

## Kashmir Receives Much-Needed Rain, Snow

Braces For 3 More Days Of Wet Weather



KO Photo | Faisal Khan

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The higher reaches of Kashmir received fresh snowfall, while the plains were lashed by rains on Tuesday, bringing much-needed respite to the residents of the valley, officials said on Tuesday.

The famous tourist resort town of Gulmarg and the surrounding areas received fresh snowfall, while the higher reaches in other parts of the valley also witnessed snowfall this afternoon, officials said.

The plains of the valley, including Srinagar, were lashed by rains, which brought the day temperature down by several degrees, they added.

The local Meteorological department (MeT) has issued a yellow alert for

February 26 across Jammu and Kashmir. An orange alert has been issued for February 27 for both J&K. On February 28, an orange alert has been issued for Jammu and yellow alert for Kashmir region.

Isolated heavy rain and snow are expected during the period while surface traffic may also be witnessed, reads the advisory issued by the MeT.

Generally cloudy weather is expected for the next three days as there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at most places till February 28 late night with isolated heavy rain and snow over both Kashmir and Jammu divisions during the above period, Director MeT, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said.

He said that on March 1 and 2, light rain and snow are expected | [More on P10](#)

## 76 Govt Employees Sacked For Terror Links In J&K: LG Says No More Terror Commanders in Kashmir | 'No Shutdown Calendar, Only Business Calendar'

Agencies

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that local recruitment in terrorist groups has dropped to zero and no commander of any outfit is alive in Kashmir. He also revealed that seventy six government employees were sacked for terror links during his tenure.

In an interview to a national TV channel, LG said, "Security forces are following a clear guiding principle: Don't touch innocents, don't spare the culprits."

Referring to terrorists shifting their focus to Jammu region, LG Sinha said, "Jammu was never a challenge, but the focus had shifted to Kashmir.



Our neighboring country played a role in infiltrating people and disturbing peace in the Jammu region, but we are prepared to establish peace," he asserted, adding that the "people of Jammu are nationalists and they will

**6** **DON'T TOUCH INNOCENTS, don't spare the culprits, our policy is clear.**

never tolerate terrorism." On action against terrorist supporters, LG Sinha said, "We have to wipe out the terrorist ecosystem." He revealed that 76 government employees had been dismissed for supporting terrorism.

He said that these measures played a pivotal role in establishing peace in the region.

LG Sinha praised the improved coordination among security forces, which had

contributed to successfully tackling terrorism.

Regarding the revival of Kashmir's cultural and tourism sector, Sinha noted that Bollywood film shootings had resumed, and cinema halls had reopened in the region after 32 years. Following the successful conduct of the G20 summit, the number of foreign tourists visiting Kashmir had increased significantly.

International cricket, including the Legends League, had been introduced, and there was no longer a "shutdown calendar"—only a "business calendar."

"The new generation has forgotten stone-pelting, and for the first time in 35 years, Muharram processions were allowed. People were fed up with the | [More on P10](#)

## LG, CM Greet People On Shivratri

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has extended his heartiest greetings to the people on the occasion of Mahashivratri, which will be celebrated tomorrow on February 26.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "On the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri, I convey my hearty greetings and felicitations to all and wish them health, happiness and prosperity.

The sacred festival, celebrated as 'Herath' by the Kashmiri Pandit community, is an occasion to rededicate | [More on P10](#)

## 'Inflammatory Sermons'

## Civil Society Seeks Pulpit Ethics Code From Religious Bodies

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant development, Kashmiri civil society has urged Mirwaiz-i-Kashmir Umar Farooq, the Chairman of Muttahida Majlis-e-Ulama (MMU), to convene an urgent meeting for drafting qualifications and ethical guidelines for religious preachers delivering sermons from the sacred pulpit.

In a letter addressed to Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, prominent civil society member Shakeel Qalander, on behalf

of the community, expressed deep concern over the rise of inflammatory and divisive rhetoric by certain preachers on social media. The letter highlights how these individuals have used religious platforms to promote personal agendas, disregarding the sentiments of various sects and threatening societal harmony.

"It has come to our notice with utmost pain that certain preachers have recently surfaced on social media and are using the sacred pulpit of the Holy Prophet for personal

publicity through highly provocative and inflammatory remarks," the letter reads.

The appeal calls upon the MMU and allied religious bodies, including the J&K Muslim Personal Law Board, to take immediate measures, including:

Drafting Qualifications & Ethical Guidelines for individuals addressing congregations in mosques, Imam Bargahs, and Khanqahs.

Preventing the Use of Sacred Platforms by those who indulge in hate speech and ensuring | [More on P10](#)

## CBSE To Conduct Class-10 Exams Twice A Yr

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Tuesday approved draft norms for conducting Class-10 board exams twice a year from 2026, officials said.

The draft norms will now be put in the public domain and the stakeholders can submit their feedback till March 9 following which the policy will be finalised, they said.

As per the draft norms, the first phase of the exams will be conducted from February 17 to March 6, while the second phase will be conducted from May 5 to 20.

"Both the examinations will be conducted on full syllabus and the candidates will be allotted the same examination centres in the two editions. Exam fees will be | [More on P10](#)

## PDD Plans Power Relief During Sehri, Iftar In Ramazan

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Power Development Department (PDD) Tuesday said that it will reduce power curtailment fixtures at Sehri and Iftar times in the holy month of Ramazan.

Besides, it also said that the department will likely run a trial on a revised schedule before the commencement of Ramazan.

A top official of PDD informed that the department has already minimized the curtailment in almost all areas of Kashmir division. However, it will further reduce it at particular times in the upcoming holy month of Ramazan. | [More on P10](#)

ORDINARY PORTLAND CEMENT

www.tcimax.co.in



53 GRADE OPC

50 KG PACK

USE NO HOOKS



HIGH STRENGTH CEMENT



Your Trust Our Promise

@TCI-MAX

@TCIMaxCement

@tci.max

tcimax.co.in

0194-4504233

9906655570



**OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI**

Subject: Application of Ab. Salam Chopan S/O Gh Mohd Chopan R/O Reshipora, Tehsil Kreeri for the issuance of OBC (Other Backward Classes) in his favor. Of Seerat Salam, Sadia Salam, Shakir Salam

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**

Regarding the subject cited above, the applicant has submitted the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC. In this connection, a report of Patwari Halqa concerned has been sought, which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village Reshipora, Tehsil Kreeri, and belongs to the Chopan community, having an annual income of Rs.1,20,000/-.

S. No	Name of the Family Member	Relationship with Applicant	Age	Occupation	Annual Income
01	Ab. Salam Chopan	Self	50	Labour	-
02	Zubada Begum	M/O	45	HHW	-
03	Seerat salam	D/I	24	Student	-
04	Sadia Salam	D/I	22	Student	-
05	Shakir Salam	S/O	12	Student	-

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

Naib Tehsildar  
Executive Magistrate 1st Class  
fko

**From Office of the Advocate  
Javid Ahmad Navoo**

In the case of  
1. Peerzada Ghulam Jeelani  
2. Peerzada Tanveer Ahmad  
Both Sons of Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad  
R/o Tapper wari para Tehsil Pattan District Baramulla.

V/s  
Public at large

In the Petition in terms of Section 14B-A

The caveators have reason to believe that Non-Caveator may file any Application, Petition, Ap- peal, Suit or any other type of proceeding before the Hon'ble Court and on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story and may seek in obtaining some relief/order at their back/in exparte against the caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put in irrepa- rable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveators be given an opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble court before passing any order.

SD/advocate  
fko

**Office of the Naib Tehsildar Tilgam**

Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed death

**Public Notice..**

The registrar birth and death (Block Development Officer Pattan ) pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to death of Zaiba Bugam W/o Gh Ahmad Bhat R/o Malikpora Tehsil Pattan Distt baramulla with verified date of death 02/06/2014 occurred at Home

In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained..

SD  
Naib Tehsildar Pattan  
fko

**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 Arif Ahmad Bhat s/o Shabir Ahmad Bhat R/o Gundaripora Kunzer Tehsil kunzer Distt baramulla with verified date of birth 11/05/2021 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  
Naib Tehsildar Pattan  
fko

**Office of the Executive Magistrate 1st Class  
Narbal District Budgam**

Tele fax: 01951.260.276 Pin Code 193401

**Notice for the General Public**

It is hereby notified that applicant namely Raheel Ashraf S/O Mohammad Ashraf Sheikh R/O Churpora Tehsil Narbal, District Budgam Had applied for the issuance of a birth certificate of his son namely Raheel Ashraf, S/O, D/O Mohammad Ashraf Sheikh The applicant intends to register the D.O.B. of his son as per school records / vaccination card 11-08-2011 (Admission No: 1120)

If anybody has any objection/claim regarding the same, he/she may approach the office of the undersigned within a period of seven days (07) days from the date of publication of this notice, or else any such claims/objections shall not be entertained.

Dated: 25/02/25  
Executive Magistrate  
1st Class Narbal  
bmg

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is informed to the General public that my name / DOB and parantage in my Aadhar Card bearing Aadhar No:- 9874 0321 0870. has been wrongly mentioned as Gh Hussan Sheer Gojree. S/O:- Ab Razak Sher Gojree.DOB.15.10.1982 instead of Gh Hassan Gojri S/O:- Ab Razak Gojri .DOB. 02.05.1984. Now I am applying for its Correction as per school record & Board Date of Birth Certificate (DOB) record . if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact the same in the office of the General Manager Ranbir Govt Press Jammu within a period of seven days from the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after expiry of stipulated period.



Gh Hassan Gojri S/O. Ab Razak Gojri  
R/O :- Hajan .Tehsil . Qaziabad Distt : Kupwara .  
Pin Code 193302. fko

**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.



**From Office of the Advocate  
Muneer Ahmad Dar**

In the case of  
1. Zahoor Ahmad Hakak S/ Ghulam Ahmad Hakak R/O Laibazar Srinagar.  
2. Fiza Ahmad Misgar S/o Ghulam Mohammad Misgar R/O Umer Hall Srinagar.  
3. Nazir Ahmad Lone S/o Ali Mohammad Lone.  
4. Nazir Ahmad Bhat S/o Ghulam Ahmad Bhat Both residents of Singhpora

V/s  
Public at large  
( Caveator)

In the Petition in terms of Section 14B-A

The caveators have reason to believe that Non-Caveator may file any Application, Petition, Ap- peal, Suit or any other type of proceeding before the Hon'ble Court and on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story and may seek in obtaining some relief/order at their back/in exparte against the caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put in irrepa- rable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveators be given an opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble court before passing any order.

SD/advocate  
fko

**Melatonin Pills Could Help Repair DNA Damage Due To Night Shift Work**

Press Trust Of India

Melatonin supplements could boost the body's ability to repair DNA damage related to night shift work, potentially lowering cancer risk among this group of workers, a study has suggested.

However, researchers, including those from the British Columbia Cancer Research Institute in Canada, cautioned that data from larger studies are needed before melatonin can be recommended for long-term use.

Normal production of the melatonin hormone, which is linked with one's body clock and daylight, is suppressed among night shift workers. Melatonin supplements are considered a 'physiological support' to help the brain restore the quality, structure, and pattern of sleep.

Researchers explained that producing lower levels of melatonin compromises the body's ability to repair DNA damage caused by everyday biological processes, potentially increasing the risk of certain cancers among night shift workers.

The findings, published in the journal Occupational and Environmental Medicine, "suggest that melato-



**Increased oxidative DNA damage due to diminished DNA repair capacity is a compelling mechanism that may contribute to the carcinogenicity of night shift work**

ni supplementation may improve oxidative DNA damage repair capacity among night shift workers." For the study, the researchers looked at 40 night shift workers, most of whom were employed in health-care.

Half the participants were randomly assigned a three-milligram melatonin pill (taken with food an hour before sleeping during the day) for about a month, while the other half were randomly assigned a placebo pill on the same schedule.

lasting seven hours each night, for a minimum of six months. None had sleep disorders or long-term conditions, the researchers said. Urine samples were collected during the second day of the night-shift-day-sleep routine -- once before starting the trial and once near the end of the four week-period.

Analysis revealed 80 per cent higher levels of '8-OH-dG' -- a molecule that indicates one's capacity to repair DNA damage -- in the urine samples of night shift workers who were taking melatonin supplements. The researchers explained that most of the 8-OH-dG is

removed from DNA as part of the repair process and excreted into urine, where its levels are measured -- therefore, higher levels mean a better capacity for DNA repair.

The study's results suggested that better repair might be occurring among those taking the melatonin supplement, compared to those taking the dummy pill, the authors said.

"Increased oxidative DNA damage due to diminished DNA repair capacity is a compelling mechanism that may contribute to the carcinogenicity of night shift work," they wrote. However, they cautioned that larger-scale studies examining long-term impacts of melatonin pills are required, results from which would help determine if supplementation could be viable for lowering cancer risk among night shift workers.

Doctors strictly advise melatonin supplements for those working irregular shifts and crossing time zones, among whom day-and-night differentiation is affected. However, the supplements are not sedatives or sleep-inducing drugs and consulting with medical experts, including psychiatrists, is recommended before one considers melatonin pills for resolving sleep-related issues.

**Public Notice**

It is hereby notified that I intend to change the name on the electricity connection bearing Consumer ID: 0201050002541 from Mohd Khalil Bhat to Zeenat Feroz. If any person has an objection to this change, they may submit their concerns in writing to the office of the concerned PDD (Power Development Department) within seven (7) days from the date of this notice. After this period, no objections shall be entertained.

Mohd Khalil Bhat  
Naqashpora Srinagar  
7006532718  
iko

**Government of Jammu and Kashmir  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER KULGAM**  
(Mini Secretariat Kulgam Room No. 121 to 132)

E- Mail: socmokulgam@gmail.com Phone:- 01931-260388  
Establishment:- cmokestabhshment@gmail.com 01931-295102  
Accounts:- aaoocmk@gmail.com Fax:- 01931-260388  
Planning:- cmokplg@gmail.com

**NOTIFICATION**

Whereas, this office circulated final Seniority list of FMPHWs in respect of district cadre kulgam vide No:-CMOK/Est-1/1271-73 dated-17/02/2024 which got published in the Rising Kashmir, Kashmir convenor in its edition dated- 18/02/2025 for information of all concerned.

Whereas, the aforesaid seniority list was formulated and subsequently notified after affording ample opportunity to the concerned for filing of objections, if any, with respect to fixation of seniority and other services particulars of each individual by way of circulation of tentative seniority list of FMPHWs District Cadre Kulgam.

Whereas, in addition to above, objections were sought from the concerned FMPHWs through their DDO's/ Controlling Officers regarding fixation of their seniority at appropriate place in their respective seniority list in consistence with the relevant records pertaining to their appointment/Services.

Whereas, several representations were received by this office from the concerned DDO's/controlling officers within stipulated time period and those were fully examined /considered and subsequently their name were incorporated in the final seniority list of FMPHWs district cadre Kulgam at appropriate places.

Whereas, upon finalization of above seniority list and its subsequent circulation among all DDO's/ concerned officials vide notification dated:- 28/09/2024, the cases of below mentioned FMPHWs have been received by this office from Chief Medical Officer Anantnag vide his officer letter No. Est-1/CMOA/FMPHW/9913 Dated: 22/02/2025 for incorporation of their name in the seniority list of FMPHWs District Cadre Kulgam at appropriate place pleading therein that the officials has been initially appointed in the District Kulgam.

Whereas, after scrutiny of all the relevant documents pertaining to the appointment of above mentioned FMPHWs, it has surfaced that their appointment has been made by the competent authority and have joined their services in District Kulgam at the time of their appointment and their seniority is to be maintained in District Cadre Kulgam in terms of the instructions conveyed by the HME Department and Directorate of Health Services Kashmir in the back drop of Govt Circular No-15-HME of 2024 dated:-24.06.2024.

