

स्वास्थ्य एवं
परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE

Last Date: 31st May 2025!


For Mandatory Filing of Annual Return for FY 2024-25 (through FSSAI's FoSCoS portal only)

All FSSAI Licensed Manufacturers,
Importers and Manufacturer - Exporter
of Food shall submit their Annual
Return for the FY 2024-25

- Refer Clause 2.1.13 and Conditions of License 05 of FSS (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011
- How to File Annual Return:
 - Step 1:** Login into FoSCoS portal
 - Step 2:** Go to Left Menu -> Annual Return -> Fill Annual Return

Points to keep in view for filing Annual Return:

- Shall be filed even for 'NIL' production during previous financial year.
- Shall be filed even if license is expired or surrendered during the FY 2024-25.
- Shall be filed even if new license obtained before 31st March 2025.
- Repacker and relabeller shall also file annual return.




Consequences for Non-Compliance:


- Penalty: Rs. 100 Per day** wef 1st June 2025
- License may be **suspended** under Section 32 of the FSS Act, 2006

For more details:


- Visit FoSCoS [<https://foscos.fssai.gov.in>]
- Call FSSAI's Helpline @1800112100 from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM
- Write at helpdesk-foscos@fssai.gov.in




fssaiindia




fssai



fssai_safefood



fssaiindia



fssai_india



To place an advertisement

CALL +91-194 2502327

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Srinagar | Wednesday | 07-05-2025

2

Study Finds Men More Likely To Fall Sick, Die From 3 Common Health Issues

Press Trust Of India

Men in many countries are more likely to fall sick and die from hypertension, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS as compared to women, according to a new study. However, compared to women, men were found to be less likely to seek medical care and adhere to treatment for these common health conditions due to norms related to masculinity and healthcare financing. Men were also more likely to smoke, while women were more likely to be obese and engage in unsafe sex, the study, published in the journal PLOS Medicine, found. The research highlights sex-based differences at each step of the "health pathway", which includes being exposed to a risk factor -- such as smoking -- developing a condition, diagnosis, treatment and death, study authors said. "Most of these differences are not explained by sex (biology) alone, but by socially-constructed gender -- highlighting the impor-

tance of taking a gender justice approach to reducing health inequities. A gender analysis can help to shape systems of health for all," Kent Buse, co-founder of Global 50/50, a UK-based research initiative seeking to achieve gender equality in global health, said. The findings are in line with those from previous studies showing men using fewer preventive, diagnostic, and treatment services for conditions such as HIV and COVID-19, compared to women. The study found that men and women received different care for hypertension in 200 countries. Also in 39 countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ecuador and Ethiopia, men and women received different care for diabetes, and in 76 countries, including Australia, Chile, Italy and Lesotho, they received different care for HIV. Overall, the authors said strategies need to be developed for encouraging men to participate in preventive and health care services. "We have long advocated the benefits of publishing sex disaggregated data. As our



Gendered Health Pathways demonstrates, such data can reveal where the health journeys of men and women diverge be it in relation to the risk factors they are exposed to, their health care seeking behaviours or their experiences in health care systems. That is an important first step towards health equity," Buse said. "Males had significantly higher prevalence

rates of conditions in 56 per cent of countries for HIV and AIDS, 30 per cent for diabetes, and four per cent for hypertension," the authors wrote. "Females, on the other hand, had significantly higher prevalence rates of conditions in 14 per cent of countries for HIV and AIDS, five per cent for diabetes, and only in India for hypertension," they wrote. Further, compared to women, death rates were found to be higher among men in 131 countries (64 per cent) for HIV/AIDS, 107 for hypertension (53 per cent) and 100 for diabetes (49 per cent). Death rates among women were higher, compared to men, in 25 countries for HIV/AIDS, nine for diabetes and only in the United Arab Emirates for hypertension, the study found. Women were also seen to have higher rates of diagnosis, treatment, and control. For the study, data on risk factors, disease prevalence, and death rates were obtained from the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) dataset.

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 Mehrooba Hamid D/o Abdul Hamid Shah R/o Malpora pattan With verified date of birth 09/04/2009 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
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Executive Magistrate 1st Class Narbal District Budgam

Tele Fax: 01951-260-276
Pin Code: 193401

It is notified that the applicant namely Abdul Gaffar Khan, S/O D/O W/O: Ghulam Mohammad Khan R/O: Kawoosa Khalisa Tehsil: Narbal, District: Budgam, has applied for the issuance of Death Certificate of Of Rafiq Bano W/o Abdul Gaffar Khan The applicant intends to register the death of his Wife as per record is 18-03-2019. If anybody is having any objection/claim regarding the same, he/she may approach the office of undersigned within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice or else any such claim/objection shall not be entertained.

(Signature & Seal)
BMG Executive Magistrate
1st Class Narbal

Dated: 06/05/2025

Public Notice

I, Gazala Nasir, D/o Nasir Ali Mir, hereby inform the general public that I have lost my original MBA degree certificate issued by Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri (J&K). The certificate was lost on 23rd February 2025.

Details of the lost certificate
Roll Number: 29-MBA-2009
Registration Number:* BG/SBU/09/616-MBA
Session:* 2009-11
Degree:* Master of Business Administration (MBA)
If anyone has found the above-mentioned certificate, kindly contact me immediately. The certificate shall be considered null and void from the date of this publication.
Gazala Nasir
Address: Khaiwan, Narwara Eidgah (Srinagar) J&K fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed the name of my daughter from (old name) Fatimah to (new name) Fatimah Mudasir Moharkan. In future she will be known as (new name) Fatimah Mudasir Moharkan. If any body is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

Media Use Aas

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed the name of my daughter from (old name) Sumaya to (new name) Sumaya Mudasir. In future she will be known as (new name) Sumaya Mudasir. If any body is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

Media Use Aas

Public Notice

This is information for general public that i have changed my particulars from Sahiba Sajad D/o Sajad Ahmad Khan R/o Malpora to Sahiba Sajad D/o Sajad Ahmad Lone for all future purposes including school record. I have gone through all legal requirements for the same. If anybody is having any complaint in this regard he/she may contact principal IEI Sholipora within a week's time. After that no complaint or grievance shall be entertained.

SAHIBA SAJAD
D/O SAJAD AHMAD LONE mcb
R/O MALAPORA

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADVOCATE TAWOOS AHMAD PARRAY

Chamber No. 01 District Court Complex Budgam

In the case of
1. Zeenat ul Tabasum W/o Mehraj ul Din Hakeem
2. Mehraj ul Din Hakeem Son of Mohammad Maqbool Hakeem R/o Sheikh ul Aalam Colony Suthoo Kuthairbagh B. K Pora Nowgam Budgam

(Caveators)
VS.
Public at Large (Non-Caveators)

In the matter of:
Caveat petition in terms of section 148-A of C.P.C.
The caveators have reason to believe/ apprehension that non-caveators may file a suit or any other type of proceeding before the Hon'ble court and on the ground or Distorted facts may succeed in obtaining some relief/order against the caveators which may result in an irreparable loss and inconvenience to them so it would be proper that caveators are given opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble court before passing any order.
Advocate Tawoos Ahmad Parray
LIC No. 158/2020
Advocate
J&K High Court
Srinagar
mcb

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Office of the Zonal Physical Education Officer Narbal Budgam.

Mr. Tajmul Ahmad Khan International player, National License certified coach, Qualified Judge "A" & MTR. Mursaleen Jan Principal Holy Mission High school Narbal kicked off selection Trials of Taekwondo, Boxing, karate, Wushu and judo U-14/17 Girls Narbal, 6th May 2025 ---The Department of Youth Services and Sports Zone Narbal successfully organized the selection Trials (kick Boxing, karate, Wushu Taekwondo and Judo for Girls U-14/17 today at Holy Mission High School Narbal. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from multiple schools across the zone.



Students from various Govt./Private Educational Institutions showcased their skills, discipline, and sporting spirit in Taekwondo, Boxing, karate, Wushu and judo categories. The competitions were held under the supervision of trained officials and referees, ensuring fairness and adherence to sportsmanship values. The event was inaugurated by International Player, National certified coach, Qualified Judge "A" Mr Tajamul Ahmad Khan, Principal Holy Mission High school Narbal Mtr. Mursaleen Mam and In-charge Activities ZPEO NARBAL MR BASHIR AHMAD SHEIKH who emphasized the importance of Martial Art in building strength, focus, and confidence among youth. They appreciated the efforts of the participating Students, schools, coaches and host Institution for their support in organizing the event successfully. This competition is a part of the department's ongoing efforts to promote physical education, talent identification, and holistic development among school children in the zone.

Issued by In-charge Media and Publicity Zone Narbal

bmj

ISSUED BY ZONAL
PHYSICAL EDUCATION OFFICE
NARBAL BUDGAM

Public Notice

I Have applid for the issuance of "D Class' contractor card . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the S.E PWD R&B Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohammad Akram Sheikh
S/o Ghulam Mohi-u-din Sheikh
R/o Chewadara Beerwah Budgam
bmj

Public Notice

I have changed the name of my son from Aman Ullah Dar to Mohammad Amaan Dar In future he will be known with his new name Mohammad Amaan Dar. Bilal Ahmad Dar F/o Mohammad Amaan Dar. R/o Takan wari Pora. District Srinagar Pin code 190017. J&K. INDIA

ts

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

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

Public Notice..

The registrar death BDO Khore Sherabad has submitted a case file pertaining to death of Ghulam Qadir Mir S/o Abdul Gaffar Mir R/o Hanjiwera Bala with verified date of death 24/01/2017 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
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

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

Public Notice..

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Sugar Zehra D/o Mohd Hussain Ganie R/o Matipora Singapora with verified date of birth 08/12/2020 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

SD
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Public Notice..

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Hanana Hamid s/o Abdul Hamid Dar R/o Pankispora seer jagir With verified date of birth 01/07/2021 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained..

SD
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

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

Public Notice

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Bariq Mehraj s/o Mehraj Ahmad Lone R/o Chonth Pathri Tangmarg with verified date of birth 18/09/2020 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

SD
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Published Since 1997 KASHMIR
OBSERVER

IS AVAILABLE IN SRIANGAR AT FOLLOWING PLACES

ABDULLAH NEWS AGENCY	AMIRA KADAL	BUDSHAH NEWS AGENCY	AFTAB MARKET
SIKENDER NEWS ANGENCY	AMIRAKADAL	RASHEED GAZALA	LAL CHOWK
GUPKARI NEWS AGENCY	LAL CHOWK	RAFIQ NEWS AGENCY	BATMALOO
KHAN NEWS AGENCY	REGAL CHOWK	MEHRAJ NEWS AGENCY	DALGATE
RASHEED NEWS AGENCY	DALGATE	ASHIQ NEWS AGENCY	GAGRIBAL
IMRAN NEWS AGENCY	KOHNKHAN	SAMA NEWS AGENCY	SHALIMAR
KOHINOOR NEWS AGENCY	NISHAT	WANI NEWS AGENCY	HYDERPORA
SHEIKH NEWS AGENCY	HYDERPORA	AL NOOR NEWS AGENCY	NOWGAM
FAIRDEAL NEWS AGENCY	AIRPORT	BISMILLAH NEWS AGENCY	BAGH E MEHTAB
AL FALAH NEWS AGENCY	NATIPORA	FIDA NEWS AGENCY	RAJ BAGH
FIRDOUS NEWS AGENCY	PIRBAGH	HARMINDER NEWS AGENCY	GOGJI BAGH

TANTRAY NEWS AGENCY	RAJ BAGH	BASHIR NEW AGENCY	NOWHATTA
ARIF NEWS AGENCY	JAWHAR NAGAR	AGA NEWS AGENCY	ALI KADAL
MUSHTAQ KALASH-PURI	KALASHPORA	HABBAKADAL NEWS AGENCY	HAB-BAKADAL
ALTAF NEWS AGENCY	FATEHKADAL	FAROOQ NEW AGENCY	GOJWARA
JEELANI NEW AGENCY	KHAWAJA BAZAR	DAR NEWS AGENCY	QAMAR-WARI
NAZIR NEWS AGENCY	RAINAWARI	CHANDER NEWS AGENCY	BEMINA
KHALID NEWS AGENCY	HAMDANIYA COLONY	JONSON NEWS AGENCY	SEKIDAFAR
BHAT NEWS AGENCY	JAMALLATTA	SHAFAT NEWS AGENCY	HAWAL
BILAL NEWS AGENCY	KAK SARAI	KHALIQ NEWS AGENCY	NOWSHEH-RA
MUZAFFAR ALI NEWS AGENCY	ALAMGIRI BAZAR	BILAL NEWS AGENCY	NOWSHEH-RA
TARIQ NEWS AGENCY	M.K. CHOWK	MUZAMIL NEWS AGENCY	SOURA
GULZAR NEWS AGENCY	SOURA	SUBHAN NEWS AGENCY	SKIMS SOURA
HASAN NEWS AGENCY	SOURA	NISAR NEWS AGENCY	LAL BAZAR
BASHIR NEWS AGENCY	BUCHPORA	BASHIR NEWS AGENCY	HAZRAT BAL
AIJAZ NEWS AGENCY	HAZRAT BAL	YASIR NEWS AGENCY	ZAKOORA

FOR ANY QUERY, CALL CIRCULATION
DEPTT. : 0194-2502327

Police Books Four Drug Peddlers Under PIT NDPS Act

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In the relentless crackdown against drug trafficking and dismantling the illegal narcotics network, Srinagar Police on Tuesday said to have booked four notorious drug peddlers under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (PIT-NDPS Act).

