

Kashmir Convener



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**JK Bank reports
Rs 320.42 cr fraud
over 3 years: GoI**

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Bank frauds in Jammu and Kashmir Bank Limited over the last three financial years have seen fluctuating amounts but the number of such incidents has also reduced, Minister of State (MoS) for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary informed Parliament.

Between 2021-22 and 2023-24, a total of 32 fraud cases were reported, involving Rs. 320.42 crore, he said in a written reply as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data also shows a nationwide decline in the amount involved in banking frauds above Rs 1 lakh, decreasing from Rs 9,298 crore in FY 2021-22 to Rs 2,115 crore in FY 2023-24.

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HM Amit Shah Likely To Review J&K Situation Today

KC NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday is likely to review the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the first such meeting after the last assembly elections held in September-October, sources said.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, top officers of the Army, paramilitary forces, JK administration, intelligence agencies and Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) are expected to attend the meeting.

"The home minister will review the security situation



in Jammu and Kashmir. He will be briefed about the prevailing situation in the Union Territory (UT) and the situation along the border areas," sources said.

This will be Shah's first meeting after the assembly elections conducted in the UT where a National Conference (NC) government, headed by

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah assumed charge.

After the abrogation of the Article 370 and bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two UTs in 2019, the law and order is the direct responsibility of the central government.

The home minister is likely to have a detailed discussion on the security roadmap ahead for the 2025, the sources said.

Sporadic incidents have been continuing in Jammu and Kashmir. On October 20, seven people were killed in a terror attack in central Kashmir.

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We Must Promote Global Good: Lg Sinha



KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today unveiled the Silver Jubilee Issue of Shri Raghvendra Panchang, at University of Jammu.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor congratulated Chander Mouli Raina, the editorial team of the Panchang and all the members of Shri Raghvendra Jyotish Sansthan Trust on the occasion.

He also commended the efforts of the Trust on making people aware about traditions and for carrying forward the legacy of Panchang which

reflects the composite culture and rich heritage of the country.

"I believe our research on astrology and ancient scriptures should touch the lives of people from all walks of life. We must promote global good. We need to focus on spreading the importance of a spiritually rich life and value-based living among our citizens," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He emphasized that we should understand history to develop our thinking and decision-making capabilities

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CM Omar Refutes Meeting with HM During Recent Delhi Visit

● 'My EVM remark was misinterpreted'

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday denied reports of meeting the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, clarifying that no such meeting has taken place yet. He, however, stated that given the current circumstances in which JK is a Union Territory, the Home Minister has a crucial role in running its affairs.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Correspondent, speaking to reporters, Omar said, "I don't know where these reports originate. If there is any meeting, you will be informed, either by me or by the Home Minister's office."

He, however, acknowledged the critical role of the Home Minister in Jammu and Kashmir's affairs. "Jammu and Kashmir is currently a Union Territory, and as such, the Home Minister has a significant role to play. There are several issues we need to discuss with him, and I plan to meet him in the future," he said.

Speaking about his recent comments

regarding Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Omar said he had made no new statement. "I've consistently maintained that if someone has concerns about EVMs, they should express them



year-round, not just when they lose elections. Complaints should persist even after victories, or else we must return to ballot papers. But have we forgotten the manipulations that occurred with ballot papers, like ballot stuffing? I experienced those issues

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Govt begins process to start dialysis facilities at 11 SDHs, CHCs in Kashmir

Jahangeer Ganaie

SRINAGAR: In a significant development, the government has begun the process of starting dialysis facilities at 11 Sub District Hospitals (SDHs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs) in Jammu and Kashmir.

A top health official informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that Directorate of Health Services Kashmir has written to Chief Engineer, Mechanical Engineering Department Kashmir to pre-

pare detailed estimates for installation of Dialysis Centres, installation of 500 LPH ROP, installation of Loop, water storage, transferring pumps, electricity backups with stabilizers etc and other allied works.

He said the Chief Engineer has been asked to submit detailed estimates to the directorate within seven days in consultation with concerned Block Medical Officers so that administrative approval may be

convened.

The health centres include SDH Dooru in Anantnag, CHC Pattan and CHC Chandoosa in Baramulla.

CHC Chaar-e-Shareef, CHC Nagam and CHC Pakherpora in Budgam, SDH Kangan in Ganderbal, SDH Kralpora in Kupwara, SDH DH Pora in Kulgam, SDH Zainapora in Shopian and SDH Tral in Pulwama.

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Javed Rana pushes for making JKFDCL self reliant

KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana, today emphasised strenuous efforts



for making Jammu Kashmir Forest Development Corporation Limited (JKFDCL), a self reliant and profit earning organisation.

The Minister was chairing a meeting held to review the performance and functioning of JKFDCL at Civil Secretariat here.

While addressing the meeting, Javed Rana said that the JKFDCL has huge potential for revenue generation

and steps should be taken for making the corporation self reliant.

Emphasising the need for utilising the assets more effectively making JKFDCL much profitable entity, the Minister stated that there is no dearth of resources but the need is to optimally explore and exploit those for enhanced revenue generation. He called for immediate and long term interventions for limiting the import of timber. He asked the JKFDCL to initiate slew of measures to meet the timber requirement in J&K from our own resources while maintaining the ecological balance.

The Minister also asked for development of barren lands saying that more focus should be laid on conservation and social forestry in non-forest areas. He also instructed the officials to prevent occurrence of forest fires.

During the meeting, Managing Director JKFDCL gave a presentation about the functioning highlighting the challenges faced by the Corporation. He said that JKFDCL is meeting the requirement of timber and fire wood for locals

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B.R. Ambedkar Was the Greatest Opponent of Article 370: HM Shah

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday addressed a press conference at the BJP headquarters, highlighting B.R. Ambedkar's strong opposition to Article 370, which had accorded special status to Jammu and Kashmir. The Minister's statement comes amid controversy over his remarks regarding Ambedkar and the Congress party's historical stance on constitutional values.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) correspondent, in the press briefing, Shah criticized the Congress for its alleged distortion of facts during the parliamentary debate on the 75 years of India's progress, referred to as the Gaurav Yatra and Vikas Yatra. He emphasized that discussions in democratic forums like Parliament should always be rooted in facts and truth, which he claimed the Congress had failed to uphold.

"The Congress Party has consistently undermined the values of B.R. Ambedkar. From opposing Ambedkar during his lifetime to leaving no stone unturned to defeat him in the elections of 1951-52 and 1954, the Congress has shown its anti-Ambedkar stance," Shah alleged. He further accused the Congress of being anti-reservation, anti-constitution, and of repeatedly distorting Ambedkar's legacy for political gain.

Reiterating Ambedkar's role in opposing Article 370, Shah said, "B.R. Ambedkar was the greatest opponent of Article 370. He believed in the unity and integrity of India."



The Minister also launched a scathing attack on the Congress for its imposition of the Emergency, undermining the judiciary, and "insulting martyrs of the army" by compromising India's territorial integrity. According to him, these actions reveal a pattern of the Congress prioritizing political expediency over national interest. "The BJP has always been the true defender of Ambedkar's legacy while the

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6 Die, 4 Injured In Kathua Fire Incident

● LG Sinha, CM Omar grieved over loss of lives

Yogesh

JAMMU: Six persons of a family including two children died while four others were injured due to suffocation allegedly caused by a fire incident in a residential house in Kathua on Wednesday, officials said.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the incident took place in the mid night at a residential house in ward number 16, Shiva Nagar Kathua.

As per the initial reports, the fire started from a rental room due to a lamp and spread to other parts of the room, resulting in the death of six persons, who were inside the room. The six persons died of suffocation caused by the smoke.

The victims have been identified as the owner of the house Avatar Krishan, 81, Ganga Bhagat, 17, Danish Bhagat, 15, Barkha Raina, 25, Takash Raina, 3 and Advik Raina, 4. They were taken to the hospital but were declared dead.

Four others were injured in the incident, who have been identified as Swarna, 61, Neetu Devi, 40, Arun Kumar and Kewal Krishan, 69.

All the injured are undergoing

treatment at Government Medical College and Hospital, Kathua.

Giving details, Principal GMC Surinder Atri said that the incident related to the recently retired Assistant Matron, who had been living in a rented house. He said six persons were brought dead and four others were injured in the incident.



He further said the incident reports at around 2 am in the night and prima facie, it has been established the fire was caused due to a lamp at Pooja room (jot) and the person died due to suffocation. He said there is no burn mark on the dead persons, while all four injured are stable.

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Effective Mechanism In Place For Redressal Of Public Issues: Dy CM

KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said an effective mechanism has been put in place for prompt redressal of issues being faced by the public.

"Necessary instructions have been issued to the concerned officers to ensure that the public grievances are redressed on priority and developmental initiatives are speeded up", maintained the Minister.

The Deputy Chief Minister was interacting with scores of deputations who called on him today to project their issues and concerns related to their respective areas besides service related issues.

A deputation of National Youth Corps raised the issue of regularisation of their services besides highlighting other service

enhancement besides better service conditions.

A deputation of Sainik Colony residents demanded improvement



related issues.

Another deputation of Kashmiri PM package aspirants demanded de reservation of vacant reserve category posts.

Similarly, a deputation of National Health Mission employees of Doda district demanded honorarium

in the vicinity areas besides macadamisation of link roads.

Meanwhile, Legislators, former Sarpanchs and individuals from different areas also called on the Deputy Chief Minister

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Pitiable: Supreme Court On Pension Of Retired HC Judges

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday lamented the meagre pension, ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000, being given to some retired high court judges and termed it “pitiable”.

The Apex Court asked the authorities to have a “humane approach” instead of adopting a “legal approach”.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan was dealing with a batch of pleas raising the issue of different pension being payable to retired high court judges.

One of the key reasons was that the High Court Judges, who have been elevated from district judiciary, were covered under the New Pension Scheme.

