www.kashmirfrontier.com epaper.kashmirfrontier.com kashmirfrontier-official

The Kashmir Frontier

HEIGHT OF JOURNALISM

Srinagar
TUESDAY
24 NOVEMBER 2026

Volume: 23
Issue No: 273

P8

POSTAL REGISTRATION NO. L/SK-134/2010-12 RNI NO: JKENG/2009/27113 RS. 3/- (ALL SURCHARGES FOR DELHI /JAMMU/LEH .50)



'We are way past Covid times' - Gill wants saliva ban to be reversed

Rijiju says J&K's future 'very bright', offers up to Rs 50 crore for Waqf Board projects

Union Minister praises Waqf Board's performance, assures support in genuine registration cases

■ MIR AASIF

Srinagar, Nov 23: Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju on Monday offered to consider funding proposals worth up to Rs 50 crore from the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board, with a focus on skill development, promotion of local culture and employment generation, while expressing confidence in the region's development prospects.

Addressing the first-ever Waqf Day 2026 celebrations at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), Rijiju said Jammu and Kashmir had undergone considerable change over the years and described its future, as well as that of the country, as "very bright".

Referring to his visits to the region in 2014, when he was serving in the Union Home Ministry, the Minister said his engagements at the time were largely centred on security assessments in remote and border areas.

He said major public programmes and gatherings were uncommon during that period, contrasting the situation with the large participation witnessed at Monday's event.

"I was in the Home Ministry in 2014 and worked for five years with Rajnath Singh



ji. I know well that back then, there were hardly any major public programmes. I used to visit remote areas and sometimes even go to the border to assess security situations. There were no public meetings," he said.

Expressing satisfaction over the pace of development, Rijiju said the changing situation in Jammu and Kashmir offered encouraging prospects for the future.

A major focus of his address was the potential expansion of the Waqf Board's developmental activities through financial assistance from the Centre. He invited the Board to submit detailed proposals for skill-development programmes, particularly targeting educated unemployed youth.

The Minister said the Ministry of Minority Affairs could consider projects worth Rs 15 crore, Rs 20 crore or even Rs 50 crore, stressing that such initiatives

■ Contd. On Page 7..

IGP Kashmir reviews security grid, calls for stronger coordination across Valley

Security agencies assess preparedness; intel sharing, area domination, operational readiness discussed

■ KF NEWS DESK



Srinagar, Nov 23: Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir Zone, Sujit Kumar, on Monday chaired a high-level security review meeting at the Police Control Room (PCR), Kashmir, to assess the prevailing security situation and review the existing security grid across the Valley.

The meeting was attended by representatives of various security and intelligence agencies, with deliberations focusing on strengthening coordination among forces and ensuring operational preparedness in vulnerable areas.

According to officials, the review covered security arrangements across the Kashmir Valley, including the plains as well as

■ Contd. On Page 7..

Sakeena Itoo assesses winter preparedness of Kashmir GMCs

Calls for advance survey of pregnant women in snowbound areas, stronger referrals, round-the-clock medical services

■ KF NEWS DESK



Srinagar, Nov 23: Minister for Health and Medical Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo, on Monday reviewed the winter preparedness of Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) across Kashmir Division, directing health authorities to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services, strengthen emergency response mechanisms and make advance arrangements for residents of remote and snowbound areas.

During the review meeting, the Minister laid particular emphasis on maternal healthcare, directing authorities to conduct a comprehensive advance survey of pregnant women residing in snowbound and inaccessible areas and maintain an updated, district-wise database to ensure timely medical assistance during harsh weather conditions.

She called for identifying expectant mothers, particularly those nearing their delivery dates or requiring specialised care, and shifting them in advance to safer locations closer to healthcare facilities wherever medically necessary.

"No pregnant woman from a snowbound or remote area should be left without timely medical assistance because of weather-related disruptions," she stressed, calling for coordinated arrangements to prevent medical emergencies from turning into crises due to lack of preparedness.

The Minister also directed GMC administrations and health authorities to strengthen coordination with district administrations, Chief Medical Officers,

■ Contd. On Page 7..

LG Sinha, CM Omar extend greetings on Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Prakash Parv

■ KF NEWS DESK

Jammu, Nov 23: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday extended greetings to the people on the eve of Prakash Parv of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in his message conveyed his heartfelt wishes and highlighted the timeless teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, including love, truth, compassion, equality and selfless service.

He said the teachings of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji continue to

■ Contd. On Page 7..

JKSSB EXAM ROW

Mehbooba seeks SI exam postponement, Sajad Lone calls for scrapping recruitment board

PDP chief demands impartial FAA exam probe; PC president proposes decentralised hiring system

■ AADIL AKBAR



Srinagar, Nov 23: The controversy over alleged irregularities in the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) recruitment process has intensified with PDP president Mehbooba Mufti seeking deferment of the November 28 Police Sub-Inspector examination and a time-bound investigation, while Peoples Conference president Sajad Lone demanded the dissolution of the recruitment board, accusing it of repeatedly failing to ensure transparent and timely selections.

Mufti said the allegations surrounding the Finance Accounts Assistant (FAA) examination had placed the future of thousands of government job aspirants at stake, stressing that the November 28 examination should not proceed until the matter was thoroughly investigated.

She called for an impartial inquiry to identify everyone involved, alleging that influential individuals could be behind the reported malpractice. Urging the Centre and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to intervene, she said accountability must extend to all those responsible, irrespective of their position or influence.

The PDP chief expressed

■ Contd. On Page 7..

Govt approves 5 kanals of land for special school in Baramulla

■ KF NEWS DESK

Jammu, Nov 23: The Jammu and Kashmir Government, led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, has approved the transfer of five kanals of land at Estate Hadipora in Tehsil Watergam, Baramulla, to the Social Welfare Department for establishing a dedicated school for children with special needs.

The proposed institution will provide specialised educational facilities, therapeutic support and skill development opportunities, creating an enabling

■ Contd. On Page 7..

BRO says post-Amarnath Yatra road widening works adhere to safety, environmental norms

■ KF NEWS DESK





Jammu, Nov 23: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Monday clarified that road widening works being undertaken following the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra are being carried out in accordance with prescribed safety standards and environmental safeguards.

The organisation said all necessary measures are being taken to ensure the safe disposal of excavated material, protection of natural drainage systems and minimal disturbance to the surrounding terrain.

Dismissing claims circulating on social media regarding the ongoing works, BRO termed the reports misleading, stating that the widening activities were initiated in view of

■ Contd. On Page 7..

FDA conducts 281 inspections across J&K; registrations of 2 Srinagar eateries suspended

51 food samples sent for testing; 9 cases initiated over hygiene, food safety violations

■ KF NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Nov 23: The Food and Drugs Administration (FDA), Jammu and Kashmir, has conducted 281 inspections of hotels, restaurants, cafés and other food establishments across the Union Territory as part of an intensified enforcement drive to ensure compliance with food safety standards.

According to a press release issued by the Commissioner, Food and Drugs Administration, J&K, the department lifted 51 samples of meat, meat products and other food commodities during the inspections and sent them for laboratory analysis to assess their compliance with prescribed safety and quality standards.

As part of the enforcement action, the FDA suspended the FSSAI registrations of two Srinagar-based establishments — M/s Zaika Chicken Biryani, Khayam, and M/s Royal 99 Café, Shalimar — over alleged violations of prescribed food safety, sanitation and

■ Contd. On Page 7..

SSP Srinagar orders crackdown on drug networks, OGW links

Directs intensified surveillance, faster investigations, strict action against lapses in policing

■ KF NEWS DESK



Srinagar, Nov 23: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Dr G.V. Sundeep Chakravarthy, IPS, on Monday chaired a comprehensive crime and security review meeting at Police Control Room (PCR) Kashmir to assess the crime situation, progress of investigations and security preparedness across the district.

According to a police statement, the meeting was attended by Zonal Superintendents of Police, SP Headquarters, Sub-Divisional Police Officers (SDPOs), Station House Officers (SHOs) and other supervisory officers of Srinagar Police.

During the meeting, a detailed assessment was carried out of cases registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), NDPS Act and POCSO Act, besides cases involving crimes

■ Contd. On Page 7..

J&K likely to announce winter vacation for primary classes from December 1

Education Min says children's health, parents' feedback will guide decision

■ MIR AASIF

Srinagar, Nov 23: Education Minister Shameema Firdous on Monday said that the government is considering announcing winter vacation from December 01 for the elementary level classes.

Speaking to reporters, the minister said, "Our primary focus is the health of the children. Keeping in view the cold weather conditions, we are considering vacation of elementary level classes from nursery to 5th front the December-01."

She also said that the government was receiving different feedback from the

■ Contd. On Page 7..

Govt warns of WhatsApp hijacking via public computers left logged in

■ PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 23: A WhatsApp Web session left logged in on a public computer or a shared device could become a gateway for cybercriminals to hijack accounts, read private conversations and impersonate users to carry out fraud, a latest advisory from the Union Home Ministry's anti-cybercrime wing, I4C, warned on Monday.

The National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (NCTAU) of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has warned that authenticated WhatsApp Web sessions could be used to gain unauthorised access, allowing malicious actors to read messages, send communications while impersonating the account holder, access contact lists and group conversations, and exploit

■ Contd. On Page 7..

Congress, Samajwadi Party leaders say UP seat-sharing talks 'cordial', final announcement in 2-3 days



The long-awaited seat-sharing negotiations between the Samajwadi Party and the Congress for the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections formally began in Delhi on Monday with a brief but "positive" first-round meeting between the four-member panels of both parties.

The talks, held in a "cordial atmosphere", focused on finalising the agenda and key points for seat allocation across the state's 403 Assembly constituencies. Leaders from both sides stressed mutual respect and a shared commitment to a workable formula based primarily on winnability rather than rigid numbers.

Samajwadi Party Rajya Sabha MP and national general secretary Ram Gopal Yadav, who heads the SP panel, said after the meeting, "The meeting took place in a very cordial atmosphere. We listened to each other's points of view, and we will soon finalise this alliance and inform you about it. We will complete the process within the next two to three days. The next meeting will take place tomorrow."

Uttar Pradesh Congress in-charge Rajendra Pal Gautam echoed the positive tone, "Both parties are in agreement, they trust each other, and they will manage things jointly. This is nearly settled, and an agreement will be reached in a respectful manner. It will happen very soon," he said.

Congress MP Pramod Tiwari, whose residence is understood to be the venue for the discussions, added that both parties were examining constituency-wise strengths and data. "Everyone has their own figures and facts based on their respective strengths. The meeting will continue today and, if required, we will meet again tomorrow. We will work out a formula and arrive at a decision," he said.

UP Congress President Aradhana Misra (Mona) also said the meeting was held on a very positive note. "I am confident that we will finalise everything within the next two to four days. HT

'Lord Ram incomplete without Nepal': PM Modi, Balen Shah underline deep cultural, religious ties between nations



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said India shares deep cultural and religious ties with Nepal, asserting that Lord Ram was "incomplete" without the Himalayan nation, as he welcomed his Nepalese counterpart, Balen Shah, in New Delhi.

Addressing a joint press conference with Shah, PM Modi said the relationship between India and Nepal was built on shared history, faith and culture.

Echoing the sentiments expressed by his Indian counterpart, Shah said, "Nepal and India have been bound by historical, cultural, and civilizational ties since the sacred era of Lord Ram and Mata Janaki."

PM Modi welcomed Balen Shah on his maiden visit to the Indian capital, after which both leaders flagged off the Sarayu-Kamala Express, connecting Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh with Janakpur Dham in Nepal to strengthen connectivity and people-to-people ties between the two countries.

PM Modi recalls 2018 Janakpur visit

Prime Minister Modi also recalled his visit to the holy cities of Janakpur and Muktinath in May 2018, during a state visit where he and then-Nepal prime minister KP Sharma Oli flagged off the inaugural direct bus service between Janakpur and Ayodhya.

"India-Nepal relations are woven together by shared history, faith, culture and deep people-to-people ties. Lord Ram and Goddess Sita are symbols of our shared civilisation and faith. In 2018, on the sacred land of Janakpur, I had said that our pilgrimage sites are incomplete without Nepal, and our Lord Ram is incomplete without Nepal," he said.

The Prime Minister further said the consecration ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya gave renewed strength to this shared faith, adding that the Sarayu-Kamala Express service would give a new dimension to this sacred bond.

Nepal's links with Ramayana

Nepal has a long connection with the Hindu mythology Ramayana, which narrates the life and journey of Lord Ram. Janakpur, which is considered the birthplace of Lord Ram's wife Sita, is home to key pilgrimage sites, such as the renowned Janaki Mandir, which is visited by tens of thousands of devotees each year.

Janakpur also houses the revered Ram Mandir and the Ram-Sita Vivah Mandap, which is associated with the divine wedding of Lord Ram and Goddess Sita. The Raj Devi Mandir and Rajarshi Janak Mandir are dedicated to the deities associated with Goddess Sita's family. The famous Dhanushadham is also closely linked to the Ramayana, as it is believed to be located where a fragment of Lord Shiva's mighty bow fell when it was broken by Lord Ram during Sita's swayamvar.

