

'Anti-Alcohol' Signboard Removal Sparks Outrage



Tashir Khan

Srinagar: The removal of a signboard by the police in Lal Chowk, Srinagar, which urged tourists to respect local culture and avoid alcohol and drug use, has sparked controversy. The move has drawn criticism from political leaders, traders, and the public, with many questioning the administration's commitment to community-driven initiatives.

The signboard, which was installed by the Traders Association Central Lal Chowk Srinagar, welcomed visitors with a message encouraging them to "love and cherish their families" while respecting local traditions. It specifically advised tourists to refrain from consuming alcohol, using drugs, spitting on the streets, and smoking in public areas. However, within an hour of its installation, authorities reportedly took it

down, prompting accusations of cultural suppression and a lack of political will.

Several prominent political figures, including Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Member of Parliament Aga Ruhullah Mehdi, condemned the removal.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq wrote on his Twitter, "Why was this signboard seized? What exactly is wrong with urging tourists to respect local culture, avoid alcohol and the use of drugs, and keep the city clean?"

"Is promoting moral values and decency now a crime in Kashmir?" Mirwaiz questioned.

Mehdi also took to social media to express his frustration, writing on X (formerly Twitter), "Even appealing to tourists to respect local sensitivities is now illegal in Kashmir. Will @JmuKmrPolice clarify which law was violated by the signboard? Or is the only | More on P10

J&K Budget Session

Speaker Convenes All-party Meet On Feb 27

Agencies

Srinagar: Ahead of the budget session, the Speaker of Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly has called an all-party meeting on February 27 to ensure smooth functioning of the 43-day long session beginning on March 03.

Sources said that Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather has invited two leaders each from the ruling National Conference and main opposition party Bharatiya Janta Party and one leader each from Congress, Peoples Democratic Party, Peoples



Conference and CPI (M) to attend the meeting to be chaired by him on Thursday at 1.00 AM in his office chamber at Jammu. They disclosed that

independent MLA Muzaffar Iqbal Khan has also been invited.

"We have ensured representation to all recognized and registered parties having

members in the House," an official said.

According to sources, Ali Mohammad Sagar (NC), Mubarak Gul (NC), Sunil Kumar Sharma (BJP), Surjeet Singh Slathia (BJP), Ghulam Ahmed Mir (Congress), Sajad Gani Lone (Peoples Conference), Muhammad Yousouf Tarigami (CPI-M), Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra (PDP) and Muzaffar Iqbal Khan (independent) have been invited.

The 43-day-long session beginning from March 3 is expected to be stormy with opposition parties set to corner the | More on P10

Zee TV's Naseer Ahmad Passes Away

Journalism Fraternity Mourns His Demise



KO WEB DESK

Srinagar: The journalistic fraternity in Kashmir has expressed shock at the demise of Naseer Ahmad, a senior journalist and former Bureau Chief of Zee News in Kashmir.

A respected figure in the media landscape, Naseer Ahmad played a pivotal role in shaping journalism in the region. | More on P10

Mirwaiz's Security Upgraded, CRPF Deployed

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Centre has enhanced the security cover for Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) now tasked with ensuring his safety due to elevated threat perceptions.

While CRPF officials have declined to comment, sources familiar with the matter confirmed that the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) decided to upgrade Mirwaiz's security following increased risks, particularly after his visit to Delhi last month, reported The Tribune. | More on P10

Power Shortage Fears Rise In J&K; PDD Outlines Plans

Agencies

Srinagar: Amid apprehension of power shortfall in the months to come in view of less snowfall and water level, Power Development Department (PDD) Saturday said that it has contingency plan to tackle the situation.

Besides, the officials of PDD said that more Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) need to enter in the years to come.

A top official of PDD said, "More PPA needs to enter in the years to come to meet the

growing demand."

"We are making a prospective plan before entering a new PPA in accordance with the estimated power demands," the official said.

The official further said, "PPAs are to be taken a year or two before so that the plan is prepared in advance."

On asking about the apprehensions of power generation shortfall in view of less snowfall and low water level, the official said, "The government always takes backup | More on P10



'Festive Outlook, Clean Premises' DSEK Issues Guidelines For Reopening Of Schools

Observer News Service

Srinagar- Ahead of reopening of schools, the Education Department Saturday directed school heads to ensure premises of institutions are neat and clean and with a festive outlook.

Directorate of School Education Kashmir in a circular said that the schools are going to reopen on March 1st after winter vacations which needs to be celebrated as a welcome event.

DSEK advised heads that the reopening of schools needs to be celebrated in

a festive ambience to attract students in a conducive school environment.

"The Hols shall ensure mobilisation including preparation of Institutional Plan and time table, sanitation, etc. well in advance," it reads.

DSEK further said that the heads shall be responsible for keeping all requisite arrangements ready before opening of schools and ensure minor repairs and retrofitting, if required, with regard to drinking water, electricity, toilets, window panes etc to be taken well in advance. | More on P10

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Scholarships This Week

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

Scholarship Name 1: The Doon School Scholarship Examination (DSSE) 2025

Description: The Doon School Scholarship Examination (DSSE) is an annual entrance exam conducted by the Doon School, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. The scholarship exam is open to male students entering Class 7 or 8, whose families may find it difficult to pay the school fees.

Eligibility: This is open to Indian male students. Applicants must be between 11 to 13 years old as of 30th September 2025. Students must be promoted to Class 7 or 8 in the upcoming academic year.

Prizes & Rewards: An opportunity to pursue studies at the Doon School with financial assistance in the form of scholarship.

Last Date to Apply: 15-04-2025

Application mode: Online and offline via email at admissions@doonschool.com

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/DSSE2

QR Code: https://d2w711p59qk10r.

Scholarship Name 2: SBIF Asha Scholarship Program for Overseas Education 2024-25

Description: The SBIF Asha Scholarship Program for Overseas Education Students, one of India's largest scholarship programs, is an initiative of the SBI Foundation under its education vertical - Integrated Learning Mission (ILM). This scholarship aims to provide financial assistance to meritorious students from low-income families across India, ensuring the continuity of their education.

Eligibility: Open to Indian students belonging to SC and ST categories pursuing a master's or postgraduate course (any year) at a premier university or college outside India. They should have secured at least 75% marks or above in their previous academic year, with a gross annual family income of up to INR 6,00,000.

Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 20,00,000 or 50% of course-related expenses (whichever is less)

Last Date to Apply: 31-03-2025

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SBIF12

QR Code: https://d2w711p59qk10r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/



Scholarship Name 3: J N Tata Endowment Loan Scholarship for Fall 2025 to Spring 2026

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

Eligibility: Open for Indian citizens who have completed at least one undergraduate degree OR students who are in the final year of any undergraduate programme at a recognised university/college/institution in India. Candidates must be interested in pursuing Post-graduate/Doctoral/Postdoctoral studies abroad. The course for which candidates are admitted must be recognized as a Graduate Program (post-graduate in Indian terminology). Candidates who did not get selected in the previous year/earlier for the J N Tata

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

Prizes & Rewards: Loan scholarship amount based on merit

Last Date to Apply: 07-03-2025

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/JNT9

QR Code: https://d2w711p59qk10r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/jn-tata-endowment-loan-scholarship-for-fall-2025-to-spring-20261736494251.png

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) ELECTRIC DIVISION KASHMIR, ENGINEERING
Complex Srinagar Rajbagh,
Near Silk Factory Srinagar-190008.
(Short Term) NOTICE INVITING TENDER
E-NIT No.212/R&B/Electric Division Kashmir of 2024-25 issued under Endorsement No: ERB/10586-94 DATED:18-02-2025.

For and on behalf of The Government of J&K(U)/Tenders (in Double cover system) are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K UT Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/UT/Central Government Departments for the following works:-

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (In Lacs)	Cost of Tender (In Rs.)	2% Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time of Completion (in Calendar Days)	Class of Contract	Major Head of Account	Remarks
01	Repair Renovation of Divisional Office at Valloo including Allied Works BWO Electrification.	Rs. 3.815/= Lacs	Rs. 200/=	Rs. 7,630/=	10 Days	"A1" Class Electrical	MH-2216 (Non Plan)	Authorization approved by Chief Engineer PW (R&B) South Kashmir vide Endorsement No. ARD/SK/A2 dated-26-11-2024
02	Construction of Inspection Hut at Sub Divisional Office at Kokerbag BWO Electrification.	Rs. 8.094 / = Lacs	Rs. 600/=	Rs. 16,190/=	10 Days	"A1" Class Electrical	NFB/Copex Budget 2024-25	Record of Administrative Approval Accorded by Superintending Engineer pw (R&B) Circle Anantnag vide order No.31/SE/R&B/Anag/AA A/OF 2024-25 Dated-07-11-2024

1 Date of Issue of Tender Notice: 18-02-2025
2 Period of downloading of bidding documents: 19-02-2025 from 12.00 PM
3 Bid submission Start Date: 19-02-2025 from 12.00 PM
4 Bid Submission End Date: 27-02-2025 upto 04.00 PM
5 Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online): 28-02-2025 at 02.00 PM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division Kashmir, Engineering Complex Srinagar Rajbagh.
6 Date & time of opening of Financial Bids(Online): To be notified after technical bid drawing is completed.

The bidding documents, consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, drawings, bill of quantities (BOQ), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:
Note: The bidders are advised to read all conditions laid down in the E-NIT carefully before uploading soft copy.
As per Circular issued by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir Civil Secretariat/Finance department vide No. OM No. 2242024 dt. 07.02.2024 which is attached herewith.

a) Furnishing of Hard Copies of bids immediately after submission of e-tenders is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from the Bidder who's declared as Lowest (L1) after opening of financial bids.

1. The cost of tender document should be collected by introducing Treasury Challan (Receipt).

1.1. The successful Bidder has to produce Performance Security Deposit @5% of contract value in the shape of CDR/FDR/IRG after issuance of Letter of Acceptance which shall be released after successful completion of work with D.D. The EMD @ 2% of successful bidder will be released only after the submission of 5% performance Security deposit.

1.2. The bidder who ever participate in the e-tenders floated by this office will submit Additional Performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/IRG in case the bidder has submitted the below Percentage Bid against the Advertised Cost for the work as per below mentioned Percentage Breakup in order to avoid unbalanced e-tender and shall be released after 70% completion of work.

S. No.	% age of Unbalanced bid Viz-a-viz advertised cost on account of Low Rate.	Additional Performance security to be Deposited on quoted bid by L1
1.	Upto and including 15%	Nil
2.	Greater than 15% upto & including 20%	5%
3.	Greater than 20% upto & including 25%	10%
4.	Greater than 25% upto & including 30%	15%
5.	Greater than 30% below	20%

The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division Kashmir, Srinagar. (Tender receiving authority)

2. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 30 days from the date of opening of bids.

3. The Employer reserves the right to invite fresh tender without any Prior Notice to the Bidders.

4. The earnest money (EMD) shall be released in favour of unsuccessful bidders only after submission of Treasury Challan

5. The earnest money may be forfeited if:-
a. Any bidder / tendered with draws his bid / tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
b. Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
c. Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
d. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

6.1. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
6.2. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get "Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)" as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.
6.3. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature.
6.4. No bid will be accepted in physical form.
6.5. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
6.6. Bidders must insure to upload can need copy of all necessary documents with the bid.
7. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
8. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.

8.1. **Price escalation and Taxes:** The percentage quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees and the percentage rates quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work, unless otherwise specified. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

9. Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to stores much documents as are required.

10. In case of CRF and any other specified project the relevant guidelines/ standard bidding document shall be followed.

11. Bidders should note that if the documents uploaded/submitted on the basis of which the contract has been awarded are found fake/not genuine at any time, the contract shall be cancelled and the contractor/bidder shall be blacklisted for participation in this division for a period of five years besides the performance security deposited for the said work shall be forfeited.

12. **Instructions to Bidder (ITB)**

12.1. All bidders shall include the following information and documents with their bids:-
a. All bidders shall upload the Scanned copy of the Latest Enlistment Registration Contractor License duly renewed for the current year.
b. Scanned copy of GSTIN Registration No. certificate with return clearance certificate (Form GST-3B) for the month of December 2024. Quarter: October to December.
c. Scanned copy of PAN Card. (As reflected in GST Return, GST Form-3B).
d. Scanned copy of valid contact number E-mail id.
e. All bidders shall upload Treasury Challan (Tender document cost) (dated between the bid submission start date and the Bid submission End date) by debit to M.H.0059 in favour of Executive Engineer (R&B) Electric Division Kashmir (Tender inviting authority). Mentioning NIT No./S.No./Name of the work/Name of the division as per Annexure I.
f. Scanned copy of Earnest money in shape of CDR/FDR/Pledged to Executive Engineer (R&B) Electric Division Kashmir (Tender inviting Authority), (dated between the bid submission start date and the Bid submission End date).
g. The successful bidder shall submit the scanned copy of Latest renewed JKPWDOMS Contractor card valid for the current year before issuance of contract allotment.
h. The successful bidder has to execute the agreement and subsequently submit the same to this office within same day after issuance of formal allotment order for commencement of work as per the terms and condition laid.

No.ERB/10586-94
DIPK-12306/24 DATED:22-02-2025

SD/-
Executive Engineer,
(R&B) Electric Division Kashmir
Engineering Complex Srinagar Rajbagh

OFFICE OF THE BLOCK MEDICAL OFFICER QAZIGUND NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION (NHM)
Email: -bpmuqazigund@gmail.com

No: NHM/QZD/..... Dated:.....

E-Tender Notice No: 02 of 2024-25
DATED: 21/02/2025

Sub: E-tender is invited for Hiring of Commercial vehicles having valid permit for RBSK Mobile Health Teams, under National Health Mission at Block Qazigund District Kulgam.

For and on behalf of Government of Union Territory of J&K through the Block Medical Officer Qazigund, e-tender is invited under two bid system (Technical bid and financial bid) from for empanelment of Tour /Vehicle Operators/Owners for the Mobile Health Teams under Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakaram (RBSK), National Health Mission in Medical Block Qazigund.

The cost of the tender documents is Rs.500/- (Five Hundred only) in the shape of Bank Draft (Nonrefundable) should be payable to Block Medical Qazigund and the successful bidder will have to submit an EMD in the shape of CDR per vehicle @ of 2.5% of rate quoted by him in BOQ pledged to Block Medical Officer Qazigund, shall be released only after successful completion of contract period.

The detailed tender document containing quantity and other terms and conditions, is available on www.jktenders.gov.in and complete bidding process will be online on said e-tender portal, as per following schedule:

S. No.	Activity Description	Schedule
1.	Tender Fee in the shape of CDR/FDR (pledged to Block Medical Officer Qazigund)	Rs 500
2.	Date & time for downloading of tenders	24/02/2025 (09:00 am) to 05/03/2025 (06:00 pm)
3.	Any clarification with regard to e-NIT shall be entertained only from (No representation/clarification shall be entertained beyond the stipulated period)	24/02/2025 to 27/02/2025 (During Office Hours)
4.	Start/ Last date & time for submission of tenders	24/02/2025 (09:00 am) to 05/03/2025 (06:00 pm)
5.	Date & Time for opening of technical bids	06/03/2025 (11:30 am)

Complete bidding process will be online at www.jktenders.gov.in (Technical and Price bids shall have to be submitted in electronic format on the said tender portal and in no case be submitted in physical form.

The Block Medical Officer Qazigund reserves the right to accept/reject or cancel any tender or all tenders in full or part thereof without assigning any reason.

The tenders should be submitted strictly in accordance with the provisions of the detailed eNIT.

DIPK-12321/24 dated:22-02-2025

Block Medical Officer,
Qazigund

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

Subject: E-Tender (Request for Proposal) for Empanelment of Event Management Agency/Agencies for Directorate of Tourism Kashmir - Corrigendum thereof.

Ref: 1. ENIT issued by this office vide No. DTK/Pub/204-A/26, dated 24.01.2025. 2. JK Tenders ID 2025_Tour_271044_1.

CORRIGENDUM

In reference to the above mentioned subject the following corrigendum with regard to extension of dates is issued:

S.No.	Events	Previous Date	Fresh Date
1.	Bid Submission End Date and Time	21.02.2025 (04:00 PM)	28.02.2025 (04:00 PM)
2.	Date, time and venue of opening of Pre-Qualification and Technical Proposals	22.02.2025 (11:30 AM)	01.03.2025 (11:30 AM)
3.	Date, time and venue for the Technical Presentation	To be communicated separately	To be communicated separately
4.	Place, time and date of opening of Financial Proposals	To be declared to technically qualified bidders separately, through e-mail and through J&K e-Tendering Website https://jktenders.gov.in	To be declared to technically qualified bidders separately, through e-mail and through J&K e-Tendering Website https://jktenders.gov.in

Note: The other terms and conditions as mentioned in the tender Document (RFP) shall remain the same.

No: DTK/Pub/204-A/71 Dated: 19/02/2025

DIPK-12324/24 dated: 22-02-2025

SD/-
Accounts Officer
Directorate of Tourism
Kashmir

NOTICE

We the following persons propose to re-register a non-profitable society under the name and style of **Talaash "A Way of Hope"** with the registrar of Societies J&K Srinagar Act 1860.

01. Mohd Latief Bhat : Chairman
02. Iqbal Hassan Mir : Vice-Chairman
03. Bilal Ahmad Wani : Secretary
04. Junaid Hilal : Treasurer
05. Fayaz Ahmad Bhat : Member
06. Sheikh Sheraz Ahmad : Member
07. Muheet Ahmad Parry : Member

Any person having any objection in this re-regard may be sent in writing/ in person/ through authorised representative to Registrar of Societies within a period of 21 days from the date of publication of this notice.

