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Mindful Eating: How To Enjoy Your Meals And Avoid The Risks Of Eating Too Fast

Associated Press

You can have your cake and eat it too — just do it slowly. Experts tend to focus on the kinds of foods you can eat to improve your health. But the speed at which you devour your dinner matters just as much. There are risks with eating too fast — think stuck food and the potential to overeat before your brain tells you to stop. (Inhaling your food also risks annoying your slower-paced dining companions or the person who took the time to cook your meal). Here are some tips from scientists on how to slow down and take a more mindful approach to consuming your diet.

How fast is too fast?

If you're the kind of person who can regularly polish off breakfast, lunch or dinner in less than 20-30 minutes, you are eating too fast. "It takes about 20 minutes for the stomach to communicate to the brain via a whole host of hormonal signals that it's full," said Leslie Heinberg at the Center for Behavioral Health at the Cleveland Clinic. "So when people eat rapidly, they can miss these signals and it's very easy to eat beyond the point of fullness."

Why is that a problem?

People who eat quickly are likely to swallow more air, Heinberg said, which could lead to bloating or indigestion. Not chewing your food properly can also compromise digestion, meaning you won't get all of



the nutrients from your food. Unchewed pieces of food also could get stuck in your esophagus.

Some previous studies have suggested that people who eat quickly have the highest risk of obesity, while the slowest eaters were the least likely to be obese.

How can you slow down when eating?

For starters, turn off the TV and put down your phone. "If you're eating while you watch TV, people tend to eat until there's a commercial or the show is over," Heinberg

said, adding that people are less inclined to pay attention to the body's own signals that it's full. "When we do things while we're eating, we're eating less mindfully. And that often causes us to eat more."

She said that when people focus exclusively on eating, they tend to enjoy the meal more and eat less. Heinberg also acknowledged the pace at which you eat is often an ingrained habit, but said change is still possible. She suggested things like using your non-dominant hand to eat, trying utensils you might not ordinarily use like chopsticks or taking a deliberate break to drink water

when your plate is partially empty. If you have a busy life, it might be unavoidable to eat lunch at a work meeting or snack while running errands. But Sarah Berry, chief scientist at the British nutritional company ZOE, said when possible, "be mindful of what the food tastes and feels like." "If we're not fully present, it's very easy to eat more quickly and not notice how much we've consumed," Berry said.

Chew your food, just like mom told you to

One of the simplest things to do is to increase the number of bites you take, said Helen McCarthy, a clinical psychologist with the British Psychological Society. "If you chew each mouthful a little bit longer, that will slow down your eating," she said.

The kind of food you eat may also make a difference, pointing out that it's much easier to eat ultra-processed or fast foods quicker because they typically have a softer texture. "It's hard to eat vegetables and protein at the same rate as something that's highly processed and requires less chewing," McCarthy said.

Some of her patients also reported an unintentional side effect once they began eating more slowly, referencing one woman who often ate a tube of potato chips every evening. When McCarthy told her to slow down and eat every single chip individually, her patient told her "it was like having a mouthful of claggy chemicals." "She didn't find (the chips) enjoyable anymore," McCarthy said.

'More Than Social Skills, These Factors Indicate Autism Diagnosis'

ANI

People with autism are typically diagnosed by clinical observation and assessment. To deconstruct the clinical decision process, which is often subjective and difficult to describe, researchers used a large language model (LLM) to synthesize the behaviors and observations that are most indicative of an autism diagnosis.

Their results show that repetitive behaviors, special interests, and perception-based behaviors are most associated with an autism diagnosis. These findings have the potential to improve diagnostic guidelines for autism by decreasing the focus on social factors—which the established guidelines in the DSM-5 focus on but the model did not classify among the most relevant in diagnosing autism.

Our goal was not to suggest that we could replace clinicians with AI tools for diagnosis," says senior author Danilo Bzdok of the Mila Quebec Artificial Intelligence Institute and McGill University in Montreal.

"Rather, we sought to quantitatively define exactly what aspects of observed behavior or patient history a clinician uses to reach a final diagnostic determination. In doing so, we hope to empower clinicians to work with diagnostic instruments that are more in line with their empirical realities."

The scientists leveraged a transformer language model, which was pre-trained on about 489 million unique sentences. They then fine-tuned the LLM to predict the diagnostic outcome from a collection of more than 4,000 reports written by clinicians working with patients considered for autism diagnosis.

The reports, which were often used by multiple clinicians, included accounts

of observed behavior and relevant patient history but did not include a suggested diagnostic outcome. The team developed a bespoke LLM module that pinpointed specific sentences in the reports that were most

relevant to a correct diagnosis prediction. They then extracted the numerical representation of these highly autism-relevant sentences and compared them directly with the established

diagnostic criteria enumerated in the DSM-5. The researchers were surprised by how clearly the LLM was able to distinguish between the most diagnostically relevant criteria. For example, their framework flagged that repetitive behaviors, special interests, and perception-based behavior were the criteria most relevant to autism.

While these criteria are used in clinical settings, current criteria focus more on deficits in social interplay and lack of communication skills. The team expects their framework will be helpful to researchers and medical professionals working with a range of psychiatric, mental health, and neurodevelopmental disorders in which clinical judgement forms the bulk of the diagnostic decision-making process.



“
Their results show that repetitive behaviors, special interests, and perception-based behaviors are most associated with an autism diagnosis

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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 Mohammad Ibrahim waza s/o Shakeel Ahmad waza R/o Hartrath Singapore Tehsil Singapore with verified date of birth 06/02/2021 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

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
 Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
PUBLIC NOTICE

The registrar birth BDO Sherabad khore has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Azka Reyaz D/o Reyaz Ahmad Bhat R/o Hanjiwera Bala Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 04/08/2017 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

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Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines and premises situated on the completed section of the under noted section of the Northern Railway that the 25 kV, 50 Hz, AC overhead traction wires will be energized on or after the date specified against the section. On and from the same date the overhead traction line shall be treated as live at all time and no unauthorized person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said overhead line.

Division	Section	From Kilometer	To Kilometer	Date of Energisation
Firozpur	Electrification of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) Siding in Suchpind (SGPD) yard	SCPD/1047	Km Loc. BPCL/1060 Chainage 4822.00 to 6111.75	01.04.2025

944/2025 Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD, Northern Railway, DRM office, Firozpur, Punjab
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PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that I, Suhaib Rafiq, S/o Rafiq Ahmad Paul, R/o Ompora, Budgam, Kashmir, was adopted by my maternal grandparents during my childhood. At that time, a savings bank account (No. 23932) was opened in my name with J&K Bank Ltd., B/U Hazratbal, Srinagar, where my parentage was recorded as S/o Ghulam Mohammad Beigh. However, I have since returned to my biological parents, and my parentage has been correctly updated as S/o Rafiq Ahmad Paul in all my official records and documents. Despite this, my bank account still reflects my adopted parentage. I have now applied for the necessary correction in the bank records. If anyone has any objections to this change, they may contact J&K Bank Ltd., B/U Hazratbal, Srinagar, within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After this period, no objections shall be entertained.

Suhaib Rafiq S/o Rafiq Ahmad Paul
 R/o Ompora, Budgam, Kashmir inf

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that the name of Aisha Khurshid Sheikh, daughter of Khurshid Sheikh, resident of Bugam Batapora, Tehsil Chadoora, District Budgam, has been changed to Aishah Khurshid Sheikh. Henceforth, she shall be known by her new name for all official and legal purposes. Anyone having any objections to this change may contact the Passport Office, Srinagar, within seven (7) days from the publication of this notice. No objections will be entertained thereafter.

Contact No: 60056 62260 pf

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Kashmir Food Processors Association (KFPA), a body of fruit, vegetable & allied food processing, with its office at Pantha Chowk, Srinagar, opposite J&K Bank ATM, has applied for registration under the Societies Act with the Directorate of Industries & Commerce. Any person having any objection(s) regarding the same may submit their concerns to the concerned authority within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Media Line Ads

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI

Subject: Application of Bashir Ahmad Hajam S/o Ghulam Nabi Hajam R/o Dolpora for issuance of OBC (Other Backward Classes) In Favour of Son's Basit Bashir, Asif Bashir and Daughter Barsha Bashir.

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 village Dolpora and belongs to the Hajam community, having an annual income of Rs. 200000/- (Two Lac only). The details of the family of the applicant are as follows:

S. NO.	NAME OF INDIVIDUAL	RELATION WITH APPLICANT	AGE	OCCUPATION	ANNUAL INCOME
1	BASHIR AHMAD HAJAM	SELF	55	BARBAR	200000/-
2	RAFIQA BEGUM	WIFE	52	HOUSEWIFE	
3	ASIF BASHIR	SON	31	STUDENT	
4	BARSHA BASHIR	DAUGHTER	26	STUDENT	
5	BASIT BASHIR	SON	17	STUDENT	

Therefore, through this Public Notice, objections are being sought from the general 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
 KREERI
 fko

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MANAGING BODY LIST

S.N	Name	S/O, D/O	Qualification	R/O	Position	Profession	Cell No.	Adhar No.	Photo
01	Nazir Ahmad Parrah	Mohammad Akbar Parrah	M.Phil Statistics, B.Ed	Pattan	Chairman	Pvt. Teacher	7006893117	361929582471	
02	Zahoor Ahmad Para	Jalal-Udin-Dir Para	10th Pass	Pattan	Member	Businessman	9797003868	634564091086	
03	Tawseef Ahmad Parrah	Farooq Ahmad Parrah	M.Sc. IT	Pattan	Vice Chairman	Businessman	8899668434	590723390464	
04	Abdul Majid Rather	Late Gulam Nabi Rather	B.A, B.Ed	Adina Magam	Member	Businessman	7006529604	927187392834	
05	Mohammad Jaffer Hussain Mir	Gh. Hussain Mir	11th Pass	Wata Magam	Member	Retired Govt. Employee	8899967596	543217769765	
06	Mohammad Subhan Dar	Gh. Rasool Dar	M.A Economics	Kani-hama Magam	Member	Retired Govt. Employee	7006971070	769903159036	
07	Aabida Majid Yattoo	Abdul Majid	M.A, M.Ed	Pattan	Accountant	Pvt. Teacher	7051673950	409952493057	

bmg

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed Travel unit under the name, M/S BREEZA Tour and Travels " situated at Batamaloo Srinagar

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas I Mr Imran Ahmad Qazi S/o Fayaz Ahmad Qazi R/o Nawa Kadal Tarabal Srinagar Tour and Travels intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style " M/ s BREEZA Tour and Travels "situated at Batamaloo Srinagar Kashmir under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas, I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department), Bank statement (minimum balance 1000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting), Photograph of the unit (indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation.

Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID: ddtreg123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspaper of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained

fko

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed Travel unit under the name, M/S PASSAGE POINT Tour and Travels " situated at Zukara Crossing Hazratbal Srinagar

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas I Mr Sumair Ahmad Khan S/o Mohammad Lateef Khan R/o Goori Mohalla Zukara Hazratbal Srinagar Tour and Travels intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style " M/ s PASSAGE POINT Tour and Travels "situated at Zakra Crossing Hazratbal Srinagar Kashmir under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas, I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department), Bank statement (minimum balance 1000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting), Photograph of the unit (indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation.

Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID: ddtreg123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspaper of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to transfer my Electricity Connection Bearing Consumer ID 0204040007373 from Abdul Khaliq Sofi To Manzoor Ahmad Sofi . In this Regard, if anybody is having any objection may file his/her objection in the Sub division Office Hawal within a weeks time after that no objection will be entertained.

7006831248

Media Line Ads

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Aqib Bashir S/o Bashir Ahmad Challa R/o DK Pora Shopian Want to Correct name of my cousin brother in Aadhaar Record which has been wrongly entered as Kaisar GH Ahmad instead of Kaisar Ahmad Challa . Now Correction required . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the concerned Aadhar Centre Jammu / Srinagar or Concern Authorities within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform all concerned that my name as mentioned in Aadhaar Card is incorrectly recorded as SHABROZA QASIM, while my actual name is SHABNAM QASIM as per school records. Now I want to apply for the correction of the same in Aadhaar card bearing Aadhaar No. 426999696832. Any person who has any objections or concerns regarding these changes is requested to raise them within 07 days from the date of this notice.

Name: SHABNAM QASIM
D/O: MOHAMMAD QASIM JOO
R/O: GUND KHAWJA QASIM BARAMULLA

bmg

KATHUA ENCOUNTER

2 Terrorists Killed, 5 Security Men Injured



Press Trust Of India

Jammu: A fierce gun battle in a remote forested area of Kathua district has left two terrorists dead and five security personnel injured as the security forces intensified their operation to neutralise an infiltrating group of about five militants, officials said on Thursday.

It was not immediately clear whether it was the same group that had been evading an earlier cordon in Sanyal forest of Kathua region or another batch of freshly infiltrated terrorists.

The encounter triggered intense firing and explosions, the officials said.

The gunfight, centred near Jakhole village in the Ghati Juthana area of Rajbagh, involved a group of approximately five terrorists and an initial exchange of gunfire resulted in

injuries to Special Police Officer Bharat Chalotra, who sustained facial wounds.

He was treated at a Kathua hospital before being transferred to Government Medical College Hospital in Jammu, where his condition was stated to be stable.

The officials said that two terrorists were killed in the onslaught led by the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and assisted by the Army, the BSF and CRPF.

Adding to the tension, three security personnel, including a Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), were reportedly trapped near the gunfight's location, adjacent to a rivulet concealed by dense foliage.

The officials said a clear picture would emerge only after the ongoing [More on PIO](#)

No Attendance, No Exams

CBSE Moots Tough Measures Against Dummy Schools

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced stricter measures to curb the practice of "dummy schools," stating that students who do not attend regular classes may be disqualified from appearing for Class 12 board examinations.

Officials emphasized that the onus of taking admission in "dummy schools" lies with students and parents.

The board is considering amendments to its examination bye-laws, which could require non-attending students to take the National Institute of

Open Schooling (NIOS) exams instead.

A senior CBSE official explained that surprise inspections would be conducted, and students found missing from school may be barred from taking board exams. "The responsibility of ensuring regular attendance falls on both the student and their parents," the official stated. Schools promoting the dummy school culture or sponsoring non-attending students could also face action under CBSE's affiliation and examination regulations.

The issue [More on PIO](#)

PM Modi To Flag Off First Train To Kashmir On April 19

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the first train from Katra to Kashmir on April 19, marking a significant step in expanding rail connectivity to the Valley.

The train will chug off from Katra town in Reasi district and will cross the Pir Panjal mountain range to reach Srinagar and then its final destination at Baramulla in north Kashmir.

PM Modi will flag off the train from Katra in the presence of Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister of State Dr Jitendra Singh, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, reports said.

At present, the train operates from Sangaldan to Baramulla. The Prime Minister is scheduled to land at Udhampur Army airport from New Delhi on the morning of April 19 and then fly to the world's highest railway

bridge over Chenab river in Reasi district.