While those, who have been elevated to the High Court from the Bar, were the beneficiaries of the Old Pension Scheme leading to the mismatch in the pension payable to two sets of high court judges.

“You cannot have a legal approach in every matter. Sometimes, you need to have a humane approach,” the apex court observed on Wednesday.

“It is pitiable,” the bench said, noting

some retired High Court Judges were getting observed.



pension between Rs 10,000 and Rs 15,000.

Attorney general R Venkataramani mentioned the matter before the bench and requested for a hearing in January, 2025.

Venkataramani said the government would try to resolve the issue.

“It is better you persuade them that our intervention should be avoided,” the bench

It said the matter would not be decided on individual cases and whatever the top court might lay down would be applicable to all the high court judges.

The bench posted the hearing on January 8, 2025. While hearing a separate plea in March, the Apex Court said there cannot be any discrimination in computing the pensionary

benefits of retired Judges of High Courts based on whether they were elevated from the bar or the district judiciary.

Pensionary benefits of a retired High Court Judge, who was elevated from the district judiciary, should be computed based on his or her last drawn salary as a High Court judge, it had said. During the hearing on one of the pleas in the matter in November, the top court expressed “shock” that some retired high court judges were getting a meagre pension ranging between Rs 6,000 and Rs 15,000.

The bench was hearing a petition filed by a retired high court judge who said he was receiving a pension of Rs 15,000.

The petitioner, who was elevated as a judge of the Allahabad High Court after serving as a judicial officer in the district court for 13 years, claimed the authorities had refused to consider his judicial service while computing the pension.

“If there are retired high court judges before us who are getting Rs 6,000 and Rs 15,000 as pension, it is shocking. How can that be?” the bench had remarked while hearing the plea.

Parliamentary dialogue between India, Armenia grown in recent years: Om Birla

NEW DELHI: The political and parliamentary dialogue and cooperation between India and Armenia have increased in recent years, opening up new avenues of partnership in various sectors, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said on Tuesday.

Birla held bilateral meeting with Armenian President Alen Simonyan in the Parliament House Complex on Tuesday where both sides held discussions on various issues of mutual interest including trade and investment.

The Speaker noted that in recent years, political and parliamentary dialogue and cooperation between the two countries have increased, opening up new avenues of partnership in various sectors.

Noting that India is leaping forward at highest economic growth rate in the world, Birla highlighted the efforts towards Ease of Doing Business and world-class infrastructure in India which has generated huge interest across the world in India.

the core principles of democracy.

Mentioning that India has always championed the cause of gender equality, Birla informed the delegation that the first legislation passed in the new Parliament building was the ‘Nari Shakti Vandan Act’, which strengthens the commitment to women-led development in the country.

“He observed that in recent years, Parliament of India has made extensive use of digital technologies, simplifying



“Emphasising the importance of continued dialogue and cooperation between the two countries on multilateral fora, he said regular discussions on regional and global issues between the two nations and two Parliaments would further strengthen the bilateral ties,” an official statement said.

“Underlining deep historical and cultural ties between India and Armenia, he hoped that with the growing bilateral cooperation will strengthen people-to-people connection,” it added.

Birla emphasised that the cooperation between Parliaments of India and Armenia should be further strengthened to reinforce

processes and enhancing transparency. He said that the ‘Digital Parliament’ project was one such initiative which has led to increased participation by citizens in India’s democratic processes,” the statement said.

The Armenian president also met Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankar.

“Discussions centred around the longstanding ties between the two democracies, rooted in history and underlined the importance of strengthening bilateral trade and connectivity. The leaders also highlighted the role of parliamentary exchanges between India and Armenia in further consolidating the relationship between both nations,” the vice president said in a post on X.

Punjab: Train services affected due to farmers’ ‘rail roko’ protest



CHANDIGARH: Train services in Punjab were affected as farmers squatted on rail tracks on Wednesday as part of their three-hour ‘Rail Roko’ protest to press the Centre into accepting their various demands, including a legally binding minimum support price for crops.

The call for the ‘rail roko’ was given by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha.

Kisan Mazdoor Morcha leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said farmers have been squatted on rail tracks at many places from 12 noon to 3 pm.

Protesting farmers blocked train routes at many places, including Moga, Faridkot, Kadian and Batala in Gurdaspur; Phillaur in Jalandhar; Tanda, Dasuya, Mahilpur in Hoshiarpur; Makhu, Talwandi Bhai in Ferozepur; Sahnawal in Ludhiana; Shambhu in Patiala; Mohali; Sunam and Lehra in Sangrur; Rampura Phul in Bathinda and Devidaspura in Amritsar.

The Humsafar Express from Jammu to Sealdah, Dadar Express from Amritsar to Mumbai and Shan-e-Punjab Express from New Delhi to Amritsar were halted at different platforms of the Ludhiana railway station.

The Shatabdi Express coming from New

Delhi for Amritsar was halted at Khanna railway station.

A protesting farmer said, “We are demanding a legal guarantee for MSP from the government.” Farmers under the banner of Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha have been camping at Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since February 13 after their march to Delhi was stopped by security forces. For the past three weeks, Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal has been on a fast-unto-death at the Khanauri border point between Punjab and Haryana to press the Centre to accept the agitating farmers’ demands, including a legal guarantee of MSP on crops.

A “jatha” (group) of 101 farmers made three attempts to enter Delhi on foot on December 6, December 8 and again on December 14. Haryana security personnel did not allow them to proceed. Besides a legal guarantee on MSP for crops, the farmers are demanding a debt waiver, pension for farmers and farm labourers, no hike in the electricity tariff, withdrawal of police cases and “justice” for the victims of the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

NIA Chargesheets Two Key Aides Of Khalistani Terrorist Landa

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency has chargesheeted two key aides of designated terrorist Lakhbir Singh alias Landa of the banned Babbar Khalsa International outfit in a Punjab terror conspiracy case, according to the probe agency on Wednesday.

Jaspreet Singh of Punjab’s Ferozepur district and Baljeet Singh of Madhya Pradesh’s Barwani district were chargesheeted on Tuesday before the NIA special court in Mohali, it said.

They were identified by NIA as members of a terror gang formed by foreign-based Khalistani terrorist Landa, said a statement issued by the probe agency.

A probe by the NIA found Jaspreet Singh to be an important on-ground operative of Landa and his associate Pattu Khaira, while Baljeet Singh was involved in supplying weapons to members of the Landa gang and other gangsters.

It further emerged during the investigation that Jaspreet Singh was involved in Landa’s drug smuggling and

extortion network aimed at generating funds for BKI, the NIA claimed.

Baljeet was manufacturing weapons



locally and using social media to supply them to operatives of the Landa gang, it added.

He was one of the various weapons suppliers with whom the terrorists had tied up across the country for the supply of arms and ammunition, the NIA said.

In the course of the investigation, NIA seized various arms, ammunition, narcotics and drug money, digital devices, and other incriminating articles from the accused.

Pakistan Issues 84 Visas To Indian Pilgrims To Visit Katas Raj Temples

NEW DELHI, Dec 18: The Pakistan high commission on Wednesday said it issued 84 visas to Indian pilgrims to visit the Shree Katas Raj temples in Punjab province’s Chakwal district.

The group has been given visas to visit the Katas

Raj temples from December 19 to 25.

The temples are also known as Qila Katas. It is a complex of several Hindu temples connected to one another by walkways.

Under the provision of a bilateral protocol on visits to religious shrines, Sikh and Hindu pilgrims from India visit Pakistan every year. Pakistani pilgrims also visit India every year under the protocol.

“The Pakistan high commission in New Delhi has issued 84 visas to a group of Indian pilgrims for their visit to the sacred Shree Katas Raj Temples in Chakwal district of Punjab,” the Pakistani mission said.

Pakistan’s Charge d’Affaires Saad Ahmad Warraich wished the pilgrims a “spiritually rewarding” and a “fulfilling” journey.

“Under the Pakistan-India protocol on visits to religious shrines of 1974, each year thousands of Sikh and Hindu pilgrims from India visit Pakistan to attend various religious festivals/occasions,” the Pakistan high commission said.

“The issuance of pilgrimage visas is in line with the policy of the government of Pakistan to facilitate visits to religious shrines and promoting interfaith harmony,” it said in a statement.

‘Satellite beams turned off over India’: Elon Musk rejects claim Starlink being used in Manipur



IMPHAL: SpaceX founder Elon Musk said Starlink satellite beams were turned off over India, reacting to claims that its device was being used in restive Manipur.

The security forces recently seized some internet devices along with arms and ammunition during a raid in Keirao Khunou in Imphal East district.

The Spear Corps of the Indian Army had shared photos of the items seized on X, and social media users were quick to note that one of the devices had a “Starlink logo” on it.

Pointing to it, an X user posted, “@Starlink is being used by terrorists. Hope, Elon @elonmusk looks into it and help control misuse of this technology.” To this, Musk replied,

are turned off over India.”

Musk’s Starlink, which provides satellite internet services, does not have a licence to operate in India.

In a post on ‘X’, the Dimapur-headquartered Spear Corps had put out the photos of the items recovered in the search operation that included the internet device with the Starlink logo.

It featured inscriptions of the RPF/PLA.

The recovery of the Starlink-like device has also prompted agencies to investigate how the equipment found its way to the strife-torn state, officials had said.

There is no official confirmation on whether it is a genuine Starlink device.

made during a search operation in Imphal East on December 13. Among the items seized from Keirao Khunou were “one internet Satellite Antenna, one internet Satellite router, and 20 meters (approx.) of FTP cables”, according to the state police.

The search operation was carried out jointly by the Indian Army and Assam Rifles in coordination with the Manipur Police in Churachandpur, Chandel, Imphal East and Kagpokpi, it said.

The Spear Corps further said 29 weapons comprising snipers, automatic weapons, rifles, pistols, country-made mortars, single barrel rifles, grenades, ammunition and war-like stores were recovered in the operation.