Nepal is also home to the Valmiki Ashram in Chitwan National Park, located near the Triveni Dham of Bagmati province. The revered ashram is believed to be where Valmiki wrote the Ramayana and where Sita spent her final days, raising her two sons Lava and Kusha.

In 2018, PM Modi and Oli launched the Nepal-India Ramayana Circuit connecting Janakpur with Ayodhya and other sites in India associated with the Ramayana.

India-Nepal sign 8 agreements

India and Nepal signed at least eight memorandums of understanding covering satellite technology, governance, education, healthcare, urban development and traditional medicine.

PM Modi also expressed condolences over the loss of life in the recent flash floods in Nepal and announced a development cooperation package worth 24,000 crore Nepali rupees (₹15,000 crore) for the neighbouring country.

HT

Godhra train burning case: SC grants bail to life convict on medical grounds

The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to a Irfan Siraj Pada, a life convict in the 2002 Godhra train burning case on medical grounds amid opposition by the state saying that the charges are serious and the accused does not bear a good conduct in jail. The state, however, confirmed that he is undergoing treatment for heart ailments and had undergone more than 18 years in jail. A bench of justices MM Sundresh and PB Varale said, "In this application, primarily we find that the argument for bail is on medical grounds. The state submits that the condition of petitioner is factually correct. In view of the factual scenario, we are inclined to grant suspension of sentence on medical grounds." The application was moved by Pada, who is accused of pelting stones at and setting fire to the S6 coach of the Sabarmati Express, killing 59 passengers, including women and children, on February 27, 2002, while they were returning from Ayodhya. The mob that gathered near Godhra railway station allegedly bolted the compartment doors from outside, pelted the coach with stones and set it on fire. Gujarat standing counsel Swati Ghildiyal told the court that the case involved serious charges and submitted jail records to show that the petitioner

HT

Will allow only BS-VI vehicles in Delhi, says Supreme Court amid winter pollution crisis



The Supreme Court on Monday made it clear that only vehicles complying with BS-VI emission standards should be allowed to ply in Delhi during the pollution-prone winter months, even as it described the national capital's relatively better air quality this November as a matter of good fortune, saying favourable winds had helped prevent the air quality from slipping into the severe category.

"We are clear we will allow only BS-VI vehicles in Delhi, if not NCR," a bench, comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana, observed, signalling its intention to continue with restrictions on polluting vehicles during the winter months.

The bench, which was hearing the Supreme Court's ongoing suo motu proceedings on air pollution in Delhi-NCR, said it was "lucky" that the region had not experienced 'severe' category air pollution this November, attributing the relatively better conditions primarily to favourable meteorological conditions. "We have also been lucky this winter. There is no severe category pollution till now because of the winds," it remarked.

When additional solicitor general Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), pointed to the efforts made by authorities to contain pollution, the court said: "Primarily nature." Bhati maintained that enforcement measures had also contributed to the situation.

The observations assume significance as the Delhi government has introduced restrictions on the entry and plying of vehicles that do not meet BS-VI emission standards during the winter months. Under its notification, vehicles registered outside Delhi that comply only with BS-IV or older emission norms are barred from plying in the capital between November 1 and January 31 every year.

The Delhi government announced on November 7 that the restriction would be an annual measure, rather than a one-off intervention for the current winter. The prohibition covers BS-IV and older commercial goods vehicles, including light, medium and heavy goods vehicles, as well as buses entering the capital. CNG and electric vehicles are exempt, along with specified emergency and other exempted categories.

The government has deployed enforcement personnel at major entry points, including DND, Rajokri on the Delhi-Jaipur highway, Ghazipur, Singhu, Tikri and Badarpur, to prevent violations. It has also said it is using special enforcement teams and automatic number plate recognition cameras to monitor compliance.

The Supreme Court on Monday indicated that it is considering a more comprehensive approach to vehicular pollution, potentially extending restrictions beyond the existing framework and across the wider NCR.

It also explored a five-year roadmap to progressively eliminate the entry of polluting commercial vehicles into Delhi without disrupting the supply of essential commodities. "Why not have this during five years? To ensure that no single commercial vehicle enters Delhi," it suggested.

It added that the idea should not be to prevent Delhi's residents from accessing essential goods but to change the way these supplies are transported. "Why not how to ensure that commercial vehicles don't enter Delhi at all? But it does not mean that Delhi people don't require. HT

Delhi court issues non-bailable warrant against Dhruv Rathee in 2018 defamation case

A Delhi court on Monday issued a non-bailable warrant against YouTuber Dhruv Rathee in a 2018 criminal defamation case, after observing that he failed to appear before it despite a bailable warrant having already been issued against him.

Judicial magistrate first class Aman Rais Khan of Saket courts issued the warrant after noting that neither Rathee nor any counsel representing him appeared during the proceedings. The court has fixed December 3 as the next date of hearing.

The case stems from a criminal defamation complaint filed by Vikas Sanskrityayan over a video titled "BJP IT Cell Part II", which Rathee produced and uploaded on his YouTube channel in May 2018.

In the video, Rathee had alleged that members of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s IT Cell had attempted to bribe Sanskrityayan to malign his reputation. Sanskrityayan subsequently approached the court, alleging that the claims were false, malicious and intended to damage his reputation.

The video had attracted widespread attention after it was shared on social media by former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. Sanskrityayan had initiated defamation proceedings against both Rathee and Kejriwal. Kejriwal later admitted before the court that sharing the video was a mistake,

HT

'Unable to digest': BJP takes jibe at Rahul Gandhi after India ranks 3rd on Asia Power Index



The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday attacked the Congress and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, saying that they were unable to acknowledge the country's achievements on the global stage after the Asia Power Index report named India as Asia's third most influential country, only behind the US and China.

Australian think tank Lowy Institute released its Asia Power Index Ranking for 2026, where India retained its "major power" status in Asia and increased its overall score to 40.5, despite a dip in economic capability. The report also noted that India stood strong in the diplomatic field, making Prime Minister Narendra Modi Asia's second-most effective leader behind Xi Jinping.

The BJP lauded the report, calling it a testament to India's growing strategic, economic, diplomatic and cultural power along with PM Modi's effective leadership.

'Rahul Gandhi unable to digest India's achievements'

Taking to X, BJP leader Sambit Patra said the report reflected India's progress in diplomatic influence, future resources, economic relationships, and defence networks, adding that the country was establishing its identity as a global power.

Attacking Rahul Gandhi and the Congress, Patra said, "While the world is acknowledging India's growing strength and global leadership, Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party are constantly trying to spread negativity by questioning the country's achievements."

"Rahul Gandhi should explain why the Congress party has trouble acknowledging the country's achievements when international institutions are recognising India's growing power and the effective leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi," he added.

HT

Bengal govt to change state's English name to Paschim Banga; 8 bills lined up in assembly



'Paschim Banga' will be the official English name of the eastern state, chief minister Suvendu Adhikari said on Monday, adding that the resolution to rename the state will be tabled in the assembly during the next session beginning on December 4.

"Our government will present eight bills related to various departments during a 10-day session of the legislative assembly starting December 4. On December 9, we will present a bill proposing that the state's English name, West Bengal, be changed to Paschim Banga. The Bengali name will be written in English alphabet once the bill is passed," Adhikari told the media after the cabinet meeting at Nabanna, the state secretariat.

The names West Bengal and Paschim Banga were established during the 1947 Partition when the eastern part of the undivided Bengal province was separated to form East Pakistan. Bengalis, however, continued to refer to East Pakistan as East Bengal and Purba Banga.

Adhikari said the departments of animal husbandry, panchayat and rural development, refugee rehabilitation, labour, mass education and finance are among those presenting the upcoming bills.

The CM announced this after the cabinet meeting, where decisions were also taken to grant a monthly fund of ₹one lakh for cow shelters and increase the monthly allowance for unemployed graduates from ₹1,500 to ₹2,000.

"The cabinet today passed an important decision to grant a maximum monthly fund of ₹one lakh to individuals or institutions taking care of aged cows. We will not allow anyone to slaughter cows. We will not allow anyone to touch the Gau Mata in our state," Adhikari said.

When asked what would happen with cows taken to licensed slaughter houses, Adhikari said the state will strictly follow the West Bengal Animal Slaughter Control Act, 1950.

"There have been instances of illegal slaughter in some districts. These people were arrested and jailed. HT

DC Srinagar visits Makhdoom Sahib (RA) Shrine, Sharika Devi Temple



SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 23: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today undertook a visit to the shrine of Hazrat Sheikh Hamza Makhoom (RA) and Sharika Devi Temple atop Hari Parbat to take on-the-spot stock of the progress of ongoing developmental, restoration and beautification projects at both historical religious sites.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, SP North, Showkat Ahmad, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer North, Shabir Ahmad, Tehsildar Khanyar, Syed Shahid, Executive Engineer R&B, Arif Hazari, Executive Engineer KPDCL, Nasir Ahmad, District Health Officer, Dr Rubeena and other Officers were also present on the occasion.

At Makhdoom Sahib Shrine, the DC reviewed the progress of the Rs 4.44 crore project aimed at strengthening and restoring retaining walls, upgrading steps and paving them with traditional Devri stone, developing a viewing deck, improving lighting and installing CCTV surveillance, besides other allied beautification works aimed at enhancing public amenities and improving facilities for devotees visiting the Shrine..

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned Departments to expedite the pace of work and ensure its timely completion, emphasizing close inter-Departmental coordination for effective and seamless execution of the project.

Later, the DC visited Sharika Devi Temple atop Hari Parbat and reviewed the progress of various ongoing Developmental works, including construction of the boundary wall, toilet block and renovation of stairs at the Temple.

BWJA constitutes advisory panel, executive body following elections

Aabid Nabi appointed Patron; Syed Rizwan Geelani, Waris Fayaz named Advisors

■ KF NEWS DESK



Baramulla, Nov 23: Baramulla Working Journalists Association (BWJA) has constituted its advisory panel and executive body following the recently concluded elections, formalising its organisational structure with representation from different areas of the district.

Aabid Nabi has been appointed Patron of the association, while Syed Rizwan Geelani has been named Advisor to Chairman Arawat Mehraj. Waris Fayaz has been appointed Advisor to President Suhail Khan.

The association's organisational structure comprises 47 members, including the Patron, Chairman, Advisor to the Chairman, President, Advisor to the President, General Secretary, Spokesperson and Treasurer, along with other members of the executive body.

The newly constituted body includes representation from Baramulla, Uri, Sopore, Rafiabad, Tangmarg, Kreeri and Pattan, ensuring participation of journalists from across the district in the association's affairs.

BWJA also announced that a dedicated legal panel would be constituted in the coming days to provide legal assistance and address issues concerning the professional interests and rights of working journalists.

The formation of the advisory panel and executive body follows the association's elections, in which 103 out of 126 registered voters cast their votes, reflecting active participation by members from different parts of the district.

The association said the expanded organisational structure would strengthen coordination among journalists, facilitate the resolution of professional concerns and ensure effective representation of the media fraternity across Baramulla.

Reiterating its commitment to professional journalism, impartiality and unity among media persons, BWJA said it would maintain constructive engagement with all stakeholders and ensure coverage of events and media-related programmes across the district without discrimination or boycotts, in keeping with the principles of fairness and professional responsibility.

DC Anantnag flags off 120-boy contingent for five-day adventure trekking expedition to Pahalgam

Encourages youth to embrace adventure, explore nature



ANANTNAG, NOVEMBER 23: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, today flagged off a contingent of 120 boys from Sports Stadium Anantnag for a trekking expedition to the world-famous tourist destination of Pahalgam.

The flag-off ceremony was held in the presence of District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSSO) Anantnag, along with field staff and other officials of the department.

The trekking expedition, organised by the District Youth Services and Sports Office Anantnag, will be conducted from November 23 to November 27, 2026.

Adressing on the occasion, the DC encouraged the participants to actively engage in the expedition and make the most of this enriching experience.

DYSSO added that the department has put in place the necessary arrangements for the smooth and safe conduct of the expedition, with field staff and officials accompanying the contingent throughout the programme

The initiative aims to promote adventure sports, physical fitness, discipline, teamwork, leadership qualities and a spirit of exploration among young boys.

It will also provide participants with an opportunity to experience the breathtaking natural beauty of Pahalgam while developing confidence, resilience and environmental awareness.

DC Shopian launches 'Swachh Shopian Janbhagidari Abhiyan' from his Official Residence

Declares Premises Single-Use Plastic-Free, calls for collective Commitment to Keep Shopian Clean



SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 23: District Administration Shopian today launched the 'Swachh Shopian Janbhagidari Abhiyan' from the official residence of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Charandeep Singh, calling for active public participation in promoting scientific waste management and making cleanliness a shared responsibility.

The Deputy Commissioner also led by example by adopting sustainable waste management practices at his official residence.