These drug peddlers namely Tawfeeq Ahmad Khan S/o Mohammad Ayoub Khan R/o Shangulipora Noorbagh, Aaqib Mushtaq Kenoo S/o Mushtaq Ahamd Kanoo R/o Pamposh Colony Noorbagh, Imran Ahmad Bhat S/o Aijaz Ahmad Bhat R/o Guzerbal Noorbagh and Faizan Rashid Wani S/o Ab. Rashid Wani R/o Palpora Noorbagh have been booked under the PIT-NDPS Act after obtaining the formal detention orders from Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir on the basis of dossiers prepared by Srinagar police against them, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to Kashmir Observer.

Consequently, police said that these drug peddlers were detained and subsequently lodged in Kot Balwal Jail Jammu and District Jails of Udhampur, Kathua and Bhandarwah.

“These drug peddlers have been involved in the peddling of narcotics among the youth of Srinagar on an alarming scale. Besides, they were also involved in several NDPS Act cases of various police stations of Srinagar. Despite several NDPS Act cases registered against them, they did not mend their ways after getting bailed out from courts and were brazenly promoting drugs among the youth of the valley, especially in Srinagar, through their illegal narcotics network. Srinagar Police has also set into motion the process to attach their properties under the provisions of PIT-NDPS Act,” the statement reads.

Pertinently, Police has been systemically targeting and dismantling the illegal narcotics infrastructure in the Srinagar city and numerous drug peddlers have been detained under the PIT NDPS Act in Srinagar till date.

“J&K Police affirms its steadfast commitment of eliminating drug peddling in the region with the full might of law. We also caution those engaged in this unlawful activity that the long arm of law would catch them sooner than anticipated and every offender will face justice,” police said.

DC Sgr Assesses TB Control Efforts

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to assess ongoing Tuberculosis control efforts and to acknowledge the significant strides made towards TB elimination at the grassroots level, a comprehensive review meeting on National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) cum felicitation ceremony recognizing the achievements under the TB Free Panchayat initiative for the year 2024, was held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex, here.

Speaking on the occasion,

DC acknowledged the commendable efforts of the Health Department and other stakeholders, appreciating the dedication shown by the teams at various levels.

Dr Bilal also sought a renewed commitment from all participants to sustain and accelerate the momentum towards TB elimination, ensuring continued collaboration and support at all levels of governance and healthcare delivery in Srinagar District.

DC further underscored that the achievement reflects the collaborative efforts of the District administration, Health, Panchayat level staff and community health workers in combating Tuberculosis at the grassroots level.



Police, SDRF Conduct Mock Drill In Dal Lake

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: In a proactive move to bolster emergency preparedness, the Srinagar Police, in coordination with the Tourist Police and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), conducted a mock drill in Dal Lake on Tuesday. The exercise was aimed at testing response mechanisms for water-related emergencies such as boat capsizing and drowning incidents.

Fully equipped rescue teams demonstrated real-time rescue operations, showcasing the use of life-saving equipment and coordinated relief procedures. The drill was designed to assess the readiness and inter-agency coordination necessary for swift action during water-based emergencies.

Officials from the SDRF con-

“The drill was designed to assess the readiness and inter-agency coordination necessary for swift action during water-based emergencies.

firmed that the drill was conducted following orders received a day earlier, focusing on boat capsize scenarios. “We carried out

demonstrations involving rescue techniques and equipment as part of our ongoing commitment to disaster preparedness,” an SDRF official said.

Senior police officers, including the SSP Enforcement, SP Zone East Srinagar, SP Headquarters Srinagar, DySP Headquarters Srinagar, and DySP SDRF, were present during the exercise and closely monitored the drill to evaluate the preparedness level of all participating agencies.

This mock drill also served as a preparatory step ahead of a broader civil defence exercise slated for May 7. The upcoming exercise follows a directive from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), urging all States and Union Territories to conduct comprehensive preparedness drills to enhance disaster response capabilities.

Prof. H. C. Verma Calls For Scientific Inquiry Beyond Exams

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Prof. H. C. Verma, one of India’s most celebrated physicists and educators, delivered an inspiring address at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Tuesday and urged them to look beyond the narrow goals of competitive examinations like JEE and NEET and instead embrace scientific inquiry as a lifelong pursuit.

In his keynote speech, Prof. Verma emphasized the value of curiosity-driven learning over rote memorization. He encouraged students to engage deeply with the fundamentals of Physics and Mathematics, citing unsolved problems in Physics that require fresh and imaginative thinking.

“Real science begins where textbooks end,” he said, stressing the need for innovation and original thought.

Prof. Verma also highlighted the pressing environmental challenges facing the world today. He called on the academic community, especially young scientists and engineers to incorporate sustainability into both research and daily practice.

“Water conservation and the responsible use of natural resources should be core concerns in scientific development,” he said.

Prof. Verma expressed his gratitude to the Department of Physics for hosting the event and fostering a vibrant academic culture at NIT Srinagar.

Expressing his appreciation, Prof. Verma thanked the Department of Physics for hosting the event and fostering an environment conducive to academic excellence and critical thinking.

Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, expressed his deep appreciation for Prof. Verma’s visit and its lasting

impact. “We are honored to host Prof. H. C. Verma, whose teachings have ignited scientific curiosity across generations,” he said.

“His philosophy aligns perfectly with our mission at NIT Srinagar—to cultivate not just skilled engineers but thoughtful, socially responsible innovators. His interaction today will surely inspire a renewed sense of purpose among our students and faculty,” Prof. Kanaujia added.

The session was organized by Prof. M. A. Shah, Dean of Alumni Affairs at NIT Srinagar, who delivered the welcome address.

“Prof. Verma’s visit is not just an academic event—it is an emotional moment for generations of science lovers who grew up learning from his books,” Prof. Shah said.

“His presence rekindles a deeper love for Physics and reminds us that the purpose of education is not just to clear exams, but to transform minds,” he said.

From Office of the Advocate Adv M.A Sofi

In the case of

1. Nisar Ahmad Malik
2. Mohammad Shafi Malik Both Sons of Abdul Jabbar Malik Both Residents of Oam Buran Pattan.
3. Shakeel Ahmad Malik S/o Ghulam Hassan Malik.
4. Tanveer Ahmad Malik
5. Mohammad Rafi Malik (Alias Mudasir) Sons of Ali Mohammad Malik
6. Shazia Bano D/o Jabbar Malik Residents of Ganjipora Buran Pattan & District Baramulla.
7. Fayaz Ahmad Malik S/o Mohammad Malik
8. Bilal Ahmad Malik S/o Mohammad Shafi Malik R/o Singhpora.
9. Bashir Ahmad Malik S/o Ghulam Qadir Malik Resident of Singhpora Tehsil Singhpora District Baramulla.

(Caveator)

V/s

Public at large

In the Petition in terms of Section 148-A

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

fko

Sd/advocate

From Office of the Advocate Adv M.A Sofi

In the case of

1. Shabir Ahmad Bhat Son of Late Haji Mohammad Sideeq Bhat and Mst. Raja Begum
 2. Sanjeeda Sideeq
 3. Rubena Sideeq
 4. Ulfat Sideeq
 5. Urfana Sideeq
 6. Suriya Sideeq
- Daughters of Late Haji Mohammad Sideeq Bhat and Raja Begum
7. Arjumand Hussain Bhat Son of Late Haji Mohammad Sideeq Bhat and Taja Begum
- All Residents of Hanjiweera Bala District Baramulla.

(Caveator)

V/s


Public at large

In the Petition in terms of Section 148-A

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

fko

Sd/advocate

- 
- 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

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311




RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS



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

<div><div>HIJRI CALENDAR</div><div>09 Zil-Qadah 1446</div></div>	PRAYERS	
	FAJR	4: 02
	ZUHR	12:28
	ASR	5: 18
	Magrib	7:21
	ISHA	8: 53

This Day In History

- 558- In Constantinople, the dome of the Hagia Sophia collapses. Justinian I immediately orders the dome rebuilt.
- 1253- Flemish friar William of Rubruck sets off to convert the Mongols to Christianity, a mission ordered by French king Louis IX - one of the most famous travel accounts in the Medieval world
- 1274- 2nd Council of Lyons (14th ecumenical council) opens, convened by Pope Gregory X
- 1416- Monk Nicolaas Serrurier arrested because of heresy at Tournay
- 1429- English siege of Orleans broken by Joan of Arc and the French army
- 1579 -Congress of Cologne forms in Netherlands
- 1638- Cornelis Gooyer establishes the first permanent Dutch settlement on Mauritius, then uninhabited
- 1660 - Isaac B Fubine of Savoy, in The Hague, patents macaroni
- 1664- Louis XIV of France inaugurates The Palace of Versailles
- 1697- Stockholm's medieval royal castle is destroyed by fire, the Codex Gigas (world's largest extant medieval illuminated manuscript) survives by being thrown out a window
- 1700- William Penn begins monthly meetings for blacks advocating emancipation
- 1718- The city of New Orleans is founded by French explorer Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville
- 1748- French troops conquer Maastricht in the War of the Austrian Succession
- 1756- Burmese King Alaungphaya sends his Golden Letter on rolled gold to King George II of Great Britain detailing trade proposals
- 1832- Greece becomes independent, Otto of Bavaria is chosen as king
- 1873- US marines attack Panama
- 1891- Battle in Bunyoro: Capt F Lugard stops Muslim rebellion, 300 killed
- 1895- Russian scientist Alexander Stepanovich Popov demonstrates to the Russian Physical and Chemical Society his invention - the world's first radio receiver in St. Petersburg. Celebrated as Radio Day in Russia.
- 1912- Columbia University approves plans for awarding the Pulitzer Prize in several categories, after established by Joseph Pulitzer
- 1919- A draft of the Versailles Treaty is shown to Germans
- 1920- USSR recognizes Georgia's independence
- 1928- Pulitzer prize awarded to Thornton Wilder for "Bridge of San Luis Rey"
- 1934- Pulitzer prize awarded to Sidney Kingsley for his play "Men in White"
- 1939- Germany and Italy announce an alliance known as the Rome-Berlin Axis
- 1941- British House of Commons votes for Winston Churchill (477-3)
- 1945 - World War II: British troops enter Utrecht, Netherlands
- 1945 - World War II: Unconditional German surrender to the Allies signed by General Alfred Jodl at Reims
- 1947 - General MacArthur approves Japanese constitution
- 1947 - Paraguayan government unleashes contra revolt
- 1954 - French surrender to Vietnam after 55-day siege at Dien Bien Phu
- 1954 - US, Great Britain & France reject Russian membership of NATO
- 1955 - USSR signs peace treaty with France & Great Britain
- 1963 - SETC Telstar 2 launched (apogee 6,700 miles (10,800 km))
- 1975 - Small Astronomy Satellite Explorer 53 launched to study X-rays
- 1986 - Iraq bombs a Tehran oil refiner
- 1992 - US space shuttle STS-49 launched (maiden voyage of Endeavour)
- 1993 - South Africa agrees to multi-racial elections
- 1998 - Mercedes-Benz buys Chrysler for \$US40 billion and forms DaimlerChrysler in the then largest industrial merger in history

DEMISE

This is to announce with profound grief that **Abdul Rashid Ganie S/o Mohammad Sultan Ganie R/o Wawoosa Rangreth, Old Air Port Road Srinagar** passed away on *5th May 2025 (08 Zul Qa'dah 1446)*, at SKIMS Soura Hospital after a brief illness.