In a separate post on ‘X’, the Manipur Police said one MA4 assault rifle, one 12-bore gun, one 9 mm pistol, one .32 pistol, five hand grenades, five arming rings, two detonators, 30 5.56 mm ammunition, one internet satellite antenna and one internet satellite router were among those recovered from Keirao Khunou in Imphal East district.

More than 250 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups in

Regulating OTTs Comes Under Preview Of I&B Ministry, Concerns Of Telecom Service Providers Are Raised: Jyotiraditya Scindia

NEW DELHI: Regulating over-the-top (OTT) platforms comes under the purview of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia adding that one of the six advisory groups that he had established, had flagged the issue,



highlighting concerns from the perspective of telecom service providers (TSPs).

“That is something that, to be very candid, comes under the domain of the Ministry of I&B (information & broadcasting). Having said that, I have six advisory groups that I have set up and this concept has come up as an issue that they would like to discuss from the point of view of the TSPs,” Scindia said.

The debate stems from calls for OTT platforms to share the costs incurred by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) in delivering content to consumers. While TSPs argue that cost-sharing

network expansion, while critics highlight the potential violation of net neutrality principles.

Net neutrality mandates equal treatment of all internet traffic, prohibiting payments from content providers to TSPs. Introducing such payments, critics argue, could allow network operators to prioritize certain platforms, undermining the internet’s democratic nature.

Proponents of cost-sharing highlight that the digital economy and telecom landscape have evolved dramatically in recent years.

Between 2015 and 2023, India saw an explosive growth in mobile data consumption, with average usage per user jumping from 0.09 GB to 17.36 GB per month.

However, the expansion of network infrastructure, such as the number of mobile towers, has not kept pace with this demand. Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT) are expected to further amplify data consumption, intensifying the need for network upgrades.

It is argued that a blanket approach to net neutrality may no longer be sufficient to address the current challenges.

Instead, a nuanced framework could balance the interests of all stakeholders.

For instance, larger OTT platforms with significant revenue streams, such as subscription fees or advertising, could be required to contribute to network costs.

However, smaller or less profitable platforms might be exempt to avoid stifling innovation

Priyanka, Shrikant Shinde Likely To Be On Joint Committee Of Parliament On ONOE Bills

NEW DELHI: The BJP is considering the names of its seasoned MPs Ravi Shankar Prasad and Nishikant Dubey as nominees for the parliamentary panel that will scrutinise simultaneous poll bills, while Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Manish Tewari are set to be among the Congress representatives, sources said.

Sukhdeo Bhagat and Randeep Surjewala are the Congress’ other choices for the joint committee of Parliament.

Kalyan Banerjee and Saket Gokhale of the Trinamool Congress, Shrikant Shinde of the Shiv Sena, Sanjay Jha of the JD(U), and T M Selvaganapathi and P Wilson of the DMK are expected to be part of the panel which may have 31 members — 21 from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha. Sources said Anurag Thakur and P P Chaudhary are also being considered as the probable BJP choices for the panel in which the saffron party and its allies will be in a majority due to their numerical superiority in Parliament. The two ‘One Nation One Election’ (ONOE) bills, including one requiring an amendment in the Constitution, that lay down the mechanism to hold simultaneous elections were introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday after a fiery debate.

Opposition parties dubbed the draft laws — a Constitution amendment bill and an ordinary bill — as an attack on the federal structure, a charge rejected by the government.

Speaking to reporters on the Parliament premises, Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi had termed the bills “anti-constitutional”.



I have shared my contact number through the advisory, and people can also send us video clips showing such violations. We will take strict action based on those," he added.

Empowering PACS

In order to expand the area of activities undertaken by Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS), thereby making them financially strong and sustainable, they have been allowed to apply for LPG Distributorships. Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has amended its guidelines to make PACS eligible for LPG distributorship. This new initiative aims to enhance the financial sustainability of PACS while serving the larger goal of improving rural access to clean energy. PACS, with their deep roots in rural communities and well-established networks, are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap in LPG supply, especially in remote areas. By allowing PACS to distribute LPG, the government not only ensures more extensive coverage but also reduces the dependency on distant distributors, thereby making the process more convenient for rural households. The introduction of this scheme is a welcome move, as it brings both economic and environmental benefits to rural communities. Authorized PACS representatives must undergo training and pass a qualifying exam with a score of 80% before they are granted distributorships. This ensures that PACS can effectively manage the distribution process, operate safely, and maintain the necessary infrastructure, including storage facilities and capital support. From an environmental and health perspective, this initiative is especially important. By replacing traditional cooking methods, such as using firewood, with cleaner LPG, rural households can significantly reduce health risks and environmental degradation. Additionally, the financial sustainability of PACS will be significantly enhanced through the new revenue streams created by LPG distributorships. This will strengthen their operational capacity and help them serve their members more effectively, creating a more resilient and empowered rural economy. This innovative move to involve PACS in LPG distribution exemplifies a holistic approach to rural development—addressing the immediate needs for clean energy while ensuring the long-term sustainability of PACS. It is a step forward in improving the livelihoods of farmers and rural communities, promoting cleaner energy, and contributing to the broader goals of economic growth and environmental preservation in India's rural areas.

Breaking the Stigma: A Humane Approach to Marital Challenges and Divorce



Dr Fiaz Maqbool Fazili

Marriage, a sacred bond and cornerstone of human society, has historically symbolized union, commitment,

extended families, particularly in joint-family setups, can strain relationships. In-laws' meddling and societal expectations add to the burden. Compatibility Issues: Differences in values, aspirations, and personal habits can challenge marital harmony. Compatibility goes beyond initial attraction and must be nurtured through understanding and compromise. Infidelity and Trust Issues: Breach of trust, often through infidelity, creates emotional wounds that are difficult to heal, leading to long-lasting resentment and conflict. Domestic Violence and Abuse: Physical, emotional,

and division of assets. Courts must avoid perpetuating stigma and ensure that neither party is left destitute or marginalized post-separation. 3. Community Support Systems: Community-based support networks can offer guidance, counseling, and even temporary refuge for individuals in abusive or distressing marriages. These networks should work to reduce stigma around marital disputes and provide a non-judgmental space for affected individuals. 4. Focus on Children: In marriages involving children, their well-being should be of utmost priority. Custody

arrangements must consider the best interests of the child, and co-parenting plans should emphasize stability, love, and security. 5. Respect for Autonomy: While external support is invaluable, the autonomy of the individuals involved must be respected. Forced reconciliations or societal pressures to remain married can have detrimental effects on mental health. The decision to stay together or part ways must ultimately lie with the couple. Shifting Attitudes Toward Separation" Divorce or separation is often viewed as a failure, particularly in traditional societies. This stigma exacerbates the suffering of couples already in distress. To provide dignified settlements, it is essential to normalize separation as a valid, albeit challenging, life decision.



and social harmony. It forms the basis for familial stability and nurtures shared values within communities. However, marriages often face strains due to various reasons, ranging from personal differences to societal pressures. In such cases, it becomes imperative to offer couples a dignified path toward resolution, whether that involves reconciliation, adjustment, or, if necessary, separation. Providing a dignified settlement to marriages in distress is essential for preserving respect and humanity in relationships. The separation of a Bollywood celebrity, a renowned singer, after nearly three decades of marriage has reignited debates on the complexities of marital life and the causes of discord. While the reasons behind such decisions remain deeply personal, it serves as a reminder of the importance of communication, mutual respect, and adaptability in relationships. As a society, we can contribute by fostering environments that encourage couples to seek counseling, normalize discussions about emotional and mental health, and promote understanding rather than judgment. Supporting friends or family during marital struggles with empathy, rather than unsolicited advice or criticism, can also make a difference. The Strains on Marriages: Marriages are not immune to challenges, irrespective of cultural, religious, or social contexts. Strains in marriages can emerge from a multitude of factors, including: Lack of Communication: Poor communication is a primary cause of discord in marriages. Misunderstandings, unexpressed expectations, and unresolved conflicts can snowball into larger issues over time. Financial Stress: Money matters often lead to tension in marriages. Disparities in financial goals, debt, or economic hardships can erode trust and create friction between partners. Cultural and Family Interference: In traditional societies, interference from

or psychological abuse devastates the victim's well-being and makes coexistence intolerable. Mental Health Issues: Undiagnosed or untreated mental health challenges can destabilize a marriage, with one or both partners struggling to cope. The Role of Society and Family: Societal norms and family dynamics play a crucial role in marriages. While they can provide support and encouragement, they also have the potential to exacerbate problems. In patriarchal societies, gender-based expectations often result in women bearing the brunt of marital issues. Societal stigma surrounding divorce and separation forces many couples to remain in toxic relationships, leading to mental health deterioration or worse. Family pressures, especially in arranged marriages, can create unrealistic expectations for couples. The emphasis on dowries, lavish weddings, or material success often overshadows the core essence of a marriage, which is mutual respect and companionship. Providing Dignified Settlements: A Framework. A dignified settlement in marriage issues requires sensitivity, fairness, and a humane approach. Both societal attitudes and institutional mechanisms must align to ensure that couples in distress can resolve their conflicts respectfully. 1. Reconciliation and Mediation: Reconciliation should be the first step when a marriage is in trouble. Counselling sessions from marriage counsellors with trained professionals or community leaders can help couples navigate their issues. Mediators can facilitate constructive dialogues, encouraging spouses to understand each other's perspectives and find common ground. 2. Legal Safeguards: When reconciliation fails, legal frameworks should provide an impartial and just avenue for settlement. Divorce laws should prioritize fairness, particularly in matters related to alimony, child custody,

Shifting Attitudes Toward Separation" Divorce or separation is often viewed as a failure, particularly in traditional societies. This stigma exacerbates the suffering of couples already in distress. To provide dignified settlements, it is essential to normalize separation as a valid, albeit challenging, life decision.

