

# KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Clarity in the Chaos

www.kashmiobserver.net • twitter.com / kashmiobserver • facebook.com/kashmiobserver • Postal Regn: L/159/KO/SK/2014-2016



www.elitepluscentre.com

## ElitePlus

DENTAL & DERMA CENTRE

+91-9797703533 | Vintage Mall, 2nd floor Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar

This cutting-edge technology effectively reduces dark spots, melasma, and sun damage, revealing a radiant complexion with minimal downtime



**BOOK**  
APPOINTMENT

## LG Summons J&K Assembly From March 3



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has summoned the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly from March 03 for the first budget to be presented by the National Conference-led government. According to a notice from the Legislative Assembly secretariat, the LG has summoned the Assembly from March 03.

"I, Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me under Section 18(1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, do hereby summon the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative

Assembly to meet at Jammu on Monday, the 3rd day of March, 2025 at 10:00 AM," reads the order issued by the LG.

The session will start with the LG's address to the MLAs on the same day at 10:00 AM.

"I, Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, under the provisions of Section 21(1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, call upon the Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir to assemble in the Legislative Assembly Complex at Jammu on Monday, the 3rd day of March, 2025 at 10:00 AM to hear my address," reads another order | [More on P6](#)

## Chillai Kalan Ends On A Sunny Note

### Scant Snow, Warmer Days Mark Kashmir's Harsh Winter

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The 40-day 'Chillai Kalan', considered the harshest period of winter in Kashmir, came to an end on a sunny note on Thursday but overcast conditions towards the end of the day raised hope of some precipitation after a prolonged dry spell.

Chillai Kalan, which starts on December 21, is a period when chances of snowfall are maximum and temperatures drop several degrees below freezing point.

The minimum temperature dropped to bone-chilling levels this winter as the mercury dipped to minus 8.5 degrees Celsius in Srinagar on the



very first day of Chillai Kalan, breaking a 50-year-old record. However, snowfall during this period remained elusive, with January receiving scant precipitation.

The harsh winter period was also marked by warmer-than-usual days as maximum temperatures | [More on P6](#)

Fading Winters In Kashmir: Experts Warn Of Water Shortages

Kashmir witnessing less snowfall during peak winter season this year could lead to water scarcity in coming months, experts said on Thursday. The experts said the changing weather patterns have led to decline in the intensity of snowfall in Kashmir and it can have far reaching consequences. Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the snowfall in winters is important | [More on P6](#)

## 'Rainfall Deficit Fuels Ganderbal Spring Contamination'

Saliq Manzoor

A concerning discovery revealed that 37 out of 40 spring water samples from Ganderbal district are contaminated with bacteria.

This finding has caused alarm among residents, environmentalists, and officials. In response, the Jal Shakti (PHE) Rural Water Supply Division has advised people to refrain from using spring water for drinking until further notice. | [More on P6](#)

## Welfare Of Deprived Sections Should Be Govt's Top Priority: LG

» Says 25 Cr Indians Have Risen Above BPL Category In Past Decade » Rural Poverty Has Been Reduced To Less Than 5% In 2024

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said the welfare of the deprived section should be the government's topmost priority and society's collective strength must bring the poorest of poor to the mainstream of development.

Attending the 'Shanti Doot Sammelan' organised by Gandhi Global Family here to mark the martyrdom anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Sinha paid rich tributes to the father of the nation.

The lieutenant governor said the principles and values of truth and non-violence to which Gandhi was always committed are beyond time and place.

"They are as relevant today



as they were during Gandhi's lifetime. He has guided us for peaceful resolution of differences and well-being of every Indian," he said.

The lieutenant governor honoured the family members of the army brave-hearts and also paid homage to all

the leaders, fighters and martyrs, who devoted themselves towards India's freedom.

"The world that we live in today is witnessing conflicts. In many parts of the globe, societies are facing disruption because of ongoing aggression. In such a | [More on P6](#)

## Will Omar Abdullah's 2025-26 Budget Fulfill Poll Promises?

Key Pledges on Jobs, Free Electricity, & More At Stake

Agencies

Srinagar: As the forthcoming 2025-26 budget session is set to commence from March 3 this year, the million dollar question remains that whether the Omar Abdullah led dispensation will fulfill its poll-pledges- topping among them is 200 units of free electricity and creation of more than three lac government jobs for the youth here.

As per the inputs received, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is expected to hold discussions with key stakeholders, while the government is set to prioritize electoral guarantees in the upcoming budget.

According to official sources, the budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly is proposed to commence on March 3- the first annual budget presentation for the region in six years.

A proposal to convene the

session was recently approved in a cabinet meeting and sent to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. The final duration of the session will be determined by Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather, following consultations with the Business Advisory Committee.

For the first time as Finance Minister, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will present the state budget in the assembly.

During his previous tenure as Chief Minister, Abdullah oversaw the Home, General Administration, and other departments but had not directly handled finance. The budget must be approved before March 31, and while Union Territories typically have shorter budget sessions than states, this session may extend for several weeks.

Currently, the Jammu and Kashmir government consists of six ministers, | [More on P6](#)

## 17 Lives Lost, No Cause Found

### Mystery Lingers Over Rajouri Deaths

Observer News Service

Jammu: After 54 days of uncertainty, life in Badhaal, Rajouri is finally returning to normal following a mysterious illness that claimed 17 lives.

Over the last seven days, no new cases have been reported, and most of the previously admitted patients have recovered, which has brought some relief to the fear-stricken community.

Locals said that though

delayed, the government's preventive measures have helped in containing the crisis. However, they demand urgent answers regarding the exact cause of the deaths so that proper safety measures can be put in place and that the residents can resume normal life without fear.

The first death in Badhaal was reported on December 8, and since then, more than 50 days have passed without the government being able | [More on P6](#)

## BUDGET SESSION

### Bills On Waqf, Immigration & Foreigners Listed

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The government has listed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill as well as three other new draft laws for consideration in the Budget session of Parliament beginning Friday.

The joint committee of Parliament, which examined the amendment bill on Waqf on Thursday, submitted its report to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, paving for the government to move amendments on the bill tabled last year. The Mussalman Wakf (Repeal) Bill was also introduced along with the Waqf amendment bill.

The government has also listed three new bills for the session -- 'The Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill', 'Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill', and the 'Immigration and Foreigners Bill'.

The Finance Bill, 2025 and related demands for grants and appropriation bills have also been listed by the government for the session.

There are 10 other | [More on P6](#)

## PDA Chief Removed Amid Crackdown On Illegal Constructions

Tashir Khan

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government has removed Masarat Hashim from his position as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Pahalgam Development Authority (PDA), just a month after his appointment. His removal comes in the wake of his efforts to crack down on nearly 300 cases of illegal constructions, including hotels, lodges, and residential buildings lacking proper approvals. This move has drawn sharp criticism and raised concerns about the unchecked growth of illegal constructions in the region.

Hashim, an officer in the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS), was reassigned to the position of Deputy Labour Commissioner (Central) after taking strong action against unauthorized constructions in a popular tourist destination. His transfer, which many view as sudden, has led to



allegations of political interference and pressure from the influential hotelier lobby.

Before his removal, Hashim initiated a crackdown on illegal constructions. His actions focused on structures that violated strict environmental regulations, which endangered Pahalgam's fragile ecosystem.

On January 16, a notice was issued regarding an unauthorized building that has a plinth area of 1,596 square feet and a height of 32 feet. The violators were warned that their

## MSME Recovery

### JKB Promises To End 'Name & Shame Policy'

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant move that brings much-needed relief to the business community, J&K Bank's Managing Director & CEO, Amitva Chatterjee, has promised to end the bank's controversial "Name and Shame" policy and other practices that have caused undue distress to borrowers, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the region.

This assurance came during a productive marathon meeting between Chatterjee and a high-level delegation from the Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK), led by Shahid Kamili. The meeting also included J&K Bank's Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, General Managers Narjesh Gupta, Rajesh Tickoo, Shabir Ahmad, Deputy General Manager Nishikant Sharma, and other key bank officers.

For years, J&K Bank publicly shamed borrowers struggling with loan repayments by



publishing SARFAESI notices and e-auction advertisements in newspapers. This practice severely damaged the reputations of businesses and individuals, often hindering their ability to secure future financial support or business opportunities. FCIK has long criticized this approach, asserting that it disproportionately affects MSMEs, many of which are already under significant financial strain due to external factors beyond their control.

FCIK has consistently advocated for a more | [More on P6](#)

## 64 Killed After US Army Chopper Hits Airliner

Agencies

Arlington: All 64 people aboard an American Airlines jet that collided with an Army helicopter were feared dead in what was likely to be the worst US aviation disaster in almost a quarter century, officials said on Thursday.

At least 28 bodies were pulled from the icy waters of the Potomac river after the midair collision on Wednesday night when the helicopter apparently flew in the path of the jet as it was landing at Ronald Reagan National Airport near Washington, officials said.

Rescuers were still searching for any sign of the 60 passengers and four crew members, but they did not believe there were any survivors, which would make it the deadliest US air crash in nearly 24 years.

"We are now at the point where we are switching from a rescue operation to a recovery operation," said John Donnelly, the fire chief | [More on P6](#)





# Don't Rely On Social Media Users For Fact-Checking. Many Don't Care Much About The Common Good

## The Conversation

In the wake of Donald Trump's election victory, Meta chief executive Mark Zuckerberg fired the fact-checking team for his company's social media platforms. At the same time, he reversed Facebook's turn away from political content.

The decision is widely viewed as placating an incoming president with a known penchant for mangling the truth. Meta will replace its fact-checkers with the "community notes" model used by X, the platform owned by avid Trump supporter Elon Musk. This model relies on users to add corrections to false or misleading posts.

Musk has described this model as "citizen journalism, where you hear from the people. It's by the people, for the people." For such an approach to work, both citizen journalists and their readers need to value good-faith deliberation, accuracy and accountability. But our new research shows social media users may not be the best crowd to source in this regard.

Our research Working with Essential Media, our team wanted to know what social media users think of common civic values. People who relied on newspapers, online news aggregators, and non-commercial TV all scored significantly higher than those who relied on social media and commercial broadcasting.

The survey also found that as the number of different media sources people use daily increased, so too did their civic values score.

This research does not indicate whether platforms foster lower civic values or simply cater to them. But it does raise concerns about social media becoming an increasingly important source of political information in democratic societies like Australia.

Why measure values? The point of the civic values scale we developed is to highlight the fact that the values people bring to news about the world is as important as the news content.

For example, most people in the United States have likely heard about the violence of the attack on



**“People who relied on newspapers, online news aggregators, and non-commercial TV all scored significantly higher than those who relied on social media and commercial broadcasting.”**

the Capitol protesting Trump's loss in 2020.

That Trump and his supporters can recast this violent riot as "a day of love" is not the result of a lack of information.

It is, rather, a symptom of people's lack of trust in media and government institutions and their unwillingness to confront facts that challenge their views.

In other words, it is not enough to provide people with accurate information. What counts is the mindset they bring to that information.

No place for debate Critics have long been concerned that social media platforms do not serve democracy well, privileging sensationalism and virality over thoughtful and accurate posts. As the critical theorist Judith Butler put it: the quickness of social media allows for forms of vitriol that do not exactly support thoughtful debate.

Sociologist Zeynep Tufekci said social media is less about meaningful engagement than bonding with like-minded people and mocking perceived opponents. She notes, "belonging is stronger than facts". Her observation is likely familiar to

anyone who has tried to engage in a politically charged discussion on social media.

These criticisms are commonplace in discussions of social media but have not been systematically tested until now.

Social media platforms are not designed to foster democracy. Their business model is based on encouraging people to see themselves as brands competing for attention, rather than as citizens engaged in meaningful deliberation.

This is not a recipe for responsible fact-checking. Or for encouraging users to care much about it. Platforms want to wash their hands of the fact-checking process, because it is politically fraught. Their owners claim they want to encourage the free flow of information.

However, their fingers are on the scale. The algorithms they craft play a central role in deciding which forms of expression make it into our feeds and which do not. It's disingenuous for them to abdicate responsibility for the content they chose to pump into people's news feeds, especially when they have systematically created a civilly challenged media environment.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from Masrat Jan to Dilshada Akhter in future I will be known as Dilshada Akhter. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Dilshada Akhter**  
**W/o Nazir Ahmad Wani**  
**R/O Dangerpora**  
**Magam Budgam**

bmg

## Office Of The Naib Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject Application of Gh Nabi Zargar S/o Sonullah Zargar F/o Muzamil Nabi Zargar and Insha Nabi R/o Kreeri Tehsil Kreeri for issuance of OBC (Other Backward Classes) in favor of Muzamil Nabi Zargar and Insha Nabi

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the Subject cited above the applicant has submitted the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwai halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in village Kreeri and belongs to the Zargar Community having annual income of Rs 174000 (One Lakh Seventy Four Thousand Rupees) The details of the family of the applicant are as follows:

S No	Name of the family Member	Relationship with the Family Head	Age	Occupation	Annual Income
01	Gh Nabi Zargar	Self	60	Butcher	174000
02	Ateega Begum	Wife	55	H/W	
03	Zubair ul Islam	Son	28	Student	
04	Insha Nabi	Dughter	26	--	
05	Muzamil Nabi Zargar	SON	21	--	

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

fko Naib Tehsildar

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT.**  
 Ground Water Division Srinagar  
 Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar.  
 E- mail: - phegwd@yahoo.com, Tel./ Fax No:- 0194-2411285

## NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

GIST of Detailed e- NIT No: - 58/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2024-25.