PM Modi will be briefed about the construction of the bridge, which is considered to be an engineering marvel, the report added.

The Prime Minister will then reach the Mata Vaishno Devi base camp, Katra from where he will flag off the Vande

Bharat train to the Valley.

PM Modi will address a public rally at Katra before returning to Delhi in the afternoon, Daily Excelsior reported.

Railway officials said after completion of expansion work at Jammu Railway Station, including increase in the number of

platforms, the train to the Valley will start operations from Jammu, expectedly by July-August this year, the report further said.

"There will be no direct train from Delhi or any other part to Kashmir. The passengers will have to de-board at Katra and change trains. Later, the same process will shift to Jammu", officials said.

Several trials of the train from Katra to Baramulla including that of Vande Bharat Express have been successful and the security issues have also been addressed.

Out of the total 272 kms of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, 209 kms was commissioned in phases with the first phase of the 118 km Qazigund-Baramulla section commissioned in October 2009, followed by the 18 km Banihal-Qazigund link in June 2013, 25 kms of the Udhampur-Katra stretch in July 2014 and the 48.1 km Banihal-Sangaldan section in February, last year. [More on PIO](#)



Completion of USBRL Project

- » Qazigund-Baramulla (2009)
- » Banihal-Qazigund (2013)
- » Udhampur-Katra (2014)
- » Banihal-Sangaldan (2023)
- » Sangaldan-Reasi (2023)
- » Reasi-Katra (2024)

- Vande Bharat Features**
- » Operates in -20°C cold conditions
 - » Anti-freezing & heating systems
 - » CCTV & emergency talk-back units
 - » Shatterproof windows & anti-frost windshields

2 More Hurriyat Groups Denounce Separatism: Shah

Says Triumph Of Unity Echoing Across Kashmir

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said two more constituents of the Jammu and Kashmir-based Hurriyat Conference have discarded separatism and reposed their faith in the new Bharat built by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This development comes a couple of days after similar announcements made by two other affiliates of the separatists' conglomerate.

On Tuesday, Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement



(JKPM) and the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Political Movement (JKDPM) announced the severing of all ties with separatism.

Shah said under the Modi

government, separatism is breathing its last and the triumph of unity is echoing across Kashmir.

"Another great news from Kashmir Valley. Two more groups affiliated with the Hurriyat, namely J&K Tahreeqi Isteqal and J&K Tahreek-Istiqamat, have discarded separatism and reposed their trust in the new Bharat built by PM Shri @narendramodi Ji," Shah wrote on X.

In a statement, J&K Tahreeqi Isteqal chairman Gulam Nabi Sofi said he and his organisation disassociated from the All Parties [More on PIO](#)

FIR Filed Against JKIM Members

Observer News Service

Baramulla police has registered an FIR against persons affiliated with the banned Jammu and Kashmir Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (JKIM) for alleged anti-national

activities, officials said on Thursday.

The JKIM, led by Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari, was banned by the Centre on March 11 for five years under charges of supporting terrorism, fueling secessionist activities, and threatening national integrity. [More on PIO](#)

Rashid Challenges Rs 1.45 Lakh Per Day Travel Cost

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Jammu and Kashmir MP Abdul Rashid Sheikh, commonly known as Engineer Rashid, has moved the Delhi High Court against the Rs 1.45 lakh daily travel cost required for his commute from Tihar Jail to Parliament.

Earlier, the court had permitted Rashid—currently in judicial custody—to attend parliamentary sessions under the condition that he bears his own travel expenses. Now, he is seeking the removal of this condition, arguing that the high cost could prevent him from representing his constituency.



During a hearing before Chief Justice Devendra Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, Rashid's counsel, Advocate Vikhyat Oberoi, informed the court that authorities had set the daily travel cost at Rs 1.45 lakh. Oberoi emphasized that Rashid was not [More on PIO](#)

Rashid Demands Economic Package For J&K

Engineer Rashid on Thursday demanded a special financial package for the region. Speaking in Parliament, Rashid criticized the Centre for reducing J&K's budget allocation by Rs 1,000 crore compared to last year. He questioned the government's [More on PIO](#)

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1 In 5 Ultra-Rich Indians Planning To Move Abroad

Agencies
New Delhi: One in five ultra-high-net-worth individuals (Ultra-HNIs) in India is either in the process of migrating abroad or planning to do so, while still retaining their Indian citizenship, according to a report by Kotak Bank.

The report highlighted that many of these wealthy individuals plan to settle permanently in their chosen foreign destinations. Among them, professionals show a higher tendency to migrate compared to entrepreneurs or inheritors.

“**1 in 5 Ultra-HNIs surveyed are currently in the process of or plan to migrate, most of whom intend to reside in their chosen host country permanently while retaining their Indian citizenship**”

The report said “1 in 5 Ultra-HNIs surveyed are currently in the process of or plan to migrate, most of whom intend to reside in their chosen host country permanently while retaining their Indian citizenship”.

Additionally, those aged between 36-40 years and those above 61 years are more likely to consider relocation than others in different age groups.

The findings come at a time when India's ultra-rich population and overall wealth are projected to witness significant growth. The number of Ultra-HNIs in the country is expected to rise to 4.3 lakh by 2028.

The report added “India Ultra-HNI numbers and wealth is expected to grow to reach 4,30,000 with a total wealth of Rs 359 trillion by 2028”.

As their wealth grows, more Ultra-HNIs are looking beyond India's borders for investment opportunities. The report notes that nearly one-third of India's ultra-rich now hold global assets,

with a significant focus on residential real estate.

Many of these individuals see property investments as part of their long-term migration and residency plans abroad.

The desire to migrate is not a new trend. In 2021, the Ministry of External Affairs reported that over 2.5 million Indians migrate to other countries every year. India also has one of the largest diasporas in the world, with over 32 million Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) settled across the globe.

Many among them have excelled in various fields, making significant contributions to their adopted countries with their skills and expertise.

With Ultra-HNIs increasingly diversifying their wealth globally, their migration decisions are influenced by better investment opportunities, stronger financial security, and long-term residency benefits in foreign countries.



Leaked Signal Thread Reveals Trump Officials' Houthi Strike Plans

Agencies
Washington: Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth texted about plans to kill a Houthi militant leader in Yemen two hours before a military operation meant to be shrouded in secrecy, according to screenshots of a chat released by The Atlantic on Wednesday.

The revelation that highly sensitive attack plans were shared on a commercial messaging app, possibly on personal cell phones, has triggered outrage in Washington and calls from Democrats that members of Trump's national security team be fired over the leaks.

Republican President Donald Trump's administration has sought to contain the fallout from the revelation that the March 15 chat included The Atlantic's editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg on the encrypted messaging app Signal.

Hegseth has repeatedly denied texting war plans, and Trump and his top advisers are saying no classified information was shared, bewildering Democrats and former US officials, who regard timing and targeting details as some of the most closely held material ahead of a US military campaign.

“I think that it's by the awesome grace of God that we are not mourning dead pilots right now,” Democrat Jim Himes of

Connecticut said at a hearing of the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee.

Republican Senator Roger Wicker, who leads the Pentagon's oversight committee in the Senate, joined calls for an independent probe and said the texts appeared so sensitive. “I would have wanted it classified.”

If Houthi leaders knew a strike was coming, they might have been able to flee, possibly to crowded areas where targeting is more difficult and the number of potential civilian casualties might be deemed too high to proceed.

The chat did not appear to include any names or precise locations of Houthi militants being targeted or to disclose information that could have been used to target US troops carrying out the operation.

Pentagon officials aware of the planning believed that information Hegseth texted was classified at the time, one US official told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity, raising questions over whether, when and how Hegseth's text messages may have been declassified.

It has also renewed scrutiny of Hegseth, who only narrowly won Senate confirmation after a bruising review that raised serious questions about his experience, temperament and views about women in combat.

The White House played down the idea that Hegseth or others would lose their jobs, saying Trump retained confidence in them. Trump also played down the Yemen leak, calling it a “witch hunt” and defending Hegseth. “Hegseth is doing a great job,” Trump said.

Goldberg, who had initially declined to publish the chat details, did so on Wednesday. The Atlantic magazine did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the release of the additional messages.

'TEAM UPDATE'

Hegseth's text started with the title “TEAM UPDATE” and included these details, according to The Atlantic: “TIME NOW (1144et): Weather is FAVORABLE. Just CONFIRMED w/CENTCOM we are a GO for mission launch” “1215et: F-18s LAUNCH (1st strike package)”

“1345: 'Trigger Based' F-18 1st Strike Window Starts (Target Terrorist is @ his Known Location so SHOULD BE ON TIME -also, Strike Drones Launch (MQ-9s)” “1410: More F-18s LAUNCH (2nd strike package)” “1415: Strike Drones on Target (THIS IS WHEN THE FIRST BOMBS WILL DEFINITELY DROP, pending earlier 'Trigger Based' targets)” “1536 F-18 2nd Strike Starts -also, first sea-based Tomahawks launched.”

Iran Displays Naval Power In Support Of Palestine Ahead Of Al-Quds Day

Agencies
Tehran- Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) staged an extensive naval parade on Thursday, deploying 3,000 vessels across the Gulf, Makran coasts, and the Caspian Sea in a show of support for Palestinians ahead of International al-Quds Day.

During a gathering in Bandar Abbas, IRGC Navy Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri emphasized that Iran's maritime forces remain committed to securing regional waters and countering adversarial movements. “We will turn the sea into hell for the Zionists and elimi-

ance against oppressors. Today, the seas have become an arena for confronting occupiers.”

Highlighting the significance of al-Quds Day, he asserted, “This day represents a global stand against oppression. Not just Iranians, but Muslims worldwide will voice their opposition to injustice.”

Tangsiri also described Iran's maritime forces as a pillar of resistance, stressing that their strength instills fear among enemies. “With more than 3,000 vessels, we have ensured security and deterrence in our waters,” he said, cautioning that any hostile move would face a swift and decisive response.



rate Israel from the face of the world,” he declared, echoing the guidance of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Sayyed Ali Khamenei. “We will not only fight on land. We are also ready in the sea, and you will have no way to escape,” Tangsiri said, warning the Israeli entity and reinforcing Iran's determination to maintain security in the Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and northern waters.

Naval mobilization as a symbol of Resistance

Tangsiri framed Iran's naval operation as a symbol of defiance, stating, “The naval Basij force is not just a military unit but a representation of the Islamic nations' defi-

In a message addressed to adversaries, he declared, “You will find no escape route through the sea. Iran's naval Basij, alongside other Muslim nations, will block all your paths,” reiterating Iran's preparedness to confront threats beyond land. “We are ready at sea as well. You have nowhere to run,” he asserted. The naval display also involved forces from the Axis of Resistance, with Palestinian flags prominently featured.

Tangsiri concluded his remarks by affirming Iran's unwavering commitment to resistance, stating, “We do not fear martyrdom. The era of tyranny over the seas is over, and we stand ready to counter any threats.”

Darkest political black comedy

Stalin Slams Yogi Adityanath Amid Language Row

Agencies
New Delhi: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Thursday lashed out at his Uttar Pradesh

BJP state president K Annamalai



counterpart Yogi Adityanath on the language row, dubbing his remarks as “political black comedy” and said his state was not opposing a language, but its “imposition and chauvinism”.

He claimed Tamil Nadu's fair and firm voice on the two language policy and fair delimitation “is echoing nationwide—and the BJP is clearly rattled.”

“And now Hon'ble Yogi Adityanath wants to lecture us on hate? Spare us. This isn't irony—it's political black comedy at its darkest. We don't oppose any language; we oppose imposition and chauvinism,” Stalin said in a post on X.

“This isn't riot-for-votes politics. This is a battle for dignity and justice,” he added.

lashed out at Stalin, the ruling DMK president. “The whole country now knows that the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu's family owns private schools that teach three languages & more but opposes the same policy for the state's Government school students...” he claimed.

“TN CM thinks that the orchestrated drama by his party-men in pockets here and there reflects the voice of entire TN. It is also unfortunate that you haven't realised that your attempts to divert people's attention to insignificant matters have been exposed. Live in your blissful world of ignorance, Thiru @mkstalin. We will not disturb you,” he said in the post on X, responding to Stalin's criticism.

US Drops Bounties On Top Afghan Taliban Officials

Agencies
KABUL: The United States has removed multimillion-dollar bounties on leaders of Afghanistan's feared Haqqani militant network, including the current Taliban interior minister, the State Department and the Taliban government said.

The Haqqani network was responsible for some of the deadliest attacks during the decades-long war in Afghanistan.

The men remain on Washington's list of “specially designated global terrorists” but the bounty price has been scrapped.

Taliban interior ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani said that Washington had “canceled rewards” for Sirajuddin Haqqani – who also heads the

Haqqani network – as well as other key leaders, Abdul Aziz Haqqani and Yahya Haqqani.

Sirajuddin Haqqani had long been one of Washington's most important targets, with a \$10 million bounty on his head.

The US State Department said that “the three persons named remain designated as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs), and the Haqqani Network remains designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and a SDGT.”

But while the wanted page remains active, the bounty on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) website has been removed.

“It is the policy of the United States to consistently review and refine Rewards for Justice reward offers,” a State Department

spokesperson said on Wednesday.

The bounty cancellation came days after the first visit by US officials to Afghanistan since President Donald Trump returned to office, and the announcement afterwards of the release of a US citizen by Taliban authorities.

US-based Afghan political analyst Abdul Wahed Faqiri said that the bounty removal is likely “largely symbolic” but a way for the United States to “give credit to Sirajuddin Haqqani,” seen as an emerging more moderate “alternative.”

Media reports talk of increasing tensions between the “pragmatic” Haqqani figures and a more hardline circle around Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, who vie for influence within the government.

NEWS MAKERS

Hamas spokesman killed in Israeli strike

Gaza: Hamas said an Israeli air strike killed one of its official spokesmen in Gaza on Thursday, the latest high-ranking operative targeted since Israel resumed its bombardment.

The group said in a statement it mourned the loss of Abdul Latif al-Qanou who was killed in what it called a “direct” strike on a tent he was in, in the Jabalia area of northern Gaza.

A fragile ceasefire that brought weeks of relative calm to Gaza ended on March 18 with Israel resuming its bombing campaign across the territory.

According to the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza, at least 855 peo-



ple have been killed since. Qanou is the latest Hamas official to be killed in recent Israeli strikes.

Israel's military said last week it had killed the head of Hamas's internal security agency, Rashid Jahjough, in an air strike. Days earlier, Hamas

had named the head of its government in the Gaza Strip, Essam al-Dalis, and interior ministry head Mahmud Abu Watfa, among a list of officials it said were killed in strikes.

The Israeli military confirmed it had killed Dalis, a member of Hamas's

“**The occupation's targeting of the movement's leaders and spokespersons will not break our will**”

political bureau who became the head of its administration in Gaza in June 2021. Hamas has also confirmed the deaths of Salah al-Bardawil and Yasser Harb, both members of its political bureau.

