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BOOK
APPOINTMENT

BUDGET SESSION 2025-26

LG's Prior Approval Required For Money Bills

Agencies

Srinagar: In a significant move, the Jammu & Kashmir Government has directed departments to submit money bills at least 21 days in advance for necessary approvals to the Lieutenant Governor's secretariat.

Ahead of the budget session, the Department of Justice, Law and Parliamentary Affairs has directed departments to submit money bills for necessary approvals 21 days in advance to Raj Bhavan for LG's recommendation.

"For proposals requiring the Lieutenant Governor's recommendation under Section 36 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, departments must submit them at least 21 days in advance for necessary approvals," reads the circular issued by the department.

Under the said provision of the Act, any bill or amendment

related to taxation, government financial obligations, or appropriation of funds from the consolidated fund can only be introduced in the Legislative Assembly with the prior recommendation of the Lieutenant Governor.

The department underlined that there is a need for timely submission and legal vetting of legislative proposals before their introduction in the House.

"To ensure thorough examination, departments must refer all Bills and other legislative matters to the Department of Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs well in advance," the department directed.

The Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs has also directed them to adhere to the procedure of introduction of bills as delineated under the Transaction of Business of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir Rules, 2019.

The Part-C of the Business Rules outlines the procedure for initiating | More on P6



Kashmir's Winter Pantry: A vendor displays *Hokh Syun* - a colorful assortment of dried vegetables, cereals and dried fish. From earthy browns to vibrant reds, these dried vegetables tell a story of tradition and flavor. KO Photo Faisal Khan

Ensure Priority, Protocol To MLAs: Govt To Officials

Observer News Service

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday issued a directive to its employees, directing them to ensure that all elected representatives are attended to on priority in public offices and that proper protocol as per established government norms and guidelines is maintained.

The directive also emphasized that MLAs should be invited to all official functions and meetings organized within their jurisdiction.

"The elected Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are expected to play a crucial role in the governance

process at the grassroots level. It is, therefore, imperative that all government departments, officers and officials extend due cooperation and accord priority to issues highlighted and flagged by these public representatives," stated a circular issued by General Administration Department (GAD) secretary M Raju on Friday.

He further directed that all officers and officials working in various government departments of the Union Territory must attend to the elected representatives on priority in public offices and adhere to proper protocol as per established government norms and guidelines.

"Communications, requests and grievances | More on P6

Govt To Finalize Guidelines On CDF

The Jammu & Kashmir government is in the process of framing guidelines for the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), sources disclosed. Sources said that the Finance Department is working to finalize the guidelines for the utilization of the | More on P6

MLAS SHOULD BE INVITED to all official functions and meetings organized within their jurisdiction.

MYSTERIOUS DISEASE IN RAJOURI

38 Patients Discharged After Complete Recovery



Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Thirty-eight patients, who were admitted to different hospitals after falling ill due to a mysterious illness at Badhaal village in J-K's Rajouri district, have been discharged after complete recovery, officials said.

Currently, 363 individuals from 60 families remain quarantined in various facilities across Rajouri, they informed a meeting of health professionals and police personnel chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dullo on Thursday.

The mysterious illness has claimed 17 lives from three

families in Badhaal between December 7 and January 19. Health Secretary Syed Abid Rashid Shah briefed the meeting, stating that every measure has been taken to isolate the affected families and provide them with food and water after testing.

"Out of the 55 symptomatic persons, 38 have been discharged after recovery, while 17 deaths have been registered so far," Shah said.

There are currently no new admissions in hospitals, and the existing patients have been examined by teams of doctors from PGIMER, Chandigarh, and AIIMS. | More on P6

Cabinet Clears New I-T Bill

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the new income tax bill, which will replace the six decades old I-T Act, sources said.

The new bill seeks to make direct tax law simple to understand and not to impose any new tax burden. It will not have provisions and explanations or long sentences.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the New Income Tax Bill, sources said.

Sources said the new income tax bill will now be introduced in the Parliament next week and would be sent to Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance.

The first leg of the ongoing budget session ends on February 13. The session will reconvene on March 10 and sit through April 4.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced in Budget 2025-26 that the new tax bill will be introduced in the ongoing session of Parliament.

Sitharaman had first announced a comprehensive review of the Income-tax Act, 1961 in July 2024 Budget.

The CBDT had set up an internal committee to oversee the review and make | More on P6

NEET-UG To Be Conducted On May 4

Observer News Service

New Delhi: The medical entrance exam NEET-UG will be conducted on May 4, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Friday.

The application process for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-UG began on Friday and will conclude on March 7. It is the largest entrance exam in the country in terms of the number of candidates appearing for the test.

In 2024, a record more than 24 lakh candidates took the exam. The NTA conducts the NEET every year for admission into medical colleges. A total of 1,08,000 seats are available for MBBS course. Approximately 56,000 of them are in government hospitals and about 52,000 in private colleges.

Admissions to undergraduate courses in Dentistry, Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha also utilise the results of the NEET for admission.

The NTA had last month announced that the crucial exam will continue to be conducted in pen and paper mode. The decision came after detailed deliberations between | More on P6

J&K BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

Nothing Said Here Will Be Ignored: CM

Continuing with the pre-budget consultations for the third consecutive day, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah engaged in extensive discussions with public representatives and key stakeholders to gain firsthand insights into the issues and developmental priorities of various sectors and districts. The meeting | More on P6

TO ENSURE THOROUGH EXAMINATION, DEPARTMENTS MUST REFER all Bills and other legislative matters to the Department of Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs well in advance."

J&K Has Only 2 Special Needs Child Care Homes

Agencies

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir has two Child Care Institutions (CCIs) catering to children with special needs under the Mission Vatsalya scheme. However, no such facility exists in Ladakh, the Union government informed Parliament on Friday.

The information was provided by the Minister of

State for Women and Child Development, Savitri Thakur, in response to a parliamentary query on shelter homes for mentally challenged destitute children across the country.

According to official data, Jammu and Kashmir has a total of 55 CCIs, out of which two have special units for children with special needs.