For and on behalf of Government of UT - J&K, e-tenders from reputed and resourceful Firms/Companies/drilling agencies/Joint Ventures etc for "registered experienced Contractors of Machine Drilled Hand pump wells" as per details given below. The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications and Cover 2nd shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

S. No	Name of work	Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs	Earnest money Rs. 8,000/-	Cost of Tender Document Rs.500/-	Time of completion 10 Days	Class of Contract Machine Drilled Hand Pump wells	Major Head/ Programme District Capex Budget 2024-25 (DDC Grants)	Technical Sanction/Tender Call JS-PHE/GWDS/ Capex Budget 2024-25/ 93 of 01/2025, Dt: 27-01-2025
1.	Construction of Bore Well near Darul Uloom Jamala Fatima Zehra at Wullarhama Anantnag.	Rs.3.94 Lacs	Rs. 8,000/-	Rs.500/-	10 Days	Machine Drilled Hand Pump wells	District Capex Budget 2024-25 (DDC Grants)	JS-PHE/GWDS/ Capex Budget 2024-25/ 93 of 01/2025, Dt: 27-01-2025
2.	Installation of Machine Bore Well near Gujjar Basti Batdawal at Batdawal Putwama.	Rs.3.40 Lacs	Rs. 7,000/-	Rs.500/-	10 Days	Machine Drilled Hand Pump wells	District Capex Budget 2024-25 (DDC Grants)	JS-PHE/GWDS/ Capex Budget 2024-25/ 91 of 01/2025, Dt: 27-01-2025
3.	Construction of Tube well near H/o: Zahoor Ahmad Pala at Hadoora Ward No. 01 Wanihama Ganderbal.	Rs.2.87 Lacs	Rs. 6,000/-	Rs.500/-	10 Days	Machine Drilled Hand Pump wells	District Capex Budget 2024-25 (Area Development PRI Grants)	JS-PHE/GWDS/ Capex Budget 2024-25/ 92 of 01/2025, Dt: 27-01-2025

Position of Funds:- Available:  
 S. No. 01. Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the Distt. Development Commissioner Anantnag Vide Order No: 30-DDCA of 2025, issued vide endorsement No: DCCA/Capex/Ground-Water/2024-25/ 7771-80, Dated: 24-01-2025.  
 S. No. 02. Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the Distt. Development Commissioner Pulwama Vide Order No: 236-DDCP of 2024, issued vide endorsement No: DDCP/PRI/2024-25/4236-39, Dated: 11-10-2024.  
 S. No. 03. Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the Distt. Development Commissioner Ganderbal Vide Order No: 15-DDCG of 2025, issued vide endorsement No: DDCG/Area Dev. Plan-CW/2024-25/ 6430-32, Dated: 22-01-2025.

The Bidding Documents and other details can be downloaded from the website: https://www.jktenders.gov.in From 30.01.2025 (03:00 PM) UPTO 10.02.2025 (11:00 AM)

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Book of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms, conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the website: https://www.jktenders.gov.in As per Critical Dates/Information scheduled given below

S. No	Name of work	Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs	Earnest money Rs. 8,000/-	Cost of Tender Document Rs.500/-	Time of completion 10 Days	Class of Contract Machine Drilled Hand Pump wells	Major Head/ Programme District Capex Budget 2024-25 (DDC Grants)	Technical Sanction/Tender Call JS-PHE/GWDS/ Capex Budget 2024-25/ 93 of 01/2025, Dt: 27-01-2025
1.	Publishing Date							30-01-2025 (03:00 p.m)
2.	Period of Downloading of Bids							30-01-2025 (03:00 p.m) upto 10-02-2025 (11:00 a.m)
3.	Period of Submission of bids							30-01-2025 (03:00 p.m) upto 10-02-2025 (11:00 a.m)
4.	Date of opening of Tender.							11-02-2025 (11:00 a.m)
5.	Tender Receiving Authority: Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Srinagar Kashmir-190011							
6.	Cost of Tender Document : Non-Refundable should be in form of DD /TR/e-challan deposited to Account Head 0215 in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar ( at Saddar Treasury Srinagar) (The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply)							
7.	NOTE: In case the firm/agency/contractor submits/uploaded scanned copy of tender document fee in the shape of DD/e-challan, the hard copies shall have to be submitted in the divisional office before opening of cover 2nd (Financial Cover) of e-NIT.							
8.	Bid Validity Period: 180 Days							
9.	The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on www .Jktenders.gov.in							

Bids must be accompanied by bid security viz: Earnest Money in shape of CDR/FDR and (The date of CDR/FDR etc. must be prior to 03 months from the date of issuance of this e-NIT and Treasury Receipt (mentioning therein the NIT No., S.No. of work and Advertised Cost as per the NIT) as cost of Tender Document under Account Head 0215 to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Ground Water Division Srinagar (as specified in the table (I) (Page 1st). Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding documents and shall be valid for 180 Days after opening of bid. Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Division Srinagar (H.Q. Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar) on 11.02.2025 at 11:00 am. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

Sd/-  
 Executive Engineer  
 Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.  
 Ground Water Division, Srinagar.

DIPK-11398/24  
 dated: 30-01-2025

## OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER SOCIAL FORESTRY DIVISION, ANANTNAG

## e-TENDERING

E-NIT Notice No.: 19-E-NIT of 2024-25, Dated: 27.01.2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with UT of J&K Govt./Central Govt. Organizations for the following works of district Anantnag under Capex Scheme:

S/N	Name of work	Adv. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Tender Document	EMD (Amount in ₹)	Class of Contractor	Time of Completion
1	Construction of 05 No's of View point (Hexagonal with 6 meter each site)	Rs. 9.91	Rs. 500/-	2% of Adv. Cost	"C&D"	30 Calendar Days
2	Construction of approach path	Rs. 3.64	Rs. 300/-	2% of Adv. Cost	"D"	30 Calendar Days
3	Construction of Guard/Watch and Ward Hut	Rs. 2.43	Rs. 300/-	2% of Adv. Cost	"D"	30 Calendar Days
4	Installation of benches and Dustbins	Rs. 1.56	Rs. 200/-	2% of Adv. Cost	"D"	30 Calendar Days
5	Construction of stairs	Rs. 0.48	Rs. 150/-	2% of Adv. Cost	"D"	30 Calendar Days

The e-NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities, (B.O.Q), Set of Terms & Conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental Website:- [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in)

Position of Funds:-	Available:
Position of AA:-	Accorded.
Position of TS:-	Accorded.
Publishing Date :-	29.01.2025
Download Start Date :-	29.01.2025 From 06:00 PM
Bid submission Start Date :-	29.01.2025 From 06:00 PM
Bid submission End Date :-	05.02.2025 up to 06:00 PM
Date of Opening of Technical Bid (online) :-	06.02.2025 at 11:00 AM in the Office of the Regional Director, Social Forestry Kashmir
Date of Opening of Financial Bid (online) :-	To be notified after evaluation of technical bid

**DIPK-11398/24**  
**dated: 30-01-2025**

**Divisional Forest Officer**  
**Social Forestry Division**  
**Anantnag/Kulgam**

**No. DFO/ANG/ACCT/2024-25/1092-96**

### NOTICE FOR GENERAL PUBLIC

This is information for the general public that in my adhar bearing no. 829716442212, i want to change my name from ZAMROODA AKHTER D/O ABDUL GAFFAR MALIK R/O PAIMAS BUDGAM TO RUMAIISA JAN W/O ILYAS MANZOOR SHEIKH R/O MUNIPAPY BUDGAM as per domicile Certificate. In this regard if any body having any objection may contact concern department within a period of 7 days. No objection may consider after that.

**RUMAIISA JAN**  
**W/O ILYAS MANZOOR SHEIKH**  
**R/O MUNIPAPY BUDGAM CELL : 7006083850** mcb

### PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card as Sami Jan while my correct name is Sumi Aasan Bhat which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Sumi Aasan Bhat**  
**W/o Hilal Ahmad Kumar**  
**R/o Kral Check Berthipora Shopian** fko

### OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No. JK-0420090003681 issued in favour of BILAL AHMAD MIR Parentage GULAM MOHI UD DIN MIR Whereas an application has been received by one BILAL AHMAD MIR Parentage GULAM MOHI UD DIN MIR wherein he claimed that the fathers Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as GH MOHIUDDIN Which needs to be changed as GULAM MOHI UD DIN MIR.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper. After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.

**Assistant Regional Transport officer**  
**Budgam Kashmir**  
 mcb

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for the issuance of Death certifies of my father, Charanjeet Singh who expired on 12-07-2024. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the BDO Aripal Pulwama within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Amarjeet Singh**  
**S/o Late Charanjeet Singh**  
**R/o Dharamjeet Tehsil Aripal** fko

### Government of Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION BANDIPORA.

#### NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Fresh e-NIT No.82/ET/R&B/Bandipora of 2024-25 Dated:-29-01-2025. (Single Cover System)

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following work:-

S. No	Name of work	Adv. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest money (IN Rs.)	Time of completion	Project Authority	M.H of Account	Class of contractor
1	Up gradation of Road with Drain towards Seed Multiplication Farm (Agriculture) at Wata-pora Payeen. (Balance Work).	18.64	800 (indicate name of work with NIT serial no. on TR)	37280.00	40Days	District Development Commissioner Bandipora	District Capex Budget Regular.	"BEE" "CEE"
2	Construction of Elementary Boundary wall at Govt. Middle School Braripora, Zone Quilmuqaam, District Bandipora	6.50	300 (indicate name of work with NIT serial no. on TR)	13,000.00	30Days	Directorate of Samagra-Shiksha	Samagra-Shiksha-PAB 2022-23	"CEE" "DEE"

Position of AA:- Accorded.

- The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of dates given below:-

S. No	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	Period of downloading of bidding documents
1	29-01-2025	30-01-2025 from 10:00 AM
2		
3		
4		
5		

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender documents under MH-0059 in shape of Treasury Receipt favoring to Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Bandipora (tender inviting authority). Indicating S.No of Nit No, Name of work and Earnest Money / Bid Security in shape of CDR / FDR pledged to Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Bandipora (Tender receiving authority).
- All bidders have to submit/upload 2% EMD of Advertised cost in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Bandipora.
- The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/ FDR Pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Bandipora within 02 Days before fixation of contract and shall be released after completion of DLP.
- All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form) and detailed NIT issued.
- Treasury Challan should indicate tender document cost deposit in-between commencement date and end date of NIT, Name of work, Adv. Cost, NIT No. and Tender inviting authority.
- For drawing of agreement of the contract and memorandum of an agreement relating to sake of bill of exchange one rupee for Rs.10,000/- or part thereof shall have to be realized/deposited by the Contractor at his own to revenue Head of Accts.0030/ Stamps of Deputy Commissioner Stamps J&K UT.
- The successful bidder who fails to submit original copies of uploaded documents especially 2% / (EMD) security performance of NIT. Adv. Cost within five days after opening of Bid shall be debarred from participating in future tendering for a period of one year in this Department as per instructions and reference of clause 2.20.5.
- Bidders should be fully cognizant that if the documents uploaded/submitted on the basis of which the contract was awarded are later discovered to be fake/not genuine, the contract will be cancelled and the Contractor/bidder will be black-listed from participating in this Division/ Department for a period of three years, in addition to the performance security deposited for the said work being forfeited.
- All other terms, conditions are as per PWD Form-25 (Double agreement)

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

No.EE/R&B/Bpr/6448-55.  
 DIPK-11390/24 Dated: -30-01-2025.



## Latest Issue Of Koh-E-Maran Titled "Gosha Umar Majid" Released

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A literary event was held in Srinagar, where the latest issue of the quarterly magazine Koh-e-Maran, titled Gosha-e-Umar Majid, was released.

The event was presided over by prominent writer and oral historian Zarif Ahmad Zarif. Others who were present on the occasion were leading fiction writer and patron of the Fiction Writers Guild, Wahshi Sayed, former Head MERC, KU Professor Nasir Mirza, Journalist & writer Javed Azar and Assistant Professor in the Department of Urdu at Kashmir University, Dr. Mushtaq Haider.

The event began with a welcome address by Sohail Saleem, the editor of Koh-e-Maran, who provided a brief overview of the latest issue.

"This issue of Koh-e-Maran features a special section

dedicated to the late Umar Majid, it is important that we remember our teachers" he said.