“The occupation's targeting of the movement's leaders and spokespersons will not break our will,” Hamas said Thursday.

Whatever life is destined is destined: Salman on death threats and security

Jitni umar likhi hai, utni likhi hai,” a philosophical Salman Khan said in his first comments about death threats from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and the heightened security that has significantly restricted his movements.

The security protocol has impacted his daily routine, Khan told reporters on Wednesday night.

“Bhagwan, Allah sab unpar hai. Jitni umar likhi hai, utni likhi hai. Bas yahi hai. (It is up to Bhagwan, Allah. Whatever life is destined is destined. That's all),” Khan said in a rare interaction in which he opened up about his personal life and the many challenges after the death threats.

“I cannot do anything about it (security). Khallas. So I go from



Galaxy (home) to shoot to Galaxy, no detours,” he added.

The 59-year-old could earlier be seen cycling around the city unhindered by his security team.

His security concerns escalated in 2018 when incarcerated gangster Bishnoi openly threatened to kill him during a court appearance in Jodhpur over the

actor's involvement in the infamous 1998 blackbuck poaching case. Since then, Khan has faced multiple threats. In April 2024, two shooters, allegedly from the Bishnoi gang, fired gunshots outside his Bandra residence before being arrested.

After this, security was enhanced with bulletproof glass protecting his balcony and CCTV cameras keeping watch on the road outside. Two months later, Navi Mumbai Police claimed to have discovered a plot to kill the actor when he travelled to his farmhouse at Panvel near Mumbai.

Security around the actor was further tightened following the murder of politician Baba Siddiqui, who was known to be a close friend of Salman, in October 2024.

SMC Gears-Up For Major Religious Festivities

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In preparation for the upcoming religious occasions of Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida, Navratra and Eid-ul-Fitr, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has launched a series of special measures to ensure cleanliness, sanitation, and smooth pedestrian and vehicular movement across the city.

Commissioner, SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed has directed officials to implement extensive sanitation and facility management efforts at all major religious sites, ensuring a hygienic and organized environment for devotees.

SMC will uphold high sanitation standards at key religious locations, including Hazratbal, Jenab Sahib Soura, Dastgeer Sahib Khanyar, Imam Bargah Zadibal, Shahi Hamdan Sahib, Makhdoom Sahib, and prominent temples such as Sharika Devi Temple, Durga Nag Temple, and Purashyar Mandir.

To accommodate the increased number of devotees, mobile toilet vans will be installed at prominent religious places, remaining operational until the culmination of the festivals.

The Commissioner directed SMC's Encroachment Wing to conduct massive anti-encroachment drives to ensure smooth pedestrian and vehicular movement throughout the city.

Dr Owais Extends Greetings On Shab-e-Qadr

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a warm and uplifting message to the citizens of Srinagar, Commissioner SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed, has extended his heartfelt greetings on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Qadr, also known as the Night of Power.

This sacred night serves as a profound moment for reflection, prayer, and spiritual renewal.

Dr. Owais emphasized the extraordinary significance of Shab-e-Qadr, highlighting its value as a night that surpasses a thousand months in blessings.

"Shab-e-Qadr is not just a night of individual devotion; it is a time for collective worship and unity," he stated, adding, "Let us use this occasion to come together as a community, fostering a spirit of peace and harmony."

In a bid to enhance the

SMC's Electric Wing was directed to ensure the proper functioning of streetlights, particularly in and around religious sites. Dedicated repair teams will remain on standby to promptly address any lighting issues.

SMC will deploy a dog-catching squad during Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida, and Eid-ul-Fitr at Hazratbal to prevent stray animals from entering the Asar Sharief premises. Additionally, sanitation workers will be deployed to maintain cleanliness throughout the area.

SMC will conduct special sanitation drives to ensure all religious sites remain clean and hygienic ahead of the festivities.

SMC is committed to a clean and hassle-free celebration with these measures in place; it reaffirms its commitment to providing a clean, well-managed, and safe environment for citizens observing these significant religious events.

The Commissioner has directed all officials to execute these measures promptly and effectively, ensuring a seamless experience for devotees across Srinagar.

For grievances, updates, or additional information, citizens can reach SMC's 24x7 Control Room through the following helplines: 18001807038, 0194-2474499, 0194-2470465.

Dr Andrabi Inaugurates Newly Constructed Mimber At Eidgah

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board, Dr. Syed Darakhshan Andrabi, inaugurated the newly constructed Mimber at the historic Eidgah in Srinagar on Wednesday.

The event, though brief, was marked by a grand ceremony organized by the Waqf Board to celebrate the completion of this significant project.

The construction of the Mimber, which began a few months ago, is a key part of the Board's broader plan to restore the historical and spiritual significance of Eidgah. Expressing her delight at the project's completion, Dr. Andrabi said, "The development and restoration of Eidgah's glory is our dream project, and the construction of this Mimber is a vital part of that vision."

She further emphasized the need to develop the site in accordance with modern requirements while preserving its sanctity. "Despite fac-



spiritual experience for residents, Dr. Owais has initiated vital measures to ensure a clean and serene environment throughout Srinagar. These initiatives include comprehensive cleanliness drives, improved sanitation, and an uninterrupted water supply, ensuring that citizens can immerse themselves in prayer and reflection without distraction.

"As we observe this sacred night, let us also remember the values of compassion and solidarity that bind us together," Dr. Owais added. "May Shab-e-Qadr inspire us all to strengthen our bonds and work towards a peaceful coexistence."

ing opposition from vested interests, we remained steadfast in our mission to make the J&K Waqf Board an exemplary institution in the country. Through streamlining management systems, ensuring transparency, and maintaining accountability, we have achieved significant progress, which is evident at all Waqf-managed shrines and assets across J&K," Dr. Andrabi stated.

Dr. Andrabi was accompanied by Waqf Board members Syed Mohammed Hussain and Dr. Ghulam Nabi Haleem, as well as prominent religious figures, including the Imam of Jamia Masjid Srinagar, Mufti Ghulam Rasool, and the Imam of Hazratbal Shrine, Maulana Riyazul Haq. Also present were Waqf Board Executive Magistrate Ishtiaq Mohiuddin, Executive Engineer Qazi Mushtaq Ahmad, BJP District President Srinagar Advocate Sheikh Salman, and several other dignitaries and citizens of Srinagar.



Tulip Garden Draws Record 17,259 Visitors On Inaugural Day

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Asia's largest Tulip Garden in Srinagar witnessed an overwhelming response on its inaugural day, attracting a record-breaking 17,259 visitors, including local, national, and high-end tourists.

Following its grand opening, the Department of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks expressed gratitude to visitors, particularly national and international tourists, for their enthusiastic participation. Officials stated that this year's turnout has set a new benchmark in the garden's history.

A senior official from the Floriculture Department remarked, "The incredible footfall reflects the popularity of Kashmir's natural beauty and the global appeal of the Tulip Garden. We are thrilled to see such an enthusiastic response."

The department also extended appreciation to the Divisional and District administration, J&K Police, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, PWD, KPDC, and other allied agencies for their seamless coordination

in ensuring a smooth and hassle-free experience for visitors. Their dedicated efforts in maintaining security, cleanliness, and essential services were instrumental in making the event a success.

A special mention was given to the dedicated gardeners, field staff, and officers of the Floriculture Department, whose relentless efforts, meticulous planning, and commitment have resulted in a breathtaking floral spectacle. With over 1.70 million tulips in full bloom, the garden has once again proven to be a mesmerizing attraction.

Many visitors from different parts of India expressed their excitement and awe at the floral wonderland. Neha Sharma from Mumbai, Maharashtra, said she has traveled to many hill stations, but nothing compares to the vibrant sea of tulips. She described it as stepping into a dream. Ramesh Patel from Ahmedabad, Gujarat, shared that this was his first time in Kashmir, and the Tulip Garden was absolutely breathtaking. He found

the variety of colors and the serene atmosphere to be a perfect holiday experience.

Anita Verma from Delhi expressed her delight, saying that the garden is an absolute treat for nature lovers. She praised the organization and maintenance of the garden and said she couldn't stop taking pictures. Shiv Kumar from Bengaluru, Karnataka, stated that he always wanted to visit the Tulip Festival, and finally being there felt surreal. The sheer scale and beauty of the flowers, he said, were unmatched. Pooja Singh from Jaipur, Rajasthan, added that the garden's layout, the scenic backdrop of the Zabarwan Range, and the cool breeze made the visit an unforgettable experience.

The Department of Floriculture reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing the beauty and vibrancy of this iconic garden. Authorities have encouraged tourists to continue visiting in the coming weeks to witness nature's unparalleled grandeur at its peak.



THE INCREDIBLE FOOTFALL REFLECTS THE popularity of Kashmir's natural beauty and the global appeal of the Tulip Garden. We are thrilled to see such an enthusiastic response."

Food Safety Team Seizes Expired Food Items In City

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, market inspections are being continuously conducted in Srinagar City to ensure sale of quality food items to the consumers.

Accordingly, acting promptly on a specific tip-off, the Food Safety Department carried out a targeted raid on a wholesaler's premises in Saraf Kadal, Srinagar.

The raid, conducted in response to an anonymous complaint, uncovered an alarming stockpile of expired food items, including milk and milk products valued at approximately Rs. 55,000. Shockingly, the seized stock also include items that had expired as far back as 2018.

During the inspection led by Assistant Commissioner Food Safety Srinagar, it was observed that expired goods were stored alongside fresh supplies, reflecting a disregard for fundamental food safety practices and consumer health. When questioned, the Food Business Operator (FBO) at the premises failed to provide any satisfactory explanation on the presence of expired products.

The Food Safety team seized the expired items to prevent them from reaching consumers and contributing to potential health hazards.

As per the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSS Act), the case has been forwarded to the Adjudicating



Officer (Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar) for further legal proceedings. The swift and decisive action reinforces the Department's commitment to safeguarding public health by ensuring compliance with food safety regulations.

The Food Safety Department reiterated its instructions to all Food Business Operators (FBOs) to ensure expired food items must be stored in a designated quarantine area, separated from fresh supplies.

Any expired items found exhibited for sale will face strict penalties under the relevant provisions of the FSS Act.

Consumers are urged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious practices involving the sale of expired or substandard food items to the Food Safety Department. Public cooperation plays a pivotal role in upholding food safety standards and protecting community health.

DC Srinagar greets people on Shab-e-Qadr and Jummat Ul Vida



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat has felicitated people on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Qadr, also known as Lylat-ul-Qadr, the holy night when people congregate to pray to Almighty Allah seeking his

forgiveness.

The DC also greeted people on the occasion of Jummat Ul Vida the last Friday of the Ramadan ul Mubarak 1446 Hijri.

Dr. Bilal prayed for betterment of the people and expressed hope that the holy night would bring Allah's blessings. He also prayed that the auspicious occasion

would strengthen the bonds of communal harmony and brotherhood and be a harbinger of peace and prosperity.

Meanwhile MLA Lal Chowk Ahsan Pardeesi also extended warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Qadr, a night described in the Holy Quran as "better than a thousand months."

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 000
ZUHR	12: 36
ASR	5:01
Magrib	6:51
ISHA	8:12

This Day In History

- 1809 - Peninsular War: France defeats Spain in the Battle of Medelin.
- 1845 - Mexico drops diplomatic relations with US
- 1854 - Britain & France declare war on Russia (Crimean War)
- 1866 - 1st ambulance goes into service
- 1885 - US Salvation Army officially organized
- 1891 - 1st world weightlifting championship held
- 1904 - Japanese troops advance in Korea, defeat the Russians at Chongju, and capture the town
- 1910 - 1st seaplane, takes off from water at Martiniques France (Henri Fabre)
- 1913 - Guatemala becomes a signatory to the Buenos Aires copyright treaty.
- 1920 - Anton Denkin's White Russian troops defeated by Bolsheviks/Soviets at Novorossiysk on the Black Sea (The British aid Denkin in his escape)
- 1922 - 1st microfilm device introduced
- 1929 - Democratic constitution goes into effect in Ecuador
- 1930 - Turkish cities Constantinople & Angora change their names to Istanbul & Ankara

From KO Archives

Soz Revolts, Blasts Farooq

Abdullah's Decision 'Insult To Kashmir Genius'

Observer News Service

NEWDELHI- Senior National Conference leader and former union minister Saifu-ud-din Soz, today revolted against his party leadership's decision to support the BJP led government at the center and made an "impassioned" appeal to Farooq Abdullah to "reconsider your stand" in the interests of people of Kashmir.

"RSS will continue to guide and inspire the destiny" of the Vajpayee government" and the contention of Farooq Abdullah that he needed maximum support (funds) from the center, for the welfare of the state and had this compulsion for supporting the BJP government "is fraught with dangerous consequences", Soz said in a strongly worded statement issued here late this afternoon.

He said that "short run political and economic gains involving many awkward compromises are no substitutes for long term and enduring political assertions" adding that even after Abdullah offered his party's support to the BJP, there was "no guarantee" that the ruling alliance will support National Conference commitment to restore internal autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir.

"I don't think that Farooq is naive and does not understand that, in response to a coalition consensus, the BJP has just temporarily put the abrogation of Art. 370, uniform civil code and Ram Mandir on a back burner", Soz said in his statement.

The four-time Lok Sabha member and "official spokesman" of the National Conference, Soz, is said to have tried his best in last few days to convince Abdullah against taking any "hasty decision" on extending support to Vajpayee government. Soz is learnt to have been in touch with other senior National Conference leaders on this issue and most of them, including some senior ministers of Farooq government are reported to be in unanimity with Soz's stand. Soz, sources said talked to Farooq on phone late last evening and this morning, but seems to have failed in persuading his leader to change the stand.

Soz, as already reported, attended the meetings of the United Front, even after Farooq Abdullah declared to have severed his relations with the Front, regretted that Abdullah took such a major decision without taking into confidence his senior party colleagues and also putting the issue before the party working committee, highest decision making body.

This stance of Farooq Abdullah, not convening the party working committee before taking such an important decision "is an insult to the genius" of the people of Kashmir, Soz said and asked "are the people of Jammu and Kashmir supposed to live at the mercy of a central government of the day?" Soz also charged Farooq Abdullah with "misquoting" his father, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, in dealing with the center. "All the Sheikh said was that center and state should endeavor to maintain a harmonious relation within the frame work of center-state relations", Soz said and added that Farooq was "mistaken in his belief that generally people have short memories. He said that Farooq's announcement that he would be placing the issue of extending support to BJP after having taken the final decision himself, was "nothing short of adding insult to the injury".

Soz advised Farooq Abdullah, to reconsider his decision, "even at this late stage" and try to appreciate the fact that "short run political or economic gains involving many awkward promises are no substitute for long term and enduring pro-people assertions which always rest on calm reflections and cool thinking".

"My worry is that Doctor Sahib, in his hurry to drop-tail short run situations of advantage with his politics of compromise, might cripple the very goose that invariably laid the golden eggs for him", Soz said.