Launched under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0, the campaign aims to promote responsible waste disposal, source segregation, home composting and the elimination of single-use plastics, with a focus on ensuring a cleaner and healthier Shopian.

The launch programme was attended by ADDC Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone; Suhail Ahmad Malik, Executive Officer, Municipal Council Shopian; members of civil society, Traders Association and sanitation workers.

During the programme, a live demonstration of the four-bin source segregation system was conducted, explaining the separation of household waste into wet waste, dry waste, sanitary waste and special-care waste, including domestic hazardous items such as batteries, expired medicines and chemical containers.

Safai Mitras demonstrated the door-to-door waste collection process, showcasing the collection and transportation of segregated waste in designated compartments of the municipal collection vehicle. The demonstration highlighted the importance of proper waste segregation and the vital role of sanitation workers in maintaining cleanliness across the town.

Reinforcing the importance of decentralised waste management, the Deputy Commissioner deposited wet waste into the compost pit at his official residence, demonstrating how kitchen and garden waste can be converted into organic manure through home composting.

ADDC Bandipora inspects ongoing Road Restoration, Jhelum Embankment Works at Check-i-Chandergeer

BANDIPORA, NOVEMBER 23: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Bandipora, Nazir Ahmad Mir, today visited Check-i-Chandergeer to inspect and review the ongoing road restoration and River Jhelum embankment repair works.

During the visit, the ADDC inspected the ongoing restoration activities and took stock of the progress achieved on the ground.

He reviewed the repair works being undertaken at the site and directed the concerned officers to ensure that the restoration process is carried out in a timely and systematic manner without causing unnecessary inconvenience to the general public.

He particularly stressed that adequate care must be taken to facilitate the smooth and safe movement of commuters, pedestrians and local residents during the execution of the works. He further instructed the concerned departments to maintain close coordination and ensure that necessary arrangements are in place to minimise public inconvenience.

AIP opposes road construction near Sheshnag Lake, calls for immediate halt to excavation

Says sacred site, fragile Himalayan ecology must be protected; seeks project details, environmental assessment

■ KF NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Nov 23: Awami Itihaad Party (AIP) has opposed road construction and excavation activities near Sheshnag Lake in South Kashmir, warning that such interventions could compromise the religious sanctity of the site and cause damage to its fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

Awami Ittehad Party Chief Spokesperson Inam Un Nabi said Sheshnag holds immense significance in Hindu religious tradition and forms an integral part of the centuries-old Amarnath pilgrimage route. According to religious belief, the site is associated with Lord Shiva leaving behind his serpents before proceeding towards the holy cave.

He acknowledged the importance of ensuring pilgrim safety and improving facilities along the pilgrimage route but maintained that development activities should not come at the expense of sacred religious sites and ecologically sensitive areas.

The AIP demanded an immediate halt to excavation near the lake, public disclosure of the project's details and a comprehensive environmental assessment. It also called for consultations with religious representatives before any further intervention.

Reiterating the party's position, Inam Un Nabi said Sheshnag's religious sanctity, cultural significance and natural heritage must be safeguarded.

Ten Huffaz honoured at annual Jalsa-e-Dastarbandi in Ramban

Scholars stress Islamic education, moral values and communal harmony at Ramban congregation

■ KF CORRESPONDENT



Ramban, Nov 23: The annual Jalsa-e-Dastarbandi of Madrasa Ishaat-ul-Uloom, Halla, Ramban, concluded on Sunday with the participation of prominent Islamic scholars, political representatives, social activists and a large gathering of people from across the region.

The congregation was attended by Shahi Imam of Jammu Hazrat Maulana Mufti Inayatullah Qasmi, Hazrat Maulana Nazir Ahmed Qasmi, Hazrat Maulana Zubair Ahmed Qasmi, Hafiz Abdul Rehman Ashrafi of Qazigund, Maulana Hamad Altaf Rahimi, Hafiz Mahjoor Ahmed, Ramban MLA Arjun Singh Raju, National Conference District President Batote Abid Magray, social and political activist Miraj Ahmed Khan, Haji Mohammad Ayoub Ahangar, Faiz Ahmed Wani, Dr Mohammad Iqbal Wani of Rajgarh, Pandit Bansi Lal and Dr Om Prakash, among others.

The programme began with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by Naat recitations, religious discourses and educational presentations by madrasa students, who showcased their learning and received appreciation from the audience.

The main highlight of the congregation was the Dastarbandi ceremony of ten students who successfully completed the memorisation of the Holy Quran. The newly qualified Huffaz were honoured with traditional turbans by prominent Islamic scholars. One of the students had completed his Hifz at a local Maktab under the guidance of Hafiz Aslam.

The graduating students were also presented with awards in recognition of their achievements, marking an occasion of pride for their families, teachers and the wider community.

Addressing the gathering, religious scholars emphasised the importance of Quranic education, moral upbringing and the role of parents in shaping a responsible and ethically conscious younger generation. They also expressed concern over drug abuse and other social evils, urging collective efforts to protect youth from harmful influences.

The speakers called for an end to sectarian divisions and stressed the need to promote mutual respect, Hindu-Muslim brotherhood, communal harmony and peaceful coexistence. They also acknowledged the contribution of Islamic seminaries in preserving religious values, imparting education and strengthening the moral fabric of society.

Appreciating the educational and character-building role of Madrasa Ishaat-ul-Uloom, the speakers urged people to extend continued support to religious institutions and maintain close relations with scholars and mosque Imams. Parents were also encouraged to provide their children with a strong foundation in religious education.

At the conclusion, Madrasa Administrator Hafiz Shams-ud-Din expressed gratitude to the visiting scholars, distinguished guests, political representatives, social activists, parents and local residents for their participation and support in making the congregation successful.

The programme concluded with special prayers for peace, prosperity and stability in the country, communal harmony, the progress of Islamic institutions, the success of students and the well-being of the Muslim Ummah.

KASHMIR FRONTIER
EDITORIAL

SPIRIT OF ONENESS

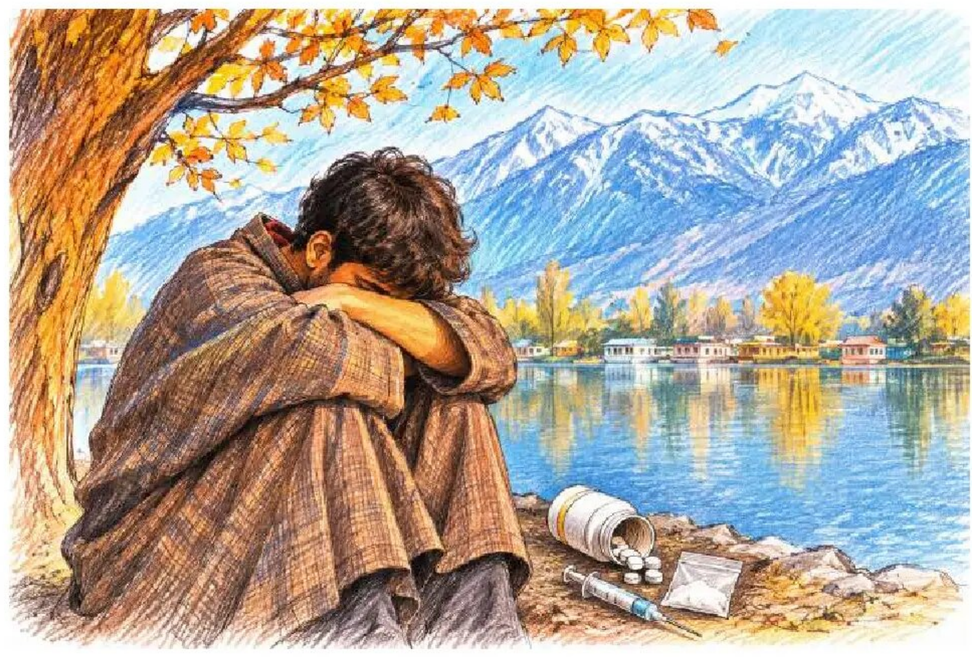
Some teachings do not lose their relevance with time because they address questions that every generation must confront within itself. Guru Nanak Dev Ji's message is one such legacy. Centuries after his birth, his vision of humanity, humility, honest living and selfless service continues to offer a meaningful framework for building a more compassionate and inclusive society. What makes Guru Nanak's philosophy particularly enduring is its practical understanding of spirituality. He did not separate devotion from the ordinary responsibilities of life. His teachings encouraged people to remember the Divine, earn through honest labour and share their resources with others. Naam Japna, Kirat Karni and Vand Chakna were not simply spiritual principle rather they represented a way of living in which personal fulfilment and collective well-being could progress together. His emphasis on human equality also carries a profound social message. At a time when distinctions of caste, status and religious identity shaped social relationships, Guru Nanak advocated the inherent dignity of every individual. His teachings encouraged a society where respect was not determined by birth, wealth or position, but by the humanity reflected in one's actions. The institution of langar remains among the most meaningful expressions of this philosophy. People from different backgrounds sit together and share a meal, with no distinction of status or social standing. Its significance extends beyond the act of serving food. It represents an enduring social ideal: that equality must be experienced in everyday life rather than remain confined to philosophical discussion. In contemporary society, where rapid economic change, technological advancement and growing individual aspirations are reshaping human relationships, Guru Nanak's message offers an important sense of balance. Progress acquires greater meaning when accompanied by compassion, material prosperity when matched by generosity, and individual achievement when connected to a responsibility towards others. His teachings also remind us that meaningful change often begins with simple choices by speaking truthfully, respecting differences, helping those in need and approaching others with humility. These everyday expressions of goodness collectively shape the character of a society. Guru Nanak Jayanti is an occasion to celebrate a remarkable spiritual legacy, but also to recognise its continuing relevance in our shared lives. His message transcends geographical and religious boundaries because its central concern is universal which is the dignity of human existence. Ultimately, the strength of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's philosophy lies in its simplicity and depth. It teaches us that a meaningful life is not measured merely by what we acquire, but by what we contribute to the lives of others.

REDEMPTION

Kashmir's Drug Crisis: From Reshi Waer to a Valley in Distress | PART II

An Islamic Perspective on the Moral, Social and Spiritual Revival of Kashmir's Youth

MOHAMMAD IMRAN ZARGAR



The Way Forward: A Collective Islamic Approach.

The question before us is not merely how to condemn drug addiction, but how to rescue our generation from it. Lectures, slogans and public statements are important, but they must be followed by practical action.

1. Reconnect the Youth with the Qur'an and Sunnah

The first and foremost remedy is to revive the spiritual connection between young people and Allah. Mosques, Darasgahs, Islamic institutions and educational organisations must take an active role in educating the younger generation about the purpose of life, accountability in the Hereafter, self-discipline and the importance of protecting one's body and intellect.

Religious education should not be restricted to rituals alone. It must also address contemporary social challenges, including drug addiction, depression, peer pressure, hopelessness and moral decline.

Young people need to understand that their lives have a purpose and that their abilities are a trust from Allah.

2. Make Mosques The Centres of Social Reform

Our mosques must become more than places of congregational prayers. They should serve as centres of guidance, awareness, counselling and community development.

Khateebs and Imams can dedicate sermons, particularly on Fridays, to discussing the dangers of substance abuse from the perspectives of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Local religious scholars can organise awareness programmes, invite medical professionals and establish supportive connections with families affected by addiction.

The message from the pulpits must be clear: saving one young person from addiction is a service to the entire community.

3. Parents Must Become Their Children's Closest Friends

Parents have a responsibility to understand their children's emotional and social lives. Merely providing food, clothing and education is not sufficient. Children also need affection, attention, meaningful conversations and moral guidance.

Parents should observe sudden behavioural changes, unexplained financial demands, unhealthy friendships, withdrawal from family activities and declining academic performance.

However, suspicion, humiliation and physical punishment are not solutions. Parents should approach their children with patience, understanding and appropriate professional support.

4. Educational Institutions Must Take Responsibility

Schools, colleges and universities have a significant role in preventing substance abuse.

Drug awareness should become part of regular educational activities. Institutions should organise seminars, counselling sessions, student discussions and awareness campaigns involving doctors, psychologists, religious scholars and recovered individuals.

Teachers must also be trained to identify warning signs and guide vulnerable students towards appropriate help.

Our educational institutions must produce responsible human beings, not merely degree holders.

5. Medical Treatment and Rehabilitation Must Be Prioritised

One of the greatest mistakes society makes is treating every drug-dependent individual as a criminal or a morally corrupt person.

Drug addiction is a health condition that can require medical treatment, psychological counselling and long-term rehabilitation. Withdrawal from certain substances can be medically dangerous; therefore, individuals should never be encouraged to stop abruptly without professional guidance.

The government, healthcare institutions and civil society must strengthen accessible de-addiction facilities, rehabilitation centres and follow-up services.

Recovered individuals should also receive opportunities for education, vocational training and employment so that they can rebuild their lives with dignity.

A person recovering from addiction needs a helping hand, not a pointing finger.

6. Engage the Youth in Positive Activities

An idle mind, a lack of direction and social isolation can make young people vulnerable to harmful influences.