SD/-
Chairman
walnut ads

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card bearing no: 24046907981 as

Particulars	Wrong	Correct
Name	Kounser Akhter	Kowsar Jan
Husband's Name	Mohd Akram Khan	Mohd Akram Manhas
Residence	Pishawari Mohalla Zawrah Shopian	

Now I have applied correction of the same. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Kowsar Jan
W/o Mohd Akram Manhas
R/o Shadab Karewa Shopian fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card as

Particulars	Wrong	Correct
Name	Naseema Begum	Naseema Akhter
Husband's Name	Manzoor Ahmad Ganai	Manzoor Ahmad Ganie

Now I have applied correction of the same. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Naseema Akhter
W/o Gh Manzoor Ahmad Ganie
R/o Domawanl Tukroo Keegam Shopian fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my Adhaar card bearing no: 524806427151 as Noora Begum D/O : Mohammad Akbar Najar while my correct name is Noori Begum W/o Gh Rasool Najar which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Noori Begum
W/o Gh Rasool Najar
R/o Andergam Pattan fko_r

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار کیری ایچ ایس نائب تحصیلدار کیری

درخواست نمائندگی سائل غلام حسن نیجار ولد عبدالرحمن نیجار سائنٹیفک بورڈ برادرسول

سرٹیفکیٹ تحت این ایس اے او 126/ 294/ بقیہ بقیہ اسرارسن

استھارہ سراسر آگاہی ہر حتم و وسام

معاملہ مندرجہ ذیل میں اصرار سن غلام حسن نیجار ولد عبدالرحمن نیجار سائنٹیفک بورڈ

دفتر میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت رپورٹ پڑھائی ہے یہاں سے سائل کا مکین (کے) 05 افراد پر مشتمل ہے نیکی سالانہی ہمتہ آدائی 37000 تک ہے

سائل کے افراد غلام مندرجہ ذیل ہے

1. غلام حسن نیجار ولد عبدالرحمن نیجار سربرہ 58 سال ترکمان
2. ظلیہ بیگم زوجہ 56 سال گھریلو کام
3. مدر احمد نیجار پسر 28 سال ترکمان
4. ربیہ بانو بیوہ 26 سال گھریلو کام
5. اسرارسن دختر 19 سال زیر تعلیم

اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد نہیں بتلا گیا ہے ہذا اتمام موصوم خاص و عام کو بریڈا اشتہار مطالع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی کو سرٹیفکیٹ نکالنے میں کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ دینے کے اندر اندر پیش کریں معاذ گرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار کیری fko

Free Books, Hijab Distribution Campaign Applauded



Agencies

SRINAGAR: A free books and hijab distribution campaign at Zero Bridge in Rajbagh area on Saturday garnered widespread appreciation from locals and pediatricians alike.

The initiative aimed to spread awareness about religion and promote peace in society, while books included "Islamic and other books."

One of the organizers, who named himself as Wasif, present at the stall said the campaign was set up to educate people about social awareness, bring them closer to their religion and encourage harmony.

He said they have set up two stalls for males and females alike, and their aim is to make people aware of the importance of reconnecting with their religion and refraining from spreading nudity and vulgarity, either on social media or elsewhere.

A female representative at the stall said the importance of this campaign lies in guiding the younger generation. "We have kept religious books in multiple translations, including Hindi, English, and Arabic, so that people can understand Islam better," she said, adding that the initiative also seeks to discourage vulgarity and

inappropriate behavior in public spaces and on social media. "We have also kept other books for those who understand languages like English, Hindi, and others."

Additionally, locals and pediatricians praised the campaign, calling it a step toward instilling moral values and raising awareness about religious teachings. "Such initiatives help shape a better society and guide the youth in the right direction," a pediatrician said.

Muneer, a student who was walking on the bridge, reacted by saying, "This initiative is really inspiring, especially for young people like us. It not only helps us understand the teachings of Islam but also encourages us to stay connected with our faith in a meaningful way. The availability of books in different languages makes it accessible to everyone," he said.

Tahoor, a local resident from Rajbagh, said, "It is refreshing to see such events being organized in the heart of Srinagar. In today's fast-paced world, people often forget the essence of their faith. Initiatives like this serve as a reminder of our roots and promote a message of peace and understanding within the community," he said—(KNO)

KVIB Organizes Awareness Camp At ITI



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) successfully organized an awareness camp at I.T.I. Srinagar to sensitize the general public about the various government schemes being implemented by the Board.

The program was attended by Deputy CEO KVIB, Chief Planning Officer, Block Development Officer, Lead District Manager Srinagar, Director RSETI, Line Departments, Branch Heads of various banks and other dignitaries.

The event witnessed an enthusiastic response from the local community, entrepreneurs, and aspiring businesspersons.

The camp aimed to educate participants about the wide range of opportunities available under the flagship programs of KVIB, including the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and other state-specific schemes designed to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship in rural areas.

Addressing the gathering, KVIB officials emphasized the importance of utilizing these schemes to boost local industries and empower urban/rural communities. The session included detailed presentations about the financial assistance, subsidies, and technical support provided under the schemes to facilitate the establishment

of small and medium enterprises.

Special emphasis was laid on the production of eco-friendly products and leveraging traditional crafts to enhance economic sustainability. Participants were also guided on the application process, eligibility criteria, and necessary documentation required availing of these benefits.

The event featured interactive sessions, where experts addressed queries and provided personalized consultations to attendees. Success stories of beneficiaries who have established thriving businesses under KVIB schemes were also shared to inspire and motivate others.

It is pertinent to mention here that KVIB Srinagar has sanctioned/forwarded 2348 cases under PMEGP scheme to different Banks involving margin money Rs: 2028.30 lakh and 15 cases under JKREGP involving margin money Rs: 47.25 lakh.

Speaking at the event, a senior KVIB official stated, "We are committed to creating awareness about these schemes and ensuring that the benefits reach the grassroots level." The camp concluded with the distribution of informational booklets and registration forms to interested participants. KVIB assured that similar awareness programs would be conducted in other regions to extend the reach of their initiatives.



Food Safety Raids Intensify In City Ahead Of Ramzan

Agencies

SRINAGAR: With Ramzan approaching, the authorities, including the Food Safety Department, have intensified enforcement drives in Srinagar, cracking down on vendors selling unhygienic and substandard food.

An evening inspection was conducted in the Civil Lines areas to ensure ready-to-eat food meets safety standards and was part of continuous drives ongoing for the last couple of weeks.

Senior officials from the Food Safety Department, Srinagar have been conducting the drive for the past couple of weeks and warning vendors against cutting corners. The aim of these drives is to maintain hygiene and the quality of food. "Clean food is not a choice, but it is a necessity. Violators will face strict action," an official from the department said.

He said the goal is to ensure that people consume safe and quality food, especially with Ramadan around the corner. "Vendors must strictly adhere to the Food Safety and Standards Act, and those violating hygiene norms will be dealt with firmly," he added.

Meanwhile, local residents have welcomed the crackdown, demanding more frequent inspections. "These checks bring accountability. We need to be sure that the food we buy is safe, especially during Ramzan," said Shahid Ahmad, a resident of Sonawar.

Faheed, another resident, urged authorities to extend inspections beyond major markets. "Many street vendors in smaller neighbourhoods sell food in unsanitary conditions. The department should monitor them too," he said.

The department also continued its

evening inspection in the downtown area, covering locations such as Habakafal, Fatehkadal, Bohrikadal, Rajori Kadal, and Saraf Kadal.

Led by Assistant Commissioner Food Safety Srinagar Yameen ul Nabi, along with Food Safety Officers Syed Dilpazir, Khalid Bashir, and Hakeem Adil, the team identified six food business operators violating provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act.

To address these issues, the team provided one-on-one awareness sessions to street vendors, emphasizing the importance of basic food safety aspects, hygiene, and sanitary conditions in their premises. Yameen ul Nabi stressed that anyone found violating the Food Safety and Standards Act will face strict action, and advised food business operators to properly protect and cover open food items to prevent environmental hazards. (KNO)



FAHEED, ANOTHER RESIDENT, URGED AUTHORITIES TO EXTEND INSPECTIONS BEYOND MAJOR MARKETS. "Many street vendors in smaller neighbourhoods sell food in unsanitary conditions. The department should monitor them too," he said.

PDP's Iltija Starts Signature Campaign Favoring Alcohol Ban

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Days after the legislators moved private bills seeking complete ban on alcohol ahead of the maiden budget session, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Iltija Mufti on Friday started a signature campaign in Jammu and Kashmir in this regard.

Three legislators from National Conference (NC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) have moved private bills for the upcoming budget session, seeking complete ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir.

In this regard, Iltija Mufti kicked-off a signature campaign at the PDP headquarters in Srinagar to spur support for a complete ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir.

In her 17 minute video, Iltija has stated that the campaign has been started in Srinagar today and it will be next carried out in Budgam district. She has sought the support from the ruling NC and other parties with regard to ensuring complete ban on the consumption and sale of alcohol.

The PDP leader has however, reacted to the statement of NC leader, stating that the ban on alcohol has



nothing to do with tourism as the Gujarat like states would have never banned the alcohol.

"Drugs and alcohol is a social issue and it touches our society in an adverse way. The parties should not fight on it. We welcome all the parties to join us and help us create awareness among the masses in different districts about alcohol and drugs as both are detrimental to our health," she said.

"We want more interactions with the young generations on drugs and

alcohol to ensure that their future is prosperous and they are saved from this evil," she said.

The PDP leader also said that a PDP MLA Fayaz Mir has already moved a private bill in this regard and thus everyone should support it and ensure that the ban on alcohol is ensured.

She also appealed people to sign through digitally and support the signature campaign on alcohol ban, adding that they want that Jammu and Kashmir should be drug and alcohol free soon—(KNO)

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER
8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

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

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

KASHMER / Kashmir American Society of Healthcare, Medical Education & Research, In collaboration with HPVT / Help Poor Voluntary Trust, is initiating a free 8 weeks Group Therapy for the individuals suffering with OCD by a team of counselling clinical psychologists led by leading consultant clinical psychologist of I & K.

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

You do not have to fight your battles alone.

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

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

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
24 Shaban
1446

PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 43
ZUHR	12: 44
ASR	4:42
Magrib	6:24
ISHA	7:44

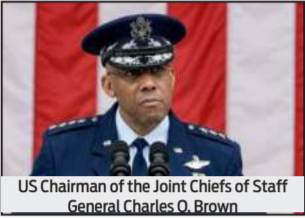
This Day In History

- 1455- Johannes Gutenberg prints his first Bible (estimated date) [1] 1540- Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's expedition sets off from Mexico in search of the 7 cities of Cibola 1574- France begins 5th "holy war" against Huguenots 1660- Charles XI becomes king of Sweden 1689- Dutch prince William III proclaimed King of England 1782- Engineer James Watt's patent for a rotary motion for the steam engine (his sun-and-planet gear) is granted 1846- Polish revolutionaries march on Kraków, but are defeated 1847- Battle of Buena Vista, Mexico; Zachary Taylor leads mostly volunteer troops against larger Mexican Army force; Mexico retreats, both sides claim victory 1854- Great Britain & Orange Free state sign Convention of Bloemfontein 1861- Dutch Prime Minister Floris van Hall resigns 1870- Mississippi is readmitted to US after the Civil War 1874- Major Walter Clopton Winfield patents a game called "sphairistike" (lawn tennis)
- 1883 - American Anti-Vivisection Society organized (Philadelphia)
- 1886 - Aluminum manufacturing process developed
- 1886 - "The Times" of London publishes world's 1st classified ad
- 1903 - The US and Cuba sign an agreement by which Cuba releases Guantanamo and Bahia Honda to the US for naval stations.
- 1903 - The Sultan agrees to an Austro-Russian plan to reform the government of Macedonia in yet another effort to stifle the rising disorder among the rival Bulgarian.
- 1904 - United States acquires control of the Panama Canal Zone for \$10 million.
- 1904 Having occupied Korea, Japan signs a treaty with Korea under which it becomes a Japanese protectorate in return for Japanese protection from other powers
- 1919 - Fascist Party forms in Italy by Benito Mussolini
- 1940 - Russian troops conquer Lasi Island
- 1943 - German troops pull back through Kasserine-pass Tunisia
- 1944 - Forced deportation of the Chechen and Ingush people to Central Asia.
- 1954 - 1st mass inoculation against polio with Salk vaccine (Pittsburgh)
- 1958 - USSR performs nuclear test at Novaya Zemlya USSR.
- 1967 - US troops begin largest offensive of Vietnam War.
- 1983 - The United States Environmental Protection Agency announces its intent to buy out and evacuate the dioxin-contaminated community of Times Beach, Missouri.
- 1987 - Supernova 1987A in LMC 1st seen; 1st naked-eye supernova since 1604.
- 1991 - US insists Iraq publicly announce it is leaving Kuwait by 12 PM EST.
- 1997 - Scientists in Scotland announce they have cloned an adult mammal, producing a lamb named "Dolly"
- 1998 - Osama bin Laden publishes a fatwa declaring jihad against all Jews and Crusaders.
- 2007 - Japan launches its fourth spy satellite, stepping up its ability to monitor potential threats such as North Korea.
- 2012 - A series of bomb attacks across 12 Iraqi cities kills 60 and injures 200.
- 2013 - 51 people are killed and 62 are injured in conflict between rival tribes in Darfur, Sudan.
- 2014- Canada wins the Olympic ice hockey double with a 3-0 victory over Sweden in the men's gold medal game in Sochi; first team to finish the tournament undefeated since 1984 2014- Russia sweeps the medals in the men's 50k cross country skiing at the Sochi Winter Olympics; Alexander Legkov wins gold ahead of teammates Maxim Vylegzhnin and Ilia Chernousov 2018- Dutch speed skater Kjeld Nuis wins his second gold medal of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in the 1,000m; also 1,500m champion 2018- Russian figure skater Alina Zagitova wins the women's singles gold medal at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics; earlier sets a new ISU best short program score of 82.92 2018- Study suggests earliest European Palaeolithic artwork in Spain made by Neanderthals not humans in "Science Journal"

Trump Fires Top US General In Unprecedented Pentagon Shakeup

Agencies

Washington: President Donald Trump on Friday fired the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force General C Q Brown, and pushed out five other admirals



and generals in an unprecedented shake-up of US military leadership.

Trump said in a post on Truth Social that he would nominate retired Lieutenant General Dan "Razin" Caine to succeed Brown. A former F-16 fighter pilot, Caine was the associate director of military affairs at the Central Intelligence Agency until late last year.

Trump will also replace the head of the US Navy, a position held by Admiral Lisa Franchetti, the first woman to lead a military service, as well as the air force vice chief of staff and judge advocates general for the Army, Navy and Air Force, the Pentagon said.

Trump's decision sets off a period of upheaval at the Pentagon, which was already bracing for mass firings of civilian staff, a dramatic overhaul of its budget and a shift in military deployments under Trump's new America First foreign policy. While the Pentagon's civilian leadership changes from one administration to the next, the uniformed members of US armed forces are meant to be apolitical, carrying out the policies of Democratic and Republican administrations.

Brown, the second Black officer to become the president's top uniformed military adviser, had been expected to complete

his entire four-year term in September 2027. A US official said Brown was relieved with immediate effect, even before the Senate confirms his successor.

Reuters in November was first to report that the incoming Trump administration planned a sweeping shakeup of the top brass, with firings including Brown.

'WOKE' GENERALS

During last year's presidential campaign, Trump spoke of firing "woke" generals and those responsible for the troubled 2021 pullout from Afghanistan. On Friday, the president did not explain his decision to replace Brown.

"I want to thank General Charles 'CQ' Brown for his over 40 years of service to our country, including as our current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is a fine gentleman and an outstanding leader, and I wish a great future for him and his family," Trump wrote.

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth had been skeptical of Brown before taking the helm of the Pentagon with a broad agenda that includes eliminating diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in the military.

In his most recent book, Hegseth asked whether Brown would have gotten the job if he were not Black. "Was it because of his skin color? Or his skill? We'll never know, but always doubt - which on its face seems unfair to CQ."

But since he has made the race card one of his biggest calling cards, it doesn't really matter, he wrote in his 2024 book "The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of the Men Who Keep Us Free."

Brown, a former fighter pilot with command experience in the Middle East and Asia, recounted his experiences of discrimination in the military in an emotional video posted online after the 2020 killing of George Floyd, which sparked nationwide protests for racial justice.



Thousands Fly To Lebanon For Funeral Of Hassan Nasrallah

Agencies

Beirut: Nearly five months after Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was assassinated by Israel, hundreds of thousands of supporters of Hezbollah's slain leader have flown into Beirut for his funeral on Sunday.

Sayyed Nasrallah was killed on Sept. 27 when Israel's air force dropped more than 80 bombs on Hezbollah's main operations room in southern Beirut. It was the biggest and most consequential of Israel's targeted killings in years.

Stream of visitors arriving in the Lebanese capital for the funeral of the assassinated leader, which is set for Sunday at 1:00 PM local time, include journalists, anti-imperialist activists and social media influencers from around the world.

Beirut's airport and streets are seeing a steady stream of people, many waving Hezbollah flags and carrying portraits of Nasrallah as they gather to honour him.

Nasrallah, idolised by his supporters held the title of sayyid, an honorific meant to signify his lineage to the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh).

Over the three decades run as Hezbollah supremo Nasrallah became a symbol of defiance, and his legacy is honoured by his supporters from across Arab and Islamic world.

Hezbollah suffered significant losses in the latest war with Israel, which it fought to ease

The funeral is to begin at 1 p.m. at a sports stadium in Beirut's southern suburbs. It will include a speech by current Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem and is to be followed by a procession to Nasrallah's burial site on the outskirts of Beirut.

pressure on embattled Gaza. The group lost several of its most senior military and political figures during the period.

Nasrallah's successor Hashem Safieddine was also assassinated by Israel a few days after him. The two had temporarily been buried in secret locations. Hezbollah earlier this month announced plans for their official funerals.

On the eve of the funeral, Sheikh Ali Daamouch, Deputy Executive Council Chairman of Hezbollah, emphasised that "tomorrow is a day of loyalty, allegiance, and commitment to the martyrs, and our presence at their funeral is a form of tribute to them."

He urged people to turn out in force from every home, village, and city, "to tell friends and foes that our Resistance endures and remains present on the battlefield and that the Zionist enemy will never be able to crush it."

Sheikh affirmed that, despite

the painful loss, the Resistance remains steadfast in its course, unwavering in its defence of the homeland, its people, the Ummah, and its sanctities, and "will not retreat from its objectives."

The funeral is to begin at 1 p.m. at a sports stadium in Beirut's southern suburbs. It will include a speech by current Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem and is to be followed by a procession to Nasrallah's burial site on the outskirts of Beirut.

Hezbollah has said 79 countries would be involved in the commemoration, whether at an official or "popular" level. Airlines have increased flights to Beirut to deal with demand.

Flights from Iraq, where Hezbollah has a huge following, have been full for days on end. According to an Iraqi transportation ministry official thousands of people have flown to Beirut over the past days.

Among those who arrived from overseas was also American commentator Jackson Hinkle.

"I am honored to be attending the funeral," Hinkle posted on the social media platform X after arriving this week in Beirut.

Hinkle posted a photo of himself visiting a war-wrecked Lebanese border village, waving a Hezbollah flag.

