefully the upgraded Jammu Railway Station would be thrown open for the | More on P6

Lead Fight Against Drug Abuse: CM To NCC Cadets

Observer News Service

Jammu: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday praised the achievements of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets from Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, urging them to be role models in their communities and to take a stand against drug abuse. He underscored the transformative role of the NCC in shaping young minds, emphasizing that it is more than a program to inculcate values of service and discipline, which is truly commendable. Encouraging the cadets to be role models in their communities, the chief minister urged them to take a stand against drug abuse and play their best



role in combating this menace. "I urge you to channel your NCC spirit into safeguarding our youth from the scourge of drugs. As role models, your influence is profound. If you see a peer faltering, extend a hand," he told the NCC cadets at a function here. Abdullah suggested to | More on P6

NIA Opposes Interim Bail Plea Of Er Rashid In HC

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The NIA on Monday opposed in the Delhi High Court a plea by jailed Jammu and Kashmir MP Rashid Engineer for interim bail in a terror-funding case to attend Parliament. In its response to Engineer's plea before Justice Vikas Mahajan, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said it was a classic case of misuse of the interim bail provision ought to be used sparingly when intolerable grief and suffering was displayed by the accused concerned. It said his election as a parliamentarian couldn't be used as a tool to get the relief.

Rashid's interim bail plea is scheduled for February 4. His interim bail plea seeks attending the budget session of Parliament, which began on January 31, and concludes on April 4. He was elected from the Baramulla constituency in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and is lodged in Tihar Jail since 2019 after the NIA arrested him under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in the 2017 terror-funding case. The agency said the MP was an influential person and it apprehended he might influence witnesses many of whom were from Jammu and Kashmir. "... therefore his election as Member of | More on P6



To place an advertisement

CALL +91-194 2502327

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

از دفتر تالیف تحصیلدار حاجن
عنوان: درخواست از جانب محمد یوسف ڈار ولد محمد سید خان ڈار ساکنہ موضع بہار آباد

از نیابت پھیلان
عنوان: درخواست از جانب معروف احمد بانگر ولد غلام نبی بانگر ساکنہ سلطان پورہ کھوئی تحصیل

از نیابت سرکل مندر پورہ تحصیل ساوہ سرنگر
عنوان: درخواست از جانب کفایت حسین ولد مرحوم غلام حسن کا نڈ ساکنہ کا نڈ محلہ نہرو

From Office of the Advocate M.A Sofi And Associates
In the case of Mohammad Rafi Malik Alias Mudasar

از دفتر تالیف تحصیلدار حاجن
عنوان: درخواست از جانب محمد یوسف ڈار ولد محمد سید خان ڈار ساکنہ موضع بہار آباد

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is informed to the General public that my name in my Aadhar Card Vide Aadhar No:- 5035 8346 4237, has been wrongly mentioned as Sami Ullah Sheikh instead of Sheikh Samiullah Mohd.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I have lost my Passport bearing no: X3043628 while travelling in shopian. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Regional Passport Office Srinagar within 7 days.

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan.
Sub.issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth. Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE
The name of my Son has been wrongly written as Jawad Aayan while his correct name is Jawad Aayan Which needs to be corrected.

PUBLIC NOTICE
The name of my Son has been wrongly written as Jawad Kawnain Raza while his correct name is Jawad Kawnain Raza Ganie Which needs to be corrected.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I have applied for the issuance of Date of Birth Certificate in favour of my daughter Tabinda Altaf who was born on 18-05-2012.

Subject:-Grant of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name and style M/S Golden M Travel Solutions Situated at Residency Road Srinagar Chinar Commercial Complex 190001. PUBLIC NOTICE

Government of Jammu and Kashmir, OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER, ICDS PROJECT LAR. Selection Notice
The below proposed selection list of candidates who have applied for the post of Sahayikas (AWHs) in pursuance of Advertisement notice No. 03 CDPO Lar of 2024, Dated, 05-12-2024, in respect of Poshan (ICDS) Project Lar is hereby published for the information of all concerned/general public.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, TARIQ AHMAD BEIGH, resident of Bemina, Srinagar, intends to change the name of my daughter from AIDAHA BINTI TARIQ to SHEEMA BEIGH.

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Health & Medical Education Department Office Of The Principal Government Medical College, Anantnag (Main Campus Dialgam, Anantnag (J&K 192210)
Phone: 01932-227624 e-mail: gmcanantnag2018@gmail.com ragmca22@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, ANANTNAG, J&K (Main Campus Dialgam, Anantnag)
Phone No. 01932-227624 e- Tender Notice No:01-GMCA of 2025 Dated:03 -02-2025

Family Of Deceased Medical Student Protests Outside CM's Residence

Agencies Srinagar: Around five months after the death of a young girl from South Kashmir's Pulwama district, the deceased's family members and relatives staged a protest outside the Chief Minister's residence in Srinagar and demanded action against the erring doctors involved in the alleged negligence.

City Gets 'Centre For Breast & Colorectal Cancer'

Agencies Srinagar: The Director National Health Mission on Monday inaugurated the 'Centre for Breast & Colorectal Cancers & Non Cancer Disorders' at Karan Nagar here.

Injured PDD Employee Succumbs At SKIMS

Agencies Srinagar: A Power Development Department (PDD) employee who was injured last week in Nowshera has succumbed to his injuries at SKIMS Srinagar, officials said on Monday.

Mehraj-Ud-Din Kathoo of Laigaridoori Eidgah passes away



With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of Mehraj-Ud-Din Kathoo, S/O Ali Mohammad Kathoo R/O Laigaridoori, Eidgah, who passed away on 2nd February, 2025.

میری ماں کی 13 ویں برسی

میری زہد کی میری خوشی میری پیامت میری ماں میری محبت میرا رشتہ میری یاد دہانی میری ماں 13 برس قبل آج ہی کے دن 13 فروری 2012ء میری پیاری ماں مرحومہ صاحبہ



MSME Skill Development Program On EV Begins At NIT

Observer News Service Srinagar: A weeklong Advanced Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Program (A-ESDP) (Hands-on Training) commenced on Monday at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar.

As India moves towards its goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2070, the EV sector will play a crucial role in transforming the country's transportation landscape

better infrastructure. "Regardless of our diverse fields, we must work for the development of the country and support the vision of Viksit Bharat," he said, adding that aspiring scholars and students should delve into local technologies and engage in research within these domains.

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan.

Sub.issuanc of registration order in respect of delayed birth. Public Notice. The registrar birth EO Pattan submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Shahid Hayat Nazroo D.o.B is 16/04/2008 and Waris Hayat Nazroo D.o.B 23/03/2010 ss/o Hayat Ahmad Nazroo R/o Aram Mohalla Pattan occurred at home.in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Public Notice

I am applying for Tour and travel licence under name and style Setha Xpress Tour and travels Keegam Shopian. If anybody has any objection he/she may contact Assistant Director Tourism Pahalgam within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Zahid Maqbool S/o Mohd Maqbool Dar R/o Daramdoora Shopian FKO

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AWANTIPORA, KASHMIR. Tele: 01933-247954/247955. Website: www.iust.ac.in

NOTICE Students desirous of seeking admission in the below mentioned PG Programmes at IUST for the Academic session 2025 are hereby informed in their own interest to register and appear in the CUET-PG 2025 in the papers as shown below:-

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: +919484100200

AIRPORTS SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 RAILWAYS SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259 ANANTNAG: 01932-228243 BARAMULLA: 0194-102029 BIJBERA: 01932-228243 PAMPOR: 01933-294132 PATTAN: 01954-293507 QAZIGUND: 01951-296153 HIGHWAY STATUS Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open) Mughal Road - (Closed) Srinagar- Leh- (Open)

PRAYERS FAJR 6: 01 ZUHR 12:45 ASR 4: 24 Magrib 6:07 ISHA 7: 28 HIJRI CALENDAR 2 Shaban 1446

Public Notice I want to transfer my Shikara Licence bearing Regd no; 3580 Dated: 19-03-05 From my name Ab Aziz Chachoo S/o Gh Mohi-ud-din Chachoo R/o Dalgate To Mumtaz Begum W/o Abdul Aziz chahoo R/o Chachoo mohalla 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 within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Ab Aziz Chachoo S/o Gh Mohi-ud-din Chachoo R/o Dalgate fko

PUBLIC NOTICE It is hereby notified that my parentage has been inadvertently recorded in my passport as Mohammad Zaffar Jung Khan, whereas the correct parentage is Mohamad Zaffar Khan. If any individual has any objection to this correction, they may submit the same to the Passport Officer within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. Name: Sheema Zaffar D/o: Mohamad Zaffar Khan R/o: W-73, Shah Faisal Colony, Buchpora, Srinagar inf

Subject.Grant of registration of the proposed Travel unit under the name, M/S Majesty Paradise Tour and Travels " situated at New Colony Palpora Noorbagh Srinagar Public notice Whereas I Mr Adil Ahma Bhat/S/o Basheer Ahmad Bhat R/o Srinagar Tour and Travels intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style" M/ s Majesty Paradise Tour and Travels "situated at New Colony Palpora Noorbagh, Srinagar Kashmir under Tourist Trade Act1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department), Bank statement (minimum balance 1000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting), Photograph of the unit (indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation. Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID:-ddtreg123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspaper of the valley.No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained FKO

Subject.Grant of registration of the proposed Travel unit under the name , M/S Trail & Train Vacations Tour and Travels " situated at Dar Complex Rambagh Payeen Srinagar PUBLIC NOTICE Whereas I Mr Bilal Ahmad Mir F/o Mir Malik Mir R/o Rafiabed Baramulla Tour and Travels intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style" M/ s Trail & Train Vacations Tour and Travels "situated at Dar Complex Rambagh Payeen, Srinagar Kashmir under Tourist Trade Act1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department), Bank statement (minimum balance 1000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting), Photograph of the unit (indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation. Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID:-ddtreg123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspaper of the valley.No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained FKO

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of Kashmir Observer LLP
Printed at: K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industrial Estate, Rangreth-Budgam
Published from: 5-Boulevard Srinagar J&K
Editor-in-Chief: Sajjad Haider
News Editor: Farzana Nisar
Opinion Editor: Tooba Towfiq
Online Editor: Syed Hamid
Head Layout & Design: Muntazir Yaseen,
Digital Media Head: Amir Ali Shah
Business & Sales Head: Namisha Raj
Distribution & Advertising: Firdos Ali
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2502327 | +91 1947969705
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email: editor@kashmiobserver.net

Digital Addiction: The Alarms Keep Ringing

Trapped by Digital Web, Parents Are Losing Control Over Their Children's Lives

While vigilant parents may attempt to restrict access to smartphones or the internet, they must recognize that connectivity is pervasive.