Mental Health Awareness: Recognizing and addressing mental health issues early can prevent them from escalating into marital problems. Societies should destigmatize seeking psychological help. Marriages, though sacred, are not immune to challenges. Providing a dignified settlement to strained marriages—whether through reconciliation or separation—is essential for preserving individual dignity and societal harmony. This requires a multi-faceted approach involving legal frameworks, community support, and societal attitude shifts. Above all, there must be an emphasis on compassion and understanding. Marriages are about two individuals coming together to build a life, but when the strain becomes irreparable, offering them the dignity to part ways respectfully is the humane course of action. By fostering a culture of empathy and support, we can ensure that even in conflict, respect and humanity prevail. Let us pray for marriages to be filled with love, understanding, and resilience, fostering lifelong happiness and companionship. May those facing irreconcilable differences find the strength to part ways amicably, preserving dignity and respect for one another. In both union and separation, may compassion and peace guide every step.

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The Rising Ease of Suicide: Causes, Unfairness, and Circumstances



Dr Mehjabeen

To address suicide, we must recognize that many individuals feel trapped, viewing themselves as victims of circumstances or relationships, leading to helplessness. Changing this requires creating a supportive environment where open communication, empathy, and resilience are fostered. We need to challenge societal norms that perpetuate isolation and stigma, while encouraging individuals to seek help and see themselves as capable of overcoming challenges. Healing begins with understanding, connection, and collective action to create a more compassionate world. Suicide has long been a troubling phenomenon, but in recent years, its prevalence has grown alarmingly, with people finding it easier than ever to act on suicidal thoughts. This growing crisis demands a deeper exploration of the causes, the factors making it easier to commit, and why it's ultimately an unfair act shaped by people and circumstances. The Causes Behind Suicide Suicide is not caused by a single factor; rather, it is the culmination of a complex interplay of psychological, social, and environmental elements. These include: Mental Health Disorders Depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are some of the leading contributors to suicide. These conditions often lead to feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, and a belief that life is no longer worth living. Chronic Stress and Societal Pressures Financial Burdens: Debt, unemployment, or financial instability create immense stress, especially in competitive and capitalist societies. Academic Pressure: Students face relentless demands to excel, often feeling like failures when they fall short. Social Media Influence: Social platforms promote

unrealistic lifestyles, leading to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. Trauma and Adverse Experiences Childhood abuse, neglect, bullying, domestic violence, or the loss of a loved one can leave deep emotional scars, pushing individuals toward despair. Loneliness and Isolation In today's hyperconnected world, paradoxically, many people feel deeply alone. The lack of meaningful relationships and support systems leaves individuals vulnerable to negative thoughts. Chronic Illness and Pain People suffering from long-term physical illnesses or unrelenting pain often see suicide as the only escape from their suffering. Why Suicide Has Become Easier to Commit The ease of suicide is a growing concern, driven by several societal and technological factors: Access to Means The availability of lethal substances, firearms, or information about methods online has lowered the barrier to acting on suicidal thoughts. Digital Isolation The internet and social media, while connecting people superficially, have replaced genuine human interaction. This digital isolation leaves individuals feeling unseen, amplifying feelings of despair.



Media and Glorification Stories of suicide in films, books, and news reports sometimes romanticize the act, inadvertently planting ideas in vulnerable minds. Furthermore, the internet often provides detailed instructions on how to carry out suicide, normalizing and simplifying the act. Reduced Stigma in Discussions While open conversations about mental health are essential, they've inadvertently normalized discussing suicide as an option without adequate emphasis on prevention or alternatives. The Unfairness of Suicide: Unfair to the Individual Suicide is often a reaction to temporary problems that could have been addressed with help. The act robs individuals of the opportunity to heal, grow, and find purpose. What feels insurmountable in the moment may not feel the same with time and support. Unfair to Loved Ones Families and friends left behind suffer immeasurable grief, guilt, and unanswered questions. They may blame themselves for not noticing signs or doing enough to prevent it, leading to lifelong emotional trauma. Unfair to Circumstances Most suicides are circumstantial—triggered by events that feel overwhelming but could have been navigated differently. Lack of access to timely intervention, therapy, or community support creates a vacuum where individuals feel suicide is the only escape. The Role of Circumstances in Suicide Toxic Relationships Abusive or manipulative relationships can make individuals feel trapped and devalued, leading to hopelessness. Workplace Stress Toxic work environments or unachievable professional expectations can crush a person's mental health. Systemic Neglect Societal systems often fail to address mental health adequately. A lack of affordable therapy, accessible mental health care, and understanding from employers or educational institutions can push individuals over the edge.

Suicide is often a reaction to temporary problems that could have been addressed with help. The act robs individuals of the opportunity to heal, grow, and find purpose. What feels insurmountable in the moment may not feel the same with time and support.

Economic Inequality Disparities in wealth and opportunity create feelings of failure and hopelessness among those struggling to survive. Prevention: A Collective Responsibility While suicide is a deeply personal decision, it is preventable with the right interventions and support systems in place. Encouraging Open Dialogue It is essential to normalize discussions around mental health, ensuring people feel safe sharing their struggles without fear of judgment or stigma. Access to Mental Health Care Governments and communities must prioritize affordable and accessible mental health care, making therapy, counseling, and crisis intervention available to all. Building Support Systems Family and friends play a crucial role in prevention. Checking in regularly, offering non-judgmental support, and recognizing warning signs can save lives. Awareness Campaigns Educational programs in schools, workplaces, and communities can teach people how to cope with stress, manage emotions, and seek help when needed. Responsible Media Representation Media should portray suicide responsibly, focusing on prevention and recovery stories rather than sensationalizing the act. Conclusion Suicide is not just an individual issue but a societal failure to address mental health, emotional pain, and systemic problems. It's a tragic act often rooted in circumstances and feelings that could be alleviated with timely intervention, compassion, and support. Addressing the root causes, improving access to help, and fostering empathy can prevent countless lives from being lost. Every life matters, and no one should feel alone in their darkest moments.

Author is Founder vision high mental health wellness. For more details visit www.drmejhabeenvisionhigh.com

Satish Sharma emphasizes quality execution, timely completion of ongoing RDD Works

JAMMU: Minister for FCS&CA, Transport, YS&S, IT, S&T and ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, chaired a meeting of concerned officers to review the physical and financial progress on developmental works being executed by Rural Development Department in Chhamb constituency under different schemes.

During the review, the Minister, who is also the MLA from Chhamb constituency, had

a comprehensive assessment of various aspects of the RDD sector including implementation of MGNREGA, PMAY-G, Capex, rural sanitation and allied programmes.

Satish Sharma emphasized transparency and accountability as central principles in RDD sector projects. He reviewed the status of RDD development works being executed across all blocks including Chowki Choura, Maira Mandrian, Samwan, Khara



Balli and Khour. He laid stress on convergence with other departments in building community developmental assets. Highlighting the importance

of MGNREGA in socio-economic empowerment of rural areas, the Minister exhorted upon the concerned officers to facilitate smooth and effective execution of all development works being done under this ambitious scheme. He asked the officials to focus on employment generation and skill development as core aspects of RDD's mission. Satish Sharma directed the ACD to focus on completion of pending works besides expediting the

tendering process and monitoring of departmental works on regular basis. The Minister asked the BDOs to ensure completion of CAPEX works being executed under 2024-25 projects within the specific timeframe to avoid lapse of funds. Earlier, Assistant Commissioner Development Jammu, Dr. Vikas Sharma, apprised the Minister of current status of different works being implemented by RDD in Chhamb constituency.

DC Srinagar Holds Public Darbar to Address Grievances of Traders and Transporters

SRINAGAR: In an endeavor to listen to the grievances and demands of Traders and Transporters in City Centre, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Wednesday presided over a Public Darbar under Public Outreach programme here at Banquet Hall.

Representatives of various Trade Associations, Transport Unions and other stakeholders were part of the Grievance Redressal cum interaction session. Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Syed Ahmad Kataria, Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir, Qazi Irfan, General Manager DIC, Hameeda Akhtar, Chief Engineer, SSCCL, A Q Kirmani, Joint Commissioner SMC, Ghulam Jeelani, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar and other Senior Officers of District Administration were present on the occasion.

During the Public Darbar, the representatives of Trade bodies lauded the District Administration Srinagar for conducting such a kind of public

darbar cum grievance redressal programme to provide an appropriate platform to the Traders and Transporters to highlight their genuine issues.

At the outset, the traders

cleanliness & sanitation of the market places, proper functioning of street lights etc.

They also called for providing adequate car parking facilities in different parts of the City to



raised various issues related to the development of City Centre Lal Chowk, Regal Chowk, Poloview, Maisuma, Hari Singh High Street, Gonikhan, Maharaj Bazar and other adjoining markets and sought intervention of Deputy Commissioner in redressing the same.

The Traders demanded for timely completion of development works taken up under Srinagar Smart City, augmentation of drainage system, operationalization and proper functioning of public washrooms and drinking water posts, adequate measures for

decongest the roads for smooth flow of traffic and business activities.

Similarly, the representatives of Transporter Unions put forth various issues regarding the welfare of transporters. They also raised the development issues regarding Parimpora Bus stand. On the occasion, the DC gave a patient hearing to the members of the trader and transporter associations and assured them that all the issues raised during the public darbar will be looked into on priority basis and addressed in a time bound manner.

DC Shopian Calls for judicious use of electricity, keeping vigil on drug menace

SHOPIAN: Block Diwas, a weekly outreach initiative aimed at addressing public grievances and ensuring effective governance at the grassroots level was today held at Zainapora subdivision.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar presided over

importance which includes upgradation of PHC Zainapora, completion of Indoor Stadium, desilting of Irrigation canal, construction of Community Bore Well, ensuring uninterrupted power supply, maintenance of Public Park, cleanliness of lanes and drains, staff for PHC Awneera, etc.



the event, emphasizing the government's commitment to public welfare and encouraged citizens to engage in developmental initiatives.