Whereas, it has been observed from the available records that the name of aforementioned FMPHWs has not been enlisted in the final seniority list of said cadre due to reason that no representation was received from his end, either directly or through proper channel, till finalization of seniority list.

Now, therefore the above mentioned FMPHWs have been accorded to the consideration and accordingly their seniority is hereby fixed at the serial number shown against each in the below mentioned table in the final seniority list of FMPHWs District kulgam, issued by this office No:-CMOK/Est-1/1271-73 Dated: 17/02/2025.

S.N	Name	Designation	D.o.B	D.o first Appointment	Place of Initial posting	Place of present posting	Seniority fixed at
01.	Muneera Akhter	FMPHW	10/03/1966	22/05/1992	Block Qazigund	Block Verinag	3A (b/w 3 and 3B)
02	Shaheena Rasool	FMPHW	11/11/1967	22/05/1992	Block Qazigund	Block Bijbehra	3B (b/w 3A and 3C)
03	Sweetly Akhter	FMPHW	04/01/1969	22/05/1992	Block yaripora	Block Mattan	3C (b/w 3B and 4)
04	Shaheena Akhter	FMPHW	01/09/1967	20/03/1993	Block yaripora	Block Bijbehra	6A (b/w 6 and 7)
05	Mahboob Akhter	FMPHW	04/01/1974	29/09/1998	Block Qazigund	Block Mattan	8A 9b/w 8 and 8B)
06	Mumtaza Akhter	FMPHW	18/11/1974	05/05/2002	Block DH Pora	Block Larnoo	8B (b/w 8B and 9)

No.CMOK/Est-1/151-73  
DIPK-12400/24  
Dated: 25-02-2025

SD/-  
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER KULGAM



## PA Forces Attack Vigil Honouring Nasrallah

Agencies

Palestinian Authority security forces assaulted participants in a vigil organised in the city of Ramallah on Sunday as they paid tribute to the former Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed by Israel last year, Quds Press has reported. The vigil was organised as Nasrallah's funeral was being held in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, five months after his assassination. The participants raised pictures

**“The participants raised pictures of Nasrallah and Hezbollah flags. PA police stormed the vigil, confiscated the flags, tore up some pictures, and assaulted a woman, while hurling abuse at other participants.”**



of Nasrallah and Hezbollah flags. PA police stormed the vigil, confiscated the flags, tore up some pictures, and assaulted a woman, while hurling abuse at other participants. Journalist Khaled Sabarneh who was there to report on the vigil, said that police officers surrounded him and dragged him to a vehicle. He was detained for a few hours before being released. Hezbollah organised a popular

funeral for Nasrallah and party leader Hashem Safieddine five months after an Israeli air strike killed them and dozens of others in Beirut's southern suburbs. Palestinian national forces and movements have called for a popular stand to honour Nasrallah. Hamas, meanwhile, called for a participation in Nasrallah's funeral in appreciation of his support for the Palestinian people in their struggle against Israeli occupation.

## CBI Conducts Searches At 60 Locations In Rs 6,600 Cr Scam

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The CBI on Tuesday conducted countrywide coordinated searches at 60 locations as part of its probe into Rs 6,600 crore GainBitcoin cryptocurrency scam, officials said. The searches were spread across multiple cities including Delhi, Pune, Chandigarh, Nanded, Kolhapur and Bengaluru, targeting premises allegedly linked to key accused individuals, a CBI spokesperson said in a statement. The ponzi scam perpetrated through a web of platforms, including flagship site www.gainbitcoin.com, was allegedly masterminded by Amit Bhardwaj (now deceased) and his brother Ajay Bhardwaj, the officials said. Launched in 2015, the illicit operation was camouflaged under the facade of Variabletech Pte. Ltd, they said. The scheme lured the investors offering extraordinary returns of 10 per cent per month in Bitcoin over an 18-month period urging them to purchase the digital currency from external exchanges and deposit it with GainBitcoin through "cloud mining" contracts, the central agency said. "The model followed a multi-level marketing (MLM) structure, commonly associated with pyramid structured ponzi schemes, where payouts were dependent on bringing in new investors," the spokesperson said. In its early days, investors received payouts in Bitcoin, fuelling

the illusion of a lucrative venture. However, as the influx of new capital dwindled by 2017, the charade began to crumble. "In an attempt to cover up the losses, GainBitcoin unilaterally switched payouts to their alleged in-house cryptocurrency called MCAP, which had significantly less value than Bitcoin, further misleading investors," the statement said. The sheer scale and complexity of the scam resulted in registration of multiple FIRs filed across India, from Jammu and Kashmir to Maharashtra and from Delhi to West Bengal. The Supreme Court handed over the investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), due to the expansive nature of the operation and the international ramifications it entailed. "The CBI took over these cases and is conducting an omnibus and comprehensive investigation to uncover the full extent of the fraud, identify all accused parties, and trace the misappropriated funds, including international transactions," the statement said. The agency has launched a probe to unravel the full extent of the fraudulent activities, identify all implicated parties, and trace the misappropriated funds, including those that may have crossed borders. "During searches, a few crypto wallets, incriminating digital evidences and digital devices have been seized. The evidences present in emails/clouds have also been seized," the agency said.



## US Shifts Stance, Sides With Russia On Ukraine War

EDITH M. LEDERER AP News

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — In a dramatic shift in transatlantic relations under President Donald Trump, the United States split with its European allies by refusing to blame Russia for its invasion of Ukraine in votes on three U.N. resolutions Monday seeking an end to the three-year war. The growing divide follows Trump's decision to open direct negotiations with Russia on ending the war, disarming Ukraine and its European supporters by excluding them from the preliminary talks last week. In the U.N. General Assembly, the U.S. joined Russia in voting against a Europe-backed Ukrainian resolution that calls out Moscow's aggression and demands an immediate withdrawal of Russian troops. The U.S. then abstained from voting on its own competing resolution after Europeans, led by France, succeeded in amending it to make clear Russia was the aggressor. The voting was taking place on the third anniversary of Russia's invasion and as Trump was hosting French President Emmanuel Macron in Washington. It was a major setback for the Trump administration in the 193-member world body, whose resolutions are not legally binding but are seen as a barometer of world opinion.

The U.S. then pushed for a vote on its original draft in the more powerful U.N. Security Council, where resolutions are legally binding and it has veto power along with Russia, China, Britain and France. The vote in the 15-member council was 10-0 with five European countries abstaining — Britain, France, Denmark, Greece and Slovenia. The dueling resolutions also reflect the tensions that have emerged between the U.S. and Ukraine. In escalating rhetoric, Trump has called Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy a "dictator" for not holding elections during wartime, when much of Ukraine is under Russian occupation, its soldiers are on the frontlines and the country is under martial law. Trump also has falsely accused Kyiv of starting the war and warned that he "better move fast" to negotiate an end to the conflict or risk not having a nation to lead. Zelenskyy responded by saying Trump was living in a Russian-made "disinformation space." In a whirlwind of diplomacy, Trump's meeting with Macron will be followed by a visit on Thursday from British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, key U.S. allies who were in lockstep with Washington on Ukraine just over a month ago. They now find themselves on opposite sides on the best pathway for the UN to call for an end to the war. The General Assembly voted 93-18

with 65 abstentions to approve the Ukrainian resolution. The result showed some diminished support for Ukraine, because previous assembly votes saw more than 140 nations condemn Russia's aggression and demand an immediate withdrawal. The assembly then turned to the U.S.-drafted resolution, which acknowledges "the tragic loss of life throughout the Russia-Ukraine conflict" and "implores a swift end to the conflict and further urges a lasting peace between Ukraine and Russia," but never mentions Moscow's aggression. In a surprise move, France proposed three amendments, which add that the conflict was the result of a "full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation." The amendments reaffirm the assembly's commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, and call for peace that respects the U.N. Charter. Russia proposed an amendment calling for "root causes" of the conflict to be addressed. All the amendments were approved and the resolution passed 93-8 with 73 abstentions, with Ukraine voting "yes," the U.S. abstaining, and Russia voting "no." Both assembly resolutions were supported by U.S. allies in Asia, including Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, its neighbors Canada and Mexico and European countries, with the exception of Hungary.

## 1st Phase Of Ceasefire Nears End, Here's How Many Hostages Are Still In Gaza

Agencies

JERUSALEM: Hamas freed six Israelis on Saturday in the last scheduled release of living hostages by the militant group under the current stage of a ceasefire agreement with Israel. In all, a total of 33 Israelis are being freed during this stage — including eight who are dead. Five Thai hostages have also been freed separately. Sixty-three hostages, including the body of a soldier held since 2014, remain in Gaza.

The remains of four Israeli hostages have been returned in a transfer that was marred when Hamas handed over the wrong body for Shiri Bibas, an Israeli mother of two young boys abducted by militants. After a tense standoff, her remains were returned and identified early Saturday. The final four sets of remains are expected to be returned in the coming days. Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people in its Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. More

than 48,000 Palestinians in Gaza, mostly women and children, have been killed in the ensuing conflict, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants. Israel is releasing nearly 2,000 prisoners and detainees during the first phase of the ceasefire in exchange for the hostages. Here are details on the hostages taken on Oct. 7, 2023: Hostages released in exchanges or other deals: 141, of whom 4 were dead

## Next Maha Kumbh On Sand As Rivers May Dry Up: Wangchuk In Letter To PM

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Fresh from his tour to the US where he carried a piece of ice from a glacier in Ladakh to flag their fast melting, climate activist Sonam Wangchuk has written an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi stating that India should take a lead in addressing the issue.



Drawing attention to the gravity of the situation in the Himalayas, Wangchuk told a press conference in the capital that if steps are not taken to restore these glaciers which are the source of perennial rivers, the next Maha Kumbh after 144 years may be held on sand as the rivers may dry up. Wangchuk, who has been working on preserving Himalayan glaciers, travelled from Ladakh to Delhi, and then to the US with a piece of ice from a glacier in Khardung La. The ice was placed in a container wrapped in Ladakh's iconic Pashmina wool for insulation. The ice was taken to the UN office in Delhi, before he flew to the US where it travelled along with the climate activist to the Harvard Kennedy School, MIT, at Boston and to the UN headquarters in New York, before being immersed at the confluence of Hudson River and East River in New York on February 21, a month ahead of The World Day for Glaciers which will be observed on March 21. The United Nations (UN) has declared 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preser-

vation. Wangchuk, who sent out a message of reducing demands instead of finding new means of supply to manage climate change, delivered his talks with the glacial ice melting next to him, symbolising how glaciers are receding as talks go on. Back in India, the climate activist recounted how they had to trek a few kilometres to get the ice from the glacier at Khardung La, the highest motorable pass in the world at 5,359 metres in Leh district. Wangchuk rued that over the years, glacial ice has been receding but action remains delayed. In his open letter to the Prime Minister, Wangchuk stressed that India should take a lead in the year of glaciers, as the Himalayas have the third largest deposit of ice and snow on Earth after the Arctic and Antarctica, fetching it the name "Third Pole". "India needs to take a lead in glacier preservation as we have the Himalayas, and our sacred rivers such as the Ganga and Yamuna come out of them," Wangchuk said.

## Anti-Suicide Ceiling Fans For Kota Hostels

Press Trust of India

Kota: Ahead of the upcoming academic session 2025-26, the district administration has released new guidelines for coaching centres and hostels under the Kota Cares Campaign, officials said on Tuesday. The aim of the campaign is to reduce the cost of living for the students coming to Kota to prepare for the competitive exams. The key features of the new guidelines include the elimination of security and caution money in all the 4,000 hostels in the city. Earlier, the hostels would charge the amount and refund it by the end of the year. Following a meeting with the stakeholders of the coaching industry, Kota District Collector Dr Ravindra Goswami announced that hostels can charge of maintenance fee of Rs 2,000. They will also be provided with anti-suicide ceiling fans and mandatory gate-keeper training for hostel staff, the statement said. The students will be provided free entry to Chambal Riverfront and Oxygen Zone Park on a one-time pass basis. A Kota Cares helpdesk will be set up at the railway station and bus stand, and functional CCTV and biometric systems will be installed in the hostels, the statement read. The hostel staff will be required to maintain manual attendance at night. The accommodation will

**“The key features of the new guidelines include the elimination of security and caution money in all the 4,000 hostels in the city. Earlier, the hostels would charge the amount and refund it by the end of the year”**

have recreation areas and parents will be provided with receipts of all payments. Dr. Goswami said, "Under the Kota Cares campaign, efforts are being made to provide students with better facilities and an improved environment. With the growing number of students in Kota, excellent infrastructure has been developed. Better accommodations and care facilities can now be offered to students in different areas of the city, and issues that previously existed have been resolved. We are confident that students in Kota will receive the best coaching along with excellent housing and an ideal environment." This comes as the number of students coming to Kota for the preparation of competitive exams saw a sharp decline from over 2 lakh to over 1.24 lakh in 2024-25. This caused a revenue loss of around 50 per cent, leaving many hostels with less than 40 per cent occupancy.

NEWS MAKERS

## Sajjan Kumar's Old Age, Illness Weigh In Favour Of Lesser Punishment, Says Court

Delhi court on Tuesday awarded life imprisonment to former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar in a murder case connected to 1984 anti-Sikh riots, saying his old age and illness weighed in favour of a lesser sentence instead of death penalty. Special judge Kaveri Baweja's verdict came over the killings of Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh on November 1, 1984. The judge said the offences committed by Kumar were undoubtedly brutal and reprehensible but underscored certain mitigating factors, including his age of 80 years and illnesses that "weigh in favour of imposing a lesser sentence, instead of death penalty." The offence of murder attracts a maximum of death penalty whereas the minimum punishment is life imprisonment. "The 'satisfactory' conduct of the convict as per the report of the jail authorities, the ailments from which he is reportedly suffering, the fact that the



convict has roots in society and the possibility of his reformation and rehabilitation are material considerations which, in my opinion, tilt the scales in favour of sentence for life imprisonment instead of death penalty," the order said. Nothing "adverse was reported about Kumar's behaviour" and his conduct was "satisfactory" according to a jail report, the court added. The judge went on to add that the case at hand was part of the same incident and could be seen in continuity of the incident for which Kumar was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Delhi High Court on December 17, 2018.

Student leaders of the Government Holkar Science College in Indore allegedly locked their teachers inside a hall and even cut off the power supply after being denied permission for a Holi event, officials said on Tuesday. After the incident at the college on Monday came to light, the district administration ordered an inquiry. Student leaders, who were angry over the denial of permission for a Holi event, locked the door of the hall where teachers were, and cut off the electricity supply, said an official. Several teachers remained locked inside for about half an hour as students shouted slogans. A college employee who too was confined inside managed to sneak out through a window and opened the door, allowing the teachers to exit.

## Angry Over Cancellation Of Holi Event, College Student Lock Teachers Inside Hall



District Magistrate Ashish Singh called the incident

"extremely serious". The college's principal Dr Anamika

Jain had filed a complaint, and an Additional District Magistrate (ADM) was asked to investigate the matter, he told reporters. "Appropriate action will be taken based on the ADM's report," he averred. No police case has been registered in the matter yet. The Holkar Science College was established 133 years ago by the then Holkar rulers of Indore. Some students had planned to organize the 'Holkar Ka Holi Fest' event with an entry fee of Rs 150 on March 7, featuring DJ performances and a 'rain dance', sponsored by a coaching class for civil services examinations. Even though the college administration denied permission to the event, they went ahead and put up posters on campus advertising the same.

## BJP Backs Liquor Ban, Slams PDP, Accuses NC Of Deceiving People

### Agencies

**JAMMU:** Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday said that the party will raise the issues related to development, tourism, unemployment and others during the upcoming Budget Session of Jammu and Kashmir, slated to be held from March 3.

A senior BJP leader and Jammu west lawmaker, Arvind gupta said that the party will focus on the development of Jammu and Kashmir, tackling youth unemployment and also improving tourism across the region.

The leader said, "We will raise the issue of unemployment among the youth of J&K and work towards creating more job opportunities for them."