Ladakh has seven CCIs but lacks any | More on P6

'Custody Parole Not Vested Right'

HC Reserves Verdict On Er Rashid's Plea To Attend Parliament

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Friday reserved its order on a plea seeking custody parole to attend the ongoing Parliament session by jailed MP Abdul Rashid Sheikh alias Engineer Rashid, accused of funding separatists and terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Judgement reserved," said Justice Vikas Mahajan after hearing the counsel appearing for the Lok Sabha MP from Baramulla (North Kashmir) and the National



Investigation Agency (NIA).

Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra and advocate Akshai Malik, representing the NIA, argued against the granting of custody parole, and said Rashid did not | More on P6

CM Omar Expresses Concern

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday expressed concern about the health condition of Baramulla Lok Sabha member Sheikh Abdul Rashid alias Engineer, who is on an indefinite hunger strike. "Very concerned to hear about Engineer Rashid having to be shifted to hospital. | More on P6

MP's Health Worsens on 8th Day of Hunger Strike

The health of jailed Member of Parliament Engineer Rashid has worsened as his indefinite hunger strike at Tihar Jail entered its eighth day on Friday. Rashid has been shifted

to Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital in New Delhi for medical attention, the Awami Ittihad Party (AIP) said in a press statement. The health situation of Er Rashid is | More on P6

10 Hectares Of Forest Land Cleared For Water Projects

Agencies

Jammu: Pursuant to clearance of Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEFCC), the Jammu and Kashmir Government has approved diversion of more than 10 hectare of forest land for various Water Supply Schemes (WSS) in Doda and Udhampur districts.

The projects mostly pertained to water supply infrastructure projects related to Jal Jeevan Mission for augmentation of water supply schemes in the districts.

Additionally, clearance has been given for diversion of 1.23 hectare of forest land of Social Forestry Division Baramulla for Srinagar-Baramulla-Uri road.

After a high level meeting

of Union Forest Minister Bhopender Yadav and JK Forest Minister Javed Rana held last week, MoEFCC moved promptly and expedited Phase-III clearance of the projects on 1st February and accordingly JK Forest Department has approved diversion of requisitioned forest land subject to compensatory afforestation.

It is pertinent to mention that Javed Ahmed Rana, had recently met Union Forest Minister in New Delhi and urged him to expedite the clearance of pending cases under the Forest Conservation Act related to Jal Jeevan Mission, awaiting Phase-III clearance at the regional office, so that water infrastructure projects in forested areas can be | More on P6



'Books Only Can Provide True Knowledge'

Observer News Service

Jammu: Stating that the digital world has changed the perspective of human beings, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said that books only can provide "true knowledge."

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of the World Book Fair here, LG Sinha said, "The digital world has changed human perspectives. It can provide inspiration, but not true knowledge (gyan). Books only can provide true knowledge. Youth need to become avid | More on P6

Minors Seen Riding Two-Wheelers In City

Agencies

Srinagar: Srinagar residents have expressed concern over the growing number of underage riders on city roads, despite a police ban following the fatal Tengpora accident. The authorities had prohibited minors from driving two-wheelers after the tragedy, but reports indicate that young, unlicensed riders are once again flouting the rules.

Eyewitnesses have spotted minors recklessly riding Scooties, often carrying three pillion passengers, particularly in the Raj Bagh area. Concerned citizens have urged the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Traffic to take strict action against not only the offenders but also their parents, holding them accountable for allowing their children to violate traffic laws.

With road safety at stake, residents fear that continued negligence could lead to more accidents, calling for immediate enforcement of the ban to prevent further tragedies. [KNT]

ACS Reviews Educational Scenario Of Kashmir



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Education, Shantmanu, chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the educational scenario of Kashmir division.

While reviewing the steps being taken, the ACS directed the CEOs and ZEOs to ensure that in the coming session, the respective heads in all schools of the valley take extra steps to impart moral education to the children. He said that when we talk about quality education, we should give special attention to the mother tongue along with imparting moral education to the children.

Shantmanu emphasized that the current time is an era of Artificial Intelligence (AI), so we cannot imagine quality education unless we provide education to children by adopting innovative methods and in-

novative tools.

The ACS also emphasized that we cannot enhance the personal development of children unless we remove learning gaps through a friendly environment in schools, enhance children's communication skills and strengthen their confidence.

Shantmanu directed the officers and school heads to adopt these suggestions at the ground level to see a new change in the education scenario.

Earlier, Director School Education Kashmir, Dr. G.N. Itoo, while presenting the details of the current educational scenario in the valley, said that the department has prepared a roadmap for providing effective education to the children for the coming session.

The meeting was attended by Director School Education Kashmir, Chief Educational Officers of Kashmir Division and other concerned.



Houseboat Owners In Jhelum Demand Rehabilitation

Agencies

Srinagar: As the much-anticipated water transport system in Srinagar is under evaluation and is expected to be operational soon, the houseboat owners and their association have demanded the rehabilitation of houseboats on the Jhelum River and Tsoont Kol.

Houseboat owners said they have been demanding rehabilitation for a long time but are being ignored. Now, with the water transport system set to begin, they are calling for immediate rehabilitation.

The houseboat owners and their association said that it is a positive step that water transport will be introduced in Srinagar, and they welcome the move.

However, they also demand immediate rehabilitation, as the waves from water transport will damage their houseboats.

Gulzar Ahmad, a houseboat owner said they (houseboat owners) have been demanding rehabilitation for a long time but have been ignored. "We want immediate rehabilitation, and once the water transport system is introduced, our boats will be damaged, as the high tides will impact our houseboats, and they might even sink," he said.

"We have been calling upon the administration for many years, but we are continuously being ignored. We feel like a neglected community and nobody is paying attention to us," said Rafiq Ahmad, another houseboat owner.

He added that with the new government in place and discussions about water transport ongoing, they request the Chief Minister and other authorities to rehabilitate them.

Manzoor Ahmad Pakhtoon, Chairman of the Houseboat Owners Association (HBOA), said they demand the rehabilitation of houseboats from the Jhelum River and Tsoont Kol.

"We also met MLA Zadibal, Tanvir Sadiq and discussed the issue of rehabilitation, along with our long-pending concerns affecting the houseboat industry," he said.