Mother-Son: This is an AI generated image showing how mobile phones have redefined the bond between the parents and their children.

KO VIEW

Hurriyat's Reconciliation Effort

The formation of an interfaith committee led by Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq to help bring back and rehabilitate Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley is a welcome move. For decades, the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits has been one of the most painful and unresolved chapters in the Valley's troubled history of the past three decades. Now, with this committee in place, there's a renewed sense of hope for reconciliation and coexistence.

The committee's goals are ambitious, but they touch upon the heart of what's needed—ensuring the safe return of Kashmiri Pandits, addressing the concerns of other minority communities, and creating economic opportunities. Beyond that, it also seeks to preserve Kashmir's unique cultural heritage, encourage engagement between young Muslim and Pandit professionals, and create inclusive spaces where returning Pandits can feel at home again. If successful, this initiative could help bridge the divides that have shaped generations.

Mirwaiz's role in this effort is significant. As a respected religious and political figure, his involvement lends both credibility and weight to the initiative. His recent meetings in New Delhi—with BJP MP Jagdambika Pal and National Conference leader Syed Aga Ruhullah—suggest a willingness to engage with the central government and other stakeholders. It's a cautious but encouraging move, especially in a region where political dialogue has often been overshadowed by conflict and mistrust.

One of the most important aspects of this effort is its focus on the Kashmiri Pandits who have spent over three decades in migrant colonies in Jammu and the other parts of the country. The committee's plan to create a roadmap for their return acknowledges the complex realities they face—both in terms of security and reintegration. A holistic approach is the only way forward, and this initiative seems to recognize that.

That said, Mirwaiz's interaction with the Kashmiri Pandit delegation has a larger significance. This comes in the backdrop of Mirwaiz's recent meetings with Jagdambika Pal and Ruhullah. There have also been reports recently of Mirwaiz's alleged engagement with the central government which have been denied by neither party. Needless to say, after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, the ground situation in Kashmir has altered beyond recognition, which, in turn, has affected the complexion of Kashmir issue as it was known earlier. New Delhi is now loath to discuss the political nature of the issue even with Pakistan, let alone Hurriyat. This makes reported Hurriyat-Centre engagement interesting. Hurriyat has also some serious issues to discuss. The continued detention of other Hurriyat leaders is an issue that the grouping has been urging the centre to address. Yet, Mirwaiz's leadership in this effort signals a shift—one that prioritizes negotiated settlement of the issues. The formation of the interfaith committee is a part of this process. In a region long defined by its fault lines, this initiative stands out as a rare opportunity to build bridges. The road ahead won't be easy, but with leaders willing to take the first steps, there is hope for a Kashmir that embraces all its people, and seeks a future free from conflict.

Farooq Shah

During the COVID lockdown, when the entire school system collapsed, smartphones became the only means of studying. During this time, when my younger son, Muntazir (I fondly call him Monty) was in Grade 8, he quickly hid his phone upon seeing me. It didn't take me long to realize that he was probably watching something unrelated to his studies, playing a game or something. When I asked for the phone, he gripped it tightly and refused to let go. Sensing the sensitivity of the situation, I chose to step away and leave him be.

I may not be a top-notch psychologist or counselor, but my credentials support the claim that I am fully capable of handling such situations. After much thought, I decided to approach my son again. Guilt was written all over his face as he lowered his head in submission, but I gently lifted his chin and asked him to look me in the eye. His tear-filled gaze told a different story, making it easier for me to begin my approach.

"Look, son, I'm not going to ask you what you were watching, but I can safely assume it wasn't appropriate," I said to him calmly.

I explained to him that the internet is filled with content that can broadly be classified into two categories: constructive and destructive. It was up to him to choose which side of technology he embraced. Sitting beside him, I told him that life is like a beautiful carpet—it takes billions of tiny knots to weave intricate and meaningful patterns.

"If you lose focus today, all the hard work you've put in so far will go to waste," I told him.

I neither took away his phone nor switched off the internet. Instead, I made him pledge that from that moment on, he wouldn't waste his life on trivial things online. In the end, I succeeded in bringing a smile to his face.

From that moment on, he never disappointed me. I never saw him using his phone for anything other than his stud-

ies. No doubt, he would watch other content on YouTube and elsewhere, but to the best of my knowledge, it was nothing inappropriate.

Overtime, he developed an interest in pencil sketching—and he turned out to be quite good at it. I was pleasantly surprised to see him draw portraits of Hollywood actors like Paul Walker, Alexandra Daddario, and Selena Gomez. Now, in Grade 12, he often stays up late into the night, preparing for his upcoming board exams. However, the leash is still on, and I'm not here to brag about how perfect my kids are. If they've chosen the right path, it's for their own future well-being.

Parents can be quite amusing. They often believe their kids are the best beings on Earth, proudly comparing them to the children of friends or relatives, saying things like, "You know, my son is the best, and he would never do this or that." Affection and love for children are like blinders, limiting the ability to see things from different perspectives. Often, by the time parents realize it, it's too late to prevent their child from slipping to the other side of the fence.

A family friend recently asked me to check on her son, who was preparing for his upcoming CBSE 10th exams. After a couple of visits, I advised him to focus on self-study rather than relying on home tuition and offered some helpful tips. However, during a follow-up visit, I found the boy struggling and instinctively asked for his phone. To my surprise, he refused to give it up, gripping it tightly. It reminded me of my own son, but since I had no authority over him, I chose not to press the issue. I left, realizing my previous efforts had been in vain. The mother, though silent, didn't shield her son and asked me to continue visiting. I promised to help after his exams, but I knew the real work was in his hands.

Such cases are common. I recently met another boy of the same age, about to appear for his CBSE 10th exams. His parents have completely restricted his internet access and asked

“The internet exposes children to diverse content, often unknown to parents. While vigilant parents may attempt to restrict access to smartphones or the internet, they must recognize that connectivity is pervasive. Even minimal exposure to inappropriate material—whether at the gym or a friend's house—can corrupt young minds

him to study the traditional way. Given that he was being coached by two teachers, their approach seemed reasonable. I spent at least two hours with him, offering my best advice and counseling.

Strangely, I found his learning outcomes didn't align with his age or grade level. In private, he confided in me about his home, parents, school, and even his gym trainer. I shared the same carpet analogy I'd used with my son, and using various techniques I've learned over time, I was able to map his mind.

I left the house feeling satisfied, believing I had made a difference in the boy's mindset, and that my counseling

would bear fruit for all to see. Before leaving, I hugged him, calling him my friend, and he smiled warmly.

Whether boys in this age group truly take advice or counseling to heart is uncertain. They have minds of their own, shaped not by their home or school environment, but by a small gadget in their hands—their mobile phone.

With phones having gained the upper hand completely, parenting or counseling has become a challenging task. Children, who once exhibited sobriety, respect, and obedience, now seem beyond control.

Complicating matters, many parents lack proficiency with mobile phones and often rely on their "tech-savvy" children for help. This dependence creates a misleading belief that their children are excelling academically—when, in reality, this is not the case. A recent study found that 85% of Class 3 students couldn't solve basic math problems, even though 94% of them had access to mobile phones.

The internet exposes children to diverse content, often unknown to parents. While vigilant parents may attempt to restrict access to smartphones or the internet, they must recognize that connectivity is pervasive. Even minimal exposure to inappropriate material—whether at the gym or a friend's house—can corrupt young minds.

Although children may feel smarter due to their engagement with technology, this often comes at the cost of their value system, which erodes over time. The consequences may not be immediate, but they eventually become apparent. In such a scenario, parents are reduced to mere spectators in their children's lives.

Farooq Shah, a senior educator, has spent three decades working with children of different age groups. He is also a senior journalist whose write-ups have appeared in many national and international publications. He can be reached at mfshah@gmail.com



Did you know?

Understanding the Long-Term Value of Equity Investments: Why Staying Committed During Bear Markets is Key to Wealth Creation

In times of a bear market, where prices are declining and investments seem disheartening, it's easy to feel negative about equity shares and mutual funds. You might think that these investments are falling to generate returns compared to safer options like bank accounts or gold. However, it's crucial to remember that investing in the stock market and mutual funds isn't a short-term venture.

Long-Term Perspective is Vital

While you may compare short periods—like one month or even six months—remember that true investment growth in equities occurs over years, not days. During bear markets, you might witness your investment values decrease, which can spark doubt about the returns of quality mutual funds and shares. However, this short-term slump is part of the market's nature.

The Beauty of Equity Investment in Down Trends

Short-term declines can initially feel discouraging, especially if your cost of acquisition seems higher as prices fall. But these downturns can actually produce opportunities for significant wealth accumulation over time. This is where Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) in mutual funds shine. By investing consistently—regardless of market conditions—you can lower your average purchase cost. As prices drop, you buy more units at lower prices—10, 9, 8, or even 6. This strategy allows you to navigate volatility more effectively while building your investment portfolio.

Understanding Market Dynamics

It's essential to understand that "Mr. Market" operates with its own rhythm of ups and downs. While this can seem chaotic, our job as investors is to remain focused on long-term progress and to avoid making decisions based solely on emotions or short-term market fluctuations.

Read the full article on our website: <https://kashmiobserver.net>

Disclaimer: This article is for information only and doesn't offer investment advice. It's not an endorsement or an offer to buy or sell any financial products. If you

Digital Addiction

Experts in Kashmir Call for Action to Combat 'Invisible Pandemic'

Fazal Ansari

Srinagar – Kashmir is witnessing a new kind of pandemic in the form of what experts call "Digital Addiction," which has led to a widespread impact on mental, physical, and social well-being, particularly among children.