The BJP will also push for the development of border tourism, particularly in areas previously impacted by cross-border shelling. "We are committed to promote border tourism in

both Jammu and Kashmir and we want these areas to benefit from tourism for the overall development of the region," Gupta added.

Regarding the liquor ban, he stated that the party has no objections to the ban when it was in power but is now demanding it. "Kashmir is the land of Sufis, and Jammu is the land of temples. If the liquor ban is implemented, we support it. The PDP opposed it in the past but is now deceiving the people on this issue," he said.

The BJP lawmaker also took aim at the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference's (JKNC) 12-point manifesto, claiming the party has not fulfilled its promises. "Instead of addressing real issues, the ruling party is misleading the people by focusing on Article 370 and other irrelevant matters," Gupta said—(KNO)

## Have Positive Hopes On Govt's Maiden Budget: Parra

### Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) MLA from Pulwama, Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra on Tuesday said they have positive hopes on Omar Abdullah-led government's first budget, which will be presented by the Chief Minister himself on March 7 in the Legislative Assembly.

Parra said, "We are hopeful that the budget will be as per the demands of people, who are seeing popular government after a long time. The government should address the anxiety of people. The issues of salaries, employees, pensions and bills

should be addressed," he said. The budget session will begin in Jammu on March 3. This will be the maiden budget session of the elected government in the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory.

Earlier, the budget for Jammu and Kashmir was presented in the Parliament after 2019 as the UT was under a prolonged spell of President's rule, which ended in October last year.

CM Abdullah held a series of pre-budget consultations with public representatives across Jammu and Kashmir to receive their suggestions, which he said is pivotal for accommodating the public aspirations—(KNO)

## PHE Employees Decry Implementation Discrepancies In Orders

### Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** President of the Daily Wagers Forum and General Secretary of the Employees Joint Action Committee (EJAC), Sajad Ahmad Parray Tuesday raised serious concerns over the alleged discrepancies in implementing the order of 2021, which mandates the transfer of select Jal Shakti Department (PHE) divisions to Municipal Corporations.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Sajad Parray, said that while the order has been fully implemented in Jammu, Kashmir continues to face mismanagement and legal hurdles.

He said the issue is currently sub judice, with two cases pending before the Supreme Court.

He accused certain officials in the Chief Engineer's office in Kashmir of disregarding court

orders, misleading authorities, and acting against the public interest. "Their actions threaten both employee rights and the water supply system," he said.

Parray also said that before any proposal is sent to the government, employee representatives of the transferred divisions must be consulted. He further stated that if their demands are not met, employees will stage a peaceful protest on February 27, 2025, from the Water Works Division Srinagar to the Chief Office. "If no corrective measures are taken, a complete work strike will follow," he said.

He urged the Additional Chief Secretary of the Jal Shakti Department and the Municipal Commissioner Srinagar to intervene and ensure the protection of the Water Works Division Srinagar, the water supply system, and employee livelihoods—(KNO)

## Rampant Destruction Of Chinar Trees In Anantnag, Authorities Silent

### Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** In a disturbing environmental violation, dozens of majestic Chinar trees have been illegally felled in South Kashmir's Anantnag district, with authorities allegedly turning a blind eye to the destruction. The chopping down of these majestic trees, despite strict regulations for their preservation, has sparked outrage among locals.

Sources reveal that while authorities granted limited permissions to contractors for pruning branches, many misused the approvals and chopped down entire trees to extract maximum wood. This large-scale felling has been reported from multiple areas, including Rani Bagh, Sarnal, and Kadipora, where the once-thriving Chinar trees now lie in ruins.

Locals have expressed deep concern over the administration's inaction, questioning why no measures have been taken to curb the illegal felling despite

the availability of geo-tagging technology meant to protect these heritage trees. "These trees have stood for centuries, providing shade, beauty, and a crucial ecological balance. But vested interests are axing them in broad daylight, and officials are doing nothing," a local from Anantnag told the news agency Kashmir News Trust.

The Chinar tree, which holds immense historical and cultural significance in Kashmir, is a protected species under the Jammu and Kashmir Preservation of Specified Trees Act, 1969. Under this law, even pruning requires official permission, yet entire trees are being cut with impunity. Locals and environmental activists have demanded immediate action, urging the administration to identify and penalize those involved in the illegal felling. They have also called for a thorough probe into how contractors managed to exploit the permissions and why authorities have failed to intervene. [KNT]

## Northern Railway Honoured With The Build India Infra Awards 2025



### Observer News Service

**NEW DELHI:** In a significant recognition of engineering excellence, Northern Railway has been awarded the prestigious Build India Infra Awards 2025 for its contribution to the amazing Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project. The award was presented by Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Shri Ram Mohan Kinjarapu. The distinguished accolade was accepted by Shri Ashok Kumar Verma, General Manager of Northern Railway, who acknowledged the diligence, innovation and commitment of the team involved in the project.

The award was presented in the Railways sector, highlighting its impactful influ-

ence on the industry and the communities it is set to serve. This transformative rail link stands as a testament to India's engineering ingenuity and dedication to making the Indian Railways a state-of-the-art transit network.

The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link is a national project which shall play a pivotal role in enhancing all weather connectivity across the nation by connecting the Kashmir Valley to the rest of the country. This link is set to play a crucial role in driving socio-economic growth all across North India as well as the rest of the nation.

The annual Build India Infra Awards 2025, is an extraordinary initiative that

spotlights and commends trailblazing infrastructure projects and initiatives across India. This exclusive platform serves as a beacon, illuminating the exceptional endeavors of both organizations who have etched their mark on the canvas of India's infrastructure sector.

These awards not only recognize excellence but also celebrate and honor the significant contributions made towards the development and progress of India's infrastructure landscape. Through these awards, Build India acknowledges the spirit of innovation, perseverance, and transformative contributions that have propelled the nation's development forward and serve as a testament to future generations.

**THE AWARD WAS PRESENTED BY UNION MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION, SHRI RAM MOHAN KINJARAPU.** The distinguished accolade was accepted by Shri Ashok Kumar Verma, General Manager of Northern Railway, who acknowledged the diligence, innovation and commitment of the team involved in the project.

## Oppn Slams CM Over His Remarks On Mirwaiz's Security

Omar's Comments 'Nonsensical', 'Highly Regrettable': Mirwaiz Manzil

### Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Opposition parties in Jammu and Kashmir slammed the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah over his remarks on the security of Jama Masjid head cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq with Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Peoples Conference (PC) leaders accusing him of taking U-turn.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in an interview with a National TV Channel had linked the increased security provided to Mirwaiz Umar Farooq to a decline in separatist activities in Jammu and Kashmir, saying that it would have been unimaginable earlier for Mirwaiz to be provided with CRPF cover.

PDP MLA from Pulwama, Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra, in a post on X, accused the Chief Minister of taking complete U-turn from his election campaign and manifesto.

"Dear Omar Abdullah Sahab, Since you are now endorsing peace—if Kashmir appears peaceful today, it is due to UAPA, PSA, NIA, attachment of houses and assets, constant profiling, verification, the lodgment of prisoners outside under stringent laws, and the sacking of employees under 311. This is a complete U-turn from your election campaign and manifesto. Your endorsement now is nothing but a ratification of the iron-fist approach against Kashmiris," it reads.

"If there is no separatist activity today, it is due to tougher measures against separatist and the ban on Hurriyat and Jamaat. And if Mirwaiz Sahab has been given security, it is not for his safety but because his vulnerability has in-

creased. Singling out Mirwaiz only puts him at greater risk, knowing well that his family has already paid a heavy price. The truth is, like hundreds of others, even graves, shrines, and mosques are guarded by JKP and CRPF. So why make an issue if Mirwaiz is?," he wrote.

**“**CM sahib—we are victims. We know what a violent death is. Our fathers were killed. Incidentally my father was killed under the watch of your father when he was the Chief Minister.**”**

Peoples Conference (PC) President Sajad Lone said that he was not surprised with the statement of Omar Abdullah.

"I may have millions of disagreements with Mirwaiz Umar Farooq sahib. But that his father was martyred is a reality. My father was martyred too. Even the date of martyrdom is the same and my father had gone to Idgah to commemorate the martyrdom of the Mirwaiz Mohammed Farooq sahib and was shot there," Lone wrote

Lone further wrote that "CM sahib—we are victims. We know what a violent death is. Our fathers were killed. Incidentally my father was killed under the watch of your father when he was the Chief Minister."

"And yes. He did not provide him security despite having clear inputs from the CID that there is

likelihood of him being attacked. He did not provide me security when I wanted to go for his funeral. The Divisional Commissioner at that time came and expressed inability to provide security. You know what your statements mean. Your mention of so called security for Mirwaiz is what we know as — speak to kill—in the last 3 decades," Lone wrote.

"You always had one of the highest security covers in India. And does it behoove you to act like a white collar killer and make statements which greatly increase the threat perception of a person. Loose talk. Cruel talk. Killer talk. What a shame???" And Wallah. I am not surprised," he wrote.

In the meantime, Mirwaiz Manzil office has strongly condemned recent remarks made by National Conference leader Omar Abdullah regarding the security provided to Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Umar Farooq. In a statement, Mirwaiz Manzil called Omar Abdullah's comments "nonsensical" and "highly regrettable," asserting that as a leader, he is expected to speak with responsibility and understanding of the circumstances.

The statement criticized his remarks as being in poor taste and reflective of personal insecurities.

The reaction follows Omar Abdullah's response to a question about whether conditions in Jammu and Kashmir had improved since the abrogation of Article 370. While stating that only 2-3 percent had changed, Omar remarked that no one could have imagined Mirwaiz Umar Farooq receiving CRPF security from the Central Government, saying, "I couldn't have ever thought of it, but situations have changed."

## Mission Director Takes Financial Review Of Jal Jeevan Mission

### Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Mission Director, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), J&K Khurshid Ahmad Shah took a financial review of implementation of JJM in Jammu & Kashmir through virtual mode. The meeting was attended by Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Department Kashmir & Jammu besides Superintending Engineers Hydraulic circle's and Executive Engineers of all divisions including their counterparts of Mechanical engineering.

The Mission Director enquired about the unspent funds above one crore in Single Nodal Account (SNA) of each division and directed the Executive engineers to expedite the process of payment to the firms who have satisfactorily completed the works allotted. The chair called for synergy between the Executive Engineers and Superintending Engineers for clearing the liabilities well before the completion of financial year in March.

The Officer on Special Duty with Mission Director enjoined

upon the officers to clear the liabilities on account of completed works which will pave the way for transition to the new payment system. The meeting further directed the divisions to upload the details of infrastructure created on Gati Shakti portal for which training is being imparted by National Jal Jeevan Mission to the nodal officers.

The meeting concluded with directions that the next financial review will be held on the weekend to monitor the progress effectively.

## 3-Member Panel To Draft Environment Rejuvenation Plan For Poonch

### Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu & Kashmir administration has appointed a three-member committee to draft an Environment Rejuvenation Plan for Poonch district.

This initiative comes in response to a directive from the National Green Tribunal (NGT) following the case against M/s Dewan Stone Crusher, which was found guilty of violating critical environmental regulations.

The Joint Committee, comprising of District Magistrate of Poonch, members of the Jammu & Kashmir Pollution Control Committee (JKPCC), and representatives from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), has been given two months to finalize the rejuvenation plan.

The primary focus will be on restoring the ecological balance, mitigating pollution, and rehabilitating the land impacted by unauthorized industrial activities.

Once the plan is approved, it will be implemented within three months, following the deposit of the environmental compensation. This ensures that timely corrective actions will be taken to remedy the damage caused by the stone crusher's unlawful operations.

The legal proceedings surrounding M/s Dewan Stone

Crusher have been intense.

The JKPCC recently reaffirmed the NGT's order, emphasizing that the stone crusher violated essential environmental norms and must halt its operations immediately. This stance was part of the JKPCC's compliance report submitted to the NGT in case OA No. 151 of 2023, which was filed by Hasina Wajid, Sarpanch, against the State of Jammu & Kashmir and others.

The NGT had previously found the stone crusher and its associated hot mix plant in violation of siting norms, mandating their removal within two months. The tribunal also imposed an interim environmental compensation of ₹7,20,000, requiring the deposit within one month. However, JKPCC's latest submission reveals that the stone crusher continued its operations despite several legal orders, prompting authorities to take stronger measures.

JKPCC's report underscores that M/s Dewan Stone Crusher's activities have led to substantial environmental damage, including dust pollution, noise hazards, and potential groundwater contamination. The failure to comply with prescribed siting criteria has exacerbated the ecological crisis in the area, making the formulation of the rejuvenation plan crucial for the district's recovery—(KNO)

## Hajin Road Along Jhelum Develops Cracks

### Agencies

**BANDIPORA:** Massive cracks appeared on a road along the river Jhelum in Hajin town of north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Tuesday, creating panic among locals.

Locals said that cracks have been developing on the road over the past few days, but today, the damage worsened with fresh cracks.

They expressed concern that if the cracks worsen, a huge tragedy could occur as the road passes along the river Jhelum. The locals



urged the administration to take immediate action to prevent further cracks in the road.

An official said that a team has been rushed to the spot to assess the situation, and necessary steps will be taken accordingly. He added that public movement near the spot will be restricted—(KNO)

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public that I, Ulfata Bano intend to correct my name in my adhar card bearing no. 5474-4956-2574 which is inadvertently recorded as Ulfat Akhter while as my correct name is Ulfata Bano. In this regard if anybody have any kind of objection he/she may file the same with the concerned department within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterwards.

Ulfata Bano  
D/o Gh Qadir Bhat  
R/o Aglar Tehsil Pattan District Baramulla

PHO

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public that I, Tanveera Zahoor intend to correct my name in my adhar card bearing no. 7017-7799-0907 which is inadvertently recorded as Tanveer Qayoom while as my correct name is Tanveera Qayoom. In this regard if anybody have any kind of objection he/she may file the same with the concerned department within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterwards.

Tanveera Qayoom  
W/o Zahoor Ahmad Bhat  
R/o Pattan Tehsil Pattan Baramulla

PHO

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public that I, Barkat Ali Khan intend to correct the name of my son in his adhar card bearing no. 6587-6274-8833 which is inadvertently recorded as Mohd Abrar Khan while as his correct name is Abraar Barkat Khan. In this regard if anybody have any kind of objection he/she may file the same with the concerned department within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterwards.

Barkat Ali Khan  
Father of Abraar Barkat Khan  
R/o Sariwarpora Tehsil Pattan Baramulla

PHO

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public that I, Barkat Ali Khan intend to correct the name of my son in his adhar card bearing no. 2407-4189-7594 which is inadvertently recorded as Mohd Asrar Khan while as his correct name is Asraar Barkat Khan. In this regard if anybody have any kind of objection he/she may file the same with the concerned department within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterwards.

Barkat Ali Khan  
Father of Asraar Barkat Khan  
R/o Sariwarpora Tehsil Pattan Baramulla

PHO

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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

KO VIEW

Soaring Airfares

One of the biggest spoilers of the tourism sector in Kashmir Valley, other than the troubled situation, has been the frequent hikes in airfares. This discourages tourists from visiting the Valley and diverts them to other parts of the country where they can travel with lower fares. In fact, often the tourists can travel with lesser cost to a foreign country such as the United Arab Emirates.

The exorbitant airfares thus create a man-made crisis for the Valley's tourism sector, which, in turn, affects the livelihoods of thousands of people. It goes without saying that tourism plays a key role in the economy of Jammu and Kashmir, contributing significantly to its GDP and providing employment opportunities across various sectors.

Due to a lingering dry spell, Kashmir already has had a lean tourist season this winter. In the most visited resorts such as Gulmarg and Pahalgam, visitor numbers have declined by 30 and 50 percent respectively. The government has already been forced to defer winter games scheduled to be held between at Gulmarg. The games would have put a spotlight on the Valley, drawing more tourists other than the sportsmen participating in the event. With snow still eluding the Valley, the government finds itself unable to reschedule the games. And, anyways, with March approaching, the chances of snowing will increasingly abate.