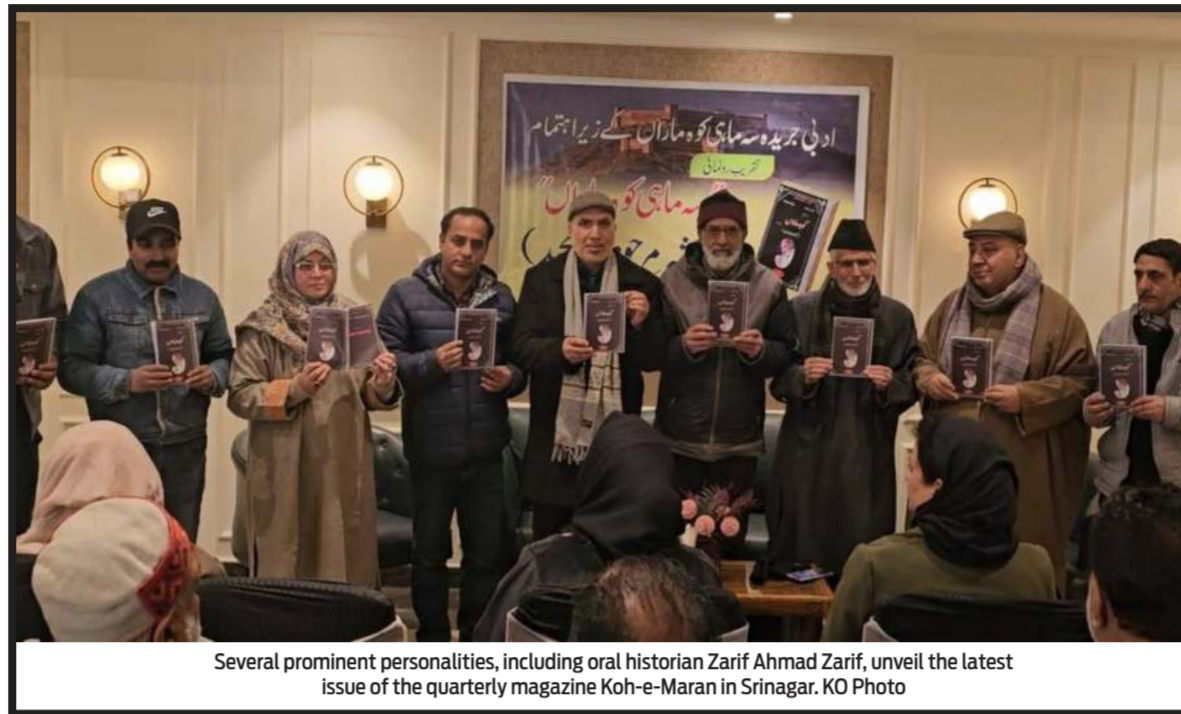
The dignitaries paid tributes to the Late Umar Majid who worked as a teacher at the Tyndale Biscoe School and lauded his contributions in Urdu Language & Literature.

In this context, Sufi Bashir presented a commentary on the literary contributions of the late Umar Majid.

Before the launch of the new issue, Zubair Qureshi presented a commentary written by Dr. Nazir Kumar.

During the event, Dr. Shehzada Saleem presented a paper titled "A Sociological Study of Umar Majid's Short Stories."

Several prominent personalities were also honored in recognition of their literary contributions including Muhammad Yousuf Shaheen, Sufi Bashir Bashir, Sheikh Bashir, Niaz Ahmad Butt, Dr. Shehzada Saleem and Zubair Qureshi.



Several prominent personalities, including oral historian Zarif Ahmad Zarif, unveil the latest issue of the quarterly magazine Koh-e-Maran in Srinagar. KO Photo

## Admin Fails To Curb Footpath Encroachments In City

SMC Recovered Rs 2.5 Lakh Fine From Vendors Occupying Footpaths: PRO

Agencies

Srinagar: Newly constructed footpaths across Srinagar are being brazenly encroached upon by shopkeepers and erring vehicle owners, turning pedestrian walkways into personal parking spaces.

This growing menace is evident in areas such as Old City, Babademb, Batamalo, Hazratbal, Nowhatta and Khanyar, where pedestrians are increasingly forced to walk on busy roads, risking their lives.

The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has acknowledged the issue and assured strict action against encroachments.

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) Idrees Aqail Mir of SMC said, "We are conducting continuous drives against footpath encroachments."

Despite significant investments in urban infrastructure, including the construction of footpaths to ensure safer movement for pedestrians, many of these walkways are now occupied by vendors, shopkeepers, scrap dealers, and car dealers, particularly in Babademb.

The encroachment has not only disrupted pedestrian movement but also led to frequent traffic congestion, making everyday commuting a nightmare for residents.

Residents and commuters have voiced their frustration over the issue, calling for strict action against

the violators.

Abdul Ahad, a resident of Batamalo said, "We were happy when the government built proper footpaths, but now they are of no use. Shopkeepers and vendors have taken them over, leaving no space for pedestrians."

In Babademb, the situation is even worse, with scrap dealers and car dealers occupying large sections of footpaths, forcing pedestrians onto the road. Many elderly citizens and children find it particularly difficult to navigate through these encroached spaces, increasing the chances of accidents.

"Walking to college has become dangerous. We have to navigate through parked vehicles and roadside vendors. Authorities need to take strict action before an unfortunate accident occurs," said Zahid Ahmed Dar, a student.

In fact, in 2024 alone, we have recovered fines amounting to Rs. 2.5 lakh from those who have illegally occupied footpaths. Additionally, we have seized goods from violators."

However, despite these measures, encroachments continue to resurface, indicating that fines and temporary crackdowns might not be enough to deter habitual offenders. The SMC official further stated that operations against encroachers would be intensified in the coming days.

Beyond enforcement, the lack of civic sense among a section of the public remains a pressing concern. While authorities can remove il-

legal structures and fine violators, sustainable change can only be achieved when people understand the importance of keeping footpaths free for pedestrians.

Chief Encroachment Officer of SMC Syed Batyari while talking with Associated News Bureau stated, "We are on our toes round the clock to remove illegal encroachments from footpaths."

At times, we reach home late to ensure that pedestrian pathways remain unobstructed. However, enforcement alone is not enough—we need cooperation from all quarters. Most importantly, people must develop a sense of civic responsibility. If everyone respects public spaces and follows the rules, our city can be more pedestrian-friendly. Encroachments not only cause inconvenience but also pose serious safety hazards. We will continue our efforts and intensify operations to reclaim footpaths for their intended purpose."

"Rules alone won't change anything. People need to develop a sense of responsibility. Footpaths are for walking, not for business or parking," said Abdul Rashid, a local.

For now, the battle to reclaim Srinagar's footpaths continues, with pedestrians hoping for a permanent solution that allows them to walk safely without risking their lives on the city's busy roads. (ANB)

## ABVP Organizes Taranga Rally

Agencies

Srinagar: In a rare political display in the heart of Srinagar, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) organized a "Taranga Rally" on Thursday, which saw the participation of nearly 70 students. The rally commenced from the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC) and culminated at the historic Ghanta Ghar (Clock Tower) in Lal Chowk.

According to 'Associated News Bureau correspondent, the participants, mostly students, carried the national flag and chanted patriotic slogans as they marched through the city. Security was heightened along

the route, with police and paramilitary forces deployed to ensure smooth conduct of the event.

The rally was organized as part of ABVP's initiative to instill a sense of nationalism and patriotism among students. Holding banners and waving tricolors, the students aimed to send a message of unity and national integration.

An ABVP representative speaking at the rally with Associated News Bureau, stated, "Our purpose is to strengthen the bond of patriotism among the youth and reaffirm our commitment to the nation. The participation of students in such events is crucial for fostering a sense of responsibility and national pride."

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-AUCTION NOTICE		
The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Northern Railway, Firozpur for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Auction from eligible and registered bidders for the following works over Firozpur Division:		
Catalogue No.	Auction Start	Name of work
EAZR-SLR25-19	13.02.25 at 11:00 hrs.	Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 12474/F1, 18102/F1, 14806/F1, 14601/R1, 14601/F2, 14614/R1, 12032/F1, 12588/F1, 14614/F1, 14601/F1 & 22126/F1.
For other details and registration, please visit Railway website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>		
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 324/25		

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-Auction Notice		
The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Northern Railway, Firozpur for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Auction from eligible and registered bidders for the following works over Firozpur Division:		
Catalogue No.	Auction Start	Name of work
EAZR-CTG25-3	11.02.2025 at 11:00 Hours	Allotment of Catering stalls on contract at Khem Karan, Muktsar, Tam Taran, Sahnewal, Kartarpur, RCF Kapurthala Halt, Nawan Shahar Daoba, Nakodar, Verka, Jagraon, Firozpur City & Fazilka Railway Stations.
EAZR-CTG25-4	12.02.2025 at 11:00 Hours	Allotment of Catering stalls on contract at Hillar Shahabad, Anantnag, Bari Brahmna, Samba, Dinanagar, Nagrota Surian, Numpur Road, Guler, Nagrota, Palampur Himachal, Tanda Urmur, Bhogpur Sirwal and Kot Kapura Railway Stations.
EAZR-PRKG25-2	14.02.2025 at 12:30 Hours	Allotment of Parking lot on contract at Beas & Kapurthala Railway Station.
For other details and registration, please visit Railway website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>		
No. MC/38015/Pub/E-Auction/FZR/22 Date: 30.01.2025 332/2025		
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE		

Government of Jammu and Kashmir JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PHE MECHANICAL RURAL DIVISION, SRINAGAR, KASHMIR.			
Corrigendum-I			
For E-NIT No. PHE/MRD/TS/ 96 of 01/2025 DT: - 24-01-2025 issued vide this office No:-PHE/MRD/TS/5039-43 DT: - 24-01-2025 and published vide No: 2024_PHE_267835_1 is hereby extended. The new closing and opening dates are given below:			
S.NO.	Description	Date	Time
1.	Closing date	01-02-2025	11:00 AM
2.	Bid opening date	01-02-2025	12:00 PM
No: PHE/MRD/5103-07 DIPK-11413/24 Dated: 30-01-2025			
Sd/- Executive Engineer, PHE Mechanical Rural Division, Srinagar.			

## 4th Death Anniversary

Peer Ghulam Nabi Shah

Ex-Tourist Officer (TRC, Srinagar)

It has been four years since you left us, but our hearts remain deeply Wounded by your absence. Your absence has created a void in our hearts That can never be filled. Words fall short in expressing your immense importance in our lives. Though your absence brings pain, your memory lives on in our hearts forever.

May Allah grant you Jannat-ul-Firdous. Aameen.  
Deeply remembered by Family Members inf

رضوی خاندان (اسکندر پورہ حال باغبان پورہ) کو عظیم صدمہ

یہ خبر انتہائی رنج و غم کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ محترم سید شہیر احمد رضوی صاحب کے جوان سال فرزند، سید واجد علی رضوی (ساکند اسکندر پورہ حال باغبان پورہ لال بازار سرینگر) 26 ماہ جنوری 2025ء مطابق 25 ماہ رجب المرجب 1446ھ بروز اتوار دار فانی کو خیر باد کہہ کر ہمیں داغ مفارقت دے کر چلے گئے۔ انا للہ وانا الیہ راجعون اللہ تعالیٰ اس جوان سال مرحوم کو ساکن در اعلیٰ علیین فرمائے اور وابستگی کو صبر جمیل مرحمت فرمائے۔ آمین۔ اسی سلسلے میں مرحوم کی فاتحہ خوانی 31 ماہ جنوری 2025ء بروز جمعہ صبح 00:8 بجے قبرستان واقع در باغبان پورہ متصل یہ تکین سر حکیم محلہ باغبان پورہ، لال بازار سرینگر میں ادا کی جائے گی۔ بعد ازاں مجلس ترجمہ دن بھر امام بارگاہ حضرت ابوالفضل العباس (ع) باغبان پورہ لال بازار سرینگر میں جاری رہے گی۔ سوگواران: جملہ احباب کنبہ



- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092, 2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488, 2452222, 2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +919484100200

AIRPORTS  
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

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

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

PRAYERS

FAJR 6: 04  
ZUHR 12:44  
ASR 4: 22  
Magrib 6:03  
ISHA 7: 26

HIJRI CALENDAR  
1446

## This Day In History

- 314 - St Silvester I begins his reign as Catholic Pope
- 876 - Charles becomes king of Italy
- 1578 - Battle of Gemblooux (Gemblours); Spanish forces win decisive victor over coalition rebel forces
- 1627 - Spanish government goes bankrupt
- 1849 - Corn Laws abolished in Britain
- 1867 - Maronite nationalist leader Youssef Karam leaves Lebanon on board of a French ship for Algeria
- 1925 - Premier Ahmed Zogu becomes president of Angola
- 1927 - Internationall allied military command in Germany disbands
- 1929 - Leon Trotsky expelled from Russia to Turkey
- 1933 - Adolf Hitler promises parliamentary democracy
- 1943 - Chile breaks off relations with Germany & Japan
- 1944 - US forces invade Kwajalein Atoll
- 1945 - Soviet troops reach the Oder River, less than 50 miles from Berlin
- 1946 - Yugoslavia adopts new constitution, becomes a federal republic
- 1948 - Magnetic tape recorder developed by Wireway
- 1950 - US President Harry Truman publicly announces support for the development of a hydrogen bomb
- 1957 - Trans-Iranian oil pipe line finished
- 1958 - James van Allen discovers radiation belt
- 1958 - US launches their 1st artificial satellite, Explorer 1
- 1961 - USAF launches Samos spy satellite to replace U-2 flights
- 1966 - USSR launches Luna 9 towards Moon
- 1971 - Apollo 14 launched, 1st landing in lunar highlands
- 1972 - Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev becomes 11th King of Nepal
- 1972 - Military coup ousts civilian government of Ghana
- 1972 - US launches HEOS A-2 for interplanetary observations (396/244,998).
- 1982 - Gustafson skates world record 10 km (14:26.59)
- 1985 - South African President P. W. Botha offers to free Nelson Mandela if he denounces violence
- 1987 - United Steel workers union ratified a concessionary with USX Corp
- 1988 - Barge sinks near Anacortes, WA, spills 70,000 gallons of oil
- 1990 - 1st McDonalds in the Soviet Union opens in Moscow
- 1990 - 1st ever all-sports daily "National" begins publishing
- 1990 - Jushin "Thunder" Liger beats Naoki Sano to become New Japan IWGP champ
- 1991 - Denver Nuggets Michael Adams becomes shortest NBAer to get a triple-double
- 1991 - Robert Gibson flies record 27,040 feet altitude
- 1991 - "Close-Up", Iranian film directed by Abbas Kiarostami, starring Hossain Sabzian and Mohsen Makhmalbaf, is released
- 1995 - President Bill Clinton authorizes a \$20 billion loan to Mexico to stabilize its economy.
- 1996 - 50 people die and many more injured in a suicide bombing in Sri Lanka by separatist Tamil Tigers
- 1998 - Australian Open Women's Tennis: Switzerland's Martina Hingis retains her title; beats Conchita Martinez of Spain 6-3, 6-3 for 5th Grand Slam title
- 2000- Alaska Airlines flight 261 MD-83, experiencing horizontal stabilizer problems, crashes in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Point Mugu, California, killing all 88 persons aboard.
- 2000- Family GP Dr Harold Shipman is jailed for life for murdering 15 of his patients, making him Britain's most prolific convicted serial killer



## KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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

# What Ails J&K's Government Schools

Bilal Ahmad Khanday



“With this background, and after conducting proper and balanced research while considering grassroots realities, I believe the system requires a comprehensive and urgent overhaul from top to bottom if we genuinely want it to thrive and benefit the student community, most of whom come from less privileged backgrounds

As a former government teacher who has experienced the system firsthand—observing it closely and critically—I have come to realize that the entire system requires a comprehensive overhaul. Only through such an overhaul, from top to bottom, can we truly ensure its growth and improvement, benefiting the student community, most of whom come from less privileged backgrounds.