Experts from various fields gathered at Amar Singh Club for the second session of its Common Interest Conversations series on January 31, 2025, focusing on "Digital Addiction: An Invisible Pandemic."

The discussion was chaired by eminent neurologist Dr. Sushil Razdan, and the panel stressed that excessive screen time is causing developmental issues, sleep disorders, anxiety, poor social skills, and even physical ailments like posture-related injuries and vision problems.

The event featured a distinguished panel of medical experts and professionals who discussed the severe physical, mental, and social consequences of digital overuse. Experts highlighted its impact on brain development, mental health, vision, posture, and social interactions, particularly among children. The discussion emphasized the need for parental supervision, digital rationing, outdoor activities, and policy interventions such as banning social media for children, restricting screen time, and promoting digital detox strategies. The event underscored the urgent need for collective efforts by families, society, and the government to mitigate the rising crisis of digital dependency.

In his opening remarks, senior lawyer Zaffar Shah noted that the substantial presence of distinguished personalities underscored the gravity of the issue. He set the tone for the discussion by raising two key concerns:

1. Is digital technology itself a problem?
2. If so, how should society's parents, communities, and governments address it?

"It is a matter of observation that when you walk or drive down in Srinagar, out of ten boys or girls, 6 or 7 are using it while they are walking," Shah said. "This is a man-made problem and not something divine that cannot be controlled or managed."

He emphasized the urgent need for a societal response to this man-made crisis.

The Science Behind Digital Addiction

Dr. Razdan drew a stark comparison between past technological advancements like cars, airplanes, and radios that changed the way people lived and digital technology, which has fundamentally altered human behavior.

He said that children born or brought up during the age of digital technology are called 'Digital Natives,' while his own generation were 'Digital Immigrants.'

It has been established that the minds and behaviors of these children are entirely different. He stated that they are withdrawn, suffer from autism and attention disorders, prefer to use digital devices instead of playing, connect with friends through digital devices, and consequently face an entirely different set of problems.

Dr. Razdan cited scientific studies, including MRI-based research, proving that excessive screen time alters brain development, leading to memory impairment, weakened problem-solving skills, and an inability to handle life's challenges. In children, digital addiction has been linked to autism-like traits, attention disorders, and social withdrawal.

For adults and the elderly, overuse of digital devices contributes to headaches, neck pain, anxiety disorders, insomnia, obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD), aggression, and reduced social interactions. He strongly advised parents to keep digital devices away from children under five years old and impose strict supervision on digital use for older children.

Commending the family and social structure of Kashmiri society, Dr. Razdan said that in Jammu, he often gets patients from Delhi and other places who are forced to come alone, but when a Kashmiri patient visits him, they are accompanied by a platoon of family members and friends, which indicates the depth of Kashmiri social fabric. "This is something to be preserved and cherished," he stressed.

Dr. Kaiser Ahmad, former

Principal & Head of Paediatrics, GMC, Srinagar, raised alarm over the early exposure of infants (as young as 4-6 months old) to screens, leading to reduced eye contact, weakened social skills, and an increased risk of vision and hearing impairment.

ments, obesity, hyperactivity, and depression. He urged parents to actively engage children in physical and mentally stimulating activities rather than relying on digital devices as a distraction.

"We see that children have started losing direct eye-to-eye contact, and in some cases, their minds construe the digital device to be their parents."

He



Although managing this addiction may appear to be a daunting task, it was important for families and the community not to adopt a defeatist attitude, as it would result in the obliteration of society as we know it today

know it today. He also stressed the need for reforms in the education sector, such as the use of internet services for only essential academic purposes, banning the use of mobile phones in schools, providing counseling services, and offering alternative avenues and infrastructure for enhancing mental and physical activities.

Noted pulmonologist Dr. Naveed Nazir Shah highlighted the sedentary lifestyle induced by digital addiction, which has led to a

rise in lifestyle-related diseases. He called for active parental monitoring, arguing that digital addiction cannot be tackled with apps alone but requires consistent family involvement and awareness campaigns.

Dr. Majid Shafi, Incharge of the Mental Health & Addiction Treatment Programme at the Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir, emphasized the link between screen addiction and deteriorating sleep patterns, leading to depression, anxiety, and even violent behavior. He said that aggression and violent criminal behavior by juveniles and young adults had been associated with pornographic addiction. He supported legislative action to restrict digital exposure for children, citing Australia's ban on social media for minors under 16.

Physical and Psychological Consequences

Dr. Tariq Trumboo, Interventional Pain Physician, with a large social media following, shared his clinical findings, revealing a surge in musculoskeletal issues, particularly neck pain. He explained that bending the neck at a 60-degree angle while looking at a smartphone puts an equivalent of 27 kg of pressure on the cervical spine, often leading to irreversible joint degeneration.

He said that students and users of digital devices needed to be educated about the proper posture for using devices.

Dr. Najeer Drabu, a prominent orthopedist, noted an increase in

wrist nerve entrapments and spinal problems linked to excessive screen time, while Dr. Khursheed Ahmed warned of an alarming rise in digital eye strain, myopia, and retinal damage among children and adults alike. He advised limiting screen time to two hours daily, using blue-light-blocking lenses, and following the 20-20-20 rule (taking a break every 20 minutes to look 20 feet away for 20 seconds).

Writer Dr. Javid Iqbal described digital addiction as a mass psychological phenomenon requiring a collective response from families and communities. He lamented the decline in family bonding, with meals now consumed in silence as everyone remains glued to their screens.

Education, Policy, and Community Responsibility

Educationist G. N. War highlighted a concerning decline in literacy rates due to over-reliance on digital platforms. He called for public policy changes similar to those in Singapore, advocating for large-screen classroom teaching rather than mobile-based learning.

Radio jockey Sardar Nasir Ali Khan stressed the importance of parental responsibility, recommending the strict use of parental controls and supporting a ban on social media for children.

Dr. Musharaf warned against the normalization of digital addiction in families, pointing out that even parents are deeply engrossed in their devices, setting a poor example for their children. She also raised concerns about rising cyber scams and online gambling cases in Kashmir.

The Road to Recovery: 'Digital Fasting' & Lifestyle Changes

Club Secretary Nasir Hamid Khan described digital addiction as an insidious form of dependency akin to drug addiction, where the constant pursuit of digital stimulation numbs the mind and erodes creativity, purpose, and real-world interactions.

He emphasized the need to popularize the concept of 'Digital Fasting,' wherein abstinence from digital consumption for a minimum of one month allows the brain to reset and regain cognitive balance. Modern psychiatrists recommend this method to reduce anxiety, restore mental clarity, and break the cycle of compulsive digital use.

Combating Digital Addiction in Kashmir

Rediscovering Connection, Culture, and Community

KO Web Desk

In today's digital age, Kashmir is witnessing a rise in digital addiction that has affected people of all ages, particularly children. The pervasive nature of smartphones and social media platforms has led to an increasing reliance on screens for communication, entertainment, and even education. While technology offers undeniable benefits, its overuse is resulting in a growing detachment from real-world interactions, physical activities, and the rich cultural fabric of Kashmir. Combating digital addiction in this context requires a shift in how we spend our time, focusing on reconnecting with family, exploring outdoor activities, and rediscovering the cultural richness of our heritage.

Reconnecting with Family and Community

One of the most profound impacts of digital addiction is the diminishing quality of family interactions. In the past, family gatherings during special occasions such as Eid were an opportunity to reconnect with loved ones. However, today, many people are opting for quick text messages and social media posts rather than engaging in face-to-face conversations. This trend weakens the bonds that once held families together.

To combat this, it's crucial to emphasize the importance of personal connections. Instead of sending a text message, consider visiting your relatives and spending time with

them. This small but meaningful gesture brings back the warmth and intimacy that digital communication lacks. During Eid or other holidays, let's return to the practice of spending time with cousins, uncles, aunts, and grandparents, cherishing the face-to-face interactions that form the foundation of our social fabric.

Additionally, instead of merely communicating over social media platforms, Kashmiris should make it a point to invite cousins and extended family frequently for simple activities like tea gatherings or family dinners. This helps break the cycle of digital dependence while fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Embracing Outdoor Activities

Outdoor play has long been an essential part of Kashmiri life. The bustling grounds of Eid Gah during the festival used to be filled with children playing cricket, football, and other traditional games. Sadly, in today's world, many children prefer to stay indoors, absorbed in their devices. To combat this, we must reintroduce the value of physical activity and socializing through games in public spaces.

New cricket turfs have been opened in several localities across Kashmir, and these provide an excellent opportunity for children to enjoy outdoor sports. Encouraging kids to play cricket, football, or even traditional games in these spaces will not only help them disconnect from their screens but also foster a sense of teamwork, discipline, and physical fitness. Community parks, public playgrounds,



and sports facilities can become hubs for healthy social interaction and recreation.

Parents should lead by example, joining their children in outdoor activities and participating in games. Instead of watching TV or scrolling through phones, a trip to the local park or playing cricket in the neighborhood can be an enriching experience for both adults and kids. These moments create lasting memories while fostering a healthier, more balanced lifestyle.

Rediscovering Kashmir's Literary Heritage

Another casualty of digital addiction is the decline in reading and the appreciation of literature, particularly among children. Kashmir has a rich literary history, with renowned poets, writers, and scholars who have contributed significantly to the cultural fabric of the region. Yet, in recent years, the rise of digital content has over-

shadowed the importance of reading physical books, especially in the younger generation.

To combat this, parents and educators must encourage children to delve into Kashmir's rich literary heritage. Stories of our culture, history, and traditions can inspire young minds, and reading works by local authors, poets, and historians can help children connect with their roots. Regular visits to the local library or bookstores, where children can explore the works of writers would not only help them gain knowledge but also develop critical thinking and analytical skills.

Reading not only enriches the mind but also improves focus, concentration, and creativity—qualities that excessive screen time tends to diminish. Incorporating a reading routine at home, such as reading a book before bed or having a family reading hour, can be a great way to encourage children to disconnect from their screens and

explore the world of literature.

Setting a Good Example for Children

In Kashmir, the winter months often lead to a kind of hibernation, where both parents and children tend to stay indoors due to the cold weather. However, this can also lead to increased screen time, as phones, tablets, and televisions become the primary sources of entertainment. Parents must recognize that children often imitate their behavior, and if they see adults spending excessive time on their phones, they are likely to follow suit.