There's, however, hope that the upcoming spring will compensate for the winter shortfall. Apart from a snowbound winter, Kashmir's spring has been one of the biggest tourism draws for the Valley. As things stand, airfares are skyrocketing right at the onset of spring. According to reports, for Delhi-Srinagar flights, travellers pay Rs 12,000 to Rs 14,000, while those from Bangalore must pay around Rs 17,000. Mumbai residents are confronted with even steeper fares of Rs 27,000, and Kolkata passengers face rates around Rs 18,000. This will discourage the middle class, which comprises the majority of tourists, from visiting the Valley.

True, the issue of escalating airfares is not specific to Kashmir. It can and does happen with other places too. There are many factors at play in the air price variations, such as seasonal demand fluctuations and operational costs. At the same time, predatory pricing practices by the airlines too can't be ruled out. And this is where the government's intervention is required. More so, at a place like Kashmir that heavily relies on tourism to sustain its economy. With the largely dry winter already costing us dearly in terms of tourist inflow, higher airfares can dent spring arrivals too.



Did you know?

Understanding Mutual Funds: A Guide to Investment Strategies and Diversification

Irshad Mushtaq

Mutual funds serve as versatile investment vehicles, allowing individuals to strategically plan and diversify their financial portfolios. They offer the ability to invest across various markets, such as India, China, the US, Taiwan, or the Hang Seng, as well as in commodities like gold and silver. Additionally, options such as liquid funds, similar to fixed deposits, and real estate investment trusts (REITs) listed on Indian stock markets are available.

Categories of Funds in India

Large Cap, Mid Cap, Small Cap: These funds invest in companies with corresponding market capitalizations.

Flexi Caps and Multi Cap Funds: Offer greater flexibility by investing across a range of market caps.

Sectoral Funds: Focus on specific sectors like technology, pharmaceuticals, infrastructure, and automotive industries.

Global Investments through Funds of Funds

Indian investors have opportunities to invest in various international markets via funds of funds, which include investments in American, Taiwanese, and European equities. These funds sometimes invest in their own mutual funds, promoting diversification.

Moreover, new thematic funds like artificial intelligence funds have surfaced, providing exposure to emerging global trends while still being accessible through domestic portfolios.

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

Learn from the insights of @Irshad Mushtaq, Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of M I Securities! Connect for valuable financial advice at [misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com](mailto:misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com)  
Disclaimer: This article is for information only and doesn't offer investment advice. It's not an endorsement or an offer to buy or sell any financial products. If you decide to act on the information here, you do so at your own risk

Glitter Over Grit

The Illusion of a Grand School Reopening

Farooq Shah

In a circular issued on Saturday, the Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) instructed school heads to ensure that schools wore a "festive" look ahead of their reopening on March 01 after winter vacation.

The DSEK emphasized that the occasion should be celebrated to create a welcoming atmosphere and encourage students to return to a positive and engaging learning environment.

In light of this directive, I took it upon myself to visit some schools, particularly middle and high, to see how well the "festive reopening" vision aligned with reality. What I saw was nothing short of alarming. Inside the very classrooms meant for learning, I found sheep and stray dogs taking shelter—right where students are supposed to sit and study.

In such conditions, the health and safety risks for students are unimaginable. Young children, exposed to animal waste and unhygienic surroundings, are at constant risk of bacterial infections, respiratory diseases, and parasitic infestations. The unchecked presence of stray dogs heightens the danger—one sudden attack, a rabid bite, and an entire classroom could be thrown into chaos.

How do you create a "welcoming ambience" in schools where children share space with livestock? Where broken windows let in the cold and rain?

The government's own "Vision Document" published in 2023 indicated that nearly 5000 government schools, especially in remote and hilly areas, suffer from a lack of basic facilities, including proper classrooms, heating arrangements, sanitation, and adequate teaching resources.

Senior officials, particularly those at the ranks of Secretary and Director of Education, often focus their attention on select schools within city limits—institu-



Bovines graze as students take classes in a Srinagar downtown school.

areas remain summarily neglected.

School heads in these "well-monitored" institutions ensure their campuses appear festive by putting up colourful bunting and decorative flowers, creating a visually appealing setting. The process is often superficial—once the decorations are in place, pho-

compliance with directives, satisfying higher-ups without addressing deeper systemic issues.

However, beyond these staged visuals, the realities of thousands of schools struggling with inadequate infrastructure remain unaddressed, making such directives more about optics than meaningful improvement.

Education departments in India are largely managed by bureaucrats who often lack direct experience in the education sector.

In Jammu and Kashmir, these departments are typically overseen by senior JKAS officers who are transferred from various other administrative roles, bringing with them expertise in governance but little to no background in pedagogy, curriculum development, or student engagement.

Take the case of Dr. G.N. Itoo, the current Director of School Education Kashmir. Before assuming this role, he served as the Mission Director of Jal Shakti, where his primary responsibility was ensuring the distribution of potable water to remote areas. While this role undoubtedly involved administrative efficiency and logistical management, it has little to do with the complexities of education

The lack of domain-specific knowledge among senior education officials often results in policies that are disconnected from ground realities. The trend of appointing bureaucrats with little to no background in education to oversee crucial policy decisions is not just puzzling; it's outright detrimental to the system

Education Kashmir, his career trajectory also includes diverse assignments such as Director of Tourism Kashmir, Deputy Commissioner of Baramulla, and Director of Estates—each requiring different administrative skills but not necessarily expertise in the



Dogs—an unexpected and dangerous addition to the school roll.

field of education.

This raises an important question: How can an officer with a background in water supply, tourism, and district administration effectively address the nuanced challenges of the education system?

The lack of domain-specific knowledge among senior education officials often results in policies that are disconnected from ground realities. The trend of appointing bureaucrats with little to no background in education to oversee crucial policy decisions is not just puzzling; it's outright detrimental to the system.

Take Alok Kumar, a bureaucrat from the Indian Revenue Service (IRS), Bihar cadre. At one point, he wasn't managing just one or two departments—no, he was juggling five: Higher Education, School Education, Medical and Health Services, Aviation, and Estates.

If multitasking had an Olympic category, Alok Kumar would've taken gold. But let's be honest—how can one individual possibly bring meaningful reform in five vastly different sectors at the same time? The idea that someone trained in revenue collection could seamlessly transition into education policymaking speaks volumes about how the system views expertise: as an optional extra, not a necessity.

Then there is Rajiv Rai Bhatnagar. His tenure as Director General of the CRPF coincided with the

deadliest Pulwama terrorist attack, where 40 paramilitary personnel lost their lives. Yet he was later appointed as an advisor to oversee the Education in J&K. The logic? Unclear. What insights a former top cop could bring to curriculum design, pedagogy, or school infrastructure remains a mystery.

But, in the bureaucratic universe, it seems experience in handling security somehow translates to expertise in shaping young minds.

And then there's the pièce de résistance: Suresh Kumar Gupta, an Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer, currently helming education affairs. A forest officer managing schools—because in the grand scheme of things, trees and textbooks are obviously interchangeable. Maybe it's all part of some grand eco-education experiment where school infrastructure is expected to sprout organically like a well-tended forest. Or maybe it's just another example of how little regard the system has for domain expertise.

Rather than formulating long-term strategies to address infrastructural deficits, learning gaps, and teacher training needs, directives tend to focus on optics—such as festive re-openings—while fundamental issues like dilapidated school buildings, lack of proper heating, and outdated teaching methods remain unresolved.

Without experienced educators in leadership roles, the education system continues to be treated as just another administrative portfolio, rather than a specialized field demanding dedicated expertise.

This directive, coming from those who rarely step beyond city schools, feels not just out of touch but almost farcical.

The reality is that the government's own reports acknowledge the infrastructural deficiencies in thousands of schools across Jammu and Kashmir. And yet, instead of addressing these pressing issues, instructions to make schools look festive are circulated just for the heck of it. What good is decoration when the very foundation of a safe and healthy learning environment is missing?

The author is an academic and can be reached at [mfshah@gmail.com](mailto:mfshah@gmail.com)  
Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer



Classrooms or pastures? Sheep freely roam inside a Srinagar school.

tions they frequently visit. As a result, these schools receive disproportionate attention, while those in remote and underprivileged

tographs are taken, videos are recorded, and the content is promptly shared in official WhatsApp groups. This gives the illusion of

policy, school administration, or pedagogy.

Though Dr. Itoo has previously held the position of Director of School



ALL letters intended for publication must include the writer's name and address, even if a pseudonym is used. Letters are edited as clarity, space and accuracy of expression require. Our publishing a letter does not mean we agree with everything or even anything in it. -EDITOR

MAIL YOUR LETTERS

P.O. Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190 001  
[email: editpage.ko@gmail.com](mailto:editpage.ko@gmail.com)

Urgent Need for Vigilance Against Underage and Reckless Driving

I would like to draw the attention of the concerned authorities, particularly the traffic police, towards a growing menace on the roads of Kashmir—teenagers driving without a license, engaging in dangerous stunts, and speeding, especially on the national highways.

It has become increasingly common to witness young boys riding

motorcycles at alarming speeds, often without helmets, and performing life-threatening stunts. Such reckless behavior endangers not only their own lives but also the safety of pedestrians and other motorists. The lack of strict enforcement of traffic laws has allowed this problem to escalate, leading to frequent accidents and even fatalities.

The traffic police must take immediate action to curb this dangerous trend. Regular checkpoints, strict penalties for underage driving, and awareness campaigns in schools and colleges can play a crucial role in deterring teenagers from engaging in such activities. Additionally, parents must also be held accountable for allowing their children to ride motor-

cycles without proper licenses.

I urge the traffic authorities to be more vigilant and take strict measures to ensure road safety. Preventive actions today can save countless lives tomorrow.

Feroz M Fayaz  
Srinagar

## A GOOD BOSS IS NOT ONE WHO EXERCISES UNCHECKED

**AUTHORITY BUT ONE** who upholds the rules, ensures the welfare of the organization, and treats employees fairly. The belief that "A boss is always right" is more of a myth if it implies unquestionable authority. In reality, a boss is right only when they act within the legal and ethical framework, ensuring fairness, discipline, and organizational growth



# Are **BOSSSES** Always Right?

Syed Mudasir Mushtaq

The role of a boss is crucial in ensuring that an organization functions efficiently and achieves its objectives. However, the phrase "A boss is always right" raises questions about the legitimacy of their decisions and actions. Is this statement a myth or a reality?

In both government and private organizations, bosses play a significant role, but their responsibilities and the way they exercise authority differ.

1. Government Sector: Bosses are bound by rules, regulations, and legal frameworks. They have limited discretion and must adhere strictly to policies. They are responsible for maintaining transparency, fairness, and accountability.
2. Private Sector: Bosses often have greater flexibility in decision-making. They prioritize business interests over strict adherence to regulations while being expected to balance profitability with employee welfare.

### The Behavior of a Boss Towards Subordinates

A good boss should exhibit professionalism, fairness, and integrity while dealing with subordinates and ensuring compliance with laws and rules. A boss must function strictly within the boundaries of established policies. Favoritism and bias should have no place in the workplace. Every employee should be treated equally, regardless of personal relationships. Promotions, postings,

and rewards should be based on merit, seniority, and experience rather than personal preferences.

A boss should lead by example and ensure that office discipline is upheld. The primary focus should be on the betterment of the organization rather than personal benefit. A boss should maintain a professional distance from subordinates to prevent favoritism and misuse of authority. If a boss develops friendships or close relationships with subordinates, those individuals may exploit the relationship for personal gain. Some employees try to stay close to their boss by offering gifts, treating them to meals, or providing transportation. Such practices lead to injustice among weaker and helpless employees and must be strictly avoided.

### Respect and Compliance with a Boss's Orders

Every subordinate should obey the orders of their boss, respect them, and comply with their directives. Bosses are typically experienced, educated, knowledgeable, and have the credentials of passing competitive exams or excelling in their fields. Their competence and expertise make them bosses. Certainly, bosses are more mindful, knowledgeable, and trained decision-makers than subordinates. They are entrusted with authority and responsibility; therefore, subordinates should respect their boss and comply with their instructions to maintain discipline and efficiency in the organization.

### A Successful Boss

A successful boss maintains a good re-

lationship with employees, listens to their genuine concerns, respects subordinates, and always extends support for their well-being. They must provide support and benefits to all eligible subordinates rather than practicing favoritism or selectively choosing individuals for personal reasons.

### Faithfulness, Honesty, and Integrity in Employment

Everyone, whether a boss or a subordinate, must be faithful, honest, and uphold integrity. They must respect the government or organization that provides them with employment and sustenance. Additionally, they must work diligently for the institution that has entrusted them with responsibilities. Upholding these values ensures a just and effective work environment and contributes to the overall progress and integrity of the organization.

### Discretion vs. Compliance with Rules

While some level of discretion is granted to bosses for decision-making, it must always align with legal and organizational rules. Exercising discretion to favor certain individuals, bypassing normal departmental channels, or making personal gains is a violation of ethical and professional standards. A responsible boss should follow due process while making decisions, ensure that rules are implemented for the organization's benefit, avoid misusing authority for personal gain, and uphold workplace integrity by maintaining fairness in all dealings.

### Accountability of a Boss

If a boss is always right, then why are some bosses held accountable and penalized for violating rules and engaging in illegal practices? The reality is that not all bosses act responsibly. Some misuse their authority, break regulations, and engage in unethical practices, leading to disciplinary actions against them. However, this does not apply to every boss. A good boss operates within legal boundaries and ensures fairness, while those who exploit their position for personal gain ultimately face consequences.

### Bosses Are Also Bound by Rules

Employees of a department or organization are bound by laws, rules, regulations, and conduct guidelines. However, the boss is not exempt from these regulations. Just as subordinates are expected to follow procedures, so too must a boss adhere to the same legal and ethical framework. A boss who disregards these rules can be held accountable for their actions. The notion that a boss has unlimited authority is a misconception; instead, they must operate within the confines of the law and organizational policies.

### Bypassing Senior Officials for Personal Benefit

Some bosses bypass senior officials and entrust responsibilities to juniors from whom they seek personal benefits. This practice is a violation of laws and rules. Assigning tasks based on personal interest rather than merit and experience undermines the integrity of the organization. Such violations, along with bypassing normal departmental channels and

regulations, contribute to corruption and unfair practices that must be avoided at all costs.

### Lobbyism and Retaliation in Leadership

Some bosses engage in lobbying for personal gain, creating an environment of favoritism and corruption. They misuse their authority to take revenge on honest employees who refuse to support illegal activities. As a result, these honest employees often face uncertainty, undue pressure, and mental harassment. This toxic culture discourages integrity and damages workplace morale. A true leader should eliminate such unethical practices and promote an atmosphere of fairness and professionalism.

### Conclusion: The Ideal Boss

A good boss is not one who exercises unchecked authority but one who upholds the rules, ensures the welfare of the organization, and treats employees fairly. The belief that "A boss is always right" is more of a myth if it implies unquestionable authority. In reality, a boss is right only when they act within the legal and ethical framework, ensuring fairness, discipline, and organizational growth. A true leader prioritizes the organization's progress over personal relationships, maintains discipline, and fosters an environment where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute to the organization's success.

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The author is a Post Grad in Public Administration*

# AI-generated influencers: A new wave of cultural exploitation

Ateqah Khaki & Vinita Srivastava

You probably know what an "influencer" is – people with large, highly engaged social media followings who have the power to sway beliefs and purchasing decisions.

But you might not have yet heard of virtual influencers.

They're like human influencers ... but they're not human. They're characters brought to life by CGI and AI, designed to target demographic groups from a first-person perspective.

Virtual influencers are becoming more popular and prevalent every day. A full-blown industry has sprung up around them – an industry with agencies and companies dedicated to creating and managing them, with some of the top personas earning millions annually.