Sharing her experience, Tara Reynor O'Grady, President of No Peace Without Justice wrote on X: "In Lebanon this week to document the destruction, and to lend solidarity to the people."

New Legal Framework to Tackle 'Harmful' SM Content

Agencies

New Delhi: The Information and Broadcasting Ministry is examining the existing statutory provisions and the need for a new legal framework to regulate "harmful" content amid complaints of "obscenity and violence" being shown on digital platforms.

In its reply to a parliamentary panel, the ministry said there is a growing concern in the society that the constitutional right of "freedom of expression is being misused to showcase obscene and violent content on digital platforms".

It told the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology headed by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey that while certain provisions exist under the current laws, there is a growing demand for a stricter and effective legal framework to regulate such harmful content.

It said, "This ministry has taken note of these developments and is in process of examining current statutory provisions and need for a new legal framework."

The ministry said that many high courts and the Supreme Court, MPs and statutory bodies like the National Commission of Women have spoken on the issue, which has made headlines after the crass comments of social media influencer Ranveer Allahbadia drew

wide condemnation. Criminal cases have been registered against him, and his apology has done little to damp down the controversy. While the Supreme Court granted him protection from arrest, it also made very critical observations over his vulgar comments.

The ministry told the committee that it will submit a detailed note after due deliberations. The committee had asked the ministry on February 13 regarding the amendments needed in the existing laws to clamp down on controversial content in the

wake of the emergence of new technology and media platforms. Unlike the conventional print and electronic content,

which are covered under specific laws, new media services powered by internet such as OTT platforms or YouTube have no specific regulatory framework, triggering demands for amending the laws.

While there have been some concerns that authorities may use new provisions to censor content for extraneous reasons, frequent outrage triggered by episodes like the one involving Allahbadia have given rise to the demand for strengthening the legal framework through amendments in the existing laws or enacting new ones.



Signboards Of Akbar, Humayun Road In Delhi Defaced By 'Chhaava' Fans: Report



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Signboards at Akbar Road and Humayun Road were blackened and posters of Chhatrapati Shivaji were pasted over them, police sources said on Saturday.

They said the incident occurred after a group of people watched the Vicky Kaushal-starrer Hindi film 'Chhaava', a period drama on Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Sambhaji.

Many purported videos of the act surfaced on different social media platforms, showing some youth applying black spray on the signboards and pasting pictures of Maratha Empire founder Shivaji.

The sources said police teams and civic officials were immediately sent to the spot and the defaced boards were cleaned.

Many purported videos of the act surfaced on different social media platforms, showing some youth applying black spray on the signboards and pasting pictures of Maratha Empire founder Shivaji

Authorities have begun investigation and are reviewing CCTV footage to identify the culprits. Police are monitoring the situation to prevent further vandalism and ensure law and order.

Will Not Implement NEP Even If Rs 10,000 Crore Offered To Tamil Nadu: CM Stalin

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Continuing his tirade against the Centre over the National Education Policy (NEP), Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday said he would not agree to implement it even if the Centre offered to provide Rs 10,000 crore in funds to the state.

The opposition to NEP was not merely due to the attempt to impose Hindi but also because of various other factors that would have serious consequences for the future of students and the social justice system, he claimed.

Apart from encouraging a screening test for admissions to even arts and science colleges, similar to NEET for medical courses, NEP would allow students to discontinue their studies.

"Permitting students to discontinue studies is akin to asking them not to study," Stalin said, addressing an event organised by Parents-Teachers Association here.

"We are not opposed to any language but will remain firm in opposing its imposition. We are not opposing NEP only for the attempt



to thrust Hindi but for several other reasons as well. NEP is regressive. It will drive students away from schools," Stalin claimed.

Apart from 'denying' financial aid to SC/ST and BC students, which is now being provided, NEP proposed public exams for third, fifth, and eighth standards, besides introducing a common entrance test for admissions to arts and science colleges, the Chief Minister said.

"The Centre says Tamil Nadu will get Rs 2,000 crore if the state implements NEP. I wish to say that we will not agree to NEP even if the Centre offers Rs 10,000 crore. I will not allow NEP and commit the sin of pushing Tamil Nadu backward by 2,000 years," Stalin said.

Dowry Demand Not Needed To Invoke Cruelty Charge Against Husbands: SC

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has said dowry demand was not a prerequisite to constitute the offence of cruelty under Section 498A of the IPC introduced in 1983 to protect married women from the husband and in-laws.

A Bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Prasanna B Varale on December 12, 2024, said the essence of Section 498A IPC lay in the act of cruelty itself and a dowry demand was not necessary

to invoke the provision against errant husbands and in-laws.

"Therefore, either form of cruelty, independent of a dowry demand, is sufficient to attract the provisions of Section 498A IPC and make the offence punishable under the law," said the Bench.

The top court said it was clear that an unlawful demand for dowry was not a prerequisite element to constitute "cruelty" under Section 498A of the IPC.

"It suffices that the conduct falls within either of the two broad

categories outlined in clauses (a) or (b) of the provision, namely, wilful conduct likely to cause grave injury or mental harm (clause a), or harassment intended to coerce the woman or her family to meet any unlawful demand (clause b)," added the Bench. Section 498A (Husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty) was introduced in the IPC in 1983 with the primary objective to protect married women from cruelty of their husbands or in-laws.

NEWS MAKERS

Ex RBI Governor Appointed Principal Secretary to PM

Former governor of Reserve Bank of India Shaktikanta Das was on Saturday appointed the second Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

P K Mishra, a retired IAS officer of the Gujarat cadre, is currently serving as the Principal Secretary to the prime minister.

According to an official order, the tenure of Das, a retired IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, will be "co-terminus" with the term of the prime minister or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

"The Appointments Com-



mittee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Shri Shaktikanta Das, IAS (Retired), as Princi-

pal Secretary-2 to Prime Minister with effect from the date he assumes the office. His appointment will be co-terminus with the term of the Prime Minister or until further orders, whichever is earlier," the order read.

Das has been a career civil servant with over 42 years of distinguished service, primarily in the areas of finance, taxation, investment and infrastructure.

The 25th governor of Reserve Bank of India has also acted as India's G20 Sherpa and member, 15th Finance Commission.

Kash Patel sworn in as new FBI director

Kash Patel was sworn in as the FBI director and he called the opportunity to lead the nation's premier federal law enforcement agency the "great honour" of his life.

Patel was confirmed by the Senate on Thursday by a 51-49 margin, with two Republican lawmakers, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, breaking party ranks and voting against him.

"I think he'll go down as the best ever at that position," President Donald Trump told reporters Friday ahead of the White House swearing-in on Friday, which was conducted by Attorney General Pam Bondi and attended by Republican supporters in Congress, including Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio.

Trump added that the "agents love this guy".



the January 6, 2021, riot at the US Capitol. Democrats had sounded the alarm about the appointment, saying they fear Patel will operate as a loyalist for Trump and abuse the FBI's law enforcement powers to go after the president's adversaries. They've cited past comments such as his suggestion before he was nominated that he would "come after" anti-Trump "conspirators" in the government and media.

Patel sought to assuage those concerns at his confirmation hearing last month, saying he intended to follow the Constitution and had no interest in pursuing retribution, though he also said at his swearing-in Friday that reporters had written "fake, malicious, slanderous and defamatory" stories about him.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Shri Shaktikanta Das, IAS (Retired), as Principal Secretary-2 to Prime Minister with effect from the date he assumes the office. His appointment will be co-terminus with the term of the Prime Minister or until further orders, whichever is earlier

Vehicle Numbers In J&K Double Over Eight Years

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Over the past eight years, the number of vehicles in Jammu and Kashmir has doubled, resulting in increasingly congested and chaotic roads.

According to recent data accessed the region has seen a significant rise in both public and private transport. In 2016, there were 13,65,552 registered vehicles, a number that surged to 25,67,000 by the end of March 2024—a drastic surge of more than 12 lakh vehicles.

Revenue targets and achievements also show a positive trend. In 2020-21, the department achieved Rs 821.15 crore against a target of Rs 900.00 crore. The following year, 2021-22, saw an achievement of Rs 628.65 crore against a target of Rs 625.00 crore. In 2022-23, the department achieved Rs 725.03 crore against a target of Rs 800.00 crore. The most recent year, 2023-24, saw the department exceed its target, achieving Rs 925.00 crore against a target of Rs 915.00 crore.

“

“We are now faced with the challenge of managing this exponential growth while ensuring the safety and efficiency of the transport system,”



The Motor Vehicles Department has reported substantial revenue growth, achieving Rs 925.12 crore against a target of Rs 915.00 crore during the financial year 2023-24. This period also saw the registration of 1.65 lakh vehicles, alongside the issuance of 11,196 fresh route permits and the renewal of 40,595 existing ones. Additionally, 99,191 fresh driving licenses were issued, with 65,501 licenses renewed. The department also issued 14,963 fitness certificates for commercial vehicles and renewed 93,292 such certificates.

The data highlights a consistent increase in vehicle registrations and related administrative activities over the years. In 2020-21, the department registered 93,366 commercial and 1,12,468 non-commercial vehicles, totalling 1,31,644. By 2021-22, these numbers rose to 1,84,911 commercial and 1,17,686 non-commercial vehicles, totalling 1,37,177. The trend continued in 2022-23 with 28,657 commercial and 1,36,298 non-commercial vehicles, totalling 1,57,922. By 2023-24, the numbers reached 36,282 commercial and 1,28,095 non-commercial vehicles, totalling 1,62,378.

In terms of permits and licenses, the department issued 3,697 fresh permits and renewed 36,364 permits in 2020-21, totalling 40,061. The following year, 2021-22, saw 6,681 fresh permits and 39,311 renewals, totalling 4,992. In 2022-23, the department issued 5,407 fresh permits and renewed 46,496, totalling 51,903. By 2023-24, the numbers rose to 11,105 fresh permits and 40,595 renewals, totalling 51,791.

A senior official of the Road and Transport Department said that the rise in vehicle numbers has put immense pressure on the region's infrastructure, leading to frequent traffic jams and road safety concerns. “We are now faced with the challenge of managing this exponential growth while ensuring the safety and efficiency of the transport system,” he said.

The official added, “The roads aren't wide enough in cities and towns. There are concerns about people's safety with road accidents becoming normal. With the sale of the new vehicles, the government has to ensure it wouldn't turn into Frankenstein's monster - out to devour its very own masters.”—(KNO)

Tral's Aripal Spring Runs Dry Despite Rains



Agencies

SRINAGAR: Despite recent rainfall, the water level in Aripal Spring—on which nearly six water supply schemes depend—continues to remain dry, worsening the water crisis in the region.

Aripal Spring has remained dry for nearly three months, causing severe difficulties for the local population.

Officials from PHE Tral said that the depletion of the spring began in December last year, and despite recent rainfall, the water level has not improved even by 5 per cent.

The drying up of this key water source has led to a severe water shortage in many areas of Tral.

An official from the Jal Shakti Department said the situation

remains critical. He said the residents have been facing water scarcity for the past three months.

“Tanker services have been deployed, but they can only meet about 10 percent of the demand,” the official said. “The situation is extremely concerning as the recent rains have failed to restore the water source for six water supply schemes.”

He added that every effort is being made to supply water through tankers, but the demand far exceeds availability.

“We were hopeful that the water flow in the spring would be restored by February 18, but that hasn't happened for unknown reasons,” he said. “If the situation persists for a few more days, we could be facing an even tougher crisis.”—(KNO)

J&K ESHA Seeks Political Reservation, Financial Assistance

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Members of the J&K ESHWA Handicapped Welfare Association (EWSHA) on Saturday urged the government to address their long-pending demands.

Farooq Ahmad Dar, the association's president and resident of Baramulla, speaking at the Press Enclave in Srinagar said the rights of people with disabilities were being neglected.

He said their association members gathered today at press enclave Srinagar to demand political reservation for

the community as they are also calling for an increase in the monthly assistance provided by the government from Rs 1,000 to Rs 5,000.

Dar said they also sought relaxation in electricity and water bills, as highlighting many individuals with disabilities struggle to afford monthly electricity charges ranging from Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000.

Moreover, the group also urged the government to consider their demands in the upcoming budget and take concrete steps to support them—(KNO)

CM Omar Abdullah Inaugurates Akhal Bridge At Kangan



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday inaugurated the 82-meter-long Akhal Bridge over River Sind in the Kangan area of Ganderbal district.

The bridge, constructed at a cost of ₹8 crore by the Public Works (Roads and Buildings) Department, connects several villages in Kunmul-Akhal and adjoining areas.

Addressing the public on the occasion, the Chief Minister

stated that the Akhal Bridge is expected to significantly improve transportation, stimulate economic activity in the area and enhance the quality of life for thousands of residents in the district.

He expressed confidence that the bridge would serve as a vital link, promoting development and bringing much-needed relief to the local population.

The Chief Minister emphasized that the bridge

marks the resolution of long-standing connectivity issues in the area. Local public representatives and residents expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister for addressing their long-standing demand, which will now provide greater convenience and accessibility. MLA Kangan Mian Mehar Ali, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, DDC member Kangan, Chief Engineer R&B, and other senior civil and police officers were present on the occasion.

Holds Public Durbar At Ganderbal

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Saturday convened a public durbar at Dak Bungalow, Ganderbal, where he directly interacted with numerous delegations and individuals from across the district to address their day to day issues and other concerns relating to development of the area.

During the public meeting, the Chief Minister patiently listened to the issues and demands raised by the public, issuing on-the-spot directions to concerned authorities for prompt resolution.

He urged the district administration to prioritize the redressal of public grievances, ensuring that people are not deprived of basic necessities. Reaffirming his commitment to the welfare and socio-economic development of Ganderbal, the Chief Minister pledged continuous support and timely action to address the concerns raised by the residents.

Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore,



along with other senior officials of the district administration, were present to take note of the issues highlighted by the delegations.

Public delegations and hundreds of individuals from various areas like Beehama, Duderhama, Fatehpura, Shalabugh, Sehpora, Bamloora, Tulmulla, Barosa, Theeru, Gangerhama, Sherpathri, Lar, Safapora, Cutlibagh, and other parts of the district submitted their demands before the Chief Minister.

Key demands raised included the establishment of fire service stations at prominent locations, development of playgrounds, augmentation of irrigation facilities, construction of an attendant sarai at the district hospital, road widening, promotion of horti-

culture and agriculture activities, beautification along River Sindh, reinforcement of the nallah bank from the Jhelum side, and dredging and desilting of Duderhama Nallah.

Additionally, the public sought the creation of employment opportunities within the district. Responding to these issues, the Chief Minister, who represents the Ganderbal constituency in the J&K Legislative Assembly gave instructions to the Deputy Commissioner and senior officials to ensure that all genuine concerns are addressed without delay.

He assured the public that the highlighted issues would be thoroughly examined and resolved within a stipulated time frame.

GOC Sachdeva Chairs Joint Security Review Meeting

Agencies

JAMMU: As security forces launched massive search operations in Jammu region on Saturday to tighten noose around the terrorists, General Officer Commanding White Knight Corps Lt Gen Navin Sachdeva chaired a joint security review meeting with focus on maintaining peace in the province.

The searches conducted by a joint team of J&K Police's Special Operations Group led to the seizure of a substantial cache of arms and ammunition in Reasi District. “The hideout, located in the remote Simbli-Shajra forest area near Chakrass in Mahore was busted following credible intelligence inputs,” an official said.

He said that among the items recovered were four Under Barrel Grenade Launchers (UBGLs), one filled and three empty AK-47 magazines, 268 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, and four packets of detonators.

Another official said that in the Pir Panjal area, multiple operations were initiated, with several joint operations carried out in the Doda-Kishtwar region.

“Similar operations have been launched in Udhampur,” he added.

Cordon and search operations were also conducted in Mohalla Qasba, Allapir, Jaalian in Mandi, and Mankote in Poonch district. Other key areas under operation include Dera Ki Gali, Sunderbani, and Nowshera sectors in Rajouri district, the official said.

Several locations in Poonch-Rajouri and higher reaches



“The hideout, located in the remote Simbli-Shajra forest area near Chakrass in Mahore was busted following credible intelligence inputs,”

Commanding of Jammu-based White Knight Corps Lt Gen Navin Sachdeva on Saturday chaired a joint security review meeting in Jammu with focus on maintaining peace in the region.

The meeting was held amid intensified search operations across Jammu to counter terrorists, who have shown their presence in different districts of the division by carrying out a number of attacks last year.

“A joint security review meeting chaired by GOC White Knight Corps was conducted along with representatives of intelligence agencies, J&K Police, and CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force). The aim was to maintain peace and tranquility in the region with operational synergy,” Army's White Knight Corps, also known as XVI Corps, said in a post on X—(KNO)

‘Purple Revolution Integrated J&K Into India's Startup Ecosystem’

Agencies

JAMMU: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and MoS PMO, Dr. Jitendra Singh, on Saturday, said that the ‘Purple Revolution’ integrated Jammu and Kashmir into India's growing startup ecosystem.

Speaking on the sidelines of the National Startup Festival here Dr. Singh, said, “The cultivation of lavender in Baderwah, Doda district was instrumental in transforming the region's economic landscape.”

India,” he added.

Dr. Singh credited Prime Minister Modi's ‘Startup India, Stand up India’ initiative, launched from the Red Fort, for propelling India into the league of global startup hubs. “In the past decade, India has grown from having only a handful of startups to approximately 1.75 lakh today, making it the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world,” he said.

The National Startup Festival in Jammu, he said, “Aims to extend this movement to previously untapped regions, ensuring



Citing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's endorsement of the initiative (Purple Revolution) in his ‘Mann Ki Baat’ address, Dr Singh stated that it has set a benchmark for agri-startups. “The revolution that began in Baderwah has enabled Jammu and Kashmir to enter India's startup movement, paving the way for states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Arunachal Pradesh to follow the suit,” he said.

He said that the Republic Day tableau of 2024 showcased the ‘Purple Revolution’ at Kartavya Path in New Delhi, reflecting its national significance. “As of today, nearly 3,000 youth are earning their livelihood through lavender farming, with many leaving corporate jobs to join the startup movement in

youth understand their inherent aptitude and leverage innovation to drive economic growth.”

Dr. Singh also highlighted the contributions of CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), one of the oldest research institutions in the world, established in 1942-43. The institute has been actively engaged in harnessing the potential of medicinal plants, including lavender, to develop pharmaceutical and wellness products like mint-based tablets.