Yesterday, while reading one of the top dailies of the valley, I came across an expected but shocking news report revealing that "only 21% of 5th standard students of government schools in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir can read Class 2 textbooks properly, whereas more than 60% of 5th standard students in private schools in Jammu and Kashmir can read at the second-class level." There are many more points in the report that are worthy of consideration in order to effectively develop strategies, both at the administrative and academic levels, to improve the educational scenario not only in government schools but also in private institutions. The report needs to be properly analyzed systematically and pragmatically to identify the loopholes and shortcomings in the prevailing educational set-up and to come up with appropriate remedies and solid, practical, working solutions.

The report, on one hand, talks about the lackadaisical nature of the educational scenario in Jammu and Kashmir, while on the other hand, it clearly highlights the cold and ineffective approaches and 'administrative skills' of the officials who are heavily paid by the public through the government exchequer. Not only this, but they are often given various incentives and perks for their 'valuable services' to the education sector of Jammu and Kashmir. Unfortunately, the sorry state of affairs in the education sector, especially in government schools, goes on to show that the money

and resources being spent recklessly and without proper checks and measures are a clear waste and are draining the government treasury without yielding fruitful and expected results.

Having resigned as a government teacher, I have witnessed the system from within—both closely and critically. In addition, my experience in various private schools over the years allowed me to thoroughly analyze the system, understand its operations from top to bottom, and gain insight into its internal and external mechanisms. With this background, and after conducting proper and balanced research while considering grassroots realities, I believe the system requires a comprehensive and urgent overhaul from top to bottom if we genuinely want it to thrive and benefit the student community, most of whom come from less privileged backgrounds.

### Reasons for the abysmal state

There are many causes for this dismal state of affairs, which I categorize into two groups for simplicity: primary and secondary. However, the causes are so intertwined that it is very difficult to separate them, as they complement each other. The primary causes are mainly the traditional system of education, outdated curriculum, conventional teaching methods, unscientific approaches, lack of proper guidance and counseling for the teacher community, limited exposure of teachers to the outside scientific and technological world, the moral 'bankruptcy' of teachers, improper interest of teachers in the profession, and many more. The secondary causes relate to the administrative mechanisms and workings, which, although indirectly related to academics, play a crucial role in policy making and strategizing other related matters.

### Possible Remedies

The remedy lies in one simple and handy mantra which we are all probably aware of: "Mission with Vision." So, what is

this "Mission with Vision" mantra? Simply put, it means having a collective and collaborative mission with a holistic and pragmatic vision. I personally believe that we rarely see any collective mission in this educational scenario, despite the reality that many documents highlight the mission of every system in bold letters, and the education system is no exception. Everywhere we come across newsletters, brochures, posters, hoardings, and signboards of the education system that claim great things for its aims, objectives, wishes, and aspirations. Unfortunately, these are just mere lip service and lack practical applicability when considering the ground realities. The vision seems to be blurred and weak, as the results at the grassroots level paint a very dismal picture. If the "Mission with Vision" slogan had been implemented practically and with great care and pure intention, things would have been totally different, and the education system would have progressed by leaps and bounds, flourishing decades ago.

If I'm not wrong, we all know for sure that at our individual levels, we are not honestly performing the duties assigned to us. From a teacher to a Zonal Education Officer, to a Chief Education Officer, to the Director, to the Secretary of Education, in one way or another, we are not performing what we are paid to do and what we are supposed to discharge at our respective levels. If they all, consistently and honestly, with pure intention, introspection, dedication, and determination, perform their duties, we will definitely see the "sun of education and knowledge" rising with full beauty and bloom in the near future.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The author can be reached for feedback at khandaybilal12@gmail.com

## KO VIEW

### Anti-Militancy Ops Widen

Security forces in Jammu have intensified their counter-terror operations in Jammu region to ensure that the infiltrating militants no longer gain an upper hand. And if the last two months are anything to go by, the forces have certainly made a redeeming difference to a once tough situation. Over the past year, a series of well-coordinated crack-downs have disrupted militant activity, particularly in Poonch, Rajouri and Chenab Valley that had seen a worrying surge in violence. The blending of intelligence, technology, and community participation is certainly beginning to bear fruit, though the road ahead remains challenging.

In recent years, Rajouri and Poonch have been at the center of militant activity. But as security forces ramped up operations, insurgents have reportedly forayed into newer areas like Reasi, Doda, and Kishtwar. This has raised fresh security concerns, more so with militants increasingly setting up base in forests, where they are turning out to be difficult to track down for the security forces. This is also apparent from the militancy related violence in the union territory last summer, most of which has been concentrated in the hilly terrain stretching from Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu division up to the hilly areas in parts of Kashmir Valley. Last year, militants struck both at Z-Morh tunnel and Gulmarg causing loss of the lives of security personnel and civilians. The hill warfare has confronted security forces with new formidable challenges. The militants operating out of forests are difficult to locate and once located, difficult to engage with in an encounter. Most of the militancy related violence in recent years in which security personnel have been killed has taken place inside or close to forests.

What is turning the tables on the ground now is the growing synergy between the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, and paramilitary units. This has ensured that intelligence leads are acted upon in real-time. Besides, advances in surveillance technology have helped forces stay ahead of the curve, while crack-downs on financing have squeezed militants' ability to operate.

The results are already visible in Rajouri and Poonch, where terror incidents have notably declined. But there's no room for complacency. Militants have a history of adapting when under pressure, and with summer approaching—a period when infiltration attempts peak—security forces will have to remain a step ahead. They invariably have done so in the past, ensuring their survival. But security forces have also brought the situation back from the brink, often against heavy odds. If the current momentum holds, 2025 could see an even sharper drop in militant activity.



### Did You Know?

## Why Staying Committed During Bear Markets is Key to Wealth Creation

Irshad Mushtaq

In times of a bear market, where prices are declining and investments seem disheartening, it's easy to feel negative about equity shares and mutual funds. You might think that these investments are failing to generate returns compared to safer options like bank accounts or gold. However, it's crucial to remember that investing in the stock market and mutual funds isn't a short-term venture.

### Long-Term Perspective is Vital

While you may compare short periods—like one month or even six months—remember that true investment growth in equities occurs over years, not days. During bear markets, you might witness your investment values decrease, which can spark doubt about the returns of quality mutual funds and shares. However, this short-term slump is part of the market's nature.

### The Beauty of Equity Investment in Down Trends

Short-term declines can initially feel discouraging, especially if your cost of acquisition seems higher as prices fall. But these downturns can actually produce opportunities for significant wealth accumulation over time. This is where Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) in mutual funds shine. By investing consistently—regardless of market conditions—you can lower your average purchase cost. As prices drop, you buy more units at lower prices—10, 9, 8, or even 6. This strategy allows you to navigate volatility more effectively while building your investment portfolio.

### Understanding Market Dynamics

It's essential to understand that "Mr. Market" operates with its own rhythm of ups and downs. While this can seem chaotic, our job as investors is to remain focused on long-term progress and to avoid making decisions based solely on emotions or short-term market fluctuations.

### Seek Guidance and Make Informed Decisions

If you're not an expert in finance, it's wise to avoid making knee-jerk reactions when investing. Instead, look for quality financial advice and insights from trusted sources. Comparing options and understanding the market can significantly help in making informed decisions that align with your financial goals.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, while it may be tempting to panic during bear markets, understanding the long-term value of equity investments can lead to substantial wealth creation. Embrace the strategy of consistent investing, seek reliable advice, and focus on your long-term financial journey, rather than short-term volatility.

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



OBSERVER  
MAIL

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

### MAIL YOUR LETTERS

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

## No Jobs For Electrical Engineers In J&K

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the situation of electrical engineers has worsened, casting doubts on this once-promising career due to a severe lack of job opportunities. Despite high demand in various sectors, graduates have struggled to find jobs, especially since the Power Development Department (PDD) last hired in 2015. Since then, no new vacancies have been advertised, creating a sense of disarray among aspiring engineers who have spent years honing their skills. In 2019, a glimmer of hope appeared when the government announced 30 posts for Junior Engineers (JE) and 68 for Assistant Engineers (AE), but these were abruptly withdrawn, exacerbating the frustration of hundreds of graduates entering

the job market each year.

The various engineering institutions in J&K continue to produce qualified professionals, the absence of opportunities has pushed many to seek jobs outside the Union Territory or in unrelated fields. This crisis is further compounded by the continuous retirement of experienced engineers without adequate replacements, leaving the power sector vulnerable and worsening job prospects for newcomers. The Jammu and Kashmir Electrical Engineering Graduates Association (JKEEGA) has actively raised concerns, holding emergency meetings and petitioning government officials to expedite recruitment processes and fill vacant posts, yet their appeals have seen little response.

Statistically, the Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Department (JKPDD) alone faces a critical shortage, with 436 Junior Engineer (JE) and 161 Assistant Engineer (AE) electrical positions unfilled since 2016. The delay in finalising recruitment rules under SO 381 and the failure to forward these guidelines to the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) and Public Service Commission (JKPSC) have left more than 40,000 qualified electrical and electronics engineers stranded, their careers put on hold for almost a decade. This prolonged stagnation has led to financial hardships and a growing sense of hopelessness among young professionals, who now see their hard-earned degrees losing value.

We, the aspirants, earnestly re-

quest the higher-ups in PDD, the J&K government, JKSSB, and JKPSC to pay immediate attention to this pressing issue and provide necessary recruitment opportunities for engineers. The government and private sector must urgently address this issue by implementing recruitment rules, expediting hiring processes, and encouraging industrial investments to create new job opportunities. Without swift action, the operational efficiency of the power sector will continue to decline, and the aspirations of thousands of skilled engineers will remain unfulfilled, casting a long shadow over the future of electrical engineering in J&K.

Aausyf Ibn Farooq



# Digital Drugs

## Addiction Beyond Recovery?

Ikkz Ikbal

In an era where screens dominate our lives, social media has become a digital drug—highly addictive, dangerously immersive, and alarmingly destructive. Children and adults alike are trapped in an endless cycle of scrolling, liking, sharing, and seeking validation from a virtual world that offers little substance but demands complete submission. Is social media the new-age cocaine, rewiring our brains and enslaving us to dopamine-driven illusions?

We often talk about drug addiction as a crisis, yet we fail to recognize that social media functions in much the same way. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter operate on an exploitative business model designed to keep us hooked. The more time we spend online, the more profitable we become to tech giants. But at what cost?

### Children and Teens

Their developing brains are being hijacked by instant gratification. Likes, comments, and shares trigger dopamine surges, making social media as addictive as narcotics. Instead of playing outside, they are glued to screens, living in a fabricated reality where self-worth is measured by follower count. Anxiety, depression, and attention disorders are skyrocketing.

Moreover, cyberbullying and online toxicity are further poisoning young minds. The pressure to maintain a flawless digital persona forces teens into a relentless cycle of comparison, self-doubt, and insecurity. Many suffer silently, masking their struggles behind carefully curated posts while battling real-life loneliness and identity crises. Social media, meant to connect, is ironically isolating an entire generation.



### Adults

They may not be making TikTok dances, but they are equally addicted—doom-scrolling news feeds, arguing over political debates, or refreshing notifications like slot machine gamblers. Work productivity is plummeting, real-life relationships are deteriorating, and sleep cycles are wrecked.

Even more alarming is the shift in priorities—family dinners are interrupted by social media distractions, and moments that once held emotional significance are now seen through the lens of a potential Instagram story. Adults, who should be role models, are often just as guilty as teens, seeking digital validation instead of fostering genuine connections. The addiction is so deeply ingrained that many fail to recognize the damage until relationships are strained and mental well-being is compromised.