But our guest today has noticed a troubling pattern – many virtual influencers are crafted as young women of colour. And their creators are often men with



different racial identities who work at marketing agencies.

Jul Parke is a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information specializing in social media platforms, digital racism, virtual influencers and AI phenomena. She is currently a visiting scholar at New York University. Parke's doctoral research explores what

motivates companies and creators to produce these virtual, racialized women, which she says is a new form of commercializing gender and racial identity in digital spaces.

As we enter the era of AI proliferation, it seems virtual influencers are here to stay. There are at least 200 digital personalities out there today, and platforms like Facebook, Instagram and TikTok are rolling out

new tools that will enable everyday users to craft their own virtual personas.

Given the absence of laws for non-humans, the rise of virtual influencers on social media raises a whole host of urgent ethical questions about authenticity online.

### Resources

- ◆ Virtual influencers mentioned in this episode include: Miquela, Shudu, Rozy, imma and Bermuda
- ◆ Virtual Influencers - Identity and Digitality in The Age of Multiple Realities by Esperanza Miyake (Routledge, 2024)
- ◆ Instagram Visual Social Media Cultures by Tama Leaver, Tim Highfield, Crystal Abidin (Polity Press, 2020)
- ◆ The Influencer Industry: The

Quest for Authenticity on Social Media by Emily Hund (Princeton University Press, 2023)

- ◆ "Racial Plagiarism and Fashion" by Minh-Ha T. Pham (QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking, Fall 2017)
- ◆ Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code by Ruha Benjamin (Polity, 2019)
- ◆ When Chatbots Play Human, NPR (February 9, 2025)
- ◆ Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto by Legacy Russell (Verso, 2020)

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The author is a Post Grad in Public Administration. By arrangements with The Conversation*

# Working Memory Which Allows Multitasking Could Have Limits: Study

Press Trust Of India

**W**orking memory, which allows one to juggle multiple tasks at the same time, may have its limits, according to a new study published in the journal eLife.

A learning process involving 'chunking' or grouping related pieces of information, rather than capacity, is the real driver of working memory, according to co-author of the study, Aneri Soni, a graduate student at Brown University, US.

The capacity of one's working memory -- how many tasks can be performed simultaneously -- is considered to be limited. However, there are competing theories as to why or how this might be true, the researchers said.

In this study, the team ran trials of everyday human tasks on a computer model of the basal ganglia and the thalamus -- brain regions relevant to the functioning of working memory. The model was shown multiple coloured blocks oriented in different directions and asked to recall which colored block was pointing in which direction. Over multiple trials, the



critical to learning is the brain chemical 'dopamine', which plays a role in producing motivation to learn and in consolidating newly learned information as memory

model learned how to strategically compress information and began chunking together similar colors, such as blue and light blue.

However, trials on the model without the ability to chunk, but with plenty of space to store items, showed that it was worse at both storing and retrieving the items,

the authors said.

The model did not seem to realise it had access to such a large amount of storage, they added.

The researchers found that a model that knew how to "chunk," or group related pieces of information, was able to strategically store information to its full stor-

age capacity.

"The simulations we ran show that if we held more than just a few items at a time, it becomes too difficult to learn how to manage so many pieces of information at once, such that the brain gets confused and can't use the information it does store," Soni said.

Further, critical to learning is the brain chemical 'dopamine', which plays a role in producing motivation to learn and in consolidating newly learned information as memory.

The findings could, therefore, help in understanding how learning is affected in disorders such as Parkinson's disease, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and schizophrenia, where dopamine production and regulation are known to be impaired.

In one of the experiments in this study, Soni altered a model to mimic what is known about dopamine levels in patients with Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia, and ADHD. When the model was challenged to perform the same commonly performed human tasks, the results showed that.

# 'New Cases Of Breast Cancer Could Be Up 38% By 2050 Globally Related Deaths By 68%'

Press Trust Of India

By 2050, new cases of breast cancer and related deaths will have increased globally by 38 per cent and 68 per cent, respectively, disproportionately affecting countries with low human development index (HDI), a study has estimated.

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the leading cause of cancer-related death in women. HDI measures a country's overall quality of life after looking at aspects, including life expectancy, education levels, and standard of living.

Researchers, including those from the International Agency for Research on Cancer -- WHO's cancer agency -- estimated current and projected burden, along with trends in breast cancer incidence and deaths over the past 10 years, in nearly 50 countries, using the GLOBOCAN database.

The findings, published in the journal Nature Medicine, showed that only seven countries meet the World Health Organization's goal of reducing mortality by 2.5 per cent a year, including Denmark, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

The goal is outlined under the Global Breast Cancer Initiative (GBCI), launched



by the WHO in 2021, for countries to lower breast cancer mortality.

The authors found that there were 23 lakh new cases and 6.7 lakh deaths from breast cancer in 2022, globally.

However, this was unevenly distributed, they said -- in regions low on the human development scores, people diagnosed with breast cancer disproportionately had the highest mortality rates.

For example, one's lifetime risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer was found to be highest in France (one in nine) and Northern America (one in 10), whereas the lifetime risk of dying from breast cancer was highest in Fiji (one in 24)

and Africa (one in 47).

"By 2050, new cases and deaths will have increased by 38 per cent and 68 per cent, respectively, disproportionately impacting low-HDI countries," the authors wrote.

This translated to an estimated 32 lakh new cases and 11 lakh deaths in the year 2050, they said.

The authors said a sustained investment and improvements in early diagnosis and treatment are needed to address growing inequities in breast cancer survival globally.

They also called for high-quality cancer data in countries with low and medium HDI to address inequities and monitor cancer control goals.

# Study Finds Possible Way To Heal Damaged Lungs After Premature Birth

ANI

**R**esearchers have created 3D video images of mouse lung tissue grown in the laboratory using a four-dimensional microscopy technique. What they have learned has been nothing short of groundbreaking.

A new study suggests that understanding resilience—the ability of injured lung tissue to heal and regenerate—may be key to advancing the treatment and prevention of life-threatening lung disease in extremely premature babies.

Using a four-dimensional microscopy technique, researchers at Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Medical Center have created 3D video images



of mouse lung tissue grown in the laboratory.

"For the first time, we've been able to live-image the

lung as it forms, and quantify and measure those cellular movements that come together to make an organ with

a surface area large enough for gas exchange," said Jennifer Sucre, MD, associate professor of Pediatrics and Cell and Developmental Biology.

The group's findings, published Feb. 24 as the cover article in JCI Insight, the journal of the American Society of Clinical Investigation, represent a significant step toward improved treatment and prevention of bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD), which occurs in about 50% of infants born two to four months prematurely.

"If we can understand how the lung forms, then we have a blueprint for how to grow new lungs after injury," said the paper's first author, Nick Negretti, PhD, a senior post-doctoral fellow in the Sucre lab who co-led the research.

"Mice have an extraordinary ability to repair the lung," said Sucre, the paper's senior author, who directs the Biodevelopmental Origins of Lung Disease (BOLD) Center at VUMC. "I want to give babies the superpower of the mouse."

Premature babies with BPD require oxygen and mechanical ventilation in the early days after birth to help them breathe. Oxygen therapy is a double-edged sword because it also can damage delicate lung tissue.

The innovative technology implemented by the Sucre lab allows for testing and identification of the specific molecules and pathways that guide this process. It is also a discovery tool for drugs promoting tissue regeneration after injury.

### Public Notice

I have lost the Number Plate of my motor Cycle bearing regd no: jk15 6347 from SEHPORA to Beehama GANDERBAL. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Shabeer Ahmad Dar  
S/o Abdul Rehman Dar  
R/o RakH Sultanpora Snoawari Bandipora

### Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

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

Public Notice...

The registrar birth BDO Khore Sherabad has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Arooba Akbar D/o Mohamad Akbar Ganie R/o Shirpora Bangil Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 03/05/2011 occurred home in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained..

SD  
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

### From office of Advocate Ishfaq Rasool And Associates

In the case of  
1.Gh Rasool kuchey  
2.Mohd Akbar Kuchey  
Both Sons of Late Mohd Subhan Kuchey.  
Both Residents of Tantraypora Palhallan

(Caveator)

V/s  
Public at large

In the Petition in terms of Section 148-A

The caveators have reason to believe that Non-Caveator may file any Application, Petition, Ap- peal, Suit or any other type of proceeding before the Hon'ble Court and on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story and may seed in obtaining some relief/order at their back/in exparte against the caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put in irrepa- rable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveators be given an opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble court before passing any order.  
fko Sd/advocate

### Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

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

Public Notice...

The registrar birth BDO Khore Sherabad has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Arooba Akbar D/o Mohamad Akbar Ganie R/o Shirpora Bangil Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 03/05/2011 occurred home in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained..

SD  
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

## Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION GANDERBAL

Address: Mini Secretariat Ganderbal TelNo.0194-2416058

**Subject:- Procurement of GYM equipment's & Children's Playing equipment for Open Air Gym and Children's Park at Beehama.**

**Reference: This Office NIT No. 105 of 2024-25 issued under endorsement No. 9936-41 Dated: 17-02-2025.**

### Extension Notice

**The Bid submission end date for the subject work floated for tenders vide this office NIT No. referred to above which were scheduled to be on 24-02-2025 upto 4:00 PM is hereby extended and the details where of are given as under:-**

1	Date of issue of Tender	17-02-2025
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	17-02-2025
3	Bid submission start date	18-02-2025 from 12:00 PM
4	Bid submission End date	27-02-2025 upto 04:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening	27-02-2025 at 04.05PM in the office Of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal.

**The other terms and conditions of the aforesaid NIT shall remain unaltered.**

**No.: 10232-37**  
DIPK-12413/24  
dated: 25-02-2025

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
(R&B)Division Ganderbal

## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, R&B DIVISION GANDERBAL

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

e-NIT No:108 of 2024-25 No.:10286-91 Dated:25-02-2025

For and on the behalf of the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of J&K tenders through e- Tenders in single cover system on percentage basis are invited from Mechanical/OEM having sufficient relevant experience for the work mentioned below:

All other details/eligibility criteria and terms and conditions can be downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in. Queries if any may be made by email at rmbdivisionganderbal@gmail.com.

S. No.	Description of work	Adv. Cost (in lacs)	Earnest Money	Cost of tender document	Time of Completion	Class of Contractor
01.	Hydraulic Testing of the Extinguishers installed at Mini Secretariat Ganderbal.	0.26	Rs. 522/=	Rs.200/-	10 days	Mechanical Card Holder/OEM

Administrative Approval: Accorded. Funds: Available  
THE NIT CONSISTING OF QUALIFYING INFORMATION, ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, BILL OF QUANTITIES(BOQ) SETS OF TERMS & OTHER DETAILS CAN BE VIEWED/ DOWNLOADED FROM THE WEBSITE www.jktenders.gov.in

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	25-02-2025
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	25-02-2025
3	Bid submission Start Date	25-02-2025 from 04:00 PM.
4	Bid Submission End Date	03-03-2025 upto 04:00 PM.
5	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	04-03-2025 at 11.00AM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal

- Bids must be accompanied with a cost of Tender document (as mentioned above) in the shape of Treasury Receipt/e-Challan in favour of Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Ganderbal.
- The Date of Treasury Challan and CDR must be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date.  
Any deviation shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.
- The Bidders shall upload earnest money equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the shape of CDR/FDR at the time of tendering pledged in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal and 5% of the allotted cost as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR by the successful bidder pledged in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal. The Performance Security i.e. 5% shall be released after successful completion of the Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. The EMD of 2% of successful bidders shall be released after receipt of 5% Performance Security/ after award of the contract for the Work is issued.
- Note:-All bidders shall submit the uploaded Treasury Challan in Original before issuance allotment.

DIPK-12446/24  
dated: 25-02-2025

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
R&B Division Ganderbal

### FROM THE OFFICE OF THE M/S TAWOOS AHMAD PARRAY ADVOCATE AT BUDGAM

IN THE CASE:

- Ishfaq Hussain Dar S/O Gh Mohd Dar
- Aaisa Akhter D/O Gh Mohd Dar
- Rukiya D/O Gh Ahmad Dar

Both residents of Durbal Tehsil and District Budgam

Vs  
Public at lagre

In the matter of: Be it known to the public at lagre/interested persons that the caveators have reason (s) apprehensions (s) to believe that the Non-Caveators may file any suit/petition/ proceedings before the Honble court of jurisdiction against caveator on the grounds of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked up story and may succeed in obtaining some order xparte against the caveator and in such eventuality the caveator will be put to be an irreparable loss and inconvenience.

It is prayed before the honble court that in the event of any petition or other case being filed by any manner of public at large /interested person, no interim order or any protective order be passed without granting the caveator an opportunity of hearing.  
M/S Tawoos Ahmad Parray  
Advocate at Budgam  
Dated 25-02-2025  
mko



## 8 Cities Saw 10% Rise In Housing Prices In Oct-Dec: Report



Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI** -Housing prices appreciated at an average of 10 per cent during the December quarter across eight major cities on strong demand, higher input cost, according to a report by CREDAI, Colliers and Lias Foras.

Realtors' body CREDAI, real estate consultant Colliers India and data analytic firm Lias Foras on Tuesday released their joint report, which showed that Delhi-NCR saw a maximum appreciation of 31 pc annually during the October-December period of 2024.

"Interestingly, average housing prices have been on a rising spree for the 16th consecutive quarter, starting 2021," the report said.

The price appreciation was evident in all eight major cities. CREDAI National President Boman Irani said, "The sustained growth in housing prices underscores the strong confidence among homebuyers, driven by a preference for spacious living and lifestyle upgrades."

"While evolving preferences and lifestyle upgrades remain key motivators, cost pressures

in construction and land acquisition are also significantly contributing to pricing trends," Irani said. Colliers India Chief Executive Officer Badal Yagnik believes 2025 may see similar increase in average prices across top eight cities.

"Going ahead, with elbow-room for further reduction in benchmark lending rates, most cities are likely to witness traction in housing sales across categories. Resultantly, average residential prices can potentially increase at similar levels in 2025 on an annual basis," Yagnik said.

Lias Foras Managing Director Pankaj Kapoor said sales witnessed a marginal decline, led by moderated new launches in the last quarter.

"We anticipate a growth in affordable and mid-segment supply and sales going forward, which will change the composition of supply, which has been skewed towards the luxury segment for the last four years," Kapoor said.

Among cities, the average housing prices rose 15 per cent annually in Ahmedabad to Rs 7,725 per sq ft on carpet area basis during the October-December period of 2024.

“Interestingly, average housing prices have been on a rising spree for the 16th consecutive quarter, starting 2021”

## Gold Jumps ₹250 To ₹89,350 Per 10g Amid Rupee Depreciation

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI** - Gold prices jumped by Rs 250 to Rs 89,350 per 10 grams on Tuesday extending gains for the second day amid depreciation in rupee, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The gold of 99.5 per cent purity rose by Rs 250 to Rs 88,950 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 88,700 per 10 grams. On February 20, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity hit all-time highs of Rs 89,450 and Rs 89,050 per 10 grams, respectively.

However, silver prices slipped below the Rs 1 lakh mark, falling by Rs 500 to Rs 99,500 per kg.

"Silver fell due to weakness in the industrial metals and rebound in the dollar index. Global equity markets are also struggling due to Trump's tariff fears and pressure on industrial metals but reversal in the US Treasury yields could support silver prices at lower levels," Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities at Mehta Equities Ltd, said. On Tuesday, the rupee fell sharply by 51 paise to settle at 87.23 (provisional) against the US dollar due to month-end dollar demand by importers amid uncertainty over US trade tariffs.

In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX),



gold contracts for April delivery appreciated by Rs 275 to Rs 86,459 per 10 grams.

"Gold traded positively in MCX as rupee weakness below 87.10 provided support to domestic prices. Meanwhile, Comex gold remained range-bound between USD 2,930 and 2,955, continuing its consolidation phase over the past few sessions," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

On the other hand, silver futures for March delivery increased by Rs 241 to Rs 95,330 per kg on the commodities bourse.