Community organisations should encourage young people to participate in:

a. Sports, fitness and recreational activities.

b. Reading circles and educational programmes.

c. Quranic studies and Islamic discussions.

d. Skill-development and vocational training.

e. Voluntary social work and community service.

f. Entrepreneurship and employment initiatives.

Young people must be given opportunities to discover their abilities and contribute positively to society.

7. Strict Action Against Drug Trafficking

While compassion must be extended to those struggling with addiction, those involved in manufacturing, supplying and trafficking illegal drugs must face effective legal action.

Law enforcement agencies must strengthen intelligence networks, prevent illegal distribution and identify the channels through which narcotics reach vulnerable young people.

The focus should be on dismantling supply networks while ensuring that people suffering from substance-use disorders can access treatment without fear or stigma.

8. Build a Collective Movement for a Drug-Free Kashmir

No single institution can resolve this crisis independently.

Religious scholars, teachers, parents, doctors, social workers, government departments, media organisations and civil society must work together.

Every locality should consider establishing community level awareness and support committees. Such committees could organise awareness programmes, identify available treatment facilities, support affected families and encourage recovered individuals.

The media must also play a constructive role by highlighting the consequences of addiction, sharing recovery stories and promoting awareness rather than sensationalising the issue.

A Call to the Scholars, Parents and the Younger Generation

Our religious scholars must understand that the challenges confronting today's youth are different from those of previous generations. They must address these challenges through wisdom, compassion and practical guidance.

Our parents must realise that their children need their time, attention and companionship more than material comforts.

Our teachers must remember that their responsibility extends beyond completing the syllabus. They are also shaping the character and future of the next generation.

And our young people must understand that their lives are precious. Temporary pleasure cannot compensate for the permanent damage that addiction can cause. Real strength lies not in experimenting with harmful substances but in having the courage to refuse them.

Allah says: "Do not despair of the mercy of Allah." (Surah Yusuf, 12:87)

This verse carries a powerful message for every individual struggling with addiction. No matter how difficult the journey has become, the doors of Allah's mercy remain open. Repentance, treatment, determination and the support of loved ones can help a person begin a new chapter.

Let Us Restore the Soul of Kashmir:

Kashmir does not need another generation of broken dreams, struggling families and abandoned potential. It needs educated, spiritually conscious, morally responsible and socially committed young people.

We often take pride in calling Kashmir Reshi Waer, the Valley of Saints, and Jannat-e-Benazir. But can we truly preserve this identity if our younger generation continues to suffer from addiction, despair and moral disorientation?

The legacy of our forefathers must not remain confined to historical narratives, shrines and beautiful slogans. It must be reflected in our conduct, our institutions, our families and the character of our youth.

Let us not wait until addiction knocks at our own door before recognising its seriousness. Let every mosque become a centre of awareness, every educational institution a source of guidance, every family a place of emotional security and every responsible citizen an ambassador of positive change. The real beauty of Kashmir lies not merely in its mountains, rivers and gardens, but in the character, faith and dignity of its people.

Let us work together to protect our youth, restore our moral values and reclaim the spiritual identity of Kashmir. Saving a generation from drugs is not merely a social responsibility; it is an investment in the future of Kashmir. Concludes.

THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN A STUDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES CUK. FEEDBACK, IF ANY, CAN BE SHARED AT ZARGAR.M786@GMAIL.COM

PERSEVERANCE

The Journey of Hope | PART II



YOUSUF MIR

On the way, one of their friends suddenly complained of chest pain. At first, he thought it was something minor, but within a few moments the pain grew worse. The boys became alarmed and rushed him to a nearby hospital.

At the hospital, Saila, one of Sahil's friends, joined them.

They learned that a well-known cardiologist treated patients there. When Sahil mentioned the doctor's name, Sajid immediately said,

"I've read about this doctor on the internet. He is a very famous cardiologist. People praise his skill and experience."

They went to the reception desk and asked to see the doctor.

The woman at the desk told them that the doctor was not seeing patients in his usual room that day.

Sajid asked, "Why? Is the doctor on leave today?"

The woman explained, "No, the doctor is in the hospital, but the cleaning staff have staged a symbolic protest against the administration. They have left a few rooms in one particular block uncleaned to draw attention to their problems and to the importance of their work. As a result, the doctor's usual room could not be made ready."

Sajid asked in surprise, "But how can the cleaning of one or two rooms affect the work of such a renowned doctor?"

Before Sahil could reply, he glanced towards Saila. Saila said, "That is an important lesson in life, Sajid! The doctor has spent years studying. He has skill, experience and fame. But he, too, needs a clean and safe environment to do his work. Cleaning is not an insignificant job. If the person responsible for cleaning does not do the work properly, even the greatest doctor cannot perform his duties as he should."

Just then, the woman informed them that Room No. 502 was clean and ready. The doctor could examine the patient there.

The friends took their companion towards Room No. 502. A little later, the doctor arrived, examined the patient and gave the necessary instructions.

Sajid watched everything quietly.

On the way back, he said to Sahil, "Today I've understood that a person's worth is not measured only by their position or fame. Everyone's work is connected, in one way or another, to someone else's work."

Sahil smiled and replied, "Exactly! Whether someone is a doctor, a teacher, a farmer or a cleaning worker, everyone has a responsibility. What truly matters is how honestly and conscientiously a person performs their duty."

When Sajid returned home that day, many thoughts were moving through his mind. He remembered the two marks in the field. The books he had seen in the library and the incident at the hospital were fresh in his memory too.

He said to his mother, "Mother, I will go back to school tomorrow."

His mother looked at him in surprise. Tears of happiness filled her eyes. She placed her hand on his head and embraced him.

The next day, Sajid returned to school. Some students were surprised to see him, but he paid no attention to them. He went to his classroom and met his teacher.

This time, he decided to understand his mistakes. Whenever he failed to understand a lesson, he asked questions. He worked through difficult problems again and again. He began to value his time. He set aside separate hours for games, reading and studies. He now understood that wishing for a destination was not enough; reaching it required continuous effort.

Days passed. Months turned into years. Sajid's hard work began to bear fruit. He retook his examinations and passed. He continued his education, choosing a path suited to his interests and abilities. Instead of being afraid of failure, he began to treat every difficulty as a new experience.

In time, Sajid completed his higher education and, through hard work, ability and honesty, rose to an important government position. People came to know him not merely by his title, but by the way he worked. He treated his staff with respect, listened to their concerns and valued every person according to the responsibility they carried.

One day, a young man came to his office. He held his marks card in his hand, and disappointment was written all over his face.

He said to Sajid, "Sir, I have failed my examination. I no longer feel like studying. I think I will never be able to achieve anything in life."

Sajid remained silent for a few moments. Then he looked at the young man and asked,

"Have you ever been to a field where two marks are placed five feet apart?"

The young man looked surprised.

"No, sir."

A faint smile appeared on Sajid's lips.

He remembered his own past: that same fifteenth of October, the school wall, the marks card, the tears in his mother's eyes, the affection of his friends and the two marks in the field. Everything came rushing back to him.

He said to the young man, "Come with me. I'll take you somewhere and show you a small lesson."

He rose from his chair and walked out of the office with the young man.

His feet were moving forward, but his mind was filled with that scene from years ago, when he had first crossed the five-foot distance.

He now knew that looking straight ahead was not always enough to reach one's destination. Sometimes, one must learn from the past, read about the achievements of those who came before, and value the efforts of others.

He glanced back once at his office building, then continued walking with the young man.

The journey of hope was still going on...

THE AUTHOR CAN BE REACHED AT YOUSUFMIR555@GMAIL.COM

DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS, OPINIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS EXPRESSED IN THE ARTICLES PUBLISHED ARE SOLELY THOSE OF THE RESPECTIVE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE EDITORIAL POSITION, POLICIES OR VIEWS OF THE NEWSPAPER, ITS EDITORS, PUBLISHERS OR MANAGEMENT. AUTHORS ARE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OF THE FACTS, REFERENCES AND OPINIONS PRESENTED IN THEIR SUBMISSIONS.

CELEBRATIONS

Significance of Kartik Purnima





ER. PRABHAT KISHORE

Bharatvarsha is a country known for its diversity in terms of people and culture and there are different kinds of festivals and rituals. Kartik Purnima is one of the auspicious festivals for three prominent communities Sanatan Dharma, Sikh and Jain together. It is celebrated with great enthusiasm all over the country and abroad on Shukla Paksha Purnima Tithi of Kartik month and falls 15 days after Deepawali.

Kartik Purnima also known as "Tripurari Purnima" or "Tripuri Purnima" is celebrated as the victory of Bhagwan Shiva over the demons Tarakaksha, Viryavana and Kamalaksha (together called "Tripurasur"). All the Devs rejoiced at their killings and celebrated "Dev Deepawali" by lightning Diyas in heaven. On this day, Dev and Devis descended from the heavens on the earth to take a bath in the Holy rivers. So, by lighting Deeyas, taking holy dip in rivers and other water sources (called Kartik Snan) and worshiping deities, devotees wish for divine blessings and attract prosperity. Devotees offer "Deep Daan" (floating of lamps) on the rivers. Deepmalas or towers of lights are illuminated throughout the night in the Mandirs on this occasion.

This day marks the emergence of Matasya, the Matasyavatar (Fish incarnation) of Bhagwan Vishnu to rescue living beings and save life on the earth. It is also believed that on this day Bhagwan Krishna and Radha performed Rasleela with the Gopis in Brajbhumi. In Dakshin Bharat, this day is celebrated as the birthday of Kartikeya, the lord of war and elder son of Shiva-Parvati.

Kartik Purnamashi is the most auspicious day for Sikhs. On this day, Guru Nanak Dev ji Jayanti is celebrated worldwide as "Guru Parab" or "Prakash Parva". Various programmes along with Kirtan, Gurubani and Akhand Path are organized in the Gurudwaras in every corner of the country. Although his birthplace Rai-Bhoi-Di-Talwandi (now Nankana Sahib) presently falls in Pakistan.

Jains believe that Rishabh (also popular as Adinath), the first Tirthankar, had sanctified the Shatrunjay hills at Palitana on Kartik Purnima by visiting it and delivering his first sermon. So, Jain pilgrims flock to the foothills of the Shatrunjay hills to undertake the auspicious Yatra. Shri Shatrunjay Tirth Yatra is an important religious event for a Jain Devotee, who circumambulate the rough mountainous terrain covering a distance of 216 km on foot to worship at the Adinath Mandir atop the hills.

On Kartik Purnima, many world famous fairs such as Harihar Kshetra Sonpur Pashu Mela in Bihar, Pushkar camel fair in Rajasthan and Lugu Pahar Mela in Bokaro (Jharkhand) are organised.

Whatever be the belief and happenings behind the festival of Kartik Purnima, this day marks harmony, joy, celebrations, devotion, spiritual bhajan-kirtans in Mandirs, Gurudwaras and everywhere. It illuminates the houses, hearts and heaven and spread the message of friendship and togetherness.

THE AUTHOR IS A TECHNOCRAT & ACADEMICIAN. HE IS MASTER IN ENGINEERING FROM M.N. REGIONAL ENGINEERING COLLEGE, ALLAHABAD/PRAYAGRAJ. HE CAN BE REACHED AT PRABHATKISHORE65@GMAIL.COM

CELEBRITY

Beyond the Rockstar: The Journey, Identity and Legacy of Qazi Touqeer



WANI ARFAT

There are some journeys which are not just remembered for their successes but also for the hopes they inspire among people. One such personality is that of Qazi Touqeer, a singer and performer from Srinagar. Starting his journey from the streets of Kashmir and reaching national television, this talented artist began his journey over two decades ago when he made a mark for himself by participating in the singing reality show Fame Gurukul. In 2026, his participation in Bigg Boss 20 has once again taken him to national television. But the story of this artist is not only about a television show; it is a journey of ambition, struggle, friendship, family support and connection with Kashmir.

Although many people in the Valley know him by name, there is a younger generation that has come to know him through the Bigg Boss 20 television show. Those who saw him perform in 2005 as a contestant and later watched him become one of the most discussed personalities on the show have a different story to tell about him.

Childhood Dreams in Srinagar

Brought up in Srinagar, Qazi had a passion for singing, dancing and acting right from his childhood days. The advent of cable TV in Kashmir when he was around twelve years old introduced him to the world of entertainment and made his dream of becoming an artist stronger. His family members were instrumental in supporting his dreams, especially his uncle, Qazi Rafi, who helped in preparing his portfolio, registering him for Fame Gurukul and taking him to Delhi.

Qazi used to practise his dancing movements in front of the mirror and needed a harmonium to cultivate his love for music. He studied at a convent school in Rajbagh and then at Amar Singh College. He was also a great admirer of Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan and was inspired by his dancing movements to take up acting. His classmates used to call him Hrithik because of his imitations. People who knew him said that he was a very energetic, humorous and friendly person.