### The Science Behind the Addiction

Social media engineers have mastered the art of psychological manipulation. Features like infinite scrolling, push notifications, and autoplay videos ensure users never stop. The fear of missing out (FOMO) and the craving for digital validation are just as powerful as drug withdrawal symptoms. Many can't even sit through a meal without checking their phones—when did life become so empty without a screen?

### A Society on the Verge of Collapse?

The effects of social media addiction are not just personal—they are societal. Relationships suffer, attention spans shrink, and reality becomes distorted. Children idolize influencers who promote unrealistic beauty standards, while adults engage in endless online conflicts that lead to real-world hostility. Truth is becoming harder to distinguish from fake news, and deep human connections are being replaced with superficial interactions.

### Is There an Escape?

The first step in breaking free is acknowledging the problem. Social media detoxes, screen time limits, and real-life social interactions must become priorities. Parents need to regulate their children's online exposure, while adults must set boundaries for themselves. The digital world should serve us—not the other way around.

### Are We Doomed?

If social media is our digital cocaine, are we beyond recovery? Or can we take control before it's too late? The choice is ours, but one thing is clear—if we continue down this path, we might just become a society of zombies, endlessly chasing the next notification while real life slips away.

### The Illusion of Connection

In a world more connected than ever, we have never been lonelier. We scroll through highlight reels, mistaking them for reality, and measure our worth through digital affirmations. The addiction to social media is not just about screen time—it's about a slow erosion of presence, purpose, and personal connections.

If we are to reclaim our minds, we must break free from this digital illusion. Real conversations, real experiences, and real relationships must take precedence over fleeting online gratification. The choice isn't easy, but it is necessary. The question remains—will we unplug before it's too late, or will we continue chasing the next notification, oblivious to the world slipping through our fingers?

*The author has a PG in Biotechnology and is Administrator Maryam Memorial Institute Pandithpora Qazibad. He tweets @IkkzIkbal*



If social media is our digital cocaine, are we beyond recovery? Or can we take control before it's too late? The choice is ours, but one thing is clear—if we continue down this path, we might just become a society of zombies, endlessly chasing the next notification while real life slips away

# The History Behind the Heavenly Journey

KO Web Desk

The date of the Mi'raj of the Prophet of Islam (S) has been recorded by two major Muslim historians, Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham, as being in the 10th year of Bi'sath (appointment to Prophethood). The great Muslim historian, Baihaqi has recorded this event as occurring in the 12th year of Bi'sath. Others have mentioned it as occurring in the beginning of the Bi'sath, and some mentioned it as being between these two dates.

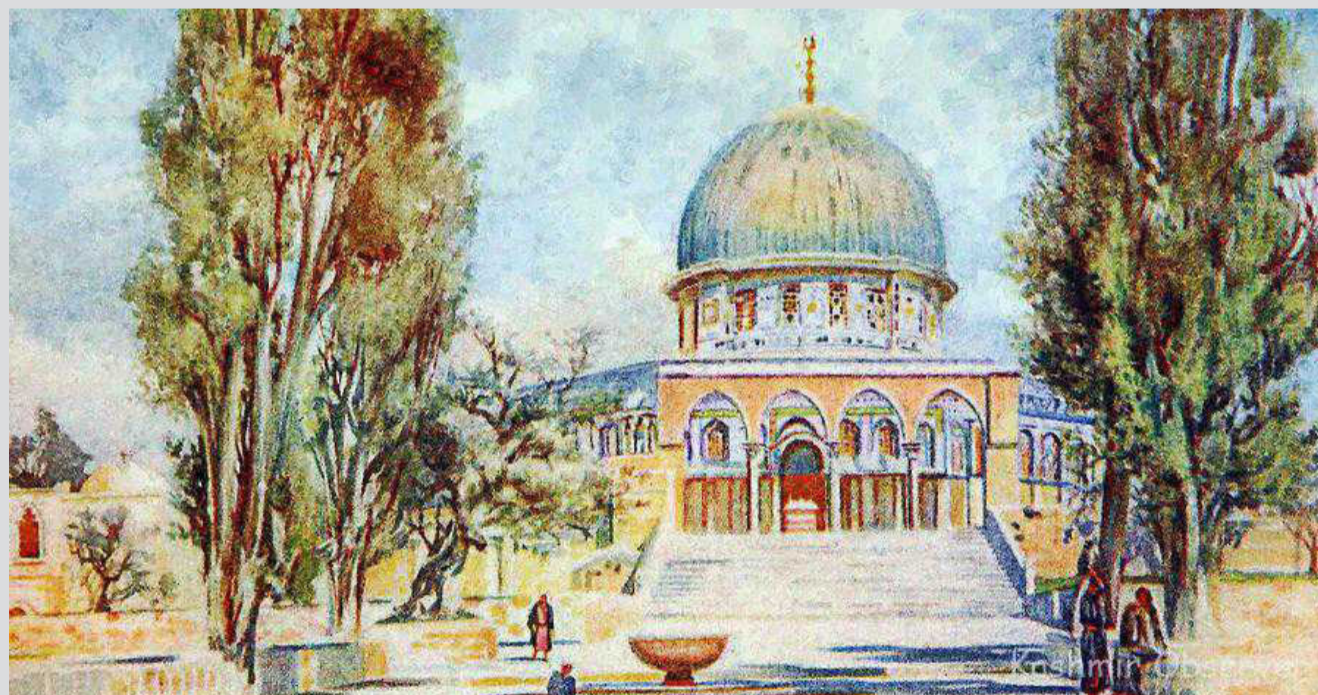
Sometimes, to rationalize between these different views, it is has been said that the Prophet of Islam (S) went on the Mi'raj more than once. However, it should be mentioned that that Mi'raj in which the daily Salat was made incumbent, without doubt, occurred before the death of Abu Talib, who passed away in the 10th year of Bi'sath. Unmistakably, from the ahadith and books of history, it is mentioned that on the night of Mi'raj, Allah (SWT) gave the order of the five daily Salat as being mandatory upon the Islamic Nation.

### The Physical Ascension

It has been an ongoing discussion and debate for hundreds of years concerning the method of travel of the Holy Prophet (S) during the Mi'raj. Many things have been said regarding this journey and its being physical or only spiritual even though from the Qur'an and the ahadith there is no doubt that it was a physical ascension.

However, one problem from the point of view of science prevented some people in believing the reality and thus, the Mi'raj of the Prophet of Islam (S) was recorded as being simply spiritual. Another group went a step further and believed that this complete event was simply a dream and that the Prophet (S) experienced the Mi'raj during his sleep!

However, the response of the Quraish, after hearing about the Mi'raj of the Prophet (S) clearly



shows that the journey through the different worlds was not something that was seen in a dream because then it would have had no meaning and if the Quraish could have just called the dream of the Prophet (S) a lie and they would not have created all the commotion (that they did).

Others have said that the Mi'raj of the Prophet (S) was nothing more than spiritual in meaning and it was because his deep contemplation and thought for the creations of Allah (SWT), the witnessing of the greatness and beauty of His creations, and his being entirely submerged in the thought and remembrance of the Truth, and thus, the physical restrictions and spiritual closeness (that the Prophet (S) encountered) are beyond explanation.

However, this type of spiritual ascension and closeness is something that anyone with a clear conscience and pure heart can attain. Nevertheless, the Qur'an relates that this distinct ascension of the Prophet (S) is one of the peculiarities of the Noble Prophet (S) and this trip which he was taken through was something extraordinary,

since many a nights did the Prophet of Islam (S) experience a state of spiritual ascension and closeness (to his Creator), whereas this physical Ascension was one that took place on a particular night.

It must be mentioned that the Greek hypothesis which was put forth by Bartholomew, who for close to two thousand years was well recognized in the scientific circles of the east and west, also fell into error. He was of the belief that all physical entities that exist in this world are of two divisions: elemental and celestial. By elemental he meant the four known elements which are: water, earth, wind and fire. The first sphere that comes to our attention is the sphere of the earth, which is the center of the universe. After that, it is the sphere of water, followed by that of the wind, and the fourth, is that of the fire. Each of these four spheres are related to the other. It is from here that the spheres come to an end and the celestial bodies start.

The meaning of the celestial bodies are the nine celestial planes, which just like the various skins of an onion, are

**HOWEVER, THIS TYPE OF SPIRITUAL ASCENSION AND CLOSENESS is something that anyone with a clear conscience and pure heart can attain**

related to one another but do not have the ability of tearing nor becoming united (as one). There is not a single creature which by its own leave is able to traverse within these boundaries, since this would call for the separation of the levels of the celestial bodies.

against the scientific and natural laws of today natural laws such as: the law of gravity of the earth; its speed of travel of 25,000 miles per hour; the weightlessness of an object that is outside of the airspace of earth; the fact that it is not possible to breathe the air that is outside our atmosphere; the various cosmic rays; meteorites and air pressure; and the speed of light that goes at the speed of approximately 300,000 kilometers a second; and other such examples.

Fortunately however, it must be known that through scientific research and investigation, the space scientists of the East and the West, by launching the very first rocket in the year 1957, named Sputnik, were able to demonstrate to mankind with ease, that they could overcome such problems as the gravitational pull, cosmic rays, problems with breathing in space, and others, through various technologically designed and built equipment and instruments.

Even today, the space science research is ever increasing and the scientists and researchers are confident that in a matter of time, they will be able to place life on one of the planets in our solarsystem; just as today, they have opened up the exploration to the moon and the planet Mars.

These scientific progresses and advancements in technology and industry are a clear proof that such a celestial travel (that of the Prophet of Islam (S) on the night of Mi'raj) is possible and can not be classified as something that was impossible.

That which is certain and in which there can be no doubt is the fact that everything mankind can do today through various human created ways and means, the Prophets were able to perform by the grace of Allah (SWT) and without the apparent and external means.

Therefore, we see that the Prophet of Islam (S) by the will of Allah (SWT) was taken on the Mi'raj, and all that exists in it belongs to Him and He is

the designer and fashioner of this amazing and perfectly arranged system. It is He who has given the earth its' gravitational pull, has given the sun its cosmic rays, and it is He who has given the air its various levels; and anytime He wants to, He is able to take all of these back and put a halt to them all. Also, it must be known that in reference to miracles, natural events and the power of mankind, all of these are independent issues and never can the infinite power of Allah (SWT) be compared to the limited power and ability of mankind.

Bringing alive those who are dead, converting a staff into a snake, splitting the moon, keeping alive the Prophet Yunus in the belly of a whale in the depths of the ocean, and many other miracles such as these which have been mentioned in other heavenly books, confirm the fact that no uncertainty can be placed on the Mi'raj of the Prophet (S).

Thus, all of the natural occurrences and all the external obstacles were demolished and conquered by the intention of the Maintainer of the Universe. His will and intention are not only limited to issues that are impossible rather, any time that He wishes to perform any action, He is able to whether mankind has the ability to perform it or not.

Further, that person, who in recognizing Allah (SWT) has reached to that level of true cognizance of his Creator and the attributes and characteristics which are exclusive to Him, and who recognizes Allah (SWT) as the One who is Eternal, Everlasting and the All Powerful Creator whose power and intention is above all things, will much more quickly accept (these facts and occurrences). Other people (who have not reached to that level of cognizance of their Creator), through a little bit of study and research and with a deep and precise understanding along with the correct outlook on the world too will accept and acknowledge the truth.



## Nobody Above Law In Country: SC In Matrimonial Case

Agencies

New Delhi: Nobody is above the law in this country, the Supreme Court on Thursday observed in a dispute between a man and his estranged wife, an IPS officer. Justices B R Gavai, Augustine George Masih and K Vinod Chandran made the remark after the man's counsel raised an apprehension that he would be made to suffer all his life for the estranged wife was an IPS officer.

The bench said the parties should settle their disputes in the interest of justice.

"She is an IPS officer. You are a businessman. Rather than wasting your time in the court, you should settle it. We are here to protect you if there is any victimisation," the bench told the counsel.

"Nobody is above the law in this country," it added.

The counsel said his client and his father were jailed in connection with the cases lodged by the woman.

The counsel alleged the estranged wife gave a wrong declaration that no FIR was registered against her but she faced two FIRs on the day she filled a form at the time of joining the police service.

"You are more interested in ensuring that she loses her job," the bench said.

The bench said it was for the home ministry to take action if she had made any wrong declaration in her form.

"You are not interested in saving your life. You are interested in ensuring that her career goes. Ultimately, in the process of ruining her life, you will also ruin your life," said the court.

The bench observed it was "very clear" the man wasn't interested in settlement and said, "You are not interested in living your life happily. But you are only interested to ruin somebody else life. It is more than clear to us."

The bench noted it couldn't force a settlement on the parties if they were unwilling and suggested they settle the disputes.

## House Foreign Affairs Committee To Review US Policy Towards India

Press Trust Of India

Washington: The powerful House Committee on Foreign Affairs will review the US policy towards India and the continued expansion of bilateral co-operation, particularly in the defence sector.

India appears on the 11th list of priorities for the House Committee on Foreign Affairs for the current Congress.

The committee said it "will review US policy towards India and the continued expansion of bilateral cooperation rooted in shared democratic values while countering the influence of US adversaries in South and Central Asia."

"Particular attention will be paid to the US-India defence relationship, including security and technology cooperation, opportunities for expanded roles, missions, and capabilities, and counterterrorism efforts," it said. The committee will also focus on efforts to effectively enhance

US-India economic relations, including discussions surrounding bilateral efforts in the technology, telecommunications, and pharmaceutical industries.

"The committee will also focus on efforts to bolster India's participation in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue efforts and review the implications of India's rapidly growing energy demands," it said.