Notably, it has been already reported that the water transport system in Srinagar will be launched soon. The project is currently under evaluation, and work is expected to commence shortly—(KNO)

Workshop On Fostering Leadership Excellence In Forestry Held

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The J&K Forest Department organized a one-day workshop at Forest Headquarter, Srinagar focused on fostering leadership excellence among Range Officers.

The aim of the workshop is to equip Range Officers with the necessary skills to effectively lead and manage their teams, promote collaboration among stakeholders, and address the challenges facing the forestry sector. About 25 Range Officers across the region participated in the workshop.

Irfan Rasool Wani, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), Kashmir who was Chief Guest on the occasion, highlighted the importance of leadership in shaping the future of forestry in the region.

The workshop featured a detailed presentation by expert speakers who shared their valuable knowledge and experience in various aspects of leadership within the forestry sector.

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 - PATTAN: 01954-293507
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HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PRAYERS

FAJR 5: 58
ZUHR 12:45
ASR 4: 27
Magrib 6:10
ISHA 7: 31

HIJRI CALENDAR
9 Shaban
1446

This Day In History

- 1622 - King James I disbands the English parliament
- 1672 - Isaac Newton reads 1st optics paper before Royal Society in London
- 1743 - Comet C/1743 C1 approaches within 0.0390 AU of Earth
- 1744 - French and Spanish fleet leave Toulon.
- 1807 - Battle of Eylau ends inconclusively between Napoleon's forces and Russian Empire - 1st battle Napoleon isn't victorious
- 1809 - Franz I of Austria declares war on France
- 1849 - New Roman Republic established in Italy
- 1867 The Ausgleich results in the establishment of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary.
- 1879 - Sandford Fleming first proposes adoption of Universal Standard Time at a meeting of the Royal Canadian Institute.
- 1883 - Louis Waterman begins experiment to invent the fountain pen
- 1905 - Cyclone hit Tahiti & adjacent islands, killing some 10,000 people
- 1912 - British Emissary journeys to Berlin to suggest that Britain might support German colonial aspirations in Africa if Germany agrees to hold her current naval strength
- 1920 - Bolshevik troops capture Odessa, bringing an end to foreign involvement in the resistance against Bolshevik rule
- 1926 - Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio becomes Walt Disney Studios
- 1927 - Belgian-Swiss treaty signed
- 1934 - Gaston Doumergue forms new French government
- 1936 Pandit Jawaharlal suceeds Mahatma Gandhi as chairman of India Congress Party.
- 1942 - Nazi architect Albert Speer appointed Minister of Armaments by Adolf Hitler after death of Fritz Todt in a plane crash

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Office Of The Executive Engineer (R&B) Electric Division Kashmir, Engineering Complex Srinagar Rajbagh. Near Silk Factory Srinagar- 190008.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
E-NIT No.196/R&B/Electric Division Kashmir of 2024-25 issued under Endorsement No: ERB/9648-56 DATED:06-02-2025.

Farndonbehalf of The Government of J&K/UT/Tenders (In Double cover system) are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K UT Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/UT/Central Government Departments for the following works:-

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (In Lacs)	Cost of Tender (In Rs.)	2% Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time of Completion (Calend or Days)	Class of Contract	Major Head of Account	Remarks
01	Upgradation of NIC Shopian by way of Procurement of UPS and Electrification B/W Supply and Installation.	Rs. 2.50/- Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Rs. 5005/-	100Days	"441" Class Electrical	District Capital Budget 2024-25	Accord of Administrative Approval Accorded by District Development Commissioner (Shopian vide order No.194 DDCS of 2024 Dated:-11-12-2024

1. Date of Issue of Tender Notice: 06-02-2025

2. Period of downloading of bidding documents: 06-02-2025 from 06.00PM

3. Bid submission Start Date: 06-02-2025 from 06.00 PM

4. Bid Submission End Date: 18-02-2025 upto 04.00 PM

5. Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online): 19-02-2025 at 02.00 PM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division Kashmir, Engineering Complex Srinagar Rajbagh.

6. Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online): To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed.

The bidding documents consisting of qualitative information, eligibility criteria, specifications, drawings, bill of quantities (BOQ), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

Note: The Bidders are advised to read all conditions laid down in the E-NIT carefully before uploading soft copy.

As per Circular issued by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir Civil Secretariat Finance department vide No. OM No. 224/2021 dated 07-06-2021 the same are as under:-

a) Furnishing of Hard Copies of bids immediately after submission of tenders is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from the Bidder who's declared 1st Lowest (L-1) after opening of financial bids.

1. The Cost of tender document should be collected by introducing Treasury Challan (Receipt).

1.1. The successful Bidder has to produce Performance Security Deposit @ 5% of contract value in the shape of CDR, FDR, B/L after issuance of Letter of Acceptance which shall be released after successful completion of work with DLP. The EMD @ 2% of successful bidder will be released only after the submission of 5% performance Security Deposit.

1.2. The bidder who so ever participate the e-tenders floated by this office will submit Additional Performance Security in shape of CDR, FDR, B/L in case the bidder has Submitted the below Percentage Bid against the Advertised Cost for the work as per below mentioned percentage Breakup in order to avoid unbalancing of e-tender and shall be released after 70% completion of work:

S.No.	% age of Unbalanced bid Viz-a-viz advertised cost on account of Low Rate.	Additional Performance security to be Deposited on quoted bid by L1
1.	Upto and including 15%	NIL
2.	Greater than 15% upto& including 20%	5%
3.	Greater than 20% upto& including 25%	10%
4.	Greater than 25% upto& including 30%	15%
5.	Greater than 30% below	20%

The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of the Executive Engineer, R&B Electric Division Kashmir, Srinagar. (Tender receiving authority)

2. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 28 days from the date of opening of bids.

3. The Employer reserves the right to invite fresh tender without any Prior Notice to the Bidders.

No.ERB/9648-56
DIPK-11675/24 DATED:-07-02-2025

SD/= Executive Engineer, (R&B) Electric Division Kashmir Engineering Complex Srinagar Rajbagh

NOTICE

Nazir Ahmad Mir, father of Zaid Nazir, is formally correcting his wife's name on his son's Date of Birth certificate from "Rafeeqa" to "Rafeeqa Akhter" to align with her Aadhar details. Any objections to this correction must be submitted to the Registrar of Births and Deaths (BDO Surasaryar) within seven days of this notice. No objections will be entertained after this period.