Fame Gurukul: The Turning Point

The crucial point came in 2005 when Qazi participated in the singing reality show Fame Gurukul on Sony Entertainment Television. Facing continuous criticism from the judges, Qazi apparently made it to the danger zone almost ten times. Yet, the audience kept supporting him, and he received about 2.5 crore votes in the show, where the voting process involved paid SMS services.

On October 20, 2005, Qazi and Ruprekha Banerjee won the Fame Jodi title and received Rs 50 lakh each, along with a Sony music contract and a Maruti Alto car. This win was more than just a personal victory for many Kashmiris. It was a period when the Valley used to be spoken of in terms of politics and security, but a young man from Srinagar had made Kashmir known to the world through his musical talent. It gave hope to many families and aspiring artists that geographical location is not an obstacle to achieving something great. In addition, it gave him a lifelong friendship with another contestant, Arijit Singh, who would soon become one of the best playback singers in India.

The Reality Behind Fame

Being successful on television does not mean automatic success in life. The world of entertainment needs patience, opportunities, discipline and resilience. Qazi kept trying in the fields of music and acting even after Fame Gurukul, working on many projects along with Ruprekha, such as the album Yeh Pal. His dream of becoming an actor was also delayed as some films did not get completed.

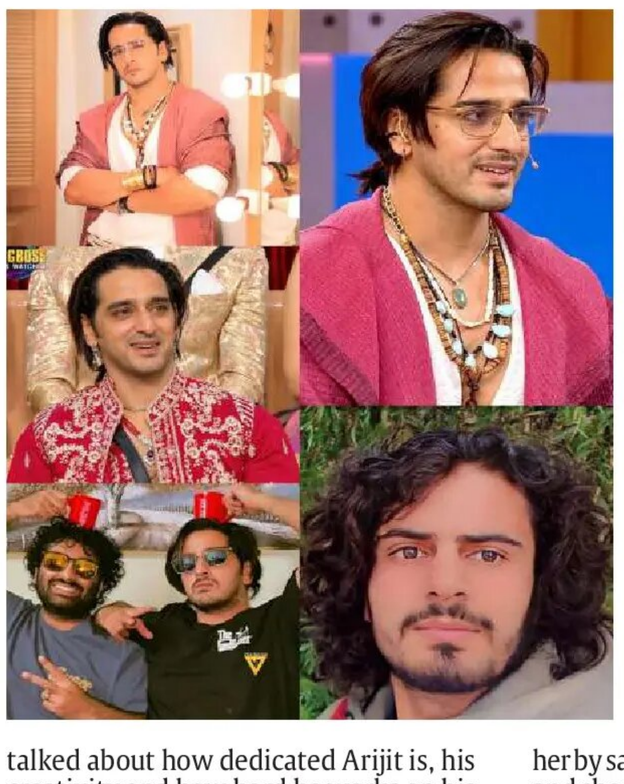
However, he kept performing in India as well as abroad, including in Australia, the United States and Singapore. He performed in the music video of Afghan Jalebi, which was part of the Bollywood movie Phantom, composed by Asrar in 2015. Qazi's musical career includes Kashmiri, Hindi and Urdu songs.

A Friendship Spanning Over Twenty Years

One of the most amazing things about Qazi's story is his friendship with Arijit Singh. The two met while participating in Fame Gurukul, and neither of them had any idea how their lives would turn out to be. It is said that the two lived in the same room and went through the uncertainties of working towards building their careers in music.

Some years down the line, Qazi was seen participating in Bigg Boss 20, and Arijit openly came out in support of his friend Rockstar, saying that he would watch the show for the first time because Qazi was participating in it. Qazi also went to Arijit's hometown, Jiaganj, in West Bengal, and their cricket matches and scooter rides became viral on the internet.

While inside the Bigg Boss house, Qazi



talked about how dedicated Arijit is, his creativity and how hard he works on his music. He even sang Tum Hi Ho as a tribute to his friend. There have been talks about a collaboration between the two in the musical world, but the project is yet to materialise. However, some groundwork has already been done.

Bigg Boss 20: A New Episode

With Salman Khan as the host, Bigg Boss 20 was launched on September 6, 2026. Qazi's return to national television, after being away from reality television for many years, was noticed soon enough for his wit, charisma, songs and famous line, "I am a Rockstar, baby." Salman Khan praised his voice, and his singing of "O Mere Dil Ke Chain" and dancing to "Ek Pal Ka Jeena" reminded people of his admiration for Hrithik Roshan.

His fitness was another highlight when he did 100 push-ups at once. In a brand campaign, he was awarded the title of Flipkart Fashion Icon, along with a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh, which he gave to his wife. Actress Wamiqa Gabbi also applauded him for his optimism and entertainment value.

But there have been some disputes related to him as well. One such dispute occurred between Qazi and Manish Goel when Qazi felt that his personal space had been violated during a role-play activity. This was an allegation that Manish Goel denied. Fairness is the key here, and every allegation should not necessarily be considered a fact. It is not necessary for one to support an artist by agreeing with everything he says or does.

Family, Language and Cultural Identity

Behind Qazi's public journey is his supportive family. His wife, Hifsa, a dentist, has been encouraging him to chase his dreams and be part of the show. He answered the questions regarding his marital status raised inside the house and said that he was married. He also spoke about his wife's support. Her emotional message and his decision to gift the Rs 5 lakh prize money to her were a reflection of the role played by the family in an artist's life.

One of the most memorable moments came during the episode of Weekend Ka Vaar, which was telecast on October 25. Srinagar-born Farrhana Bhatt came on the show and sang her song named Shahiba. Their conversation in the Kashmiri language turned out to be much more than just a usual conversation. He greeted her by saying, "Wari chukh theek chukh?" and she answered, "Shukar, shukar, Hazrat, tuhi chiv theek." They also talked about the Tachar trend in Kashmir and sang together.

Kashmiri people sitting throughout the nation would feel a sense of pride in hearing their native language being used on a national entertainment channel. Kashmiri is our language, which reminds us of everything from childhood memories, humour and family phrases to folklore and culture. It is important for us to learn other languages, but it is also important to maintain our own language.

Bridging Religious and Social Barriers

Another aspect of Qazi's connection to Kashmir is evident from his relationship with people belonging to other social groups. For instance, his videos on social media show him walking around in the Valley, singing with the locals and even spending some time with Krishna Kaul, a young Kashmiri Pandit boy. Further, in one of his interviews, he also talked about going to the house of his Kashmiri Pandit friend, Vivek Malla, to have a meal. He reacted to some comments with the statement, "We have to move ahead and spread love."

The videos posted on social media by Kashmiri Pandit women showing their fondness for him also generated a lot of interest. Even the Diwali greetings from his father, telling him to spread warmth and love in the house, are examples of the same. It is unnecessary to politicise these things; what matters is human interaction in its truest sense, which still remains very relevant in Kashmir.

Support and Message to Young Kashmiris

Qazi's comeback has also been recognised off the screen. A piece of art bearing Qazi's image has appeared at the Books and Bricks cafe next to Amar Singh College, linking his current quest to a location related to his college days. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has also voiced his support for him and reminded people about his previous success, saying that he would vote for Qazi if voting were based on popularity.

While the support mentioned above does not imply that everyone must have the same view regarding his performance, it does show the public interest that has been generated by Qazi's comeback. More importantly, Qazi's comeback must help initiate a discussion regarding the avenues available to young artists in Jammu and Kashmir. Singers, writers, actors and performers require not just talent but also training, studios, cultural organisations, financial support and venues where their work can be appreciated.

As a relative of Qazi, I understand that there is a personal aspect to this topic. But at the same time, a newspaper article cannot turn into flattery. His successes must be noted, while his faults and behaviour can be freely criticised.

Beyond the Trophy

Even if Qazi Touqeer does not win Bigg Boss 20, he is sure to have sparked discussions and reminiscences of 2005, along with discussions about the language and culture of Kashmir through his participation. While the trophy determines the result of the competition, it cannot quantify the love of the audience for Qazi, the camaraderie between the two best friends and the pride that comes from having one's mother tongue spoken by millions of people.

Qazi's journey proves that an artist can go far and wide beyond geographical boundaries without losing touch with his roots. His most significant legacy may very well be the inspiration he gives to the youth of Kashmir to chase their dreams without forgetting their origins. The story of Qazi, beyond being the Rockstar, is a story of ambition, perseverance, friendship and identity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: MOHAMMAD ARFAT WANI IS A WRITER, SOCIAL ACTIVIST, AND NURSING STUDENT FROM KUCHMULLA, TRAL. HE WRITES ON SOCIAL ISSUES, CULTURE, AND PUBLIC CONCERNS WITH THE AIM OF RAISING AWARENESS AND INSPIRING POSITIVE CHANGE. THE WRITER IS A RELATIVE OF QAZI TOUQEER
EMAIL: WANIA6817@GMAIL.COM)

DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS, OPINIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS EXPRESSED IN THE ARTICLES PUBLISHED ARE SOLELY THOSE OF THE RESPECTIVE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE EDITORIAL POSITION, POLICIES OR VIEWS OF THE NEWSPAPER, ITS EDITORS, PUBLISHERS OR MANAGEMENT. AUTHORS ARE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OF THE FACTS, REFERENCES AND OPINIONS PRESENTED IN THEIR SUBMISSIONS.

Doctor lists the early warning signs of blood cancer, shares approaches to diagnosis and treatment

When it comes to the various types of cancer diagnosis that have people worried, cancer of the blood does not rank very high on the list. But that does not mean greater public awareness on the subject is unnecessary.

"Symptoms such as recurring fever, constant tiredness and repeated infections are often mistaken for common illnesses. However, when these problems persist without a clear explanation, they should not be overlooked, as they can sometimes point towards underlying blood disorders, including blood cancer," Dr Radnyi Mande, consultant paediatric haematologist and oncologist at MOC Cancer Care, shared with HT Lifestyle.

Dr Mande noted that blood cancer refers to a group of malignancies that develop in the blood, bone marrow or lymphatic system. It is broadly classified into three main types: leukaemia, lymphoma and multiple myeloma.

Each has distinct characteristics, progresses differently and requires an individualised treatment strategy.

Early symptoms and warning signs

According to the hemato-oncologist, the initial signs of blood cancer may differ depending on the type and stage of the disease. Some symptoms that require medical attention include:

Persistent tiredness, weakness or unexplained weight loss.

Fever that keeps recurring



and frequent infections.

Unusual bruising, bleeding gums or bleeding that takes longer than usual to stop.

Painless swelling of lymph nodes around the neck, armpits or groin.

Excessive sweating during the night.

Ongoing pain in the bones or joints.

"It is important to remember that these symptoms are not exclusive to blood cancer and may be associated with other medical conditions. Nevertheless, symptoms that continue or appear without an identifiable cause should be assessed by a doctor," she shared.

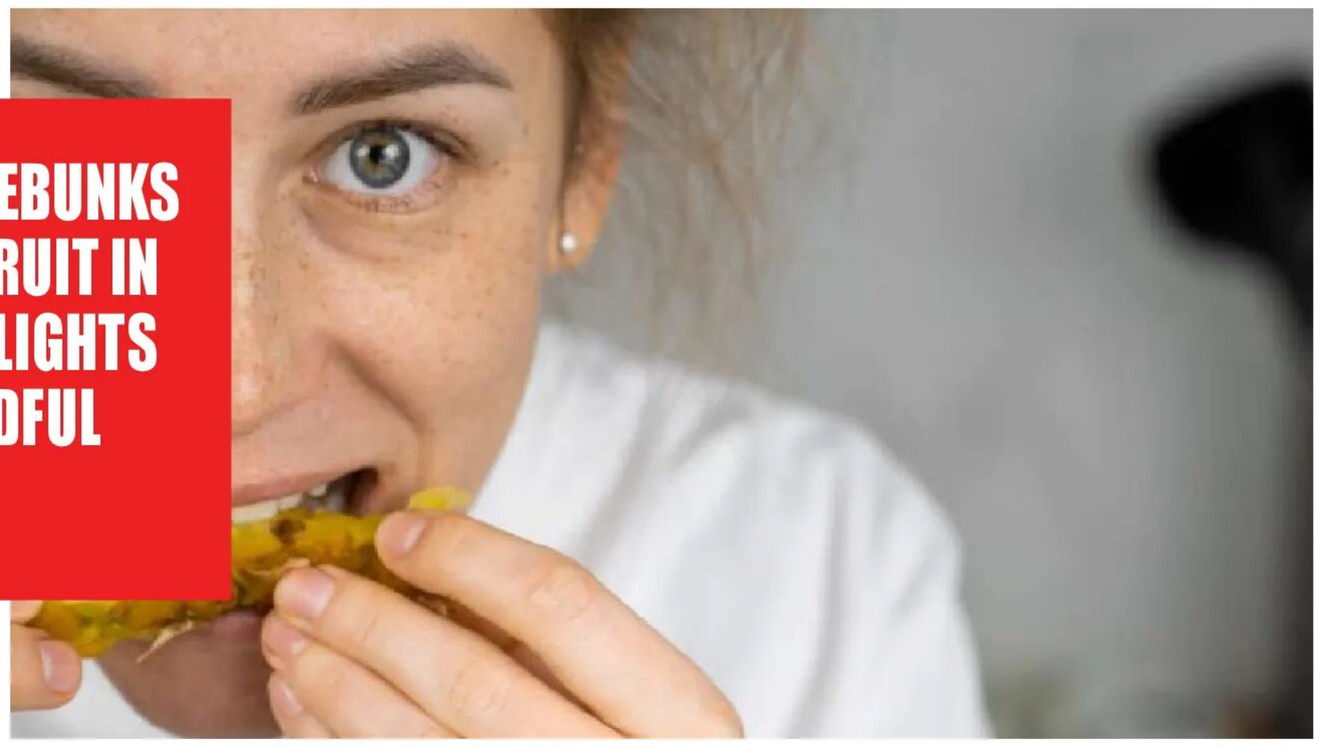
Diagnosis and available treatment approaches

Dr Mande explained that the diagnostic process generally starts with a complete blood count (CBC) to assess the levels of different blood cells and identify possible abnormalities.