On a separate note, when asked about the controversy surrounding alleged US aid to influence voter turnout in India's 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Dr. Singh refrained from commenting, stating, “Let's talk about how to make Bharat Viksit,” he added—(KNO)

GMC Baramulla Operates Without Cardiologist

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Patients in north Kashmir feel they are back to square one as Government Medical College (GMC) Baramulla has been functioning without a cardiologist for the past few months.

Several patients suffering from cardiovascular issues, who had been receiving treatment at GMC Baramulla for the last two years, say that the absence of a cardiologist has left them in distress. They are now forced to travel to Srinagar once again for treatment, reversing the relief they had experienced.

“For two years, we had access to cardiac care at GMC Baramulla, which was a huge relief. Now, in the absence of a cardiologist, we are back to struggling with long and exhausting trips to Srinagar,” said Abdul Rashid, a cardiac patient from Baramulla.

He added that cardiac patients previously benefited from local services, eliminating the need for strenuous travel. However, with no specialists available, even basic consultations and follow-ups now require travel to Srinagar.

Nazir Ahmad, another patient, highlighted the impact of the missing specialist. “The availability of a cardiologist at GMC Baramulla has eased our difficulties. We could get tests like echocardiograms and essential heart treatments locally. Now, we are back to where we started, facing the same hardships again,” he said.

He added that regular fol-

low-ups are critical for heart patients, and travelling to Srinagar for every consultation is not only exhausting but also financially burdensome.

“In 2023, I had a dual-chamber pacemaker implanted at GMC Baramulla. However, after the cardiologist was transferred, I have been unable to receive regular follow-ups. Travelling to Srinagar for consultations is both physically exhausting and financially challenging,” he said.

The absence of specialised cardiac care in Baramulla has also affected patients' families. Many have to take time off work or spend heavily on transportation to accompany their loved ones to Srinagar. This creates a major barrier to essential healthcare, especially for those with limited financial means.

Residents said that GMC Anantnag and GMC Baramulla were established at the same time, yet GMC Anantnag now has a functional cath lab, while GMC Baramulla does not even have a cardiologist.

They urged authorities to appoint a permanent cardiologist at GMC Baramulla to ease the suffering of cardiac patients across North Kashmir. The lack of a specialist is also increasing the patient load in Srinagar hospitals, as those from North Kashmir have no other option but to seek treatment there.

Meanwhile, Principal GMC Baramulla, Dr Majid Jahangir told KNO that the issue has already been raised with higher authorities. “We are hopeful that a cardiologist will be posted here soon,” he said—(KNO)

Cache Of Arms, Ammo Recovered In Reasi

Observer News Service

REASI: Reasi Police on Saturday said to have recovered a cache of arms and ammunition from forests of Jamslan Mahore area in the district.

A joint team of Reasi Police and 126 CRPF Bn. After receiving a specific input, launched search and cordon operations in the forest area of Jamslan area of Sub-Division Mahore and recovered arms and am-

munition under a tree covered with blanket in forests of Simbli Jamslan, Mahore, a police spokesman said in a statement.

The arms and ammunition recovered includes four AK-47 magazines, 268 rounds of AK-47, 04 UBGL grenades and four IED batteries. On this, Police have registered a case in this regard and investigation is underway, the statement reads—(KNO)

Will the Karewa Protection Bill Become a Law in J&K?

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

The valley of Kashmir is an oval-shaped basin with a small plain area of approximately 160 x 60 km. The valley has large tracts of plateaus, locally known as Karewas or Woedder. These small hillocks are an intermountain fill that comprises unconsolidated gravel and mud. Geologists say that the Karewas of Kashmir were formed during the Pleistocene period, which began about 2.6 million years ago and lasted until about 11,700 years ago. During this time, the entire valley of Kashmir was submerged under water, resembling a massive lake (Sati Sar). When the valley's water drained out through Khadanyar (Baramulla), huge mud deposits were left behind, which solidified over time and came to be known as Karewas.

Kashmir's Karewas are massive plateaus—dry yet highly fertile. Over the last two to three decades, these Karewas have been plundered for clay excavation, a trend that has significantly increased over the last 5 to 6 years due to rising demand for clay in highway construction. The clay from Karewas in Budgam, Pulwama, Anantnag especially Bijbehara and Pattan area in Baramulla has also been used to fill low-lying areas and wetlands, a major contributing factor to the devastating floods in Kashmir, especially in Srinagar in 2014.

Thousands of hectares of Karewa land in Pulwama, particularly in the Parigam to Newa villages and the Chadoora area, including Kuzwera, Kultreh, Nagam, and Hayathpora villages, have been plundered by an organized mafia under the guise of development. Unfortunately, officers from the Revenue Department, including Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) and Tehsildars, have facilitated this loot by granting so-called Disposal Permits. These permits have also been misused to exploit Kashmir's rivers and streams.

Despite several laws protecting rivers and streams, there is no legislation safeguarding Karewas. The Revenue & Geology & Mining Departments continue issuing permissions to destroy these unique landforms.

Private Member's Bill

To protect and preserve Karewas, Dr. Syed Bashir Veeri, MLA from Bijbehara, has introduced a Private Member's Bill, an appreciable initiative aimed at regulating and curbing the destruction of Karewas due to the excavation of clay, sand, gravel, and other materials.

Preamble of the Bill (2025)

I reviewed the draft Karewa Bill a



few weeks ago and shared some suggestions with Hon'ble MLA Dr. Veeri. However, due to time constraints, I couldn't consult more experts. Still, I find the bill commendable, and if passed into law, it will be immensely beneficial.

The preamble of the draft bill states:

"Whereas to regulate the excavation of clay, sand, gravel, and other construction materials from Karewas—unique plateau-like geological formations with a history dating back more than 1 million years. Karewas are geological and archaeological treasures, an unnoticed heritage of Kashmir Valley."

"Whereas Karewas hold great importance for agriculture and horticulture, particularly for saffron, almond, and apple cultivation. These landforms also play a crucial role in environmental conservation, with Karewa plantations serving as biodiversity hubs, often referred to as deemed forests."

"And whereas it is necessary to regulate mining activities in Karewas, especially clay, sand, and gravel excavation, to enforce strict penalties for violations and ensure sustainable land management."

Highlights of the Karewa Bill

The bill's primary goal is to regulate mining in Karewas and protect local biodiversity and the environment. It strictly prohibits the excavation of clay and other materials like bajri and gravel from designated Karewa regions.

The bill states:

"Mining shall be strictly prohibited in Karewa stretches designated as ecological, geological, and archaeological sensitive zones due to their 1-million-year-old history. Mining in

The J&K Government must accept this Private Member's Bill and enact it into law immediately to protect Kashmir's geological, agricultural, and environmental heritage

Karewas shall only be permitted in designated areas that have already faced destruction, subject to approval from the *J&K State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (JKSEIAA)."

Mining in Karewa lands containing fruit trees, saffron fields, vegetable crops, or non-fruit-bearing trees shall be prohibited. All mining activities will require prior approval from the Karewa Protection Authority (KPA) and JKSEIAA, in consultation with the J&K Pollution Control Committee, Department of Geology & Mining, and Agriculture & Horticulture Departments.

A comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be mandatory before granting mining leases. Sustainable mining practices, including controlled extraction and periodic ecological assessments, will be enforced.

Penalties for Violations

The Private Member's Bill on Karewa Protection proposes strict action against illegal mining, including imprisonment of up to 5 years and a penalty of 10 lakh. Even government officers involved in unauthorized mining will face consequences.

"Any person or entity found guilty of illegal mining in Karewas shall be subject to a fine of up to 10 lakh per violation and up to 5 years of imprisonment for repeated offenses. Equipment and vehicles used for illegal mining shall be seized and confiscated. Government officials complicit in Karewa mining shall face suspension, dismissal, and prosecution under anti-corruption laws."

Construction Permission

The bill states that no individual or entity shall undertake excavation, cutting, or degradation of Karewas without prior approval from the competent authority (SEIAA).

Karewas identified as highly sensitive agricultural and horticultural zones shall be completely protected from excavation and construction. Before any construction on Karewa land, prior permission from the Village Halqa Majlis (Gram Sabha) will be mandatory.

Sustainable Land Use Policy

The Private Member's Bill advocates for a Sustainable Land Use Policy, requiring the government to formulate a Karewa Conservation and

Sustainable Development Plan with the following objectives:

- Afforestation and soil conservation measures
- Promotion of horticulture and water conservation initiatives
- Strict regulations to prevent commercial destruction
- Providing subsidies for the installation of solar pumps for irrigation
- Developing Karewas as tourism hubs due to their geological and archaeological significance

Karewa Protection Authority (KPA)

The draft Karewa Protection Bill (2025) proposes the establishment of a Karewa Protection Authority (KPA) under the Department of Environment, Ecology & Forests. The KPA will consist of:

- Experts in hydrology, ecology, and environmental law
- Representatives from rural & urban local bodies, NGOs, and environmental conservation groups
- Government officials from relevant departments

The KPA will have the authority to inspect mining sites, revoke mining licenses for violations, and recommend policy changes to strengthen conservation efforts.

Whistleblowing Encouraged

Under the J&K Karewa Protection Bill (2025), citizens will be encouraged to report illegal mining activities via a dedicated helpline and online portal. Public-spirited citizens and whistleblowers will be protected and rewarded for credible information leading to legal action.

Conclusion

The protection of Karewas is crucial for our sustenance, as Kashmir's landmass is shrinking due to rapid urbanization. The excavated Karewa sites in Budgam and Pulwama now resemble the ravines of Chambal, contributing to severe dust pollution. Cases have been filed in the National Green Tribunal (NGT) against some construction companies for environmental violations.

The J&K Government must accept this Private Member's Bill and enact it into law immediately to protect Kashmir's geological, agricultural, and environmental heritage.

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

Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow and Chairman of the Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement

President Donald Trump's electoral victory last November was decisive and sweeping. He now has majority control over both legislative houses, i.e. the lower house called the Congress or House of Representatives, and the upper house called the Senate. Sometimes both houses together are also misleadingly called the "Congress".

He has of course the control of the White House, and this is called a "governing trifecta", which is a sweet spot. He has already exercised his increased influence in the passage of 64 executive orders in barely three weeks of assuming office of the President for the second time.

Unlike his first term which began in 2017, he also has a two third majority of the conservative judiciary. This might prove crucial if he tries to deliver on his promise of no birthright citizenship. This cannot be merely done by an executive order, and might require a constitutional amendment, which might in turn be challenged in the Supreme Court. The apex court could come to Trump's aid, although this is not guaranteed in this case of citizenship debate.

Trump's popularity is also supposed to be ten percent higher than what he got from his voters, which means that even some of those who did not vote for him now support his policies. These policies cover tariff action against trading partners, stricter action against illegal aliens, withdrawing from expensive wars in distant theatres and making NATO allies pay more, and finally reducing the size of the government.

The President has threatened that America will charge reciprocal import tariffs, as a tit for tat strategy. In response India has immediately reduced import duty on American Bourbon whiskey from 150 to 100 percent. The duty on Harley Davidson motorcycles was reduced earlier. India enjoys a trade surplus of about 30 billion dollars with the U.S., and it is this that Donald Trump wants to reduce. The defense purchases of F35 fighters and other combat vehicles are on the cards, partly to assuage U.S. sentiment.

Some of President Trump's wishes seem contradictory. On one hand his desire to reduce the trade deficit and make the dollar cheaper is to increase

What Powers The Dollar Hegemony

Ajit Ranade

American exports and jobs. On the other hand, he wants the dollar to remain the strong and dominant currency in the world.

He threatened the BRICS nations, of which India is a member, that if they contemplate trading among themselves in non-dollar currencies, then he will impose 100 percent import tariffs on them. You can't simultaneously ask for a weak and a strong dollar. The fact is that the dollar index, measured as DXY is close to being the highest it has been in the past twenty-five years.

So, what is the real source of the dollar strength and its hegemony? Is it due to President Trump's

“The President has threatened that America will charge reciprocal import tariffs, as a tit for tat strategy. In response India has immediately reduced import duty on American Bourbon whiskey from 150 to 100 percent. The duty on Harley Davidson motorcycles was reduced earlier. India enjoys a trade surplus of about 30 billion dollars with the U.S., and it is this that Donald Trump wants to reduce

political support and popularity? Or his enjoying the governance trifecta? Not really. Incidentally, the trifecta is still not good enough because in the upper house, the Senate, the bills need a 60 percent majority to be passed as law. Which Trump does not have at this stage. There are some murmurs from within the Republican Party, which indicate less than enthusiastic support for some of Trump policies, especially on downsizing government and cutting benefits.

Yet what is the real source of dollar's hegemonic status? The first is simply that there is no other candidate currency. Neither the pound sterling in terminal decline since the second world war, nor the euro born in 1999, nor the Chinese yuan are anywhere close to the dollar's unmatched supremacy. In terms of global trade, the U.S. share is barely 11 percent. But the U.S. economy makes up one fourth of the global GDP and of course is the largest. President Trump is upset about the trade deficit which is close to 1 trillion dollars.

Mirroring that, the Chinese have a trade surplus of 1 trillion dollars, one third of which is with the

United States. Many countries including India have a trade surplus with America. So, what happens to all the surplus dollars held by export surplus countries? It is in the form of exchange reserves. A whopping sixty percent of all reserves worldwide are held in dollar assets, i.e. United States government issued bonds.

So that is the real reason for dollar hegemony. It is due to the strong desire of the rest of the world to hold dollars, or dollar assets. This creates a strong

demand for U.S. bonds, which reduces the cost of borrowing for the U.S. government. This is the enormous privilege enjoyed by the U.S. due to the dominant status of its currency.

To add to the privileges of dominance is another favorable factor, and it is that ninety percent of all foreign exchange transactions worldwide are in dollars. It is the most preferred invoicing currency. Trump has already warned BRICS nations not to transact in non-dollar currencies. The preference for dollar invoicing is due to its inherent stability.

And the belief that America will never default on its debt. This is tested from time to time, since the law and constitution does not allow the U.S. government to pile on unlimited debt. It is currently about 33 trillion dollars. But the debt ceiling cannot be breached unless approved by the Congress, which sometimes leads to brinkmanship between the ruling party and the opposition. But invariably the debt ceiling is relaxed, until the new limit has to be relaxed again in a few years.

Whenever there is global turmoil and uncertainty, investors rush to dollar assets, causing outflows from developing countries, and leading to a fall of their currencies. This has happened to India as well. But the real reason is that implicitly the world has faith in the stability of America's financial system, its judiciary in resolving disputes speedily and fairly, its capability of resilience, and the US government's way of not passing too many irrational and isolationist laws and policies.

Of course, none of this can be taken for granted. The rise of India and China in the twenty first century will surely challenge the hegemony of the dollar. India's rise is benign, while China's rise threatens the west. Their evolving bilateral relationship will surely shape world trajectory as well as affect the dollar's dominance. But for now, the dollar is king.

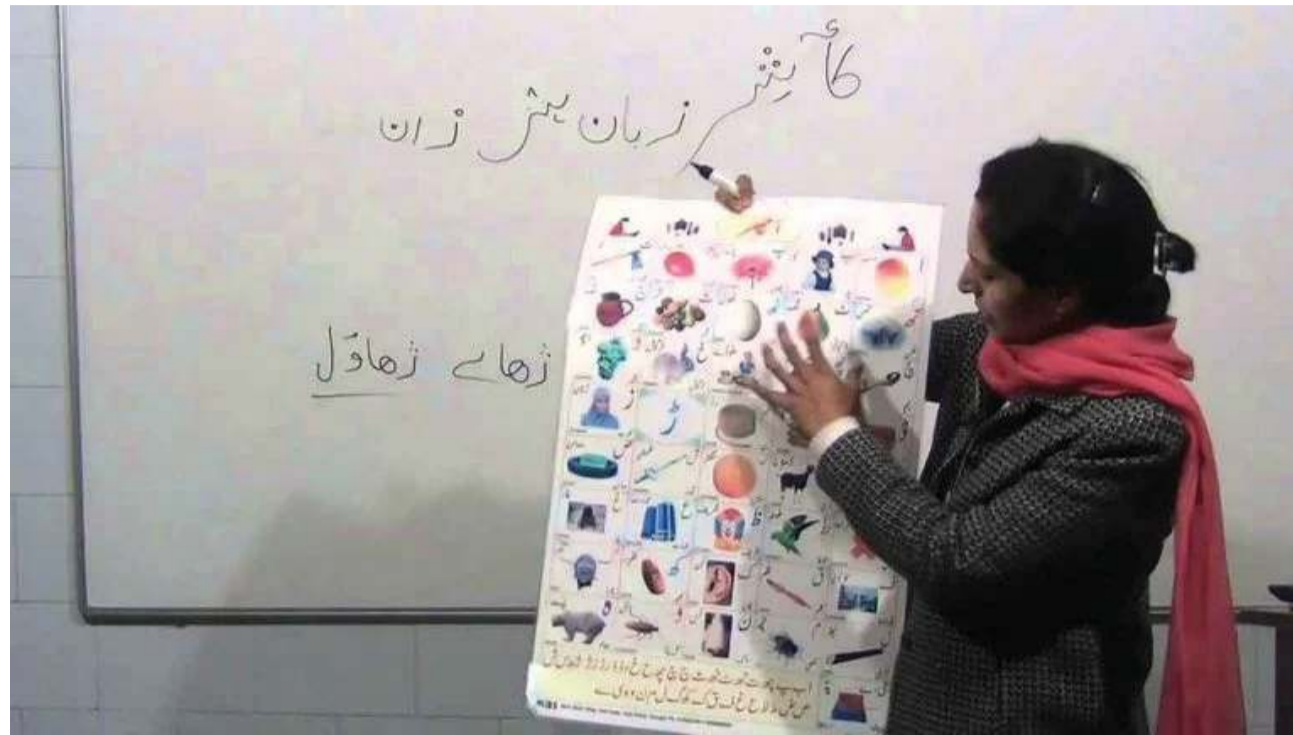
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Kashmiri is Dying Speak Before It's Silent Forever!

Wajahat Qazi

In reductive and prosaic terms, 'a living language is one that is used and spoken by people of a given society or culture'. Given this, is Kashmiri a 'living language'? This question may sound preposterous to many. A 'common sense' reaction to this would be, 'but of course'. But probe deeper or scratch the surface, a different (and unsalutary) picture emerges: our mother tongue Kashmiri is a dying language. How? First, in vernacular terms, the Kashmiri we speak is far from haute Kashmiri. There is a correlation between thought (thinking) and language. If this is a tight correlation, this then means that we Kashmiris may have lost the mental paradigm of high thinking- a corollary of which is simple living. But this may not be too alarming given that there is a disconnect between haute culture- of which language is an indelible component of - and the vernacular idiom across the world.