NOTICE

I Nisar Ahmad Dhat want to change my daughters name in her aadhar card bearing no 3837 8414 3677 from Zirwa (old name) to Humna binti Nisar (new name). If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

مرحوم ظہور احمد ترمبوکی پانچویں برسی پر خراج عقیدت

آپ گنگے تو پر خوشی چلی گئی، ان چراغوں کی روشنی چلی گئی۔ کیا کہوں، کیا گزری اس زندگی پر، ہم زندہ ہیں مگر زندگی چلی گئی۔ آج ہی کے دن، یعنی 8 فروری 2020 کو، آپ ہم سے ہمیشہ کے لیے جدا ہو گئے۔ لیکن آپ کی یادیں آج بھی ہمارے دلوں میں زندہ ہیں۔ آپ کی محبت، آپ کی شفقت، سب کچھ آج بھی ہماری زندگی کا حصہ ہے۔ ہمیں یقین ہے کہ آپ جنت الفردوس میں اعلیٰ مقام پا چکے ہوں گے۔ اللہ تعالیٰ آپ کو ہمیشہ اپنے جوار رحمت میں رکھے اور زمیں آخرت میں آپ سے ملنے کی سعادت نصیب کرے۔

بڑے عزیز، محبوب سیدہ، بیوی، بیٹا، بیٹی، داماد اور بہنو

9906883396
رائل وائٹ واٹر ٹی راجھون
اگر آپ مزید کوئی ترمیم یا بہتری چاہتے ہیں تو بلا تھجک بتائیں۔

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How Social Media is Draining Kashmir's Spirit

Shahid Ul Islam

Each one of us plays a role in determining what kind of content dominates our digital spaces. By being mindful of what we share, we can collectively break this cycle of sorrow and inject some light into our online world. This is not to say that we should ignore real-life issues. Rather, we should balance awareness with optimism. While it is important to acknowledge struggles, it is equally crucial to remind ourselves and others that life, despite its hardships, still holds beauty and hope

We live in an era dominated by technology and social media. Information is available at our fingertips, and yet, instead of using these platforms for positivity and enlightenment, they have become sources of endless distress. Every time we open a social media app, we are met with heartbreaking news of death, disease, and despair. The digital space, which could have been a beacon of hope and knowledge, has turned into a relentless stream of sorrow, draining the mental and emotional strength of people.

In Kashmir, this phenomenon is even more pronounced. Every second, we come across posts about someone's passing, another person battling cancer, or someone suffering from kidney failure. These tragedies are real, but their constant exposure through social media has left people feeling hopeless and mentally exhausted. Even those who are physically fit and fine are now feeling the weight of collective grief.

While awareness about illnesses, deaths, and social struggles is necessary, the sheer volume of such content flooding our digital spaces is taking a toll on our mental health. Studies have shown that continuous exposure to distressing content increases anxiety, depression, and a sense of helplessness. For a place like Kashmir, already struggling with numerous socio-political and economic challenges, the addition of this emotional burden is overwhelming.

Social media is a powerful tool, capable of shaping narratives and influencing emotions. While some media professionals and individuals genuinely aim to spread awareness, many others share distressing content solely for engagement likes, shares, and comments without realising the deep psychological impact it has on the people of Kashmir. Tragedy should never be used as a means to gain social media traction. Unfortunately, the race for viral content has led to an increase in posts that capitalize on human suffering. People are now consuming grief like entertainment, scrolling through endless sorrow without realizing its effect on their emotional well-being.

Kashmir has already witnessed decades of conflict, uncertainty, and trauma. The addition of digital grief has further intensified the emotional strain on its people. With every tragic post, a sense of powerlessness deepens. The people of Kashmir are not just battling real life struggles but are also fighting an unseen war of digital despair. Psychologists warn that exposure to excessive negative content can lead to increased anxiety and depression.



Photo for representational purposes only

Constantly reading about death and disease creates a sense of fear and helplessness. It leads to a desensitization towards Tragedy. Over time, people may become numb to suffering, losing empathy for real life issues. The continuous flood of bad news also leaves people drained, reducing their ability to function effectively in daily life.

It is high time we reconsider our digital habits. Instead of flooding social media with despair, let us make a conscious effort to share hope, encouragement, and stories of resilience. There are still moments of kindness, acts of bravery, and instances of love that deserve recognition. Let's highlight those. Imagine a social media feed filled with stories of courage, tales of individuals who have overcome hardships and inspired others; instances of acts of kindness, stories of people helping each other in times of need; or the news of people celebrating the successes of Kashmiris in various fields, from education to entrepreneurship. Additionally, a digital space filled with encouraging conversations around well-being, self-care, and seeking professional help when needed.

Social media is shaped by its users. Each one of us plays a role in determining what kind of content dominates our digital spaces. By being mind-

ful of what we share, we can collectively break this cycle of sorrow and inject some light into our online world. This is not to say that we should ignore real-life issues. Rather, we should balance awareness with optimism. While it is important to acknowledge struggles, it is equally crucial to remind ourselves and others that life, despite its hardships, still holds beauty and hope.

The people of Kashmir deserve a sense of hope, a reason to smile, and the reassurance that better days lie ahead. It is our responsibility to create a digital environment that uplifts rather than drains, that empowers rather than disheartens. I urge every individual to be mindful of what they share. Let us become the voices of optimism, guiding each other toward a future filled with strength, resilience, and positivity. The change begins with us. Let's choose hope.

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

The author is a student and tweets at @Shahidulislam_0

Can the capital expenditure envisaged in the Budget elicit more formal sector job creation? The claims made by the finance ministry's Economic Survey 2025-26 about labour force participation rate (LFPR) and worker population ratio (WPR) rising, and the unemployment rate (UR) falling are just that — claims. The facts are as follows. In 2017-18, India reached the highest UR in the history of labour surveys in the country.