"Depending on the results, further investigations may include a peripheral blood smear, bone marrow biopsy or examination, lymph node biopsy, molecular testing and imaging scans," she stated.

HT

ENDOCRINOLOGIST DEBUNKS MYTH OF AVOIDING FRUIT IN DIABETES DIET, HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF MINDFUL CONSUMPTION



Diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases across the globe and one that calls for a change in diet. It is common knowledge that one should watch their sugar consumption after diagnosis. However, it is a major misconception among many that diabetics should avoid eating fruits as they can increase blood sugar levels, Dr Kalyan Kumar Gangopadhyay, endocrinologist at CK Birla Hospitals, CMRI, Kolkata, told HT Lifestyle.

"As a result, many people either eliminate fruits from their diet or restrict themselves to only a few varieties, believing that naturally occurring sugar is just as harmful as added sugar. However, this approach is not entirely correct," he stated.

Importance of eating fruits

Dr Gangopadhyay noted that fruits are an important part of a balanced diet, even for individuals managing diabetes. The key, he pointed out, lies in understanding portion sizes, choosing whole fruits and being mindful of how they are consumed.

Fruits contain natural sugars, primarily fructose and glucose, but they also provide dietary fibre, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and water. "Unlike sugary beverages and processed desserts, whole fruits contain fibre, which slows down digestion and the absorption of sugar into the bloodstream," shared the endocrinologist. "This can help prevent sudden spikes in blood glucose levels. Fibre also supports gut health, improves satiety and helps regulate appetite."

Mindful consumption of fruits on a diabetic diet

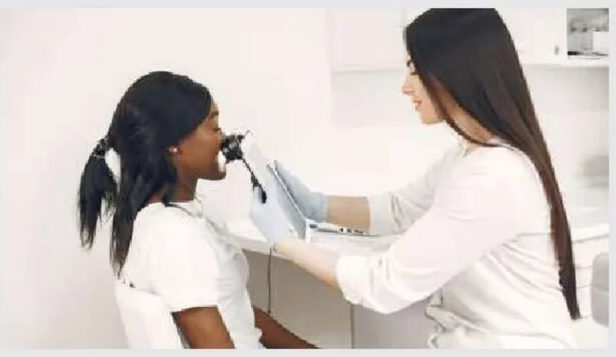
Not all fruits affect blood glucose in the same way, cautioned the endocrinologist. Their impact depends on factors such as carbohydrate content, fibre composition, ripeness, portion size and the individual's overall metabolic health.

"Fruits such as guava, apple, pear, orange, papaya and berries can be included in a diabetes-friendly diet when consumed in appropriate portions," stated Dr Gangopadhyay. "This does not mean that people with diabetes must completely avoid bananas, mangoes or grapes. Rather, they should be mindful of the quantity consumed and consider their individual blood glucose response."

Another important distinction is between whole fruits and fruit juices. Dr Gangopadhyay noted that even freshly prepared fruit juice can raise blood sugar more quickly than eating the fruit itself. This is because juicing removes much of the fibre and makes it easier to consume the sugar equivalent of several fruits in a single serving.

HT

From detecting pigmentation to suggesting skincare: Dermatologists explain the limitations of AI-powered skin analysis



People are increasingly using smartphone photographs to identify skin conditions and, through AI, prescribe themselves a skincare routine or skin treatment based on this. The technology itself is promising, but there are certain pitfalls to it.

Dr Manisha Mareddy, MBBS, MD, dermatologist, founder of Shlok Dermatology and Wellness Clinic, Kokapet, Hyderabad, Dr Dhanraj Chavan, MBBS, MD (dermatology), consultant dermatologist, Clear Skin Clinics, Pune, and Dr Sadhana Deshmukh, MBBS, DNB, dermatology, venereology, aesthetic and trichologist, Forever Young Clinic, Bandra West, Mumbai, explained the risks and limitations of AI-powered skin analysis.

Is your AI skincare app reading your skin correctly?

According to Mareddy, the main question lies in its accuracy, especially when it comes to Indian skin tones. It is commonplace nowadays to have patients come in with "ChatGPT prescriptions" and scrutinise our treatment using AI input.

One of the most fundamental challenges is skin tone diversity because Indian skin cannot be classified as a single category. There are so many variants in Indian skin types. There are differences in genetics, ethnicity, geographical backgrounds, and sun exposure, all of which factor into skin type. The skin type used widely in dermatology is not the only parameter to assess skin. "The limitations of this skin type grading, which is the Fitzpatrick skin type, are particularly obvious when we are treating a diverse range of Indian skin tones," highlighted Dr Mareddy. AI-based skin analysis platforms rely on images captured using smartphone cameras. However, these are not standardised pictures. Camera sensors, exposure, white balance, lighting, image compression, and all these technical parameters can significantly alter the appearance of the skin. Even minor artefacts and subtle variations can influence how an algorithm interprets pigmentation. What might seem like one condition in a picture could be a totally different one on examination. "You need to understand that the very first problem is the photograph. A selfie is not an ideal way to detect skin issues. A tube light can make your skin look darker or yellowish. And a window behind can put dark spots on your face," explained Dr Chavan. Also, a number of holes automatically smoothen and make the skin bright. And the app they are using is not able to detect what's really there on the face. Different locations of the photograph with different lighting conditions can give you different results. Why is personal consultation important? Dr Mareddy highlighted that even in the clinic, we recommend that patients come in for in-person consultations for this reason. Treatments are totally dependent on the diagnosis, and one mistake in the user input from pictures, history or the description of the condition itself can completely misplace the diagnosis and the following treatment. According to Dr Mareddy, most AI models are trained on Caucasian skin types. There is a lot of variation in the presentation of skin diseases in Caucasian and Indian skin types. So, the datasets lack representation of Indian skin types. AI may be useful in tracking certain skin changes and giving preliminary recommendations, but it is not reliable at the moment. There are many skin conditions that need clinical correlation. A picture is not often enough to assess and diagnose them. "I also see a lot of confusion with pigmentation. Conditions like melasma, tanning, and dark spots left by pimples may look the same in the photo, but they are completely different and need different treatments," said Dr Chavan. HT

Doctor cautions against growing antibiotic resistance, shares simple steps to slow it down

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is fast becoming a serious public health issue. As per Dr Sandeep Patil, chief intensivist at Fortis Hospital, Kalyan, in the next few years, it will have a death toll to rival that of many chronic diseases.

During World AMR Awareness Week 2026, which is observed from November 18 to November 24, Dr Patil shared with HT Lifestyle why AMR is fast becoming a major health concern and what can be done to keep it under control.



"Think of an ordinary infection that could easily be treated using antibiotics turning into a hard-to-treat one, hence needing stronger drugs and extended periods of hospitalisation; in extreme cases, even leaving physicians with very little to choose from in terms of treatment methods. The situation is not as far-fetched as it seems," he noted.

What is antimicrobial resistance?

Antimicrobial resistance refers to the ability of microorganisms, including bacteria, fungi, and viruses, to resist medicines intended to destroy them. While it is a normal biological phenomenon, exposure to antimicrobial medicines, especially over an extended period, can speed up the process, pointed out the physician.

"The impact goes way beyond a single infected person," stated Dr Patil. "The resistant infections might cause long-term hospital stays, delayed recovery, increased cost of treatment, as well as increased mortality."

"The infections are usually treated with strong antibiotics, which may be more dangerous due to potential side effects and complications. In some cases, AMR infections have extremely limited treatment options and might pose a serious threat to even the most routine medical intervention," he added.

Why is AMR a cause for serious concern?

Dr Patil noted that what makes AMR so worrying is its direct impact on modern medicine. There are several important achievements in medicine that depend on our ability to prevent and treat infections with appropriate antibiotics.

"The other critical issue about AMR is how the excessive use of these antibiotics and antifungals affects the body's natural protective bacteria. Not all antimicrobial drugs differentiate between pathogenic microbes and commensal flora, which are beneficial bacteria that live in our bodies and protect us from infections," stated the physician.

"With the elimination of susceptible microbes by antimicrobial medications, resistant bacteria and fungi are left alive. They grow and spread, passing their genetic traits to other microorganisms. This causes the spread of resistance among microbial populations and makes infections hard to control," he added.

How to keep AMR in check?

AMR is a natural process that not only arises from medical practices, but also from agricultural practices, diet and the environment. However, Dr Patil believes that the process of spreading resistance can be significantly slowed down.

HT

Yellow eyes or unexplained weight loss: Warning signs of pancreatic cancer that need attention

A slight yellowing of the eyes can be easily dismissed as a sign of exhaustion. Dark urine may be blamed on dehydration, whereas loss of appetite or indigestion may be put down to stress. While these symptoms may seem minor, when they appear together or persist, they may be the body's way of signalling that something needs attention. In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Jaskaran Singh Sethi, senior consultant and chief of GI, GU, HPB, and TBI radiation oncology services, Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre, New Delhi, shared pancreatic cancer symptoms that should not be ignored.

What yellow eyes and dark urine may indicate

The pancreas lies deep inside the abdomen, behind the stomach. The head of the pancreas sits close to the common bile duct, a small tube that carries bile from the liver to the intestine. A tumour in this area may press against the bile duct and obstruct the normal flow of bile. As a result, bilirubin, a yellow pigment present in bile, begins to build up in the blood. This causes jaundice, which is often first noticed as yellowing of the whites of the eyes.

As excess bilirubin leaves the body through the kidneys, the urine may become dark brown or tea-coloured. Stools may appear unusually pale, grey or greasy as less bile reaches the intestine. Persistent itching can also occur.

According to Dr Sethi, jaundice has several possible causes, including gallstones, hepatitis and other conditions affecting the liver or bile ducts. However, painless jaundice, especially when accompanied by dark urine, pale stools or weight loss, should be evaluated without delay.

Symptoms that often get dismissed

Pancreatic cancer can cause several symptoms that are easy to overlook. These may include:

- Persistent pain in the upper abdomen that spreads to the back
- Unexplained loss of weight or appetite
- Ongoing nausea, bloating or indigestion
- Changes in bowel habits
- Unusual tiredness or weakness
- New-onset diabetes, particularly without typical risk factors
- Unexpected difficulty controlling previously stable diabetes

HT

Rijiju

should create employment opportunities while strengthening traditional arts, crafts and cultural activities.

He also assured the Board that genuine cases involving delays in Waqf property registration would receive support from the government. He said the Centre would ask its counsel to assist legitimate requests for further relief before the appropriate tribunals and the Supreme Court to ensure that bona fide properties were not affected by documentation-related delays.

On the amended Waqf legislation, now known as the UMEED Act, Rijiju said the law was intended to improve transparency, accountability and systematic management of Waqf properties. Rejecting allegations that the legislation was designed to target Muslims or take over their assets, he said proper registration and documentation were necessary to protect these properties from encroachment and mismanagement.

He pointed out that several Waqf properties across the country had remained unregistered, encroached upon or poorly managed for decades. Their effective management, he said, was important to ensure that the benefits reached poor families, widows, orphans and other disadvantaged sections of society.

Rijiju commended the J&K Waqf Board for its work over the past three to four years, describing it as the best-performing Waqf Board in the country. He said its initiatives had been cited as a model for other state boards, including Uttar Pradesh.

The Minister particularly appreciated the restoration of the Hazratbal Shrine, saying the work had fulfilled the spiritual aspirations of devotees. He congratulated Board Chairperson Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi and her team for their contributions to religious infrastructure, education and healthcare.

During the programme, Rijiju inaugurated the Waqf Revival Photo Museum, Hazrat Khadijatul-Kubra Ladies' Prayer Hall and a newly constructed guest house at Dargah Hazratbal. He also inaugurated development facilities at Bibi Halima College of Nursing and Medical Technology at Kathi Darwaza, Rainawari.

Appreciating the Board's efforts to strengthen educational and healthcare infrastructure, he assured it of continued support from the Centre for initiatives aimed at public welfare.