Of greater concern and worry is that our Gen Next (Millennials of Kashmir) hardly speak Kashmiri. In the main they speak an approximation of Urdu sprinkled with English words and so on. Can this Kashmiri 'pidgin' this be named? I don't know. It is difficult to coin a neologism for this. But this is beside the point. The alarmingly gradual and inexorable drift into losing our language has deep implications and consequences captured best by the phrase, 'lose your language, lose your culture'. The question that arises here is: Is culture important? Yes. It is. Why? Even though there is no such thing as an entirely original and authentic culture, but it (culture) is the anchor that gives people a meaningful framework to negotiate life and the world. Once a given peoples loses its culture, it loses this 'centre' or anchor. By way of a corollary and analogy a society or people that lose their culture are like 'floating atoms' that have no nucleus prone to be caught in the



whirlwind of forces that may or may not be sanguine.

But a contra hypothesis is that we live in a quasi- globalized world, where latching onto one's culture may not be prudent or even practical. This argument is quasi-facetious: globalization in the sense of movement of peoples, and negating identities in different and differential domains, time and space actually privileges hybridity. What is meant by this? Simply put, it means negotiating a globalized time space domain in real and practical terms both holding on to one's culture (the sanguine aspects) and engaging with the world at large in the idiom that it demands. It may, for example, mean that a Kashmiri man or woman speaks fluent

Kashmiri, is able to code, say for Google or Microsoft, but at the same time turns up at Microsoft or Google headquarters wearing the Kashmiri pheran (a loose woolen tunic worn by Kashmiris in autumn and winter). Key here is he or she must do excellent and unparalleled coding. This is a very important point. It perhaps goes to the heart of why our Gen Next is not encouraged to speak in Kashmiri- that is, a deep inferiority complex that appears to define us. There appears to be no alternative explanation for this. But there is a structural reason: a point or thesis elaborated upon by sociologists and anthropologists is that there is a correspondence between the structure of society and the language it uses. If this thesis

holds, it suggests that a morphed, mutated and altered Kashmiri language or even 'pidgin' Kashmiri is correlated with a morphed, and mutated societal and social structure. The corollary here is harks back to the point made earlier, 'lose your language, lose your culture'. If then the drift continues, the day is not too far when we Kashmiris will not recognize ourselves in each other. We will have lost both our culture and languages.

Can this alarming drift be stemmed? Can a new bold and beautiful idiom that smacks of self-confidence (not arrogance), self-assuredness, cultural and social well-being be crafted? This is a difficult question to answer and what I will posit is more hope and aspiration than reality. This is in

my three beautiful children- all in the age bracket of 3-10 years. (I must confess here that I too am guilty of 'following the herd' and not imparting and teaching Kashmiri to my children) While the youngest one is too young to understand but will obviously follow her older siblings, my middle and older daughters harp on a theme that warms the cockles of my heart. The refrain for both is, 'mye chhu Kaeshur khosh karaan. Mye seath kar Kaeshur'. (I like Kashmiri. Talk to me in Kashmiri). Of course, this is said in an inflected and accented Kashmiri which is a problem. But their desire to speak in Kashmiri is a great starting point. What I cull from this is that there is hope and this springs eternal. Now returning to the core theme of this essay, I will conclude by positing that Kashmiri is a fertile, rich language that has excited the imagination and poetic genius of great luminaries. All is not lost then. There can come a day when a Pheran clad Kashmiri person, can after having created a great software program, or developed an AI application can saunter on the streets of Manhattan, Paris or London and regale his or non- western audiences in pure and sublime Kashmiri poems. Our hypothetical Kashmiri person can then return home (for vacation or otherwise), wander around our downtown, have some Nadir Monje (Kashmiri condiments), go home, place the Kanger (Kashmiri clay fire pot bound by wicker) under his or her pheran, put a potato in the Kanger and relish it after its roasted. And in wintry evenings or nights, dust off his or her book shelf read aloud the beautiful and sublime poetic verses of Soche Kraal sahib, Shamas Faqeer sahib, Rasool Mir Sahib, Abdul Ahad Aazad sahib, Rahman Rahi sahib and other great luminaries!

Author is Masters with Distinction in International Relations from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Worked as Associate Editor of Kashmir Observer.

Breaking the Spell Escaping the "Time-for-Money" Trap of Digital Begging

Mohd Younus Bhat

In the wild world of online content creation, the sacred trinity of "Like, Share, and Subscribe" functions as a virtual pied piper, the term "Pied Piper" is often used metaphorically to describe someone who is charismatic or persuasive and leads others, often unwittingly, into following them or adopting their ideas. Here, the digital creators like a "Pied Piper" lead unknown audience into a time-for-money trap. These digital wizards have transformed the art of interaction into a mystical dance in which your valuable time is killed wisely.

Consider vloggers to be modern-day magicians, wielding content wands and enticing viewers with promises of digital wonders. As they work to turn your time into a golden goose, it's like watching a monetization magic show - "Abracadabra, your minutes are now my treasures!"

Remember, you are the hero of your own screen time story on your digital journey. Travel intelligently through the tempting maze of online content, and don't let the enticing chant of "Like, Share, Subscribe" convert you into a pumpkin at the digital ball. After all, in this enchanted realm, laughter is the finest armour, and a well-timed emoji can be your trusted sword. As producers work to monetize your time, it's critical to understand the signals of this digital fascination and find ways out of this alluring maze.

What you should take care of to be an informed and smart digital content consumer:

The Time-For-Money Spell:

Imagine this - you stumble upon a video that promises entertainment, but before you know it, you're knee-deep in a digital rabbit hole. The vlogger, armed with charm and charisma, keeps you hooked with the perpetual cycle of likes, shares, and subscriptions. While it may seem harmless, it's essential to recognize that your time is becoming the currency, and you're unknowingly contributing to the monetization of every second spent watching.

The Wake-Up Call:

Recognizing the time-for-money trap is the first step. When the desire of engagement becomes a devouring force, and you find your-

self spending more time than you anticipated



on digital connections. Awareness is the key to breaking the spell.

Setting Boundaries:

Regaining control over your time requires establishing clear boundaries. Consider setting time limitations for your internet activities. Set aside a specific time to watch content, and then resist the impulse to go down the content rabbit hole.

Diversify Your Digital Diet:

Break the monotony by diversifying your digital diet. Explore content beyond the realms of endless engagement requests. Seek out educational, informative, or thought-provoking content that adds value to your time spent online.

Unsubscribe and Unfollow Strategically:

Review your subscriptions and follows. Unsubscribe or unfollow creators who primarily engage in the relentless pursuit of likes, shares, and subscriptions. Choose creators whose content aligns with your interests and values without bombarding you with constant demands.

Digital Detox:

Periodically start a digital detox to reset your engagement habits. Take a break from the relentless pursuit of likes and shares to reevaluate your relationship with online content. Use this time to engage in offline activities that bring you joy and fulfillment.

Be a Mindful Consumer:

Practice mindful consumption by actively engaging with stuff that speaks to you. Rather than mindlessly adding to the engagement frenzy, choose to interact with material that truly brings value to your life.

To put it simply, while vloggers use the "Like, Share, Subscribe" motto to monetize their time, it is critical to understand the possible risks of falling into the time-for-money trap. Setting limits, diversifying your digital diet, and being a conscious consumer will help you take control of your online experience and break free from the trap of constant digital pleading. Remember, your time is valuable, and it is up to you to determine how to spend it in the huge world of online content.

Check the Online World with Purpose and Intention:

Escape the digital cyclone and take control of your own online future. Instead of being a mere spectator in the vast spectacle of digital

connection, explore these practical tactics for creating a more intentional and satisfying online experience. Let us begin on a journey to break free from the digital beguilement and transform your screen time into a catalyst for personal growth and fulfillment, starting with expert time management and strategic content planning and ending with meaningful connections and offline rituals. Are you ready to take control of your digital ship? Let the journey begin!

Skill Up and Utilize Your Time Wisely:

Instead of succumbing to the endless loop of digital engagement, consider using your time for personal growth and skill development. Identify areas of interest or skills you've always wanted to acquire. Whether it's learning a new language, picking up a musical instrument, or honing your culinary skills, invest your time in activities that contribute to your personal development.

Create a Content Calendar:

Take charge of your online experience by creating a content calendar. Plan your online engagements strategically, ensuring a balance between entertainment and productivity. Allocate specific time slots for watching content, engaging with creators, and, most importantly, dedicating time to activities that contribute to your well-being and growth.

Engage Meaningfully:

When interacting with content, strive for quality over quantity. Instead of mindlessly clicking the like button, leave thoughtful comments that contribute to meaningful conversations. This not only enhances your digital experience but also fosters a sense of community around content that resonates with you.

Explore Educational Platforms:

Consider exploring educational platforms and online courses that align with your interests and career goals. Platforms like Coursera, Udemy, or Khan Academy offer a plethora of courses that can help you acquire new skills and knowledge. Utilize your screen time for educational purposes, transforming your online experience into a valuable learning journey.

Set Digital Goals:

Define clear goals for your digital interactions. Whether it's staying informed on current events, networking with like-minded individuals, or simply finding joy in entertaining content, having purpose-driven goals will help you navigate the digital landscape more intentionally.

Establish Offline Rituals:

Create rituals that involve stepping away from the digital realm. Whether it's a morning routine, an evening walk, or a weekend hobby, establishing offline rituals provides a healthy balance and ensures that your time is well-spent both in the virtual and physical worlds.

Practice the 5-Minute Rule:

Implement the 5-minute rule whenever you are tempted to skim through stuff mindlessly. Allow yourself a maximum of 5 minutes to engage with a certain piece of content. If it does not pique your interest within that timeframe, go on to other worthwhile pursuits. You may avoid the digital begging trap by navigating the internet realm with skill, setting limits, and making the most use of your time. Remember that, when utilized properly, the internet may improve your life. Take charge of your digital experience and turn your screen time into a beneficial resource for personal development and enjoyment.

Conclusion

In the dynamic digital landscape, seize control of your fate. Avoid the time-for-content trap by setting limits, diversifying your online consumption, and engaging meaningfully. Transform your screen time into a tool for enrichment, skill development, and joy. Become an active architect of your online journey, shaping a digital world that aligns with your goals. Your decisions in this vast space can influence the trajectory of your journey—make them count.

Researcher, CSIR-NET, Gold Medalist, DST-INSPIRE fellow & Pursuing Ph.D. at "Pondicherry Central University". Founder: GeoBuddy Learning Solutions. Email: yunusbhatt586@gmail.com

ASF ENTERPRISES

Sale and Services of Computers 2nd. Floor Munir Manzil Regal Chowk Srinagar (J&K), Ph.0194-24 77949, 9419001176, 9419776235

Sale and Sendee of Laptops. Desktops. Printers, Photocopiers. Faxes., CCTV Cameras, Security System and Refilling of all Types of Cartridges, Toners

Registered Government order Suppliers.



PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my name has been inadvertently recorded in my Son's date of birth certificate as Syeda Rizvi M/O Syed Mohammad Hamza W/O Syed Tahir Hussain R/O Pallar, Budgam-191111. However, the correct name with spelling is Syeeda Afzal M/O Syed Mohammad Hamza W/O Syed Tahir Hussain R/O Pallar, Budgam-191111, as recorded in all my official documents, including academic records, Aadhaar Card, Ration Card, Voter ID etc.

In view of the above I want to correct my name in the date of birth certificate as Syeeda Afzal M/O Syed Mohammad Hamza W/O Syed Tahir Hussain R/O Pallar, Budgam-191111. Instead of Syeda Rizvi M/O Syed Mohammad Hamza W/O Syed Tahir Hussain R/O Pallar, Budgam-191111. If any person has any objections to this name correction, they are hereby requested to submit their objections in writing to the Block Development Officer, Budgam within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. Objections received after the stipulated time will not be entertained.

Syeeda Afzal
M/O Syed Mohammad Hamza
W/O Syed Tahir Hussain
R/O Pallar, Budgam-191111.
Mobile Number. 9682610044

inf

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan..

Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice...

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Aswar ul Ishfaq S/o Mohammad Ishfaq Lone R/o Khambyar Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 27/05/2020 occurred at SDH pattan 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..

SD
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan..

Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice...

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Arham Ibn Myser S/o Myser Ahmad Bhat R/o Hanjwera Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 10/07/2021 occurred at SDH pattan 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.

SD
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan..

Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Arham Aijaz D/o Aijaz Ahmad Dar R/o Ashpora Qaziabad Kupwara with verified date of birth 08/06/2021 occurred at SDH pattan 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..

SD
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan..

Sub . issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Numaan Firdous S/o Firdous Ahmad War R/o Warpora Sopol Tehsil Sopore Distt baramulla with verified date of birth 08/07/2020 occurred at SDH pattan 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.

SD
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan..

Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
PUBLIC NOTICE.

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Sobiya Sajad D/o Sajad Ahmad Rather R/o Gohal Tangpora Pattan Tehsil Sopore Distt baramulla with verified date of birth 13/04/2021 occurred at SDH pattan 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.

SD
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

'Lifestyle And Environmental Factors Affect Health And Ageing More Than Genes'

ANI

A new study led by researchers from Oxford Population Health has shown that a variety of environmental factors, including lifestyle choices (such as smoking and physical activity) and living conditions, have a more significant impact on health and premature death than our genes.

The study, which analysed data from nearly half a million UK Biobank participants, examined the influence of 164 environmental factors and genetic risk scores for 22 major diseases on

ageing, age-related diseases, and premature death. The findings were published today in Nature Medicine.

As per the key findings, the environmental factors explained 17% of the variation in risk of death, compared to less than 2% explained by genetic predisposition (as per the present).

Of the 25 independent environmental factors identified, smoking, socioeconomic status, physical activity, and living conditions had the most impact on mortality and biological ageing. Smoking was associated with 21 diseases; socioeconomic factors, such as



household income, home ownership, and employment status, were associated with 19 diseases; and physical activity was associated with 17 diseases.

The early life exposures, including body weight at 10 years and maternal smoking around birth, were shown to influence age-

ing and risk of premature death 30-80 years later.

Environmental exposures had a greater effect on diseases of the lung, heart and liver, while genetic risk dominated for dementia and breast cancer.

Professor Cornelia van Duijn, St Cross Professor of Epidemiology at Oxford Population Health and senior author of the paper, said 'Our research demonstrates the profound health impact of exposures that can be changed either by individuals or through policies to improve socioeconomic conditions, reduce smoking, or promote physical activity.'

The research shows that whilst many of the individual exposures identified played a small part in premature death, the combined effect of these multiple exposures together over the life course (referred to as the exposome) explained a large proportion of premature mortality variation. The insights from this study pave the way for integrated strategies to improve the health of ageing populations by identifying key combinations of environmental factors that shape the risk of premature death and many common age-related diseases simultaneously

Study Suggests Origin Of Elasticity Could Lie In How Molecules Interact Under Stress

Press Trust Of India

A study has suggested that elasticity in an object possibly originates in the interactions between molecules of the flexible material, allowing it to regain its original shape once the external stress is removed.

The findings open the door for the design of new and elastically flexible crystals which could be used in spacecraft or electronic devices, the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Nature Materials.

The researchers, including from The University of Queensland, Australia, had set out to try and locate the exact "location" of the force stored in a flexible material which gives it elasticity.

To understand this, the team bent single crystals of three molecular materials - which retain their properties at a molecule's level - to locate precisely where the energy is stored.

"We looked at how and where the energy was stored as the crystals contracted and went back to their original shape and size," author Jack Clegg, a professor at the school of chemistry and molecular biosciences, The University of Queensland, said.

The researchers found that the energy that allowed the crystals to spontaneously straighten out and spring back to its original shape was stored as potential energy in the interactions between the molecules.

"We were able to show that enough



We looked at how and where the energy was stored as the crystals contracted and went back to their original shape and size

energy was stored in our bent flexible crystals to lift something 30 times the weight of the crystal a metre into the air," Clegg said.

The author added, "Under strain, the molecules reversibly rotate and reorganise in a way that stores energy differently on the inside and the outside of the bend."

The new understanding of this commonly observed phenomenon could allow the design of new hybrid

materials that could find their use in spacecrafts or electronic devices, Clegg said.

"Elasticity is a property that underpins a myriad of existing technologies including optical-fibres, aeroplane "We show for each material that different intermolecular interactions are responsible for the restoring force under both expansive (tension) and compressive strain," the authors wrote.

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
JAMMU AND KASHMIR PHARMACY COUNCIL
CONSTITUTED IN TERMS OF SECTION (19) OF PHARMACY ACT 1948
COMBINED DRUG & FOOD LAB, PATOLI MANGOTRIAN, JAMMU).
EMAIL: President.jkpharmacycouncil@gmail.com. Tele: 0191-2536043.

To, Mr. Sameem Sultan, S/o Mr Dr Mohamaad Sultan, R/o Near Jama Masjid, Sharief Molana Azad road, Srinagar, Distt:- Srinagar (J&K), Pin: 190001. Email: sameemsultan993@gmail.com. No: JKPC/SCN/2025/PHAR009995--Estt-1025-1039 Dated: 21-02-2025 Dated:21.02.2025.

Subject: Show Cause Notice. Reference: VBSPU University, HOD, letter no:- Memo/Verf/2025, Dated:-20.02.2025. Whereas, the Pharmacy Council of Union Territory of J&K issued a Public Notice under endorsement no: JKPC-86/Estt/681-91, 16.12.2020 inviting therein applications for registration as Pharmacist under the Pharmacy Act, 1948.