According to HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities Saumil Gandhi, traders will be awaiting the macro data, including the CB Consumer Confidence Index and the Richmond manufacturing index to be released later on Tuesday, along with some of the US Federal Reserve members speech which will provide trajectory for the bullion prices.

## India Imports 49 Bn Euro Worth Of Russian Oil In 3rd Year Of Ukraine Invasion

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI** - India, the world's third largest oil consuming and importing nation, bought crude oil worth 49 billion euros from Russia in the third year of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, a global think tank said.

India, which has traditionally sourced its oil from the Middle East, began importing a large volume of oil from Russia soon after the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. This is primarily because Russian oil was available at a significant discount to other international benchmarks due to western sanctions and some European countries shunning purchases.

This led to India's imports of Russian oil seeing a dramatic rise, growing from less than 1 per cent of its total crude oil imports to a staggering 40 per cent in a short period.

"Russia's stronghold over new markets has solidified in the third year of the invasion. The three biggest buyers, China (EUR 78 billion), India (EUR 49 billion) and Turkey (EUR 34 billion) were responsible for 74 per cent of Russia's total revenues from fossil fuels in the third year of the invasion," Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air said in its latest report.

The value of India's import saw an 8 per cent year-on-year increase, it said.

Russia's total global fossil fuel earnings in the third year



of the invasion reached 242 billion euro and have totalled 847 billion euro since the invasion of Ukraine.

Some of the refineries in India turned Russian crude oil into fuels like petrol and diesel that were exported to Europe and other G7 countries.

"In the third year of the invasion, G7+ countries imported EUR 18 billion of oil products from six refineries in India and Turkey that process Russian crude. An estimated EUR 9 billion of this was refined from Russian crude," the CREA report said.

In the first three quarters of 2024, as refineries in India and Turkey increased their consumption of Russian crude, the volume of Russian crude used to create products for G7+ countries jumped by an estimated 10 per cent. Concurrently, this also contributed to a rise in the price of Russian oil, boosting the value of the crude used for these exports by an estimated 25 per cent, it said.

The EU is the biggest importer of oil products from India's and Turkey's refineries. On average, 13 per cent of these refineries' total production is targeted towards exports for the bloc in the third year of the invasion.

The top-five importers within the EU were the Netherlands (3.3 billion euro), France (1.4 billion euro), Romania (1.2 billion euro), Spain (1.1 billion euro), and Italy (949 million euro). The single-biggest buyer was Australia, whose imports from these refineries totalled 3.38 billion euro in the third year of the invasion.

In the third year of the invasion, 23 per cent of the oil transhipped in EU waters was destined for China, 11 per cent for India, 10 per cent for South Korea, and 2 per cent for Turkey, with the remainder distributed among other markets.

"CREA's data shows that from February to September 2024, 331 shipments arriving in India's Sikka port (in Gujarat) averaged USD 90.8 per barrel," it said.

“IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE INVASION, G7+ COUNTRIES imported EUR 18 billion of oil products from six refineries in India and Turkey that process Russian crude. An estimated EUR 9 billion of this was refined from Russian crude”

## US Sanctions 4 Indian Firms For 'Involvement' In Iran's Oil Industry

Press Trust Of India

**WASHINGTON** - Four Indian companies are among 16 firms sanctioned by the US on Monday for their alleged involvement in Iran's petroleum and petrochemical industry.

According to a press release issued by the treasury department, the sanctioned Indian firms are Austinship Management Pvt Ltd, BSM Marine LLP, Cosmos Lines Inc, and Flux Maritime LLP.

This marks the second round of sanctions targeting Iranian oil sales since President Donald Trump issued a national security memorandum on Feb 4, ordering a campaign of maximum pressure on Iran, the state department said in a press statement.

"The US Department of State is today designating 16 entities and vessels for their involvement in Iran's petroleum and petrochemical industry," the statement said.

The Department of State, along with the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC),



“The US Department of State is today designating 16 entities and vessels for their involvement in Iran's petroleum and petrochemical industry”

also imposed sanctions on 22 individuals and identified 13

vessels as blocked property across multiple jurisdictions for their involvement in Iran's oil industry.

"This network of illicit shipping facilitators obfuscates and deceives its role in loading and transporting Iranian oil for sale to buyers in Asia. It has shipped tens of millions of barrels of crude oil worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Today's action represents an initial step to realise President Trump's campaign of maximum pressure on the Iranian regime. It disrupts efforts by Iran to amass oil revenues to fund terrorists' activities," the statement said.

## STD Urges Taxpayers To Follow Fair-Trade Practices

Observer News Service

As part of its ongoing drive to check the practice of conversion of B2C invoices into B2B and passing on fake ITC to dealers especially those registered as work contractors, Jammu and Kashmir, State Taxes Department (STD) conducted simultaneous search and seizure inspections at various locations across Jammu division here today.

The Department has urged the dealers to follow fair-trade practices and avoid indulging in tax evasion activities or fraudulent practices involving fake ITC as it is continuously monitoring such actions through AI based data analytics tools and any dealer indulging in such activities shall be dealt with seriously under GST law.

The department made an appeal to all the taxpayers to practice invoice-based business and report their actual sales and pay the necessary amount of GST in their monthly/quarterly returns to avoid enforcement actions and penalties.

The Department has impressed upon the taxpayers that any fraudulent activity is generating red flag inputs in various AI tools including Business Intelligence and Fraud Analytics (BIFA), E-way Bills Portal and other portals of enforcement wings and therefore need to be avoided.

The entire drive was carried out under the guidance of Commissioner State Taxes J&K, P.K Bhat and under the supervision of Additional Commissioner Enforcement and Administration Jammu, Namrita Dogra.

## State Taxes Deptt Busts Fake Input Tax Credit Case; Realizes Penalty Of Rs 11, 18, 068

Observer News Service

In a major enforcement action, the team from Enforcement South Kashmir of State Tax Department has realized a huge penalty of Rs 11,18,068 from a tax payer carrying rigid tubes, pipes, hoses, and fittings made of propylene polymers in violation of GST regulations.

Acting on specific intelligence input, the enforcement team laid a special Naka and intercepted a vehicle in violation of GST norms by passing fake Input Tax Credit (ITC) without actual movement of goods in which 03 taxpayers were involved.

During investigation it was found that a Delhi based firm generated 02 e-invoices and E-Way bills worth Rs 73,29,554 in favour of two taxpayers but was carrying goods of Rs 36,64,777 only.

The enforcement drive was carried out by team of STOs, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and guards led by Anil Kumar Chandel, Deputy Commissioner, Enforcement South Kashmir under the guidance of P.K. Bhat Commissioner, State Taxes, J&K and Pervaiz A Raina Addl Commissioner State Taxes, Kashmir.

Commissioner and Addl Commissioner appreciated the efforts of Team South Kashmir for efficiently handling big cases which will help in tax compliance and in neutralising the nexus of tax evaders using fake ITC.

## H&H Deptt Artisan Exhibition Cum Awareness Camp

Observer News Service

The Handicrafts and Handloom Department Baramulla organized a day-long Artisan Exhibition cum Awareness Camp at the Handicrafts Block Sopore.

The event was inaugurated by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sopore, Shabir Ahmad Raina and was attended by Handicrafts Training Officer (HTO) Sopore, Owais Ahmad, Craft Instructors, artisans, members of various Industrial Cooperative Societies and trainees from different training centers.

Addressing the gathering, ADC Sopore, Shabir Ahmad Raina, emphasized that the objective of the camp was to create awareness among artisans about various welfare schemes and programs offered by the department.

He urged artisans to register with the department to avail the benefits of these schemes, which aim to support them in achieving economic independence.

During the event, HTO Sopore apprised the participants about the various training programs, cooperative initiatives, and design support available through the School of Designs, Srinagar. He also highlighted the benefits of the newly launched Credit Card Scheme, which provides artisans with a financial aid of Rs 2 lakh, along with a 7% subsidy for five years from the date of disbursement.

On the occasion, ADC distributed appreciation certificates to extraordinary trainees from various training centers of Block Sopore.

## Kashmir Artisan Wins 1st Prize In Iranian Craft Festival



Mir Arshad's papier mache wall plate wins both heart and art

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR** - In yet another recognition at prestigious global event, Mir Arshad Hussain, a noted papier mache craftsman from Bota Kadal, Lal Bazar, has been conferred with the first prize and Diploma of Honor at the 9th International Fajr Festival of Handicrafts, Sarve-Simin, at Tehran, by the Iranian Minister for Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri.

Mir Arshad's entry of papier mache wall plate, which presented an exemplary fusion of traditional and contemporary motifs of Kashmir, scored over 7000 other global entries to receive the first prize in the said festival, along with cash award of ₹65,000.

The festival showcased outstanding and valuable works crafted by master artisans and

renowned designers from all over the world, which set high-standards of excellence and originality.

One of the highlights of the award remains the Honorable Mention by the Iranian Culture Minister addressed to Mir Arshad in which he attributed the award to his invaluable efforts and innovative approach in elevating handicrafts. "Your creations through your masterful hands stand as a testament to skill, passion and dedication to the cultural and artistic legacy of the world," it read.

Director, Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, Musarat Islam met and congratulated Mir Arshad for this rare honour and hoped this international recognition will inspire many others to take famed Kashmir handicrafts on the next pedestal.

An IT engineer by qualification and master craftsman by choice, Mir Arshad extended full support to the Handicrafts and Handloom Department Kashmir, in its endeavour to promote unique crafts like papier mache, which have huge potential in the overseas markets.

## RBI Lowers Risk Weight for NBFC, Microfinance Loans - Boosting Credit

Press Trust Of India

**MUMBAI** - The Reserve Bank on Tuesday lowered risk weights for bank finance to NBFCs and microfinance loans, a move that will unlock more funds and boost credit.

A lower risk weight means that lenders need to set aside less funds as a safety net for consumer loans, implying an increase in their lending capacity.

Both NBFCs and microfinance institutions have witnessed a slow down in their lending after the central bank tightened lending norms by raising the risk weight in November 2023.

The risk weight on the exposures of commercial banks to NBFCs was increased by 25 percentage points (over and above the risk weight associated with the given external rating) in all cases where the extant risk weight as per external rating of NBFCs was below 100 per cent.

"On a review, it has been decided to restore the risk weights applicable to such exposures...," the RBI said in circular.

In another circular, the RBI said it has reviewed risk weights on microfinance loans.

In November 2023, the risk weights on consumer credit, including personal loans, but excluding housing loans, education loans, vehicle loans and loans secured by gold and gold jewellery, too was increased to 125 per cent.

"On a review, it has been decided that microfinance loans in the nature of consumer credit shall also be excluded from the applicability of higher risk



weights specified in the circular and shall accordingly, be subject to a risk weight of 100 per cent," RBI said in another circular.

The central bank further clarified that microfinance loans which are not in the nature of consumer credit and fulfil certain criteria may be classified under regulatory retail portfolio (RRP) provided that the banks put in place appropriate policies and standard operating procedures to ensure fulfilment of the qualifying criteria.

Also, microfinance loans extended by regional rural banks (RRBs) and local area banks (LABs) shall attract a risk weight of 100 per cent, the RBI said.

As per the MFN data for the third quarter of the fiscal, the portfolio has declined by 3.53 per cent on year on year basis, amounting to Rs 3,85,348 crore.

"It is a welcome move in view of the current headwinds faced by the sector; this shall to an extent provide some relief to the players and facilitate credit flow to a broader set of players than what was witnessed in the recent past," Anil Gupta, Senior Vice President Co Group Head - Financial Sector Ratings, ICRA, said.

## Sensex Snaps 5-Day Losing Streak On Gains In Financials, FMCG Shares

Press Trust Of India

Benchmark BSE Sensex recovered 147 points in a range-bound trade on Tuesday, ending its five-day slide on the back of buying in financial and FMCG shares.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 147.71 points or 0.20 per cent to settle at 74,602.12 with 17 of its constituents ending higher and 13 with losses. During the day, it rallied 330.67 points or 0.44 per cent to 74,785.08. The broader Nifty of NSE, however, fell for the sixth day, slipping by 5.80 points or 0.03 per cent to finish at 22,547.55 due to fog-end selling in pharma, metal and IT shares.

Weak Asian and US markets along with foreign fund outflows made investors risk-averse, analysts said.

The BSE midcap gauge declined 0.57 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.45 per cent.

Among Sensex shares, Mahindra & Mahindra was the biggest gainer, rising by 2.61 per cent. Bharti Airtel rose by 2.55 per cent after it announced a partnership with Ericsson top deploy 5G Core technology to drive 5G evolution. Bajaj Finance, Zomato, Nestle, Bajaj Finserv, Maruti and Titan were among the gainers.

Sun Pharma, Power Grid, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, Asian Paints and Tata Motors were among the laggards.

## Federal technology staffers resign rather than help Musk, DOGE

Agenceis

Washington, Feb 25 (AP) More than 20 civil service employees resigned Tuesday from billion-dollar Trump adviser Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, saying they were refusing to use their technical expertise to "dismantle critical public services".

"We swore to serve the American people and uphold our oath to the Constitution across presidential administrations," the 21 staffers wrote in a joint resignation letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press. "However, it has become clear that we can no longer honour those commitments."

The employees also warned that many of those enlisted by Musk to help him slash the size of the federal government under President Donald Trump's administration were political ideologues who did not have the necessary skills or experience for the task ahead of them.

The mass resignation of engineers, data scientists and product managers is a temporary setback for Musk and the Republican president's tech-driven purge of the federal workforce. It comes amid a flurry of court challenges that have sought to stall, stop or unwind their efforts to fire or coerce thousands of government workers out of jobs.

In a statement, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt was dismissive of the mass resignation.

"Anyone who thinks protests, lawsuits, and lawfare will deter President Trump must have been sleeping under a rock for the past several years," Leavitt said. "President Trump will not be deterred from delivering on the promises he made to make our federal government more efficient and more accountable to the hardworking American taxpayers."

The staffers who resigned worked for what was once known as the United States Digital Service, an office established during President Barack Obama's administration after the botched rollout of Healthcare.gov, the web portal that millions of Americans use to sign up for insurance plans through the Democrat's signature health care law.

All had previously held senior roles at such tech companies as Google and Amazon and wrote in their resignation letter that they joined the government out of a sense of duty to public service.

Trump's empowerment of Musk upended that. The day after Trump's inauguration, the staffers wrote, they were called into a series of interviews that foreshadowed the secretive and disruptive work of Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE.

According to the staffers, people wearing White House visitors' badges, some of whom would not give their names, grilled the nonpartisan employees about their qualifications and politics. Some made statements that indicated they had a limited technical understanding. Many were young and seemed guided by ideology and fandom of Musk - not improving government technology.

"Several of these interviewees refused to identify themselves, asked questions about political loyalty, attempted to pit colleagues against each other, and demonstrated limited technical ability," the staffers wrote in their letter. "This process created significant security risks."

Earlier this month, about 40 staffers in the office were laid off. The firings dealt a devastating blow to the government's ability to administer and safeguard its own technological footprint, they wrote.

## South Korea's Yoon defends his martial law decree as impeachment trial nears end

Agenceis

Seoul, Feb 25: In a final statement at his impeachment trial, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol defended his martial law decree that plunged the country into chaos as a bid to inform the public of the danger of the opposition-controlled parliament as he vowed Tuesday to push for political reform if reinstated.

Yoon spoke at the Constitutional Court as it wrapped up arguments in his impeachment trial. The court is expected to rule by mid-March on whether to remove Yoon from office or reinstate his presidential powers.

The liberal opposition-controlled National Assembly impeached Yoon, a conservative, after his short-lived Dec 3 martial law decree caused political turmoil, rattled its financial markets and hurt its international image. He has been separately arrested and indicted on rebellion charges in connection with his decree. If convicted, he would face the death penalty or life imprisonment.