The top priority for the committee will be the dangers posed by China.

Adopting its authorisation and oversight plan for the 119th Congress, the committee said it will review the international agreements and treaties China has signed and its violations thereof.

This will encompass the human rights agreements China has violated through its genocide of the Uyghurs and persistent abuse of human rights, the violations of its obligations to Hong Kong under the Basic

Law, actions inconsistent with its World Trade Organisation and other trade and investment obligations, non-proliferation regimes, cyber agreements, and other bilateral and international agreements.

After China, the second on top of the priority is an examination of the State Department's participation in multilateral forums such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and closely monitor any discussion of trade agreements in the Indo-Pacific region.

It will also conduct regular review and oversight over the State Department and US Agency for International Development resourcing in the Indo-Pacific.

Among the top 10 issues for the committee are Taiwan, Europe, Russia and its war against Ukraine, the Middle East and North Africa, Israel, Iran, Africa and Afghanistan.

## Trump Orders Setting Up Of 30,000-person Detention Centre At Guantanamo Bay

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: US President Donald Trump has signed a presidential memorandum to set up a 30,000-person migrant facility at Guantanamo Bay to detain "high-priority criminal aliens."

The Guantanamo Bay facility, which has so far been used to hold terrorists, will now also house illegal immigrants with criminal records.

The signing took place on Wednesday, with Trump directing the Departments of Defence and Homeland Security to prepare the facility.

According to the memorandum, he ordered the expansion of the Migrant Operations Center at the Naval Station Guantanamo Bay to accommodate "high-priority criminal aliens" and address related enforcement needs.

"Most people don't even know about it. We have 30,000 beds in Guantanamo to detain the worst criminal illegal aliens threatening the American people," Trump said



at a White House event.

"Some of them are so bad, we don't even trust their home countries to hold them. Because we don't want them coming back, so we're going to send them to Guantanamo," he said.

"This will double our capacity immediately. It's a tough place to get out of. Today's signing brings us one step closer to eradicating the scourge of migrant crime in our communities once and for all," he added.

With this, Trump has ramped up efforts to remove illegal immigrants from the country, a major poll promise.

He said the memorandum was issued to halt the border invasion, dismantle criminal cartels, and restore national sovereignty.

### CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

#### LG Summons

from the LG.

The cabinet led by Omar Abdullah last week recommended the LG to summon the assembly in the first week of March, something which was objected to by Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone, citing the holy month of Ramadan.

According to the Legislative Assembly secretariat, each MLA cannot submit more than ten starred and ten unstarred questions by or before February 10, 2025. The MLAs also cannot submit more than three bills by or before February 10, 2025. They can submit a maximum of four resolutions by or before February 16, 2025.

#### Chillai Kalan Ends

Stayed five to seven degrees above normal in the second half of January.

While the higher reaches of north Kashmir received light snowfall on Wednesday, the skies in the rest of the valley turned cloudy on Thursday evening, raising hope of snow or rainfall during the night.

Chillai Kalan will be followed by a 20-day 'Chillai Khurd (small cold)' and a 10-day 'Chillai Bachha (baby cold)'.

The minimum temperature in the summer capital Srinagar was recorded at minus 1.5 degrees Celsius, a Met office spokesperson said.

The night temperature in Pahalgam in south Kashmir settled at minus 5.5 degrees Celsius while the ski-resort town of Gulmarg shivered at a low of minus 7.6 degrees.

The minimum temperature in the highway town of Qazigund in south Kashmir was recorded at minus 2.5 degrees Celsius.

In Kokernag, the night temperature settled at minus 2.5 degrees Celsius while north Kashmir's Kupwara town recorded a minimum temperature of minus 2.2 degrees.

#### Fading Winters

For the seasons ahead, "in case of the less snowfall, the water scarcity, inconvenience in irrigation works would become normal in the Valley," he said, adding that the absence of snowfall is also leading to the rise in the maximum temperatures as witnessed in the month of January this year like previous years as well.

"The temperatures are expected to rise whenever the dry spell persists. Therefore, the summer would likely be hot this year like the previous year when the mercury crossed the mark of 36.5 degree Celsius in July," he said.

Meanwhile, an Independent Weather Forecaster, Faizan Arif Keng informed KNO that the changing weather patterns have led to Kashmir receiving less snowfall.

He said the precipitation was being witnessed mainly in the shape of snowfall in the Valley almost a decade ago, but now the situation has changed. "The reasons behind the less snowfall is the change in the weather pattern due to the global warming and also the rise in the temperatures across the Valley," he said, adding that there was a time when the records were broken after a decade, but now, every year record-breaking temperatures are recorded, which is one among the reasons behind the less snowfall being witnessed in the Valley.

Pertinently, Jammu and Kashmir in 2024 witnessed unprecedented rainfall deficit making it the driest year of the region in the past 50-years. The statistics suggest the Union Territory received 870.9 mm rainfall in 2024 compared to the normal annual average of 1,232.3 mm, causing 29% deficit rainfall.

In January 2025, the Union Territory has recorded a deficit rainfall of 87 per cent in the first 29 days.

#### 'Rainfall Deficit

Environmental activists and experts have identified various causes of contamination, urging immediate action to restore these essential water sources.

Executive Engineer of the Jal Shakti Department, Samiullah Beigh, highlighted insufficient rainfall as a contributing factor to the current situation. He noted, "The lack of rain has hindered the natural flushing of springs, which has allowed bacteria to thrive."

Beigh expressed hope that upcoming rainfall will help cleanse the springs and make the water safe again.

Bilal Bhat, a prominent social and environmental activist, attributed the contamination primarily to the rampant dumping of waste into water bodies. "People are carelessly discarding waste, including harmful items like diapers, into springs and other water sources. This has led to severe pollution," he said.

He further highlighted the stagnation of water as a critical issue. "The natural flow of many springs has been disrupted due to encroachments and lack of maintenance. When water remains stagnant, it becomes a breeding ground for bacteria. These springs need regular cleaning and restoration to ensure safe water flow."

Bhat also criticized the neglect of natural resources by both authorities and the community. "Our natural water resources are shrinking due to human negligence. If we don't act now, the situation will worsen," he warned.

Bilal Wani, a resident from Ganderbal, questioned the Jal Shakti Department's past efforts. "The department's order is informative and appreciated, but I have a question: what steps did they take earlier to protect these springs? For years, people have been using spring water in rural areas. Authorities and the public are equally responsible for contaminating the springs," Wani said.

A resident from Dobipora emphasized the importance of these springs. "They provide water throughout the year, even during harsh winters. The government must address the root causes of contamination and ensure they are functional again," the resident said.

The Jal Shakti Department has advised residents to use tap water for drinking until further notice. "We conducted the sampling for public safety, even though these springs don't come under our direct jurisdiction," Beigh added.

As Ganderbal grapples with this environmental challenge, experts and locals agree that restoring the springs requires collective efforts from both authorities and the public. Ensuring the preservation of these vital resources is essential for the health and well-being of current and future generations.

#### Desecrator of

gunshot wounds. He later died in the hospital, and a preliminary murder investigation was launched.

Police confirmed that the dead man was Momika and a murder investigation got underway.

Prosecutor Rasmus Öman told Swedish news agency TT that several people had been arrested in the case, without elaborating.

The Stockholm District Court said a verdict scheduled Thursday in a trial in which Momika was a defendant was postponed because one of the defendants had died.

Göran Lundahl, a judge at the court, confirmed that the deceased was Momika.

Momika and a co-defendant were charged in the Stockholm court with incitement to racial hatred because of statements they made in connection with the Qur'an burnings.

The 38-year-old staged several blasphemous burnings and desecrations of Islam's holy book in Sweden in 2023. Videos of the Qur'an burnings got worldwide publicity and raised anger and criticism in Muslim nations, leading to riots and unrest in many places.

Iraq's Foreign Ministry called on Sweden in 2023 to extradite the Iraqi man so that he could be tried according to the country's laws.

The Ministry emphasized that Momika's heinous act, which is an insult to religious sanctities, had hurt the feelings of Muslims all over the world.

Sweden has repeatedly permitted Qur'an burnings in recent years citing laws granting freedom of expression.

#### Welfare Of Deprived

scenario, the need for peace and non-violence is deeply felt. I am confident in this situation Bapu's ideals will show the right path to humanity," he said.

Sinha called upon every section of the society to rededicate themselves to the ideals and values of Gandhi and come together for the cause of empowerment of poor, youth, women and farmers and make their valuable contribution to realise the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'.

"Pujya Bapu had once said that the mission of his life was to wipe tears from every eye.

It should be our life motto. Welfare of the deprived section should be the government's top-most priority and society's collective strength must bring the poorest of poor to the mainstream of development," he said.

He noted that 25 crore Indians have risen above the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category in the last decade, reflecting the government's commitment to inclusive development.

Citing a recent State Bank of India (SBI) report, he pointed out that rural poverty, which stood at 26% in 2012, has now been reduced to less than 5% in 2024.

The lieutenant governor commended the Gandhi Global Family J&K for its constant endeavours to promote Gandhian values and spreading the noble message of 'truth, non-violence and social harmony'.

Responding to the demand put forth by Padma Shri S P Varma, the president of Gandhi Global Family J&K, Sinha assured that the month-long Gandhi Jayanti celebrations will continue across Jammu and Kashmir as per the past practice.

He said humanity can achieve the right path and goal of peace, harmony and development in Jammu and Kashmir, the country and the world only by following Gandhi's ideals.

A two-minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to the father of the nation and the martyrs, who made supreme sacrifice in the struggle for India's freedom.

A pledge was also administered to uphold and promote Gandhi's vision, ideals and philosophies.

Turning to agriculture, LG Sinha praised the Holistic Agricultural Development Programme (HADP) for farmers in Jammu and Kashmir, which has led to a revolution in farming practices. "Farmers are adopting innovative methods, proving their capability to achieve new heights. Gandhiji always recognized the wisdom of Indian farmers, and today, their contributions are shaping a self-reliant India," he said.

LG Sinha also underlined the government's efforts to create employment opportunities for the youth, emphasizing the need for collective action.

"People want Swaraj, and I want Swaraj too. But first, we must take the initiative; only then will the government follow," LG Sinha quoted Gandhiji as having said.

#### Will Omar Abdullah's

including the Chief Minister. The Business Advisory Committee will decide on time allocations for key legislative activities, including: Debate on the motion of thanks to the Lieutenant Governor's address, discussions on budgets and grants of various ministries, debates on private members' resolutions and bills and other government business

The last budget for Jammu and Kashmir as a state was presented in January 2018 by then Finance Minister Dr. Haseeb Drabu, amounting to Rs 80,313 crore for FY 2018-19. However, following the dissolution of the assembly in June 2018, the State Administrative Council (SAC) adopted a budget of Rs 88,911 crore for FY 2019-20. From 2020-21 to 2024-25, budgets were presented and passed in Parliament in the absence of an elected assembly. The 2024-25 budget, passed by Parliament, stood at Rs 1,18,728 crore, a slight increase from the Rs 1,18,500 crore budget of 2023-24.

The Omar Abdullah-led government is expected to focus on fulfilling key electoral promises, including:

- 200 units of free electricity for eligible households
- Rs 5,000 per month for economically weaker women
- 12 free LPG cylinders per year
- Expanded ration distribution
- Job creation (3 lakh government jobs)
- Boosting agriculture and horticulture
- Promoting tourism and industrial growth

These guarantees are likely to be key priorities in the budget, and the NC led dispensation will ensure their inclusion in government expenditure plans.

According to sources, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has requested a 20,000 crore special package from the Union Government in a recent meeting with the Union Finance Minister and other central ministers. If approved, this package may be included under a

specific budget component.

Additionally, the Jammu and Kashmir Finance Department has instructed Administrative Secretaries to cut down on unnecessary expenses while preparing budget proposals. This move aims to curb wasteful government spending and promote fiscal discipline. (KNO)

#### Mystery Lingers

to determine the cause.

Locals expressed frustration over the slow pace of the investigation, saying the issue should have been treated as a health emergency and resolved on priority.

A government official said that most patients admitted at Government Medical College (GMC) Rajouri have recovered, though they remain under observation. He said that antidotes given to the affected patients have been effective, but authorities still lack conclusive evidence about the cause of the deaths and are awaiting Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) reports.

MLA Budhal Javed Iqbal Choudhary criticised the delayed investigation and expressed concern that no official FSL or test reports have been released even after nearly two months. The situation remains in the realm of 'guesswork', with no confirmed scientific findings, he said.

The MLA accused GMC Jammu of negligence, holding them responsible for the deaths of 12 children. He vowed to push for a full-fledged investigation. "There must be a swift inquiry process," he said, adding that authorities must prioritise finding the root cause of these deaths.

#### Bills On Waqf,

bills which are pending in both the Houses since the previous session.

The session commences on Friday with the address of the president to the joint sitting of the two Houses.

The Union Budget will be presented on February 1.

The first leg of the session will conclude on February 13 and the second leg will continue from March 10. The session will conclude on April 4.

#### PDA Chief Removed

reportedly submitted a detailed report to the government, highlighting these violations and urging for immediate action. Hashim's removal aligns with a troubling trend of Public Development Authority (PDA) chiefs facing transfers after taking a stand against illegal construction activities.

In 2023, the former CEO, Syed Sajad Qadri, was reassigned to Ladakh after he raised concerns about a hotel being built in Pahalgam that violated regulations. Conservationists argue that these removals reflect a systemic resistance to enforcing environmental laws.