He said the programme provides a platform to residents to voice their concerns and seek redressal.

During the event, the people of various Villages of Zainapora put forth their issues of public

the DC heard them patiently and assured that all their genuine issues of public importance would be redressed in a phased manner within a stipulated time frame.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC emphasized for making judicious use of electricity for having uninterrupted power supply in the area.

He appealed to the people to keep vigil on their children and make efforts to keep them away from drugs.

He added that the people can also contact (24x7) Help Line No: 1933 and share any information in this regard of reporting the drug peddling cases. Shahid encouraged people to register for PMSurya Ghar and other schemes of employment & labour departments.

Kupwara Admin launches mass awareness campaign on PMJJBY, PMSBY

KUPWARA: The District Administration Kupwara has launched a mass awareness campaign regarding Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) schemes.

These schemes were launched with the objective of providing life and accident insurance cover of Rs.2 lakh to the beneficiary. The schemes are particularly targeted at the poor and underprivileged sections of the society with an aim to offer financial security in case of death or disability.

To ensure grassroots level coverage of the beneficiaries under PMJJBY and PMSBY, the District Development Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan has issued a Circular regarding conduct of Block wise awareness cum enrollment campaign to cover the targeted beneficiaries.

Nodal Officer for every block has also been designated to ensure the smooth and successful

conduct of the awareness camps. Commissioner Development (ACD) Kupwara, who is also the Nodal Officer for conduct of the campaign in Kupwara Block, today organized an awareness cum enrollment camp at Town

groups. He highlighted the benefits of these schemes for the beneficiaries especially belonging to poor sections of the society.

He appealed to the participants to come forward in large numbers



Hall Kupwara. The camp witnessed the participation of a large number of stakeholders including Bankers, Anganwari Workers, VLVs, GRs and officials from line departments and general public.

Addressing the camp, the ACD said that PMJJBY and PMSBY are two social security schemes launched by the Government of India to provide affordable insurance coverage to people, especially from lower-income

and enroll themselves for availing the benefit under the schemes. He also enjoined upon them to spread further awareness among the people and encourage them to register under these social security schemes.

Meanwhile, experts from Lead Bank Kupwara and other departments provided detailed awareness to the participants regarding the modus operandi of the schemes and the procedure for getting enrolled.

Joint Efforts of Wildlife and Forest Departments Control Massive Fire in Batdalaw Khrew

Bilal Habib

Pampore: A massive forest fire that broke out in the Batdalaw Khrew area of Pampore has been successfully controlled through the joint efforts of the Wildlife and Forest Departments.

The fire, which started on Monday evening, spread to the Tangwath beat in the Wildlife Range Khrew and the Forest Range Pampore, prompting a swift response from authorities.

Officials reported that employees from the joint Control Room, along with staff from the Forest and Wildlife Departments, immediately initiated fire-fighting operations. Despite facing challenges, including a lack of water, the team was able to contain the fire by using bare

hands and sticks. The fire was fully controlled by Tuesday evening around 5 pm.

Range Officer of the Wildlife Department, Mohammad Ashraf Kobli, explained that although the fire had spread quickly, it was largely contained by Tuesday afternoon.

He said the team of 50 personnel, including casual laborers from the Wildlife Department, worked tirelessly to bring the fire under control. "The operation, which resumed early Tuesday morning, successfully limited the damage to grass, bushes, and decomposed wood, with no significant harm to the green trees".

The Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Awantipora, Sajad

Ahmad, explained that the dry soil and large amounts of combustible material in the area made the fire difficult to control.



He advised the public to avoid carrying matches or lighters into the forests and to promptly extinguish cigarette butts to prevent such incidents.

The fire-fighting operation underscores the dedication of the local authorities in protecting the region's environment and wildlife.

GMC Anantnag Organises CME program on ‘First Ortho Edge Advancing Surgical Excellence’

ANANTNAG: The Department of Orthopaedics and Spine Surgery at Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag Wednesday organised a one-day Continuing Medical Education (CME) program titled 'First Ortho Edge: Advancing Surgical Excellence'.

The event, convened under the patronage of Principal and Dean, Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Najeeb, focused on advances in Hip and Pelvic Orthopedic surgeries, featuring scientific talks by renowned experts in the field.

Prominent orthopedic specialists from leading medical colleges and institutions shared their insights and experiences. The list of distinguished speakers included Dr. Altaf Kawsoda, HOD Orthopedics, GMC Srinagar; Dr. Saheel Majid, HOD Orthopedics, SKIMS Medical College; Dr. Shabir Ahmad Dhar, SKIMS Medical College; Dr. Riyaz Dar, SKIMS Medical

College; Dr. Zameer Ali, HOD Orthopedics, GMC Baramulla; Dr. Javid, HOD Orthopedics, GMC Handwara; Dr. Asif Baba, GMC Srinagar; Dr. Ifikhar Hussain

Handwara; Dr. M Haseeb Gani, Paras Hospital Srinagar and Dr. Adnan Zahoor, Shifa Hospital Srinagar

Experts from GMC Anantnag also



Wani, GMC Srinagar; Dr. Asif Sultan, GMC Srinagar; Dr. Ansar, GMC Srinagar; Dr. Mudasir, GMC Srinagar; Dr. Nisar, GMC

delivered insightful talks, including Dr. Younus Kamal, Dr. Nawaz Ahmad Bhat, Dr. Murtaza Fazil Ali, and Dr. Tabish Tahir.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal and Dean Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Najeeb congratulated the Department of Orthopaedics and Spine Surgery for the grand success of the CME. She emphasized her commitment to supporting all departments in organizing academic events such as conferences, workshops, and CMEs to foster academic growth and enhance patient care.

The organizing team included Dr. Younus Kamal, Associate Professor and HOD Orthopedics GMC Anantnag, as the Organizing Chairman; Dr. Nawaz Ahmad Bhat, Co-Organizing Chairperson; Dr. Tabish Tahir, Organizing Secretary; Dr. Murtaza Fazil Ali, Co-Organizing Secretary and Dr. Kaleemul Haq as Treasurer.

The event was lauded for its high-level academic discussions and its contribution to advancing surgical excellence in orthopedic care.

Baramulla all set for Good Governance Week: DC finalizes

BARAMULLA: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, today briefed media persons in his office chamber about the district's preparations for the 'Good Governance Week' (December 19–24) and chaired a preparatory meeting at Dak Bungalow Baramulla to finalize arrangements for 'Prashashan Gaon Ki Ore' program.

During the press briefing, the DC highlighted the week-long 'Good Governance Week' initiative, which aims to bring administration closer to rural areas by organizing grievance redressal and service delivery camps in all 26 blocks of the district. Citizens were encouraged to attend these camps to get their concerns addressed and benefit from various government services. Additionally, awareness campaigns will be conducted to inform the public about welfare schemes.

The DC further said that during the week all the grievances received through JK-IGRAMS, JK Samadhan and other public services demands

will be resolved in a time bound manner.

Earlier, the DC chaired a preparatory meeting at Dak Bungalow Baramulla with district and sectoral officers. The meeting finalized the implementation of 'Prashashan Gaon Ki Ore,' focusing on transparent and accountable



governance. Minga Sherpa reiterated the administration's commitment to bridging the gap between government institutions and the public, urging media cooperation in raising awareness about these transformative initiatives.

DC Kulgam visits Sheikh-ul-Alam Shrine at Qaimoh, reviews progress on its beautification

KULGAM: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today visited the revered Sheikh-ul-Alam Shrine at Qaimoh to review its beautification developmental progress.

During the visit, it was informed that the beautification and development of the shrine is being carried out on a heritage pattern at an estimated project cost of Rs.3.19 crore.

The project aims to preserve the cultural and architectural essence of the shrine while enhancing facilities for devotees.

The DC emphasized the importance of timely completion of the project and directed the concerned authorities to ensure quality

work in line with heritage preservation norms.

The project aims at preserving the district's



cultural and spiritual heritage and ensuring the development of key religious site.

Accompanying the DC were ADC, Viqar Ahmad Giri; ACR, Executive Engineer R&B, Tehsilidar and other officers.



Stomach ulcer: 5 warning signs you must watch out for

Stomach ulcer refers to a state characterised by the development of sores on the oesophagus, stomach, and small intestine lining. The lining of the digestive tract can get inflamed and damaged by exposure to the bacteria H. Pylori or excess use of anti-inflammatory painkillers such as – ibuprofen and aspirin. Also known as a gastric ulcer, this condition can give burning sensations within the stomach and upper abdominal pain often immediately after eating.

Symptoms of a stomach ulcer

Pain triggered by stomach ulcers can last for a few minutes or sometimes even for hours. Although the pain can be barely noticeable in a few cases, at times it can be severe enough to keep you awake all night. To get relief from stomach ulcer pain, antacids can be used; however, this offers temporary relief which can relapse time and again if the ulcer is left untreated for too long.

Besides pain, another common sensation linked to stomach ulcers is nausea. It can be accompanied by vomiting when feeling sick. Patients may also experience loss of appetite – majorly because of the episodes of pain that show up after eating. Therefore, unexplained weight loss in stomach ulcer patients should not come as a surprise.

In terms of symptoms, stomach ulcer patients are likely to complain of the following as most common signs of a gastric ulcer:

- Loss of appetite
- Sensations of sickness
- Heartburn
- Burning sensations in the stomach
- Indigestion

Diagnosing a stomach ulcer

A medical oversight can help diagnose gastric ulcers. Doctors can conduct a gastroscopy to look inside directly to locate an ulcer. In this procedure, a thin and flexible tube is inserted with a camera inside the stomach and small intestine. If an ulcer is spotted and excessive use of painkillers is cited as the root cause, then a proton pump inhibitors (PPI) course is given.