(Kashmir Observer, 28 March, 1998)

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Supplying Polluted Water Violates Consumer Rights

Providing unsafe drinking water to people not only violates environmental laws but is also a clear violation of the Consumer Protection Act



Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat



Doodh Ganga at Navkan Valley Pir Panjal

“There was a time, 20 to 30 years ago, when we drank water directly from rivers and streams. Even the water of Dal Lake was used for drinking purposes just 30 to 40 years ago. The transition to tap water occurred between the 1960s and the 1980s. Now, we have reached a point where we are hesitant to drink even tap water

mountains, about a 10-hour hike from Yusmarg. At its source, the water is so pristine and clean that words cannot do justice to its purity. However, just 15 to 20 kilometers downstream, Doodh Ganga becomes heavily polluted.

This pollution is an open fact, and the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued multiple orders in this regard following my petition filed four years ago. Recently, the NGT reprimanded the Commissioner Secretary of the Housing & Urban Development Department for failing to address the water pollution in Doodh Ganga. Hefty penalties are expected to follow now.

Water Analysis Confirms Contamination

The NGT has already imposed environmental compensation amounting to Rs 79 crores on the SMC, the Mining Department, and the Municipal Committees of Chadoora and Budgam.

- Initially, a Rs 3 crore penalty was imposed on the government in March 2022.
- Then, a Rs 35 crore penalty was imposed in October 2022.
- Finally, an Rs 41.67 crore penalty was imposed on Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) in October 2024.

The government has sanctioned Rs 140 crores to set up sewage treatment plants (STPs) from Barzulla to Chadoora to treat wastewater entering Doodh Ganga.

The J&K Pollution Control Committee (PCC) submitted a detailed water analysis report last year as per the NGT's orders. The report states that the water quality in Doodh Ganga is extremely poor and not even fit for bathing. Ironically, this contaminated water is supplied to over six lakh people in Srinagar's uptown areas.

Lawmakers Express Concern

Untreated sewage and fecal waste continue to enter Doodh Ganga, Jhelum, and other water bodies across J&K. The same contaminated water is then supplied to the public.

Recently, MLA Bijbehara expressed out-

rage against municipal institutions in Bijbehara, Mattan, and Anantnag for allowing drains to discharge directly into Jhelum, as these towns lack sewage treatment plants. He criticized the government's misleading response in the Assembly and voiced his frustration on social media, stating that the "administration's response was riddled with flaws and misinformation."

Similarly, MLA Uri, Sajjad Shafi, condemned the PHE - Jal Shakti Department for cutting off drinking water supply to some villages in his constituency due to non-payment of fees. He even declared in the Assembly, "Take my salary and restore drinking water to the people."

Conclusion

Supplying contaminated water not only violates multiple environmental laws but is also a clear violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. More importantly, it breaches international laws, as the United Nations (UN) has declared access to clean and safe drinking water a basic human right.

On July 28, 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution recognizing the right to water as a fundamental human right. Ensuring access to clean water is also a key objective of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, given the current state of affairs in Jammu & Kashmir, achieving these goals seems increasingly difficult.

Despite spending billions of rupees under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the government has failed to provide safe drinking water. Pipelines have been laid across every corner of J&K, yet the water supplied remains contaminated—as proven in the Doodh Ganga case pending before the NGT for the last four years.

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

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow and Chairman Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement. Feedback: bhatrajamuzaffar@gmail.com

KO VIEW

Thawing Permafrost

A new study has revealed that permafrost in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh is thawing due to climate change. This is the ice that has been frozen for thousands of years and its thawing poses far-reaching environmental challenges for the region and beyond.

Significantly, permafrost covers nearly 65% of J&K and Ladakh. Over a quarter of this is continuously frozen, providing stability to glaciers, river systems, and even entire settlements. But rising temperatures are disrupting this delicate equilibrium. This primarily doesn't bode well for the water resources. Glaciers and permafrost act as natural reservoirs. They gradually release water to sustain water bodies through dry months. But should they thaw earlier, as is happening due to rising temperatures, this will make river flows erratic, which, in turn, will affect the agriculture, power and water supply.

There are larger environmental consequences for the region. Permafrost stores carbon and methane, and once it melts it releases these into the atmosphere. This, in turn, will aggravate the existing global warming. What is more, thawing permafrost could awaken ancient microbes, posing unforeseen threats to public health.

With glaciers also gradually receding over the past two decades, it is a double whammy. It threatens the discharge in the region's water bodies. Thawing of glaciers is taking place all over J&K as well as Ladakh. Climate change in the Himalayas is triggered largely by global factors such as rising temperatures due to greenhouse gas emissions, industrial and agricultural activity, as well as deforestation at a global level.

This has created two immediate problems for our region: one, the glaciers are melting and another due to increasingly snowless winters, glaciers are not adequately replenished.

Kashmir witnesses its heaviest snow during chilai kalan and the snowfall progressively reduces in February and March when spring sets in. But this year chilai kalan was completely dry, the last such seasons were in 2015 and 2018. This winter, and the 2023-24 winter, more or less, also were largely dry.

Heavy snow in these two months helps in the glacier formation which in turn charges up the Valley's water bodies through summer. So increasing the frequency of dry winters signals trouble. More so, at a time when the Valley's major glaciers have shown marked signs of depletion in recent decades. Biggest of them is the Kolahai glacier. The area of Kolahai, according to a study, has retreated to 11.24 square kilometers from 13.87 sq kms since 1976. This doesn't augur well for the future. Kashmir's plight is not an isolated event, but a harbinger of what awaits us all if the world continues down this path of unchecked environmental degradation.



Investing in Mutual Funds: A Comprehensive Guide to Gold, Debt, Global Funds, and Equity Funds in India

Irshad Mushtaq

Investing in mutual funds has become an increasingly popular choice for Indian investors looking to grow their wealth. This article aims to provide a focused examination of the various types of mutual funds available, specifically targeting gold, debt, global funds, and equity funds.

Understanding Mutual Fund Categories

1. Gold Funds

Gold mutual funds offer investors exposure to the performance of gold without the complexities of physical gold ownership. These funds invest in gold ETFs (Exchange-Traded Funds) or directly in gold bullion. They are an effective hedge against inflation and currency fluctuations, providing a stable investment option in uncertain economic climates.

2. Debt Funds

Debt funds invest in fixed-income securities like government bonds, corporate bonds, and other debt instruments. They are generally considered safer than equity funds and are suitable for conservative investors seeking steady returns. Debt funds can be particularly appealing in a rising interest rate environment, as they generate stable income while preserving capital.

3. Global Funds

Global funds allow investors to diversify their portfolios by investing in international equities and debt securities. This provides exposure to markets outside India, increasing the potential for higher returns while spreading risk. However, investors must be aware of currency fluctuations and geopolitical risks when considering global funds, as these factors can impact returns.

4. Equity Funds

Equity funds invest primarily in stocks, offering the potential for high returns over the long term. They come in various forms, including large-cap, mid-cap, and small-cap funds, each catering to different risk appetites. Equity funds are ideal for investors with a higher risk tolerance who seek to capitalize on market growth.

Key Considerations for Investors

Risk Assessment

Before investing in any mutual fund category, it is crucial to assess your risk tolerance. Gold and debt funds typically offer lower risk, while equity and global funds carry higher risk due to market volatility.

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

Learn from the insights of @Irshad Mushtaq, Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of MI Securities! Connect for valuable financial advice at miscurities@bp.sharekhan.com.

Disclaimer: This article is for informational purposes only and does not offer investment advice. It is 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.

We recently commemorated World Consumer Rights Day, observed every year on March 15. This day serves as a reminder of the importance of consumer rights and their protection. World Consumer Rights Day was first observed in 1983, and the date was chosen to commemorate U.S. President John F. Kennedy's address to the U.S. Congress on March 15, 1962, in which he formally recognized these rights. He was the world's first leader to do so.

This year's theme for World Consumer Rights Day 2025 was "A Just Transition to Sustainable Lifestyles." This theme clearly reflects the importance of making sustainable and healthy lifestyle choices accessible and available to all consumers, including access to safe drinking water.

Soon after commemorating Consumer Rights Day, people across the world, including J&K, celebrated International Water Day on March 22. This year's theme for the occasion was glacier preservation. After writing on both these issues recently, I found a close relationship between water and consumer rights, which led me to write this piece for public awareness and to sensitize the government about this critical issue.

Access to Clean Drinking Water Is a Consumer Right

When we talk about consumer rights, people in the Indian subcontinent—especially in Jammu & Kashmir—hardly imagine that access to clean drinking water is also a consumer right. This is because Jammu & Kashmir has been blessed with numerous fresh drinking water sources, and we never anticipated a time when most of these sources would become polluted, forcing us to rely on packaged drinking water.

There was a time, 20 to 30 years ago, when we drank water directly from rivers and streams. Even the water of Dal Lake was used for drinking purposes just 30 to 40 years ago. The transition to tap water occurred between the 1960s and the 1980s. Now, we have reached a point where we are hesitant to drink even tap water. Many have already shifted to drinking packaged water, which is often labeled as "mineral water." However, whether this water is genuinely "mineral water" is a separate debate. Additionally, storing water in plastic bottles is harmful, especially when grocery stores leave them exposed to sunlight.

As drinking water sources continue to deplete, the government has started charging consumers for drinking water supply—something that was freely available in Kashmir and Jammu until a decade ago. Consumers are now required to sign agreements with the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Jal Shakti Department. This entitles them to clean drinking water, which clearly brings the PHE - Jal Shakti Department under the purview of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. However, neither consumers nor the government seem to recognize this fact.

Pollution in Drinking Water Sources

I have always spoken based on facts, which I gather through RTI or other reliable sources. I have personally visited Doodh Ganga at its source near Navkan Valley in the Pir Panjal



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

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Cultivating Charitable Behaviour In Children

Pesticide residues have been found in more than 50% of food samples tested in India. Some foods, such as vegetables, fruits, cereals, pulses and spices, have been found to contain more than the maximum residue limits (MRLs) set by regulatory bodies. Pesticides are used on crops to control insects, fungi and weeds and can be transported through water, soil and air, affecting nearby crops. Additionally, some pesticides are used to prevent spoilage during storage and transport. Common fruits and vegetables such as apples, grapes, strawberries, spinach, tomatoes and potatoes often contain significant residues of pesticides. Staple foods such as rice, wheat, lentils and chickpeas may also contain harmful pesticides.

Pesticide residues in food are small amounts of pesticides that remain on or within foods after they have been used on

crops. These residues can potentially pose health risks, depending on the specific pesticide and its concentration. India is one of the top consumers of pesticides globally, using them extensively in agriculture to protect crops from pests and diseases. However, the detection of pesticide residues in food has emerged as a significant health issue. Research shows that most foods in India contain these residues, some of which have levels higher than safe limits. This situation raises serious health concerns and highlights the need for better food safety regulations and greater public awareness. The recent appeal by the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare for a comprehensive national strategy for monitoring pesticide residues in food is important to enhance public health and food safety in India. Contamination of food with pesticides poses a serious health risk, which

is further worsened by modern farming practices and reckless use of chemicals. Although several regulatory measures are in place, there are gaps in monitoring, enforcement and public education, which require stronger government action at both the central and state levels.

Reports from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and various independent studies show that pesticide residues have been found in more than 50% of food samples tested in India. Some foods, such as vegetables, fruits, cereals, pulses and spices, have been found to contain pesticides in excess of the maximum residue limits (MRLs) set by regulatory bodies. Pesticides are used on crops to control insects, fungi and weeds and can be transported through water, soil and air, affecting nearby crops. Additionally, some pesticides are used to prevent spoilage during storage and

transportation. Common fruits and vegetables such as apples, grapes, strawberries, spinach, tomatoes and potatoes often contain significant residues of pesticides. Staple foods such as rice, wheat, lentils and chickpeas may also contain harmful pesticides. Spices such as turmeric, coriander and cumin can sometimes contain pesticide levels above safe limits. Consuming food with pesticide residues can cause a variety of health problems, which vary depending on the amount and duration of exposure. Short-term effects can include nausea, dizziness, headaches and allergic reactions, while long-term exposure can result in serious conditions such as cancer, hormonal imbalances, neurological disorders and developmental problems in children.

Dr. Satyawan Saurabh
Haryana

Al Quds Day

Masjid Al Aqsa in Islamic History

Zafar Bangash

Masjid al-Aqsa holds immense significance in Islamic religious tradition as well as history. It is known as the first qibla of Muslims' the direction toward which Muslims face to offer their salat as well as the third holiest site in Islam. It is built on the site where the noble Messenger (saws) led all the earlier Prophets in prayer when he was transported by night from Masjid al-Haram before his miraj (ascension to Heaven) to the point referred to in the Qur'an as Sidrat al-Muntaha (53:10-16).

In contemporary history, it has become a contested place because the Zionists claim it is built on the site where their first and second temples originally existed. A great deal of myth is interwoven into this narrative despite the fact that the temple was destroyed repeatedly by invading forces. The Babylonian king Bakhtnash (Nebuchadnezzar) attacked Jerusalem in 587 BC and destroyed the temple (Beteyel). The Israelites were enslaved and suffered greatly for more than 70 years.

There were several phases of rebuilding and destruction of the temple the last being the Romans' destruction of it in 70 CE. No trace of the temple has ever existed. While the some hardcore Zionists are currently trying to encroach on the Haram al-Sharif (the noble Sanctuary) and are even demanding the right to worship there, Rabbinical law prohibits Jews from setting foot on the Temple Mount for fear of desecrating the 'holy of Holies' in Jewish religious tradition. There is in fact a board erected near the Haram al-Sharif that houses both the Masjid al-Aqsa as well as Dome of the Rock and numerous madrassas and other smaller structures, prohibiting Jewish trespassing of the Haram al-Sharif.

Let us first consider who built Masjid al-Aqsa: was it the father-and-son Prophets Daud and Prophet Sulayman (as), as claimed by the Zionists, or built even earlier? We know from the Qur'an (2:127-128) that the father and son Prophets, Ibrahim and Ismail (as) built the Ka'aba in conformity with the command of Allah. The Ka'aba in Makkah is the first House of worship for Allah on earth. Prophet Ibrahim (as) had settled his first son Ismail (as) and his mother, Hajar (as) there, again according to the command of Allah.

Prophet Ibrahim (as), however, did not live in Makkah; he lived in Palestine in the place that takes its name from him: al-Khalil (Hebron). Is it conceivable that Prophet Ibrahim (as) would build a place of worship in Makkah but not have a place of worship in Jerusalem that is right next to Hebron? As the Patriarch of all the Prophets of Allah, Ibrahim (as) also built a place of worship in Jerusalem. This came to be known as Beteyel (meaning the House of Allah in Hebrew).