The High Court had previously instructed the administration to stop illegal construction in Anantnag district while hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) aimed at protecting the natural beauty of Pahalgam. However, despite these directives, illegal structures continue to emerge, reportedly due to political patronage and corruption.

The timing of Hashim's removal has sparked speculation that his ouster was orchestrated by powerful hoteliers with connections to the ruling National Conference (NC). Waheed Parra, a senior leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the MLA from Pulwama, condemned the transfer, stating on X that it was a deliberate move to silence officials who oppose the status quo.

"Just a day after CEO Pahalgam identified 300 illegal constructions that were violating the green belt, he was abruptly removed from his position. This unchecked destruction is pushing Pahalgam's fragile ecosystem to the brink," Parra stated. "While locals are unable to rebuild their homes, large-scale illegal construction continues to thrive. Political interference and corruption are jeopardizing one of Kashmir's most valuable ecological treasures. The government must reverse this transfer and take action against those who are endangering Pahalgam's future."

Hashim's removal has attracted considerable attention from local residents and civil society groups. A large crowd gathered to bid him farewell, during which the outgoing PDA chief

urged them to protect Pahalgam's environment for future generations.

Reactions on social media were swift, highlighted by a widely circulated meme featuring National Conference leader and Pahalgam MLA Altaf Kalloo alongside the popular Telugu song "Pushpa Pushpa."

Abdul Qayoom Wani, the chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Society Forum (JKCSF), condemned the transfer, stating, "Transforming Pahalgam into a concrete jungle not only destroys its pristine beauty but also threatens tourism, which is the backbone of our region."

The controversy surrounding Hashim's transfer coincides with the government's push for large-scale infrastructure projects in the region. The BJP-led central government, along with the J&K administration, has announced several initiatives, including a railway line and a four-lane road to the Amarnath cave. These developments have raised concerns among environmentalists.

Moreover, the forest department has raised objections to plans for cutting down 700 to 800 trees to build a ropeway to Baisaran Valley, highlighting the ongoing debate over the need to balance development with ecological preservation.

After his removal, Hashim reached out to a news outlet, stating that he had requested a transfer to his home district for personal reasons. However, since this request was made several weeks after his appointment in Pahalgam, doubts arose over whether his transfer was routine or politically motivated.

The Abdullah government has not yet responded to the allegations, but conservationists and civil society groups continue to call for accountability and action against illegal construction in the ecologically sensitive Pahalgam region. Following Hashim's departure, there are lingering questions about the government's commitment to environmental preservation and adherence to the rule of law in Kashmir's tourism hotspots.

#### JKB Promises

constructive approach, calling for the bank to adhere to government-mandated revival and restructuring mechanisms. These measures, as outlined in the Government of India's 2015 Notification and the Reserve Bank of India's 2016 Guidelines on MSME Rehabilitation, are designed to provide businesses with a fair opportunity to recover, rather than prematurely classifying them as Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). The Supreme Court of India has also upheld the principle that MSME accounts should not be hastily declared NPAs without proper due process.

In light of FCIK's concerns, Chatterjee assured that J&K Bank would discontinue the use of SARFAESI notices and e-auction advertisements for public shaming, especially for MSMEs. He confirmed that the premature classification of MSME accounts as NPAs would cease, and all cases would be handled in full compliance with government and RBI guidelines. Additionally, the MD emphasized that the bank would prioritize open, constructive dialogue with struggling MSMEs, offering viable restructuring and repayment options to help businesses recover.

FCIK has welcomed this positive shift in the bank's approach, commending Chatterjee for his cooperative and non-confrontational stance on debt resolution. The Federation has stressed that J&K Bank should prioritize the revival of businesses over liquidation, giving MSMEs a fair chance to rebuild and avoid forced closures. This decision marks a crucial turning point in the bank's approach to MSME borrowers, fostering financial stability and reinforcing principles of rehabilitation and financial inclusion.

To further streamline the process of accessing credit and financial services for local businesses, FCIK presented a 25-page charter of demands outlining key measures to address the unique needs of the region's entrepreneurs.

Recognizing the significant challenges facing local businesses, FCIK proposed a three-pronged strategy for resolving the growing NPA crisis. The delegation urged J&K Bank to adopt a more inclusive and structured approach that would ensure the survival and growth of viable enterprises.

FCIK has expressed optimism that, under



## NAGROTA BYELECTION

## Uncertainty Looms Over NC Alliance As Congress Begins Preparations

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The Congress party has kick started its preparations for the upcoming by-election in the Nagrota assembly constituency, which fell vacant following the demise of BJP MLA Devendra Singh Rana.

While the election date is yet to be announced, the political maneuvering has already begun, with the Congress setting up its office in the constituency and weighing potential candidates.

Details available reveal that in the 2024 assembly elections, Congress had fielded local Sarpanch Balbir Singh, who lost the seat to BJP's Devendra Singh Rana.

Singh had secured only 5,979 votes, while National Conference (NC) candidate Jogendra Singh garnered 17,641 votes. The late BJP leader emerged victorious with a commanding 48,113 votes.

Former minister and ex-MLA Balwan Singh, who won the seat in 1983, has now emerged as a strong contender for the Congress ticket. Another key factor in the electoral battle is the late Devendra Singh Rana's daughter, who is being considered a front-runner for the BJP's ticket.

The bigger question looming over the by-election is whether NC and Congress will once again contest separately or field a joint candidate. In the 2024 assembly elections, both parties had a pre-poll alliance but fought a "friendly contest," leading to a split in votes. Collectively, they secured around 25,000 votes, indicating that a united front could pose a strong challenge to the BJP.

Sources said that the National Conference is yet to decide whether to contest the seat, given Devendra Singh Rana's long association with the party before switching to the BJP. Rana was once a close confidant of former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, making NC's decision on whether to contest or support Congress crucial in shaping the electoral dynamics.

Congress has intensified its groundwork, with senior party leaders actively engaging with workers in Nagrota. A public meeting is expected soon, featuring top leaders, as the party aims to consolidate its support base. Meanwhile, J&K Congress President Tariq Hameed Karra is in Jammu, strategizing with local leaders to strengthen the party's position in the constituency—(KNO)

## District Admin Anantnag Celebrates Jashn-E-Chillai-Kalan



## Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The District Administration Anantnag organized the Jashn-e-Chillai-Kalan cultural event at Wazirbagh Anantnag which aimed to promote public outreach and cultural engagement.

The event also saw overwhelming participation from cultural enthusiasts & youth. Prominent local artists including Anil Koul (popular comedy artist), Ayaan Sajad (Young Sufi Singer and Rashtriya Bal Puraskar awardee), Ishfaq Kawa and Noor Mohammad enthralled & mesmerized audience while Band Pathar was also part of the Jashn-e-Chillai-Kalan.

On the occasion, several departments including Agriculture, Employment, Horticulture, Tourism, Health, Handloom and Handicrafts, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, ITI etc set

up public information kiosks in which they exhibited schemes and initiatives of their respective departments.

The event also provides an interface between youth & numerous companies and corporations.

Moreover, a special short film showing the achievements and developmental focus of the district was also screened.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from district and sectoral officers, students, locals, cultural enthusiasts and distinguished dignitaries.

During the event, district level winners of various online competitions held by the Department of Information and Public Relations recently on Republic Day 2025 including the Patriotic Song Singing Competition, Draw you favourite Freedom Fighter Competition, and the Essay Competition were also felicitated.

## Unified Call For Dignity &amp; Healing

## GMC Srinagar Marks World Leprosy Day



## Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Postgraduate Department of Dermatology, Venereology & Leprosy, Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, in collaboration with the Indian Association of Dermatologists, Leprologists (IADVL) J&K branch organized a Continuing Medical Education (CME) program to mark World Leprosy Day.

The event, themed 'Unified Call for Dignity & Healing', aimed to raise awareness, update medical professionals on recent advancements in leprosy management, and reinforce the commitment to eliminating the disease.

The theme emphasizes the importance of a unified approach to address leprosy, promote dignity, and ensure healing of affected persons. The CME was attended by dermatologists, medical faculty, postgraduate students, and healthcare professionals.

During the event, renowned experts delivered insightful lectures on epidemiology, early diagnosis, leprosy reactions, treatment modalities, and stigma associated with leprosy.

Principal GMC Srinagar, Prof. Dr. Iffat Hassan while speaking in the CME, reaffirmed the GMC Srinagar's commitment to leprosy control initiatives and appreciated the efforts of the Dermatology Department in organizing the CME.

She urged everyone to reaffirm commitment to leprosy control and asked for working together to promote awareness, education, and community engagement. She emphasized to strive to provide compassionate and patient-centered care to those affected by leprosy.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Yasmeen Jabeen, Head of the Department of Dermatology & President IADVL J&K, emphasized the importance of continued education and awareness in eradicating leprosy.

Other prominent speakers included Dr. Shagufta Rather, secretary IADVL J&K, Prof. Seema Qayoom HOD SKIMS medical college, Prof. Sheikh Manzoor & Prof. Syed Mubashir, both former presidents of IADVL J&K, Dr. Anjum Afshan state leprosy officer, faculty from Dermatology & Microbiology GMC, Sgr.



ABVP organized a Tiranga Rally which commenced from the TRC and culminated at the historic Clock Tower at Lal Chowk..

KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

## Eurasian Otters Resurface In Gurez Valley

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Once believed to be extinct in the Himalayan region, the elusive Eurasian otter has made a rare appearance in Gurez Valley, Bandipora district, sparking excitement among wildlife enthusiasts.

Otters are carnivorous mammals belonging to the Mustelidae family which includes weasels, badgers, minks etc. They are one of the top predators found in river ecosystems across the country.

A recent video which went viral on social media from Gurez Valley captures three of these semi-aquatic mammals feasting on rainbow trout in the Kishanganga River.

The footage, recorded by Wajid Munawar Shangoo, a resident of Markoot, offers a rare glimpse into the species that had seemingly vanished from Kashmir's waterways.

Shangoo, recalled spotting an otter as a child in the early 2000s, but sightings have been exceptionally rare since. "This recent encounter has reignited interest in the region's fragile aquatic ecosystem and the potential return of a species long thought to be lost," he said.



After the sightings sparked excitement among wildlife enthusiasts, several experts said the authorities need to protect these otters as they are already on the verge of extinction.

An official said that the River Otter, also known as the Erosion Otter, was sighted for the first time in Gurez. "Although it was present in the area, no official sightings had been recorded before. The otter is an aquatic species that primarily lives in water," he said.

One of the experts said that in winter, Gurez Valley remains untouchable from outsiders or tourists which keeps it clean, but in summer because of the tourism boom, the Kishanganga becomes a hub of garbage.

He said authorities need

to take steps to control pollution in these border areas where biodiversity supports otters and other aquatic species. "These otters decline because of human activities and pressure on water bodies. No water bodies are without garbage, if we want to protect them we have to keep our water bodies clean," he said.

Another wildlife expert said that the recent sightings are good news for the wildlife department. "Earlier on April 3, 2023, the researchers claimed to spot an Eurasian Otter near Tragbal in Gurez near the Line of Control (LoC)," he said, adding that the sightings reveal that the otter population has increased in the last three years and calls for its protection—(KNO)

## J&amp;K Incomplete Without Statehood: Satish Sharma

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Minister for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma on Thursday said that Jammu and Kashmir is incomplete without statehood.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inaugural function of two-day All India Inter-University Winter Games by the Central University of Kashmir (CUK), the Minister said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given assurance that J&K's statehood will be restored. We will get it back. It may get delayed by a few months, but it will be restored. It was taken from us, and we are incomplete without it."

The Minister also reassured that every promise made in their election manifesto would be fulfilled. "It has been just 105 days. You will hear a happy announcement in a few days, then another in three months. There's a lot to happen—this is our time," he said.

Taking a pledge to put J&K in top three sports destina-



tions, Sharma said that there is a need for regular and year-round sporting events in the Union Territory. "Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is keen to empower J&K's youth to compete at the global level," he added.

The Minister said that the government wants to hold sports activities in J&K all throughout the year. "We won't deter. I am a soldier's son and remain dedicated to my words. We will bring Jammu and Kashmir among the top three regions in sports."

To engage the youth in constructive activities, Sharma

highlighted efforts to curb drug abuse and mobile addiction by bringing youngsters to playgrounds.

Additionally, he announced that 225 youth will soon be employed, with orders set to be issued shortly.

"For IT parks alone, at least 20,000 to 30,000 youth will be recruited soon, by God's grace," he said, adding that the government was committed to creating job avenues for the youth.

With Khelo India Winter Games approaching, Sharma assured that preparations were in full swing.

Pertinently, All India Inter-University Winter Games commenced today at Gulmarg, with participation from 27 universities across the country.

A total of 169 athletes, along with their coaches and support staff, will compete in the event, being hosted by the Central University of Kashmir—(KNO)

5 IAS Officers Transferred  
Nitish Rajora Is New Dir Info

## Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday ordered the transfer and posting of five senior IAS officers in the interest of administration.

As per an order, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer, Jatin Kishore (IAS, AGMUT:2020), Additional Secretary in the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat and holding additional charge as Director, Information J&K, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal.

Shishir Gupta (IAS, AGMUT:2020), Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, Shopian. Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar (JKAS), whom he replaces, will report to

the General Administration Department for further posting.

Nitish Rajora (IAS, AGMUT:2021), Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Jammu (North), has been transferred and posted as Director, Information J&K.

