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## WILL J&K GO ALCOHOL-FREE? 3 MLAs Submit Bills Seeking Liquor Ban



Observer News Service

Srinagar: There is a growing clamour for declaring Jammu and Kashmir a dry state as at least three MLAs have submitted private members' bills for banning alcohol in the Union Territory.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) MLA from Kupwara Mir Mohammad Fayaz, Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) legislator from Langate Sheikh Khursheed Ahmad and ruling National Conference (NC) MLA from Lal Chowk Ahsan Pardeesi have submitted separate private members' bills for a ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir.

In his statement of objectives and reasons, Mir emphasized the

need for strict regulations, stating, "The rise in use of alcoholic drinks is an ascending curve and this is largely due to insensitivity to deal with the issues in a holistic manner... If this trend of using alcohol is not checked at this point of time, it will prove disastrous for the society as such strict law on the subject is inevitable," reads the bill.

The bill also calls for severe penalties, including imprisonment and fines, for violators.

The bills will be tabled in the forthcoming session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, which will meet in Jammu for the budget session from March 3.

"Alcohol consumption is ravaging lives | [More on P6](#)

### Politicians Extend Support

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Nirmal Singh, has voiced strong support for proposed legislation aimed at banning alcohol across the Union Territory. His support comes in the wake of bills introduced by legislators from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and National Conference (NC), seeking to curb | [More on P6](#)

### Online Support Swells For Dry J&K

Syed Mohammad Burhan

A growing wave of online support has emerged as netizens back the proposed liquor ban in Jammu and Kashmir. The debate, fueled by social media discussions, has gained traction as three MLAs have introduced private members' bills in the upcoming Assembly session seeking to | [More on P6](#)

**IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER** or not the bill will be passed. It is within the jurisdiction of the Speaker and the Assembly Secretariat, and they will examine it."

### Will J&K See Fewer Power Cuts During Ramzan?

Agencies

Srinagar: The Power Development Department (PDD) is likely to take a call on modification of power curtailment schedule a week before the commencement of the holy month of Ramzan.

Sources in the department informed that it may consider a slight modification in the ongoing power curtailment schedule a week prior commencement of the Ramzan.

"As of now PDD has not taken any call for revising the power curtailment schedule. But if there will be any proposal of modification in the schedule, the department will take a call a week before the commencement of holy month Ramzan if required," sources said.

The official sources further said that it had already reduced the curtailments in | [More on P6](#)

### E-Bike Service In J&K Curve Electric Secures USD 1 Million Funding



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Curve Electric, a micro-mobility startup headquartered in Jammu & Kashmir, has successfully secured funding at a valuation of USD 1 million (Rs 8,68,30,900) with participation from prominent angel investors. This funding marks



A newspaper vendor in old Srinagar takes a moment to sip tea amid the stacks of daily publications. He has reportedly been a local fixture for 45 years. KO Photo By Faisal Khan

## Crush Terrorism, Strengthen Public Trust: LG To JKP

◆ Chairs Security Review Meeting In Srinagar ◆ Says Terror Supporters Will Pay A Heavy Price

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday directed the security forces to intensify the efforts to "crush terrorism and those aiding and abetting terrorists" in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Chaired a high-level security meeting today at PCR, Srinagar. Directed J&K Police and its various wings to work in close synergy with each other and intensify the efforts to crush terrorism and those aiding and abetting terrorists," Sinha said in a series of posts on X.

The lieutenant governor said there will be a zero tolerance



policy to tackle terrorism and the security forces have been given free hand to neutralise the terror ecosystem.

"Directed officials to follow a zero tolerance policy to tackle terrorism. I have given JKP & Security Forces a free hand to neutralise the

terror ecosystem operating in the shadows. Those supporting & financing terrorism will have to pay a very heavy price," he said.

Sinha said he has directed the officials to take strict action against those misusing cyberspace | [More on P6](#)

### CM Omar Not Invited

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah was left out of the high-level security review meeting chaired by

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in Srinagar, a decision his advisor, Nasir Aslam Wani, strongly questioned

on Wednesday. Nasir Aslam Wani expressed dismay over the LG administration for not extending | [More on P6](#)

### Contradictory Affidavits HC Issues Arrest Warrant Against Secy Nigeen Club

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has issued bailable warrants of arrest for "securing presence" of Secretary Nigeen Club Srinagar in a petition regarding payment of 7th Pay Commission arrears to an employee.

Hearing a plea by the employee, Mir Aftab Yaseen, a bench of Justice Sanjay Dhar issued the warrant in the amount of Rs 10,000 to be executed by the SHO concerned.

The directions followed "apparent contradictions" in the two affidavits filed by the Secretary regarding the payments of arrears.

"In the...affidavit (filed pursuant to court's order on 27 December 2024), it has been admitted that the petitioner (Mir Aftab Yaseen) has been paid four installments as arrears of 7th Pay



Commission and it has also been submitted that the Secretary Nigeen Club has approved the release of arrears of 7th Pay Commission in six monthly installments subject to availability of funds," the court said. The same Officer, the court said, in his affidavit filed pursuant to order dated 19 November 2024 had submitted that the Nigeen Club has not taken any decision with respect to payment of arrears of 7th Pay Commission and as such, in absence of any order to that effect, no employee of the society including the petitioner

## Probe Into Civilian Deaths Discussed With HM: CM

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said that the deaths of two persons in Kathua and Sopore were discussed during his recent meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Abdullah's statement comes a day after opposition PDP president Mehbooba Mufti criticized the chief minister saying she had expected him to raise the two incidents during his meeting with Shah.