The Minister also spoke about his association with Jammu and Kashmir through his earlier assignments in the Union Government. During his tenure as Union Sports Minister, he said, the Khelo India Winter Games were conceptualised in Gulmarg in 2019 and had since developed into a major sporting event attracting athletes from across the country.

He also highlighted water-sports initiatives at Dal Lake and adventure-sports programmes across the Valley, saying these had opened avenues for young people to demonstrate their sporting abilities.

As Union Law Minister, Rijiju said he had been associated with the inauguration of the new Jammu and Kashmir High Court building and legal outreach programmes in remote areas, including Lolab Valley and locations beyond Baramulla.

He said he had accompanied Supreme Court judges and the Chief Justice of the J&K High Court to far-flung areas for legal awareness camps and Lok Adalats, aimed at making justice more accessible and affordable for residents.

Emphasising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' vision, Rijiju said inclusive development was central to the objective of Viksit Bharat by 2047 and stressed that no religion, caste or community should be left behind.

He said development initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir were being advanced through coordination among various Union ministries under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The programme was attended by Lok Sabha MP Mian Altaf Ahmad Larvi, BJP National General Secretary and J&K in-charge Dr Satish Poonia, SKUAST-K Vice-Chancellor Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Waqf Board members, religious scholars, academicians and other public representatives.

IGP

mountainous and higher-altitude areas. Particular emphasis was laid on intelligence sharing, area domination and maintaining operational readiness to ensure a coordinated response to emerging security challenges.

The discussions also examined the need to strengthen the existing security framework in areas where difficult geographical conditions and seasonal changes pose additional operational challenges.

IGP Kumar stressed the importance of close coordination among all agencies and called for maintaining a robust, proactive and well-coordinated security grid across the Valley.

The participating agencies were also urged to maintain heightened vigilance, ensure effective exchange of intelligence and strengthen preparedness to address emerging security requirements.

The meeting comes five days after the killing of Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Mohammad Lateef Bhat in an encounter in Kulgam on November 18. His killing was described by security agencies as a significant development, as he was the last listed active local militant in the Kashmir Valley, marking an unprecedented situation since the onset of militancy in 1989.

Sakeena

field-level health institutions, SDRF and traffic authorities to facilitate timely transportation, referrals and admission of patients during weather emergencies. She called for constituting teams to monitor weather advisories and initiate timely action whenever required.

Emphasising the need for a robust referral mechanism, Sakeena Itoo directed that patients referred from District and Sub-District Hospitals to tertiary care institutions must be managed through a systematic protocol involving proper clinical assessment, documentation, stabilisation and prior communication with the receiving hospital.

She further instructed that an experienced medical professional accompany every critically ill patient referred to a tertiary care facility to ensure continuity of medical supervision during transportation.

The Minister also reviewed the availability of essential medicines, emergency drugs, oxygen supplies, blood components, heating arrangements, backup power systems, ambulances and other critical facilities at GMCs and their associated hospitals. She stressed adequate deployment of doctors, nursing staff, paramedics and supporting personnel, particularly in emergency and critical-care departments.

She called for special attention to emergency departments, maternity and neonatal care units, intensive care facilities and operation theatres to ensure that essential services remain functional throughout the winter season.

Taking up issues related to public facilitation, the Minister directed hospital authorities to prominently display the rates of diagnostic tests, clearly indicating which investigations are available free of cost and which require payment.

She also instructed Medical Superintendents of district hospitals to display OPD schedules, along with the names and contact numbers of consultants and doctors available during day and night shifts, enabling patients and attendants to access the required medical assistance without difficulty.

The Minister further called for strengthening grievance redressal mechanisms and maintaining complaint registers in every hospital to allow patients and members of the public to register their grievances on the spot.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary Health and Medical Education Saugat Biswas, Director Finance of the Health and Medical Education Department, Administrator GMC Srinagar, principals of GMCs Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla and Handwara, Principal Dental College Srinagar, Director Health Services Kashmir, Medical Superintendents of district and sub-district hospitals, and representatives of JKMSCL, State Health Agency and other concerned officers.

Reiterating the need for proactive planning, Sakeena Itoo called upon heads of institutions to identify potential bottlenecks in advance and ensure that geographical isolation and adverse weather conditions do not deprive people of timely and quality healthcare services.

LG Sinha,

guide humanity and called upon people to follow his path and dedicate themselves to the service and upliftment of society.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also extended warm greetings to the Sikh community on the auspicious occasion.

In his message, the Chief Minister said that the timeless teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, centred on compassion, equality, unity and selfless service, continue to inspire humanity and promote harmony across communities.

He emphasised the importance of upholding the values of mutual respect, brotherhood and inclusivity to build a peaceful and harmonious society.

The Chief Minister extended his best wishes to all celebrating the occasion and expressed hope that the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji would continue to guide society towards peace, prosperity and communal harmony in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mehbooba

concern over the growing distrust among educated youth towards recruitment institutions, warning that repeated controversies and perceived injustices could deepen alienation. Referring to the 1987 Assembly elections, she cautioned against undermining young people's faith in democratic institutions and stressed that recruitment opportunities must be protected through fairness and transparency.

Meanwhile, Lone questioned the continued existence of JKSSB, arguing that recurring allegations of irregularities, recruitment delays and political interference had undermined its credibility.

He called for winding up the board and introducing a decentralised recruitment mechanism under which individual government departments could engage specialised agencies to conduct examinations and selections. He particularly advocated professional agencies for computer-based examinations to strengthen transparency and accountability.

Lone also stressed the need for advance recruitment planning, arguing that departments should identify vacancies and initiate the selection process well before posts become vacant, rather than allowing prolonged delays to affect appointments.

Alleging that political interference and backdoor appointments had compromised recruitment processes over the years, he said the existing system required fundamental restructuring rather than temporary corrective measures.

The Peoples Conference president also criticised the Omar Abdullah-led government, alleging that its limited administrative authority was being largely exercised through transfers instead of being directed towards substantive governance and public welfare.

The reactions come against the backdrop of the controversy over the FAA examination conducted on November 15 for 600 posts, which was scheduled to be taken by 1,61,946 candidates at 493 examination centres across Jammu and Kashmir.

The investigation into the alleged cheating network has reportedly led to 20 arrests, including six government employees, by November 22. Police have alleged that question papers were photographed and circulated through a Telegram group as part of an organised attempt to facilitate cheating at a particular examination centre.

However, police have maintained that the alleged malpractice was localised and did not constitute a widespread leakage compromising the examination across the Union Territory. JKSSB has also defended the examination process, maintaining that timely intervention prevented the suspected attempt from affecting its overall integrity.

The Board has subsequently announced additional security measures for upcoming examinations, including tighter access controls, enhanced technical surveillance and revised examination-related procedures.

Govt

environment for children with special needs to access education, develop essential life skills and move towards greater independence.

The initiative is aimed at strengthening educational and rehabilitation facilities for children with special needs while promoting their confidence, dignity, empowerment and meaningful participation in society.

The move is part of the Government's broader focus on strengthening social welfare infrastructure and ensuring that vulnerable sections of society have access to essential services and institutional support.

The establishment of the school is expected to expand opportunities for the education, rehabilitation and social integration of children with special needs in Baramulla and adjoining areas.

BRO

requirements identified during previous Yatras and the need to improve road infrastructure for the safe movement of pilgrims.

The works primarily focus on widening existing tracks and stabilising vulnerable stretches to ease congestion and ensure safer passage. BRO clarified that all activities are confined to the existing track alignments.

Reiterating its commitment to pilgrim safety, the organisation said the primary objective of these works is to make the routes safer and more accessible for pilgrims, Yatra personnel and other road users, serving the larger public interest.

FDA

hygiene requirements.

The department also initiated six cases under Section 56 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, for maintaining insanitary and unhygienic conditions in food establishments. The provision carries a penalty of up to ₹1 lakh.

Another three cases were initiated under Section 58 of the Act for other contraventions, which attract penalties of up to ₹2 lakh.

In a move aimed at strengthening consumer awareness and ensuring transparency, the FDA has directed food business operators dealing in non-vegetarian preparations to prominently disclose the type of meat used in their products.

The establishments have been instructed to clearly specify whether the meat used is mutton, beef or chicken, whether it is fresh or frozen, and provide details of the ingredients used in preparing non-vegetarian food items.

The department has further directed operators to display this information on menus and Food Safety Display Boards in a manner that is clearly visible and accessible to consumers, enabling them to make informed choices.

Meanwhile, the FDA has appealed to consumers to remain vigilant and report instances involving the sale or distribution of unsafe or adulterated food products through its official email address, cfsjandk.fnd@jk.gov.in.

The department said the enforcement exercise is aimed at improving hygiene practices, strengthening regulatory compliance and ensuring adherence to the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, across Jammu and Kashmir.

SSP

against women, murder, theft, burglary and other offences. Particular emphasis was laid on the quality of investigations, timely disposal of cases, prosecution outcomes and effective implementation of the new criminal laws.

SSP Srinagar directed officers to expedite pending investigations, strengthen the collection of scientific and forensic evidence, address shortcomings contributing to acquittals and improve conviction rates. He also stressed the need to dismantle drug trafficking networks through focused investigations into their financial and criminal linkages, besides identifying and attaching proceeds of crime in accordance with the law.

Reviewing the security arrangements, he called for sustained day-and-night area domination, dynamic deployment of checkpoints, surprise inspections and heightened surveillance around sensitive locations. He also directed officers to intensify efforts against overground worker (OGW) networks, maintain operational preparedness and ensure close coordination with Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and other security agencies.

All SHOs were instructed to personally monitor the progress of investigations, adhere to statutory timelines, strengthen preventive policing and ensure prompt redressal of public grievances.

Reiterating the need for discipline and efficiency, SSP Srinagar said that the performance of officers, accountability and measurable outcomes would be closely monitored, making it clear that negligence or any lapse in the discharge of duties would invite strict action.

He urged officers to maintain the highest standards of professionalism, vigilance and proactive policing to ensure the safety and security of Srinagar residents.

J&K

parents regarding the winter vacation.

"We are getting two different responses from the parents, some parents are in favor of the vacation and some are saying that it is early to announce the vacation," the minister said.

Govt

the user's trusted identity to carry out fraud, phishing and social-engineering attacks.

It advised users that simply closing a browser window or a tab is not enough to end an authenticated session, and that they must manually log out after each session.

"Users are therefore advised to exercise caution while using WhatsApp Web, particularly on office computers, shared systems, public computers or devices that may be accessible to other persons. Avoid official or sensitive work on WhatsApp Web. Government, organisational, financial, confidential or other sensitive information should preferably not be exchanged through WhatsApp Web sessions on computers," it said.

It suggested using the incognito and private browsing mode when use is unavoidable.

"Avoid unknown or public computers. Do not log in to WhatsApp Web from cyber cafes, public kiosks, hotel business centres, borrowed computers or other untrusted systems. Be alert to unusual account activity. Unexpected messages sent from your account, unusual replies from contacts or unexplained activity should be treated seriously," it said.

The I4C has advised users to keep devices, operating systems and browsers secure, the security software updated and avoid suspicious downloads, unknown files and cracked software.

AIIMS Handwara celebrates 16th annual day "AALAV"

MLA SAJAD GANI LONE ATTENDS AS CHIEF GUEST; STUDENTS SHOWCASE CULTURAL TALENTS, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

■ **Aadil Akbar**



Handwara, Nov 23: The Ain-ul-Ilma Institute of Morality and Science (AIIMS), Handwara, on Monday celebrated its 16th Annual Day, titled 'AALAV', with enthusiastic participation from students, faculty members, parents and distinguished guests.

The programme commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by Naat-e-Sharief and a series of cultural and educational presentations.

MLA Handwara Sajad Gani Lone attended the function as the chief guest, while several other dignitaries from Kupwara district were also present.

The celebrations featured a range of student performances, including cultural presentations, heritage-based activities and entertainment programmes. The performances highlighted the students' creativity, confidence and appreciation for their cultural traditions.

The event provided a platform for students to showcase their talents beyond academics while emphasising the importance of education, moral values, discipline and cultural awareness in their overall development.

Outstanding student performances were also recognised, with prizes distributed among winners in appreciation of their achievements and dedication.

The occasion reflected the institution's emphasis on holistic education, combining academic excellence with character-building and extra-curricular activities.

At the conclusion, Director AIIMS Mir Sulaiman presented the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the chief guest, dignitaries, parents, staff members and students for their participation and support.

Chairman AIIMS Mir Naseer also thanked all those who contributed to the successful organisation of the programme, particularly appreciating the efforts of the teaching staff, students and organising team.

The 16th Annual Day celebration concluded on a memorable note, reaffirming the institution's commitment to nurturing academically capable, morally grounded and culturally aware students.

Green Land Public School bids farewell to Class 8 students, welcomes new principal

■ **Jahangir Lolabi**



Kupwara, Nov 23: Green Land Public School, Wavoora, Lolab, organised a farewell ceremony for outgoing Class 8 students, a welcome programme for its newly appointed Principal, Ab. Rashid, and an appreciation ceremony to honour students for their achievements.