Instead of retreating into digital devices, parents should actively engage in family activities that don't involve screens. This could include going for a walk along Dal Lake in the evening, taking a trip to the local mosque for prayers, or simply spending time with the family playing board games or engaging in storytelling. These activities promote emotional bonding, physical well-being, and a deeper connection to one's surroundings.

Combating Boredom with Alternative Recreational Opportunities

Boredom is one of the primary triggers that lead children to pick up their phones. If there are no alternative activities available, children are likely to turn to screens for entertainment. To counter this, parents must ensure that they provide recreational opportunities that are both enjoyable and enriching.

Weekend outings are a perfect example of an opportunity to get away

from screens. A family outing to a local attraction, whether it's a visit to the beautiful Mughal Gardens, a walk along the banks of Dal Lake, or a short trip to nearby natural spots, can be a fun way to bond while enjoying Kashmir's stunning landscapes. Planning family movie nights with age-appropriate films can also provide a good balance, as it encourages shared experiences rather than individual screen time.

Regular visits to local parks, nature walks, or attending cultural events are other great ways to fill the leisure time with something beneficial. This not only keeps children away from digital distractions but also helps them develop an appreciation for nature, culture, and the arts.

Conclusion

Combating digital addiction in Kashmir is a challenge, but it is not insurmountable. By fostering connections with family, encouraging outdoor activities, rediscovering our literary heritage, and setting positive examples for our children, we can gradually move away from the overuse of digital devices. With a little effort and creativity, we can create a balanced lifestyle that preserves the best of both the digital age and our cherished Kashmiri traditions.

This article was partially generated with the assistance of artificial intelligence. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and relevance, the content reflects a blend of AI-generated suggestions and editorial input.

Infertility, Pregnancy,

before pregnancy. Infertility—the inability to conceive after a year of trying—is a growing concern in Kashmir, where societal pressure to have children is immense.

Asmat, 30, from Kupwara, faced an even tougher journey. After seven years of marriage, she remained childless while battling tuberculosis (TB), PCOS, and depression.

“At first, my family supported me, but over time, I felt abandoned even by them. My husband eventually told me he would remarry because I couldn’t have a child,” she said.

Dr. Farhat Jabeen, former head of gynaecology and obstetrics at Government Medical College in Srinagar, said 10% of women seeking gynaecological consultations struggle with infertility.

The most common causes include:

- PCOS, which affects ovulation and increases miscarriage risk.
- Thyroid dysfunction, which, if untreated, can severely impact reproductive health.
- Tuberculosis, still prevalent in Kashmir, which can damage the reproductive system.
- Late marriages and delayed pregnancies, which lower fertility as women age.
- Obesity and diabetes, which disrupt hormone levels and ovulation.

“Many women struggle to conceive due to late marriages, delaying pregnancies, and hormonal imbalances. In Kashmir, thyroid dysfunction and tuberculosis are also common causes,” Dr. Jabeen said.

Pregnancy: A Time of Joy or Medical Battle?

For those who conceive, pregnancy is rarely smooth. Anemia, hypertension, gestational diabetes, and thyroid disorders are widespread among Kashmiri women, leading to serious complications.

Farah, a mother of two from Srinagar, knows this struggle all too well. At six months pregnant, her haemoglobin levels dropped dangerously low, prompting doctors to administer an iron injection. Instead of stabilizing her condition, it triggered a severe reaction.

“I suddenly fell ill with loose motions, vomiting, high fever, extreme restlessness. Then I fainted,” she recalled. Her O-negative blood type had reacted adversely to the injection, leading to a life-threatening emergency.

She survived, but her ordeal continued. Throughout her pregnancy, she had to increase her thyroid medication fourfold to keep her condition under control.

According to Dr. Jabeen, the most common pregnancy complications in Kashmir include Anemia, which causes weakness, fatigue, and risks during childbirth; Gestational diabetes, especially in women with PCOS or insulin resistance; Hypertension, which increases the risk of preterm birth and preeclampsia and Pregnancy loss, particularly in women with underlying health issues.

A major issue, Dr. Jabeen emphasized, is the lack of preconception counselling medical checks before pregnancy to identify health risks.

“Women should undergo screenings before marriage to detect conditions like PCOS, thyroid disorders, and Anemia. Many pregnancy complications could be prevented if women received medical guidance early,” she said.

Postpartum Struggles: The Silent Battle

The struggles don’t end with childbirth. Many women experience postpartum complications, including infections, excessive bleeding, and hormonal imbalances. One of the most overlooked issues is postpartum depression (PPD), a severe condition affecting new mothers, often dismissed as mood swings.

Dr. Jabeen estimates that 30-40% of new mothers in Kashmir experience postpartum depression, yet most cases go undiagnosed due to stigma and lack of awareness.

“The first three months after delivery are crucial. Women experience exhaustion, psychological changes, and sometimes severe depression, but their struggles are often ignored,” she said.

For Farah, postpartum struggles became unbearable. Just nine days after giving birth, she woke up to find the right side of her face paralyzed, a condition known as Bell’s palsy.

“I couldn’t blink or close my right eye while sleeping. I couldn’t even look at myself in the mirror,” she said. Doctors were unsure of the cause; some blamed an infection, others suspected high blood pressure. Months of steroid treatment and facial therapy followed, but the emotional toll was devastating.

“I used to cry a lot. But one day, my brother placed my newborn twins in front of me and said, ‘If you keep stressing like this, who will take care of them?’ That moment changed everything for me.”

Meanwhile, Kashmir’s child nutrition crisis is worsening. NFHS-5 data shows that 27% of children are stunted (low height for age), while underweight children have increased from 12% to 19% a sign that maternal health problems are directly affecting newborns.

Breaking the Silence: A Call for Change

Despite the rise in reproductive health issues in Kashmir, conversations about women’s health remain limited. The pressure to conceive quickly, the stigma around infertility, and the expectation to endure suffering in silence continue to define the experiences of countless women.

Dr. Jabeen emphasized the need to prioritize women’s health before, during, and after pregnancy. She called for:

- Increased awareness and preconception counselling to address risks early.
- Better postpartum care, particularly in the first three months after childbirth.
- Greater family and partner support, as well as emotional well-being, is critical to recovery.
- A societal shift, where women’s health is not treated as secondary to childbirth.

Farah, now recovered, has a message for other women:

“Stay mentally strong. Trust in Allah, but also trust yourself. And above all, make sure you have a support system. Those who don’t have it suffer the most.”

Given the rising issues of infertility, pregnancy complications, and postpartum health crises in Kashmir, it is clear that women’s

health can no longer be a silent struggle. Addressing the stigma surrounding reproductive health issues requires collective action one that involves not only medical professionals but also families, communities, and policymakers.

Early screenings, improved maternal healthcare, and open conversations can help prevent many women from suffering in silence. Beyond medical interventions, we must also shift societal attitudes. A woman’s value should not be defined solely by her ability to conceive, and her struggles should not be dismissed as mere phases of life.

Access to comprehensive healthcare, emotional support, and awareness campaigns is vital to ensure women receive the care they deserve throughout their reproductive journey, not just during childbirth.

J&K Was Better

justice will only be served when autonomy is returned,” he stated.

He accused the BJP of misleading the public about the benefits of Article 370’s revocation, arguing that elections were held even when the provision was in force. “It is strange how people across the nation are being fooled. Elections were always held before, but Article 370 was removed through an illegitimate process. People have responded by participating in the elections, but what have been the consequences of its removal? Article 370 actually benefited Jammu and Kashmir,” he argued.

Citing statistical data, Ruhullah noted that under Article 370, Jammu and Kashmir ranked sixth in the Human Development Index (HDI) with a score of 0.712, outperforming BJP-ruled states such as Haryana (0.702), Uttar Pradesh (0.596), Madhya Pradesh (0.606), and Gujarat (0.677). He also highlighted that before the abrogation, J&K had a higher life expectancy (73.5 years) than Gujarat (68 years) and a better gross enrolment ratio in higher education (30.9 per cent) compared to Gujarat (20.4 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (28.5 per cent), and Bihar (14 per cent).

Haj 2025: J&K

pilgrimage with over 12,000 pilgrims embarking on the holy journey from Jammu and Kashmir.

Official data reveals that 35,215 people planned to embark on the pilgrimage in 2017, followed by 32,330 applications from various districts in Jammu and Kashmir in 2018.

Hajj authorities received 21,566 applications for the pilgrimages in 2019, with 2020 witnessing no applications owing to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

Despite the pandemic, the data reveals that more than 7,000 applications from various J&K districts were submitted in 2021 for the Hajj pilgrimage. However, the authorities subsequently cancelled the pilgrimage for a second year in a row due to the virus’s continued spread.

The comparative data for 2024 and 2025 reveals a sharp decline in all districts of Jammu and Kashmir in the number of pilgrims applying to take up the Hajj 2025 journey, with only district Doda witnessing a nominal increase of over 9 per cent.

According to the data, Srinagar district, which received 2,607 Hajj applications in 2024, has registered a decline of over 64 per cent for this year. It has received just over 930 applications for the Hajj 2025.

Similarly, district Budgam, which received 873 applications in 2024, this year received over 320 applications, recording a decline of over 62 per cent.

District Anantnag and Bandipora also recorded a decline of over 50 per cent in the number of people applying to undertake the Hajj, the holy pilgrimage. District Baramulla received over 345 applications against the 781 applications in 2024.

Any intending Hajj pilgrim embarking from Srinagar has to pay around 4.2 lakh rupees, while from Delhi, it is Rs 3.6 lakh only. The authorities are attributing the difference in amount to airfares.

Officials said the airfare from Srinagar embarking is Rs 1.7 lakh, while from Delhi, it is Rs 1.1 lakh for pilgrims. However, they added that people are not bound to travel from any specific destination and are free to take up the Hajj journey from any embarkation of their choice.

People say economic realities are forcing many to deprioritize the pilgrimage in favour of essential and daily expenses.

Bashir Ahmad Bashir, a horticulture trade leader, attributes the decline in the Hajj applications to rising prices and economic strain in Jammu and Kashmir, saying the people in the region were struggling to make ends meet.