In the healing process, a stomach ulcer can take a maximum of six weeks to heal. Additionally, there are some simple steps that can be taken to speed up and support the recovery process. These include:

- Abstinence from alcohol
- Avoid eating spicy food
- Practice mindfulness to keep stress at bay
- Quit smoking

“ **PAIN TRIGGERED BY STOMACH ULCERS** can last for a few minutes or sometimes even for hours. Although the pain can be barely noticeable in a few cases, at times it can be severe enough to keep you awake all night. To get relief from stomach ulcer pain, antacids can be used; however, this offers temporary relief which can relapse time and again if the ulcer is left untreated for too long ”

Top 5 reasons why apple is a king of fruits, even for diabetics and BP patients

New Delhi: An apple a day keeps the doctor away – from childhood to adulthood, this phrase is repeated in every household to promote a healthy diet for longevity and disease-free life. And when it comes to following a healthy and balanced diet, fruits are considered an essential staple along with vegetables and whole grains. And when it comes to healthy fruits, deep red-coloured apples are nothing short of a superfood owing to their nutritional value.

A medium-sized apple, with 104 calories, packs the following nutrients:

- Healthy carbohydrates: 28 grams
- Fibre: 5 grams
- Vitamin C: 10 per cent of the daily requirement
- Potassium: 5 per cent of the daily requirement
- Copper: 6 per cent of the daily requirement
- Vitamin K: 4 per cent of the daily requirement

And when it comes to the management of chronic conditions like diabetes and potentially detrimental heart problems like hypertension, apple can work wonders again. Keep reading to know the many health benefits of this super fruit.

Lower risk of diabetes: On one hand, apples are a low glycemic index (GI) fruit that prevents blood sugar spikes in type-2 diabetes patients; and on the other hand, they can help lower diabetes risk in the first place itself. Several studies have linked intake of this fruit and pears to 18 per cent lower likelihood of diabetes. This effect is attributed to the anti-inflammatory properties of this fruit and its various polyphenols.

Supports weight loss: An apple a day could also help keep weight gain at bay; what's more, it can also help lose additional kilos. Made from water and fibre, a single serving of this fruit is filling enough to mitigate hunger pangs thereby lowering calorie intake. According to a study, whole apples induce satiety for four hours more as opposed to apple juice and puree.

Hypertension management: At a time when hypertension, or high blood pressure, has become a major cause of concern for people across age groups and countries, apples can help manage this driving factor responsible for heightened risk of heart disease.

Fights obesity: With apples, one can successfully fight obesity as this is a weight loss-friendly fruit. If you are on the road to weight gain or wish to come out of obesity timely, this high-fibre and low-sugar fruit can offer help as apples are linked to a lower risk of overeating and eventual weight gain.

Better gut health: Apples are a rich source of pectin, a substance that acts as a prebiotic – one that feeds the gut microbiota and improves gut health. Additionally, it contains dietary fibre which helps prevent constipation, supports good bacteria thereby keeping digestive distress at bay.

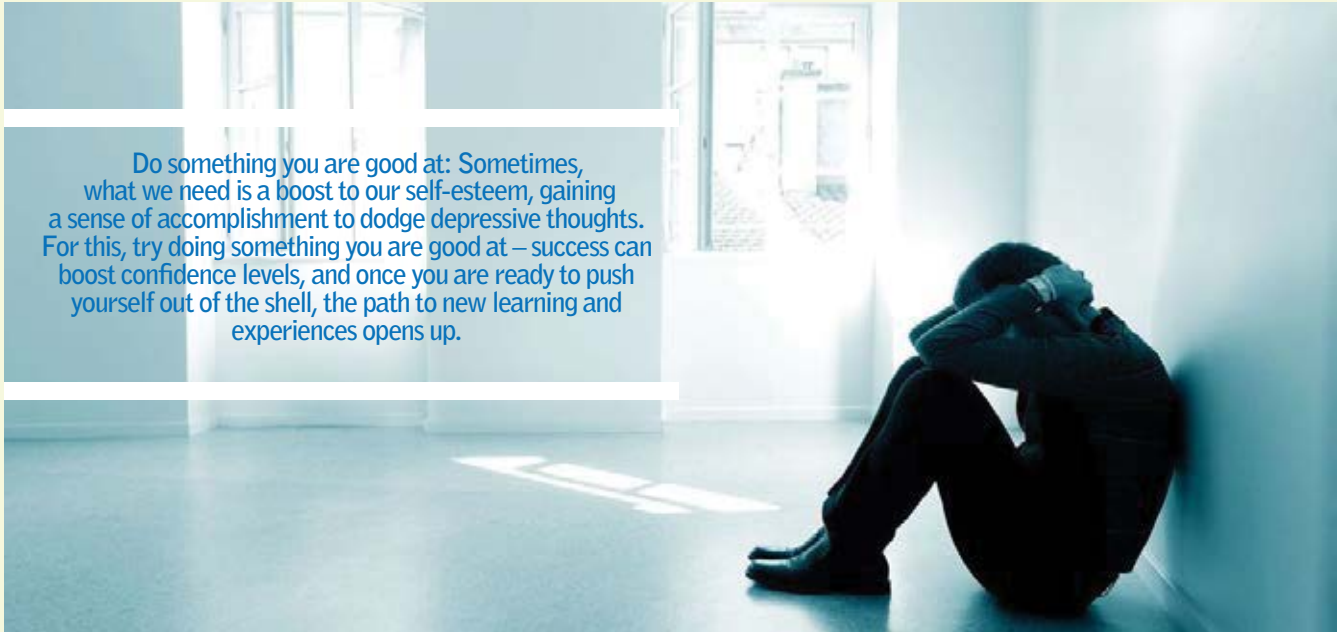


Top 5 ways to tackle mental health issues

The 2022 Union Budget was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1 in Parliament and it was centred on taking India on the road to digitization. This year's Budget also laid focus on health and wellbeing with the announcement of a National Tele Mental Health Programme holding precedence – this involved the establishment of 23 centres of excellence with NIMHANS at the centre and tech support from the International Institute of Information Technology-Bangalore (IIITB).

Mental health is a highly stigmatized subject wherein anxiety and depression are rarely spoken about – those that struggle with these two to name a few barely succeed in gathering the courage to come out and talk about it. Be it work-related stress, emotional setbacks, or trauma of any form – mental health can often go for a toss impacting wellbeing just as much as other physical health woes do.

On one hand, medication can offer relief from mental health issues; however, if you are not willing to walk down the path of depression and anxiety meds and spend a fortune on them, therapy and counseling can also be the go-to solutions. At the same time, you can fight mental health woes by making some simple changes to your lifestyle



Do something you are good at: Sometimes, what we need is a boost to our self-esteem, gaining a sense of accomplishment to dodge depressive thoughts. For this, try doing something you are good at – success can boost confidence levels, and once you are ready to push yourself out of the shell, the path to new learning and experiences opens up.

– and it won't cost a penny extra and take all of your time either. Keep reading.

Stay active: Sitting in the same spot attending online classes and working from home can take a major toll on your physical and mental health as well. Therefore, it is advisable to spend some time breaking a sweat – be it a walk or a running session,

yoga, or spend some time at the gym – keeping active is one of the best ways to distract your mind from overthinking and depressive thoughts.

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thoughts. For this, try doing something you are good at – success can boost confidence levels, and once you are ready to push yourself out of the shell, the path to new learning and experiences opens up.

Watch what you eat: Patients with depression and anxiety often find themselves

struggling with stress eating habits – majorly relying on sugar and caffeine for immediate effects, even alcohol. This, however, is short-lived. The human mind and body is what it eats, therefore, it is advisable to nourish your body with a plethora of nutrients that keep the physical and mental aspects of health satiated. Include lots of fruits, vegetables, nuts, fatty fish, seeds, bread, grains, and water in your diet.

Be mindful of alcohol intake: Alcohol can have an immediate effect on the brain in helping it dodge negative thoughts to a great extent, but only for a short term. Once the effect wears off, an individual finds him or herself back in the same spot and sometimes it can be worse. For temporary relief, some might fall for frequent alcohol binges which can be detrimental to mental and physical health in the long run. Treating alcohol addiction can become a whole new priority then.

Practice mindfulness: Meditation is another way of getting relief from mental health problems. Try sitting in a calm environment without any distractions or step out in a greener atmosphere – a garden or park, for instance, choose a quiet place where you can listen to the sound of birds, focus on your mind. Practicing some yoga poses as the cobra pose can also help get relief from mental health woes.

J&K's Salal-Haimana shows potential for lithium, titanium resources: Govt

● Says preliminary lithium exploration projects underway in Reasi



Raja Syed Rather

SRINAGAR: The Union Government has confirmed that the Salal-Haimana area in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district holds significant resources of lithium and titanium.

According to the Ministry of Coal and Mines, G. Kisshan Reddy, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) conducted preliminary exploration (G3 stage) primarily for bauxite, during which additional resources of lithium and titanium were also

identified.

The GSI has submitted mineral samples to the Indian Bureau of Mines, Nagpur, and the Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology, Bhubaneswar, for beneficiation studies. In addition, two other preliminary exploration projects (G3 stage) for lithium are underway in the Salal East and Panasa areas of Reasi district as part of the current field season for 2024-25, he said.

Regarding the timeline for exploration and auctioning, the government as per the news agency—

Kashmir News Observer (KNO) has not specified a fixed period for the area to reach the G1 or G2 exploration stage, which would be necessary for the auction process and commercial mining to begin.

Efforts to reduce India's dependence on lithium imports have been a key focus. The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, has been amended through the MMDR Amendment Act, 2023, introducing major reforms in the mining sector, he said. Reddy added the amendments include the addition of 24 critical minerals, including lithium, to the First Schedule of the MMDR Act, empowering the Central Government to auction mineral concessions exclusively for these minerals.