The economy slowed over nine quarters from 2017 to early 2020, and then the Covid-19 pandemic sent unemployment shooting up, as the economy contracted (by twice as much as the global economy in FY2021). Hence, 80 million workers went back to agriculture, reversing the exit from agriculture between 2004 and 2019.

Thus, LFPR has risen, as has WPR, and UR fell, but only because women also joined agriculture as unpaid family labour with 40 million additional workers. That is what the capital, labour, energy, materials, and services (KLEMS) researchers, and the Prime Minister have called eight crore new jobs in four years (2020-24).

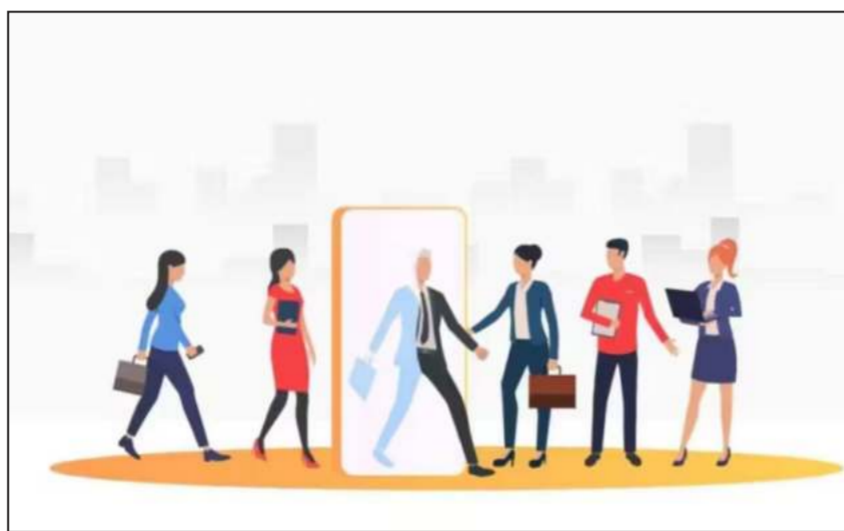
The Economic Survey admits real wages have not risen for 80% of workers in the last five years, but still has claims that jobs have grown — a rather contradictory conclusion. Overall, the combined capex of the Union government and central public sector enterprises is budgeted at 3.7% of GDP in FY26BE, better than 3.6% of GDP in FY25RE, but lower than 3.8% of GDP in FY24 and 3.9% of GDP in the pre-Covid years.

In other words, don't expect growth to rise merely on the basis of combined capex. Given this background, one would have expected that economic policy generally, and Budgets post-Covid in particular, would be designed to create non-farm jobs — given that aggregate demand collapsed in the economy, as macro-economic aggregates have shown.

However, the finance minister's answer, in the Budget 2025-26 speech, has been to give personal income tax (PIT) breaks to the middle class, hoping to revive demand. Given that the middle class itself has had to dissave to maintain consumption, and consumption has barely grown, the tax breaks to 30 million PIT payers (in a workforce of 600 million) is hardly likely to sud-

Will Budget Create Jobs? Tax breaks unlikely to ignite demand, let alone spur private investment & fuel growth.

Santosh Mehrotra



denly turn around aggregate demand, let alone encourage private investment and hence generate growth or jobs.

The labour and skill development ministry has received a significant boost, with the Budget 2025-26 allocating ₹38,746.3 crore — an 80% increase from ₹21,608 crore in the previous year. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has outlined plans to spend ₹2 lakh crore over the next five years, reinforcing the government's commitment to skill development and internship programmes.

Even after so many interventions and schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (2015 to present), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (2014 to present), and the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (2016 to present), placement data and efficiency of these schemes are not available for monitoring and evaluation. A deeper dive into

the implementation of these policies raises concerns.

Despite the increased allocation of funds, the focus seems to be on expanding the quantity of trained individuals rather than increasing quantity while improving the quality of training. The government is prioritising capital expenditure and quick certifications over substantive skill development. They may hold certificates but lack real-world proficiency, and not get jobs.

The government's ambitious Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Upgradation Scheme, announced in the Union Budget 2024-25 with a proposed investment of ₹60,000 crore over five years, aims to revamp 1,000 ITIs under a hub-and-spoke model where costs will be borne by the Centre and states equally. The budget for the Scheme increased from ₹1,000 crore in FY25 to ₹3,000 crore in FY26. However, the scheme's formulation and implementa-

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Despite the increased allocation of funds, the focus seems to be on expanding the quantity of trained individuals rather than increasing quantity while improving the quality of training. The government is prioritising capital expenditure and quick certifications over substantive skill development

tion appear haphazard.

Despite significant capital expenditure, there is little emphasis on updating curricula, enhancing teacher training, or improving the overall skill development system. A mid-term evaluation of a similar initiative, the Model ITI scheme, revealed that the share of funds allocated to civil works (57.9%) and equipment purchases (31.3%) was high, with minimal focus on curriculum development or instructor training.

So these efforts may prioritise infrastructural enhancements over substantive educational reforms, limiting the effectiveness of the initiative to address the demands of industry. Finally,

there is not so much as a mention of the Internship Scheme announced in Budget 2024-25. It was meant to ensure that lakhs of youth would receive internships in the 500 top firms of India. So what happened to it, citizens would want to know. Meanwhile, the Budget scheme for so-called employment hardly seem promising in respect of non-farm jobs.

The first scheme is the "enhancement of credit availability with guarantee cover". This is supposed to improve access to credit. The credit guarantee cover will be enhanced for micro and small enterprises, from ₹5 crore to ₹10 crore, leading to additional credit of ₹1.5 lakh crore in the next five years. The second scheme is to promote employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in labour-intensive sectors.

Thus, the government will undertake a Focus Product Scheme for the footwear and leather sectors. Finally, there is a scheme for tourism for employment-led growth. Thus, the top 50 tourist destination sites in the country will be developed in partnership with states through a challenge mode. The land for building key infrastructure will have to be provided by the states. Hotels in those destinations will be included in infrastructure.

These are not exactly schemes that will set the labour market ablaze. For a country that adds six-seven million new job seekers each year; where 46% of its workforce in agriculture should exit farming; and has 100 million youth not involved with education, employment, or training, and which also has about 25 million unemployed, these three Budget schemes are unlikely to address the challenges of job creation.