When Ibrahim's (as) second son Is'haq (Isaac) was born and grew up

in Hebron, he would go to worship in Beteyel. Interestingly, Is'haq (as) who was also a noble Prophet of Allah, also prayed in the Ka'aba in Makkah and performed the Hajj pilgrimage there together with his father (Ibrahim (as) and brother (Ismail (as), again according to the commands of Allah. It was Ibrahim (as) that named Beteyel as Masjid al-Aqsa' the farthest mosque' in deference to the Ka'aba, from which it was located far away to the northwest.

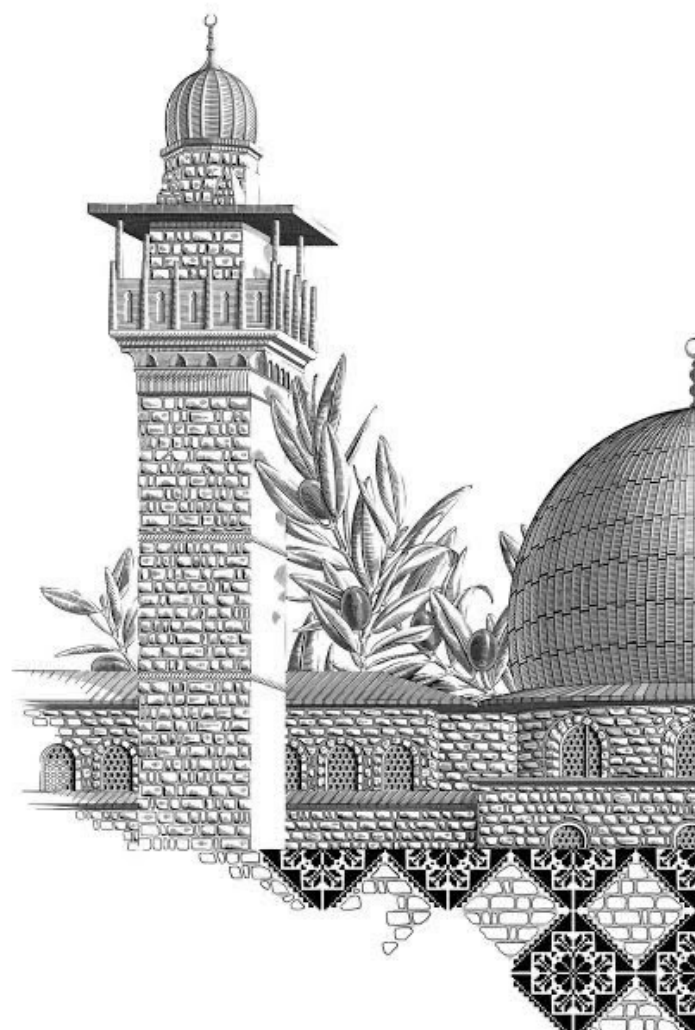
Yaqub (as), known in the Bible as Jacob who was the son of Is'haq (as), was also a noble Prophet who opened Beteyel as a place of worship for all those that accepted the One true God, Allah. Naturally in the land of Palestine many other tribes resided. The land takes its name from the Philistines, the people that lived there. Among the other tribes were the Moabites and Hittites. The latter tribe was the one to which the mother of Sulayman (as) belonged. It needs recalling that Ibrahim (as) was born in Ur (present-day Iraq) and was forced into exile because of the oppression and persecution he faced at the hands of the tyrant Nimrood. After a long journey, Ibrahim (as) finally settled in al-Khalil (Palestine).

Prophetic history takes many turns and it is no different with the Prophets from the lineage of Ibrahim (as). Prophet Yusuf (as) [Joseph] was greatly loved by his father Yaqub (as). This created huge jealousy among his step-brothers who plotted to kill him but finally decided to throw him a well.

He was rescued from the well and sold into slavery ending in Egypt where the ruler employed him. The ruler's wife had a crush on him because Yusuf (as) was a very handsome young man but Allah protected him from committing sin and despite being innocent, he ended up in prison where he spent many years. When he was finally released, the king appointed him to the important post of the kingdom's treasury and he became the de facto ruler of Egypt. The story of Yusuf (as) is narrated in exquisite detail in the noble Qur'an in the surah by the same name (Surah Yusuf).

Once Yusuf (as) had attained power in Egypt, he invited his family' father, mothers and brothers' to live with him in Egypt. They readily accepted the offer as narrated in the chapter on Genesis 46 in the Torah. No one from Yaqub's (as) family was left to take care of Beteyel/Masjid al-Aqsa. Thus, he gave charge of the masjid to the local inhabitants, the Palestinians. The children of Yaqub (as), referred to as Bani Israel in the noble Qur'an lived in Egypt for more than 400 years. There was never a hint that they should return to Palestine to reclaim ownership/custodianship of Masjid al-Aqsa.

Many generations later, the Bani Israel were taken as slaves by the pharaohs and it was not until Allah raised Musa (as) [Moses] among them that he led them out of slavery



EVEN WHILE MUSLIMS THROUGHOUT THEIR HISTORY PROVIDED SANCTUARY TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE after they suffered persecution elsewhere, the Zionists have turned out to be the worst kinds of oppressors in history. They act with impunity and are extremely hostile toward the indigenous Palestinian people

and across the Red Sea into the Sinai Peninsula. When Allah ordered them to enter Palestine, they refused, incurring Allah's wrath to wander in the desert for 40 years. During this time, Musa (as) died and Allah raised another Prophet, Daud (as) who was a soldier in the army of Saul. Because of his courage, Daud (as) was made king and entered Palestine to establish his kingdom there.

It was Sulayman (as) who rebuilt the temple (Masjid al-Aqsa) with the support and help of the indigenous people, principally the Palestinians. The father-son rule, however, lasted a total of 73 years. Thereafter, his sons divided the kingdom and power once again slipped from their hands. A chain of Prophets emerged among their progeny but the Bani Israel were always argumentative and refused to abide by the teachings of the Prophets. The Qur'an narrates that they killed many of their prophets among them Zakariya (as) as well as his son Yahya (as).

As mentioned earlier, the Babylonian king Bakhtnash (Nebuchadnezzar) laid siege to Jerusalem and

took over the city and Palestine in 587 BC. He destroyed the temple/ Masjid al-Aqsa and enslaved all the people. This story is narrated in detail in the Bible in Kings 2 Chapters 24 and 25. The Torah also says that the Israelites were enslaved in both the Nile (Egypt) and in the Euphrates (by the Babylonians).

The Persian King Cyrus the Great rescued the Bani Israel after seventy years of slavery in Babylon. He also permitted them to return to Palestine from where the Babylonians had driven them out. The Persian Empire faced a rival in the Roman Empire and constant battles occurred between them. In the year 70 CE, the Romans captured Jerusalem and destroyed the temple one more time. Barely 65 years later in what is referred to as the Bar Kokhba revolt, the Romans massacred the Bani Israel and even dug out the foundations of the temple in the year 135 CE. By now, the Romans had accepted Christianity as their religion and their enmity toward the Jews intensified as killers of Prophet Isa (as) [Jesus].

The Romans, however, faced a

constant threat from the Persians and in the year 614 CE, the latter took control of Jerusalem from the Romans. In Makkah where the noble Messenger (saws) had started his mission of propagating Islam, the mushriks made fun of Muslims because the fire-worshipping Zoroastrians had vanquished the Christian Romans. The Qur'an narrates this in the opening ayats of Surah al-Rum in which Allah (swt) says that not only the Romans but Muslims too would be victorious within a period of less than 10 years.

Given the plight of Muslims at the time' their numbers were small and they faced great persecution' the Makkah mushriks made great fun of the Qur'anic ayats but Allah's Word came true' as it was bound to' within the stipulated timeframe and not only the Romans defeated their Persian rivals but the Muslims also triumphed over their Makkah foes in the Battle of Badr.

It is also pertinent to note that when Muslims migrated from Makkah to Madinah, for the first 17 months, they faced toward Masjid al-Aqsa in their salat. It was during dhuhur salat in the second year of the hijrah that Allah's revelation about the change of qibla from Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem to Masjid al-Haram in Makkah came. This is narrated in the Quran (2:142-43). The masjid in Madinah where the Prophet (saws) was leading the Muslims in salat is today called Masjid Qiblatain (Masjid of the two qiblas).

Jerusalem, however, came into Muslim possession only during the Khilafah of Umar (ra) in the year 638 CE. The Christian Patriarch, Sophronius had insisted that he would hand over the keys of Jerusalem only to the ruler of Muslims. The second Khalifah Umar was on a campaign in the Golan Heights and when word reached him, he hurried to Jerusalem to take possession of the keys without causing any bloodshed in the city.

When he entered the city, Umar (ra) located the place where the noble Messenger (saws) had led all the Prophets in prayer before his ascension of Heaven on his mi'raj. After cleansing the place thoroughly, he led the Muslims in prayer and a makeshift mosque was erected there. This simple structure later developed into what is called Masjid al-Aqsa today and has been in Muslim possession ever since.

There is also another more impressive structure that emerged on the Haram al-Sharif. This is called the Dome of the Rock and has a huge gold dome. The Umayyad ruler Abdul Malik built this about 50 years later over the rock where the Heavenly steed, the Buraq was tethered when the Prophet (saws) led the other Prophets in prayer. After mounting the Buraq that started to ascend, the rock followed. The Angel Jibrail (as) asked the noble Messenger (saws) to order the rock from rising.

The noble Messenger (saws) put

his foot on the rock ordering it to stop. To this day, there is a footprint on the rock and it remains suspended except for very thin metal rods underneath it. This is the place where the Dome of the Rock Mosque exists.

The Muslims lost Masjid al-Aqsa and Jerusalem to the Crusaders in the year 1099 CE. Muslim rulers surrounding Palestine had become corrupt, much like the rulers today and had lost the will to defend Islam or Muslims. It was not until another 88 years before Salahuddin Ayyubi liberated Masjid al-Aqsa and Jerusalem from the clutches of the Crusaders.

Unfortunately the decline in Muslim rule and corruption in their ranks has led to the loss of Masjid al-Aqsa one more time. It occurred in several phases. When the Ottoman Empire was defeated and dismembered, the British colonialists took control of Palestine and in typical colonial style started to disburse Muslim lands to others. The Europeans had never tolerated the Jews in their midst; the frequent pogroms against them being a constant reminder of the intolerance of the Europeans. In 1918, when Britain occupied Palestine, they conspired to hand it over to the Jews' actually the Zionists' as a permanent homeland totally ignoring the rights of the indigenous Palestinian people. At the time the Zionist state was created in Palestine in 1948, more than 60 percent of Palestinian land was handed over to the Zionists. The rest was grabbed by the Zionists in 1967 together with East Jerusalem that houses the Masjid al-Aqsa as well as the Dome of the Rock.

That is where the situation stands today: Masjid al-Aqsa, indeed the entire Haram al-Sharif is under Zionist occupation and threat of destruction. Even while Muslims throughout their history provided sanctuary to the Jewish people after they suffered persecution elsewhere, the Zionists have turned out to be the worst kinds of oppressors in history. They act with impunity and are extremely hostile toward the indigenous Palestinian people. Heavily armed, they shoot at the slightest pretext and have no regard for Palestinian life.

The corrupt Muslim rulers are totally subservient to the imperialists and Zionists. Reposing hope in them to rescue the Muslims is a waste of time. It would require a figure like Salahuddin Ayyubi to rise among the Muslims to liberate Masjid al-Aqsa and Palestine from another group of Crusaders, this time of the Zionist variety.

Until then, Muslims can pray and prepare for that day. A good starting point would be to become better informed about their history that seems to have been largely forgotten.

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

Mindful Fridays

Inheritance to Orphans Under Islamic Law

Let the same Creator answer in Whose name orphans are being expelled from their rights

Aisha Hasnain

In the court, as Sana and her mother sat shaking in their shoes, the judge asked the official:

"Have you drafted these documents?"

"Yes, Your Honour," the official replied.

"Under what provision?"

"Your Honour, their grandfather has left a wasiyat [a will] for them."

"Where is the will?"

"Your Honour, the defendants' grandfather had left some of his land in their care so that the defendants could cultivate it for means of income."

"Is it true?" the judge asked the uncles.

"Yes, they replied confused, caught off guard. The official continued:

"Your Honour, the grandfather was an unlettered man. Hence, his decision to let the defendants have the hold of the land is his form of the will."

The Judge agreed with the official, favoured the defendants and gave them legal rights over the land. This was yin and yang between de jure and de facto.

Afshana could not recall what her paternal aunt looked like until the latter came to see Afshana's younger brother who was lying on the deathbed. The aunt was the only kind enough relative to

show up after two decades. No one else ever came from her deceased father's family to see the widowed mother living with her brother or the children who lived in an orphanage.

The argument of the greedy kinfolk of an orphan: "Orphans are not mentioned in the inheritance law in the Holy Book, thereby they stand ousted from any inheritance." Well, there is no direct mention, for sure; however, I ask, "Where is it written in the Holy Book that the orphans shall 'not' receive any share?"

Qur'an:

- Did you see him who denies the Hereafter? [107:1]
- Such is the one who repulses the orphan [107:2]
- And when the relatives and the orphans and the poor are present at the time of division of inheritance, give them something out of it [the property] and speak to them words of appropriate kindness. [4:8]
- Let those who, if they themselves died, would fear for the future of their helpless children, let them fear Allah and speak appropriate words [i.e., show the same concern for orphans] [4:9]
- Do good to your parents and relatives,

- and orphans and the needy [2:83]
- And that you stand firm for justice to orphans. [4:127]
- So as for the orphan, do not oppress him [93:9]
- And you devour others' inheritance greedily [89:19]
- But no, you do not honour the orphan [89:17]

There are two things Allah gave a human: Shariat, and Shu'oor. Shariat is law. Shu'oor is sense. The inheritance to orphans is one of those things He has explained in His final book, the Qur'an, not in words of one syllable. Some matters were left by Him for us humans to evaluate sensibly, looking for guidance in the light of the holy Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). But we have become good at nothing but creating controversies out of the ambiguity in these matters.

One day I asked my father, "Baba, how is it that I am sure I am born in the right belief and the other person in the wrong one? How is the latter to be blamed if they were born in the wrong belief?" My father answered: "No, Aisha, God shall ask you, 'If in the world you had time to study so much of science and art, how come did you not care to study the book

I sent for you?" I think my father did a fair job at raising me. If I am to turn into a rogue, that would be on me now.

This inheritance 'puzzle' is as simple as it gets: Aisha is a legal heir of her father, Hasnain. In turn, Hasnain is a legal heir of his own father, Ghulam Rasool, who is also Aisha's grandfather. Hasnain will pass on the ancestral property to Aisha which he himself will inherit from Ghulam Rasool. Since Ghulam Rasool is alive, the division of the property has not taken place yet. Sadly, Hasnain dies before he could inherit any fortune from his father. Now Aisha finds no inheritance not because she ceases to be the daughter of her deceased father who 'was' the son of Ghulam Rasool, but simply and plainly because her father died without having received any property from Ghulam Rasool. But losing her father is what her gluttonous co-heirs equate with 'Aisha is no longer entitled to any share in the property'. There is no divine law or lack of it behind this no-share theory. It is poor math and pure politics.