Inna Lillahi wa inna ilayhi

raji'un. **MOURNING** will be

observed for **THREE DAYS** (until Thursday). Ladies are requested not to bring any fruit with them.



BEREAVED FAMILY:

ZUHAIB RASHID (SON) [+91 97963 88337]
M. YAQOOB GANIE (BROTHER) [+91 60051 31330]

SAD DEMISE

With Profound Grief & Sorrow We Inform The Sad Demise Of **Mr. Haji Mohammad Hussain Khan R/o. Khaiwan Eidgah Srinagar.** May Allah (SWT) Grant Jannat-ul-Firdous to the Departed Soul. The Congregational Fateh Khawani Will Be Held On **08-May-2025 (Thursday)** At Their Ancestral Graveyard Gojiwara Near Kaleen Mart At 10:30 Am .



BEREAVED FAMILY

9796946757, 9419650505

NOTE :People are requested not to bring fruits or any other eatable.

inf

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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

KO VIEW

Mental Health Stigma

In Kashmir, as in many parts of the world, mental health is still widely misunderstood and often dismissed as madness, as a report in this paper makes clear. Yes, we talk about mental health more now. Schools and workplaces hold occasional workshops. But when someone close to us actually breaks down, we often don't know what to do. We advise them to "snap out of it," or "stop overthinking." There is a reason for it. We don't want to acknowledge that there is a mental health issue, which is seen as madness by most people. In turn, this has created a stigma over the disease. We generally don't talk openly about depression, anxiety, or trauma. This calls for a change in attitude. More so, in a place where, according to a study, a striking 55.72% of the Kashmiri population is grappling with depression, with the most susceptible age group being individuals aged 15 to 25 years old.

We are now seeing the cost of this silence. There's been a disturbing rise in suicides among Kashmir's youth, and yet we still lack the mental health services they desperately need. In a welcome decision in 2023, Jammu and Kashmir announced the setting up of a dedicated mental health authority, in response to the growing mental health crisis in the union territory, more so in Kashmir Valley. The primary objective of this authority is to oversee and regulate all mental health facilities within the region, ensuring they are properly registered and conform to established guidelines.

For example, casual use of terms such as "psychotic," "crazy," or "psychopath" perpetuates negative stereotypes and stigma. The terms, often thrown around without understanding their clinical implications, can harm individuals and discourage them from seeking support. It's crucial to differentiate between clinical terms and everyday language to avoid further stigmatization.

With over 150 million Indians requiring mental health care services, yet only around 30 million seeking help, there's an urgent need for both education and awareness. One of the critical aspects of tackling this issue is addressing and dispelling misconceptions. Terms associated with mental health are often misused and misunderstood, contributing to the stigma surrounding the topic.

Mental health has in recent years become an endemic global malaise. But it isn't getting enough attention as unlike diseases like Covid-19 which have visible physical manifestation, mental health is a psychological affliction. It is shrouded in part secrecy and part mystery. The result is that it generally goes unnoticed unless the symptoms acquire extreme manifestation. While mental health struggles may not always claim lives, they quietly erode the quality of life — and only through sustained awareness and open conversation can we begin to offer real support.



The Slow Secret to Getting Rich

Irshad Mushtaq

Building wealth through long-term investing sounds simple. Put your money in, let it grow at 15 per cent a year, and in 20 years your Rs 1 crore turns into over Rs 16 crore. The math is solid. The challenge is sticking around long enough to see it work.

Most people don't. That's because long-term investing goes against our instincts. We want results now. In the age of quick trades and viral tips, waiting two decades feels like watching paint dry. But chasing fast money usually ends badly: high risks, low returns, and a lot of regret.

The truth is, investing isn't meant to be thrilling. It's meant to be effective. It rewards those who are informed, steady and patient. The ups and downs of the market are normal. What matters is staying in, not trying to time the perfect exit or entry.

Mutual funds are a useful starting point. They offer diversification, professional management and low entry barriers. You don't need a fortune to begin, just the discipline to keep going. And if you choose funds or companies with strong ethics, you not only grow your money but do it with peace of mind.

But even the best portfolio won't work if you panic at every dip. This is where courage comes in: the ability to trust your plan, ignore the noise and let time do its job. Education helps too. Knowing why you're investing and what you're investing in builds confidence and clarity.

The real secret to wealth isn't luck or timing. It's patience. Most people fail not because they picked the wrong stock, but because they gave up too soon. Stick with the process, stay curious, and give it time. The results will follow, slowly, but surely.

Writer is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

Kashmir Needs a Loan Shift

Priority Sector Lending can transform Kashmir's economic landscape, if financial access is reimagined to meet the lived realities of local artisans, farmers, and entrepreneurs



Across orchards, workshops, and winding tourist trails, small businesses in Kashmir have kept the wheels turning through decades of disturbances. Yet, these micro, small, and medium enterprises—MSMEs, as policy calls them—remain stunted by outdated support systems and distant policymaking.

Kashmir is a region defined by its contradictions. Rich in natural beauty, cultural heritage, and artisanal skill, it remains economically fragile.

According to the Annual Report of the Ministry of MSMEs 2022-23, India is home to over 63 million MSMEs, contributing nearly 30 percent to the GDP and employing over 110 million people.

In Kashmir, though precise data is fragmented, MSMEs account for an overwhelming share of non-government employment, particularly in handicrafts, small-scale farming, and tourism.

These businesses are not only economic units. They are social anchors.

In villages near Shopian, women gather around creaky looms to weave Pashmina threads into heirlooms. In the apple belts of Pulwama, growers prepare crates for export despite erratic weather. In Baramulla, small homestay operators welcome tourists with stories and saffron tea. Each is a node in a delicate economy that has survived conflict, climate shocks, and market closures.

But survival is no longer enough. Kashmir needs economic renewal. One way to start is by rethinking how financial support is extended to small businesses through Priority Sector Lending (PSL). The RBI mandates that 40 percent of adjusted net bank credit must go to priority sectors: agriculture, MSMEs, education, and others.

In principle, this should bring affordable credit to the very people building Kashmir's economy from the ground up.

Yet, in practice, the ground

is uneven.

In Kupwara and Kulgam, artisans speak of loans they never heard of. In Anantnag, aspiring entrepreneurs cite documentation barriers and distrust of state institutions. Many rely on informal credit, often at exploitative interest rates. Women-led enterprises, already marginalized, are especially vulnerable. A 2023 report by Women in Business Kashmir found that less than 5 percent of women entrepreneurs had ever accessed formal credit.

Kashmir's economic potential is held hostage not by lack of talent or demand, but by the absence of tailored financial policy. While banks technically meet PSL targets, credit does not always reach where it is most needed. This mismatch costs livelihoods.

A reimagined approach is overdue. First, awareness must go beyond pamphlets. Outreach must be personal, multilingual, and embedded in community networks. Financial literacy cannot be a checkbox. It must be a campaign. Panchayats, self-help groups, and trade bodies should become partners in connecting entrepreneurs with credit.

Second, the loan process must be simplified. Many small businesses lack collateral or complex documentation. Digital platforms with vernacular support and minimal paperwork can ease entry. The model of Jan Dhan accounts and Aadhaar-linked subsidies offers lessons worth scaling.

Third, credit limits must reflect the real costs of doing business. With input prices soaring and climate risks rising, fixed ceilings on working capital are no longer tenable. Inflation-adjusted caps, coupled with risk guarantees and crop insurance, can prevent defaults and NPAs.

Globally, small enterprises have turned green economies into engines of employment. Europe's shift toward eco-friendly businesses was powered by public grants for renewable adoption and

sustainability-linked financing. Kashmir, too, can lead if policies are adapted to its landscape. Subsidies for solar-powered looms or cold storage for perishables are not luxuries, they are necessities for resilience.

In 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir Government allocated Rs 200 crore under the New Industrial Policy, aiming to encourage local manufacturing. But such top-down initiatives must integrate MSME voices at the policy table. The credibility of any scheme rests not in its design but in its delivery.

Supporting MSMEs is also a peace dividend. Unemployment remains one of the most pressing concerns among Kashmiri youth, with over 20 percent in the 18-29 age group out of work, according to CMIE data. Jobs rooted in community businesses can reduce migration, anchor families, and sow economic dignity. In a region where the line between economic and political stability is thin, this matters.

The stakes are not just economic. Kashmir's famed papier-mâché, its crewel embroidery, and its apple orchards are cultural treasures. Preserving them is as much about financing their future as it is about honoring their past.

In the story of Kashmir, the protagonists are not only in high offices. They are in downtown workshops, remote fields, roadside cafés, and homegrown co-operatives. They do not ask for subsidies or handouts. They ask for access, training, and a system that sees them.

If Priority Sector Lending can be grounded in empathy and redesigned with precision, it may finally offer more than a loan. It may offer a future.

- Danish Shafi is a Junior Research Fellow at NIT Srinagar. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.

Danish Shafi



Globally, small enterprises have turned green economies into engines of employment. Europe's shift toward eco-friendly businesses was powered by public grants for renewable adoption and sustainability-linked financing. Kashmir, too, can lead if policies are adapted to its landscape.



OBSERVER
MAIL

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

► MAIL YOUR LETTERS

P.O. Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190 001
email: editpage.ko@gmail.com

A New Beginning for Kashmir Classrooms

In today's changing education landscape, school inspections must move beyond their outdated role as fault-finding exercises. They must become tools for academic reflection, renewal, and reform. The Directorate of School Education Kashmir's (DSEK) recent circular on academic inspections marks a step in the right direction.

Instead of top-down audits, the new model proposes a layered inspection system—engaging all levels, from directors to zonal officers—based on clear guidelines and standardized tools. This encourages continuous dialogue over one-time evaluations. The focus expands beyond infrastructure or rule adherence to core

academic areas: classroom engagement, teacher preparedness, use of teaching-learning materials, and competency-based strategies.

What makes this shift promising is its continuous nature. Schools are no longer expected to perform only for "inspection days." The goal is to build a culture of self-assessment and consistent improvement. Monitoring tools act as checklists for growth, not fear. Even local resources, like the Village Knowledge Register, are being integrated into learning.

This system also strengthens the link between training and classroom practice. Teachers often return from workshops unsure how to apply what they've learned. With regular, support-

ive monitoring, strategies shared by SCERT, DIETs, and other agencies can take root in classrooms. Competency-based education, inclusive pedagogy, and activity-based learning become part of real teaching, not just theory.

The role of inspectors is being redefined—from passive evaluators to active mentors. Instead of simply noting gaps, they can guide school leaders and teachers, recognize good practices, and suggest professional development. School heads, in turn, must create environments where dialogue, reflection, and collaboration are embedded in daily routines.

The success of this model depends on trust and shared commitment. Inspectors must prepare carefully and

offer actionable, respectful feedback. Schools should welcome visits as opportunities for support, not judgment. Grades should reflect academic health, not just surface-level compliance.

It's time we move past surprise visits, rigid formats, and hollow reports. We need inspections that support, not intimidate. Done right, this shift can lead to schools that are not only compliant, but competent, creative, and centered on learning outcomes.

Sincerely,
Irshad Ahmad Wani
abuualim@gmail.com

Kashmir's Hidden Horsemen

A secret field of ancient horsemen in Jammu and Kashmir could rewrite Central Asian history.
But years after their discovery, the statues are crumbling, and no one is stopping it.

Fiza Masoodi

In June 2017, Natalia Polosmak, a Russian archaeologist known for uncovering the Siberian Ice Maiden, stepped into the thick woods of Gora Gali in Pirpanjal region. She had traveled thousands of miles following a rumour.

It was just a vague tip about strange statues lost in the mountains. She thought she might find a few carved rocks. What she found instead stopped her in her tracks.