He urged the authorities to take measures which can reduce the costs involved in the holy pilgrimage, describing the pilgrimage as the most significant for the Muslims.

Many government employees said they were prioritising essential expenses such as healthcare and education over the pilgrimage due to financial constraints.(KNO)

Ex-Armyman Killed,

believed to be from banned Lashkar-e-Taiba, fired upon Wagay as he returned home, and all three victims were rushed to a nearby hospital, where Wagay succumbed to injuries. Police have taken cognizance of the incident and initiated an investigation into the attack.

The incident marks the first attack on a civilian this year as Wagay had retired from the Territorial Army in 2021. Family members said that after his military service, Wagay had engaged in livestock rearing.

The attack comes more than a month after security forces killed five terrorists, including the self-styled commander of Hizbul Mujahideen Farooq Ahmed Bhat, at Kaddar located in Beehi Bagh.

The encounter had virtually left the Hizbul Mujahideen faceless in South Kashmir.

The officials said that Monday’s attack could possibly be an act of revenge for gunning down the top cadres of the Hizbul Mujahideen in December last year.

LG, CM Condemn

two women, including his wife and cousin, sustained gunshot injuries in a terrorist attack in Behibagh village in Jammu and Kashmir’s Kulgam district on Monday, officials said.

The LG strongly condemned the terrorist attack and paid homage to Manzoor Ahmad Wagay who was martyred in the incident.

“I strongly condemn the heinous terrorist attack on Manzoor Ahmad Wagay and his family in Kulgam. The entire nation stands in solidarity with the bereaved family in this hour of grief,” Sinha said.

Asserting that the attackers will pay for their heinous act, the LG said “I have instructed the officials to provide the best possible treatment to the injured. Praying for their speedy recovery. I assure the people that the perpetrators of this cowardly attack will be punished soon.” CM Abdullah expressed condolences to the family and said “I am deeply saddened by the tragic killing of ex-serviceman Manzoor Ahmad Wagay Sahab in Kulgam. My heartfelt condolences to his family and prayers for the swift recovery of his injured wife and daughter.” He added that such heinous violence has no place in our society and must be condemned in the strongest terms.

“May peace and justice prevail,” the CM added.

Former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti expressed her condolences, saying she was “terribly saddened” by Wagay’s killing and offered prayers for the recovery of his wife and niece.

Altaf Bukhari, president of the Apni Party and former minister, denounced the attack, labelling it a cowardly act.

“I am deeply saddened to hear that terrorists have attacked and killed an ex-Army man and injured his wife and daughter in Kulgam. This attack is highly condemnable, and I have full confidence that our security agencies will swiftly apprehend the perpetrators and bring them to justice,” he added.

Kulgam MLA and veteran CPM leader M Y Tarigami said, “Condemning, in no uncertain terms, the killing of former (territorial) army man Manzoor Ahmad Wagay in Behibagh. The dastardly attack left his wife and daughter injured. Such attacks won’t serve any purpose. Urging authorities to ensure best possible treatment to the injured.”

HM To Review

the security plan for the coming months as snow will start melting, leading to the opening of infiltration routes along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. Other issues that may come up for discussion include securing tourist spots before the commencement of the peak tourism season.

The meeting is expected to discuss steps to eliminate the terror ecosystem in J&K. The top security brass will apprise the Home Minister about the steps being taken to maintain peace across Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

Rising Forest Fires

averaging 8 hectares per year.

The peak fire season in the region typically begins in late March and lasts for 12 weeks. However, recent fires have sparked concerns, with 117 high-confidence fire alerts recorded between February 5, 2024, and February 3, 2025. Additionally, between January 27 and February 3, 2025, there were 73 fire alerts reported, although none of them were classified as high-confidence.

Forestry officials identify climate change as a significant factor contributing to the recent wildfires, which have been worsened by a decline in snowfall and rainfall.

“We expected fewer forest fires after December due to anticipated snowfall and rainfall,” said Syed Ghulam Rasool Geelani, the national secretary and state president of TUC. “However, to our surprise, there was little to no precipitation, which led to an increase in forest fires. Our department is doing everything possible to address the situation.”

The lack of precipitation has left forests drier and more vulnerable, endangering both wildlife and rural communities. Geelani pointed to global climate change as a factor, drawing parallels to the devastating wildfires in California. “The developed world has interfered with natural ecosystems, and as a result, such calamities are becoming more frequent,” he said.

While human negligence such as discarded cigarette butts and wood stove usage in forests contributes to fire outbreaks, experts agree that rising temperatures and prolonged dry spells are making forests increasingly flammable.

Forestry officials employ traditional methods to contain wildfires, including digging firebreaks and clearing fallen leaves to reduce ignition risks. However, resources remain a challenge. “The forestry department is trying to use technology, but field officers are not well-equipped, and essential tools are not always available,” Geelani said.

To combat deforestation, the Green India Mission has been engaging local communities in afforestation efforts. “Under the Green India Mission, we involve local panchayats and residents to help us plant trees wherever land is available,” Geelani said, emphasizing the importance of community participation.

He called on civil society to take a proactive role in conservation efforts. “I appeal to students and lawyers—everyone should contribute to this cause. The government provides support, but real change happens when individuals take action,” Geelani said. “The Chipko movement was a major contribution to forest conservation, and we need a similar effort today.”

Wet Spell Today:

5th forenoon.

He said that an improvement is expected from February afternoon, adding that the higher reaches of Chenab Valley & Pirpanjal Range in South Kashmir may receive snow depth of 8-10 inches.

Ahmad also said that the weather is expected to remain partly cloudy with generally dry

from February 06 to 08 while fresh spells of light rain and snow is expected at isolated scattered places on February 09.

From February 10-11, the weather would remain generally cloudy with the possibility of light rain and snow scattered to fairly widespread places.

Pertinently, the MeT had predicted back-to-back WDs in Jammu and Kashmir till February 05.

It is worth mentioning that Jammu and Kashmir had recorded a deficit rainfall of 87 per cent in the month of January as against the normal rainfall of 88.2 mm, the Union Territory has recorded a precipitation of just 11.5 mm only.

Moreover, the MeT has issued an advisory for tourists, travellers and transporters, asking them to follow administration and traffic advisory

9--member Panel

Reorganisation Act, the quorum to constitute a meeting of the Legislative Assembly shall be ten members or one-tenth of the total number of members of the Legislative Assembly, whichever is greater.

Sources disclosed that the Legislative Assembly Secretary has also deleted rules governing amendments to the Jammu & Kashmir Constitution and bills defining or altering permanent residents. Additionally, references relating to the Governor in the Rules have been replaced with Lieutenant Governor.

“The modifications have been proposed to make the Rules in sync with the constitutional changes effected on August 5, 2019,” a member of the committee, wishing to remain anonymous, told KNO.

He said the committee would meet tomorrow to discuss the changes proposed in the Rules of Assembly. “We will finalize the modifications in these Rules before the beginning of the Assembly session from January 03,” he said.

J&K Gets Rs 844 Cr

public by August-September this year. It would lead to direct train connectivity between Jammu and Srinagar cities.”

He said that the government is also exploring new railway projects to improve connectivity to far-flung areas, including a Ladakh-Srinagar rail link. “A total budget allocation of Rs 844 crore has been earmarked for Jammu & Kashmir’s railway projects. Once the new projects are sanctioned the budget allocation will increase. There will be no dearth of funds,” Vaishnav added.

The Minister emphasized the significant progress made in railway electrification, noting that since 2014, a total of 344 km of railway tracks have been electrified, making Jammu & Kashmir 100% electrified.

Providing financial and developmental insights, the Union Minister stated that since 2014, a total of 135 km of new railway tracks have been constructed in Jammu & Kashmir, improving regional connectivity and accessibility.

He also informed that four major railway stations Budgam, Jammu Tawi, Katra, and Udhampur are being developed as ‘Amrit Stations’ at a total cost of Rs. 292.5 crore, enhancing passenger amenities and station infrastructure.

The budgetary allocation and development projects reaffirm the government’s dedication to modernizing railway infrastructure in Jammu & Kashmir, fostering economic growth, and improving connectivity in the region, Vaishnav added.

Highlighting the government’s extensive railway development plans, the Minister announced that 50 new Nammo Bharat trains, 100 new Amrit Bharat trains, and 200 new Vande Bharat trains are in the pipeline. “Additionally, a budget of Rs 1,14,000 crore has been allocated for railway safety and Rs 2,52,000 crore for overall railway infrastructure.”

The Railway Minister praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership, under which 35,000 kilometers of new railway tracks have been laid and 100% electrification of railway lines in Jammu and Kashmir has been achieved.

On the issue of concessions for senior citizens, he clarified that half of the expenses of all the travelers are borne by the Railways. “Passengers across the country travel on subsidized rates,” he added.

The Minister thanked both the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister for their support in the rapid expansion and modernization of the Indian Railways.

Lead Fight Against

them to share their stories of discipline and show them a path of purpose and guide them, aligning the message with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of a ‘Nasha Mukht Bharat’.

The chief minister called on the cadets to carry forward the pride and values of the NCC in their everyday lives.

“Lead with empathy, stand firm in your values, and remember: the greatest service to our nation lies in lifting others. Together, let us build a future where Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh — and all of India — shine as beacons of hope and unity,” he said.

Abdullah praised the achievements of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets from Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, emphasizing their remarkable representation during the Republic Day celebrations at Kartavya Path in New Delhi.

Highlighting the extraordinary feat of a Jammu and Kashmir girl cadet who commanded the all-women NCC contingent at the parade, the chief minister remarked, “This is not a small achievement. The images of her leading the contingent resonated globally, showcasing Jammu and Kashmir’s commitment to discipline and unity.”

“She didn’t just lead the 17 cadets from Jammu and Kashmir; she commanded the entire national contingent of girls, marching proudly before not just our nation, but a global audience,” said Abdullah.

“Republic Day isn’t just seen by those present at Kartavya Path or watching television in India; it is broadcast worldwide. The world witnessed what Jammu and Kashmir has to offer,” he added.

Addressing the cadets, Abdullah commended their dedication and the spirit they brought to the national stage.

“Your presence on Kartavya Path symbolized not just personal dedication but also the vibrant spirit of our region. This year, 127 cadets from Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh — alongside military cadets, support staff, and trainers — represented us with immense pride,” he said.