And if the middle-class tax cuts are not expected to raise consumption demand and hence investment, the needed rise in private investment is unlikely. Our policymakers need to remember that India's demographic dividend runs out in 2040, when the country will become an ageing society. Without jobs before 2040, the dividend is likely to become a disaster.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by Financial Express

Geo-tagging of Chinar Trees in Kashmir

A good initiative towards the conservation of Kashmir's heritage tree



THE GEO-TAGGING PROCESS WILL HELP PRESERVE THE REMAINING CHINAR TREES and ensure that the trees don't face any kind of disturbance or intervention further. As per the officials, this geo-tagging process will create a database and store all the information about the Chinars



Peerzada Aarif

The authorities in the valley have taken a unique initiative of geo-tagging Chinar trees. The project, spearheaded by the J&K Forest Research Institute (FRI) of the J&K Forest Department, involves geo-tagging and QR coding of Chinar trees to enable their monitoring and management. Under this geo-tagging process, QR codes are attached to each surveyed tree, recording information about 25 characteristics, including its geographical location, health, age, and growth patterns, enabling conservationists to track changes and address risk factors. This initiative of the government is indeed a good step towards the protection and conservation of this rich heritage tree.

The Chinar tree has remained a symbol of great cultural, social, religious, and historical significance in the valley for ages. It has

a close connection with our past, cultural heritage, environment, as well as literature. The name Chinar is derived from a Persian word which means "What a Fire"; it reflects the impressive orange-red color of the Chinar in autumn. Its leaves acquire varied hues from blood red to mauve, amber, and yellow, depicting the various seasons of Kashmir. The oldest Chinar in Kashmir is said to have been planted in 1374 and is almost 600 years old. It is 14.78 meters tall and is located in Kashmir's Budgam district. The tree was adored by Mughal Emperors such as Akbar, Jahangir, and even Aurangzeb. It has even been dubbed the "royal tree." Following his conquest of Kashmir in 1586, the great Emperor Akbar is supposed to have planted over 1,200 Chinar trees. On Dal Lake, there is a small Chinar Island called 'Char Chinar.' The island's name comes from the fact that it has four Chinar trees

planted on it. Emperor Jahangir erected these four trees in such a way that they would always cast a shadow on the island. They are among Kashmir's most popular tourist destinations. Chinar trees, a symbol of Kashmir's natural heritage, are renowned for their majestic size, vibrant foliage, and cultural significance.

Unfortunately, developmental activities in the name of industrialization, urbanization, commercialization, etc., have caused widespread damage to this highly rich tree over the past years. Ever since the turmoil in the valley of Kashmir, this heritage tree has been badly subjected to destruction and devastation. A large number of Chinar trees were cut down and burned, which resulted in a decline in their numbers. The Chinar tree population in Kashmir has declined, according to a 2021 booklet from Kashmir's Forest Department. Some estimates

put the number at 42,000 in the 1970s. Current estimates range from 17,000 to 34,000.

There is an ongoing census, the coordinator of which says there are estimated to be 32,500 Chinars in Kashmir. Better late than never. Now the government seems to be sensitive to this decline. The geo-tagging process will help preserve the remaining Chinar trees and ensure that the trees don't face any kind of disturbance or intervention further. As per the officials, this geo-tagging process will create a database and store all the information about the Chinars. Everyone can scan and log in to access the information. The administration can easily assess which Chinar has dried up and which is dangerous. The authorities are also proposing more surveys on risk assessment. It will be a USG-based risk assessment survey.

It will be done through ma-

chines with no human interference. It will provide information about whether the tree is safe or risky. Besides this geo-tagging, there is an immediate need to plant more and more Chinar trees in appropriate places so that the lost glory of this highly rich tree is restored. The tree is no doubt Kashmir's pride, and while developing the infrastructure, it should be ensured that the natural heritage remains unaffected. While the existing trees need to be nurtured and conserved, new ones should be planted on a large scale to conserve this legacy.

The Chinar tree doesn't just amplify the beauty of Kashmir but has immense environmental importance. From an environmental perspective, the Chinar tree plays a pivotal role in maintaining the ecological balance. It helps in moderating the temperature and lowering air and noise pollution. The trees are also

known to have some medicinal properties and uses. Chinars are important ecologically, economically, and aesthetically. Chinars, being large ornamental trees, contribute not only to the beauty of the Kashmir valley but also to its resources. They are important sequesters of carbon, vital to the regulation of the climate, and help improve air quality.

Chinars contribute to the protection of biodiversity as they are a favorite shelter for birds, particularly crows and kites, in Kashmir. Both individual and collective efforts will be helpful in the protection and preservation of this natural asset. Taking effective measures will certainly contribute to restoring the lost glory of this precious tree, which has otherwise suffered extensive damage over the past years.

The author is a teacher and a freelancer

Radical Act of Rest

Sabzara Ali

In a world where women are constantly expected to do it all, have you ever wondered what happens when they just stop and take a breath? What if the most radical act of resistance isn't in the struggle but in the stillness? What if real rebellion happens when women take some moments for themselves without any responsibilities or roles?

Gendered Dichotomy

Throughout history, leisure for men and women has been greatly influenced by gender roles which result in different experiences altogether. Men, often considered tough and adventurous, tend to pursue leisure activities away from home – for example playing sports or engaging in heated political debates. Women, on the other hand, are often viewed as nurturing, private, and inclined to stay within the home. Their "leisure" is typically woven into their responsibilities, like caring for the family or keeping the household running smoothly.

Historically, there isn't much separation between work and relaxation in the lives of women. Their roles blur the lines between labor and leisure, making those quiet moments of rest feel like a rare luxury.

For men, who work outside the home, work and leisure are clearly separated. Of course, economic status influ-

ences how people spend their free time but regardless of wealth, men still find ways to carve out time for themselves. For the affluent, it might be a drive or a hobby; for others, it could be as simple as gathering at a local stall for a chat.

The Unequal Landscape of Leisure

Leisure is when you can just be yourself without worry about your work or anything else that obliges you. Unfortunately, for many women, such as those in rural India, spare time is something they do not have enough of.