Nearly 200 life-sized stone horsemen, frozen mid-ride, were scattered across the forest floor.

Some stood upright, their stone faces staring toward the horizon. Others had fallen, overtaken by roots, moss, and mud. The figures were hauntingly detailed: high-cheekboned riders wearing boots and tunics, holding curved daggers, small bows, and goblets.

Some shared a single horse, packed two or three at a time. Women appeared beside or behind them, draped in carved skirts and ornaments. They seemed part army, part funeral procession.

"I have never seen anything like this in India," Polosmak later recounted. "These are not purely Indian faces."

She was right.

The statues didn't look like anything in India's official archaeological record. To her, they pointed elsewhere—back to Central Asia, to a nomadic empire that swept through parts of South Asia 1,500 years ago and then seemed to vanish.

The Hephthalites, also called the White Huns, were feared horsemen who once ruled large swaths of north India. They were said to be brutal and mysterious. Their skulls were artificially stretched, their art a mix of Persian, Gandharan, and steppe influences. They built little and left behind fewer records. Much of their story remains a guess.

Until, perhaps, now.



Pic: Natalia Polosmak

Polosmak first saw two statues like these at the Archaeology Museum in Srinagar in 2013. They had no labels and no context. They stayed in her memory. Four years later, with help from the Gerda Henkel Foundation and scholars from the University of Kashmir, she set out to find their origin.

The path to Gora Gali was unmarked. Locals led her there. The statues were hidden in two clusters at high altitudes. The area's name, Ghoragali, literally means "horse pass." The people in nearby villages treated the figures with a mix of reverence and

confusion. Some called them Pandavas like these at the Archaeology Museum in Srinagar in 2013. They had no labels and no context. They stayed in her memory. Four years later, with help from the Gerda Henkel Foundation and scholars from the University of Kashmir, she set out to find their origin.

"We don't know who made them," said Ghulam Rasool, a village elder. "But they have always been here."

Polosmak and her team, which included Dr. Mohammad Ajmal Shah and Yatoo Mumtaz Ahmad, documented the entire site using 3D laser scanning and drone surveys. A Russian company created detailed digital models of the

statues, mapping every curve and crack. The idea was to preserve what they could before time and weather destroyed the rest.

The carvings, it turned out, were more than artistic. They told stories. Some horsemen gripped swords with mushroom-shaped pommels. Others had bows, arrows, and elaborate saddles. Some horses showed teeth, their mouths open in mid-snarl. Traces of red paint clung to the stone, suggesting they were once brightly colored. The details matched artifacts from Central Asia, even as local influences appeared in

their style and weapons.

One rider had a long nape, flat and stretched—the clearest sign yet of the Hephthalite practice of skull deformation.

Nearby, the team found stone basins fed by streams, shaped like ritual ablution pools. They were decorated with lotus flowers, Dharma wheels, and other Buddhist and Hindu symbols. This blend of spiritual markers, like the mix of foreign and local aesthetics, hinted at a period of cultural fusion and flux.

Dr. Ajmal Shah believes the statues date to the 5th or 6th

century, when the White Huns ruled this region. Coins from that era show similar faces. The name of the nearby village, Gool, may come from "gula," a Hun title for warrior-rulers.

Yet no official Indian agency has moved to protect the site.

There are no signs, fences, or guards. The Archaeological Survey of India was informed but never followed up. Rain erodes the carvings. Trees grow into their cracks. Some statues have already disappeared. No one knows if they were taken or destroyed.

A former ASI official called the silence a historic failure. "This should be a major archaeological find," he said. "But it's being forgotten in real time."

The digital scans offer one lifeline. They may one day form the basis of a virtual museum. But the real statues still lie in the woods, exposed to weather and wandering cattle. No one has excavated the ground beneath them. Their full story may still be buried.

Some scholars think the site is a war memorial. Others say it could be sacred, linked to ancient funeral rituals or collective sacrifice. The repetitive faces, somber stares, and presence of women and children suggest more than just a military display.

"These may be the dead," Polosmak wrote in a Russian journal. "Or their guardians. Stone witnesses to a world that is already gone."

Back in the village, life moves on. Locals herd goats and chop firewood. Tourists rarely visit. The forest keeps its secret.

And the stone horsemen, their mouths half-open, keep watching.

Fiza Masoodi is a Srinagar-based writer whose work has appeared in many publications. Her debut book, set against the mountains and their myth, will be released this fall.

The Lesson Plan Solution for Kashmir

The NEP 2020 offers Kashmir a chance to rebuild its education system from the ground up. But without thoughtful lesson planning, its promise will remain out of reach.



Dr Mushtaq Rather

In the hills and hamlets of Kashmir, the classroom remains a fragile space. In many government schools, a chalkboard and some benches are all that greet children every morning. But beyond the crumbling walls and basic infrastructure, the real challenge lies in something more invisible: the absence of structured lesson planning.

It is easy to assume that a teacher who knows their subject will naturally teach it well. But mastery of content means little if the teaching has no direction. Good teaching does not begin when the teacher walks into the classroom. It begins long before, with careful thinking about what students need to learn, and how they will learn it best.

Lesson planning has always mattered, but with the arrival of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it has become even more urgent. The policy calls for a shift away from rote learning and passive memorisation. It urges schools to recognise that children are different. They come to class with different strengths, interests and learning styles. A one-size-fits-all model no longer works. The teacher is expected to meet every child where they are, and help them grow from there.

This is a tall order, especially in Kashmir, where classrooms often have children with wide gaps in prior learning. Some may be first-generation learners, while others face stress at home that affects their ability to focus. Some pick up

concepts quickly; others need more time. The classroom, in truth, is never a homogenous group, it is a "class within a class".

To navigate such diversity, a teacher needs more than just content knowledge. They need a plan. And that plan must account for the topic being taught, the teaching materials to be used, the expected outcomes, and the ways to assess if learning has taken place. Without this planning, teaching becomes a blind walk. Students remain passive listeners instead of active participants. Competencies like critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration, all central to the NEP, remain distant dreams.

The truth is, traditional methods of teaching have led to superficial learning. Students may remember facts but struggle to apply them. They can recite definitions but cannot analyse or evaluate real-life problems. Skills like creating new ideas or working in teams are often ignored. The cost of this is visible in Kashmir's youth unemployment rate, one of the highest in the country. Education is supposed to prepare young people for life, not just for exams. But without effective lesson planning, this preparation is weak.

The solution lies in shifting from content delivery to competency development. One useful model that teachers can adopt is the 5E lesson plan — a structure built around five steps: Engage, Explain, Explore, Elaborate and Evaluate.

The first step, Engage, is about awakening curiosity. Rather than starting a class with

dry facts, a teacher can tell a story, pose a question, or share a picture. This helps students become ready to learn, and connects the lesson to their lived experience.

Next comes Explain, where the teacher introduces key concepts clearly and confidently. This is still teacher-led, but it should go beyond the "chalk and talk" method. Visual aids, real-life examples, and hands-on materials can help students grasp ideas more effectively.

The third step, Explore, shifts focus to the students. They work in groups, conduct small investigations, or solve problems together. This encourages peer learning, and helps students build leadership and collaboration skills — both vital in the 21st century.

Elaborate comes next. Here, students apply what they have learned to new situations. This could involve debates, case studies, or linking the topic to current issues. It helps them deepen their understanding and see the relevance of classroom knowledge in the real world.

Finally, Evaluation allows the teacher to check if learning has actually happened. This is not just about asking a few questions at the end of the class. A good evaluation assesses not just knowledge, but understanding, skill, and application — a method sometimes called KUSA.

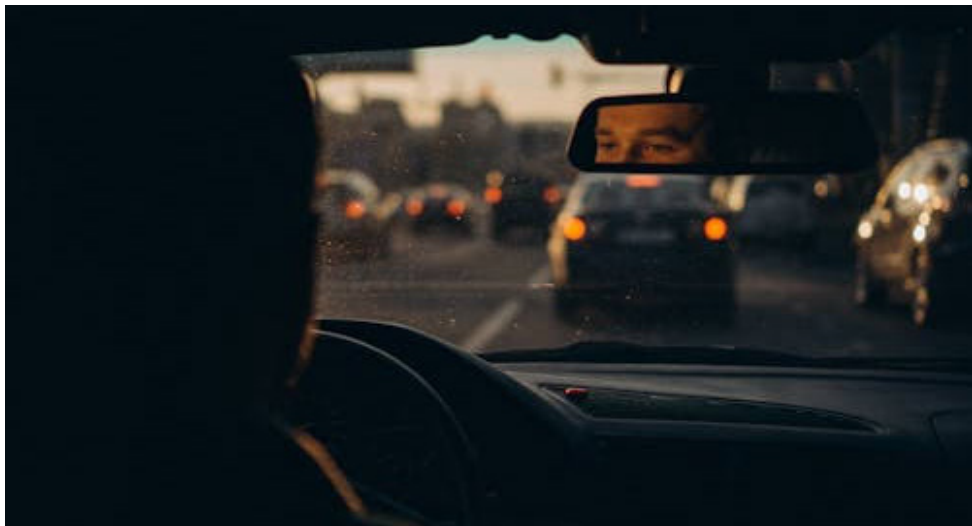
Teachers in Kashmir have often been accused of sticking to outdated methods. But the problem is not always laziness. Sometimes, it is the absence of training, support, and time. A culture of planning needs to be nurtured in schools, with heads and administrators playing a key role. Planning should not be seen as extra work. It is, in fact, the very foundation of meaningful teaching.

To build a future-ready Kashmir, where children are confident thinkers and not just silent note-takers, we must invest in the art of planning. The NEP gives us a direction. It is now up to us, and especially our teachers, to chart the course. Without a plan, the classroom becomes a place of lost potential. With one, it can become a space of transformation.

The author is an Educator from Mattan Anantnag. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.

Wheels and Words

The bond between a father and his child is shaped by values, principles, and the legacy left behind.



Mukhtar Ahmad Qureshi

Sixteen years after my father, Abdul Rashid Qureshi, passed away, I find myself reflecting on the lessons he taught me, the strength he embodied, and the life he lived with purpose.

Born in 1956 in Nambra, a village in Tehsil Uri, Baramulla, my father's early years were marked by simplicity. His childhood in Boniyar, surrounded by Kashmir's natural beauty, left a lasting impression. His father, Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Qureshi, was a postmaster. He was a man devoted to service. His mother, Aisha Begum, embodied honesty and integrity, shaping his values.

Tragedy struck early when my father lost his father, forcing him to leave school to support his family. Yet, even then, he never surrendered to hardship. Instead, he worked tirelessly, embracing every job with dignity. His first roles were labor-intensive, and later, he worked as a washerman: long hours, exhausting work. But he never complained. For him, hard work was about integrity, not praise.

In time, he found his calling as a driver. It wasn't just a job;

it became his passion. Driving allowed him to support his family and experience life beyond his village. Soon, his driving skills earned him respect and admiration. People saw not just a driver but a man who took pride in his work.

My father valued family above all. He had a brother, Bashir Ahmad Qureshi, and a sister, Saiyda Begum, with whom he shared both struggles and joys. Family meant everything to him, and he passed that value to me. He was also a loyal friend. His close friendships with Abdul Rashid Mir and Abdul Hamid Thaker were built on trust and respect.

From 1993 to 1999, my father worked as a driver for civil projects in Uri, earning a reputation for honesty and dependability. His dedication led him to Hindustan Construction Company in 2005, where he worked on the Uri II Hydroelectric project. It was there he earned the title of Best Driver. But for him, the real reward was knowing he had given his best.

Despite leaving school early, my father's thirst for knowledge never waned. He was an avid reader of novels,

newspapers, and magazines. His intellectual curiosity was contagious, and it sparked a similar passion in me. One topic he often spoke of was Haqooq-ul-Ibad: the rights we owe to others. He believed in service, not just to God, but to humanity, and he lived by this principle every day.

Even in his passing, my father's legacy endures. His life exemplified persistence, humility, and service. His influence continues to guide me as I navigate my own path. I remember the dreams he had for me, especially his wish that I would become a teacher and pursue endless education. Though my journey has taken different turns, his aspirations remain close to my heart.