The following are the verses from the Qur'an for the orphaned children whose parent(s) died while they were minors and were left with some wealth from them:

- And do not eat up their [the or-

phans'] property along with your own. It is surely a mighty sin. [4:2]

- Indeed those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans eat up a fire into their own bellies. And they will soon be burning in a Blazing Fire. [4:10]
- And do not go near the wealth of the orphan [6:152]

In case the father had gathered no savings or security in his lifetime that his legal heirs could inherit, what is the way out for Aisha? Here comes the crucial role of Ghulam Rasool. There is a reason that the Islamic law has allowed Ghulam Rasool to make a will for any cause of his choice within one-third of his wealth and discouraged him from giving away his property to his children while he is still alive and in need of his wealth. Ghulam Rasool has the freedom to leave a will or leave everything for the children. The trick though is that Ghulam Rasool is barred from making the will for his legal inheritors. In his life, he can give anyone anything, but once he leaves the world, his say in things, except for his will made in compliance with the Muslim law, holds no merit. The Shariat takes over. My father cannot leave a one-third property will in my name and let my siblings and his wife look for their

small shares in the two-third of his property - movable or immovable - which I am again also a rightful shareholder of apart from receiving a will.

What one can deduce from the Qur'anic verses mentioned above, and many more not mentioned in this article, is that the grandfather is under an obligation to make a will for his orphaned grandchildren. If this society had been kind enough, the title of this article could have been the reverse: How an Orphan Lands a Lion's Share in the Property by Means of a Will? If the grandfather has five children and fifteen grandchildren, the twenty together would have to look for their share in the two-third while the orphan singularly got one-third. While this is wishful thinking and also something I wouldn't propose, give the orphan as much of share as the other children in the family would (indirectly) inherit from the grandfather, give or take, for creep's sake!

The stories narrated in the article are true but the names have been changed. The author goes by her pen name, Aisha Hasnain. She can be reached at aishahasnaino@gmail.com.

Read the full version of this article on our website

Gold Rises Rs 365 To Reclaim Rs 91,000/10 Gram-Mark

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- Gold prices increased by Rs 365 to Rs 91,050 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a strong trend in the overseas markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 90,685 per 10 grams on Wednesday.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also rose by Rs 365 to Rs 90,600 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 90,235 per 10 grams.

Silver prices also went up by Rs 200 to Rs 1,01,700 per kg. It had ended at Rs 1,01,500 per kg on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, gold futures for April delivery surged by Rs 828 or 0.94 per cent to trade near a record high of Rs 88,466 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

On March 20, the yellow metal prices rose to hit a lifetime high of Rs 89,796 per 10 grams.

Spot gold in the international markets climbed by USD 34.77 or 1.15 per cent to trade near a record high of USD 3,054.05 per ounce.

Gold prices surged near USD 3,050 per ounce as expectations of lower US GDP data and the anticipated reciprocal tariffs from the US on April 2, fuelled uncertainty, Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

Additionally, new threats from the US towards the Eurozone over potential support for Canada have heightened market risks, further boosting safe-haven demand, Trivedi said.

Parliament Approves Finance Bill 2025, Completes Budget FY26 Exercise

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- The Rajya Sabha on Thursday returned the Finance Bill 2025 to the Lok Sabha, along with 35 government amendments, including one that abolishes a 6 per cent digital tax on online advertisements, thus completing the 2025-26 budgetary exercise that started on February 1.

The House also returned the Appropriation Bill (3) with a voice vote.

Earlier in the day, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had moved the two bills in the House.

The Lok Sabha had passed the Finance Bill on March 25 and passed the Appropriation Bill on March 21.

Replying to the debate later in the evening, she said the tendency of the finance ministry would be to exercise caution and not let go of revenues.

"But, here we wanted to use this opportunity to show



our respect for Indian taxpayer. We have moved towards setting Rs 12 lakh as threshold up to which no one will have to pay any tax," Sitharaman said.

The Union Budget 2025-26 envisages a total expenditure of Rs 50.65 lakh crore, an increase of 7.4 per cent over the current fiscal.

The total capital expenditure proposed for the next fiscal is Rs 11.22 lakh crore and an effective capital expenditure of Rs 15.48 lakh crore.

It proposes a gross tax revenue collection of Rs 42.70 lakh

core and a gross borrowing of Rs 14.01 lakh crore.

According to Budget documents, Rs 5,41,850.21 crore has been earmarked for Centrally Sponsored Schemes for the financial year starting April 1, 2025. This compares with Rs 4,15,356.25 crore for the current financial year.

For central sector schemes, Rs 16.29 lakh crore have been earmarked for FY26 compared to Rs 15.13 lakh crore for 2024-25.

Budget estimates of expenditure for 2025-26 have in-

creased due to several reasons, including a rise in payment of interest on market loans, treasury bills, external loans, small savings and provident funds; higher requirements of Armed Forces, including capital expenditure; and more provisions for employment generation scheme.

Total resources being transferred to states, including devolution of states' share, grants/loans and releases under Centrally Sponsored Schemes, in Budget 2025-26 are Rs 25,01,284 crore, a rise of Rs 4,91,668 crore over the actuals of 2023-24.

The fiscal deficit for FY26 is projected at 4.4 per cent against 4.8 per cent in the current fiscal.

The GDP for FY2025-26 is estimated at Rs 3,56,97,923 crore, which is 10.1 per cent over the Revised Estimates for FY2024-25 of Rs 3,24,11,406 crore released by the National Statistical Office(NSO).

PUBLIC NOTICE: I have applied for the issuance of Pesticides license under name and style "Yatoo Enterprises." If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Mohd Shafi Yatoo fko R/o Chanderhama

PUBLIC NOTICE: This is to inform the general public that the electricity connection bearing consumer ID No. 0204020007838 & Installation Number 90643 R-1A, currently registered in the name of my father namely, Mohammad Abass Akhoun S/O Hyder Akhoun R/O Check Saderabal (Check Bagh) behind NIT, Hazratbal, Srinagar, now, I Ghulam Hassan Akhoun S/O Mohammad Abass Akhoun resident of Check Saderabal (Check Bagh) behind NIT, Hazratbal, Srinagar, hereby apply for the transfer of the said electricity connection in my favour at the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer Electricity Sub Division, Rainawari, Srinagar. If anyone has any objections regarding this transfer, he/she may submit the same to the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer Electricity Sub Division, Rainawari, Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper, after that no objection shall be entertained. Ghulam Hassan Akhoun S/O Mohammad Abass Akhoun R/O Check Saderabal (Check Bagh) behind NIT, Hazratbal, Srinagar Mobile No. 9697904482 inf

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL EKLAVYA MODEL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL Salia, Anantnag, J&K (192129) Tribal Affairs Department Jammu Kashmir Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government Of India. (National Education Society For Tribal Students) Website: emrssalia.net | UDISE: 01061100811 | Email: emrssalia@gmail.com | Phone No.: 01932-292544 EMRS SALIA SELECTION TEST 2025-26 RESULT NOTIFICATION This institution issued a notification through print media vide No: EMRS/S/2025/520-28 Dated: 25/03/2025 for inviting applications from the eligible candidates of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for admission to Class VI in accordance with the National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) guidelines issued vide F.NO: NESTS/EMRS/CAC/109/2021-22/1498, dated 01/01/2025, duly endorsed by the Tribal Affairs Department, J&K, vide No: TA-ADM/6/2025/03TAD(e-7609848) Dated: 07/01/2025, and Deputy Commissioner Anantnag vide No: DDCA/Tribal/2024-25/8191-94, dated: 19/02/2025. The last date for submission of application forms was 18/03/2025, which was later extended up to 22/03/2025 (up to 4 pm) vide Extension Notification No: EMRS/S/2025/553-59, Dated: 18/03/2025. The entrance test was conducted on 25/03/2025 at EMRS Salia from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm. Since the applications received for Boys and Girls at Block level were less than the intake capacity, all the candidates were selected, and the remaining vacancies from the Block quota were filled from the District/UT quota strictly as per the merit in the EMRSST. The applications received from Boys and Girls at District and UT level exceeded the intake capacity/vacancy, hence the selection was made as per the merit in the EMRS selection test.

Office of the Principal Eklavya Model Residential School Salia, Anantnag, J&K (192129) (National Education Society For Tribal Students) Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government Of India. Selected Candidate Girls. Table with columns: S.no, Name of candidate, Parentage name, Address, Roll no allotted, Score, Quota.

Note:- 1 Since the number of application received for admission to class VI under Block category(Girls) were less than the intake capacity all the appearing Candidates under this category stand selected 2 The remaining vacancies from the block quota where filled from district/ut level strictly as per merit in the EMRSST 2025 3 The number of application received for admission to class VI Exceeded the intake capacity, hence the selection were made strictly as per the merit in the entrance test. 4 The selection is subject to production and verification of original documents viz valid category certificate, School leaving certificate, age proof. In the event any of the documents produced by a candidate is found to be dubious/fake or the information provided is false, his/her admission shall be cancelled without any notice. 5 If any seat remains unoccupied due to non joining of selectees by the due date or become vacant later due to one or the other reason during the current A.Y 2025-26, the same shall be filled from the waiting list strictly as per merit in the EMRSST 2025.

Table with columns: S.No, Class, Intake capacity/Vacancy as per Notification, Applications received, No. appeared in admission test, Schedule for Document verification & completing Admission related formalities, Documents to be produced at the time of Admission. (Bring complete set of photocopies of the documents, Also Bring original documents for verification).

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL EKLAVYA MODEL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL Salia, Anantnag, J&K (192129) (National Education Society For Tribal Students) Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government Of India. Selected Candidate boys. Table with columns: S.No, Name of candidate, Parentage name, Address, Roll no allotted, Score, Quota. Includes a note at the bottom regarding application selection process.

Office of the Principal Eklavya Model Residential School Salia, Anantnag, J&K (192129) (Waiting List boys). Table with columns: S.no, Name of candidate, Parentage name, Address, Quota, Roll no, Score, Waiting list. Includes a note at the bottom regarding application selection process.

High Court Seeks Status Report On Ex-Ministers Staying In Govt Accommodation

Agencies

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has directed the Estates Department to submit a status report on two politicians—former Chief Minister Gulam Nabi Azad and former J&K BJP President Ravinder Raina—regarding their continued occupation of government accommodation. The directive was issued by a Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice M.A. Chowdhary during the hearing of a public interest litigation (PIL No. 17/2020) that seeks the eviction of overstaying ex-ministers, ex-legislators, and politicians from official residences.

During the hearing, Senior Additional Advocate General (Sr. AAG) S.S. Nanda, representing the Estates Department, informed the court that only three politicians remain in government accommodation. One of them, former MLC Ravinder Sharma, has challenged his eviction in a separate writ petition, where the court has granted a stay on his removal.

Nanda also stated that the J&K government's Designated Committee is set to review the matter of allotments and sought three weeks to file an updated report on Azad and Raina's status.

“Nanda also stated that the J&K government's Designated Committee is set to review the matter of allotments and sought three weeks to file an updated report on Azad and Raina's status.”

However, the petitioner's counsel, Advocate S.S. Ahmed, along with Advocate Rahul Raina, argued that the continued occupation of government residences by these two politicians violates the court's earlier rulings. They emphasized that security concerns and official accommodation should be treated separately, citing a precedent set by the Delhi High Court in Subramanian Swamy's case. Ahmed pointed out that previous governments had evicted two former Chief Ministers and over 180 politicians, arguing that the same principle should be applied in this case.

After hearing both sides, the Division Bench ordered the Estates Department to file a detailed status report on the two politicians by the next hearing date. Recognizing the case's significance, the court scheduled the next hearing for April 23, 2025. (CNS)

Police Conduct Raids Across Kashmir In Probe Against Proscribed Groups



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a significant crackdown, Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday conducted multiple raids across the Valley as part of ongoing investigations into the activities of proscribed organizations.

According to officials, the raids were carried out in Ganderbal, Shopian, and Baramulla districts, targeting individuals linked to banned groups, including Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP), and Jammu and Kashmir Muslim League (Masrat Alam faction).

Authorities stated that searches were conducted at the residences of individuals suspected of involvement in unlawful activities deemed a threat to public order and national security. During these operations, police recovered

incriminating materials connected to the activities of these banned organizations.

The recovered evidence has been taken into custody and will be examined as part of multiple cases registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Police officials emphasized that all raids were conducted in the presence of magistrates and independent witnesses to ensure legal transparency. “The operation aims to dismantle anti-national and separatist networks by identifying and prosecuting individuals engaged in such activities,” an official said.

Over the past several days, security forces have intensified their crackdown, executing multiple raids across Kashmir as part of efforts to curb separatist activities and enforce law and order.

Kashmir Consumes Mutton Worth Over Rs 252 Cr This Ramazan

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Kashmir valley has witnessed a high demand for mutton this Ramazan with an estimated consumption worth over Rs 252 crore for the holy month of fasting so far, revealed the data.

The data states that around 1,400 trucks loaded with sheep arrived in the Valley this month.

It states that in the last week alone, 60 to 70 trucks were transported, while in the first 24 days of Ramazan, 30 to 35 trucks arrived daily. “Each truck carried approximately 150 sheep, with each sheep priced accordingly.”

A mutton dealer from Srinagar said that the stock remained available throughout the month, and the demand was strong. He said that compared to the previous year, the

market conditions were favorable, with steady sales and good returns for suppliers.



able, with steady sales and good returns for suppliers.

Mehraj Ud Din, General Secretary of the All Kashmir Wholesale Mutton Dealers Association, said that this Ramazan, the stock of mutton was good and available throughout the year.

“The stock was sufficient for the whole month, and there was a minor disturbance in

arrivals when the road was

closed for a few days at the beginning of the month,” said Mehraj, adding that stock was available in the Valley and no shortage of mutton occurred during the month.

He also said that the high consumption of mutton during Ramadan reflects the continued preference for meat in Kashmiri households, despite steady prices—(KNO)

6 THE STOCK WAS SUFFICIENT FOR THE WHOLE MONTH, and there was a minor disturbance in arrivals when the road was closed for a few days at the beginning of the month,”

‘Proactive Steps Taken To Mitigate Glacial Lake Outburst Floods’

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir is taking proactive steps to mitigate the risks associated with Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) in the Union Territory.

The initiative involved a phased approach, including data collection, identification of high-risk glacial lakes and development of early warning systems.

The region's unique geography, with its high-altitude glaciers and lakes, makes it particularly vulnerable to GLOFs. Rising global temperatures are accelerating glacier melting, leading to formation of numerous glacial lakes that are at risk of sudden breach, releasing millions of cubic meters of water and debris.