"It was a good meeting. Several issues were discussed including the Sopore killing and death in Kathua. It was emphasised that there should be a transparent probe and anyone found guilty should be



punished," Abdullah, who met Shah in Delhi on Monday, told reporters in Ganderbal.

In Billawar area of Kathua district on February 4, a 26-year-old man, accused of being involved in militancy, allegedly committed suicide following alleged harassment by police. In Sopore of Baramulla district, a truck driver was | [More on P6](#)

### Holds Pre-Budget Consultations

Continuing with extensive pre-budget consultations, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah held a series of meetings with public representatives from various districts of Kashmir at the Civil Secretariat, Srinagar. The Chief Minister chaired pre-budget consultations with the chairpersons of District Development Councils (DDCs) and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from the districts of Srinagar, Ganderbal and Bandipora, who participated both in person and virtually. | [More on P6](#)

### Akhnoor IED Blast Army Man Killed 2 Months Before Marriage

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: He had returned to his Army unit on January 28 after his engagement and giving final touches to his new house. Just 14 days later, Naik Mukesh Singh Manhas was killed in an IED blast, leaving his family shattered and pondering a future gone dark.

The 29-year-old from Jammu and Kashmir's Samba, who was supposed to get married in April, was killed along with Captain Karamjit Singh Bakshi from Jharkhand's Ranchi in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast carried out by terrorists near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu's Akhnoor sector on Tuesday.

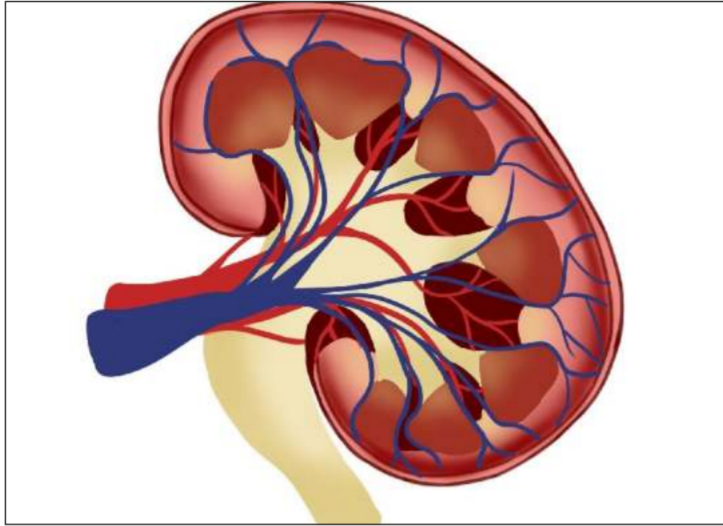
In his native | [More on P6](#)



Map Of Genes Involved In Kidney Function Reveals Potential Targets For Treating Disease

Press Trust Of India

Researchers have created a comprehensive map of genes involved in the functioning of a kidney, revealing over a thousand genes that could serve as potential targets for treating kidney disease, according to a new study.



A professor of renal-electrolyte and hypertension at the University of Pennsylvania, said. Chronic kidney disease, in which a damaged kidney is unable to purify blood, can be caused due to varied reasons, including diabetes and high blood pressure.

The disorder can eventually lead to a patient requiring dialysis or a transplant, when the kidneys cannot cope with the body's demand for pure blood, removing waste and regulating electrolytes, the researchers explained. "We provide a genetic blue-

print for kidney function, enabling genetics-based prognostication and drug discovery," the authors wrote. The study analysed genetic data from over two million people. The team also found that proximal tubule cells -- involved in re-absorbing water and electrolytes and other functions -- are a "hotbed" of disease-causing variants. Variants in these cells could hamper essential processes, potentially causing kidney disease. "It's critical to pinpoint which cells are truly relevant for disease," first author Hongbo Liu, a former postdoctoral fellow in the division of renal-electrolyte and hypertension, the University of Pennsylvania, said. "By creating single-cell profiles of thousands of kidney cells, we were able to 'zoom in' and find how certain genetic variants disrupt the regulatory machinery in key kidney cell types," Liu said.

Public Notice

The name of my newborn son has been wrongly written in birth Certificate issued by Municipal Office Pattan as Salaar Danish while his correct name is Mohammad Murtaza 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. Towheeda Akhtar W/o Danish Ahmad Mir R/o Nehalpora Pattan fko

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed Homestay under the name, M/S The Manor Homestay "situated at Ishber Nishat Srinagar

Public Notice Whereas I Mr./ Bashir Ahmed Ganai S/o Salam Uddin Ganai R/o Gousia Colony Ishber intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed Homestay under the name and style "The Manor Homestay situated at, Ishber Nishat, Srinagar under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department), Bank statement (minimum balance 1000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting), Photograph of the unit (Indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation. Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID: ddtreg23@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspaper of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained. fko

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Department of Administrative Reforms, Inspections and Trainings
Civil Secretariat J&K

O.M.No:ARI-BOPEE/O1/2025/01
Dated: 04-02-2025

Subject: Tentative Schedule for Registration and Entrance Examinations with seats intake in various Professional Courses for Session 2025-26.

The undersigned is directed to invite the kind attention of all the Administrative Secretaries regarding the subject cited above and to forward herewith the tentative Schedule for Registration & Entrance Examinations with seats intake in various Professional Courses for the session 2025- 26 issued by the JKBOPEE for kind information and further necessary action.