The Time-Use Survey 2019-20 for India states that young working women in rural areas spent almost five hours daily on domestic tasks while urban counterparts spent about two hours forty-five minutes each day.

Thus, for many women, leisure isn't a scheduled break; it's something snatched in between daily responsibilities. It might be listening to the radio while cooking or chatting with a friend on the way to work. But for the women of Kashmir, leisure is about more than just choosing how to spend their time. It's about navigating a complex web of societal norms, restrictions, and the shadow of conflict that constantly defines the limits of their freedom.

The Confining Norms and Invisible Boundaries

The majority of Kashmiri

women live by traditional societal norms that limit them to being caregivers and housewives. With this, they hardly get any time to pursue interests or recreations of their choice. Most public spaces in Kashmir are male dominated, and women's participation in leisure is largely confined to their homes. A survey conducted by students of Lady Shri Ram College revealed that most women in Jammu and Kashmir engage in leisure activities like reading, writing, and painting, all within the safety of their homes. Only a small number of respondents participated in sports, and even then, these activities often came to an abrupt end due to reasons such as harassment or the necessity of being accompanied by a male family member. For instance, one of the respondents spoke of how she had to leave sports because of continuous groping in public transport while another explained that going out in Kashmir often required a series of lies, as she was frequently made to stay at home under the guise of safety concerns.

The conflict in the region has only exacerbated this situation, creating both physical and psychological barriers that restrict women's movement and make the idea of leisure fraught with anxiety. Patriarchal norms further limit their freedom, dictating which

forms of leisure are acceptable, often tying them to domestic and societal activities. This leaves very little time for a woman to relax, be creative, or express herself authentically, further marginalizing her and thus denying her the liberative power of leisure.

Sufi Shrines: Sanctuaries of Solace and Sisterhood for Kashmiri Women

The visit to a Sufi shrine is one of the very few occasions when an elderly woman of Kashmir gets to leave her house and break the tedium of routine. She finds a rare escape in the peaceful courtyards of these shrines. These sacred spaces, deeply woven into the spiritual fabric of Kashmiri life, represent much more than just a place to pray. They are sanctuaries where women come together to breathe, to connect, and to rejuvenate.

Unlike mosques, which are predominantly male spaces, these shrines provide women with a socially acceptable public space where they can gather, socialize, and form emotional and devotional relationships with the saints. Here, they can personalize the relationship with the saints and whisper all their troubles to them, finding solace in the company of people who share similar burdens. Here, it is not very uncommon to find a group of women sitting together in the shade of a

tree, sharing their stories, and drawing strength from one another's stories.

These visits are not just about tradition or seeking blessings. They are about reclaiming a bit of themselves—a space to laugh, cry, and be without the weight of household duties pressing down on them. For many women, these shrines are places where they feel truly at peace—where the noise of everyday life fades, and they shift their focus to spiritual growth and healing. In a world that offers so few spaces for leisure, these shrines become a vital refuge, a place where they can finally exhale and let their souls rest.

Leisure Through a Feminist Lens: Reclaiming Identity and Crafting New Narratives

Leisure, often seen as a simple escape from daily responsibilities, holds a deeper, more transformative potential when viewed through a feminist lens. It's not just about taking a break; it is about reclaiming both time and space for self-discovery and self-expression. For most women, leisure is a powerful act of resistance against societal norms that expect them to behave in a certain way or hold specific roles.

One inspiring perspective comes from Surabhi Yadav, the founder of the NGO Sanjhe Sapne. Through her work, Surabhi explores how leisure can be a radical tool for women to redefine themselves be-

yond the traditional roles of mother, wife, or daughter. Her photo project, *Basanti: Women at Leisure*, was inspired by observing the often-hidden playful side of her mother and women around her. The project captures women and girls in moments of unguarded joy, dancing and relaxing; it captures them being themselves. These images do not depict rest; they celebrate leisure as a personal right and subtle, powerful form of resistance.

Surabhi argues that while much of today's feminist movement focuses on resisting patriarchy—fighting for equal pay, rights, and recognition—this approach often feels reactive, simply responding to the rules set by men. To her, real power in feminism lies in opening up so many new possibilities to women and creating spaces where women have the choice to explore and define their identities. Within these very words, leisure ceases to become a mere break from life's routine but assumes the role of a path toward self-discovery and empowerment. Leisure time would afford a space within which women could discover themselves beyond defined roles assigned to them, hence changing this resting time into a powerful tool of creating and reclaiming their own narratives.

If one were to introspect into the life of a Kashmiri woman, it would become evident that

these moments of leisure are more than just brief escapes from daily responsibilities—they are subtle acts of defiance, quiet rebellions against a world that tries to confine them to narrow roles.

Whether they find peace in the sacred spaces of a Sufi shrine or take a rare moment of rest within their homes, these women are taking back their narratives from just being victims to discovering their own identities, engaging in activities they truly enjoy, and reclaiming their right to prioritize their own well-being.

But as we applaud these acts of quiet defiance before the mountains, we must also remind ourselves: What are we, as a society, doing to make their burdens a little lighter? How do we ensure that the leisure of Kashmiri women is priority and not an afterthought? For too long, our feminist goals have centered on survival—fighting for land, labor, and basic rights. But perhaps true liberation for Kashmiri women means striving for more than just safety and survival. It means reimagining leisure as a fundamental right, a space for self-discovery and liberation.

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

The author is a student at Smith College

Ponting Shocked Iyer Does Not Have A Spot In India's White-Ball Line-Up

Press Trust Of India

CUTTACK: Australian legend Ricky Ponting finds it incredulous that Shreyas Iyer has not been given a permanent slot in India's white-ball side, given his magnificent form and the ability to dominate spinners on slow subcontinental pitches.

Iyer was one of the vital cogs in India's run to the final of the 50-over World Cup in 2023, with the middle-order batter scoring 530 runs to emerge the seventh-highest run-getter in the global event, and he further validated his prowess in the format with a 36-ball 59

against England in the first ODI at Nagpur on Thursday.