Whereas, the above exercise was initiated in pursuance to the implementation of the Pharmacy Act, 1948 in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir after the enforcement of J&K re-organization Act, 2019; Whereas, an application for registration as Pharmacist under Section 32 of the Pharmacy Act, 1948 from your end was uploaded in the Online Portal vide Form reference no: PHAR009995, Dated:- 10.01.2023 along with the documents as prescribed under the checklist;

Whereas, as a matter of practice & procedure, the eligibility certificate uploaded from your end was referred to the concerned university/examining body for purpose of verifying its genuineness;

Whereas, a communication presumably originating from Veer Bahadur Singh Purvanchal University, Jaunpur, U.P was received by the J&K Pharmacy Council on 15.02.2023 which was taken on record & the application submitted by you was approved & the registration as Pharmacist was granted in your favour as per below details:

Registration number	Date of registration	Validity
JKPC/NRC/9995	13-Mar-2023	12-Mar-2028

Whereas, the staff dealing with applications uploaded through online portal informed that there is some evident suspicion about the credentials of applicant who claims to acquired requisite eligibility from Veer Bahadur Singh Purvanchal University, Jaunpur, U.P;

Whereas, the above inputs were taken on record and a confidential exercise was initiated with the competent authority of Veer Bahadur Singh Purvanchal University, Jaunpur, U.P through E-mail along with all the documents uploaded as per checklist;

Whereas, in response to the above mail a return mail/communication from Head, Institute of Pharmacy, VBSPU, Jaunpur, U.P was received, vide letter no: MEMO/Verf/2025, Dated: 20.02.2025, the operative para of which is reproduced as under:

"Thank you for your communication dated 18/02/2025 regarding the verification of candidates applying for registration as pharmacists from the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. After thoroughly reviewing our records, we would like to inform you that, to date, no candidate from the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir has either been admitted to or has passed the B, Pharm or D. Pharm programs at our institution. As such, we do not have any relevant records to submit in response to your request".

Whereas, the above chronology of events clearly indicates that you have indulged in unfair means and submitted fictitious documents by resorting to manipulation and misrepresentation/impersonation;

In light of the contents of foregoing paras and before taking any final action in the matter, you are hereby afforded an opportunity to furnish your response and comments in the matter in writing to the undersigned through return mail by or before 28.02.2025 positively; It may be noted that in the event of your failure to respond to this notice, the Council shall be constrained to initiate ex-parte action against you.

(Lotika Khajuria) (Ex-Officio) President, Jammu & Kashmir Pharmacy Council. DIPC-NB-3534/24 dated: 22-02-2025

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, I&FC DIVISION GANDERBAL

Tele fax No. 0195-235275 e.mail: exenifcdganderbal@ifckashmir.com

Short term e-NIT No. 26 of 2024-25 Dated: -22-02-2025

For and on behalf of Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory, e-Tenders are invited from approved and eligible contractors including MSME register with Jammu and Kashmir UT Government or other states of India, for the following works:-

S. No.	Particulars of the work	Estimated/Advised Cost of work	Earnest money (In Rs.)	Cost of document tender fee (In Rs.)	Head of Account	Time of Completion	Class of Contract	Validity of Rates
1	2	3	4	6	7	8	08	9
01	Safe shifting of Watermaster Classic III from Hokersar Wetland Reserve to Tulumallah nallah, Ganderbal	0.86 lac	4300.00	100/-	4711-LIT Capex	05 Days	Civil DEE Class/ Mechanic at MSME	90 days from the date of opening of financial bid.

Position of funds Assured.

Position of A. A= Superintending Engineer Hydraulic Circle Srinagar/Ganderbal's Order No: SE/HYD/SGR/32 of 2024-25 Dated: 14.08.2024

Technical Sanction= Executive Engineer FMD Baramulla's No: 24 of 02/2025

The critical dates are as tabulated below:-

01	Publishing Date	22-02-2025	04:00 P.M
02	Download Date Start	22-02-2025	04:00 P.M
03	Bid submission Date Start	22-02-2025	04:00 P.M
04	Pre Bid Meeting Date	24-02-2025	02:00 P.M
05	Bid submission Date End	27-02-2025	04:00 P.M
06	Bid opening Date	28-02-2025	11:00 A.M

Bid documents can be assessed at and downloaded from the websites <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>

1. The Bids shall be deposited on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in>

2. The complete bidding process will be online <http://jktenders.gov.in>.

3. The Techno-commercial bids shall be opened online in the office of Executive Engineer I&FC Division Ganderbal on the date given above or any other subsequent date convenient to the tender opening authority.

4. Bids must be accompanied with earnest money deposit in the shape of insurance security bond/Account payee demand draft/ FDR/ CDR/ Bankers Cheque/ Bank Guarantee/ e-BG pledged in favour of Executive Engineer I&FC Division Ganderbal.

5. The hard copies of Earnest money deposit, and other relevant documents as sought shall be furnished by the bidder who is declared L1.

6. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in>.

7. Queries by email if any should be made at Email: exenifcdganderbal@ifckashmir.com

No: IFCD/GBL/CC/8935-45
Dated:-22-02-2025
DIPC-12346/24 dated: 22-02-2025
Executive Engineer I&FC Division Ganderbal

Javed Dar Inaugurates 3 Day Mega Agritech Mela Gongul-2025 At SKUAST-K



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Minister for Agriculture Production and Rural Development Department, Javed Ahmed Dar, Saturday inaugurated GONGUL 2025, the 10th SKUAST-K AgriTech mela, a three-day mega event showcasing cutting-edge agricultural innovations, sustainable farming practices and entrepreneurial opportunities in the agriculture sector at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, Shalimar campus.

This year's mela is special as it emphasises secondary and sustainable agriculture, reflecting the objectives of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). With a greater focus on value addition, climate resilience and agri-entrepreneurship, the event brings together policymakers, industry leaders and farmers to shape the future of agriculture in J&K.

The mela has more than 400 stalls exhibiting the latest farm machinery, precision agriculture, sale of seeds and planting material besides farm animals and birds.

training skills. Besides, the event is also featuring the majestic horses.

The Minister lauded SKUAST-K for choosing 'Gongul' as the name for AgriTech mela, which connects the next generation with rich Kashmiri culture. He narrated the childhood activities linked with Gongul (onset of sowing) in Kashmir and evolution of tech-driven farming in the valley. He emphasised the need for preserving the Kashmiri culture, known globally for its cuisine, literature, architecture and rich traditions.

While hailing the HADP, he said the initiative is going to change the fortunes of the people of J&K.

The Minister assured full support of the J&K Government to SKUAST-K in leading the transformation of agriculture landscape of the region. He also ensured strict law enforcement for checking the trade of spurious agrochemicals.

Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, said the Gongul-2025 reflects the achievements and aspirations of J&K's Holistic Agriculture Development Program. He said SKUAST-K has envisioned J&K as a model bio-economy for Viksit Bharat through futuristic innovation-led farming. He thanked the J&K Government for generous support to the university initiatives.

“The mela has more than 400 stalls exhibiting the latest farm machinery, precision agriculture, sale of seeds and planting material besides farm animals and birds.”

BBC World Service India Fined ₹3.44 Crore For Foreign Exchange Violation

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Enforcement Directorate has levied a penalty of more than Rs 3.44 crore on BBC World Service India for alleged contravention of foreign direct investment (FDI) regulations, agency officials said on Friday.

The federal probe agency also fined three of its directors more than Rs 1.14 crore each as it issued an order against the British broadcaster following adjudication under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

A BBC spokesperson said in a statement to PTI that "at this stage, neither BBC World Service India nor its directors have received any adjudication order from the Enforcement Directorate".

"The BBC is committed to operating within the rules of all countries we are based in, including India. We will carefully review any order when it is received and consider next steps as appropriate," the spokesperson said.

The adjudication proceedings were initiated after a show-cause notice was issued on August 4, 2023, to BBC WS India, its three directors, and the finance head for various "contraventions" under the said law.

The ED launched a FEMA probe against the BBC a few months after the income-tax department conducted a survey operation at the news organisation's office in



Delhi in February 2023.

BBC WS India, which is a 100 per cent FDI company, was engaged in uploading/streaming news and current affairs through digital media but "did not" reduce their FDI to 26 per cent, and kept it at 100 per cent in "gross violation" of the regulations issued by the government of India, sources said.

The press note 4 issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on September 18, 2019, stipulates a 26 per cent FDI cap for digital media under the government approval route, they said.

The total penalty levied on BBC WS India stands at Rs 3,44,48,850, along with a fine of Rs 5,000 for every day after 15.10.2021 till the date of compliance for violation of the provisions of FEMA, 1999, the sources said. Three BBC directors -- Giles Anthony Hunt, Indu Shekhar Sinha and Paul Michael Gibbons -- have each been fined Rs 1,14,82,950 for their roles in "overseeing" company operations during the period of contravention, they said.

The Central Board of Direct

Kashmir Shawls, Carpet Lead In Exports: Govt

Pashmina Lab augmented to enhance testing, QR coding

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- The world-famous handicraft and handloom products worth ₹2,567 crore have been exported from Kashmir valley in the last two financial years and the first three quarters of the current fiscal.

However, the exports in the current financial year have been hit by global conflicts.

Giving details, a spokesperson of the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, hoped that the exports are expected to touch cumulatively ₹3000 crore for 3 years, by the end of the last quarter of the CFY.

As per the figures available with the Department, while Kani and Sozni shawls lead exports worth ₹1105 crore, hand-knotted carpet exports stood at ₹728 crore in the last three years. The other products exported include crewel, papier mache, chain stitch and wood carving.

The spokesman further stated that the Department shall facilitate export of hand-made Kashmir products for which a subsidy scheme is available, giving incentive of 10% of the total volume of handloom/handicraft export products to any country with maximum reimbursement up to ₹5 crore in favour of the eligible exporters registered with the Department," he added.

Highlighting the Government's strategy for welfare of artisan community, the spokesman said the Depart-



ment has a well-established Design Studio in the Indian Institute of Carpet Technology and unique prototypes conceived by the School of Designs and Craft Development Institute. "The artisans can access these contemporary designs and packaging models to add value to their products in niche high-end markets," he added.

For welfare of artisans, the Department has several flagship schemes in operation including Credit Card Scheme, Mudra, Financial Assistance Scheme for Cooperatives, Karkhandar Scheme and Education Scholarship for the children of craftsmen.

Under the National Wool Policy, the department has selected 100 weaver beneficiaries for distribution of free modified modern steel carpet looms in Kashmir at a total cost of Rs.43.70 lakh

and the department will pitch for another 250 improvised looms for distribution in the next financial year.

Emphasizing upon the department's focus on testing and QR coding of GI registered craft products to weed out sale of counterfeit products, the spokesperson stated that the department has augmented manpower and equipment at its premier Pashmina Testing and Quality Certification Centre (PTQCC) and IICT lab for carpets. "The waitlist of 6 craft products including Sozni, Kani, Walnut Wood Carving, Khatamband, Papier Mache and Kashmir Pashmina at PTQCC has come down from 1700 on February 5 to 671 as on February 21, after strengthening of manpower," he said, adding that the lab will be further strengthened after more staff shall undergo necessary training at the Wool Research Association, Thane.

“THE ARTISANS CAN ACCESS THESE CONTEMPORARY DESIGNS and packaging models to add value to their products in niche high-end markets,”

Pursue Entrepreneurship Rather Than Focusing Solely On Govt Job: Jitendra Singh

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU- Union Minister Jitendra Singh Saturday appealed to the youths of Jammu and Kashmir to pursue entrepreneurial ventures rather than focusing solely on getting a government job to become successful in life.

After inaugurating a two-day National Startup Festival organized by the CSIR-India Institute of Integrative Medicine here, he emphasised the importance of innovation, entrepreneurship and early industry linkages in ensuring startup success.

Singh highlighted the immense potential of agriculture-based startups in the region and said the Purple Revolution to promote the cultivation of lavender has enabled over 3,000 youths in Jammu and Kashmir to earn lakhs.

He encouraged people to recognize their aptitudes and pursue entrepreneurial ventures rather than solely focusing on getting a government job.

"Jammu and Kashmir's agristartup ecosystem is thriving with lavender cultivation in



“Jammu and Kashmir's agristartup ecosystem is thriving with lavender cultivation in Bhadrawah putting the region on the global startup map,”

Bhadrawah putting the region on the global startup map," the Union minister said, urging greater inclusion of urban areas in agri-startups, with a focus on expanding lavender

cultivation and other high-value agricultural ventures.

With two lakh StartUps currently operating in India, the country has secured the third position in the global startup ecosystem, he said, adding that the startups are not only boosting economic growth but also providing lucrative employment opportunities, particularly for women.

Singh stressed the critical role of industry linkages and market research in ensuring the long-term sustainability of startups, encouraging young entrepreneurs to study market dynamics at the outset.

He hailed the rapid growth of India's space economy, attributing its success to collaboration between the public and private sectors. He also celebrated the contributions of women-led teams in major space missions, including Chandrayaan-2 and Aditya L1.

On the education front, the minister commended the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for revamping India's education system by creating a level playing field and ensuring digital inclusivity.

How Much Will Tesla Car Cost In India After Reduced Import Duty? Report Says...

ANI

NEW DELHI- s Elon Musk-led Tesla is soon planning to enter India, even after the reduction in the import duty to below 20 per cent, the cheapest car of Tesla will cost around Rs 35 to 40 lakh, according to a report by CLSA, a global capital market company.

The report highlighted that currently, Tesla's cheapest Model 3 in the US costs around USD 35,000 (approximately Rs 30.4 lakh) at the factory level. With an expected reduction in import duties to 15-20 per cent in India, along with additional costs such as road tax and insurance, the on-road price would still be around USD 40,000, or approximately Rs 35-40 lakh.

It said "The cheapest Model 3 for Tesla in the US is c.USD35k. With tariff lowered to c.15-20 per cent in India, along with road tax, insurance and other costs, on-road price would be c.USD40k, which is close to Rs3.5-4m".

If Tesla positions the Model 3 at a price 20-50 per cent higher than domestic EV models like Mahindra XEV 9e, Hyundai e-Creta, and Maruti Suzuki e-Vitara, the report added that it is unlikely to disrupt the Indian EV market significantly.

Even if Tesla decides to launch an entry-level model priced below Rs 25 lakh on-road and gains market share, the report believes that the recent decline in Mahindra & Mahindra's stock is already factoring in this scenario.

However, the report suggests that Tesla's entry would not have a significant impact



on major Indian automakers, as the overall penetration of EVs in India remains lower than in China, Europe, and the US.

Tesla in the coming months would be launching its models in Delhi and Mumbai. Tesla has officially begun its hiring process in India, marking a significant step towards its long-anticipated entry into the domestic market. On February 18, the electric vehicle (EV) giant posted a job listing on LinkedIn for the position of Consumer Engagement Manager in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

The report also outlined that Tesla would need to set up a manufacturing facility in India to make its cars more affordable and scale up its operations, even if import duties are reduced to below 20 per cent.

The report highlighted that under India's electric vehicle (EV) policy, Tesla could benefit from a lower import duty of 15 per cent on up to 8,000 units per year if it invests over Rs 4150 crore billion in setting up a local facility.

The report draws a comparison with the Indian motorcycle market, where Harley-Davidson's X440, priced 20 per cent higher than the Royal Enfield Classic 350, sells only around 1,500 units per month, whereas the Classic 350 sells about 28,000 units monthly.

Goyal Says Tesla Welcome To Invest, Manufacture In India

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- India welcomes Tesla and also all the other global companies which want to invest and manufacture in the country, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

Replying to a question on Elon Musk-promoted EV maker Tesla's speculated entry into India, Goyal said the American company is welcome to set up a presence in India.

It is the give and take which creates mutually beneficial partnerships, the minister said, making it clear that India is not anti-imports. "We welcome Tesla and also all the other global companies who want to invest and manufacture in India," Goyal said.

The minister also said that construction activity and vehicle exhaust are the prime reasons for pollution in cities. He assured that the government is committed to reducing pollution, citing efforts like encouraging usage of electric vehicles as a step in the same direction.

"In cities, the main reason for pollution is construction and vehicular pollution," Goyal, who handles the Commerce portfolio, said. Switching to EVs should be seen as a big plus for the country because of the benefits it offers, Goyal said, adding that it's also a viable alternative for auto users.

Speaking about the US-India

partnership, Goyal said the two countries do not compete, but complement each other and when they join forces, it acts as a force multiplier.

The relationship between both the people and businesses of the two countries is very strong and one with boundless possibilities, he added.

Goyal said everyone is "bullish, buoyant and confident" and denied there being any fears or intimidation within India Inc because of President Donald Trump.

Goyal said US interference in Indian elections as revealed through recent reports of a USD 21 million payout is not acceptable to Indians and added that whoever who has taken the money should be exposed and prosecuted.

There is a need to expose "anti-India" US billionaire George Soros' Indian friends as well, Goyal said, adding that the Hindenberg revelations on the Adani group could also be a strategy by the same set of anti-India people.

Pointing out that the revelations against one of the richest Indians came before Parliament sessions, Goyal alleged that this was a ploy to obstruct the development of the country.

Stating that the entire world has seen who is Leader of Opposition associated with, Goyal alleged the Congress leader has

Dir Agri Kashmir Kick Starts Distribution Of Vegetable Seedlings

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- The Director Agriculture Kashmir Mohammad Ilyas Khateeb Saturday kick-started sale of vegetable seedlings at Kitchen Garden Lalmandi, Srinagar.

During interaction with the farmers and kitchen garden lovers, the Director said that the department is vigorously enduring to attract more and more farmers and kitchen garden lovers towards the vegetable sector.

Director said that department is producing seedlings of different vegetable crops in hi-tech poly houses under controlled conditions in all the districts of Kashmir division and the seedlings would be distributed among the farming community of the region in a phased manner so that the produce (vegeta-



bles) reaches market in a way where it could fetch the farmer maximum possible returns.

He said department is producing vegetable seedling in consonance with the market demand for the produce. Khateeb said that the department is working to ensure that maximum area could be brought under different crops during the Kharief season.

To link the produce with the

market chain and to maintain its connectivity, the department has already formulated a strategy so that the farmers interests could be served and secured, he added.

He said that the Department is committed to produce quality seedling of different vegetable crops, as quality seedling plays a key role in the overall success of an agriculture enterprise.

Mallya Pursues Annulment, Alleging 'Unreal Quality' To Uk Bankruptcy Order

Press Trust Of India

LONDON- Embattled businessman Vijay Mallya has instructed his lawyers in the UK to pursue an annulment application against his bankruptcy order, with his legal team set to argue that Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statement in Parliament in December last year gives the order an "unreal quality".

It comes after Justice Anthony Mann reserved judgment, to be handed down at a later date, after hearings of three interlinked appeals related to Mallya's bankruptcy order concluded at the High Court in London this week.

The judge heard a set of complicated arguments involving a consortium of banks led by the State Bank of India (SBI) seeking repayment of an estimated judgment debt of around GBP 1.05 billion owed

by the 69-year-old businessman's now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines.

Mallya is wanted in India on fraud and money laundering charges.

"From Mallya's perspective, these English bankruptcy proceedings have an unreal quality," Leigh Crestohl, Managing Partner of Zaiwalla and Co-Mallya's new lawyers, told PTI.