All Administrative Secretaries J&K UT
(Dr. Raman Jandiyal), JKAS
Under Secretary to the Government

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS
JKBOPEE

Tentative Schedule for Registration and Entrance Examinations with Seats Intake in various Professional Courses for the Session 2025-26

Table with 10 columns: S. No., Name of the Course, Tentative Intake, Minimum Qualification, Duration of the Course, Tentative Month for submission of online application/ registration forms, Tentative month for conduct of Entrance Test, Tentative No. of Participating Colleges/Institutions (Govt., Private).

\*G=Govt. \*P=Private
Controller of Examinations
J&K BOPEE
DIPK-11863/24
DATED: 12-02-2025

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed Travel unit under the name, M/S Gate Of Heaven Tour and Travels "situated at Nowhar Charar i Sharief Budgam
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas I Mr. Azad Ali S/o Late Ali Mohammad Wani R/o Nowhar Charar i Sharief Budgam Tour and Travels intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style "M/ s Gate Of Heaven Tour and Travels "situated at Nowhar Charar i Sharief Budgam Kashmir under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department), Bank statement (minimum balance 1000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting), Photograph of the unit (Indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation. Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID: ddtreg23@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspaper of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained. fko

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed Travel unit under the name, M/S Heavenly Heights Tour and Travels "situated at Shalting HMT Srinagar
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas I Mr. Syed Zaffar Ahmad Shah S/o Syed Mohammad Maqbool Shah R/o Lane 1 Gulub Abad Shalting Srinagar Tour and Travels intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style "M/ s Heavenly Heights Tour and Travels "situated at Shalting HMT Srinagar Kashmir under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department), Bank statement (minimum balance 1000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting), Photograph of the unit (Indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation. Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID: ddtreg23@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspaper of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained. fko

از نیابت کلتر
درخواست منجانب فلام محمد گنائی ولد عبد الرحمان ساکن کوہلہ بئرش اجرائی و دارشان جاگزند بحق خود
اشہار برآمد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر پڑائیں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پیواری حلقے سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے عہاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل کا والد عبد الرحمان مورخہ 04-01-2018 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے موتی کے وارثان پڑیں ہے
ممانتہ حارہ بیگم 65 سال زودیتونی گھر بیلکام
مسالتہ سلیمہ 45 سال دفتر متوتنی شادی شدہ بیرون خانہ
مسالتہ مسعودہ 44 سال
مسالتہ فریدہ 42 سال
فلام محمد گنائی 40 سال پڑستونی مزدوری
اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہ نہیں بتایا گیا ہے سرفٹیکت زیر بحث اجرو کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی مندر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا مندر یا اعتراض ساتھ یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ عیاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی مندر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
نائب تحصیلدار fko

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار کلتر
درخواست منجانب شادوہ تیلی ولد عبد العزیز تیلی ساکن ڈنڈوہ تحصیل کریری برآمد حصول سرفٹیکت بحق پیر بال احمد و دفتر منجانب ہانو
اشہار برآمد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر پڑائیں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پیواری حلقے سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ نفاذات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عہاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل ساکنہ مشق ڈنڈوہ میں رہائش پذیر ہے۔ بذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے
شادوہ تیلی سربہ 52 سال مزدوری
مسالتہ بیگم زودیتونی 50 سال گھر بیلکام
بال احمد پسر 21 سال زیر تعلیم
مادل احمد پسر 19 سال
منجانب ہانو دفتر 17 سال
اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہ نہیں بتایا گیا ہے سرفٹیکت زیر بحث اجرو کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی مندر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا مندر یا اعتراض ساتھ یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ عیاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی مندر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
نائب تحصیلدار fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Owais Ahmad Kumar D.o.B 16/06/2016 and Mehran Ahmad Kumar D.o.B S/s/o Abdul Majeed Kumar R/o Bandi Payeen Tehsil Wagoora district Baramulla. In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Madeeha Jaan D/o Shahid Amin Kaloo R/o Jalal Abad Sopore Tehsil Sopore Distt Baramulla with verified date of birth 08/05/2021 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Muhammad Marrib ul Islam s/o Mudisar Mush-taq R/o Dangerpora Sopore Tehsil Sopore Distt Baramulla with verified date of birth 28/09/2020 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained..
SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth BDO pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Nasir Ahmad Malla D.o.B 30/10/2008 and Mysara Jan D.o.B 22/11/1996 s/d/o Abd Ahad Malla R/o Nehalpora Tehsil Pattan distt Baramulla. In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth EO Pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Mohammad Dayim S/o Mohammad Saleem Kumar R/o Chandilora Tehsil tangmarg Distt Baramulla with verified date of birth 31/08/2020 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Zuhra Bint Hamid D/o Abdul Hamid Malik R/o Harnow Kawcheck Kreeri Tehsil Kreeri Distt Baramulla with verified date of birth 15/06/2020 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Hadiya Jan d/o Hilal Ahmad Khan R/o Guiva pattan Tehsil Pattan distt Baramulla with verified date of birth 19/11/ 2021 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice...
The registrar birth BDO pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Owais Nazir Hajam D.o.B 08/07/2006 and Maroofa Nazir D.o.B 30/06/2005 s/D/o Nazir Ahmad Hajam R/o Nehalpora Tehsil Pattan distt Baramulla. In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

## Dr. Fatima Jalid From NIT Features In 'She Is - 75 Women In Chemistry'

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Dr. Fatima Jalid, Assistant Professor in Department of Chemical Engineering at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, has been featured in the recently launched book, 'She Is - 75 Women In Chemistry'. The book, published by Beyond Black in collaboration with the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India and the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), UK, was officially unveiled on Febru-

ary 6 at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Bhopal.

Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, and Institute's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman, have extended their heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Jalid.

In his message, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia stated that Dr. Jalid's recognition in 'She Is - 75 Women In Chemistry' not only highlights her individual achievements but also serves as an inspiration for aspiring women scientists across the nation.

## Goni Khan Traders Seek Relocation Of Street Vendors

Agencies

Srinagar: The Goni Khan Traders Association Wednesday urged authorities to expedite the "completion of pending Smart City projects" and relocate street vendors to designated areas, citing business disruptions due to encroachments.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, the Goni Khan Traders Association expressed concerns over the slow pace of market activity, noting that street vendors occupy maximum parking spaces and block customer access to shops. The association urged the government to find an alternative space for them.

As a step towards supporting vendors, the traders also mentioned plans to im-

plement "a particular day" when all shops in the market will remain shut, allowing street vendors to operate without obstruction.

Additionally, the traders highlighted the need for proper washroom facilities, saying the market is a key business hub and attracts a significant number of women shoppers. "As a market frequented by women, we are requesting the authorities to build or provide washroom facilities."

"The government must either relocate street vendors or provide another viable solution. As taxpayers, we expect better results from the money being spent," said the Goni Khan Traders Federation, adding that "we will stage peaceful protest if our demands are not met."—(KNO)



## CM Meets Srinagar MLAs For Pre-Budget Talks

Agencies

Srinagar: Barring Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief Tariq Hamid Karra, seven Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Srinagar attended the pre-budget consultations meeting convened by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah here on Wednesday.

During the two-hour-long meeting with the MLAs at Civil Secretariat here, threeday discussions were held regarding the development in their respective constituencies and other issues including education, unemployment and the public grievances.

All the MLAs from across Srinagar except MLA Central-Shalteng and Jammu & Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) Chief, Tariq Hameed Karra attended the meeting with the chief Minister.

The MLAs said every issue being faced by the people were raised and the priority has been given to the widening of roads, making Srinagar developed. "The upgradation of infrastructure in schools and sports fields", were also raised," Ahsan Pardeesi, MLA Lal Chowk said.

He added that the issues being faced by the people associated with the stone quarry were also raised by him in the meeting.

Shameema Firdous, MLA Habba Kadal, said that the prior-

ity issues related to health, education and roads were raised during the meeting. "We have discussed the road widening and other basic issues. Srinagar has been given a name of smart city, which doesn't exist, thus we raised the demands to make Srinagar smart," she said.

Pertinently, this was the fifth pre-budget consultation meeting chaired by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah ahead of the Budget Session in Jammu and Kashmir, which is slated to begin from March 03.

Earlier, the chief minister met traders, hoteliers, tour operators and people associated with the education sector to get their suggestions for the upcoming budget. (KNO)

## Intensive Food Safety Drive Conducted

Observer News Service

Srinagar: An intensive food safety inspection drive was conducted in Srinagar on Wednesday led by Assistant Commissioner Food Safety Srinagar, Yameen ul Nabi.

The team, which included food safety officers Syed Dilpazir, Khalid Bashir, Hakeem Adil, and Fayaz Ahmad, inspected various areas, including Batamaloo, Tangpora,

Mominabad, a statement issued to Kashmir Observer reads.

The main focus was on food stalls selling ready-to-eat food and roadside eateries. Three compounds will be submitted before the court under Section 56 of the FSS Act.

Roadside vendors were educated on maintaining hygiene and sanitary standards, and food business operators were directed to

undergo pest control measures and avoid setting up temporary stalls near drains.

The Drug and Food Control Organization is committed to protecting public health and promoting a culture of food safety awareness among food business operators. This inspection drive is part of the ongoing efforts to ensure food safety and quality in Srinagar, reads the statement.

- 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**  
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- RAILWAYS**
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  - ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
  - BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
  - BIJBERA: 01932-228243
  - PAMPORE: 01933-294132
  - PATTAN: 01954-293507
  - QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

**HIGHWAY STATUS**

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

**PRAYERS**

FAJR 5: 54  
ZUHR 12: 45  
ASR 4: 33  
Magrib 6: 15  
ISHA 7: 37

**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
14 Shaban  
1446

### This Day In History

- 1916 - Germany and Austria-Hungary notify the US that they will sink any armed merchant ships starting on 1 March
- 1922 - US intervention army leaves Honduras
- 1943 - US General Eisenhower selected to command the allied armies in Europe; British General Montgomery not best pleased.
- 1944 - German troops reconquer Aprilia, Italy
- 1945 - 1st gas turbine propeller-driven airplane flight tested, Downey, CA.
- 1945 - Yalta agreement signed by FDR, Churchill & Stalin
- 1946 - World War II: Operation Deadlight ends after scuttling 116 of 156 captured U-boats.
- 1953 - USSR breaks diplomatic relations with Israel
- 1956 - British diplomats Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean deny working as spies for Soviet Russia after reappearing in the Soviet Union after going missing 5 years earlier
- 1964 - Greek & Turks begin fighting in Limassol, Cyprus
- 1964 - Taiwan drops diplomatic relations with France
- 1968 - Israeli-Jordan border fight
- 1970 - Japan becomes 4th nation to put a satellite (Osumi) in orbit.