Sixteen years later, my father's lessons, strength, and commitment to doing good still shape who I am. I will forever be grateful for the father I had and the example he set. His legacy is a gift I carry with me. One of purpose, principle, and love.

Mukhtar Ahmad Qureshi is an author and columnist from Boniyar, Baramulla, writing on family, legacy, and personal growth.

J&K Bank Aims To Cross Rs 5,000 Cr Profit Mark By 2030: MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Bank, which crossed the Rs 2,000-crore profit mark in fiscal year 2024-25, aims to cross the Rs 5,000 crore profit milestone by 2030, its Managing Director and CEO Amitava Chatterjee has said.

Chatterjee emphasized on the need for the bank to focus more on supporting the agriculture sector, while expanding its footprints in the rest of the country as part of its diversification plan.

"The vision or aspiration of the bank is to cross Rs 5,000 crore profit by 2030. So that will be our way forward. Yes, we have increased the net profit by Rs 300-400 crore in the last fiscal. Obviously we would like to increase it by Rs 500 crore next



year, but the ultimate vision is to cross Rs 5,000 crore by 2030," Chatterjee told PTI.

He said the bank has been raising the bar each passing year by posting record profits for the past three financial years.

For the full 2024-25 fiscal, the bank reported nearly an 18

per cent rise in net profit to Rs 2,082.46 crore, compared to Rs 1,767.27 crore reported for FY 2023-24.

Chatterjee said, the bank is one of the main pillars of supporting the local economy, besides the government.

"We need to continuously support the local economy and we need to support the agriculture sector much more than what we have been able to do in the past," he said, adding "on the agriculture front, we are now focusing more on investment credit".

Commenting on the revision of MSME criteria, he said it is likely that the Jammu and Kashmir region will come up with new units in the small and medium sector.

"There is another very good

scheme, YUVA, being introduced by the government. It also gives us a very good opportunity to support 3.5 lakh youth of the region to get into some new kind of a business. Within this state, we are well placed to support the people and we are going to do that," he noted.

Chatterjee said, while the bank has a strong presence in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Union territories, it has a significant presence in the rest of the country as well.

"... We are present in 20 other states of the country. This gives us an opportunity of diversification. While we are very focused and positive in our growth strategy in the two union territories, we will also try to diversify our portfolio to the other parts of the country," he said.

End Policy Of Arrests: Mehbooba To LG

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: PDP supremo Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday wrote to Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and said security agencies' response to the Pahalgam attack appeared to be a "sweeping and indiscriminate crackdown", pointing to hundreds being detained or booked under the stringent Public Safety Act.

With the Amarnath Yatra approaching, Mehbooba also sought Sinha's intervention in putting an end to the policy of arrests and punitive measures and ensure the release of innocents.

"The response from various security agencies that has followed appears less like a focused investigation and more like a sweeping and indiscriminate crackdown. Over 3,000 arrests and nearly 100

Public Safety Act (PSA) detentions have been reported," Mehbooba said in the letter.

The former chief minister of the erstwhile state said such numbers were alarming and did not reflect justice but rather a collective form of punishment.

"This approach not only risks alienating families and communities but also begs the question: where will all this lead us to? While we are all unequivocally in favour of justice, the actions currently being undertaken amount to mass retribution," Mehbooba said.

"No democratic and responsible society can or should accept such treatment of its own people. I have long maintained that the people of Kashmir have extended a hand of goodwill," she added.

It is now for the rest of the nation to respond in kind,

the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) supremo asserted.

"It is deeply disheartening that the actions of a few terrorists are now determining how security agencies respond to the situation and go on a spree of arrests of innocent civilians," she said.

The nation is grieving the tragic and cowardly terror attack in Pahalgam and this heinous act has been widely condemned across the country, more so by the people of Kashmir, Mehbooba said.

"In fact, we went a step further by observing a complete shutdown and hitting the streets in protest. This spontaneous response marked a significant and heartening shift -- for the first time, Kashmiris openly defied terrorism and stood united with the nation during this critical time," she said.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

6 Kashmir Districts

Kashmir's seven civil defence districts — Anantnag, Budgam, Baramulla, Kupwara, Srinagar, Uri (in Baramulla district), and Awantipora (in Pulwama district) — which are spread over six revenue districts.

Officials said the exercise is part of a broader strategy to strengthen passive defence infrastructure and community response mechanisms. "This is a practice drill. We urge citizens to remain calm and cooperate with authorities," an official said.

The Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan chaired a high-level video conference on Tuesday with Chief Secretaries and civil defence heads across the country to finalise the preparations. Over 270 "civil defence districts" — areas with critical installations such as military bases, hospitals, schools, and refineries — will be covered under the operation.

The Directorate of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and Civil Defence Kashmir has issued a public advisory notifying people of the siren test scheduled at 4 PM. "Please don't panic. This is a mock drill to test emergency systems," the advisory stated.

The drill is being held amid heightened national security concerns, particularly after the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, which left 26 dead. Officials said the exercise aims to enhance coordination between agencies and ensure grassroots preparedness in case of emergencies.

Students, healthcare staff, railway officials, government and private employees, and uniformed personnel from police, paramilitary, and defence forces will participate. States have been instructed to test communication systems, clean and ready bunkers, and conduct evacuation simulations.

Dal Lake Mock Drill by Srinagar Police Ahead of the main drill, Srinagar Police in collaboration with SDRF and Tourist Police conducted a mock rescue operation in Dal Lake on Tuesday. The exercise simulated emergency response to boat capsizing incidents, a move prompted by recent weather-related tragedies.

Senior officers including SSP Srinagar and SSP Enforcement oversaw the drill, which aimed at improving real-time disaster response on water bodies.

Nationwide Scale The mega drill, possibly the largest since the 1971 war, is being executed across all states and union territories. In Delhi, the government rolled out "Operation Abhyaas" at 55 sites and issued dos and don'ts to the public. Instructions include identifying safe shelters, staying calm, and avoiding phone use during the siren.

In Punjab, mock drills will be conducted in 20 locations including Amritsar, Ludhiana, and Pathankot. Karnataka will hold the drill in Bengaluru, Karwar, and Raichur, while Jharkhand will focus on evacuations and black-out protocols.

Chandigarh will conduct a blackout rehearsal from 7:30 to 7:40 PM. Uttar Pradesh has expanded the drill to all districts despite only 19 being initially identified.

Nearly 6 lakh volunteers are expected to participate nationwide, with BJP units and public representatives encouraged to join the effort. The MHA emphasized that civil defence is key to national resilience in the face of "new and complex threats."

Mock drills will also test radio links with the Indian Air Force, control room operations, and alternate communication channels. Officials noted that similar mobilizations occurred during COVID-19 and past crises like the Parliament attack and the Kargil conflict.

"This exercise is crucial to strengthen local response capabilities and safeguard civilian lives and infrastructure," an MHA official said.

Air Force To Hold

following rising tensions between the two nations.

Soon after the Pahalgam terror attack, India, citing "cross-border linkages" to the strike, promised severe punishment to those involved in it.

In a high-level meeting with the top defence brass on April 29, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the armed forces have "complete operational freedom" to decide on the mode, targets and timing of India's response to the terror attack.

Air Chief Marshal A P Singh met Prime Minister Modi on Sunday and the Chief of Air Staff briefed him about the IAF's operational readiness.

On Saturday, Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi apprised the prime minister on the overall situation in the critical sea lanes in the Arabian Sea.

What Is A Security

were occurring. This could involve evacuating a building, administering first aid, or following lockdown procedures.

What Will Happen During The Mock Drill?

According to the notification by the Union Home Ministry,

The drill will assess how effective air raid sirens are in alerting people about aerial threats. It aims to train civilians to respond quickly and safely in case of an air strike.

Hotline and radio links between civil authorities and the Indian Air Force will be activated and tested.

The drill will check how well control rooms and their backups (shadow rooms) perform during emergencies.

People, including students, will be trained to protect themselves during hostile attacks through basic civil defence techniques.

The drill will include blackout exercises, where residents may be asked to switch off lights to simulate conditions during an air raid.

Authorities will practice shielding critical infrastructure like airfields, refineries and rail yards from aerial detection or attack.

The preparedness of rescue teams and firefighters will be tested. Evacuation plans will also be rehearsed to move people from danger zones to safer areas.

Civilians will receive hands-on training in providing basic first aid, handling fire fighting equipment, and taking shelter during emergencies.

Planned across 244 civil defence districts, the drill will involve district authorities, civil defence volunteers, home guards, NCC, NSS, NYKS, and students. Civilians will also be trained to respond in emergencies.

Farmers On

been sounded. The tehsildar has arranged 20 harvesters to speed up the harvesting process. Ninety-five percent of the harvesting has already been completed in these belts," another farmer from Treva, Rakesh Kumar told PTI here.

"We live in a danger zone. Every time shelling starts, we face death and destruction", he said.

Radhika Devi, who belongs to a farmers' family of village Suchetgarh, said her family had packed over 300 bags of wheat in just a few days.

"It is an emergency. Mill owners are paying well and are quickly ferrying the bags to safer areas."

Tarika Devi of Korotana Kalan echoed the urgency. "We were alerted after the Pahalgam massacre. Now that most of the harvesting is over in our belt, we are rushing to stock the produce. Shelling could resume at any time."

Amid the heightened tension, finding labour has become a challenge.

"Labourers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, who usually help us during harvesting, have refused to work in the fields under these hostile conditions," Kuldeep Kumar, a farmer from Suchetgarh, said.

The agricultural stretch from Paharpur in Kathua district bordering Punjab to Chicken's Neck in Jammu district remains vulnerable, with thousands of families living within five km of the border constantly under threat.

Chandu Chak village farmer Sardar Teg Singh said, "The fear is constant, but we have become used to it. This time, we are better prepared. Not only can we save our lives and livestock, but we are also managing to save our crops—something we couldn't always do in the past."

According to the Basmati Rice Growers Association (BRGA) of R S Pura, nearly 1 to 1.25 lakh hectares of land, mostly known for world-class Basmati rice, is routinely impacted by cross-border shelling.

Although India and Pakistan agreed to a renewed ceasefire in February 2021, the fragile peace has come under fresh strain after the Pahalgam terror strike.

The fear gripping border residents today is reminiscent of the 2021 period, when intense shelling forced mass evacuations and destruction of property and cattle from areas along the IB.

"We feel it would be worse than the 2021 shelling and firing. It is likely to be war, which we witnessed in 1971. We are better prepared this time. We will fully support our troops bravely from our villages", 80-year-old Faqir Chand of Mahashe-de-Kothe village said.

For the farmers of Jammu's border belt, the harvest season, usually marked by celebration and relief, is now one of anxiety, urgency, and survival.

12 Nights Of

flee to safer areas or fortify their homes. "We live in constant fear. Every night, we hear the

sound of shells landing near our homes," said Farooq Ahmad, a resident of Uri.

The violence, coupled with the heightened security measures following the attack, has led to widespread panic. With India suspending trade, downgrading diplomatic ties, and deporting all Pakistani nationals, the situation remains tense. To further heighten security, the Indian Army and Border Security Force (BSF) are on high alert along the LoC and the International Border, with armed forces directed to maintain strict vigilance and not lower their guard.

Amid these rising tensions, Indian forces apprehended a Pakistani national near the LoC in Poonch district. The individual is being questioned to ascertain further details about his intentions, signaling the continuing volatility in the region.

Residents are feeling the strain of this conflict. "I don't know how long we can stay like this. Our children are scared to even sleep," said Shabir Ahmad, a Poonch local. Rukhsana Begum, a resident of Rajouri, expressed her frustration, saying, "We're caught in the middle. No one seems to care about the people who are suffering here."

As the threat of escalation looms, the impact of the repeated ceasefire violations on civilian life is undeniable. The ongoing conflict, exacerbated by the diplomatic fallout following the Pahalgam attack, has created a volatile and fearful atmosphere for those living along the border.

India's Water Will

against Pakistan after the Pahalgam terror attack.

Referring to the new Waqf law, Modi said the need for reforming the law was being felt for decades, but to satisfy a votebank even this noble work was defamed.

"Now the amendments have been made which in the real sense will help poor Muslim mothers and sisters and poor Pasmanda Muslims," he said.

In his address, he said the biggest dream of this changing India is to become "Viksit Bharat" by 2047.