Yoon has denied any wrongdoing and blamed the main liberal opposition Democratic Party, which obstructed his agenda, impeached many senior officials and slashed key parts of the government's budget bill, for the political crisis. During his martial law announcement, Yoon called the assembly "a den of criminals" and "anti-state forces."

"The reason why I declared martial law was because of desperation as I could no longer neglect a do-or-die crisis facing this country," Yoon said. "I tried to inform the people of these anti-state acts of wickedness by the mammoth opposition party and appealed to the people to stop it with intense surveillance and criticism."

After declaring martial law,



Yoon sent troops and police officers to the assembly, but enough lawmakers still managed to enter an assembly chamber to vote down Yoon's decree unanimously, forcing his Cabinet to lift it.

Yoon reiterated Tuesday that he had no intentions of disrupting assembly work and that deploying troops and police was meant to maintain order. But some commanders of military units sent to the assembly have testified that Yoon ordered them to drag out lawmakers to prevent them from overturning his decree.

During the hearing, Democratic Party lawmaker Jung Chung-rai said that Yoon must be dismissed as he undermined the constitution by trying to seal the assembly and suppress its authority with armed troops. Jung also said Yoon's imposition of martial law disturbed public order because South Korea wasn't in an emergency that required such a drastic step.

"Yoon Suk Yeol is still refusing to have self-reflection and soul-searching and repeating sophistry and crafty remarks that say his emergency martial law was a high-level act of governance," Jung said. "We should dismiss him as soon as possible to get the Republic of Korea back on track."

Massive rallies by opponents

and supporters of Yoon have divided the streets of Seoul and other major South Korean cities. Whatever the Constitutional Court decides, experts say it will likely further polarise the country and intensify its conservative-liberal divide. If Yoon is formally thrown out of office, a national election must take place within two months to find his successor.

During more than an hour of testimony Tuesday, Yoon said he would push for political reforms and a constitutional revision to change the current presidential system if he regains his presidential powers. He also suggested stepping down before his single five-year term ends in 2027 to promote "political reform".

It's unclear whether and how Yoon's statement could affect the court's ruling.

South Korea adopted the current system that limits a president to a single five-year term in 1987, following decades of military-backed dictatorships.

After Yoon's martial law stunt, there have been calls to change it. Some favour a parliamentary Cabinet system, others want a US-style setup in which a president can run for a second four-year term or a system in which a president and prime minister split key responsibilities.

## Syria's national dialogue conference held as battered country seeks to rebuild

Agenceis

Damascus, Feb 25: Syria's new rulers held a long-awaited national dialogue in the country on Tuesday after the fall of former President Bashar Assad and nearly 14 years of civil war.

About 600 people from across Syria were invited to the gathering in the presidential palace in Damascus, hosted by the new authorities led by the Islamist former insurgent group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS. The group led the offensive that ousted Assad in December.

"Just as Syria has liberated itself by itself, it is appropriate for it to build itself by itself," interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa told the conference.

"What we are experiencing today is an exceptional and rare historical opportunity in which we must use every moment to serve the interests of our people and our nation and honour the sacrifices of its children," he said.

Syria's new rulers have promised an inclusive political transition. They will be closely watched by Syrians and the international community, including countries weighing whether to lift sanctions imposed during Assad's authoritarian rule.

Syria faces major challenges, from rebuilding an economy and war-wrecked infrastructure to setting up a new constitution and justice mechanisms for those accused of war crimes.

Although incidents of revenge and collective punishment have been far less widespread than expected, many in Syria's minority communities - including Kurds, Christians, Druze and members of Assad's Alawite sect - are concerned for their future and not convinced by promises of inclusive governance.

HTS was formerly affiliated with al-Qaida, although it

broke ties, and al-Sharaa has since preached coexistence.

The organisers of the Damascus conference said all of Syria's communities were invited. Women and members of minority religious communities were among the attendees.

"There were proposals made without any fear and we were able to express our opinions," said Sanabal Marandi, who took part in the session for non-governmental organisations and civil society said. She added that she hopes the recommendations "will be implemented in reality".

Recommendations issued after the conference The gathering was meant to come up with non-binding recommendations on the country's interim rules before drafting a new constitution and forming a new government.

In the closing session Tuesday, conference organising committee member Huda Attassi gave a statement announcing the recommendations reached in the discussions.

The statement called for the country's leaders to "expedite the announcement of a temporary constitutional declaration" to address the transitional phase while a new constitution is being drafted and for "accelerating the formation of the interim legislative council" to fill the role of a parliament until new elections take place. Al-Sharaa had previously said that it could take up to four years to hold elections.

Syria's new leaders also face the challenge of transforming former insurgent factions into a single national army they say should control all of the country's territory. Some armed groups - mainly the US-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, which holds sway in north-eastern Syria - have refused to disarm and dissolve their units.

## Federal employees may get more demands to justify their work at Elon Musk's direction

Agenceis

Washington, Feb 25: The turmoil that enveloped the federal workforce over the last few days is unlikely to cease anytime soon as the US government's human resources agency considers how to fulfil Elon Musk's demands.

The Office of Personnel Management told agency leaders Monday that their employees did not have to comply with a Musk-inspired edict for workers to report their recent accomplishments or risk getting fired. But later that evening, OPM sent out another memo suggesting that there could be similar requests going forward - and workers might be sanctioned for

noncompliance.

"Agencies should consider whether the expectation for employees to submit activity and/or accomplishment bullets should be integrated into the agency's Weekly Activity Report," wrote acting director Charles Ezell. He added that "agencies should consider any appropriate actions regarding employees who fail to respond to activity/accomplishment requests."

OPM originally sent employees an email over the weekend with the subject line "what did you do last week?" Recipients were asked to respond with "approx 5 bullets of what you accomplished".

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said more than 1

million employees had responded, which would be less than half of the estimated 2.4 million people in the federal workforce, according to US statistics. She said the idea for the request came from Musk, who used similar management tactics at his own companies, and she said that the administration was "working as one unified team".

Federal workers faced conflicting directions on whether to respond. One employee, who requested anonymity out of fear of retaliation, was told to expect guidance that the request was optional. But when that never came, the employee sent in bullet points to avoid possible repercussions.

Musk continued to press the issue

on X, his social media platform, and criticized people in the administration that stood in his way.

"The email request was utterly trivial, as the standard for passing the test was to type some words and press send!" he wrote. "Yet so many failed even that inane test, urged on in some cases by their managers."

He also approvingly shared the news that unemployment numbers were rising in Washington, saying "the DC swamp is actually draining".

The billionaire entrepreneur, who serves as President Donald Trump's most powerful adviser, also suggested that he's being held back from even more dramatic reductions in government spending.

"I will do whatever I can," he wrote in response to calls for deeper cuts. "There are limitations place(d) upon me."

Musk is facing a growing backlash that has extended from outraged Democrats to sceptical Republicans who fear political fallout in their own districts.

About half of Americans say it's "a bad thing" that Trump has given Musk a prominent role in his administration, according to CNN polling from last week. Only a third saw it as "a good thing".

Another survey by The Washington Post and Ipsos found that Americans are divided on whether Musk is mainly cutting wasteful spending or necessary programs, with about a third

following into each camp. Another quarter said they're not sure.

Rep Lisa McClain, a Michigan Republican, said Tuesday that her party was only delivering what voters asked for in the last election.

"We got our marching orders. We listened to the American people," she said. "And told us they wanted change. And buckle up, because that's exactly what we're giving them."

Alina Habba, a former member of Trump's personal legal team who now serves as a counsellor in the White House, told reporters that the government workforce needed to get on board with the president's goals. "If you're not on an America First agenda, you're not here,"

she said. Habba also suggested that employees could face more demands to explain their jobs.

"If you struggle to do that for a week, there's no excuse for that," she said. "You can have an extra day to answer that, but you better be able to answer that."

Leavitt, the White House press secretary, is one of three administration officials who face a lawsuit from The Associated Press on first- and fifth-amendment grounds. The AP says the three are punishing the news agency for editorial decisions they oppose. The White House says the AP is not following an executive order to refer to the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

### CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

## Kashmir Receives

in scattered to fairly widespread places, adding that an active Western Disturbance is affecting Jammu and Kashmir from tomorrow.

"There are expectations that the next four days would witness the major snowfall of this season. The major intensity is expected between February 27 and 28," he said.

Meanwhile, the office of the Chairman District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has issued a weather advisory stating that the weather system may lead to disruption of surface and air transportation like National Highway (Srinagar-Jammu, Sadhna pass, Razdhan pass, Sonmarg-Zojila Axis, Sinthan top & Mughal Road), etc.

All tourists, transporters and travellers have been advised to plan accordingly.

The DDMA has also issued a general warning, stating that middle and higher reaches of Kashmir and hilly areas of Jammu are most likely to receive moderate to heavy snowfall, while a few higher reaches of south Kashmir and Chenab Valley may receive heavy to very heavy snowfall, particularly on February 27 and 28.

The farmers have been advised to suspend irrigation and other farm operations.

According to the advisory, there is a possibility of landslides, shooting stones and mudslides at vulnerable places. A significant fall in day temperature is also expected during the above period.

The Departments of Revenue, PWD(R&B), Irrigation & Flood Control, MH&ED, SMC, KPDCI, Jal Shakti, Health & Medical Education have been requested to make all necessary logistical arrangements for snow clearance and related works.

The field staff of the aforesaid departments have been directed to remain stationed in their headquarters to render immediate assistance.

The general public can contact District Emergency Operation Centre, (DEOC) Srinagar

already established by District Administration Srinagar in DC Office Srinagar functioning 24x7 to attend to the public grievances, SOS calls on priority and other Departments.

Kashmir has experienced a mostly dry winter this year, with January and February recording a precipitation deficit of around 80 percent.

However, the wet weather spell, along with the forecast of more precipitation, has raised hopes among the people of reducing the high rainfall deficit in Kashmir.

### 76 Govt Employees

violence," he observed. Dispelling speculation of any discord between the Chief Minister and the Lieutenant Governor, he clarified, "We are on the same page when it comes to the development of J&K."

He also assured the people that the Union Home Minister had affirmed on the floor of the house, and even the Prime Minister had assured, that statehood would be restored.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that steps taken to make governance transparent and accountable had led to increased public faith in the system.

He noted that J&K's growth rate had risen by 9.5% and that wasteful expenditure had been reduced. He also lauded the J&K Police, stating that it was different from other police forces in the country and that security forces had played a crucial role in restoring peace.

"Last year, we completed 92,000 projects. Elections were peaceful, and for the first time in 35 years, poll campaigning continued until 11 PM," he highlighted.

Highlighting infrastructure improvements, he noted that connectivity had played a vital role in J&K's development, with projects worth crores being implemented. "The distance between Jammu and Srinagar can now be covered in four hours. The Zojila Tunnel will be completed by 2026. Rail connectivity will be inaugurated by PM Modi soon, and air connectivity

has increased with 126 flights operating from Srinagar daily. Digital connectivity has expanded, covering most areas, and J&K ranks number one in online services."

Addressing the economy, LG Sinha stated that 70% of J&K's population is associated with agriculture and horticulture, with 13 lakh families dependent on farming. The Holistic Agriculture Development Plan (HADP) aims to double the contribution of farmers to J&K's GDP. He credited Prime Minister Modi for revoking many regressive laws that had previously hindered investment.

"From 1947 to 2021, J&K saw only Rs 14,000 crore in investment. However, under the new industrial scheme with massive incentives—unmatched by any other state or UT—investment has surged. Currently, Rs 33,000 crore worth of industrial projects are in progress, with projects worth Rs 10,000 crore already operational."

He also mentioned the creation of a land bank to facilitate investment, assuring that those who were unable to acquire land earlier would receive it soon.

Tourism has seen exponential growth, with 2.36 crore visitors to J&K. "Many people who owned a single hotel have now built another one in the past four years," he said. The export of Pashmina and carpets has doubled, and horticulture products are reaching the Middle East.

He further highlighted that under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), J&K had remained the top-performing region for three consecutive years. (KNO)

### LG, CM Greet

ourselves to a life of commitment, truth, brotherhood and compassion. It is a celebration of devotion, divinity and symbolises our inner journey to rise to higher levels of consciousness.

I pray to Lord Shiva to guide us on the path of righteousness and shower His blessings on all of us for years to come".

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah extended his warmest greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Herath (Mahashivratri).

In his message, the Chief Minister described the festival as a joyous occasion, symbolizing faith, devotion and a moment of spiritual renewal.

He prayed for the sacred festival to bring peace, prosperity and divine blessings to every home and to all those celebrating.

The Chief Minister also conveyed his greetings through his official X account, posting: "Wishing everyone a joyous and blessed Herath! May this sacred festival bring peace, prosperity, and divine blessings to every home. Herath Mubarak!"

### Civil Society Seeks

the removal of their provocative content from social media.

Urging Organizations to Disassociate from preachers spreading discord.

Encouraging Patience & Responsible Engagement among scholars to prevent unnecessary escalation.

Involving Government Agencies if required to curb the spread of inflammatory sermons.

"It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the sacred pulpit remains a source of knowledge, guidance, and unity for all. By establishing clear and strict guidelines regarding who is qualified to address the public from the pulpit, we can safeguard the peace and coexistence that our society holds dear," the letter reads.

### PDD Plans Power

"We will try to reduce the power curtailment at Sheri and Ifari times. Besides, we are planning to run the minimized curtailment on a trial basis before Ramadan," the official said. The official further said, "PDD has already reduced the power curtailment that has been in effect from the middle of winters. But, wherever we will find that the areas have extra

curtailment, we will try to minimize it further at Sehri and Ifari times."

Pertinently, it was reported PDD is likely to take a call on modification of power curtailment schedule a week before the commencement of the holy month of Ramadan.

Sources in the department earlier had informed that it may consider a slight modification in the ongoing power curtailment schedule a week prior commencement of the Ramadan. "As of now PDD has not taken any call for revising the power curtailment schedule. But if there will be any proposal of modification in the schedule, the department will take a call a week before the commencement of holy month Ramadan if required," sources had said.

Notably, the hydel power generation from the power plants across Jammu and Kashmir has further reduced by five percent—owing to the low water level, in the past one month.

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. (KNO)

### CBSE To Conduct

enhanced and collected for both exams at the time of application filing," a senior board official said.

"The first and second editions of the board exams will also act as supplementary exams, and no special exams will be conducted in any circumstances," the official added.

The new National Education Policy (NEP) had recommended that to eliminate the "high stakes" aspect of the board exams, all students will be allowed to take the exams on up to two occasions during any given school year.

# Bruised England, Afghanistan Eye Win To Stay In Champions Trophy

Press Trust of India

**LAHORE:** A battered England will hope to keep their Champions Trophy hopes alive when they face a dangerous Afghanistan in a crucial group B match here on Wednesday.

A defeat here would severely dent both the teams' dreams of a semifinal berth in the tournament, as South Africa and Australia have already notched up two points.

The days of England's white ball supremacy are far behind now, as the former world champions' creaking unit even failed to defend a 350-plus total against Australia in their tournament opener.

While England may take some comfort in posting a massive total, the reality is that it came against an Australian side missing their premier pacers – Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, and Josh Hazlewood. The English bowlers then



failed to stop an Australian lineup that did not have lead batters such as injured Mitchell Marsh and now-retired Marcus Stoinis. So, England will need to show massive improvement against Afghanistan on both those counts.

Afghanistan's three-pronged spin attack, consisting Rashid

Khan, Noor Ahmad and Mohammad Nabi, has the potential to trouble even the best, and England batters' recent outings against slow bowlers are not confidence inspiring either.

England also suffered a setback as all-rounder Brydon Carse has been ruled out of the tournament with a toe injury.

He has been replaced by leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed in an effort to strengthen their spin department.

This move will also provide Adil Rashid with proper backing, as, until now, Liam Livingstone had been performing that role with his mixed bag of off-spin, leg-spin, and seam-up

deliveries.