"Evidence has now come to light that shows that the banks' debt has not only been paid but, moreover, the banks have recovered in excess of what was due from Dr Mallya," Crestohl said, citing Sitharaman's statement in the Parliament on December 17 last year.

Sitharaman in her statement to the Parliament "confirmed that a sum of INR 14,131.6 crore has been collected and restored to the banks", he said.

National Committee To Promote Natural Farming To Be Formed: Chouhan

Press Trust Of India

CHANDIGARH- Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday said a national-level committee will soon be established to promote natural farming across the country.

Through this committee, farmers will be made aware of adopting natural farming practices and be given necessary training, he said.

If farmers adopt natural farming correctly, it will not only boost their income but also preserve soil fertility, he said, adding that in addition, citizens will benefit from access to vegetables, grains, and fruits free from chemicals and pesticides.

He stated this after observing the natural farming practices under the guidance of Gujarat Governor, Acharya Devvrat, in village Kainthala in

Kurukshetra district, said an official statement.

Prior to this, Chouhan visited Gurukul Kurukshetra, where he examined the Gaushala for indigenous cows, the Gurukul's hostel, and other facilities.

Gujarat Governor Devvrat provided detailed insights into the progress and achievements of the Gurukul.

The union minister of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare saw wheat, sugarcane crops, as well as the vegetables and fruit plants at the Kanthala natural farming farmhouse.

He observed the jaggery-making process and had the opportunity to taste fresh jaggery.

He commended the efforts of Gujarat Governor Devvrat, stating that it was truly rewarding to see the practical application of natural farming in the fields of Gurukul.

USAID Was Allowed Here In Good Faith: Jaishankar On Voter Turnout Fund

Agencies

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has raised concerns over information from the US that millions of dollars were sent to India, allegedly to influence elections in India.

US President Donald Trump first raised the issue of alleged funding of \$21 million for "voter turnout" in India, after he took over from former President Joe Biden.

"Your security can be threatened without you leaving your house because the thought processes, the influences, the narratives, your morale, your sense of what is right and wrong, are all influenced by your phone, what you read every day, the pictures you see," Jaishankar said at the Delhi University Literature Festival.

"... I think some information has been put out there by the Trump administration people and obviously that is concerning," the External Affairs Minister said.

"It would suggest that there are activities which have a certain objective out there, to push a narrative or a viewpoint. As a government we are looking into it because such organisations have an obligation to report. And my sense is, the facts will come out," Jaishankar said, alluding to the announcement by President Trump that the US Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) posted a list of cancelled US taxpayer-funded initiatives with a mention of \$21 million earmarked for "voter turnout in India."

"Now, I read saying so-and-so dealt with USAID or so-and-so. Look, it's not a question of do you deal with USAID or not. USAID was allowed - has been here historically. But USAID was allowed here in good faith, to do good faith activities. Suggestions are being made out of America that there are activities which are in bad faith. So, it surely warrants a look," he said.

"And if there is something to it, I think the country should know who are the people involved in the bad faith activities," Jaishankar said.

The External Affairs Minister's comments come on a day the BJP sought an investigation into the alleged US funding of \$21 million for voter turnout in India and "kickbacks". The BJP alleged the money was used to sustain "deep state assets" in India.

President Trump on Thursday also repeated his questioning of the US government's allocation of the \$21 million, calling it a "kickback scheme".

The Enforcement Directorate and other security and financial agencies have started preliminary steps to identify Indian entities and individuals who served as conduits for receiving the now-scrapped USAID's \$21 million to influence voter turnout, news agency IANS reported.

Non-profits, social workers, media firms, and business entities are under the ED's scanner over alleged violation of anti-money laundering laws in a transnational conspiracy, sources said.



Hundreds attended the funeral prayers of veteran journalist and former Bureau Chief of Zee News Naseer Ahmad at Qamarwari, Srinagar.

'100-day Intensified Campaign'

Over 5.1 lakh TB Patients Notified: Health Ministry

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Over 5.1 lakh TB patients have been notified across India since the launch of the 100-day Intensified TB-Mukt Bharat Abhiyan on December 7, 2024, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday.

A new strategy was designed for the early identification of TB by offering X-rays as a screening tool for populations at higher risk of developing TB.

With the use of ultraportable, hand-held X-rays and intensified efforts to conduct door-to-door screenings in congregate settings, risk groups such as diabetics, smokers, alcoholics, people living with HIV, individuals with a history of TB, the geriatric population, and household contacts of TB patients have been identified. Both asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals have been screened using X-rays, followed by confirmation through Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing (NAAT), which has helped identify several asymptomatic TB patients.

To date, the campaign has made remarkable progress, the ministry said.

Over 3.5 lakh TB patients



have been notified across 455 intervention districts and more than 10 crore vulnerable individuals have been screened as a result of accelerated case detection efforts, reduced diagnostic delays, early identification of drug-resistant cases and improved treatment outcomes.

Among those identified, 2.4 lakh patients have been notified from public health institutions, while 1.1 lakh were identified through private healthcare facilities, the statement said.

Additionally, over 10 lakh Ni-kshay Shivirs have been organised and 836 Ni-kshay Vahans have been deployed to extend the reach of TB services, ensuring that even the most remote areas are

covered, the statement added.

Over 38 lakh people have been screened using chest X-rays, including a substantial population that did not exhibit typical symptoms or any symptoms of TB.

The campaign is working to ensure complete treatment, scale up differentiated TB care to identify patients in immediate need of care or hospital admission, provide support to undernourished TB patients, and offer preventive TB treatment to vulnerable populations, the statement said.

These results are an outcome of a "whole-of-government approach" to ensure the success of the campaign, the statement noted.

Union Health Minister J P Nadda has chaired meetings with chief ministers, cabinet ministers and senior officials from 22 ministries. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organised a sensitisation session attended by over 250 parliamentarians across states and UTs to inform them about the campaign and encourage their involvement and support at the state and district levels.

The Union Minister urged the chief ministers of all states to closely monitor the progress of the campaign at the state level. High-level administrative officers have been appointed to oversee the implementation of activities across various departments to ensure seamless coordination, the statement said.

Building on the success of the Jan Bhagidari approach, the campaign emphasises the active participation of community members. Through Ni-kshay Shapaths, individuals, community leaders, NGOs, and corporates are being encouraged to become Ni-kshay Mitras and support TB patients with nutritional baskets, psychosocial support, and vocational assistance.

Since the launch of the campaign, over 2.4 lakh Ni-kshay Mitras have registered and over 2.3 lakh food baskets have been distributed, the statement added.

"India's commitment to fighting TB is evident in the nation's achievements to date. In 2024, India notified over 26 lakh TB patients, closing the gap between the estimated incidence and those notified to the program. It is worth noting that over 36 per cent of notifications were registered from the private sector, reflecting the success of the progressive policy changes, innovative strategies and interventions deployed by the program over the past ten years," the statement said.

The new strategy adopted under the 100-Day TB-Mukt Bharat Abhiyan is significantly contributing by identifying sub-clinical or asymptomatic TB, which contributes to TB transmission in the community. This approach helps reduce incidence by breaking the chains of transmission and reduces mortality through the early identification and treatment of TB.

The strategy is accelerating progress and bringing India closer to its goal of eliminating TB, the statement added.

PM's US visit went very well, Trump-Modi had good chemistry: Jaishankar

Agencies

New Delhi, Feb 22: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the US "went very well" and underlined that the chemistry between him and President Donald Trump in Washington was also good.

Prime Minister Modi had paid an official working visit to the US on February 12-13 during which the two leaders held discussions on a broad range of bilateral issues.

"I have been doing this all my life, so I have some reference points, and some experiences as a comparative assessment. And, I would say with all objectivity, I thought, it went very well, and for a variety of reasons," Jaishankar said in response to a query on the Modi's US visit during an interaction at an event here late evening.

The external affairs minister said people know that PM Modi is a "very strong nationalist, and he sort of radiates that".

"Trump is an American nationalist, and I think in many ways nationalists kind of respect each other. They are very clear-eyed. They are in it for their country, Trump accepts that Modi is in it for India, Modi accepts that Trump is in it for America," he said.

"But, the purpose of the meeting is to say, ok, how do we find that something works, what is the common ground, something we can do together which makes both of us stronger," Jaishankar said.

The interaction was moderated by Sanjeev Sanyal, member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister during the DU Literature Festival, hosted at the Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC).

"The second I felt was... the chemistry was good. Again, Trump being somewhat unusual, there are a lot of other leaders in the world, with whom he has not necessarily a positive history. Now the case of Modiji, it's not the case. He (Trump) had a great visit (to India), he remembered," the external affairs minister said.

Jaishankar also made a reference to a picture book on the first term of President Trump, and said, he was told the Trump "himself selected pictures after his term had ended".

And, maximum number of pictures were "about India", he said, adding it also had a picture of the "Namaste Trump" event held at Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad during his visit in 2020.

"Clearly, he had a very good kind of a memory and feeling about the earlier term," Jaishankar said.

"President Trump appears to have a vision of what America's interests are, what he wants and he wants from the relation with us. We have the same.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

'Anti-Alcohol'

law in place the one that silences Kashmiris?" He further criticized the administration, calling it a colonial force that suppresses Kashmiri identity. "The colonial LG administration, in cahoots with the security forces, has turned Kashmir into an Orwellian nightmare—where people can't protest, safeguard their identity, or even speak for their culture," he wrote.

Mehdi warned that such actions could intensify local resentment. "Suppression breeds resentment. The more you push Kashmiris to the wall, the stronger their will to break it down," he said. He urged law enforcement to act responsibly, stating, "@JmuKmrPolice is advised to not work like a colonial power but work and behave as local police guided by law and respectful to the community and its sensitivities."

The incident has reignited concerns over governance in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly regarding the role and influence of elected officials. Many critics argue that Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, despite holding office, lacks real authority, with power remaining concentrated in New Delhi.

A shopkeeper in Lal Chowk, speaking to a local media outlet, voiced his frustration. "If Omar Abdullah truly believes he has no control over law and order, then why does he remain in office? What purpose does his position serve? Instead of skiing in Gulmarg or attending functions, he should be standing up for the people who elected him," he said.

Another local resident, also quoted in a local media report, expressed deep disappointment over the Chief Minister's silence. "He is the elected leader, and even if he doesn't have direct control over law and order, he can at least raise his voice. Simply washing his hands off the issue won't absolve him of responsibility," he remarked. "People placed their trust in the National Conference, hoping for change, yet all they have received is empty rhetoric."

The Traders Association of Central Lal Chowk, which had installed the signboard, viewed its removal as a direct reminder of Kashmir's political vulnerability. "The administration

couldn't even allow a simple civic appeal to remain in place. What kind of governance is this?" one trader asked.

The controversy also prompted social media reactions, with Preacher Aga Syed Mohammad Hadi questioning the authorities' logic. "A polite appeal to honourable Kashmiri tourists to avoid using alcohol and drugs in indecent activities. What is the problem with Jammu Kashmir Police or the establishment that they could not tolerate even for an hour and picked them up? Isn't this supporting their drug-free Kashmir campaign?? Or the curtains..." he wrote on X.

Itija Mufti, a leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), has initiated a signature campaign advocating for a complete ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir. She is seeking support from various political parties, including the ruling National Conference (NC), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Peoples Conference (PC).

Mufti emphasized that the issue is social rather than political, arguing that rising unemployment is driving youth toward alcohol and drug abuse. She cited examples from Bihar, Gujarat, and Nagaland to support her call for Jammu and Kashmir to be declared a dry state. Additionally, she criticized the government for increasing the number of alcohol outlets and urged the exploration of alternative revenue generation methods.

The removal of the signboard has sparked a wider conversation about the autonomy of Kashmiris in maintaining their cultural and ethical standards. Some argue that community-driven initiatives should not need official approval, while others believe that such messages must comply with government regulations.

As frustration grows, this incident has become another focal point in the ongoing debate surrounding governance, identity, and the ability of Kashmiris to manage their own societal norms. With increasing criticism and a shift in public sentiment against the administration, one question remains: Is Kashmir's elected leadership genuinely in control, or are they merely acting as figureheads within a larger political framework?

Kashmir Observer tried to contact the SHO

concerned for the police version but he was not available.

Speaker Convenes

government on a host of issues. While BJP will corner the government on issues of governance and commitments made by the ruling NC in its manifesto, Kashmir-based opposition parties like PDP and PC are likely to raise issues of Article 370, alcohol ban and other issues.

It is pertinent to mention that Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone has submitted a resolution seeking condemnation of the August 5, 2019 decisions in the strongest terms and restoration of Article 370.

PDP MLA Mir Muhammad Fayaz has submitted a bill seeking ban on sale and consumption of liquor in J&K. (KNO)

Zee TV's Naseer

encouraging young reporters and helping them secure careers in the field.

His passing has left a profound void, with journalists—both young and old—bidding him a tearful farewell. A large gathering of colleagues, friends, and admirers participated in his last rites, remembering him as a man of integrity, kindness, and unwavering support for his peers.

Naseer Ahmad was not just a journalist but a mentor who stood by aspiring reporters, guiding them in their early careers. Naseer also played a key role in launching Kashmir News Trust (KNT), a news agency that has been instrumental in providing a platform for local journalists.

Feroz Ahmad, one of his senior employees, expressed deep grief over his passing. "I still can't believe that Naseer Sir is no longer with us. He was more than a mentor—he was a guiding force for many of us," he said, recalling his invaluable support.

Naseer Ahmad was also a fearless journalist who exposed many untold stories from Kashmir. Notably, he was among the first to highlight the issue of unknown graves during the tumultuous years of militancy, bringing to light a subject that remained shrouded in secrecy. His courage in reporting sensitive issues

earned him both respect and recognition.

Senior journalist Neyaz Elahi paid a heartfelt tribute, saying, "Only those who knew him personally can truly understand his character. Naseer was not just helpful—he was a pillar for those who needed shelter and opportunity."

His passing marks the end of an era in Kashmiri journalism, leaving behind a legacy of fearless reporting and compassionate mentorship. As the media fraternity grieves his loss, his contributions to journalism and society will remain etched in the hearts of those he touched.

In a post on X, Mehbooba Mufti wrote, "Deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Naseer Ahmad, the senior journalist and former Bureau Chief of Zee News. His invaluable contributions to journalism will always be remembered."

Mirwaiz's Security

Notably, Mirwaiz was permitted to lead the Friday congregational prayers this week at Srinagar's historic Jamia Masjid, where he was reportedly seen under tight security, including CRPF personnel.

During this visit, Mirwaiz interacted with migrant Kashmiri Pandits and also appeared before a Joint Parliamentary Panel on the Waqf Amendment Bill. Mirwaiz also announced the formation of an inter-community committee to facilitate the safe return of Kashmiri Pandits, promote economic development, and preserve Kashmir's composite cultural heritage.

His recent trip to the national capital marked his first visit since the removal of the region's special status.

His visit to Delhi elicited strong reactions from various political factions, which led to the decision to provide him with upgraded security.

Mirwaiz was among 18 separatist leaders whose security cover was withdrawn or downgraded by the government in February 2019 on the premise that it was a wastage of the erstwhile state's otherwise scarce resources.

A spokesman of the J&K home department had then said, "It was felt that providing security to these separatist leaders is a wastage of scarce state resources which could be better

utilised elsewhere".

Power Shortage

measures to meet the power demand." "In case if there is a shortfall of power generation in peak time in view of low water level, the government always plans some sort of measures to tackle it," the official said.

Reportedly, in the past one month, the hydel power generation from the power plants across Jammu and Kashmir has further reduced by five percent owing to the less snowfall and low water levels.

Overall, the hydro power generation from the local plants in Jammu and Kashmir has reduced by 84.17 percent.

In the month of January, the Power Development Department (PDD) was generating nearly 250 Megawatts of power from the local hydel projects that amounts to 20 percent of the total generation capacity. However, in the ongoing month, the power generation has further reduced by five percent.

"However, the power generation has further decreased with the officials saying that the department was able to generate only 190 MWs of power in the ongoing month," the official said.

Besides, the authorities have said that Jammu and Kashmir may face 29 percent of 'forced load shedding' of annual power in the year 2034-35.

Besides, it has further projected that in the coming ten years, the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of power demand is likely to increase by more than four percent in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. (KNO)

DSEK Issues

"The heads shall ensure that the biometric, JK attendance portal is in a working condition and updated as per their current staff in position," DSEK said.

It also said that school premises must be kept neat and clean and with a festive outlook. "The complex and cluster heads shall hold sensitisation sessions with their respective clusters schools to gear up all the concerned for reopening of schools in light of the above instructions," DSEK said.

CT: India Aim For Semis, Pakistan Eye Survival In Marquee Clash

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Hyped as a marquee showdown but mostly lopsided on the field, India and Pakistan lock horns in the ICC Champions Trophy here on Sunday with Rohit Sharma's men aiming to seal a semifinal spot and Mohammad Rizwan's team desperate to avoid early elimination from the tournament.

While India are on a high after claiming a measured six-wicket win over a sprightly Bangladesh, Pakistan are evidently tense after the 60-run loss in the tournament-opener against New Zealand.

The sub-continental rivals' last Champion Trophy clash was the 2017 final in which Pakistan walked away with the win and the trophy. Rizwan and Co. would look to draw inspiration from that triumph in London but would also need to scale up their performance in



every department.

Though the buzz surrounding the match is nowhere close to being what it used to be at the peak of diplomatic tensions between the two countries, there is an air of quiet antici-

ation for the Group A clash at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

India will have a distinct advantage in every aspect. The side has settled in nicely while Pakistan have flown in a couple

of days ago after the drubbing handed by the Black Caps in Karachi.

More often than not, an India-Pakistan clash is as much a battle of nerves as cricketing abilities and India would be in

a much better space on both counts come Sunday afternoon.

For starters, skipper Rohit, whose form was a major concern in the run-up to the tournament, seems to be getting back to his best if the lucid stroke-making against Bangladesh was anything to go by.

In contrast, Pakistan would be fretting over the form and approach of their biggest star Babar Azam. The 90-ball 64 against New Zealand in a chase of 320 has been roundly criticised for being too slow.

Azam's inability to accelerate even when the asking rate kept climbing has come under scrutiny and he would be under tremendous pressure against India. Adding to their woes is the injury-forced ouster of game-changing opener Fakhar Zaman from the squad. Imam ul Haq has replaced him in the side and has joined the squad here.

Match starts at 2.30pm IST.