The chief minister also lauded the cadets for their cultural performance, which won third prize among teams from across the country.

“This achievement speaks volumes about your hard work and unity. Your cultural presentation, infused with the rich traditions of our land, captured the hearts of many and brought honor to J&K,” he said.

Reflecting on his personal experiences during his school days as an NCC cadet, the chief minister said “your triumph takes me back to my school days”.

“While I never had the privilege of marching on Rajpath (Kartavya Path), my time as head boy and NCC cadet taught me invaluable lessons in leadership and discipline. The crisp commands, the camaraderie, and the spirit of teamwork have stayed with me throughout my life,” he added.

Abdullah underscored the transformative role of the NCC in shaping young minds.

“The NCC is more than a program; it is a crucible that forges character. In today’s world, where young people face immense pressures — academic, social, and personal — your commitment to the NCC’s values of service and discipline is truly commendable,” he said.

The chief minister acknowledged the academic pressures faced by today’s youth and praised the cadets for their dedication to the NCC despite these challenges.

“When I was in school, scoring 80 percent was considered a big deal. Today, some colleges have a 100 percent cut-off. But even with these academic demands, you have chosen to embrace the NCC’s values of discipline, leadership, and service. You’ve made the journey to Delhi to represent our region, proving that education is not confined to textbooks — it is about life experiences that shape your character,” he said.

Abdullah urged the cadets to cherish these opportunities, emphasizing their importance in shaping life values beyond the NCC.

“These friendships will be your support system in times of challenge, the people who will stand by you when life tests your strength. They represent the spirit and unity of our nation, reminding you that no matter where you are or what you face, you are part of a larger family — a family that embodies unity in diversity,” he said.

NIA Opposes

Parliament (Lok Sabha) makes no difference and cannot be used as a tool for getting interim bail under the garb of providing service to the people situated in his constituency,” it said.

The NIA argued his detention in the case was valid and not allowing him to attend Parliament couldn’t be termed violative of his rights and not become a ground for interim bail.

It said the accused did not specify the manner in which he would serve his constituency and a vague averment was made that he intended to “serve the constituency”.

The NIA said Rashid was trying to use the reason to attend Parliament or serve his constituency to get away from the rigours of imprisonment after he was unsuccessful with his regular bail plea.

“... the applicant is a Member of Parliament from Baramulla and is a highly influential person. The answering respondent (NIA) apprehends that since many of the witnesses are from Jammu & Kashmir, the applicant may influence the witnesses,” it said.

On the argument that summons were issued by the President of India inviting him to attend the Parliament session, the NIA said it was a routine matter as such invitations were sent to all parliamentarians.

“The applicant’s conduct has been under scrutiny for misusing the telephone facility provided to him and the answering respondent has earlier placed relevant documents before special court (NIA),” it said and sought liberty to file these documents in a sealed cover whenever directed by the court.

Rashid’s plea, in the alternative, sought custody parole during the budget session.

The plea forms part of his pending petition over grant of bail in the case by the NIA.

His main petition urges the high court to either direct the expeditious disposal of his pending bail plea by the trial court or decide the matter itself.

On December 24 last year, additional sessions judge Chanderjit Singh — who requested the district judge to transfer the case to a court designated to try lawmakers as Rashid was an MP — dismissed his plea asking for an order on the pending bail application in the NIA case.

With the matter sent back to him by the district judge, the trial judge said in his decision that he could only decide the miscellaneous application and not the bail plea.

The NIA counsel said the probe agency in November wrote to the registrar general on the issue of designation of a trial court to hear the case but he was not aware of the status of the request.

The ED filed a money laundering case against the accused persons on the basis of the NIA’s FIR, which accused them of “conspiring to wage war against the government” and fomenting trouble in the Kashmir valley.

Cases of the NIA and the ED also involve Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba chief and 26/11 Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed, Hizbul Mujahideen leader Syed Salahuddin and others.

'Deworming, Vaccination Key To Risk-Free Pet-Human Bond'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Regular deworming, timely vaccinations and proper hygiene practices are essential to maintaining a safe and healthy bond between pets and their owners, according to a senior veterinary doctor.

Addressing a press conference, Dr Altaf Geelani, Superintendent of a Veterinary Hospital in Srinagar said that pet owners must adopt preventive health measures to ensure both animal welfare and human safety. "Maintaining regular hygiene, including routine grooming and dental care, helps prevent skin infections and dental diseases in pets," he said.

He said deworming plays a critical role in eliminating internal parasites, which can adversely affect animal health and, in some cases, be transmitted to humans. "Vaccinations are equally important as they protect pets from various contagious diseases, some of which can pose health risks to humans," he added.

Dr Geelani expressed concern over cases where pet owners have neglected vaccinations for years, putting both pets and humans at risk. "By adhering to these preventive measures, pet owners can safeguard the well-being of their animals and significantly reduce the risk of zoonotic diseases, thereby fostering a harmonious coexistence between humans and their pets," he said.

Experts present at the conference said toxoplasmosis is a rare parasitic disease transmitted through cats and teamed it a health concern. Although rare, toxoplasmosis can pose serious risks to pregnant women, including the possibility of miscarriage



if an infection occurs due to a cat bite. However, they reassured that such cases are uncommon and can be prevented through proper hygiene practices.

Cat bite cases in Kashmir have been on the rise over the past few years. According to data from the Anti-Rabies Clinic (ARC) at SMHS Hospital, 4,736 cat bite cases were reported in 2024, compared to 5,883 dog bite cases during the same period.

The statistics reveal a dramatic increase in cat bite incidents over the years. In 2018, cat bites accounted for just 8% of all bite cases reported at ARC SMHS. By 2023, this figure had surged to 20%. In 2024, cat bites constituted a staggering 44% of all animal bite cases.

This rising trend has raised concerns among health professionals, who said the surge is due to increased pet ownership, lack of awareness about proper pet handling, and negligence in pet care practices.

Dr Geelani urged pet owners to remain vigilant and proactive about their pets' health. "It's not just about the pets; it's about public health too. We need greater awareness about responsible pet ownership, including regular veterinary checkups, vaccination drives, and community education programs," he said—(KNO)

Cancer Cases On Rise In J&K

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The number of cancer patients in Jammu and Kashmir is steadily increasing, with an estimated 12,000 to 13,000 new cases being reported every year. While this rise is concerning, medical professionals note a positive trend—more patients are now seeking treatment at the first stage of the disease.

Government data available reveals that in 2019, 12,396 new cancer patients were registered across Jammu and Kashmir.

This number has seen a gradual increase over the years: 12,726 cases in 2020, 13,060 in 2021, 13,395 in 2022, and over 13,000 cases in both 2023 and 2024.

Among these, approximately 20 percent of patients are now arriving for treatment at the initial stage, improving their chances of effective treatment.

In 2024, major hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir recorded thousands of new registrations. Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) alone registered 5,200 cases, while GMC Jammu recorded 1,700, GMC Anantnag 500, GMC Baramulla 100, and GMC Kathua 80.

Additionally, around 500 patients sought treatment at GMC Rajouri, Doda, and other

hospitals, while American Oncology Jammu received nearly 2,000 patients.

"The most common cancers among men in the region include head and neck cancer and lung cancer, while breast and cervical cancer are prevalent among women. Medical experts cite multiple contributing factors, including obesity, tobacco and alcohol consumption, unhealthy diets, and environmental pollutants. A sedentary lifestyle and lack of physical activity are also significant risk factors," says Dr Junaid Javid, a medico based in Srinagar.

Medicos are attributing the rise to multiple factors, including increased awareness and improved medical facilities. Previously, the treatment was primarily available at GMC Jammu, GMC Srinagar, and SKIMS.

However, new medical colleges in Rajouri, Kathua, Doda, Udhampur, Baramulla, Anantnag and Handwara now provide specialized oncology services, making early detection and treatment more accessible.

As a result, nearly 20 percent of patients are seeking treatment at the first stage.

The Medical Oncology Department at GMC Srinagar alone registers over 1,000 new cancer cases annually. Reports reveal that the five most

common cancers in Kashmir: gastrointestinal cancer, lung cancer, breast cancer, colon cancer, and ovarian cancer.

The high prevalence of gastrointestinal cancer to dietary habits, particularly the consumption of salty and fried foods. Excessive smoking remains a major factor behind lung cancer cases in both men and women.

Furthermore, the experts believe that urbanization, obesity, high blood pressure, infertility, sedentary lifestyles, late marriages, and delayed childbirth significantly contribute to rising breast cancer cases.

At the Cancer Institute in Jammu 5,964 cancer patients sought treatment in the institute's indoor department last year. On average, 400 to 500 patients visit monthly, with 4,928 patients undergoing chemotherapy and 432 PET scans being conducted. The institute has observed an increase in lung cancer cases among men and breast cancer cases among women. Encouragingly, patient awareness has improved, leading to earlier diagnoses and better treatment outcomes.

Medical experts stressed the importance of early detection, lifestyle changes, and preventive healthcare measures to curb the rising cancer burden in Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)

Don't Be In A Hurry To Predict Results Of Delhi Polls: CM Omar

Observer News Service

News Observer (KNO), said, "People have not voted, let the results come and then we will start the analysis."

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said that no one should be in a hurry to predict the results of Delhi polls.



Talking to reporters here, the Chief Minister Kashmir

However, Omar was quick to add, "There is a probability that AAP, like the last election, will wipe off all the other parties there."—(KNO)

Who Is Hussain Distributes Gifts To Mothers Of Newborns



Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: The Who Is Hussain Kashmir Chapter marked the birth anniversary of Imam Hussain (AS) by distributing gifts and greeting messages to mothers who delivered babies on 3rd Shaban 1446. The initiative was carried out at Lal Ded (LD) Hospital in Srinagar, District Hospital Shopian, and several other healthcare facilities.

The team expressed that the distribution of gifts was a tribute to the legacy of Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), known for his unwavering stance on justice, compassion, and truth.

"Today, we had the honor of welcoming newborns who share their birthday with Hussain Ibn Ali, a symbol of courage, compassion, and truth. We

presented heartfelt messages to their families, celebrating the promise of greatness these little ones carry under the light of his legacy," organizers said.