But England's real problem lies in the patchy form of opener Phil Salt and Harry Brook in the middle-order.

Salt's only hundred in the format was in 2022 and since then the Welshman has not really converted his starts, often getting out after a quick 30 or 40.

The Afghans, on the other hand, have their own problems to tackle. They are coming off a 107-run shellacking by South Africa in their tournament opener.

They had reached the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup 2024 with almost the same set of players but the ODI format demands much more consistency in performance and execution of strategies.

Afghanistan have the required talent but they need to find a way to channelise that consistently to challenge England, even in their most vulnerable state.

Match starts at 2.30 pm IST.

## Short TAKES

### Rain Plays Spoilsport As Australia, SA Share A Point Each

The Champions Trophy match between Australia and South Africa was abandoned here on Tuesday due to persistent rain, forcing the two Group B heavyweights to share a point each.

The weather did not allow even the toss to be completed. With the conditions not getting any better, the match officials called off the game a little more than three hours after the scheduled start time.

The cut-off time for the game was 7.32 pm but the officials made the call much earlier with no weather improvement in sight.

After the no result, South Africa and Australia shared one point each and it means that Wednesday's contest between England and Afghanistan has turned into a virtual knockout with the loser becoming the third team to be eliminated from the ICC event.

Tournament hosts Pakistan and Bangladesh were knocked out of the event on Monday after suffering two successive defeats.

### Pakistan Will Find It Hard To Beat India's B Team: Gavaskar

Pakistan's cricket team continued to invite scathing criticism a day after being knocked out of the Champions Trophy with the great Sunil Gavaskar saying that it would struggle to beat even a second-string Indian team.

India, the 2023 ODI World Cup finalists, defeated defending champions Pakistan by six wickets in the Champions Trophy in Dubai on Sunday, continuing their dominance over the arch-rivals.

"I think a B team (from India) certainly (can give Pakistan a run for their money). C team, I am not too sure. But a B team will be very, very hard to beat for Pakistan in their current form," Gavaskar said on 'Sports Today'.

Pakistan, hosting an ICC tournament for the first time since 1996, were knocked out of the Champions Trophy after New Zealand beat Bangladesh in another Group A match. Pakistan are still winless in the event.

Since winning the Champions Trophy in 2017, Pakistan's cricketing fortunes have declined, with the team finishing fifth in the last two ODI World Cups.

### Shubham Gill The Next Best, Big Thing: Hashim Amla

South Africa batting great Hashim Amla on Tuesday labelled India opener Shubham Gill, who has had an "exceptional" start to ODIs, as the "next big thing" in international cricket along with Rishabh Pant and Ryan Rickelton.

The 25-year-old Gill, named India's vice-captain for the Champions Trophy, began with a match-winning century against Bangladesh and struck a vital 46 against Pakistan. "For India, you have got Shubham Gill; Rishabh Pant has been around for a while. For South Africa, we have Ryan Rickelton who has done really well off late," Amla said.

"Every country has about 2-3 cricketers who are going to come through and I think that's pretty normal, that you see that every five years some youngster poke in the head through international cricket, and possibly be the next best, big thing," he added.

### 'Mbappé Available For Copa Semifinal Despite Tooth Problem'

Kylian Mbappé missed practice because of a tooth problem but will be available to play for Real Madrid in the Copa del Rey semifinal against Real Sociedad, coach Carlo Ancelotti said Tuesday.

Madrid, seeking its second Copa final in three seasons, will play the first leg of the semifinals at Sociedad on Wednesday.

"Mbappé is traveling," Ancelotti said in the pre-match news conference. "He had a problem with a tooth and couldn't train. He's traveling tomorrow and can play. Everyone who travels has a chance of playing the game."

Spanish media said Mbappé had a tooth removed. Mbappé was scoreless in Madrid's 2-0 win against Girona in the Spanish league on Sunday, but he had scored six goals in his last four matches in all competitions, including a hat trick in the return leg of the Champions League playoffs against Manchester City. Brazil forward Endrick would likely be Mbappé's replacement if the France star doesn't play.

## J&K Emerge Overall Champions In National SnowShoe Championship



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** J&K athletes shined in the recently held 9th National SnowShoe Championship by bagging overall championship title at Sonmarg.

The championship saw participation of over 110 athletes from all over country, with J&K athletes bagging 19 medals that included six gold, seven silver and six bronze. Karnataka with four gold, one silver and two bronze medals

finished overall second, while Ladakh, with three gold, four silver and five bronze, finished third.

The event was organised by J&K SnowShoe Association in collaboration with Department of Tourism Kashmir and under the auspices of SnowShoe Federation of India from February 16 to 19 in Sonmarg.

For J&K, Waseem Raja and Shaista bagged two gold medals each. Yasmeena bagged two silver, Aamina Mukhtar

bagged one silver and one bronze. Men's Team of Adil, Shah Nawaz, Muzamil and Suhail bagged gold, Team of Javid Bashir, Abrar bagged gold. Musab and Asif Teli bagged silver in mixed team. Asif Teli also won bronze and Abrar a silver.

Women's Team of Rukaya Majeed and Ziya bagged bronze. Masrat Akhter bagged silver, Madeeha bagged two bronze medals, Shaista Jan one bronze.

It is significant achievement for J&K athletes as they snatched back overall championship title from Ladakh who had emerged overall champions last year. The event saw many new faces emerging in the snowshoe discipline, with Waseem Raja dominating the senior races.

The 9th National SnowShoe Championship was held in Sonmarg and at the prize distribution ceremony MLA Kangan Mian Mehr Ali was chief guest.

## Can't Control Politics: Afghan Captain Shahidi On Women's Cricket Back Home



Press Trust of India

**LAHORE:** Afghanistan men's cricket team captain Hashmatullah Shahidi made it clear on Tuesday that women in his country should be allowed to play the game though he said it was beyond his control in a nation governed by strict religious laws.

The Taliban took over the reins of Afghanistan in 2021 and banned women's sports, including cricket.

"Yeah, everyone likes to see every-one play," Shahid told the media here when asked if the exiled Afghanistan women's team should be allowed to play the game.

"As I said before, when it comes to politics and those things which we cannot control - we are only cricket players we can control things in the ground and we belong to the ground and we are always trying to give our best when we play."

Several Afghan women's team cricketers shifted base to Australia following the turmoil in their country.

A group of British lawmakers have also reportedly urged the England cricket team to boycott the Champi-

ons Trophy fixture against Afghanistan. Asked if such a call can affect the team's performance, Shahidi said his team always likes to "play hard".

"We are cricket players, we are sportspeople, we are sportsmen. So, we control what we can do inside the ground. So, we don't worry about what's happening out of the ground. And that cannot do anything to our confidence.

"We play hard, we work hard, we have good net sessions. So that's what we're thinking of and we only can do what we can do in the ground," said the left-handed batter.

Afghanistan had sent ripples in the cricketing world by upsetting Jos Buttler's England by 69 runs in the 2023 Cricket World Cup in India and Shahidi expressed confidence going into the match on Wednesday despite an opening loss to South Africa by 107 runs.

"In 2023 we had a good game against England and we beat them. We have that confidence with us but that's part of history and now we have to go to ground with the new mindset and with the new planning."

## 2nd SnowSky C'ship Concludes In Sonmarg

Observer News Service

**SONMARG:** The J&K Skyrunning Association, a constituent of the valley's revered athlete group, Foreshore Athletes, conducted the 2nd Sky Snow Championship, a high-altitude running event on snow, at Nilgrath, Sonmarg.

The championship saw the participation of 46 athletes from across J&K, who covered a total distance of 11 Km, including both upward and downward runs.

The top three positions were bagged by Arif Narwari, Soleh Mustaqeem and Ashiq Haji while demonstrating exceptional endurance and skill in completing the challenging course.

The valedictory function at Kullan



Sonmarg was attended by Bashir Ahmad Wani, Secretary of the JK Skyrunning Association, along with the president of Foreshore Athletes, Dr. Anwar Hussain Nagoo, and veteran athletes of the valley.

## Is Arsenal Out Of PL Title Race? 'Over My Dead Body,' Says Coach Mikel Arteta

Agencies

**LONDON:** Eleven points off the lead. An injury-ravaged forward line. Yet another player suspended after getting sent off.

Surely it's too much for Arsenal to win the Premier League title now?

Not according to Mikel Arteta.

"Over my dead body," said the Arsenal manager, who came out fighting Tuesday when it was put to him that he might be ready to concede the title to Liverpool.

"If not, I go home. Mathematically, it is possible. You are there, you have to play every game."

Arsenal's chances of a first top-flight championship since 2004 were massively damaged, though, on a sobering weekend when Arteta's second-place team stumbled to a 1-0 home loss to West Ham on Sat-



urday and first-place Liverpool won 2-0 at Manchester City on Sunday.

Just when there seemed to be life in the title race, Liverpool powered into an 11-point lead over Arsenal — having played one game more — and is reaching the end of a difficult run of five league games in a 15-day stretch culminating in a home match against New-

castle on Wednesday.

On the same night, Arsenal visits third-place Nottingham Forest and will still be without its four best attacking players — Bukayo Saka, Kai Havertz, Gabriel Martinelli and Gabriel Jesus — because of injury. Another absentee will be left back Myles Lewis-Skelly, who is suspended after his red card against West Ham.

Arsenal has received five red cards this season, two more than any other team.

Given the circumstances, Arteta said his players "probably have to do something nobody else has done in the history of the Premier League" to win the title this season.

"If somebody tells you at the start of the season that by this time, you have played five times with a red card over half an hour in each of those games, and you have lost this amount of players, what's the bet? You are in the middle of the table, at least, and you are out of the Champions League," Arteta said.

"That's not the situation. So that tells you the resilience, the resources, the ambition that the team has, every individual has, and that has been probably one of the proudest moments in my time working (here)." (AP)

## Galatasaray, Fenerbahce Spat Over Mourinho's Alleged Racist Comments

Agencies

**ISTANBUL:** Galatasaray plans to start criminal proceedings against Jose Mourinho and file complaints with soccer's governing body after accusing the Fenerbahce coach of making racist comments after a Turkish league game.

The league leaders issued a statement after Monday's 0-0 draw with Fenerbahce announcing the action against Mourinho, the 62-year-old Portuguese coach who moved to Turkey from Roma last year after stints at high-profile clubs including Chelsea, Manchester United, Real Madrid and Inter Milan.

Fenerbahce rejected the accusation on Tuesday, saying the remarks had nothing to do with racism and were "deliberately taken entirely out of context and distorted in a misleading manner."



Mourinho was fined and suspended earlier in the season for a tirade against local match officials and the league. His comments regarding Turkish referees and the Galatasaray bench following Monday's match between the top two teams in the domestic league sparked further criticism.

In a statement, Galatasaray said Mourinho had "persistently issued derogatory statements directed towards the Turkish people."

"Today, his discourse has escalated. We hereby formally declare our intention to initiate criminal proceedings concerning the racist statements made by Jose Mourinho, and shall accordingly submit official complaints to UEFA and FIFA."

In his post-match interview, Mourinho welcomed the decision to bring in a foreign referee for the game and also praised Slavko Vincic of Slovenia for a "top performance."

Mourinho said he'd gone to see the referee and thank him following the game. When he saw the fourth official — a Turkish referee — Mourinho said he told him: "If you are the referee ... would be a disaster."

Asked about a challenge early in the match, he said a Turkish referee would have reacted with a yellow card "after the big dive and their bench jumping around like monkeys."

Fenerbahce said in a post on X that it was clear Mourinho "solely intended to describe the excessive reaction of the opposing team's technical staff to the referee's decisions during the match. These remarks cannot, under any circumstances, be associated with racism."

The club said it was planning to take a legal action "against this baseless accusation." (AP)

## Search for doomed MH370 resumes 11 years after disappearance



### Agenceis

Kuala Lumpur: A fresh search for Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 has been launched more than a decade after the plane went missing in one of aviation's greatest enduring mysteries.

Maritime exploration firm Ocean Infinity has resumed the hunt for the missing plane, Malaysian transport minister Anthony Loke said Tuesday.

Loke told reporters contract details between Malaysia and the firm were still being finalised but welcomed "the proactiveness of Ocean Infinity to deploy their ships" to begin the search for the plane which went missing in March 2014.

Loke added that details on how long the search would last had not been negotiated yet.

He also did not provide details on when exactly the British firm kicked off its hunt.

The Malaysian government in December had said it had agreed to launch a new search for MH370, which disappeared more than a decade ago.

The Boeing 777 carrying 239 people disappeared from radar screens on March 8, 2014, while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

Despite the largest search in aviation history, the plane has never been found.

"We're very relieved and pleased that the search is resuming once again after such a long hiatus," Malaysian Grace Nathan, 36, who lost her mother on the doomed jet, told AFP.

Previous search

In December, Loke had said the new search would be on the same "no find, no fee" principle as Ocean Infinity's previous search, with the government only paying out if it finds the aircraft.

The contract was for 18 months and Malaysia would pay \$70 million to the company if the plane was found, Loke previously had said.

Ocean Infinity, based in Britain and the United States, carried out an unsuccessful hunt in 2018.

The company's first efforts followed a massive Australia-led search for the aircraft that lasted three years before it was suspended in January 2017.

The Australia-led search covered 120,000 square kilometres (46,300 square miles) in the Indian Ocean but found hardly any trace of the plane, with only some pieces of debris picked up.

In December, Loke said a new 15,000 square kilometre area of the southern Indian Ocean would be scoured by Ocean Infinity.

"They combined all the data and they felt confident that the current search area is more credible," said Loke Tuesday.

"They (Ocean Infinity) have convinced us that they are ready."

The plane's disappearance has long been the subject of theories - ranging from the credible to outlandish - including that veteran pilot Zaharie Ahmad Shah had gone rogue.

A final report into the tragedy released in 2018 pointed to failings by air traffic control and said the course of the plane was changed manually.

## Reply to 'What did you do last week' email or you're fired: Musk to federal workers

### Agenceis

Elon Musk said that federal workers will be given a second opportunity to respond to a government-wide email detailing what they did last week, and threatened to fire any employee who doesn't meet his demands.

But the federal agency that sent that email said Monday that it's up to agency leadership - not Musk - what happens to those who ignore the message.

The dueling directives extended the confusion over the "What did you do last week?" email hours before the midnight deadline to reply.

Musk, the billionaire and special government employee who's leading President Donald Trump's cost-cutting effort known as the De-

partment of Government Efficiency, doubled down Monday.

"Subject to the discretion of the president, they will be given another chance," Musk said in a post on X late Monday. "Failure to respond a second time will result in termination."

The Office of Personnel Management, though, quickly clarified that many federal employees would be exempt, including any employee on leave Monday, those without access to email, or employees exempted by their agency head. The departments of Defense, State and Homeland Security have all granted exemptions, as has the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Another person exempted by the OPM memo: Musk himself.

ॐ तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे महादेवाय धीमहि।  
तन्नो रुद्रः प्रचोदयात्॥

**Mahakumbh 2025 Prayagraj**

# Maha Shivratri

## Holy Dip

**26<sup>th</sup> February, 2025**

**Mahakumbh of Unity**

**64 Crore+ Devotees so far**

**Message of Mahakumbh : One Nation, Stronger Together**

Information & Public Relations Department, Uttar Pradesh | mahakumbh\_25 | upmahakumbh | MahaKumbh\_2025 | https://kumbh.gov.in/

<b>1920</b> Mahakumbh Mela Helpline	<b>112</b> Emergency Service	<b>1010</b> Food and Civil Supplies Helpline	<b>102, 108</b> Ambulance Service	<b>18004199139</b> Railway Helpline
--	---------------------------------	---	--------------------------------------	--

28<sup>th</sup> year OF PUBLICATION

# KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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

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

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

**YouTube**

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

OR SCAN

OUR SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

THE OTHER SIDE
**INKISHAF**
VOX POP
UNRAVEL KASHMIR