Also, the government has set up a joint venture company, Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), which aims to secure critical mineral assets abroad. KABIL has already acquired a 15,703-hectare area in Argentina's Catamarca province for exploration and mining of lithium, he said.

Indian Army Opens AI Incubation Centre to Boost Technology in Defence



JAMMU: The Indian Army has taken a major step toward modernizing its operations by opening an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Incubation Centre in Bengaluru.

The Indian Army AI Incubation Centre (IAIIC) was virtually inaugurated by Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi.

This centre aims to use AI to improve the Army's efficiency, decision-making, and readiness for modern security challenges. It will focus on creating data-driven solutions to enhance the Army's operational capabilities.

The centre is being set up with the support of Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), which is providing

infrastructure and IT assistance. It will be operated by Indian Army personnel.

The IAIIC will also collaborate with universities, startups, and industry experts to develop homegrown AI solutions suited to the Army's unique needs. Research will focus on areas such as advanced surveillance, autonomous systems, decision-making tools, and predictive maintenance.

A supercomputer with advanced capabilities, provided by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), will be used for AI training and development at the facility.

The initiative is part of the Army's efforts to reduce

No development at the cost of livelihood, environment: PDP Chief

Jahangir Sofi

SRINAGAR: Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on

the government during a press conference, accusing it of destroying the region's unique identity and natural resources through large-scale infrastructure projects. Mufti, while speaking to the media highlighted three major projects—the Rajouri-Baramulla Highway, the Ring Road project from Ganderbal to Ganderbal, and railway expansion projects—claiming they are causing extensive damage to agricultural land, forests, and water resources.

In four years, JK sees power consumption surge by 13 Pc

Riyaz Bhat

SRINAGAR: Amidst growing demand for power, the electricity consumption in Jammu and Kashmir has increased by more than thirteen percent in the past four years.

The official documents accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) states, "Over the span from 2020-21 to 2023-24, Jammu and Kashmir saw a steady increase in electricity consumption per capita, rising from 1,322 Kilowatt-Hour (KWhr) to 1,507 KWhr."

"This trend reflects a growing demand for power amidst a population increase from 13.41 million to 13.70 million, with units purchased and consumed escalating from 17,721.76 million to 20,644.47 million units over the period," it reads.

Currently, there are 23.45 lakh electric connections and consumers of different categories in JK who are being catered electric power supply.

"At least 14 lakh smart

meters are targeted to be installed, 727 lakh smart meters are targeted to be installed by March 2025 out of which 5.78 Lakhs stand installed," reads the document.

It also said that the government will complete the loss reduction infrastructure projects by March 2025. About the renewable energy sector in Jammu and Kashmir, the

already commissioning projects like 5 MW SHP Bultikulan and 3.75 MW SHP Khari," it reads.

The documents further reveal that an additional 37 small hydro projects totaling 107 MW are planned under IPP mode and 13 projects with 112.50 MW capacity are earmarked under EPC mode pending funds release.

"Solar energy



document states that it is advancing significantly with a focus on solar and small hydro power projects.

"Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) has allocated 35 Mini Hydel Projects (MHPs) with a capacity of 103.05 MW under Independent Power Producer (IPP) mode,

initiatives have seen the development of 27.85 MW capacity, including projects under schemes like Grid Connected Rooftop Solar Power Plant and PM-KUSUM. Future plans include achieving 500 MW of grid-connected solar power and installing 15,000 solar pumps by 2026," it reads.

SSCL launches Intelligent Traffic Management System

SRINAGAR: In a transformative initiative aimed at smooth management of traffic on City roads, the Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) has launched cutting-edge Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) alongside an e-Challan system in Srinagar City.

The ITMS, a significant step in urban traffic management is designed to improve road safety, reduce congestion and enhance traffic flow.

The key features of this initiative include Real-time Traffic Monitoring through advanced cameras to strategically monitor traffic for efficient management and quick incident response.

Smart Traffic Signals is another feature, managed by Intelligent controllers that optimize signal timings based on real-time conditions, minimizing delays.

Similarly through Automated Rule

Enforcement feature, over 1,050 cameras ensure compliance with rules, detecting violations like red-light jumping, over-speeding, mobile use, helmetless riding and more. Also as part of E-Challan System feature, digitized traffic violation processing ensures transparency, efficiency and accountability.

"This initiative will revolutionize traffic management, creating a safer and more efficient urban environment," said Dr. Owais

Ahmed, CEO of Srinagar Smart City Limited.

The ITMS and e-Challan system showcase Srinagar Smart City's commitment to leveraging technology for a sustainable and citizen-focused urban experience.

It is important to mention that Srinagar Smart City Limited is a Special Purpose Vehicle dedicated to implementing innovative, technology-driven solutions for creating a sustainable and inclusive city.

Continued From P1...

JK Bank reports

Year-wise, J&K Bank Limited reported 11 fraud cases in FY 2021-22 involving Rs 14.23 crore. In FY 2022-23, the number of cases rose to 13, but the amount involved escalated significantly to Rs 298.09 crore. However, FY 2023-24 saw a notable reduction with only eight cases reported, involving Rs 8.10 crore, the reply reads.

The Reserve Bank of India attributes the overall decline in banking frauds to comprehensive measures, including revised Master Directions on Fraud Risk Management issued in July 2024. These measures emphasize strengthening the governance role of bank boards, instituting robust internal audits, and improving frameworks for early warning signals and red flagging of accounts. The introduction of dedicated data analytics and market intelligence units in banks has also been mandated to aid in early detection and prevention of fraudulent activities, he said.

"These reforms have significantly enhanced the ability of banks, including J&K Bank Limited, to deter fraudsters and safeguard financial transactions effectively," the MoS added

HM Amit

Before that, there were attacks on outsiders working in Kashmir.

The meeting is expected to take note of recent terror incidents and possible steps to be taken on how to stop such attacks in the coming days, the sources said.

According to official data, 142 terrorists were killed in JK in 2019 and the number is around 45 so far this year.

Fifty civilians were killed in 2019 in the UT while the figure came down to 14 by the first week of November this year.

6 Die, 4

Meanwhile, the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha expressed grief over the loss of lives in the incident. "Extremely saddened by the loss of lives due to a tragic fire in Kathua. My thoughts are with the bereaved families. I wish the injured a speedy recovery," the office of LG J&K wrote on X.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of six lives in a devastating fire incident in Kathua district. In his condolence message, the Chief Minister described the incident as deeply painful, particularly as it claimed the lives of six people and injured another four.

"It is heartbreaking to learn about this tragedy where six precious lives were lost. I pray for eternal peace to the departed souls and for the swift recovery of those injured in this unfortunate incident," he said.

The Chief Minister extended his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families, praying for strength and forbearance to help them endure this difficult time. The fire, which broke out early Wednesday morning in a rented accommodation, led to the death of six individuals, including two minors, due to suffocation. The victims were rushed to the Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital in Kathua, where they were declared 'brought dead.' Four others injured in the incident are currently undergoing treatment.

The Chief Minister assured that the best possible medical care is being provided to the injured. "I have directed the concerned authorities to ensure that the injured receive best possible treatment for a smooth recovery," he said

We Must

to build a better future. "One should get back to the roots for a clear vision and goals of the future," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also advised the Shri Raghvendra Jyotish Sansthan Trust for digital publishing of the Panchang

and mobile application for value addition.

The knowledge and wisdom present in our ancient traditions should be made easily accessible to the people, especially the young generation, he added.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated several organizations and individuals for their contribution towards promotion of Sanskrit.

Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor University of Jammu; Prof. Devi Prasad Tripathi, former Vice Chancellor, Uttarakhand University; Chandra Mouli Raina, President, Raghavendra Jyotish Sansthan Trust; Prof Ram Bahadur Shukla, Head, Department of Sanskrit, Jammu University and prominent citizens were present.

Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu and Rajinder Sharma, former Mayor, JMC were also present on the occasion.

CM Omar

in my early elections before EVMs were introduced," he said.

Asked about allegations from Congress leaders that some alliance members adopt a different tone after assuming ministerial roles, the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister dismissed the claims, reiterating his praise for the Congress party's leadership.

"In the same interview, I appreciated Sonia Gandhi's leadership and stated that Congress has a natural role in leading the opposition, given its pan-India presence.

This is not BJP's language but the truth. I won't stop speaking the truth just because I've held a leadership position," he said.

On speculation of a leadership change in the INDIA alliance, Omar said, "There is no such discussion taking place."

Effective Mechanism

and projected development and other issues of their respective constituencies and areas.

The Deputy Chief Minister assured the deputations that the issues projected by them would be redressed on priority basis.

Govt begins

He said establishing dialysis centers in SDHs and CHCs in Kashmir offers significant benefits, enhancing healthcare accessibility and affordability for patients with chronic kidney diseases.

The official said that patients had to travel long distances to tertiary care centers and district hospitals for dialysis, incurring substantial travel costs and time.

Dialysis facilities in SDHs and CHCs will reduce this burden, enabling patients to receive essential care closer to home, he said.

He added that the government-run dialysis centers provide services free of cost to Below Poverty Line (BPL) patients and at subsidized rates for others, significantly reducing out-of-pocket expenses.

This financial relief is crucial for families, who previously faced high costs at private centers, they added.

Regular access to nearby dialysis centers improves patients' quality of life by minimizing travel-related fatigue and allowing more time for personal and professional activities, the health official added.

Decentralizing dialysis services to SDHs and CHCs will alleviate the patient load on tertiary hospitals, allowing these facilities to focus on more complex cases, he added

Javed Rana

besides ensuring supply to government departments.

Javed Rana also reviewed the conservation measures undertaken for cleaning and beautification of Wular Lake. He emphasised the importance of wetlands for maintaining ecological balance. He said that wetlands play a vital role in water purification, flood control and providing habitat for biodiversity.