**الموت ذائفة نفس كل**  
Rasme chahrou of Haji Mohammad Qasim Akhoun

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved father **Haji Mohammad Qasim Akhoun S/o Late Haji Hassan Akhoun R/o Vegetable Market Tinda Mohalla, Mir Behri Dal, Srinagar** who passed away on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2025.

May Almighty Allah grant Jannat-ul-Firdous to the departed soul.

The congregational Fateh Khawani of the deceased shall be observed on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2025 (Friday) at 8.00 am at their ancestral graveyard at **Hassanabad, Saida Kadal, Srinagar, after that Fateh Khawani will be also observed at our residence for full day.**

**Bereaved family**  
Ghulam Rasool Akhoun, (Son)  
Mushtaq Ahmad Akhoun (Son)  
Contact No.9419400243 , 7006823295

**NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE**

Tender Notice No: - 770-W/169/WA/FZR/2024-25 Date: 12.02.2025

Sr.DEN-IV/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) with closing date-28/02/2025 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft Banker Cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information login to [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System
Open	Works	Single Packet System
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time
06.02.2025	14.02.2025	28.02.2025/ 15:00 Hrs

S. No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender
1.	312-2024-25-BDGM-DRM-FZR	Balance work of Upgradation to existing infrastructure of Banihal (BAHL), Qazigund (QG), Hiller Shahabad (HRSB), Sadura (SDUA) & Anantnag (ANT) railway stations in Kashmir valley & Facilitating of Srinagar (SINA), Mazhrom (MZMA), Pattan (PTTN), Hamre (HME) and Baramulla (BRML) railway stations and other allied works on BAHL-BRML section under ADEN/BDGM
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money
	39899566.37	349500.00
	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
	60 days	12 Months

Similar nature of work - "Any civil work other than track work"

Note. 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against the tender.

495/25  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**NORTHERN RAILWAY E-AUCTION NOTICE**

The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/FS, 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
EAFZR-SLR25-25	26/02/2025 at 11.00 Hrs.	Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 12014/F1, 14634/R1, 12238/F2, 14633/R1, 14654/R1, 14634/F1, 14633/F1, 14633/F2, 12030/F1 & 14634/F2.
EAFZR-SLR25-26	27/02/2025 at 11.00 Hrs.	Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 12470/F1, 12752/F1, 22430/F1, 15532/F1, 19028/F1, 12476/F1, 14654/F1, 12266/F1, 12446/F1 & 14612/F1.

For other details and registration, please visit Railway website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

481/25  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**Public Notice**

Subject:- Grant Of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & Style "The Wanderer Holidays Tour & Travels" Situated at Saida Kadal, Srinagar.

Whereas I, Yawar Ali Akhoun S/O Ali Mohammad Akhoun R/O Zaildar Mohalla Saida Kadal, Srinagar intend to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under the name & style of "The Wanderer Holidays Tour & Travels" Situated at Saida Kadal, Srinagar under tourist trade act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will submit state subject / Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, pan card \ Experience Certificate (Minimum 5years), Police character certificate, Bank statement (minimum balance 10000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent deed duly attested by sub Registrar, printing material (Latter head / Visiting card ) Photograph of the unit (indoor and outdoor) and Two passport size photographs to the department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist I Prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency.

Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12) before my case is processed for my registration by the Competent Authority, the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/ Financial institutions/Bank/ Organization, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration(email id: [ddtregl23@gmail.com](mailto:ddtregl23@gmail.com)) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in a leading newspaper/newspapers of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained.

inf

**NOTICE**

I **KHALID MASUD GULMOHAMMED TEKA F/o HANEEN KHALID MASUD TEKA** want to correct my name in my Son's School Record From **KHALID MASUD TEKA To KHALID MASUD GULMOHAMMED TEKA Studying 9th class in Saint Solomon School which needs to be corrected as per Birth Certificate.** In this regard, If anybody has any objection he/she may file the same in the office of the **Principal Saint Solomon School Ellahi Bagh**, within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Media Link

**Kashmer Aspirin. Strive. Achieve.**

**OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER**

**8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY**

I did wash my hand ... but.... did I clean it enough? Wash it again? Is it clean now?

It's not just RECURRENT HANDWASHING AND CHECKING BUT UNSEEN PAIN distress myths and stigma associated with OCD

**KASHMER Kashmir American Society of Healthcare.**  
Medical Education & Research  
in collaboration with **HPVT (Help Poor Voluntary Trust)**  
is initiating a **free 8 weeks Group therapy** for the individuals suffering with OCD by a team of counselling clinical psychologists led by leading consultant clinical psychologist of J&K.

If you or some one you know is experiencing symptoms of OCD, seeking professional help is crucial.

You do not have to fight your battles alone.

There is no need for referral, simply call us for registration.

Happy & Healthy minds Office. HPVT Building (First Floor), Daresh Kadal Chowk, Srinagar  
9070806160

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# Testing Trump-Modi Bromance



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump stride around the Houston arena hand-in-hand on September 22, 2019, at the Howdy Modi event. Photo credit: White House

Brahma Chellaney

KO VIEW

## Pakistan's Peace Overture

In the evolving geopolitics of South Asia, India and Pakistan seem to have little scope to forge any relationship except one of adversarial nature. In fact over the past five years, the two countries have increasingly drifted apart: Pakistan has been sore over India's abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019 and India, in turn, blames Pakistan for cross-border terrorism in Kashmir. And it seems unlikely that these irreconcilable differences can be bridged anytime soon.