"The country has the capabilities, resources and the willpower for it," he said.

Speaking about the finalisation of the India-UK free trade agreement, Modi said it is a historic day as this pact between two big and open market economies will mark a new chapter in the development of the two countries.

"This will boost economic activity in India and will open new ways and opportunities for Indian businesses and MSMEs," Modi said.

The prime minister said India is not only carrying out reforms, but by actively engaging with the world, it is also making itself a vibrant trade and commerce hub.

"For taking big decisions and achieving objectives, it is important to give primacy to national interest and believe in the capability of the country," he said.

"For decades, a counterstream prevailed in the country. There was a time when, before taking a big decision, it was thought, 'what would the world think? Will we get votes or not?' And decisions and big reforms languished due to such reasons," Modi said.

He said the country does not move forward like this and it advances when the basis of decisions is 'Nation First'.

In the last decade, India has moved forward with this mantra, and the results are there for all to see, he said.

"Our government has taken decisions which had been languishing and did not see the light of day due to a lack of political willpower," he said.

Modi said direct benefit transfer weeded out 10 crore fake beneficiaries, saving Rs 3.5 lakh crore.

Need To Ensure

who had "confessed" to being an overground worker for terrorists, tried to escape while leading security forces to a hideout in a forest area.

Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti, National Conference Lok Sabha member Aga Ruhullah Mehdi and Jammu and Kashmir minister Sakina Ittoo said there were serious allegations of foul play in the death of Magray.

Asked about his recent meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Abdullah said, "That is between me and the PM".

On the nationwide mock drill taking place on Wednesday, he said, "I do not work in the MHA, I work in the government of J-K." "It is MHA order, so you ask them. It is not the J-K government's order," he added.

The CM said the government has asked J-K State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) to conduct a drill at the Dal Lake and also deploy its teams there to avoid loss of lives during high-speed winds.

"The SDRF drill is not linked to Pahalgam or the mock drill. It came up in the review meeting yesterday that there have been strong winds in the evening and we saw two shikaras had capsized. We have asked the SDRF to investigate it and deploy teams there so that loss of lives is avoided in such incidents," he said.

CM Launches

significant step towards digitizing the pension sanctioning process for government employees.

Chief Minister said, "Whatever we can do to simplify the retirement process and post-retirement of our employees, I think that is a responsibility that lies on our shoulders. Employees who have served J&K and its people for long years deserve a simplified process. And the more we do for our employees, I think the more we need to appreciate it."

Extending his congratulations to the officers and his best wishes to all pensioners who will benefit from the initiative, the Chief Minister said that verification of pensioners also needs to be made pensioner-friendly as every year pensioners have to prove that they are still alive and have to submit various documents and to visit offices in person. "So this initiative, I think, is something that all employees will appreciate," he said.

Highlighting the inclusive nature of the portal, he said it also covers ex-legislators who are pensioners. "So my suggestion would be that together with the Assembly Secretariat, some sort of briefing material can be sent out to all the ex-legislators, so that they are aware of this change and how better to utilize it," he added. Acknowledging the challenges faced by employees nearing retirement, he noted that the last few months of service are often consumed by paperwork. He emphasized that more often than not, efforts are made to post such employees close to Srinagar or Jammu to ease their transition. "With this initiative, I believe that process will be simplified. Now, going ahead, what we must always try and do is to ensure that employees get their dues on time," he said.

The Chief Minister also pointed out that timely disbursement of dues—such as GP fund—is a recurring concern among employees. "So for that, in the Finance Department, we are working closely to ensure that these sort of issues are resolved. But generally, clearly, the initiative that has been taken today, I think, is a welcome one," he remarked.

Earlier, Director General Accounts & Treasuries Fayaz Ahmad Lone presented an overview of the Pension Suvidha Portal. The portal supports the digitization of pension records for 2,40,000 pensioners under the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). He added that data collection was executed through multiple modes: treasury visits for 2,31,127 pensioners, home visits for 7,002, video calls for 1,819 pensioners residing abroad, and postal notices to 9,513 individuals. The portal captures comprehensive data including name, date of birth, service details, and photographs of pensioners.

Notably, he said, the initiative has helped identify and rectify several anomalies, including pension disbursement after death in some cases, duplicate dearness allowance payments, and premature cessation of recoveries.

He informed that the objectives of the portal include streamlining and digitizing pension processing, enhancing efficiency and transparency, reducing paperwork, reconciling pension disbursement with banks, and enabling real-time tracking of pension application status.

Key features of the portal include early SMS and email alerts issued eight months before an employee's retirement, online application submission with required document uploads, and integration with JKHRMS and JKPaySys for service and salary details. It is also linked with the offices of the Accountant General and J&K Bank for seamless electronic data exchange.

The portal facilitates the issuance of PPOs, provides post-retirement services tracking, and supports online KYC updates and the use of Jeevan Pramaan for life certificate submission.

The streamlined workflow involves eight stages: registration, application submission by the employee, DDO review and approval, sanction by the Pension Authority, submission to the AG's office, authorization and PPO number issuance, payment processing by the Treasury, and final completion.

The portal engages a wide range of

stakeholders. Retiring employees can initiate and monitor their pension cases, while DDOs and Pension Authorities are responsible for verification and processing. The Accountant General's office authorizes PPOs, treasuries handle payments, and pensioners can view disbursement details, request for revision, and apply for transfer of pension accounts online.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also handed over a settled pension case to Mr. Ragubhir, a retired employee who superannuated on 30th April this year.

4 Killed, 44

passed away later during treatment. Seven individuals remain in critical condition, and five of them have been referred to Jammu Government Medical College (GMC) for specialized treatment. The Mendhar Block Medical Officer, Ashfaq Choudhary, said that 15 ambulances were quickly mobilized to transport the injured.

Both Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed deep grief over the tragic incident. Sinha conveyed his condolences, stating, "Pained by the loss of lives due to the tragic road accident in Poonch. My thoughts are with the families who have lost their loved ones, and I pray for the speedy recovery of those injured."

Chief Minister Abdullah also extended his heartfelt condolences, assuring immediate assistance for the victims. "I have directed that all necessary medical care be provided and have asked Minister Javed Rana to visit the site personally to oversee the relief efforts," he said.

Javed Rana, a cabinet colleague of the Chief Minister, was dispatched to the scene to manage the response. In a statement, Rana expressed his sorrow, saying, "I am deeply saddened by the tragic bus accident. I have spoken to the Divisional Commissioner Jammu and instructed him to ensure immediate assistance, including airlifting the critically injured to GMC Jammu. The JK Government will provide all necessary support."

Pahalgam Attack

against terror and the shelter given to terrorists in the country (Pakistan) because, under Article 355 of the Indian Constitution, it is the government's responsibility to stop external aggression. Then there is Article 51 of the UN, and the UNSC 9/11 resolution as well ... we hope the government will take effective steps on it."

Owaisi also described as "wrong" the harassment of Kashmiris outside the Union Territory. "I want to tell the people indulging in such acts: listen to what Himanshi is saying. She saw her husband getting killed in front of her eyes, she is asking not to express hatred against Kashmiris and Muslims," he said, referring to Himanshi Narwal, wife of Pahalgam attack victim Lieutenant Vinay Narwal.

The Hyderabad MP said it was time to defeat Pakistan and Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

"For that, it is important to defeat their aim of spreading hatred among the two communities. If such acts continue, then the terrorists and their country will be satisfied," he added.

Owaisi also sought an inquiry into the death of 22-year-old Imtiaz Ahmad Magray from Kulgam to ascertain the circumstances.

"There should be an inquiry. I have read the statements of his relatives in the media. An inquiry should be held into the circumstances of his death," he said.

Residents of a village in Kulgam district found Magray's body on Sunday amid allegations that he was taken away by security forces for questioning in the wake of the Pahalgam attack.

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti, National Conference Lok Sabha member Aga Ruhullah Mehdi, and Jammu and Kashmir minister Sakina Ittoo said there were serious allegations of foul play in the death of Magray, whose body was pulled out from the Adbal stream in the district's Aharbal area.

While police have launched an investigation, drone footage that surfaced hours after Magray's body was recovered showed a man jumping into the gushing stream and getting washed away.

The police claimed Magray, who had confessed to being an overground worker for terrorists, tried to escape while leading security forces to a hideout in a forest area.

J&K Govt Extends

Minister emphasised. The Minister further said that the initiative reaffirms the government's commitment towards promoting inclusive access to food and essential supplies, especially among vulnerable sections of society.

Dy CM Reviews Performance Of JKKVIB, JKPC



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the performance of Jammu & Kashmir Khadi and Village Industries Board (JKKVIB) and Jammu and Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation (JKPCC) at Civil Secretariat Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary Industry & Commerce Vikramjit Singh, CEO J&K KVVIB Jagdish Chander, senior officers from the Board and district officers.

In the review meeting of KVVIB, the concerned official gave a PowerPoint Presentation to apprise the meeting of the functioning besides the physical and financial achievements of the Board.

It was apprised that there are three main schemes being implemented by the KVVIB including PMEGP, JKREGP and SFURTI. It was further informed that the main objective of all the schemes is to generate employment opportunities, to foster a strong rural economy, enhance socio-economic status of rural artisans and promote environment friendly and sustainable development in Khadi or Micro Industrial Sector.

Highlighting achievements of the boards, the official informed that 19444 males and 13689 females have been provided benefits under PMEGP whereas 4010 males and 937 females were provided benefits under JKREGP to promote entrepreneurship in J&K in the last six years. Besides, 8 cluster projects have been approved under SFURTI scheme.

It was also informed that under JKREGP, 1637 cases have been sponsored, out of which, 1148 have been sanctioned. It was further informed that 115 bee keeping training camps have been organised by KVVIB in Kashmir division.

Addressing the officers dur-

ing the meeting, Surinder Choudhary, who is also the Chairman of KVVIB, emphasized on the need for active engagement of all stakeholders to amplify employment opportunities across Jammu & Kashmir. He reiterated the importance of making these employment generation programmes inclusive, ensuring equal opportunities for all segments of society, particularly marginalized communities, women and individuals with disabilities.

The Dy CM emphasised upon the officers to simplify the process of establishment of income generating units under such programmes for all. He maintained that the applicants should be provided training for better management of the units in order to maximise their gains.

Commending the Board's efforts in employment creation across J&K, he urged the officers to adopt a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to guarantee target-oriented implementation of schemes. He stressed the importance of aligning all activities with the overarching goals and objectives.

Surinder Choudhary also highlighted the need for synchronized efforts by the implementing agencies and banks to ensure that the benefits of employment generation programmes such as PMEGP and JKREGP reach the target population effectively.

The Dy CM asked the Board to ensure convergence with other departments and establish forward and backward linkages with the skill training so as to provide end-to-end assistance and required hand-holding to the job seekers and young entrepreneurs.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister convened a meeting with senior officials of Jammu & Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation (JKPCC) to review its functioning and issues being faced by the Corporation.

CS Pushes For Swift Claim Settlements, Financial Inclusion Of All



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Tuesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the implementation status of various financial inclusion and social security schemes of the Government of India being executed through banks and financial institutions in J&K.

The meeting focused on the progress under major schemes including Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Atal Pension Yojana (APY), saturation of unbanked rural areas, priority sector lending, credit flow to MSMEs, agriculture sector initiatives including Kisan Credit Cards (KCC), and skilling interventions undertaken through Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) established in the UT.

While reviewing the current status of population coverage under these schemes, the Chief Secretary also took stock of the compliance on earlier directions issued to financial institutions. He directed the concerned agencies to ensure saturation of all identified unbanked rural centres before the stipulated deadline of June this year.

Stressing on the need for prompt and efficient claim settlements, Dulloo observed that the success of these social security schemes should be judged not merely by the number of beneficiaries enrolled, but also by the speed and effectiveness of claim settlements.

He emphasized that financial institutions must instill confidence in the public by providing full assistance in processing and settling their genuine claims, and proactively reaching out to families, especially in case of the death of insured members, to ensure timely support.

To ensure the schemes reach the most deserving, the Chief Secretary directed for the inclusion of Self Help Group (SHG) members registered with

During the meeting, Principal Secretary, Finance, Santosh D. Vaidya, highlighted the noteworthy performance of J&K Bank, stating that it had achieved an 11% year-on-year

growth in its business, significantly reduced its Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) to 3.37%, and brought down its cost-to-income ratio to 58% from the earlier 71%. He appreciated the bank administration for these achievements and termed the performance as satisfactory and commendable.