To address this threat, the J&K government has adopted a comprehensive, holistic and proactive approach, initiating numerous technologically advanced measures on this account. These included

Expeditions and Data Collection; gathering detailed data through bathymetric surveys, water sampling and meteorological data collection to understand the dynamics and characteristics of glacial lakes.

Risk Assessment and Categorization; identifying high-risk glacial lakes based on 17 critical parameters including size, location and potential mass movement zones.

Early Warning Systems; establishing a fully functional



Glacial Lake Outburst Flood Early Warning System (EWS) to enhance preparedness and response to potential GLOF events besides Mitigation Measures; developing and implementing specific mitigation measures, including lake-lowering techniques and site-specific mitigation measures.

The Focused Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) Monitoring Committee (FGMC) has been constituted to oversee implementation of the mitigation strategy. The committee has identified 14 high-risk glacial lakes, 3 moderate-risk lakes and 7 low-risk lakes. Expeditions have been conducted to high risk lakes, including Sheeshnag and Sonar to enhance understanding and preparedness.

The government plans to continue its efforts to expand the mitigation program, improve predictive abilities for heavy rainfall events and sensitize the stakeholders, including NDR, SDRF and ITBP to be prepared for any emergent situation. Likewise, awareness generation has been specially focused upon and

Aapda Mitras are being sensitized and activated to remain vigilant in local areas.

Building on the momentum of its initiatives, the government of Jammu and Kashmir has undertaken a series of specialized expeditions to study critical glacial lakes in the region.

Led by Dr. Sunil Dhar from the Department of Environmental Sciences, Central University of Jammu, these expeditions have focused on three high-risk lakes in the Kishtwar district: Mundiakar Lake, Hangu Lake and an unnamed lake.

The expeditions have provided invaluable data on lake conditions, environmental factors, and potential GLOF risks. This information will be crucial in developing risk mitigation strategies and enhancing early warning systems. A subsequent expedition to Gangabal Lake, a high-altitude glacial lake in the northwestern Himalayas, assessed the lake's physical and geological characteristics, including local geomorphology, natural dam stability, and glacier conditions.

NC MLA Demands Judicial Probe Into Deaths of Two Gujjar Men

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) legislator from Budhal, Javid Iqbal Choudhary, on Thursday called for a judicial probe or an inquiry by a central agency into the disappearance and subsequent deaths of two Gujjar men in Kulgam.

Highlighting the concerns of the Gujjar community, Choudhary pointed to a series of troubling incidents, including the deaths of 17 people in Budhal, which, he said, have eroded trust in the authorities.

On the first day of the recess during the ongoing budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Choudhary visited the bereaved families in Kulgam to gather firsthand information about the case.

“The targeting of Gujjars and the lack of credible investigations into these deaths raise se-

rious concerns. I urge a judicial probe or an investigation by a central agency into these incidents,” he stated.

Two of the deceased, Showkat and Riyaz, originally hailed from Khawas in Budhal and had migrated to Kulgam, where they worked as laborers after purchasing small plots of land. Choudhary noted that their deaths, along with earlier mysterious fatalities in Budhal, remain unexplained.

After meeting the victims' families, Choudhary alleged a “deliberate cover-up” and expressed disappointment over the indifferent attitude of law enforcement agencies. He called upon Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to intervene and ensure a transparent investigation through the National Investigation Agency (NIA) or the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

PHE Daily Wagers Defer Strike Over Festivals

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Public Health Engineering (PHE) daily wagers have temporarily called off their strike for 10 days following an appeal from Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and in consideration of the upcoming Eid and Navratri festivals.

Speaking on behalf of the PHE Employees United Front, Ravi Hans stated, “The Chief Minister urged us to end the strike due to the public inconvenience it was causing. Given the approaching festivals, we have decided to defer our strike until April 7.”

The decision followed a meeting between PHE Minister Javed Rana and the protestors, during which the minister assured them that pending wages would be released in a phased manner.

The daily wagers have been demanding regularization of services, immediate release of pend-

ing salaries, an increase in minimum wages, and compensation for those who retired at 60.

While addressing the Assembly, Abdullah acknowledged the water crisis triggered by the strike and urged the workers to engage with the government panel formed to address their concerns.

Hans warned that if the government fails to act within the 10-day period, the workers will resume their agitation with greater intensity. “If our demands are ignored, the administration will face serious consequences. As soon as the Assembly session begins on April 7, our protest will also commence,” he asserted.

Minister Javed Rana described the workers' demands as legitimate, stating that the issue of pending wages—amounting to Rs 400 crore—would be taken up in the upcoming cabinet meeting.

J&K Completes 90% Smart City Projects In Sgr, Jammu

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir has completed 90% of its Smart Cities Mission (SCM) projects, with 288 projects worth Rs 6,597 crore sanctioned for the Union Territory under the initiative, according to data presented in the Lok Sabha.

The data reveals that 127 projects worth Rs 2,969 crore were sanctioned for Jammu Smart City, while 161 projects worth Rs 3,627 crore were allocated for Srinagar Smart City.

The Central government has provided Rs 856 crore in financial assistance for both cities, with Jammu receiving Rs 440 crore and Srinagar Rs 416 crore. The fund utilisation percentage for J&K under the mission stands at 90.1%.

Under the Smart Cities Mis-

sion, various infrastructure and urban development projects have been undertaken in Jammu and Srinagar, focusing on road and traffic management improvements, upgradation of public transport systems, development of pedestrian-friendly spaces and walkways, smart surveillance and security infrastructure and waste management and sanitation initiatives.

However, the implementation of Smart City projects in J&K has faced challenges, including land acquisition issues, delays in obtaining clearances, and limited availability of vendors and resources in some areas.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has established a multi-level review system to monitor progress and address delays in project execution—(with KNO inputs)

'Free Power, Ration, & Pension Hike'

J&K Cabinet Approves Key Budget Announcements

Agencies

JAMMU: The cabinet on Thursday gave its go-ahead to implementation of key budget announcements made by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in his budget speech on March 07.

Sources said that the cabinet meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

“The meeting commenced at 3: 00 PM and lasted till 4:30 PM,” they said, adding that the cabinet gave its nod to modalities worked-out by different departments for implementation of announcements of free power and free ration to AAY beneficiaries and enhancement of pension and marriage assistance scheme.

The key budget announcement include 200 units of free electricity for all Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households under the PM's Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana and 10 kilograms of free ration per person for the families falling in this category.

In his budget speech, the CM also announced increasing pensions for over 10 lakh elderly, widows, divorcees, and special-abled individuals.

As per the CM's budget speech announcement, monthly pensions will now be Rs 1,250 for those below 60 years, Rs 1,500 for those aged 60-80, and Rs 2,000 for individuals above 80 years. The Marriage Assistance Scheme for AAY category girls has also seen an increase, with financial aid enhancing to Rs 75000 from Rs 50000.

Statehood Among 14 Resolutions To Be Tabled In Assembly

A total of 14 private member resolutions, including three seeking restoration of statehood, will be moved in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly during the second part of the budget session next month, an official said.

The maiden budget session of the assembly post abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two Union territories commenced in Jammu on March 3, having a total of 21 sittings as per the revised calendar.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah presented the first budget of his government on March 7. After the demands for grants, the budget was approved on March 25 with the passage of Appropriation Bills before the assembly went on a 12-day recess.

The legislative assembly will meet again from April 7 to 9 for the final part of the budget session. The House will also take up private member bills on April 8.

According to the bulletin issued by secretary, J&K Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Manoj Kumar Pandit, seven each private members'

resolutions, the relative precedence whereof has been determined by ballot on March 25, would be taken up in the House on April 7 and 9.

Ruling National Conference members will move a total of 10 resolutions including the two related to the demand for restoration of statehood, independent members' two resolutions including the one on statehood restoration, and BJP and PDP members' one each.

Barring a few walkouts or marshalling out of some members on a few occasions, the assembly so far has not witnessed a single adjournment which was even highlighted by Chief Minister Abdullah on March 25. He had said “the House is in action today. It was peaceful until now” while referring to the ruckus over the issue of dailywagers.

On April 7, National Conference member Qaisar Jamshaid Lone will move the resolution which reads “this House resolves that statehood be restored immediately as promised by the Central Government in the Parliament of India”.

His party colleague Hilal Akbar

Lone will move another resolution that says “this House impresses upon the Government of India to restore statehood to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in order to fulfil the promise made by the Prime Minister in the Parliament”.

Independent member Shabir Ahmad Kullay's resolution reads, “This House stands united in its demand for the full restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir and urges the Government of India to take immediate steps to fulfil this long-standing promise.”

PDP's Waheed-Ur-Rehman Para is moving a resolution seeking complete ban on use of ‘LNT, JCB, cranes, machines and heavy machines’ for extraction of sand, riverbed mining and other mining activities in Jammu and Kashmir, while NC's Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din Mir is demanding measures to streamline the health care especially in the rural and far flung areas.

NC's Ali Mohammad Sagar will demand steps to ensure the regularization of ‘Rehbar-e-Janglat’ (forest guides) and his party colleague

Ali Mohammad Dar will ask for rectifying all the wrong entries made in the land records.

On April 9, NC's Ajaz Ahmad Jan will move a private member's resolution to push for necessary steps to ensure the establishment of separate administrative structure, including creation of district offices, infrastructure development, and allocation of resources to promote the welfare of people of Pir Panjal region, comprising Rajouri and Poonch districts.

NC's Bashir Ahmad Veeri demands an end to illegal or unscientific riverbed mining all across the rivulets, rivers and nullahs of Union Territory and protecting aquatic and ecological degradation due to these “unscientific activities”.

“Also, Karewa's, water bodies/wet lands need to be demarcated and protected with firm resolve and determination. This House urges the Government to take immediate measures for environmental conservation, afforestation, sustainable development and disaster preparedness. This House further

resolves for stricter regulations to curb pollution and protect natural resources, ensuring a sustainable future for the region,” Veeri's resolution reads.

BJP's Rajiv Jasrotia, through his resolution, will highlight the need for construction of a tunnel from Bhora to Dhar Road and a tunnel at Mata Bala Sundari in Kathua district to boost connectivity.

Independent member Rameshwar Singh will seek extension of holiday to cover areas in Bani, Lohai Malhar, Basantgarh and Latti in Kathua on account of annual Kailash Kund Yatra.

NC's Sajad Shaheen is going to move a resolution to recommend to the government to take immediate steps for the regularization of 18 residential colonies in Jammu district where people have been living for the last five decades to ensure planned development and access to essential civic amenities.

NC's Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din Mir will also demand necessary measures to solve the unemployment problem of educated youth in the UT.

IPL 2025: RCB Look Up To Batters To End 17-Year CSK Jinx

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Royal Challengers Bengaluru's hopes of exorcising a 17-year jinx hinge on their experienced batting unit finding its range when they face familiar foes Chennai Super Kings in their IPL match here on Friday.

The Royal Challengers have beaten the Super Kings only once at Chepauk — in the inaugural edition of the tournament in 2008. In the current RCB squad, only star batter Virat Kohli was part of that moment and now he will like to breach the CSK's fortress for a second time.

But that's easy to dream. As ever, the Chennai outfit is constructed to win their home matches on a pitch that offers considerable help to spinners.

They have the ever-familiar Ravindra Jadeja and have brought back 'old boy' Ravichandran Ashwin through last year's players' auction.

The Chennai side has also added Afghanistan left-arm wrist spinner Noor Ahmad too to the squad, and the trio did well against fellow five-time



champions Mumbai Indians a few days back.

The triumvirate bowled 11 overs against Mumbai, conceding an appreciable 70 runs for five wickets.

The pitch is expected to retain its character for this match as well, and the RCB batters, led by Kohli, will have to lift their game several notches to outwit an experienced bowling unit.

Outwit is the key word here. The Royal Challengers' batting unit should be clever more than downright aggressive to score off CSK's three-pronged spin unit, and Kohli should lead

that charge.

Negating spin has not always been a strong point of Kohli's batting but in the last two years or so he has showed massive improvement in that department.

Central to that change is his willingness to play more sweep/slog sweeps against spinners, and Kohli will have to bring all those expertise to the table on a blockbuster Friday evening.

But then Kohli alone won't be able to tackle a competent bowling machine, and he will require full-hearted support from Phil Salt, skipper Rajat Patidar, Liam Livingstone, Jitesh Sharma etc.

Looking at the Chepauk pitch, RCB might even consider bringing in Jacob Bethell, possibly for Tim David, who also provide a left-arm spin option.

They will also keep an eye on the fitness of pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who missed the first match against KKR due to a niggle, and if the veteran is fit then he will come in for Rasikh Salam.

Match starts at 7.30 PM.

Short TAKES

Rohit Sharma May Skip England Series: Report

Rohit Sharma's Test career faces scrutiny as reports suggest he will skip the England series, forcing India to reassess their batting order and leadership ahead of a crucial tour. According to India Today, sources have confirmed that Rohit has already made the decision.

Rohit endured a disappointing outing in the recent Test series against Australia, managing just 31 runs in three matches before voluntarily stepping aside for the final game in Sydney.

His struggles with consistency in the longest format of the game have raised concerns, and his potential absence from the England tour signals a major transition in India's leadership and batting order.

Some key players are expected to feature in the 'A' squad which will take on the England Lions in two four-day matches ahead of the Test series.

The warm-up games, scheduled between May 30 and June 6, will help selectors assess form and fitness before India begins their 45-day tour of England with the first Test at Headingley on June 20.

IPL's Youngsters Can Beat Pakistan, Says Kamran Akmal

Former wicketkeeper batter Kamran Akmal slammed the Pakistan team for the 'shameful' T20I series defeat in New Zealand and urged the selectors to learn from India on how to pick the national team based on performance.

Pakistan suffered a 1-4 thrashing in the T20I series in New Zealand despite the Kiwis missing several of their regular players who are participating in IPL 2025.

Akmal, who played 53 Tests, 157 ODIs and 58 T20Is for Pakistan, called up on the selectors to learn from India on how to pick teams based on merit.

"Our team looked like a local team. It was a shameful performance. Our performance is zero, and nobody has realised it," Kamran said on his YouTube channel. "Look at the ongoing IPL. If you play the youngsters playing there against this Pakistan team, they will win the series."

Haryana Top KIPG Team Standings

Haryana once again finished on top of the team standings with 34 gold medals as the second edition of the Khelo India Para Games came to a close here on Thursday. Tamil Nadu (28 golds) and Uttar Pradesh (23 golds) finished second and third, respectively, in the overall standings.

Featuring close to 1300 athletes, competing across six sporting disciplines at three venues in New Delhi, KIPG witnessed truly memorable moments. Eighteen national records were created with Jaspreet Kaur (Punjab), Manish Kumar (Haryana), Seema Rani (Punjab), and Jhandu Kumar (Bihar) winning gold medals in Para Powerlifting.