However, it was heartening to see the Pakistan prime minister extending an olive branch to India in his speech on February 5, which Pakistan celebrates as the so-called Kashmir Solidarity Day. Sharif sought to resolve all outstanding issues through meaningful dialogue, according to the 1999 Lahore Declaration, a bilateral agreement that aimed to promote peace and security between India and Pakistan. This was significant as the reference to declaration shows Pakistan's willingness to prioritize dialogue and cooperation with India.

Although one shouldn't read much into the overture, it does mark a departure from the more confrontational rhetoric of previous years. Sharif stayed short of criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the RSS and instead emphasised finding common ground and seeking peaceful resolutions.

Pakistan is currently grappling with political instability, economic difficulties, and a host of security concerns in the wake of its deteriorating relations with Taliban-led Afghanistan. The rivalry between Army Chief Asim Munir and former Prime Minister Imran Khan has only grown bitter. In fact, the Khan factor has become the single most source of instability in the country. This is forcing the country to explore the option of a more peaceful relationship with India. The ongoing challenges along the Afghan border has made Pakistan recognize the importance of a stable Line of Control and international border in Jammu and Kashmir.

However, it's important to approach Sharif's overture with cautious optimism. As is always the case with Pakistan, the path to meaningful dialogue is fraught with challenges. India and Pakistan have deep-seated grievances and a long history of mistrust, making both, the attempt to engage and the engagement a risky affair. But despite that the potential benefits of renewed engagement cannot be overstated.

For India, resumption of dialogue with Pakistan could be an opportunity to address security concerns and explore avenues for economic cooperation. For Pakistan, it offers a pathway to economic relief and political stability. The broader South Asian region stands to gain from reduced tensions and cooperation between the two nations. New Delhi should make use of the opportunity at a time Pakistan needs India for its own stability.



**A few weeks into Trump's second presidency, however, there are reasons to doubt this rosy scenario. So far, Trump has done nothing to spare India from his frenetic push to implement his campaign promises, from raising tariffs to deporting undocumented immigrants. When the Trump administration sent more than 100 Indian nationals back to India on a military aircraft – a 40-hour ordeal – their hands and feet were shackled. Modi said nothing.**

Last time Donald Trump was president, ties between the United States and India flourished. But the bilateral relationship began to fray during Joe Biden's presidency, owing not least to divisions over the Ukraine war. Will Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's latest meeting with Trump at the White House mark the first step toward restoring this critical relationship?

Trump has made no secret of his conviction that personal bonds between leaders can underpin stronger bilateral relationships. And he and Modi certainly share an affinity: both are nationalist politicians who love little more than to please a roaring crowd with elaborate theatrics. In September 2019, the two came together for a public rally in Houston, attended by 50,000 Indian-Americans and several US legislators. The following February, Trump addressed more than 100,000 people in Ahmedabad. "America loves India," he declared. "America respects India, and America will always be faithful and loyal friends [sic] to the Indian people."

US-India relations took a turn for the worse after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The Biden administration mobilized America's allies and partners to join its campaign to punish Russia – and, ideally, compel it to change its behavior. But far from joining this effort, India stayed neutral and seized the opportunity to secure cheap Russian oil.

There were other points of contention, as well. The Biden administration sought to weaken Myanmar's military junta by imposing stringent sanctions on the country and sending "non-lethal aid" to rebel groups – a policy that has contributed to instability in India's border state of Manipur. Biden also coddled Pakistan's military-backed regime, including by approving a \$450 million deal in 2022 to upgrade the country's fleet of F-16 fighter jets.

Similarly, Biden welcomed the interim government that Bangladesh's military installed following the overthrow of the country's India-friendly government last August. Bangladesh's rapid descent into lawlessness since then has raised serious security risks for India, which is already home to millions of illegally settled Bangladeshis.

America's approach to Sikh separatist leaders on its soil has

also raised India's hackles. Under the Biden administration, the US carried out a criminal investigation into India's alleged involvement in supposed assassination plots against Sikh militants in the US and Canada. Last September, just days before Biden met with Modi in Delaware, senior White House and US intelligence officials met with Sikh separatists to assure them that they would be protected from "transnational repression." The following month, the US charged a former Indian intelligence officer in an alleged failed plot to kill a New York-based Sikh militant, who is on India's most-wanted list.

Against this backdrop, it is easy to see why Trump's victory in last November's presidential election raised hopes in India for a reset in bilateral relations. It helps that Trump has repeatedly pledged to negotiate a quick conclusion to the Ukraine war, meaning that India's choice not to pick a side in that conflict would no longer matter.

A few weeks into Trump's second presidency, however, there are reasons to doubt this rosy scenario. So far, Trump has done nothing to spare India from his frenetic push to implement his campaign promises, from raising tariffs to deporting undocumented immigrants. When the Trump administration sent more than 100 Indian nationals back to India on a military aircraft – a 40-hour ordeal – their hands and feet were shackled. Modi said nothing.

In fact, far from standing up to Trump, Modi has preemptively slashed tariffs on US imports, hoping that this would keep India out of "Tariff Man's" sights. But a dissatisfied Trump, who has called India a "very big abuser" of tariffs, has not spared India from his steel and aluminum levies. He wants India to wipe out its \$35 billion bilateral trade surplus, by buying more oil and petroleum products, and more weapons, from the US.