Rakesh Kumar (IAS, AGMUT:2021), Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Hiranagar, has been transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jammu.

Shubhankar Pratyush Pathak (IAS, AGMUT:2022), Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Akhnoor, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Uri, Baramulla. He replaces Javid Ahmad Rather (JKAS), who will report to the General Administration Department for further posting.

## Pulwama's 400 Year Old Mughal-Era Mosque In shambles

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** A 400-year-old Mughal era mosque in Shadimarg area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district is in shambles while the locals here have demanded its preservation.

Locals from Shadimarg area of Pulwama said that the Mosque is a heritage site of immense archaeological and cultural significance that needs to be preserved and renovated.

They said that this 400-year-old mosque, constructed during the Mughal era, stands as a symbol of the region's rich architectural and historical legacy.

Shahnawaz Shah, a local resident, said that designed in the Mughal architectural style, the mosque features robust walls, intricate craftsmanship, and a unique structural design that reflects the grandeur of the period.

He said that the mosque, nestled in the picturesque surroundings of Shadimarg, has the potential to be a significant tourist attraction.

Reyaz Ahmad, another local, said that site offers visitors a glimpse into Kashmir's vibrant past, cultural richness, and timeless beauty.

He said that despite its historical importance, this mosque is now in a deplorable state with parts of the structure deteriorating due to neglect and exposure to natural elements.

Its current condition not only threatens its existence but also deprives future generations of an invaluable piece of initiating a renovation and preservation project for this historical



mosque, locals said.

They said that renovating the site will not only safeguard its architectural and cultural essence but also serve as a potential boost to tourism in Pulwama.

The locals, too, are deeply attached to this monument and are willing to cooperate in every possible way to preserve it, they said and urged the Tourism department to take immediate steps to assess the site, allocate funds, and implement necessary restoration work.

Meanwhile, MLA Pulwama Waheed Ur Rehman Para has also sought attention of the Tourism and Culture department for preserving and renovating this mosque of Mughal era.

"400-year-old Mughal-era mosque in Shadimarg, Pulwama, is on the brink of ruin. This heritage site deserves urgent attention for preservation and restoration. Requesting JandK Tourism MudgalYasha to intervene and safeguard this rich cultural legacy for future generations. FYI DullooAtal jk culture dept." Para said in a post on 'X'—(KNO)

## Locals Decry 'Forced Tax' At SXR Airport

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The imposition of an entry fee at Srinagar International Airport has sparked outrage among locals, who describe it as an unfair burden on commuters and a "forced tax."

Passengers and vehicle operators said that every vehicle, whether private or commercial, is charged ₹40 at the entry gate, regardless of whether they park or simply drop off passengers. Locals have termed this practice unjust and exploitative.

"There is no separate lane for entry and parking. Once you cross the gate, you are forced to pay, even if you leave immediately," said Fayaz Ahmad, a resident who frequently visits the airport.

Additionally, locals argue that no visible signboards warn commuters about the charge, leading to confusion and frustration.

"What if someone leaves home without money or a phone, just to pick up a relative? Where will they go if they are stopped at the exit?" questioned Owais, a Srinagar resident.

Tourism operators have also criticized the policy, stating that it negatively impacts visitors and adds unnecessary costs. They have urged authorities to abolish the fee to prevent further inconvenience to travellers.

When contacted, Srinagar Airport Director Javed Anjum said that the charge applies only after 14 minutes of parking. He stated that if there are complaints of unjust charges, passengers should lodge a formal complaint so that appropriate action can be taken.

"We have taken note of this matter, and it will be investigated. If any violations are found, the guilty will be held accountable," he said—(KNO)

## CS Asks To Accelerate Pace Of Progress On Projects Under AMRUT 2.0

## Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo chaired 6th UT Level Steering Committee (UTLSC) Meeting of AMRUT 2.0 to take stock of its performance besides taking decisions over other matters related to its implementation here.

Besides the Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD the meeting was attended by ACS, Jal Shakti Department; Principal Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Forest; Commissioner, JMC/SMC; MD, AMRUT; Director ULB, Jammu/ Kashmir besides other concerned officers.

While addressing the meet-



ing, Dulloo directed for accelerating pace of progress on projects being executed under AMRUT 2.0. He said that any issue hampering the progress of AMRUT need to be ironed out forthwith for smooth implementation of the projects on ground. He emphasised the need to expedite the formula-

tion of the pending DPRs besides promptly initiating the tendering process for the approved projects.

He said that timely preparation and approval of DPRs will ensure smooth implementation of AMRUT projects, which will contribute towards the overall development and quality of life

in the region. He further said that the government's attention towards these projects reflects its strong commitment in improving the water supply services and addressing the pressing water related challenges.

The Chief Secretary urged the concerned to examine the needs of each town to be covered under the programme and prioritise the implementation accordingly.

Dulloo also asked the senior officials to closely monitor the quality of work and give clear instructions to their subordinates to take remedial measures wherever problems arise.

He made out that projects certified by the Technical Ap-

praisal Committee should only be taken up for approval so that there remains no scope for any glitches in implementation of works on ground.

During the meeting, details of the projects sanctioned and the progress made so far under Atal Mission for rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0 for J&K was highlighted.

It was revealed that, so far, 63 DPRs of the Water Supply Scheme (Jammu Region – 23, Kashmir Region – 40), have been approved by the UTLSC. Additionally, 03 more DPRs have been technically approved by the UTLTC for Udhampur, Basohli and JMC.



## No Captains' Photoshoot In Pakistan Before Champions Trophy: PCB Source

Press Trust of India

**KARACHI:** There will be no captains' photoshoot or conference in Pakistan before the ICC Champions Trophy, a source in the host cricket board told PTI on Thursday, ending the possibility of India skipper travelling to the country for any pre-tournament engagements.

The Pakistan Cricket Board source said the PCB was forced to cancel the pre-tournament captains' gathering because of "unavailability of teams due to tight travelling schedules."

"The thing is all teams have tight schedules before the tournament. England and India are playing a white-ball series



while Australia is playing a Test and ODI series in Sri Lanka," the source said.

He also said the PCB will organise an inauguration event

for the tournament on February 16 in Lahore instead of an official opening ceremony.

As per tradition, captains of all participating teams gather

for a pre-tournament photo-op before the start of an ICC event.

The 2025 edition of the Champions Trophy, which is set to be played from February 19 to March 9, will be held across three venues in Pakistan and one in Dubai.

India will, however, not travel to Pakistan for security reasons and will instead play all their matches in Dubai.

If they qualify for the final, the title clash will also be played in Dubai.

The inauguration ceremony would be held at the Huzoor Bagh in Lahore.

The source though confirmed that PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi had approved a scheduled

list of events prior to the first match of the mega event at the National Stadium in Karachi.

The PCB will officially open the renovated Gaddafi stadium on February 7 in which Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has been invited as the chief guest.

On Feb 11, the PCB will launch the renovated National Stadium in Karachi with a ceremony in which President Asif Ali Zardari has been invited as the chief guest.

"On 16th Feb we will have the inauguration ceremony," the source said.

He said England will reach Lahore on February 18 while Australia are reaching on February 19.

### Short TAKES

#### 4th T20: Samson's Weakness Against Raw Pace In Focus

Sanju Samson's technical weaknesses against express pace will be a concern for India when they take on a resurgent England in the fourth T20 International here on Friday.

Having fluffed their chances in the third T20I in Rajkot, the penultimate game of the five-match series gives the hosts another opportunity to seal the series going into the final game in Mumbai on February 2. Suryakumar Yadav's men won the first two games in Kolkata and Chennai.

Samson, the maverick keeper-batter from Kerala, has had scores of 26, 5 and 3, and it is not these numbers that are concerning. What is of concern is his palpable discomfort against anything bowled above 145 clicks.

During all three games, the Kerala batter couldn't even get his bat down as deliveries would thud into Phil Salt's gloves. Jofra Archer and Mark Wood have been bowling between 145 kph to 155 kph and that pace is creating problems for Samson.

#### 'King Kohli': Thousands Make A Beeline For Delhi's Ranji Game

The unmatched aura of Virat Kohli was on full display in and around the Arun Jaitley Stadium here during the Ranji Trophy fixture between Delhi and Railways as thousands of fans queued up to watch the superstar in an unprecedented rush that forced administrators to make additional last-minute arrangements.

The DCCA had projected a crowd of around 10,000 for Kohli's homecoming, which is unheard of for a Ranji Trophy game. But such was his magnetic pull that even those lofty calculations went for a toss.

The deafening roars of "Kohli, Kohli" could be heard from a distance as the former India captain took the field with the rest of the Delhi teammates who too were experiencing something special.

Their hopes of watching him bat did not come true immediately as Delhi opted to bowl after winning the toss. But Kohli's mere presence on the field was enough to keep the fans hooked to the proceedings.

#### Sri Lanka On The Ropes After Australia's Blitz Rewrites Records

Sri Lanka was staring down the barrel at 44-3 after Australia achieved its largest ever total in Asia — 654-6 declared — on day two of the first test on Thursday.

Fatigued after spending five and a half sessions fielding under the scorching sun, Sri Lanka's batting resistance was minimal. Australia resumed the day on 330-2 with opener Usman Khawaja and stand-in captain Steve Smith already on centuries.

Smith, who passed 10,000 test runs on day one, pushed on to a masterful 141 off 251 balls. His 266-run stand with Khawaja stands as the highest third-wicket partnership in tests between the teams.

They eclipsed the previous best stand of 200 between Adam Gilchrist and Damien Martyn in Kandy in 2004. Khawaja's eight-hour-plus knock of 232 off 352 balls was historic — the first Australian to score a double hundred in Sri Lanka. His is Australia's highest individual test score against Sri Lanka. At 38, he's second only to Don Bradman to score a double century for Australia.

## Real Kashmir Lose 3-1 To Churchill Brothers In I-League

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Real Kashmir FC fell 3-1 to Churchill Brothers FC on Thursday in an I-League 2024-25 game at Raia Panchayat Ground in Goa.

The Snow Leopards failed to assert any control from the get-go. Churchill Brothers, who were second on the I-League table before the matchup, wasted no time in showcasing why they are title contenders this season.

The Goan club took the lead in the seventh minute before adding another in the 21st. However, the Srinagar club fought back and pulled one back, thanks to penalty in the 27th minute, which was dispatched by Paulo Cezar.

Leading 2-1 at the break, Churchill Brothers looked at ease in the second half and pulled away from Real Kashmir by adding a third goal in the 79th minute.

The win lifted Churchill Brothers to the top of the I-League table (22 points, 11



games). Real Kashmir stayed fifth with 16 points from their 11 outings. The Snow Leopards will now return home to take on Shillong Lajong FC at TRC Ground on Sunday, February 2.

#### Real Kashmir U-17s Win 3-0

After their dismal 5-0 loss in the opening game of the AIFF U-17 Elite Youth League 2024-25, the Under-17 Real Kashmir team bounced back on Thursday, with a 3-0 win over MUM - Dsouza Football Academy at Decan Arena in Hyderabad,

Telangana.

All goals came in the first half of the game, with Muntazar Shafi opening the score in the 16th minute. Zahid Gulzar scored a brace in the contest, with the first coming in the 19th minute and the second in the 27th. Zahid was named player of the match for his performance.

Real Kashmir, who are being coached by Mudasir Bashir, had lost 5-0 to Juba Sangha FC in the opener on Tuesday.

They will next play Corbett FC on Saturday, February 1.

## CUK's All India Inter-University Winter Games Begin In Gulmarg

Observer News Service

**GULMARG:** Minister of Youth Services and Sports Satish Sharma declared the All India Inter-University Winter Games 2024-25 open here on Thursday.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by Central University Kashmir Vice-Chancellor Prof. A Ravinder Nath, Vice Chancellor University of Kashmir Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Awantipora, Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Joint Secretary of the Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi, Dr. Baljit Singh Sekhon, MLA Gulmarg Farooq Ahmad Shah, Dean Academic Affairs Prof Shahid Rasool, Deans of Schools, Heads of Departments and faculty members of the CUK.

Around 200 sports persons and officials from 27 Indian universities are participating in the two-day event comprising Skiing and Ice-stock competitions. The event is organised



by the Central University Kashmir in collaboration with the Association of Indian Universities.

Addressing the participants, Satish Sharma, who was the chief guest on the occasion, said, "It is an honor to be part of this prestigious event that celebrates the spirit of sportsmanship and the rich winter sports culture of India."

Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, Vice Chancellor, said "We are thrilled to host the All India Inter-University Winter Games 2024-25. This event not only highlights the athletic prowess of our students but also showcases the natural beauty and potential of Gulmarg as a winter sports destination."

Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir, Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Vice Chancellor, IUST, Awantipora, Dr. Baljit Singh Sekhon, Joint Secretary, Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi, MLA Gulmarg, also spoke on the occasion.

Earlier, Dean School of Education, Prof. Syed Zahoor Ahmad Geelani, in his welcome address, detailed about the functioning of the Physical Education Department and the activities conducted.

Asst Prof. Deptt of Law, Dr. Mubashir Ahmad conducted the inaugural programme and Head Department of Physical Education, Dr. Kokab Azeem proposed the vote of thanks.

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

# KASHMIR OBSERVER®

**YouTube**

VISIT

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

OR SCAN

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

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

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

---

OUR SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

THE OTHER SIDE
INKISHAF
VOX POP
UNRAVEL KASHMIR