He directed the officials to develop and undertake all necessary measures that address the challenges faced by the lake besides promoting sustainable use of these resources.

He called for taking all necessary measures to preserve and conserve the Wular Lake.

He also asked the officers to explore sustainable ways for generating revenue from the water body. He said that a survey should be conducted on the thriving fish species in the lake and migratory birds and other food products like water chestnuts and lotus stems, that provide sustenance to 30 surrounding villages.

Considering the adverse climatic conditions, Javed Rana said that there is an enhanced need for improving the water quality of the lake, besides focusing on waste management from catchment areas.

He said that Wular Lake is a safe haven for migratory birds and strong vigilance be maintained against poaching of these birds.

During the meeting, CED WUCMA gave a detailed presentation highlighting ongoing conservation efforts besides various works targeted for the current financial year.

B.R. Ambedkar

Congress's misrepresentation of history has been exposed during the recent parliamentary debate".

Shah furthermore, condemned the Congress for allegedly attempting to spread misconceptions in society by "dressing the truth in the garb of falsehood."

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Shabir Ahmad Hajam.
S/O Late Gh Mohd Hajam.
R/O Mir Mohalla Potushi Bandipora.

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Wahid Khalil Bhat.
S/O Mohd Khalil Bhat.
R/O Watepora Bandipora.

Had A Lot Of Fun But It's Over Now: Ashwin Announces International Retirement

BRISBANE: India's premier off-spinner R Ashwin on Wednesday surprised the cricketing world by announcing his retirement with immediate effect in the middle of the Test series against Australia here despite having a "bit of punch left" in him.

Ashwin retires from the game as the second highest wicket-taker for India in Tests with 537 scalps in 106 games, placing him only behind the great Anil Kumble (619 wickets) in the overall statistics.

He will continue to play club cricket, including the IPL, where he will return to play for Chennai Super Kings next year.

"I won't take too much of your time. Today will be the last day for me as an India cricketer in all formats," Ashwin said at the end of the drawn third Test here in a joint press conference with captain Rohit Sharma during which he declined to take any questions and left after making the announcement.

Ashwin, who would be headed back to India on Thursday, was seen sharing an emotional moment with star batter Virat Kohli in the dressing room hours before the announcement, sending social media into a frenzy.

The 38-year-old played the day-night Test in Adelaide and picked up one wicket. He not being a sure starter in the playing eleven over the course of the three Tests prompted him to think about his future in the team and eventually call time on a remarkable career.

Ashwin was not just the master of his craft, he was also considered one of the brightest minds in world cricket.

The Chennai-based bowler, who holds an engineering degree, usually does well to hide

his emotions but sitting alongside longtime teammate Rohit, Ashwin left the stage for the fear of getting overawed by the occasion.



"I do feel there is bit of punch left in me as a cricketer but I would like to showcase that in club level cricket. I have had a lot of fun. I must I have created a lot of memories alongside Rohit and several of my other teammates," he said.

"I have lost some of them over the last few years (in the team). We are the last bunch of OG's left in the dressing room. I would be marking this as my date of having played at this level," he said, referring to the likes of the currently out of favour Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara.

Ashwin played 116 ODIs for India, claiming 156 wickets, while his 65 T20 International outings yielded 72 scalps. He expressed his

gratitude towards the BCCI and other senior teammates for his career which began in 2010 in the one-day format before he made his Test

debut a year later.

"A lot of people to thank but I would be failing in my duties if I did not thank BCCI and fellow teammates. I want to name a few of them. Most importantly Rohit, Virat, Ajinkya, Pujara who have taken those hundred catches around the bat to give me those wickets I managed to get over the years.

"Big thank you the Australian cricket team, I have enjoyed playing against them."

Ashwin also thanked the media for its support over the years.

"It is an emotional moment. Please pardon me for that (not taking questions). Thanks for writing good things about me and some nasty things on occasions," said Ashwin on a lighter

note as he left the room to a standing ovation.

His retirement brought back memories of the 2014 series when the then captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni had quit Tests after conceding an unassailable lead to the home side.

"He'd been thinking about it"

Ashwin's decision may seem like a bolt from the blue but Rohit revealed that he had a chat with the champion spinner on the sidelines of the Perth Test.

"...this was on his mind and there are obviously a lot of things that went behind it, I am pretty sure Ash will be able to answer that but he understands what the team is thinking," Rohit said.

"When I arrived in Perth, this was a chat we had and I somehow convinced him to stay for that pink ball Test match and then after that it just happened so that he felt that if I am not needed right now in the series, I am better off saying goodbye to the game," the India captain added.

India played Washington Sundar ahead of Ashwin in Perth before the veteran returned for the pink ball Test. Ravindra Jadeja played in the Brisbane Test.

"It's important when a player like him who has had so many moments with the Indian team and he has been a truly big match winner for us, he is allowed to make those decisions on his own and if it was now, so be it," added Rohit.

The BCCI was also quick to congratulate Ashwin on a special career.

"A name synonymous with mastery, wizardry, brilliance, and innovation," said the BCCI in its tribute post on X.

India Waiting On Harmanpreet's Fitness Update: Smriti Mandhana

Harmanpreet Kaur's participation in India Women's T20I series decider here on Thursday is under doubt after the regular captain was sidelined from the second match having suffered a niggle in her knee during the first game.

Smriti Mandhana, who stood in for Kaur as the West Indies levelled the series 1-1 on Tuesday, said the team is awaiting update on Kaur's availability for the third match.

"Harman's fitness, (the) BCCI medical team is observing on day-to-day basis. They'll be at a better place to answer that question. I think we'll have to wait for the update from their side," Mandhana told media after India's crushing nine-wicket loss here on Tuesday.

Kaur, who turned up for practice here last Saturday with her knee strapped, scored 13 not out in India's big total of 195/4 but she did not take the field in the series-opener here.

"Harmanpreet Kaur sustained a niggle in her knee while batting during the first T20I against West Indies. Hence, she remains unavailable for selection for the second T20I. The BCCI Medical Team is monitoring her progress," the team issued a statement ahead of the second T20I here.

Mandhana, meanwhile, brushed aside any concerns regarding her after she copped a blow to her hand towards the end of the second match.

"I think (the) finger is fine now. Just that initial impact, where you think that 'oh, it can be wrong', but it's all good now," Mandhana said.

Mandhana, who struck a 41-ball 62 to lead India's charge, said her side did not bowl enough dot balls to put pressure on the free-flowing West Indies batters.

"We did try everything to stop them. But Hayley (Matthews) is definitely a quality player. The executions were not at the mark," she said after her counterpart Matthews hit a 47-ball 85.



"I won't take too much of your time. Today will be the last day for me as an India cricketer in all formats," Ashwin said at the end of the drawn third Test here in a joint press conference with captain Rohit Sharma during which he declined to take any questions and left after making the announcement.

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Samson and Pandey excluded from Vijay Hazare Trophy squads

Sanju Samson has been left out of Kerala's squad for the Vijay Hazare Trophy beginning December 21. The move comes on the back of an internal decision to include only those players who participated in a preparatory camp in the lead-up to the tournament.

Samson had led Kerala in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) 2024-25, where they narrowly missed out on qualifying for the knockouts, winning four out of their six matches. Samson, who had originally been named in the 30-member probable list, now finds himself out of the 19-member long list.

ESPNcricinfo understands Samson had written to the association stating his unavailability for the camp, but the KCA has decided to stick to its original decision. With senior batter Sachin Baby also unavailable due to injury he picked up during SMAT, batter Salman Nizar has been named captain for the 50-over competition. Samson, fresh off two T20I centuries on the tour of South Africa, played in five of Kerala's six games at SMAT, scoring 135 runs including one half-century.

Kerala squad: Salman Nizar (capt), Rohan Kunnummal, Shoun Roger, Mohammed Azharuddeen (wk), Anand Krishnan, Krishna Prasad, Jalaj Saxena, Aditya Sarwate, Sijomon Joseph, Basil Thampi, Basil NP, Nidheesh MD, Eden Apple Tom, Sharafuddeen, Akhil Scaria, Vishweshwar Suresh, Vaishak Chandran, Ajnas M (wk)

Karnataka 'move on' from Manish Pandey

Meanwhile, there's churn elsewhere with Karnataka seemingly having "moved on" - as per KSCA selection committee chair J Abhiram - from a number of senior players in a bid to reset. Among those not considered is senior batter Manish Pandey.

The KSCA believes Pandey's exit at this point is purely on form and the possibility of a comeback seems "tough." Pandey managed just 117 runs in five innings as Karnataka failed to make the SMAT knockouts; they finished fourth in the eight-team pool, losing out to Baroda and Saurashtra.

The association has also gone to the extent of saying Pandey, who was vice-captain to Mayank Agarwal for the first half of Ranji Trophy 2024-25, won't be considered for the back end of the competition that will resume in January. Pandey managed a solitary half-century in six innings, with Karnataka needing a miracle to qualify for the knockouts.

"We as an association have realised that we need to move on from the players of old and bring in new blood," Abhiram said. "We cannot live in past glory."

If Pandey has indeed played his last game, it marks the end of a glorious career in which he was part of two Ranji Trophy-winning squads [2013-14 and 2014-15], apart from winning a number of white-ball championships. Interestingly, Karnataka won their most-recent silverware under his leadership - the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy back-to-back in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Pandey has 7973 runs in 118 first-class matches at an average of 50.78, with 25 centuries. Overall, he also has over 13,000 runs across the white-ball formats. He played the most-recent of his 68 white-ball games for India in 2021. Last month, he was re-signed by reigning IPL champions Kolkata Knight Riders ahead of the 2025 season.

Pandey's ouster from Karnataka comes hot on the heels of a number of high-profile exits. K Gowtham, the allrounder, hasn't been considered across formats since the end of the 2022-23 season despite compelling performances in club cricket as well as the state-run Maharaja T20 Trophy.