Managing Director, J&K Bank, Amitava Chatterjee, also shared important statistics on the implementation of social security schemes across the UT. As the lead bank and Con-venor of UTLBC, he detailed the bank's efforts to popularize financial inclusion schemes and expand credit outreach to the priority sectors.

He pointed out that the latest statistics clearly reflect significant improvement over the figures presented in the previous review meeting held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. He pointed out that the UT has recorded significant strides in financial inclusion and social welfare coverage as per the performance data for various centrally sponsored schemes thereby highlighting the growing participation of citizens and strong involvement by banking institutions here.

In its presentation the Con-venor UTLBC, Rayees Maqbool revealed that J&K currently hosts 2,197 brick-and-mortar bank branches in addition to 5,135 Banking Correspondents (BCs) and a network of 2,661 ATMs operated by 37 banks and financial institutions ensuring that one banking touch point is available per 1,227 of population.

The meeting was apprised that efforts are underway to fully cover the remaining 21 URCs identified by RBI here under tier 5 areas (population under 5,000) with banking touch points. It was announced that 150 additional Gram Panchayats are scheduled to be covered by May 15, 2025, by J&K Bank.

Regarding the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), an accident insurance scheme for citizens aged 18-70 years saw 6.04 lakh enrollments during FY 2024-25; reaching the cumulative coverage of 23.57 lakh beneficiaries in the UT.

About the performance J&K Bank had registered 2.29 lakh

accounts, SBI (1.27 lakh), and HDFC Bank (39,096) with 285 claims settled with Rs. 5.69 Cr disbursed during the year.

With respect to Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) offering life insurance for citizens aged 18-50 years an impressive number of 2.47 lakh new enrollments were done during the previous financial year with cumulative coverage reached 9.67 lakh and settlement of 668 claims with Rs. 13.34 Cr disbursed during the previous financial year.

Atal Pension Yojana (APY) targeting unorganized workers also registered a significant progress with 24,230 new account openings, cumulatively reaching 2.48 lakh accounts since inception.

As far as the priority sector lending is concerned under the Annual Credit Plan 2024-25, J&K's banks collectively achieved 92% of the credit disbursement target, totaling Rs. 36,575 Cr. J&K Bank emerged as the top contributor, surpassing targets at 139% for physical targets and 134% in credit volume. The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector absorbed Rs. 22,688 Cr, accounting for 62% of priority sector lending. A total of 2.96 lakh accounts were supported with J&K Bank leading the table with Rs. 5,537 Cr disbursements in this sector.

The meeting was informed that the agriculture sector too received focused attention with Rs. 6,430 Cr disbursement out of a target of Rs. 11,056 Cr, achieving nearly 58% of the set goal.

Under PM Mudra and PM Vishwakarma Yojana aiming at empowering the entrepreneurs as on March 31, 2025 substantial disbursements were made under Shishu, Kishor, and Tarun categories providing support to small entrepreneurs, women, and youth-led micro businesses

It was added that under the PM Vishwakarma Yojana, growing traction was observed across various trades. The RSETI performance in skilling of rural masses (since 2009) depicted training of 1,07,672 trainees, and starting of 78,059 ventures (72.5%), and nearly 50% beneficiaries availing bank credit to start their respective enterprises.

'WORLD ASTHMA DAY'

'Consistent Care, Inhalers Key To Managing Lifelong Disease'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Asthma, a chronic respiratory condition affecting millions globally, is a lifelong disease requiring consistent and proper medical care, experts said on Tuesday.

While there is no permanent cure, asthma can be effectively managed through timely diagnosis, regular monitoring, and adherence to prescribed treatment. Inhalers are considered the cornerstone of therapy.

Noted Pulmonologist Dr Naveed Nazir Shah said the incidence of asthma in the community is around 2.5 to 10 per cent. He said the region's greenery, flowering plants, pollens, and cold waves, along with triggers like dust, smoke, cold air, and stress, can lead to more frequent and potentially life-threatening asthma attacks.

Dr Shah said asthma often begins in childhood and continues into adulthood. While symptoms may be mild initially, they can become severe if not properly treated. Environmental factors such as pollen, dust, and air pollution also contribute to asthma attacks. He said all necessary diagnostic facilities for allergy and asthma are available in Kashmir.

The noted pulmonologist called for educating the public about the disease, as many people only follow treatment during attacks and stop once their symptoms improve. This inconsistency can lead to in-

creased severity and a higher risk of future attacks.

"Inhalers remain the safest and most effective method of delivering asthma medication directly into the lungs," Dr Naveed said. "Unlike oral medications, inhalers act quickly, require lower doses, and minimise systemic side effects."

He added that asthma symptoms like wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing, and chest tightness can worsen without appropriate treatment. Inhaled corticosteroids and bronchodilators help control inflammation and open airways. Dr Shah debunked the misconception that inhalers are addictive or harmful, calling it "entirely baseless".

Dr Javid, another chest disease specialist, urged the public to overcome myths and fear surrounding the use of Rotacaps, inhalers, and nebulisers, particularly in cases of acute severe asthma or spasmodic bronchitis. He said these devices are not only safe but crucial for immediate symptom relief and preventing complications during respiratory emergencies.

Dr Javid said that during acute asthma attacks or spasmodic bronchitis episodes, airways narrow rapidly, causing shortness of breath, wheezing, and a drop in oxygen levels. "In such cases, fast-acting bronchodilators delivered through inhalers, nebulisers, or Rotacaps can open the airways within minutes," he said—(KNO)

Transport Commissioner Conducts Inspection Of ARTO Office Ganderbal

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: In a significant move to enhance transparency, infrastructure, and service delivery in the transport sector, Transport Commissioner Shri Vishesh Paul Mahajan today conducted a surprise inspection of the ARTO Office Ganderbal. He was accompanied by Regional Transport Officer (RTO) Kashmir, Shri Qazi Irfan.

During the visit, the Commissioner reviewed the overall functioning of the office, interacted with staff, and assessed the status of citizen-centric services. He reiterated the importance of professionalism, punctuality, and a strong commitment to public welfare within the department.

As part of his visit, Shri Mahajan held a public grievance redressal session, where he patiently listened to the concerns of

local residents and assured them of timely and effective resolution. "We are committed to delivering transparent, efficient, and hassle-free transport services to every citizen," he stated.

The Commissioner, along with RTO Kashmir, also visited the proposed site for the construction of the new ARTO office building and the driving skill test track. He reviewed the status of the project and directed concerned officials to expedite the work while ensuring high-quality standards and timely completion. The new infrastructure will significantly enhance the capacity of the department to conduct driving tests and provide modern facilities to the public.

Shri Mahajan further instructed ARTO officials to streamline internal processes, adopt digital solutions wherever possible, and cultivate a culture of accountability, empathy, and service excellence.

Under Construction Footbridge Collapses In Gbl Village

Agencies

SRINAGAR: An under construction footbridge collapsed in Lati Gundroshan area of Shadipora, leaving the residents of Ganderbal and Bandipora districts anguished.

The footbridge continued to remain incomplete for the last 15 years. According to the locals, the footbridge was intended to connect several villages.

They said the under construction footbridge collapsed today, resulting in minor injuries to two individuals. "We have waited nearly 15 years for this vital link. It's still not usable," said a local resident. Another remarked, "No shikara operator relies on this bridge – it's been practically abandoned due to its incomplete state."

An official from the Roads and Buildings (R&B) Division Sumbal, under the Public Works Department (PWD), confirmed that the bridge is being executed by SICOP, a government-run corporation, while the department oversees the work.

"About 50% of the plates had been installed when a sudden imbalance caused the ropeway to collapse," the official stated.

The official further alleged that Shikara operators had been anchoring sand-laden boats beneath the structure and using the incomplete bridge to haul them—a possible factor that may have contributed to the collapse.

The incident has renewed calls for accountability and timely completion of long-pending infrastructure projects in the area—(KNO)

Javed Rana Meets Ghani Bus Accident Victims In Rajouri

Observer News Service

RAJOURI: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana on Tuesday visited the Government Medical College (GMC) Rajouri to enquire about the health of the passengers injured in the tragic bus accident that occurred at Ghani in the Mendhar area.

During his visit, the Minister interacted with the injured patients and assured them of all possible support for their treatment and speedy recovery. He directed the Medical Superintendent and the hospital staff to provide the best possible medical care and extend every necessary assistance to the victims.

The Minister was accompanied by Additional District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa, along with other district and sectoral officers.

Satish Sharma Conducts Surprise Visit To MD RTC, Director, FCS&CA

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In an endeavour to ensure transparency and accountability, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, conducted a surprise inspection of offices of the Managing Director's Road Transport Corporation (RTC) headquarters and Director, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Kashmir here today.

During the visit, the Minister reviewed operational and administrative records to assess compliance with government norms and efficiency in service delivery. He also interacted with the staff, encouraging open dialogue about their roles, challenges and suggestions for improvement.

The officers and officials present at the RTC office briefed the

Minister on key operational aspects, ongoing projects and service enhancement measures.

The Minister assured full support from the government for modernizing the SRTC and improving public transport services across the state.

While interacting with the Director, FCS&CA, Kashmir, the Minister was given a brief about the activities being undertaken by the Department in order to ensure hassle-free deliverance of food grains and other civil supply services to the public.

"The objective of today's visit was to understand the ground realities and ensure that the departments are functioning smoothly and in the best interests of the public," said the Minister. "It is essential to maintain a culture of accountability and I commend the staff for their cooperation and dedication, he maintained"

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS MUST INSTILL CONFIDENCE IN THE PUBLIC BY PROVIDING full assistance in processing and settling their genuine claims, and proactively reaching out to families, especially in case of the death of insured members, to ensure timely support.

Jammu To Get First Ever Adventure Hub At Aithem, Bajalta

Observer News Service

JAMMU: In line with the Chief Minister's directions regarding promotion of tourism infrastructure in Jammu province and periodical review by Atul Duloo, Chief Secretary, a joint team of officers from Tourism, Revenue, PWD and Forest Departments conducted on spot visit to assess the site's potential for development of an adventure Hub at Aithem near Surinsar lake in Jammu district.

The team was led by Ajiaz Qaiser, Joint Director Tourism, Jammu.

The site has already been recommended by the experts from the Indian Institute of Mountaineering & Skiing Gulmarg for Paragliding.

The visit was intended to develop Aithem as an adventure Hub for various adventure activities besides exploring the option of recreational and

leisure tourism in addition to its suitability for paragliding.

In order to speed up the planning process and its subsequent execution, Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Yasha Mudgal, has directed the field officers to take the line departments and stakeholders on board during the planning phase of every project so that infrastructure blends with the natural surroundings, adhering to eco-friendly development norms.

The adventure Hub will come up as a major attraction site for the nature lovers, bird watchers, star gazers and adventure enthusiasts. The project will have state of the art facilities like eateries, public conveniences, Sunrise and Sunset points and Yoga platform.

Pertinently, the department of tourism has already trained a batch of 23 paragliders in P1, P2, P3 levels in collaboration with NIMAS Training Institute, Seppa, Arunachal Pradesh.

Vikas Gupta, Director Tourism Jammu, has taken up the matter with the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports, Manali, for imparting advance courses in paragliding (P4 & SIB) to the same set of 23 paragliders so that they can be eligible for their certification as tandem pilots.

To assess the site from a technical perspective including wind speed, wind direction and the gradient of the take-off point, the trained paragliders took-off solo test flights for the first hand experience and assessment. Their valuable insights on the infrastructure and interventions required to enhance the site's appeal and safety were also sought.

The team also assessed the site to include Zip-line and para motoring activities alongside projects besides setting up of a state of the art paragliding project.

Dhoni's Possible Eden Swansong To Overshadow KKR's Clash v CSK

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: Mahendra Singh Dhoni's possible final hurrah at the Eden Gardens will be a captivating sub-plot when Kolkata Knight Riders square off against Chennai Super Kings in a must-win clash in front of a crowd expected to be draped in yellow, here on Wednesday.