India is the world's third-largest primary energy consumer, after China and the US, and the largest source of oil demand growth. That makes the country a highly attractive market for a US administration that is committed to increasing domestic oil and gas production. It also means that Trump's commitment to pushing down oil prices, including by applying pressure on OPEC leader Saudi Arabia, would benefit India's economy.

But Trump has never been particularly concerned about en-

suring that his trade agreements are mutually beneficial. Regarding India, his plan may well be to use the threat of tariffs to compel Modi's government to accept the trade deal of his choosing. That is what he did to Japan during his first presidency. He also tried to do it to India, but failed, so he stripped India of its special trade status instead, prompting India to impose retaliatory tariffs on some US products.

If Trump ends up slapping more tariffs on India, the Indian economy could slow, at least marginally. More broadly, Trump's "America First" trade agenda – which clashes with Modi's "Make in India" initiative – threatens to undermine India's status as the world's "back office," providing extensive IT and business services to US companies.

Where trade is concerned, Trump treats friends and foes alike. But it matters that India is a friend – and Trump should want to keep it that way. The US-India strategic partnership helps advance the two countries' shared interests in the Indo-Pacific region, the world's emerging economic and geopolitical hub, including strengthening maritime security and supporting a stable balance of power. Already, the two countries are working to deepen military interoperability, and the US has overtaken Russia as India's leading weapons supplier, as new contracts show.

As Trump and Modi build on their rapport, both should recognize that India is America's most important partner in countering China's hegemonic ambitions. It is thus in both countries' interest to restore and deepen the bilateral relationship, including by strengthening collaboration on critical and emerging technologies, from artificial intelligence to biotechnology. Warm personal relations are an added bonus.

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

*Brahma Chellaney, Professor Emeritus of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin, is the author of Water, Peace, and War: Confronting the Global Water Crisis (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013).*

*By Arrangement with the: Project Syndicate*



## Did You Know? The Exciting World of Stock Market Investing

Irshad Mushtaq

Investing in the stock market is an exciting adventure full of hope for financial success. Picking stocks isn't just about numbers; it's more like creating a piece of art where "diversification" is your set of colors. Imagine the thrill of spreading your investment across different industries, watching them grow independently and not being tied down by any single market fluctuation.

Feel empowered as you get rid of underperforming stocks. Picture yourself freeing your portfolio from shares in companies that are stagnant or declining. On the flip side, think about the joy of choosing stocks from companies with excellent management, those that shine bright and have solid finances. Gain confidence knowing these robust stocks can act as guiding lights, providing stability in uncertain markets.

The stock market moves with the emotions of people. Having courage, patience, and a clear vision are essential to protect you from making impulsive decisions driven by fear or greed. Imagine diving into in-depth research, relying on solid facts instead of getting swayed by uncertainty. Quality stocks become your reliable companion, offering comfort during the unpredictable ups and downs of the market.

There will be times when the market drops, casting shadows over your financial expectations. Yet, find peace in such chaos. Stay calm and envisage strong companies bouncing back, much like a phoenix rising, giving your investments new energy and turning your patience into long-term profit.

Trust the power of diversification in weaving a strong fabric that supports your financial dreams. Keep your long-term goals in mind, invest with determination, and know that quality and careful strategy will lead you toward financial success. Embrace every part of this journey, as it's not just about financial gains, but also a personal journey toward greater courage and wisdom.

*Excited to learn from the insights of @Irshad Mushtaq, Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of MI Securities! Connect at [misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com](mailto:misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com).*

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### OBSERVER MAIL

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### MAIL YOUR LETTERS

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

## Concern Over Rising Winter Temperatures and the Lack of Snowfall in Kashmir

I am writing to express my deep concern about the unusual weather patterns we have been witnessing in Kashmir over the past few winters. This year has brought with it an alarming rise in temperatures, accompanied by a noticeable absence of snowfall. This shift in our seasonal climate is not

only unsettling but also worrying for the long-term ecological and socio-economic stability of our region.

In recent years, the winters have become warmer, with temperatures higher than usual and snowfalls becoming increasingly rare. This has disrupted the natural cycles that depend on cold weather, including the

recharge of groundwater resources and the agricultural patterns that many people in rural areas rely on.

I urge concerned authorities and environmental experts to investigate the underlying causes of these high winter temperatures and lack of snowfall. Is this a result of global climate change, or are there

other factors at play? We must take urgent action to address this issue before it has irreversible consequences for the people and ecosystem of Kashmir.

---  
Musaib Khan  
Srinagar

# Heart Attacks in Kashmir

## The Winter Health Crisis that Demands Attention

Asif Ahmad Shah  
Syed Qadri

In Kashmir, for many residents, winter is a time of heightened vulnerability, especially for those suffering from pre-existing conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). While winter in Kashmir offers picturesque views, it also brings an unseen threat that requires urgent attention.

The connection between winter and heart attacks is complex and multifaceted. As temperatures drop, the human body naturally responds by constricting blood vessels to conserve heat, a process known as vasoconstriction. This constriction of blood vessels increases blood pressure, putting an additional strain on the heart. Furthermore, the blood thickens in cold weather, making it more likely to clot and block arteries. In combination, these factors heighten the risk of heart attacks, especially for those with cardiovascular conditions or risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, and COPD. The cold, combined with physical inactivity and environmental factors, creates a perfect storm for cardiovascular events in Kashmir, making winter a dangerous season for many.