Short TAKES

Toss Won't Be A Factor, 300-325 A Good Score In Dubai: Gill

Anything in excess of 300 is a "very good" total considering the conditions in Dubai and with no dew around, the team batting second will be under more pressure, said India vice-captain Shubman Gill on Saturday ahead of the marquee clash against arch-rivals Pakistan in the Champions Trophy.

Though India have dominated Pakistan in the world events and also in the recent past, the match continues to generate plenty of hype.

"We definitely want to play positive and aggressive cricket. 300-325 will be very good score on this wicket. The team batting well in the middle overs will have a better chance of winning," Gill told reporters on the eve of the game.

Dew has played a big role in Dubai in the past but Gill said it won't be a factor in the clash between the arch-rivals and the team batting second will face the heat more.

"Toss won't matter as there is no dew. Team batting second will have more pressure," added Gill, who scored an unbeaten hundred against Bangladesh.

KKR's Full-Fledged Camp To Begin From March 12 At Eden

Defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders have begun their pre-season preparations with a week-long domestic players' training stint in Mumbai, ahead of their main camp in Kolkata starting March 12 at Eden Gardens.

KKR, who are yet to announce their skipper for the upcoming season, will kick off their IPL 2025 campaign against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Eden Gardens on March 22.

Shreyas Iyer, who led them to the 2024 title, has been released and will now captain Punjab Kings.

Among the frontrunners for the role are veteran batter Ajinkya Rahane, acquired at his base price of Rs 1.5 crore, and Venkatesh Iyer, who was re-signed by KKR for a staggering Rs 23.75 crore after being released, making him the third most expensive player in the IPL auction.

The Mumbai camp, running from February 21-28, features nine domestic players, including Iyer, Rinku Singh, Ramandeep Singh, Vaibhav Arora, and rising talent Angkrish Raghuvanshi, who impressed in 2024.

Dravid Teams Up With Son Anvay To Play In KSCA 3rd Div

Former India captain and coach Rahul Dravid on Saturday padded up with his son Anvay to play for Vijaya Cricket Club (Malur) in a Third Division (Group I) match for the Nassur Memorial Shield.

Dravid senior, who came to bat at No 6, made 10 off eight balls with a boundary but Anvay scored 58 off 60 balls with eight fours as Vijaya amassed 345 for seven against Young Lions Club.

Swarnil was the top run-getter for the club with a 50-ball 107 with 12 fours and four sixes.

Anvay is a wicketkeeper-batter, while Samit, the elder son of Dravid, is a pace-bowling all-rounder.

AG Aditya took four wickets (4/60) for the Young Lions. Dravid, who was in Guwahati for the Rajasthan Royals' pre-season camp, returned to the city a couple of days ago.

There are several instances of father-son duo playing in the same match at various levels such as WG Grace-Grace Jr, Lala-Surinder Amarnath, Dennis-Adam Lillee, Denis-Heath Streak, Shivnarine-Tagenarine Chanderpaul and Ian-Liam Botham among others.

Mexican Referee Seeks Lionel Messi's Autograph; Disciplined

Mexican referee Marco Antonio Ortiz Nava found out the hard way that there are consequences for seeking an autograph from eight-time Ballon d'Or winner and World Cup winner Lionel Messi -- he was hit with a CONCACAF disciplinary sanction.

As the final whistle blew on Inter Miami's 1-0 Champions Cup win over Sporting Kansas City, secured by a brilliant second-half goal from Messi, the referee known as 'El Gato' approached the Argentina international.

He appeared to be asking for the striker's shirt to join the Messi-mania, but it turned out he was actually requesting an autograph for a relative with special needs.

Despite the heartfelt request, Ortiz's actions did not comply with CONCACAF's code of conduct for officials.

India's National Anthem Played Before Aus-Eng CT Matchup



Press Trust of India

LAHORE: Left red-faced after India's national anthem played for a fraction of a second at the start of the Australia-England Champions Trophy match here on Saturday, the Pakistan Cricket Board has blamed the ICC for the fiasco and demanded an explanation from the world body.

At the start of the game when the two teams lined up for their national anthems, the spectators were left surprised as the Indian national anthem played for a second before being stopped.

A source close to the ICC confirmed that the PCB had sent a letter to the governing body outlining the incident and demanding an explanation.

"The PCB has made it clear that the ICC needs to offer some explanation as their people are responsible for the (national anthem) playlist of teams in the Champions Trophy.

"Since India is not playing in Pakistan, it is hard to understand how their anthem was played by mistake from the playlist," the source said.

India had refused to travel to Pakistan citing security

concerns and are playing their share of Champions Trophy games in Dubai. The traditional rivals are due to clash on Sunday in a crucial match a loss in which will knock Pakistan out of the tournament.

The PCB had earlier also written to the ICC about its name logo not being displayed on television screens when India played Bangladesh in Dubai on Friday.

The ICC then assured the PCB that it was a mistake and all matches in Dubai will use the three-line horizontal logo with Pakistan's name.

Day Before Pakistan Game, Kohli Focuses On Spin Play



Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Indian superstar Virat Kohli meant business a day before the marquee clash against Pakistan in the Champions Trophy as he arrived at the ICC Academy two hours before scheduled practice time to iron out his issues against spin.

Kohli, who was troubled by the ball outside off-stump from the pacers on the Test tour of Australia, has been found vulnerable against spin in the recent ODIs he has played.

The 36-year-old fell to leg-spinner Rishad Hossain in India's opening Champions Trophy game against Bangladesh on Thursday, his sixth dismissal in a row against spinners in ODIs.

He was caught at backward point while trying to cut Hossain. In the preceding series against England at home, leg spinner Adil Rashid had got the better of Kohli.

The former India captain will have to deal with the likes of Abrar Ahmed when India takes on Pakistan at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday.

Irrespective of his form, Kohli's commitment to the game remains unquestionable, and his exemplary work ethic was on full display as he

arrived for training well before his teammates, who also showed up an hour earlier than the scheduled time, and was the last to leave.

It was not a surprise that the majority of the net bowlers he faced were spinners, including a couple of leg-break bowlers, as many off-spinners and a left-arm spinner.

Pakistan have a part time left-arm spinner in Khushdil Shah, while Salman Agha bowls off-spin.

With due respect to the opposition, Indian batters would be fancying themselves against the Pakistan spin attack. The main challenge for them will come from the pace trio of Shaheen Afridi, Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah who all are under pressure after an underwhelming opening game against New Zealand.

While India are sitting comfortably after the win over Bangladesh, Pakistan find themselves in a must-win situation. The wicket is expected to be on the slower side, bringing a battery of Indian spinners into the game.

India have five spinners in the squad, including two specialists in Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravarty, while the all-rounders who bowl spin are Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel and Washington Sundar.

Host Pakistan's Name Omitted From India-Bangladesh Broadcast

The PCB has expressed its displeasure to the sport's governing body ICC over the absence of country's name from the tournament logo shown during the live broadcast of India versus Bangladesh clash in the Champions Trophy.

The match was played in Dubai on Thursday.

According to PCB sources, the ICC has admitted the error and assured that it will use the three-line logo with Pakistan name in all matches in Dubai -- the same broadcast graphic which

has been shown in matches in the host country.

India are playing all their games in Dubai as part of the hybrid model agreed by the concerned stakeholders.

It has been learnt that the ICC has informally told PCB that it was a technical error.

Man United Rallies To Draw 2-2 At Everton After Late VAR Drama

Agencies

Manchester United rallied from two goals down before benefitting from a late-gasp video-review call to draw 2-2 at Everton on Saturday.

Uruguay midfielder Manuel Ugarte grabbed the 80th-minute equalizer for United with his first goal at club level in four years, eight minutes after Bruno Fernandes started the visitors' fightback at Goodison Park by curling in a free kick.

United had been on course to slip to a third straight loss -- and ninth defeat in 15 league matches since Ruben Amorim took charge in November -- after first-half goals by Beto and Abdoulaye Doucoure for resurgent Everton.

There was a late scare for United when Everton was awarded a penalty for what appeared to be a foul by Harry Maguire on Ash-



ley Young, who fell to the ground dramatically under pressure from Maguire and Matthijs de Ligt in the third minute of stoppage time.

Following a video review, on-field referee Andrew Madley was advised to view the incident again on the pitchside monitor and he changed his initial decision.

"I think it was a soft penalty, it was clear," Amorim said.

Everton faded halfway through the second half

and United took advantage, though the comeback doesn't mask the big problems facing Amorim as he looks to get the fallen English giant up the standings from its current embarrassing position of 15th place. "We need to survive this season and then we can think ahead," Amorim said.

Everton extended its unbeaten run under David Moyes, a former United manager who returned for a second spell at Goodi-

son Park last month, to six league games.

Ugarte's last club goal was for Portuguese team Famacico in February 2021 so he was an unlikely scorer for United, which produced another largely inept display.

Beto drove in a shot that went into the ground and up into the net to put Everton ahead in the 19th minute after Doucoure headed the ball back into the area.

Doucoure then scored himself 14 minutes later, beating Maguire to a header from close range after United goalkeeper Andre Onana could only parry a shot from Jack Harrison high into the air.

Fernandes curled a free kick into the bottom corner in the 72nd to give United hope and Ugarte completed the fightback.

Second-place Arsenal hosts West Ham later in one of six other games and can trim the gap to Liverpool to five points with a win. (AP)

Real Madrid Can't Afford To Drop More Points In LaLiga: Ancelotti

Agencies

MADRID: Real Madrid cannot afford to keep dropping points in LaLiga if they want to stay in contention in their title defence after failing to win their last three games, manager Carlo Ancelotti said on Saturday.

Barcelona took advantage of Real's slip-ups to move top on goal difference and take the driver's seat in the title race, with Atletico Madrid one point behind in third.

Ancelotti urged his players to bring to Sunday's match against Girona the same intensity they showed to knock Manchester City out of the Champions League playoffs.

"It's a crucial moment in the season and we have to repeat our good performance against City (on Sunday). We can't afford to make more mistakes, the league is very competitive



and every game is vital to get strong to the end of the competition." Ancelotti told a press conference.

"It's true we've been a bit unlucky and I think we have played quite against City so we have to continue in this vein, because if you play well and have a good attitude, the result will reward you.

"That is key in a competitive league like here in Spain that is very difficult to win. There are three teams within one point and they are teams of a

very high level. I believe this year the title will be decided in the last game."

England midfielder Jude Bellingham will miss the Girona game after receiving a two-match suspension for directing foul language at the referee during last weekend's 1-1 draw at Osasuna.

Ancelotti is excited by the challenge Real face in the Champions League round of 16 in which they were drawn against city rivals Atletico.

"Facing them will be difficult, as always. But I think it is going to be a nice, entertaining and balanced tie. The quality of the two teams is similar," Ancelotti said.

Misunderstanding Over Object On Field Halts Celta-Osasuna Game

A misunderstanding caused a two-minute halt to Friday's LaLiga clash between Celta Vigo and Osasuna, after Osasuna keeper Sergio Herrera showed a metal object to the referee, which the official mistakenly thought was thrown from the stands. Herrera later clarified that the object was actually a part of the goal post that had broken loose. "I'd like to clarify the misunderstanding with the object I alerted the referee to in today's match. It was an iron from the goal anchor that came loose and posed a risk," Herrera wrote on Instagram.

Assam Ends 90-Year-Old 'Namaz Break' Tradition In Assembly



Agenceis

Guwahati: The decades-old Assam Assembly tradition of a two-hour break to facilitate Muslim legislators to offer 'namaz' on Fridays was discontinued for the first time during the ongoing budget session. The decision to do away with the break was taken in the last session of the House in August, but implemented from this sitting.

Expressing dissatisfaction over it, AIUDF MLA Rafiqul Islam maintained that it was a decision imposed on the strength of numbers.

"There are about 30 Muslim MLAs in the assembly. We had expressed our views against the move. But they (the BJP) have the numbers and are imposing it on the basis of that," Islam said.

Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia of the Congress said provision can be made for the Muslim MLAs to offer 'namaz' nearby on Fridays.

"Today, several of my party col-

leagues and AIUDF MLAs missed important discussion as they went to offer 'namaz'. Since it is a special prayer requirement only for Fridays, I think a provision can be made for it nearby," he said.

The decision to discontinue the nearly 90-year-old practice was taken by the Rules Committee of the House, headed by the Speaker, in August last year.

Speaker Biswajit Daimary, "in view of the secular nature of the Constitution, had proposed that the Assam Legislative Assembly must conduct its proceedings on Fridays like any other day", which was placed before the Rules Committee and passed unanimously.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had welcomed the decision, stating that it was a practice introduced by the Muslim League's Syed Saadulla in 1937, and the decision to discontinue the break "prioritised productivity and shed another vestige of colonial baggage".

Honoured beyond words: Vicky Kaushal after PM Modi praises 'Chhaava'

Agenceis

At the inaugural function of the 98th Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan (ABMSS) on Friday, Modi said Maharashtra and Mumbai have taken Marathi films and Hindi cinema to greater heights.

"Aur in dino toh, 'Chhaava' ki dhoom machi hui hai. ('Chhaava' is making headlines everywhere right now)," Modi said about the movie, which has earned over Rs 300 crore globally since its release in theatres last week.

"Chhaava" stars Kaushal in the role of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Ma-

haraj, who was the son of Maratha empire founder Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. "Honoured beyond words! Grateful to Hon. PM Narendra Modi ji. #Chhaava," the actor wrote on Instagram alongside a video of Modi from the event.

Rashmika Mandanna, who stars as Yesubai in the movie, posted on her Instagram Stories, "Thank you so much @narendramodi sir, it's truly an honour."

"Chhaava" is produced by producer Dinesh Vijan's Maddock films and the banner also shared a clip of Modi on its official Instagram handle.

Moon or Mars? NASA's future at a crossroads under Trump

Agenceis

Washington: Is NASA still Moonbound, or will the next giant leap mean skipping straight to Mars?

Speculation is mounting that the Trump administration may scale back or cancel NASA's Artemis missions following the departure of a key official and Boeing's plans to lay off hundreds of employees working on its lunar rocket. Late Wednesday, NASA abruptly announced the retirement of longtime associate administrator Jim Free, effective Saturday.

No reason was given for Free's departure after his 30-year rise to NASA's top civil-service position. However, he was a strong advocate for Artemis, which aims to return crews to the Moon, establish a sustained presence, and use that experience to prepare for a Mars mission.

Though Artemis was conceived in President Donald Trump's first term, he has openly mused about bypassing the Moon and heading straight to Mars -- a notion gaining traction as Elon Musk, the world's richest person and SpaceX's owner, becomes a key ally and advisor.

Musk's SpaceX, founded to make humanity a multiplanetary species, is betting heavily on its prototype Starship rocket for a future Mars mission.

Trump has also tapped private astronaut and e-payments billionaire Jared Isaacman, a close Musk ally who has flown to space twice with SpaceX, as his next NASA chief.

Boeing this month told employees it could 400 jobs from the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket program to "align with revisions to the Artemis program and cost expectation."

"This will require 60-day notices of involuntary layoff be issued to impacted employees in

coming weeks, in accordance with the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act," the aerospace giant told AFP.

Boeing "saw the writing on the wall," Keith Cowing, a former NASA scientist and founder of NASA Watch, told AFP.

To date, SLS has flown just one mission -- 2022's uncrewed Artemis 1 -- and has proven exceedingly costly. It's "likely to fly only one or two missions, or they'll cancel it outright," Cowing added.

Reform or scrap?

Skepticism about the exceedingly expensive SLS and the Orion crew capsule -- whose heat shield issues delayed future Artemis missions -- is widespread among space watchers.

Still, many advocate reform, not repeal.

"We need to stick with the plan we have now," Free said at an American Astronautical Society meeting in October.

"That doesn't mean we can't perform better... but we need to keep this destination of the Moon from a human spaceflight perspective. If we lose that, I believe we will fall apart and wander, and other people in this world will pass us by."

Space policy analyst Laura Forczyk noted Free had been in line to become NASA's interim administrator before being

passed over in favor of another official, Janet Petro.

She warned that eliminating the Moon would remove a crucial testbed for technologies needed to ensure a safe Mars journey.

While Musk has called Artemis a "jobs-maximizing program" and said "something entirely new is needed," the initiative enjoys strong congressional backing.

It supports tens of thousands of jobs in states including Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida, with support from key Republicans, including Senator Ted Cruz.

Abandoning the Moon would also leave China unchallenged to plant its flag on the lunar south pole with a planned 2030 crewed mission.

Forczyk believes Artemis is more likely to be reformed than scrapped, with SLS potentially limited to one or two flights before private companies -- such as SpaceX or Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin -- assume key roles.

"However, the Trump administration is unpredictable, and we really cannot get in the minds of Donald Trump or Musk," she told AFP.

Another looming uncertainty has been how Trump's broader effort to downsize the federal government could affect NASA.



Trump sends iconic Resolute Desk for refinishing after Musk's son picked nose in Oval Office

Agenceis

US President Donald Trump has ordered the 150-year-old iconic Resolute Desk removed from the Oval Office for refurbishment, days after Elon Musk's son seemingly wiped a booger on it during their visit to the White House, according to media reports.

"A President, after the election, gets a choice of 1 in 7 desks," Trump wrote on social media.

"This desk, the 'C&O,' which is also very well-known and was used by President George H W Bush and others, has been temporarily installed in the White House while the Resolute Desk is being lightly refinished--a very important job. This is a beautiful, but temporary replacement!" Trump wrote.

Trump did not mention the name of Musk's son in the post.

However, some US media outlets like the New York Post and New York Daily News linked it to the visit by Tesla CEO Musk's son X Æ A-Xii.

The change comes after Musk, who heads the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), and his four-year-old son appeared alongside Trump on live television last week, and the youngster picked his nose and appeared to put boogers on

the Resolute desk, the New York Post said.

According to the paper, Trump is known for his extreme germophobia.

Trump has spoken openly about his phobia of germs in the past too.

The Georgian-style C&O Desk is made of walnut and features golden handles. The desk's acronym stands for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway because the desk was built for one of the railway's owners and later donated to the White House, the paper said.

George H W Bush was the first and only president--up until Trump--to utilise the C&O Desk.

The Resolute Desk is perhaps the most famous and well-known desk to adorn the Oval Office, built from the remains of the British Arctic exploration vessel the HMS Resolute and presented by Queen Victoria to President Rutherford B Hayes in 1880, according to the paper.

Only three presidents are believed not to have used the Resolute Desk at all in the West Wing: Lyndon B Johnson, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, according to the White House Historical Association.

Theodore Roosevelt Desk, The Johnson Desk, The Hoover Desk, and The Wilson Desk are other desks a sitting president can choose from.



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