While five-time champions CSK are already out of the play-off race, Dhoni remains at the helm, and his presence alone is expected to turn Eden yellow, despite the match being on KKR's home turf.

For a city where Dhoni has deep personal ties -- his in-laws live here, and it is where he played much of his junior cricket -- Wednesday could end up being emotionally charged for both the 43-year-old and his fans.

The Eden Gardens has witnessed many of Dhoni's milestones, from his maiden first-class century to two of his six Test hundreds.



He has also played club cricket here, including a memorable P Sen Trophy final for Shambazar Club.

So, when the iconic No.7 walks out on May 7, many will wonder if it's the last time Dhoni plays at this historic venue.

Dhoni, who took responsibility for CSK's narrow two-run loss to RCB in their previous match, is no longer the dominant force he once was.

Despite being in a strong position at 172/2 while chasing 214, CSK fell short in the final over.

Dhoni was dismissed by Yash Dayal off the third ball of the last over, managing 12 runs off 8 balls. He later took the "blame" for the loss. But for the fans, Dhoni is still an emotion, and a strong one at that.

While it's a do-or-die game

for KKR, who must win all their remaining three matches to stay in playoffs contention, the match will be more about celebrating Dhoni's legacy than the result.

KKR currently have 11 points, and winning all three of their remaining games will take them to 17. Even then, qualification could come down to net run-rate and other results.

KKR's remaining fixtures -- against Sunrisers Hyderabad and RCB (both away) -- are tricky. Coming off a thrilling one-run win over Rajasthan Royals, KKR will look to build on that momentum.

Andre Russell's return to form was crucial in that game, and the Ajinkya Rahane-led KKR will hope that Venkatesh Iyer, who has been under scrutiny for his Rs 23.75-crore price tag, can also find his rhythm, possibly drawing inspiration from the Jamaican's explosive unbeaten fifty.

Match starts at 7.30 PM.

Short TAKES

India Shouldn't Play Pakistan Till Terrorism Ends: Gambhir

India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Tuesday called for a complete halt to cricketing engagements with Pakistan at any forum, including Asia Cup and ICC events, in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack.

At an ABP event, Gambhir said the national team should not be playing the arch-rivals till cross-border terrorism ends.

India have not played a full series against Pakistan since 2007 due to the tense relations between both countries. They only play each other at multi-team events and even that should be discontinued, said Gambhir.

"My personal answer to this is absolutely no. Till all this (cross-border terrorism) doesn't stop there should not be anything between India and Pakistan," said Gambhir when asked about the future of Indo-Pak cricket in the current environment.

"Ultimately this is government's call whether we play them or not. I have said this before also, no cricket match or Bollywood or any other interaction is more important than the life of Indian soldiers and Indian citizens," Gambhir said.

ZPEO Hardpanzoo Holds Inter-School Zonal Kho Kho Tournament

The Zonal Physical Education Officer Hardpanzoo inaugurated the Inter-School Zonal Level Kho Kho Tournament for Under-14 Boys Category at venue ground High School Arizal on Tuesday.

The event was formally opened by the headmaster of High School Arizal along with Incharge Activity ZPEO Hardpanzoo Farooq Ahmed Sheikh, overall incharge PEM Tasaduq Hussain and other zonal officials.

The opening match was presided over by the headmaster, who motivated the young athletes to play with enthusiasm and uphold the spirit of sportsmanship. The tournament witnessed enthusiastic participation from numerous government and private schools across the zone, highlighting the budding talent in the sport of Kho Kho.

The tournament aims to foster physical fitness, teamwork, and a competitive spirit among students at the grassroots levels. The Hardpanzoo zone has been at the forefront of showing outstanding performance in Budgam district for the past several years.

Esports Makes Mark At KIYG: BGMI, Street Fighter 6, Chess, eFootball

For the first time in the history of the Khelo India Youth Games, esports will be stepping into the spotlight as a demonstration event. Scheduled to be held in Bihar from May 4 to May 14, KIYG 2025 will host its esports competitions from May 6 to May 7 at the Patliputra Sports Complex, featuring popular titles such as Battlegrounds Mobile India (BGMI), Street Fighter 6, Chess and eFootball on both mobile and console.

The esports lineup at KIYG 2025 features titles from mobile, console, and strategy-based formats like chess, reflecting a deliberate effort to cater to diverse gaming audiences.

While BGMI remains the most popular esports title in India, Chess stands out as a particularly noteworthy addition to KIYG 2025. Once considered a purely traditional sport, Chess has increasingly found a home in the esports world, most recently as part of the Esports World Cup (EWC) 2025, which boasts a prize pool of USD 1.5 million (Rs 12.6 crore) for the title.

PSG Striker Dembele Fit To Face Arsenal In Champions League SF

Paris Saint-Germain striker Ousmane Dembele has recovered from a slight hamstring problem and will be in the squad taking on Arsenal in the second leg of their Champions League semifinal on Wednesday.

Coach Luis Enrique said Dembélé, who scored the winner in PSG's 1-0 win in London last week, has been training with his teammates for two days. "I have him at my disposal tomorrow," Enrique said on Tuesday.

Dembélé was injured during the first leg and rested over the weekend when PSG lost to Strasbourg 2-1 in Ligue 1. Enrique heavily rotated his squad with the match against the Gunners in mind. Dembélé's goal against Arsenal was his eighth in nine Champions League appearances since the start of the year.

Both teams are looking for a first Champions League title, and second final. PSG lost to Borussia Dortmund at this stage last year. The French side lost to Bayern Munich in its only Champions League final in 2020, while Arsenal was runner-up to Barcelona in 2006.

YSS Budgam Organises District Level Table Tennis Championship

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam organized an Inter-Zonal District Level Table Tennis Championship for boys and girls under the age of 14 on Tuesday. The event witnessed participation from students representing various educational zones of the district.

The boys' tournament was held at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Budgam and was formally inaugurated by the Principal, Sheikh Faisal. Simultaneously, the girls' event took place at Government Girls Higher Secondary School Budgam and was inaugurated by Principal Syed Gulfar.

The championship was or-



ganised under the supervision and direction of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam G.H. Hassan Lone. The initiative aimed to promote table tennis at the grassroots level and encourage young talent to engage in

competitive sports.

The event concluded with appreciation for the participants, and the department reiterated its commitment to providing more such platforms for budding athletes in the district.

Some Consider Indian Cricket Their Personal Fiefdom: Gambhir

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: "Those living in glass houses shouldn't throw stones at others." India head coach Gautam Gambhir hardly pulled back punches as he responded to criticism from a couple of former Test stars, accusing them of treating Indian cricket as their "personal fiefdom".

While Gambhir didn't take names, he dropped enough hints to make it obvious that the target of his outburst were two former India skippers from Mumbai, who have been critical of him since his playing days.

"I am into this job for eight months. If results don't come, I am fine with criticism. It is people's job to criticise. There are people who are sitting in the commentary box for 25 years and feel that Indian cricket is their personal fiefdom," Gambhir said at ABP News' 'India At 2047' Summit.

"Indian cricket's no one's personal property and it belongs to 140 crore Indians," he asserted.

"These people have raised questions about my coaching, concussions (when he left 2011 Tour of England after a head injury), to distribution of Champions Trophy prize money," the straight-talker from Delhi said.

A former India head coach, who is also a commentator, had spoken about Gambhir's "concussion" not being particularly serious during the team's 0-4 whitewash at the hands of England in 2011.

As far as the Champions Trophy prize

money is concerned, it was former India skipper Sunil Gavaskar, who wondered in his column for 'Sportstar' whether Gambhir would follow his predecessor Rahul Dravid and share the windfall with the support staff.

"After India's T20 World Cup win, Rahul Dravid, always a team player, chose not to take more than his fellow coaches."

"He shared the reward equally with them. However, with the announcement of the Champions Trophy rewards, we haven't heard any comment from the current coach, Gautam Gambhir, on whether he will adopt Dravid's approach. Does Dravid's example no longer hold value?"

Gambhir did not take Gavaskar's name but it was evident that he had not taken kindly to the poser in the column.

"I don't owe any explanation to anyone as to whether I have given money or not...Those living in glass houses shouldn't throw stones at others."

Gambhir also rejected the speculation surrounding his differences with Test and ODI skipper Rohit Sharma.

"...who are these people, who are saying all these things? These are speculations done by experts and those who run YouTube channels. Two months back, a coach and a captain together won a Champions Trophy."

"Imagine what you would ask if we wouldn't have won CT. I respect what Rohit has done for Indian cricket. I have got a lot of time for someone like Rohit Sharma. It was from start and it will remain like that with him," he asserted.



YSS Anantnag Holds DL Inter-School In Chess, TT & Badminton



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Anantnag on Tuesday inaugurated the District Level Inter-School Competitions in Chess, Table Tennis and Badminton for Under-14 and Un-

der-17 boys and girls at SRJ Higher Secondary School, Khanabal.

The opening ceremony witnessed vibrant participation from students representing various schools and zones of the district.

The events will run over five days, ensuring equal

opportunities for participation to both boys and girls in the Under-14 and Under-17 categories.

The opening day featured Chess and Table Tennis matches with participation from all zones of the district.

In the Chess competition, students from Zone Anantnag dominated the podium, with Anis Arshid, Zayan Malik and Zeyan Muzaffar clinching the top three positions. In Table Tennis, Zone Anantnag secured the first two places, while Zone Dooru took the third position. The stand-out performers included M. Gasif, Amaar Wani and Eshan Mudasir.

Captaincy Became Too Much In The End; Stepped Down To Be Happy: Kohli

Press Trust of India

BENGALURU: The constant pressure of leading India and Royal Challengers Bengaluru for nearly a decade and the relentless scrutiny around his batting "became too much in the end" for Virat Kohli, who says he stepped down from leadership to be in a "happy space".

Kohli resigned as T20 captain after the World Cup in 2021, following which he also relinquished RCB's leadership role. A year later, he quit Test captaincy following the defeat to South Africa.

Kohli said he reached a point in his career where the constant attention became unbearable.

"At one point, it did become tough for me because there was just too much happening in my career. I was captaining India for a period of 7-8 years. I cap-

tained RCB for nine years. There were expectations on me from a batting perspective every game that I played," said Kohli in an 'RCB Bold Diaries' podcast.

"I didn't have this sense that the attention was off me. If it wasn't captaincy, it would be batting. I was exposed to it 24x7. It did get very tough on me, and it did get too much in the end."

Kohli, who also took a month-long break from cricket in 2022 and did not touch a bat during that phase, added that a time had come in his life when he was struggling to be happy in the spotlight.

"That's why I stepped down because I felt like if I've decided I want to be in this place, I need to be happy."

"I need to have a space in my life where I can just come and play my cricket without being

judged, without being looked at as what are you going to do this season and what's going to happen now," said Kohli, who has been with RCB since the inaugural edition of the IPL.

Leading India to the Under-19 World Cup title triumph does not guarantee one a seamless entry into the senior team, and Kohli said it was his determination and the backing of then skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni and coach Gary Kirsten, which helped him secure the No. 3 batting spot in the side.

"I was very realistic about my abilities. Because I had seen a lot of other people play. And I did not feel like my game was anywhere close to theirs. The only thing that I had was determination. And if I wanted to make my team win, I was willing to do anything."

"That was the very reason

I got chances to play for India initially. And Gary (Kirsten) and MS (Dhoni) made it very clear to me that we are backing you to play at number three."

Kohli said the two encouraged him to play his natural game, knowing that he would always be a fighter on the field.

"This is what you can do for the team. What you represent on the field, your energy, your engagement, is of the biggest value to us. We want you to play that way."

"So, I was never looked at as this outright match winner who can change the game from anywhere. But I had this thing, I'm going to stay in the fight. I'm not going to give up. And that is what they backed."

Kohli feels nervous energy is something that is crucial to success in cricket, and no matter how many runs one scores,

it is something that keeps a player in competitive mode.

"What happens when you're young is you feel like, 'if I have scored X amount of runs by the time I'm this age or whatever', things will ease out. It never happens like that."

"And that is the marker actually. When you stop feeling that nervousness or that anticipation of how things are going to unfold is when people say that you're done," he said.

"So that never goes away from you because that very energy is what keeps you engaged to do what you need to do in that moment, in that present moment."