The initiative was met with appreciation from both medical staff and the families of the newborns. Many mothers expressed their gratitude for the thoughtful gesture, stating that it made their special day even more meaningful.

Who Is Hussain is a global movement that strives to promote the values of Imam Hussain (AS) through acts of kindness, social service, and awareness campaigns. The Kashmir chapter has been actively engaged in various humanitarian efforts, including blood donation drives, food distribution, and community welfare programs.

Shishir Gupta Assumes Charge As Deputy Commissioner Shopian



Observer News Service

RINAGAR: Shishir Gupta, an IAS Officer of Batch, 2020 of AGMUT Cadre assumed the charge as Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, succeeding Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar.

Shishir Gupta, who formerly served as the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jammu, assumed the charge in presence of senior officers of the district administration. The Deputy Commissioner was accorded a warm welcome by the officers present including ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmed, ACR, Shakoor Ahmad Dar and other officers.

The Deputy Commissioner expressed gratitude to the

gathering of officers and officials present on the occasion.

Later, Deputy Commissioner chaired an introductory meeting with district/sectoral officers at meeting hall, Mini-Secretariat.

While addressing the officers, the DC emphasized the importance of providing hassle-free public services and urged them to perform their duties with dedication and transparency to meet public expectations.

Seeking support from all departments, DC urged officers to work in close coordination to achieve the district's development goals efficiently.

The meeting was attended by ADDC, ACR, SDM, ACD and other district and sectoral officers.

Sonamarg Records Footfall Of 55k Tourists In Jan 2025



Agencies

GANDERBAL: Sonamarg, the picturesque tourist destination in Central Kashmir, has recorded an impressive influx of 55,934 visitors in January 2025. This marks a significant rise in tourism activity for the region.

According to the latest figures, the majority of visitors were domestic tourists, with 53,676 people visiting the stunning hill station.

In addition, 1,114 foreign nationals were attracted to Sonamarg's scenic beauty, while 1,144 locals also visited the area. The total footfall for the month of January stands at 55,934, indicating a strong interest in the destination.

Tourism officials attribute the rise in visitors to improved infrastructure, better connectivity, and growing awareness of Sonamarg's unique charm. The local tourism industry is expected to benefit greatly from this surge in tourism, further boosting the region's economy.

For the first time since the inauguration of the Sonamarg

Tunnel, tourism in the region has seen a significant boost. The tunnel has improved accessibility to the area, making it easier for tourists to reach the stunning destination, especially during the winter months.

This winter, Sonamarg has seen an influx of visitors, with the enhanced connectivity encouraging both domestic and international tourists to explore the beauty of the region. The opening of the tunnel has not only provided a more convenient travel route but has also contributed to the growth of the local economy by attracting more tourists to the picturesque hill station.

Gh Mohd Bhat, CEO of Sonamarg Development Authority said that Sonamarg has witnessed a remarkable surge in tourism this year, with a record 55,934 visitors in January alone.

The momentum continues with Sports Minister Satish Sharma's recent visit to inaugurate a skiing camp and the ongoing sports activities that promise to further boost the region's appeal—(KNO)

JK Has Nearly 78% 'Untrained Teachers' At KG level

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Among all states of India, Jammu and Kashmir education sector has second highest 'Untrained Teachers' at Pre-Primary and Upper Primary levels.

Besides, the Union Territory has 4th highest untrained teachers at primary level as well.

The recent official figures reveal that the highest numbers of untrained teachers were reported in Tamil Nadu followed by Jammu and Kashmir wherein only 22.3 percent of teachers at Pre-Primary levels (Kindergartens) were trained to teach the students.

The official figures also reveal that only 16.4 percent male and 25.2 percent teach-

ers at both government and private sectors were trained to teach the students at Pre-Primary levels.

It also states that the Upper-Primary level schools in Jammu and Kashmir were also having second highest untrained teachers.

The figures suggest that at least 78.5 percent were trained to teach the students at Upper Primary level including 82 percent male and 73.4 percent female tutors.

At primary level, from 1-5 classes, Jammu and Kashmir has figured at 4th number in terms of untrained teachers.

According to the recent official figures, only 77.3 percent teachers were trained to teach at primary level including 83.8 percent male and 71.7 percent

female tutors.

On February-01, it was reported that in Jammu and Kashmir more than 98 percent of educational institutes lacks digital library services.

"Only 373 schools across Jammu and Kashmir were having digital library services available for the students," it reads.

The recent official figures reveal that "Among the total 24,296 government and private schools of Jammu and Kashmir, only 373 institutions that amount to 1.53 percent were having the digital libraries."

It also reveals that in 5452 private schools of Jammu and Kashmir, more than 12 Lakh students and in the case of 18,785 government schools, over 14 Lakh students were enrolled—(KNO)

Kashmir's Shallabugh Wetland: The Perfect Eco-Tourism Escape

Saliq Manzoor

GANDERBAL: The 1,675-hectare Shallabugh Wetland Conservation Reserve, which is located in the districts of Srinagar and Ganderbal, is quickly becoming a popular ecotourism destination. Given Ramsar status on June 8, 2022, this wetland has become well-known worldwide for its vital role in protecting biodiversity. World Wetlands Day, observed globally on February 2, marks the adoption of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 1971. This year's theme focuses on Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future.

The wetland hosts a diverse range of avian species, including Pintail, Common Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall, Mallard, Common Pochard, Red-crested Pochard, Greylag Goose, Northern Shoveler, Garganey, Steppe Eagle, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Black-bellied Tern, Eastern Imperial Eagle, Yellow-eyed Pigeon, and Wood Snipe.

A comprehensive bird census is conducted annually on February 23 and 24 to monitor the avian population accurately.

Each year, a significant number of migratory birds arrive in the area, with the current bird population estimated to be between 300,000 and 400,000. Mohammad Maqsood, the Block Officer for Wildlife at Shallabugh, said, "We are closely monitoring the birds and providing grains for food during freezing conditions. Compared to last year, the number of birds has significantly increased."



He assured that they are committed to the protection of these birds and urged hunters to refrain from targeting them. He also added that in the coming weeks of February, they expect even more birds to visit.

Maqsood mentioned that garbage from Nallah Amir Khan is polluting both the Shallabugh Wetland and Anchar Lake. He appealed to locals not to pollute the wetland by throwing garbage into the Nallah, especially near the Shallabugh Wetland area.

Bilal Bhat, a social cum environmental activist from Ganderbal, said, "February 2 is not just Wetland Day; every day should be Wetland Day. He emphasized that the beauty of Kashmir lies in its wetlands, but this beauty is truly realized when birds visit these wetlands." He expressed concern over the continuous shrinking of these wetlands, with the primary responsibility falling on the general public.

Bhat called on the government to work on the restoration, sustainability, and cleanliness of the wetlands. Bhat said, "The beauty of wetlands

is largely due to the migratory birds, and it is essential to take care of them."

Regarding Shallabugh Wetland, he mentioned that the water level is frequently reported as low, urging the government and concerned departments to implement measures for its conservation and protection.

He highlighted the need for practical steps in wetland conservation, suggesting an increase in the number of employees to ensure the maintenance of sustainability and availability of resources for migratory birds, preventing the decline of bird populations.

He also appealed to the community not to throw garbage in these wetlands.

Bhat further recommended the construction of bunds around Shallabugh Wetland to prevent water leakage, ensuring that the wetland retains water as a reserve, which is crucial for the birds. He urged the government to not just celebrate Wetland Day but also take practical actions for the conservation and preservation of these vital ecosystems.

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI

Subject: Application Gulam Ahmad Chopan S/o Abdul Gani Chopan R/o Authoora Reshipora Tehsil Kreeri for the Issuance of OBC (Other Backward Classes) in favor of Wafa Jan and Kulsooma Akhter

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the Subject cited above, the applicant has submitted the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC. In this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing village Authoora Reshipora of Tehsil Kreeri and belongs to the CHOPAN Community having annual income of Rs. 100000/- (One Lakh Only) the details of the family of the applicant are as follows:

S.No	Name of the Family Member	Relationship with the Applicant	Age	Occupation	Annual Income
01	Gulam Ahmad Chopan	Self	65	Old Aged	100000/-
02	Aabida Begum	Wife	50	House Wife	
03	Wafa Jan	Daughter	27	House Wife	
04	Kulsooma Akhter	Daughter	23	House Wife	
05	Rutba Jan	Daughter	12	Handicaped	
06	Tabasum Jan	Adopted Daughter	15	Student	

Therefore, through this Public Notice objections are being sought from the public, if any person has any objection, he/she can submit their objections in the office of the undersigned within 07 days (Seven days) positively from the date the notice has been published. No objection shall be entertained after the stipulated time period

Naib Tehsildar
FKO Kreeri

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI

Subject: Application of Abdul Rashid Bhat S/o Mohd Akbar Bhat R/o Authoora, Reshipora for the issuance of the Income Dependent certificate.

Sir,
Regarding the subject cited above, in this connection, a detailed report was sought from the patwari halqa concerned which reveals that the applicants family consists of 04 members and the Annual income of the applicant Family from all sources consists of Rs. 1,20000 (One Lakh and Twenty Thousand Only) Moreover, family structure of the applicant is as under:

S.NO	NAME OF LEGAL HIER	RELATION WITH DEPENDENT	AGE	OCCUPATION	Marital Status
1	Abdul Rashid Bhat	Self	55	Labor	Married
2	Misra Begum	Wife	51	Housewife	Married
3	Umar Mukhtar	Son	26	Student	Unmarried
4	Khalid Ahmad Bhat	Son	20	Student	Unmarried

It is further submitted that Abdul Rashid Bhat S/o Mohd Akbar Bhat is Labor by profession and is sole earning hand in the said family. The applicant needs income Dependent certificate in favour of his son namely Umar Mukhtar for Marriage Assistance.

The applicant has applied for issuance of Income Dependent certificate. As such the instant matter is published through newspaper, if anyone is having any kind of objection, He/she may approach this office within 7 days (Seven Days) of the publication of this notice. After passing of stipulated time of 7 days (Seven Days), No objections will be entertained.