Additionally, 14 track and field athletes Dilip Mahadu Gavit (Maharashtra), Sharath Manganahalli Shankarappa (Karnataka), Manish Kumar (Haryana), Manjeet (Haryana), Bhavani Munniyandi (Andaman & Nicobar Islands), Lalitha Killaka (Andhra Pradesh), Khushboo Gill (Tamil Nadu), Enbatamizhi S (Tamil Nadu), Keerthika Jayachandran (Tamil Nadu), Lakshmi (Haryana), Usha (Haryana), Dolly Gola (Delhi), Jaspreet Kaur Sran (Punjab), and Fatima Khatoun (Uttar Pradesh) also broke national records.

Struggling Napoli Face Milan In Pivotal Clash For Both Sides

Second-placed Napoli are feeling the heat in the Serie A title race as they host AC Milan on Sunday with Antonio Conte's side having struggled since the departure of Khvicha Kvaratskhelia in January after only one win in their last seven league matches.

Conte has more than once expressed his frustration over the Georgia international's departure, having viewed Kvaratskhelia as a key figure in Napoli's future. The demanding coach has struggled to find a player capable of filling the winger's role.

Without the speedy playmaker Napoli have lost top spot to Inter Milan, who are three points clear with nine rounds left.

NIT Srinagar Felicitates Inter-Campus Sports Events Winners

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Thursday organised a felicitation ceremony for teaching and non-teaching staff who excelled in the recently held inter-campus sports events.

The event, held at the Community Room, was attended by Incharge Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Roohi Naaz, and Institute's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman. Both felicitated the awardees and lauded their contributions.

In the Table Tennis category, nine teams participated. The winning team comprised Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Mohd Shafi Mir, and Dr. Gowhar Nabi Tantray, while Dr. Manoj Kumar and Dr. Amandeep Singh Rehal secured the runner-up position.

In Chess, which saw participation from 21 players, Dr. Manoj Kumar emerged as the winner, with Dr. Ashok Kumar finishing as the runner-up.

The Badminton event featured competition among 11 teams. Dr. Manoj Kumar, Dr. Dinesh Kumar R, and Dr. Sandeep secured the winners' title, while Executive Engineer (Civil) Dr. Syed Mohsin Shabir, Mr. Sohail Ahmad Baba (SAS



Asst.), and Er. Junaid ul Islam finished as runners-up.

In the female category, eight teams competed in Badminton. Dr. Hailiya Ahsan clinched the winner's title, while SAS Officer Kowsar Ali Mir secured the runner-up position.

Similarly, in Table Tennis, Dr. Janani L emerged victorious, with SAS Officer Kowsar Ali Mir finishing as the runner-up. In Chess, SAS Officer Kowsar Ali Mir claimed the winner's position, while Prof. Shagoofa Rasool Shah finished as the runner-up.

Dr. Srinibash Mishra, former SAS Coordinator, was also felicitated by the dignitaries for his vast contributions to the department over the past several years.

Speaking on the occasion, Incharge Director Prof. Roohi Naaz highlighted the significance of sports in fostering

teamwork, discipline, and overall well-being.

Institute's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman, congratulated all participants and winners for their dedication and sportsmanship.

Dr. Manoj Kumar, Coordinator, expressed gratitude for the recognition and emphasized the role of such events in fostering a competitive yet friendly atmosphere within the institute.

SAS Officer Mir Kowsar stated that sports provide a refreshing break from routine academic life and enhance teamwork and collaboration.

Meanwhile Sohail Ahmad Baba (SAS Asst.), also highlighted the importance of physical fitness and encouraged more faculty and staff members to actively participate in future sports events.

Kohli Is Constantly Looking To Improve: Dinesh Karthik

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Virat Kohli's exemplary work ethic continues to serve as a source of inspiration for his teammates and the Indian superstar remains committed to raising the bar for himself, said RCB batting coach Dinesh Karthik on Thursday.

Karthik, a former RCB player who retired after the last IPL edition, said Kohli remains as hungry as ever.

"Even today, just now as I came out, he wanted to work on one more shot. At this point in time, to work on one more shot tells you the hunger that he has in his mindset," the former India wicketkeeper-batter said on the eve of RCB versus CSK clash.

"He wants to just improve and keep raising the bar. So, he is a special player. And at this point in time, the way I see it, he is batting as confidently and as well as he has ever done in the IPL."

Karthik also played down his recent struggles against spin.

"He's coming on some serious runs in the Champions Trophy. He's batted well in the recent past against spin, especially in white-ball cricket. So, I don't want to go too deep into stats," Karthik.

"I'm not very aware. But I remember, in the World Cup final, he got runs where it mattered. And apart from that, in the Champions Trophy, he had a good tournament, second-highest run-getter (fifth).

"And that doesn't come without playing spin because, in Dubai, as



you all know how well it helped the spinners, he was very aware. So, I believe right now, he is batting as well as he has ever done."

RCB have not beaten CSK at their home ground even once in the last 16 years. Rajat Patidar and his men will once again face a spin test when they take on the five-time former champions at Chepauk on Friday.

Asked if playing spin is a problem area for the RCB batters, Karthik said, "I don't think there's any problem. We played one match, a completely new side to what we had last year. One of the strengths, I believe, is the way we play spin. And as this tournament unfolds, you'll see it happen."

"CSK has three good spinners, no doubt. But we also have very good batters, competent batsmen, who we trust. One of the reasons why we picked them is how well they play spin."

'Problem Resolver' Igor Tudor Looks To Be The Right Coach For Juventus

Agencies

MILAN: Igor Tudor could be exactly the coach Juventus needs and at exactly the right time.

Tudor accepted the job last weekend, replacing Thiago Motta with the storied Italian club in disarray and discord.

Juventus is out of all competitions, having been eliminated from the Champions League and the Italian Cup. In Serie A, its faint chance of challenging for the title has evaporated after conceding seven goals and scoring none in its last two matches — 4-0 and 3-0 losses to Atalanta and Fiorentina.

That has left a shellshocked Juventus in fifth place and at risk of not qualifying for the Champions League next season. Motta also reportedly lost the support of key players.

Enter Tudor. The 46-year-old has a reputation for being a fixer, coming into clubs during the season and turning things around — having done that at Udinese (twice), Hellas Verona and Lazio.

Tudor also has a reputation as a no-nonsense coach, who can handle



difficult players and who will follow his own beliefs rather than toe the line to appease club bosses.

He left Marseille and Lazio after falling out with the hierarchy.

"Am I someone who resolves problems? I consider myself a coach," Tudor said in a news conference on Thursday. "I started coaching young and I've been doing it for 10-15 years, I have gone around a lot, I can also be a bit particular because I make choices with my

heart.

"I continue if I feel it is right. If not, I go home regardless of my contract. I live in the present. I want to be here for 10 years but I will do my work in the same way. We can't control what happens in the future."

Tudor has been given a contract until the end of June, taking him through to the end of the domestic season and the Club World Cup in the United States. His contract will reportedly

be automatically renewed for another year if Juventus qualifies for the Champions League.

Juventus is one point below fourth-placed Bologna and Tudor's first match in charge will be on Saturday, at home to Genoa.

"I believe a lot in this team because it has quality players and a great desire to improve," Tudor said. "We know that we are going through a difficult period and that there has been little time to work on changes, but there are no excuses in life and I have never looked for them."

Tudor knows Juventus well, having spent almost a decade as a player at the club, and then returning as an assistant coach to Andrea Pirlo in 2020-21. Pirlo and Tudor were fired at the end of that season.

The Croatian tactician is very much aware of the demands of the record 36-time Serie A champion.

"This club has a unique work culture. I've told the lads about some moments I experienced here as a youngster ... what makes up Juve: Respect, discipline, sacrifice and the will to win," Tudor said. (AP)

Barcelona's Squad Depth Set To Be Tested With Busy Run Of Games

Agencies

LaLiga leaders Barcelona will not have a moment to catch their breath as they play Osasuna and Girona in the space of three days after a punishing international break left their players either fatigued or unavailable and manager Hansi Flick fuming.

Barca and Osasuna were forced to reschedule their March 8 fixture following the death of the Catalan club's doctor and, with a busy schedule in other competitions, March 27 was the only date available straight after the international break.

As 13 Barcelona players return from national team duty, Brazil's Raphinha has no time to fly back and recover for Thursday's game while several others participated in Nations League quarter-finals that went to extra time and penalties.

Barca play every three days until April 15, a run of seven games in three competitions. After playing Osasuna, they host Girona on Sunday and Atletico Madrid in the Copa del Rey semi-finals three days later following a 4-4 draw in the first leg.

Barcelona and Osasuna had appeals to postpone the game rejected and Flick's side must now fulfil the fixture without key forward Raphinha, who has played every LaLiga game this season and has 27 goals and 20 assists in all competitions.

Raphinha's leadership and his form have put him in the conversation for



the Ballon d'Or but Flick did not mince his words when he bemoaned the fact he will not have the Brazil winger on Thursday when his side will be tested by Osasuna.

Midfielder Pedri said: "We're a little tired, but we can't forget that we're Barca. If it's decided we have to play on Thursday, we'll do it and give everything we have to win La Liga."

Barcelona are on a seven-match winning streak in LaLiga but Osasuna were the first team to beat them this season with a stunning 4-2 victory in September.

Back then Flick took the blame when his decision to rest key starters backfired but this time he has no choice but to rotate his squad with

defender Pau Cubarsi also injured on Spain duty.

Real Madrid will keep an eye on Barca's game on Thursday, with the two Spanish giants level on 60 points.

Real's form in LaLiga has been a roller-coaster since the start of February but Carlo Ancelotti's side host Leganes on Saturday, a straightforward fixture on paper against a team battling relegation and with one win in eight games.

Athletic Club, who are fourth with 52 points, will also watch Thursday's Barca match closely as they welcome Osasuna to the Metropolitan three days later in a game that was postponed to Sunday so their opponents could play the Catalans.

UK's Royal Society Decides Not To Take Action Against Elon Musk

Agencis

London: Britain's Royal Society has decided the scientific academy will not take any action against a famous member, U.S. tech entrepreneur Elon Musk, after fellows met to discuss potential disciplinary measures, British media reported on Wednesday.

The Royal Society, which began in 1660 and is the oldest national scientific academy in continuous existence, said last month that it would hold a meeting to discuss "principles around the public pronouncements

and behaviours of fellows" after thousands of scientists expressed their concerns about Musk's membership.

Musk, who owns X and has been a close aide to Donald Trump since the US president took office in January, was elected as a fellow in 2018 for his technological achievements in space travel and electric vehicles.

The Guardian newspaper said Adrian Smith, the Royal Society's president, had written to members to rule out disciplinary proceedings. Past fellows of the Society have included Isaac


Newton, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking.

In a statement, The Royal Society said any issues about the behaviour of its fellows were dealt with in strict confidence.

But it added that the view of its governing council was "that making judgements on the acceptability of the views and actions of fellows, particularly those that might be regarded as political, could do more harm than good to the Society and the cause of science in general".

Almost 3,500 scientists had signed an open letter expressing dismay at what they described as "continued silence and apparent inaction" from the Royal Society over Musk's fellowship.

They said Musk's behaviour, including what they said was embracing conspiracy theories, breached the Royal Society's code of conduct, while the situation had become more serious because of his position in Trump's administration, which they said had engaged in "an assault on scientific research".



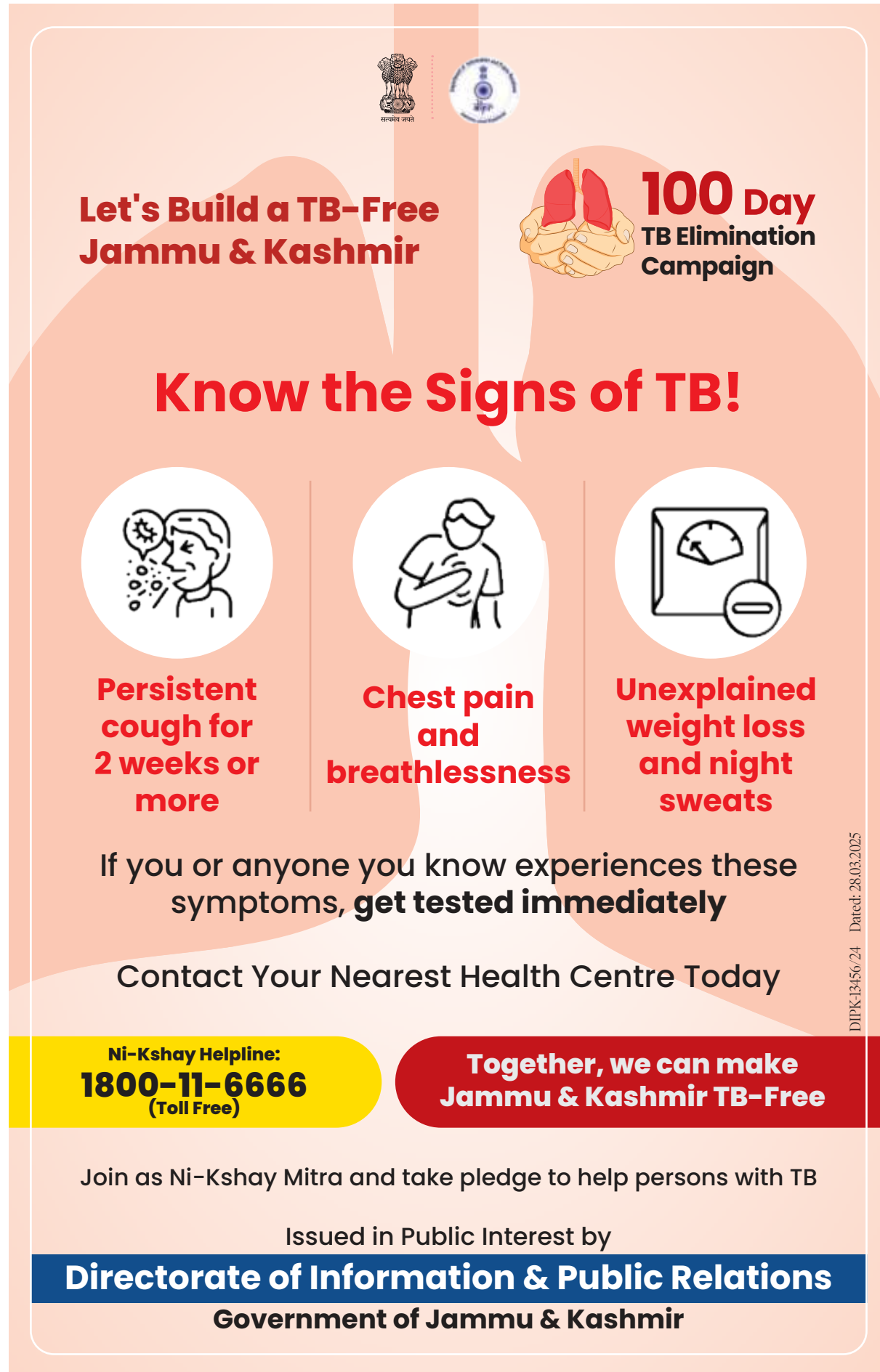
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