The event was held in a warm atmosphere, celebrating the academic journey of the outgoing students and encouraging them to pursue future opportunities with confidence, dedication and determination.

Known Islamic scholar Qari Danish attended the programme as the chief guest. A special Seerat-un-Nabi segment was also organised, highlighting the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), with emphasis on peace, compassion, discipline and moral responsibility.

De Villiers claims Australia's 2018 ball tampering 'started in Durban'

AB de Villiers has claimed that Australia were tampering with the ball in the first Test of the 2018 series in Durban as well.

Since the controversy reignited more than two weeks ago through Usman Khawaja's autobiography, significant detail has emerged from Khawaja, Chadd Sayers and Cameron Bancroft about how Australia were using sandpaper on the ball in Port Elizabeth (now Gqeberha), in the Test before they were caught in Cape Town.

Now de Villiers, who scored a brilliant century against the reverse-swinging ball in the second Test and was in the middle when Bancroft was caught hiding the strip of sandpaper at Newlands, has added that, as far as he was concerned, Australia were tampering from the start of the series in some manner or other.

"It started in Durban, by the way, not in PE," de Villiers said on his podcast. "And I'm very happy for people to quote me on that. We lost that first Test match in Durban with the ball reversing at a very, very interesting time. Way too early for anyone to reverse a ball at Kingsmead.

"Trust me, I've played a lot of cricket there. So whatever they did there, whether it was sandpaper or a nail or I don't care. I honestly do not care. The fact of the matter is they were caught and everyone knew.

"The bowlers in particular knew because the ball doesn't just reverse. It's not your first Test match for Australia. So just stand up and say, 'guys, we were wrong'."



In his 4000-word article last week, Bancroft specifically said sandpaper wasn't used at Kingsmead, where Mitchell Starc had proved devastating with a reverse-swinging ball.

"Casting forward to the first Test in Durban, sandpaper was not used," he wrote. "There were more traditional methods of maintaining the ball, including saliva. I cannot say with certainty whether mints or lollies were involved. Probably quarter-seam picking, this practice became so normal after my first Test.

"Importantly for the chronology of events, I was not responsible for the ball in that Test. However, what happened in the second Test in Port Elizabeth was different. It was a significant escalation. And it was where I became directly involved."

"It's the weirdest thing because everyone's talking about the sandpaper now. That's the point everyone's missing at the moment. And it confuses me so much. Why are we all so worried about the object that was used? The fact of the matter is there was a premeditated decision made to do something illegal on the ground. And every single person knew about it. I've zero per cent doubt about it"

AB de Villiers

After the first day of the series in 2018, when Australia had batted, David Warner had noted the reverse swing that had been on offer. "We didn't assess for reverse [swing] in the first day - not after 24 or 25 overs," he said at the time.

De Villiers questioned why so much attention has been placed purely on the sandpaper element of the saga.

"It's the weirdest thing because everyone's talking about the sandpaper now," he said. "That's the point everyone's missing at the moment. And it confuses me so much. Why are we all so worried about the object that was used? The fact of the matter is there was a premeditated decision made to do something illegal on the ground. And every single person knew about it. I've zero per cent doubt about it."

De Villiers admitted that he was not an "angel" when it came to his playing career but insisted he had never gone as far as the Australians.

ESPNcricinfo staff

Bangladesh bring back Yasir Ali and Khaled Ahmed for SA ODIs



Bangladesh's selectors have brought back Yasir Ali and Khaled Ahmed to the ODI squad, as they made four changes in their 15-member squad for the three-match series against South Africa.

Among the others returning are Mohammad Naim and Jaker Ali, while Litton Das also comes back after missing the ODI tri-series in UAE in October.

Yasir, the 30-year-old middle-order batter, last played for Bangladesh in March 2023, during the ODI series against Ireland. He has a single half-century in his nine ODIs thus far. Since his last ODI, Yasir has scored nine fifties and a century in List-A cricket, recently having made a T20I comeback. He is now playing for Bangladesh A in the Rising Stars Asia Cup tournament in Doha.

Khaled played the last of his two ODIs in September 2023, having worked his way back through impressive red-ball performances in domestic cricket at home and also during a stint with Lancashire in the previous county season. Khaled has also taken 40 wickets at 28.37 in the last three years.

Jaker and Naim were last seen in the ODI set up back in October last year, but failed to impress against Afghanistan. Both batters have returned to the Test squad, having made impressive scores in domestic cricket in the last 12 months.

The selectors have left out Nurul Hasan, Saif Hassan, Mosaddek Hossain and Soumya Sarkar. Hasan Mahmud was also part of the squad in the ODI tri-series last month, but is out due to an elbow injury, while Aliss Al Islam is working on his bowling action after being reported for a suspected action on his ODI debut. Bangladesh take on South Africa in the three ODIs on December 1, 4 and 7.

IN: Litton Das, Mohammad Naim, Yasir Ali, Jaker Ali, Syed Khaled Ahmed.

ESPNcricinfo staff

Fernando, Wanuja help SL A stay unbeaten

Sri Lanka A 146 for 3 (Madushka 51*, Rathnayake 45) beat Bangladesh A 145 (Parvez 32, Iftakhar 31, Saif 28, Fernando 4-30, Sahan 3-20) by seven wickets

On a crumbly surface where spin dominated, Sri Lanka A put it past Bangladesh A to enter the semi-finals with an all-win record at the ACC Rising Stars tournament in Doha.

Bangladesh A managed just 145, losing nine wickets to spin. Offspinner Ravindu Fernando was the chief architect, picking up 4 for 30 in an exhibition of no-frills, wicket-to-wicket offspin. Wanuja Sahan, the left-arm spinner, matched him for skill and accuracy from the other end, picking up three wickets as Bangladesh A lasted just 42.5 overs after electing to bat.

In reply, Sri Lanka A made the new ball count and kept attacking Bangladesh A's spinners. Pavan Rathnayake and Nishan Madushka put together an 81-run stand for the third wicket to smoothen their passage to victory with nearly 30 overs to spare.

Unlike Sri Lanka A's spinners, who simply let the surface do the talking, Bangladesh A repeatedly erred by bowling



shorter, only to be picked away to the short square boundaries, one of which was just 53 metres. It also helped somewhat that conditions eased under lights, with the ball skidding on.

But in the afternoon, under the baking sun, inconsistent bounce, square turn and grip on the surface made batting incredibly hard. Bangladesh A's batters didn't help matters by playing a series of rash shots trying to find escape routes the moment spin came on in the 8th over.

By then, the openers Parvez Hossain and Saif Hassan had put on 55 - picking boundaries at will without really looking to muscle the ball. But the moment spin came on, their assuredness gave way to early diffidence. Emon fell first when he toe-ended a sweep - a sign that he played too early - off Sahan to open the floodgates.

From 55 for 1, it didn't take long for Bangladesh A to slip to 100 for 6. Shahadat Hossain stepped out to hoick legspinner Vijaykanth Viyaskanth, only to completely misread a straighter one. Saif Hassan, the captain, tamely wafted at a short delivery to be caught at short third, and Afif Hossain was lured in flight, only to nick off looking to defend. Batters with international experience suddenly looked clueless when application was needed.

Iftakhar Hossain held fort for a while, looking to apply himself and milk singles. But every time he tried to farm the strike, wickets kept falling to force him to attempt the big shots. Despite the risks he was forced to take, Iftakhar was eventually out defending when extra bounce and turn from Fernando had him nicking behind as the ball kissed the shoulder of his bat.

Where Sri Lanka A operated with their seamers for the first eight overs, Bangladesh A unleashed spin from one end. At the other end, seamer Ripon Mondol was welcomed first by Shahadat dropping Sineth Jayawardena at point as the ball burst through his hands for four. Off his second ball, he flicked a length ball on leg-stump over square leg for six, a stroke reminiscent of Sanath Jayasuriya in his pomp.

ESPNcricinfo staff

Jansen, Rabada and Nortje wrap Bangladesh up for 91



Bangladesh 91 (Mahfijul 23, Jansen 3-17, Rabada 3-23, Nortje 2-10) vs South Africa

South Africa knocked Bangladesh over for 91 on the first day of the Centurion Test. Marco Jansen and Kagiso Rabada took three wickets each, while Anrich Nortje picked up two in a procession that lasted 33.3 overs. Bangladesh's 91 is now the lowest total for a side batting first at SuperSport Park, and the fourth time that they were bowled out for double-figures against South Africa.

Play started at 1.40pm, nearly four hours after the scheduled start due to rain.

When the stand-in captain Aiden Markram decided to field first, South Africa's quicks were expected to produce fireworks against a Bangladesh line-up that was without Mushfiqur Rahim, their most experienced batter. The visitors went in with seven specialist batters and effectively four No. 11s after they chose to drop Mehidy Hasan Miraz for a four-man pace attack.

Tanzid Hasan was the first to go, edging to Wiaan Mulder at first slip in Marco Jansen's first over. He tried to force an away-going delivery very early in his innings, but fell for 3.

Mahfijul Islam, who made a forgettable Test debut in Johannesburg, looked better this time. He drove the ball down the ground for his first boundary, but often played and missed or was late against the quicks. Nortje ended Mahfijul's stay with a superb delivery that nipped away late at the batter, hitting his pad on its way to the stumps. Mahfijul was gone for 23 off 40 balls.

Najmul Hossain Shanto fell one ball later, clean bowled by another Nortje delivery that seamed away from the Bangladesh captain, who was left bemused by his dismissal. Mominul Haque was the next to go, inside edging Mulder onto his stumps. Mominul had only just got the hang of things with two boundaries, before Mulder got the ball to rear into him, although leaving the ball alone looked like a better option.

ESPNcricinfo staff

'We are way past Covid times' - Gill wants saliva ban to be reversed

Leaving Mohammed Siraj out of the playing XI was "a very tough decision", India captain Shubman Gill has said after the first Test against New Zealand ended in a draw in Wellington. But Siraj, or anyone else, might not have helped tremendously, he said, since "there was no pace in the wicket", "the quality of the balls" was questionable, and "teams should be allowed to use saliva" on the ball again.

"I think a ball definitely plays a big role. Our first ball [Kookaburra in NZ] was very soft after 25-30 overs. I think the other team also complained," Gill said after the game. "We saw this in England [last year] as well. In the first three-four matches, the [Dukes] ball was getting soft very quickly. I don't know if the quality of the balls has come down or what.

"But in such conditions, if there is no help from the wicket, and on top of that, the ball has become soft, then it becomes very difficult for the bowlers to take wickets. [The edges] don't carry. If there is not enough movement in the pitch, then all you have are lbws and bowleds.

"So I think the quality of the balls will be better. And on top of that, I don't understand why we haven't been allowed to shine the ball yet. We are way past Covid times. There was a rule that you can't put saliva on the ball to make it shine. It's been seven-eight years and I still don't understand why they are not allowing it. I think this is also a big factor." India declared their first innings on the fourth day with a lead of 352, giving their bowlers around 135 overs to bowl New Zealand out again.



They managed to pick up just five wickets though on a pitch that gave the bowlers next to nothing.

"If a team used to play a five-Test series, we used to draw two matches. It was common, but not so much now. That's why we are not used to draws. That's why we definitely feel more frustrated," Gill said. "I don't think there was anything happening [from the pitch] at all. Maybe a couple of balls staying low, but there was no pace in the wicket. So even the balls that were staying low weren't quick enough to beat the batsmen."

"Sometimes, you have to see which bowlers are in form, which bowlers are bowling the best. And I had this conversation, I told him before the match that he's going to be missing out. I don't know if he agreed or not, but he understood that"

Shubman Gill on leaving out Mohammed Siraj

Could Siraj have been the man to do the job for India? "I think we played the best bowling attack that was there for this match," Gill said. "And see, Siraj is a great player and a great bowler who has done very well for India. But, you know, before all of that, he's a really good friend of mine. Even before playing for India, we were really good friends. So leaving him behind was actually, it was a very tough decision for me as well.

"But sometimes, you have to see, you know, which bowlers are in form, which bowlers are bowling the best. And I had this conversation, I told him before the match that, you know, he's going to be missing out this match. And I don't know if he agreed or not, but he understood that. He understood what was the logic behind it. He understood why, you know, we picked someone else ahead of him.

"And I think in every player's career or life, there comes a phase, you know, where you're not going to be at the peak of your career all the time. I think he understands that. And he's, as long as the player is, you know, willing to work hard and come back, that is always a positive sign for us.

ESPNcricinfo staff

Printer, Publisher, Owner & Editor: Tariq Saleem Beigh; Sub Editor: Asif Iqbal; Legal Advisor: Asif Ali Dar; RNI No: JKENG/2009/27113;
Postal Registration No.: L/SK-134/2010-12; Published from: 56-A, Gogji Bagh, Srinagar; Administration Office: I.G. Road Opposite Kashmir Haat Exhibition, Srinagar J&K;
Cell No.: +91-9103944310, +91-9682370502, +91-9596241901; Printed at: Khidmat Offset Printing Press, The Bund, Srinagar; Email: kashmirfrontier@gmail.com