Naib Tehsildar
FKO Kreeri

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI

Subject: Application of Ghulam Mohiuddin Pandit S/o Mohammad Ishaq Pandit R/o Authoora, Reshipora for the issuance of the Income Dependent certificate.

Sir,
Regarding the subject cited above, in this connection, a detailed report was sought from the patwari halqa concerned which reveals that the applicants family consists of 10 members and the Annual income of the applicant Family from all sources consists of Rs. 1,10000 (One Lakh and Ten Thousand Only) Moreover, family structure of the applicant is as under:

S.NO	NAME OF LEGAL HIER	RELATION WITH DEPENDENT	AGE	OCCUPATION	Marital Status
1	Ghulam Mohiuddin Pandit	Self	50	Labor	Married
2	Fatima Begum	Wife	48	Housewife	Married
3	Zahid Hussain Pandith	Brother	39	Disable	Unmarried
4	Jameela Mohiuddin	Daughter	22	Disable	Unmarried
5	Ishrat Fatimah	Daughter	21	Student	--DD--
6	Zeeshan Hussain Pandith	Son	19	--DD--	--DD--
7	Nusrat Mohiuddin	Daughter	14	--DD--	--DD--
8	Shahida Akhtar	Daughter	11	--DD--	--DD--
9	Jozya Akhter	Daughter	10	--DD--	--DD--
10	Farhan Hussain	Son	7	--DD--	--DD--

It is further submitted that Ghulam Mohiuddin Pandit S/o Mohammad Ishaq Pandit is Labor by profession and is sole earning hand in the said family. The applicant needs income Dependent certificate in favour of Marriage Assistance, Scholarship for Ishrat Fatimah. The applicant has applied for issuance of Income Dependent certificate. As such the instant matter is published through newspaper, if anyone is having any kind of objection, He/she may approach this office within 7 days (Seven Days) of the publication of this notice. After passing of stipulated time of 7 days (Seven Days), No objections will be entertained.

Naib Tehsildar
FKO Kreeri

Sanju Samson Fractures Index Finger, Out Of Action For Five To Six Weeks

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Star wicket-keeper-batter Sanju Samson has fractured his index finger after being hit by a Jofra Archer scorching during the fifth T20 International against England in Mumbai and will be out of action for more than a month, side-lining him from the upcoming Ranji Trophy quarterfinals.

It is learnt that Sanju has returned to his home base Thiruvananthapuram and will only start training after completing his rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA). He would

need NCA's green light before returning to competitive action.

"Samson has fractured his right index finger. It will take him five to six weeks before he can resume proper nets. So there is no chance of him playing the Ranji Trophy quarter-final for Kerala (vs J&K) in Pune from February 8-12," a BCCI source in the know of things told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"In all likelihood, his comeback will happen in the IPL for Rajasthan Royals," he added.

Samson, who had a poor series against England and

is not a part of the ODI set-up, was hit off the third ball bowled by Archer which was close to 150 clicks.

While he hit another six and four, the swelling increased once he was back in the dug-out. The scans showed a fracture.

Samson, who came into the T20I series after a stupendous run against Bangladesh and South Africa with three centuries in seven games, missed the Champions Trophy selection as he hadn't played a single Vijay Hazare Trophy game.

The England series turned out to be an underwhelming one for the flamboyant

Rajasthan Royals skipper, who scored only 51 in five games with 26 in the opening game at the Eden Gardens being his top score.

He was consistently troubled by the short deliveries from Archer, Mark Wood, and Saqib Mahmood and was mostly dismissed within the first Powerplay.

With India not due to have any white-ball assignments after Champions Trophy till end of July, the 30-year-old Samson will have to wait considerably for his next opportunity, which would be an away series against Bangladesh in August.



Short TAKES

Dutch FA Instructors Call On Secretary J&K Sports Council

A delegation of instructors from the KNVB Dutch Football Association met with Secretary J&K Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul, on Monday to discuss ongoing and future initiatives aimed at strengthening the sport in the region.

The discussions focused on a strategic roadmap covering short-, mid- and long-term goals, with a particular emphasis on women's football, coach and referee education, youth exchange programs, and expanding the game in rural, tribal and border areas. Given football's global appeal and its growing popularity in India, the meeting also addressed grassroots development to nurture young talent.

The possibility of formalizing collaborations through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was explored to further enhance football infrastructure and training programs in the region. The initiative is being coordinated by Roger, Raymond, Pinho Dsouza and Deepak Khanlokhar from Acosa Sports Infrastructure, Mumbai.

J&K Sports Council in collaboration with KNVB Dutch Football Association organised a five day Refresher football coaching course from February 1 at Mini Stadium Parade in Jammu with 35 local coaches participating in the KNVB World Coaches Program.

Tickets For India's Champions Trophy Matches Go On Sale

The tickets for India's three group-stage Champions Trophy matches and the first semifinal scheduled to take place in Dubai will begin on Monday evening, the ICC announced.

This edition of the Champions Trophy is scheduled to be held across Pakistan and Dubai from February 19. India will be playing their games in Dubai.

The tickets, which start from AED 125 (INR 2,900 approx), will be available for purchase starting 5:30pm IST.

Ticket sales for the 10 matches scheduled in Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi, have already gone on general sale last week.

"Tickets for the much-anticipated final, set to take place on Sunday, 9 March, will be released following the conclusion of the first semi-final in Dubai," the ICC said.

The Champions Trophy will feature the world's top eight teams, competing in 15 high-stakes matches over 19 days, with every game crucial in the quest to reign in the coveted white jackets.

Head, Sutherland Bag Top Honours At Australian Cricket Awards

Star batter Travis Head was named the winner of the prestigious Allan Border Medal for the top Australian men's cricketer, while young all-rounder Annabel Sutherland was awarded the Belinda Clark Medal at the Australian Cricket Awards held in Melbourne on Monday.

Head, who had an outstanding year across all three formats with 1,427 runs since the start of the polling period, received 208 votes to secure the top honour, surpassing Josh Hazlewood (158 votes) and Pat Cummins (147 votes).

The 31-year-old Head also took home the Men's ODI Player-of-the-Year award and finished second in the Twenty20 and Test Player-of-the-Year awards. Head won the ODI honours despite figuring in just five of the 11 ODIs that Australia played during the eligibility period.

DG YSS Attends Skiing Course Closing Event In Gulmarg

Observer News Service

GULMARG: The concluding ceremony of the Department of Youth Services and Sports' Annual Skiing Course at Gulmarg on Monday, saw Director General Rajinder Singh Tara attend the vibrant event. The second skiing course had the participation of 50 girl skiers from various districts across J&K.

The enthusiastic girl trainees added vibrancy to the event by presenting cultural performances before the dignitaries, underscoring the festive spirit of the occasion.

Expressing his joy at the Department's consistent efforts, the DG YSS highlighted the significance of providing government school students with access to world-class skiing facilities.

"It is immensely satisfying to see students, particularly those from lesser-exposed backgrounds, gaining invaluable experience on the internationally acclaimed slopes of Gulmarg," he said.



With a vision to further expand skiing training in J&K, the DG announced the commencement of new courses at Sonamarg and future plans to introduce similar initiatives in other renowned tourist destinations like Pahalgam and Yousmarg.

"This initiative will not only equip students with expert training but also contribute to the growth of winter tourism and the local economy," he added.

During the ceremony, Hilal Ahmed Shah, Incharge of Gulmarg Hutments (YSS), extended a heartfelt vote of thanks to the DG YSS for gracing the

event. The event was also attended by senior officers and officials of YSS, including District Youth Services and Sports Officer Baramullah, Accounts Officer, SO Planning, SO Establishment and Incharge Activities Directorate of YSS.

To ensure the highest quality of training, the YSS had enlisted a team of skilled and certified instructors, including Course Incharge Muzamil Ahmad Dar, Qadeer Ahmad, Shah Faisal, Masooda, Yasmeena, Sajid Ahmad Sofi, Fayaz Ahmad Dhobi, M Abid Bhat, Tanveer Ahmad, and M Ashraf Bhat.

Real Kashmir Remain Unbeaten At Home, Beat Shillong 2-0

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Real Kashmir FC extended their unbeaten home run in the 2024-25 I-League with a commanding 2-0 victory over Shillong Lajong FC on Sunday at TRC Ground here.

With this win, the Snow Leopards climbed to the fourth position in the standings with 19 points from 12 matches, while Lajong dropped to seventh with 16 points from the same number of games. The Srinagar club has now played eight home matches this season, securing five wins and three draws.

Braving the cold and backed by a strong home crowd of over 6,000, Real Kashmir displayed tactical discipline on Sunday and controlled the game from the outset. However, Shillong Lajong, fresh from a Northeast Derby win against Aizawl FC, started with confidence and created early chances.

Real Kashmir's goalkeeper Zahid Bukhari



proved instrumental in keeping the visitors at bay.

The hosts had their own scoring opportunities, notably when Kamal Issah attempted a header over Lajong goalkeeper Ranit Sarkar, but defender Aman Ahlawat made a goalline clearance.

Real Kashmir eventually broke the deadlock in first-half stoppage time. A long throw from the left found Cameroonian defender Bouba Aminou inside the box, and he rose above the defenders to head home his third goal of the season, sending

the home fans into celebration.

In the second half, Lajong pushed forward in search of an equalizer, but Real Kashmir's solid defensive organization denied them any breakthroughs.

The Snow Leopards sealed the game in the 88th minute when Mohammed Aqib's long pass found Issah. The Ghanaian midfielder outpaced Maxderidoff Wahlang and calmly slotted the ball past an onrushing Sarkar, ensuring RKFC's dominant home run remained intact.

28th year OF PUBLICATION

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

YouTube

VISIT

<https://www.youtube.com/c/kobserver>

OR SCAN

The methods used to consume news have changed over time from newspapers, to television, to the Internet on our computers to carrying the news around with us 24/7 on smartphones in our pockets.

Kashmir Observer, with 28 years of experience in news gathering is now available 24x7 on all digital platforms like laptops, cell phones or via Bluetooth on your smart TVs across the world.

Kashmir Observer is a one stop information bank for you. Watch live debates, talk shows and documentaries on critical issues facing Kashmir on KO youtube channel.

OUR SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

THE OTHER SIDE
INKISHAF
VOX POP
UNRAVEL KASHMIR