In domestic cricket too, the 30-year-old has been in fine fettle this season, scoring two centuries for Mumbai in the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

"I've been a little bit surprised that he's been out of India's side in the last couple of years. He had a terrific World Cup back in India (2023) where he played beautifully in the middle-order and I actually felt then that he'd almost cemented that spot and made that his own," opined Ponting on ICC Review.

"Then he had those couple of injuries, obviously injured

his back and went out of the side, but his domestic season this year has been brilliant.

"It sort of coincided with what he's done since around (IPL) auction time going forward in domestic cricket, he has been pretty much outstanding," said Ponting about the right-hand batter, who guided Kolkata Knight Riders to their third IPL title last year after missing the 2023 edition due to a serious back injury.

Ponting feels Iyer will thrive in the Champions Trophy, beginning in Pakistan and Dubai on February 19.

"He's got the game that will stand up to the white-ball for-

mats, especially in that part of the world," Ponting said.

"On those wickets -- the slower, lower wickets -- he's dynamic on those. We know how good a hitter of spin bowling he is and teams tend not to bowl a lot of spin at India, but at some stage it's going to come."

Ponting, who is Punjab Kings coach, bought Iyer for Rs 26.75 crore for the upcoming IPL season, added that he is "delighted" to see the Mumbai man in PBKS as the franchise look to win their first title.

"If Shreyas is out in the middle, then he's as good as anyone. So, I'm delighted to see him back in the team."



Short TAKES

CM Reviews Jammu Half Marathon & Ultra Marathon 2025

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday chaired a review meeting to discuss the preparations for the Jammu Half Marathon & Ultra Marathon 2025, scheduled to be held later this year.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary Finance Satosh D. Vaidya, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar, Commissioner Secretary Tourism Yasha Mudgal, Director Tourism Jammu, representatives from BISAG-N, marathon experts, and other concerned officials.

Speaking at the meeting, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah appreciated the initiative, emphasizing that the marathon should receive widespread publicity to attract top athletes from across the country. The chief minister highlighted the significance of such events in boosting tourism in Jammu & Kashmir and positioning the region as a prime destination for sports and adventure tourism.

The Jammu Half Marathon 2025 will feature: 21 km Half Marathon, 10 km Fitness Gauge Run and 5 km Fun Run. Discussions were also held on the route planning, prize structure, logo, flag-off timings, T-shirts, branding, sponsorships, and digital outreach.

Div Com Reviews Preparations For 5th Khelo India Winter Games

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri on Friday convened a meeting of officers to review overall preparation for the successful conduct of 5th Edition of Khelo India Winter Games to be held at Gulmarg later this month.

The mega event of national winter games phase 2nd of KIWG shall commence at winter wonderland Gulmarg from February 22 and shall conclude on February 25. Over 1,000 athletes, coaches and officials will participate in the event of national importance.

Deputy Commissioner, Budgam, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Director Urban Local Bodies, MD JKTD, Director Health Services Kashmir, CEO Gulmarg Development Authority, SSP Budgam, SSP Baramulla, SSP Traffic, Secretary J&K Sports Council, officers from various departments including SMC, PHE, KPDC, R&B, MED, Transport, Airport Authority, Cable Car Corporation, Information, Tourism, H&H, NHIDCL, SDRF, CISF, HAWS and other essential departments attended the meeting.

IUST Cricket Team Leaves For North Zone Inter-University Tourney

The Islamic University of Science and Technology flagged off its men's cricket team on Friday for participation in the North Zone Inter-University Cricket Tournament 2025. The team was flagged off by IUST Registrar, Prof. Abdul Wahid, in the presence of Finance Officer Mr. Sameer Wazir and Dean of Students Dr. Asifa Baba.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Abdul Wahid expressed pride in the university's athletes competing at such a prestigious platform. He emphasized the role of sports in shaping character, fostering discipline, and promoting teamwork. He conveyed confidence that the team would not only perform well but also uphold the values of IUST with dedication and integrity.

J&K Take On Kerala In Ranji Trophy Quarter-Final Today



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: J&K senior men's cricket team is all set to lock horns with Kerala in 2024-25 Ranji Trophy quarter-final matchup on Saturday at Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune. The game begins at 9:30 AM and will air on Sports18 Network and can be streamed on JioCinema.

J&K topped Elite Group A with 35 points, beating the likes of Mumbai and Baroda, to reach the quarter-final stage

after five years. The team won five of its seven games to cap off an impressive group stage performance.

Shubham Khajuria has been the standout batter, scoring 663 runs in 12 innings with a top score of 255. Pacer Aquib Nabi has taken 38 wickets in 13 innings with a best of 6 for 54. Other pacers in the squad, Umar Nazir and Yuvvir Singh have also contributed to the team's excellent run. Off-spinner Sahil Lotra is in great form, having taken 11 wickets against Baroda

in their last game.

Meanwhile, Kerala finished second in Elite Group C. Batter Salman Nizar and bowler Jalaj Saxena have been the best performers for the team.

The venue for the quarter-final matchup was changed from Jammu to Pune. After checking the MCA Stadium pitch on Friday morning, Shubham Khajuria said per The Hindu: "By the looks of it, the surface should support our brand of cricket, and having played in such conditions early, we have a good chance."

It's A Catch 22 Situation For Out-Of-Form Rohit: Ashwin



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Former India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin feels it's a "catch-22 situation" for an out-of-form Rohit Sharma, and believes it's high time for the India skipper to silence his critics by letting his bat do the talking ahead of the upcoming Champions Trophy.

Rohit, who had dropped himself from the final Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia owing to poor form, scored just two runs in the first ODI against England in Nagpur on his return to international cricket after a month.

"This is not easy. If you look at it from Rohit's point of view, then obviously, it is frustrating for him. He

wants to concentrate on the series. He thinks that I've done well in this format and I'd like to continue.

"I'm going into the tournament with a lot of confidence on the back of the One-Day tournaments that I've played," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel. "But people will ask questions. The ones who are watching will obviously ask. It's a catch-22 situation. You can't stop these questions. When will they stop? When he performs," he added.

Rohit has scored just 166 runs in his last 16 innings across formats.

"But as a cricketer, I understand what Rohit is going through. It's not easy. I pray that he does well and scores a century in this series," Ashwin said.



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