### The vulnerable groups and their silent struggles

While heart attack risk increases for everyone in the cold weather, certain groups are far more vulnerable. COPD patients, for example, face a double jeopardy during winter. Cold air is particularly problematic for people with respiratory conditions, as it aggravates airway inflammation and makes breathing even more difficult. This lowered oxygen supply forces the heart to pump harder to deliver oxygen to the body, increasing cardiovascular stress. Moreover, winter brings a marked increase in indoor air pollution due to heating sources like wood stoves and kangris. These pollutants can further exacerbate respiratory conditions and indirectly affect heart health by increasing the workload on both the heart and lungs.

For diabetic individuals, winter presents unique challenges as well. Cold weather can cause fluctuations in blood sugar levels, and when combined with the body's increased caloric expenditure to generate heat, this creates further instability. Moreover, poor circulation, already a common concern for diabetics, is worsened by the cold. The resulting combination of increased blood sugar levels, poor circu-

lation, and added pressure on the cardiovascular system significantly raises the likelihood of heart attacks.

Similarly, hypertensive patients face specific risks during winter. Cold weather triggers vasoconstriction, which causes a sharp increase in blood pressure. For people already living with hypertension, this can be catastrophic. A sudden spike in blood pressure places immense pressure on the heart, raising the risk of heart attacks, strokes, or other severe cardiovascular complications. The lack of outdoor activity, which is common during winter, exacerbates the situation, as physical activity is known to regulate blood pressure.

### The hidden dangers of Kashmir's winters

The dangers posed by winter in Kashmir go beyond the well-documented risks to vulnerable populations. Even healthy individuals are at an increased risk of heart attacks during the colder months. The body's response to cold weather, which includes increased blood pressure and thicker blood, places stress on the cardiovascular system, making it more susceptible to problems. Furthermore, winter months in Kashmir are often marked by extended periods of inactivity. With heavy snow blocking roads and limiting mobility, people tend to stay indoors, adopting a sedentary lifestyle. This lack of physical activity contributes to weight gain, poor cardiovascular health, and elevated cholesterol levels, all of which are well-known risk factors for heart attacks.

Diet also plays a crucial role in the increase of heart attack cases in the winter months. In Kashmir, traditional winter foods tend to be rich in fats and calories, meant to provide warmth and energy during the frigid temperatures. While these foods serve an immediate purpose, they also contribute to long-term health risks. A diet high in saturated fats and sugars raises cholesterol levels, promotes weight gain, and places strain on the heart. The festive spirit of the season often leads to overeating, further exacerbating these risks. Combined with a lack of exercise and increased alcohol consumption during the winter months, these habits significantly raise the chances of cardiovascular problems, including heart attacks.

The use of traditional heating methods in Kashmir, such as wood-burning stoves and the iconic kangri (a traditional Kashmiri firepot), also contributes to the region's rising heart attack rates. These methods release fine particulate matter and other pol-

lutants into the air, which are harmful to both the respiratory and cardiovascular systems. The inhalation of such pollutants can trigger respiratory problems, worsening COPD and other lung conditions. More importantly, these pollutants indirectly affect heart health by increasing the workload on the heart, leading to a higher risk of cardiovascular events like heart attacks.

### Recognizing symptoms and acting swiftly

Recognizing the symptoms of a heart attack early can make a critical difference in survival rates. For many people, heart attack symptoms are subtle and easy to dismiss, particularly in the winter when the discomfort from the cold can mask more serious health issues. Chest pain or discomfort is one of the most common signs of a heart attack. The pain may feel like tightness, pressure, or a sensation of heaviness in the chest. It may also radiate to the shoulders, arms, neck, back, or jaw. Other common symptoms include shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness, cold sweats, and fatigue.

For individuals with COPD, recognizing a heart attack becomes even more challenging. The symptoms of a heart attack can often overlap with a respiratory flare-up, which is also common during the winter months due to cold air and indoor air pollution. COPD patients often experience increased coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath during winter, which can confuse them or their caregivers

to their health is equally important. Winter temperatures can trigger blood pressure spikes in hypertensive individuals, and fluctuations in blood sugar can complicate matters for those with diabetes. This makes it essential for these patients to monitor their condition regularly and take extra precautions during the colder months.

### Preventive measures: A holistic approach to winter health

through layering clothing, using scarves, hats, gloves, and woolen socks to maintain body heat. Dressing in layers allows individuals to adjust their clothing based on their activity level, thus preventing sudden drops in body temperature.

Regular indoor exercise is another important preventive measure. While the cold may prevent outdoor activities, there are plenty of light exercises that can be done indoors to promote cardiovascular health. Activities such as walking on a treadmill, stretching, or yoga can help improve circulation, maintain flexibility, and reduce the risk of blood clotting.

Diet plays a pivotal role in winter heart health. Many people indulge in high-calorie comfort foods during the winter months, but it is important to focus on heart-healthy options. A diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and omega-3 fatty acids can help maintain healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish such as salmon and mackerel, are especially beneficial for heart health as they reduce inflammation and improve circulation. Reducing sodium intake can also help prevent blood pressure spikes during the colder months.

For those suffering from chronic conditions, medication adherence is key. Diabetics should closely

### The role of public health in preventing winter heart attacks

Addressing the rising number of heart attacks during winter in Kashmir requires more than individual effort—it demands collective action. Public health campaigns are essential to raise awareness about the risks associated with winter and the specific precautions that can help prevent heart attacks. These campaigns should focus on educating vulnerable groups—such as diabetics, hypertensive patients, and individuals with COPD—about the dangers posed by winter and how to recognize early symptoms of heart problems.

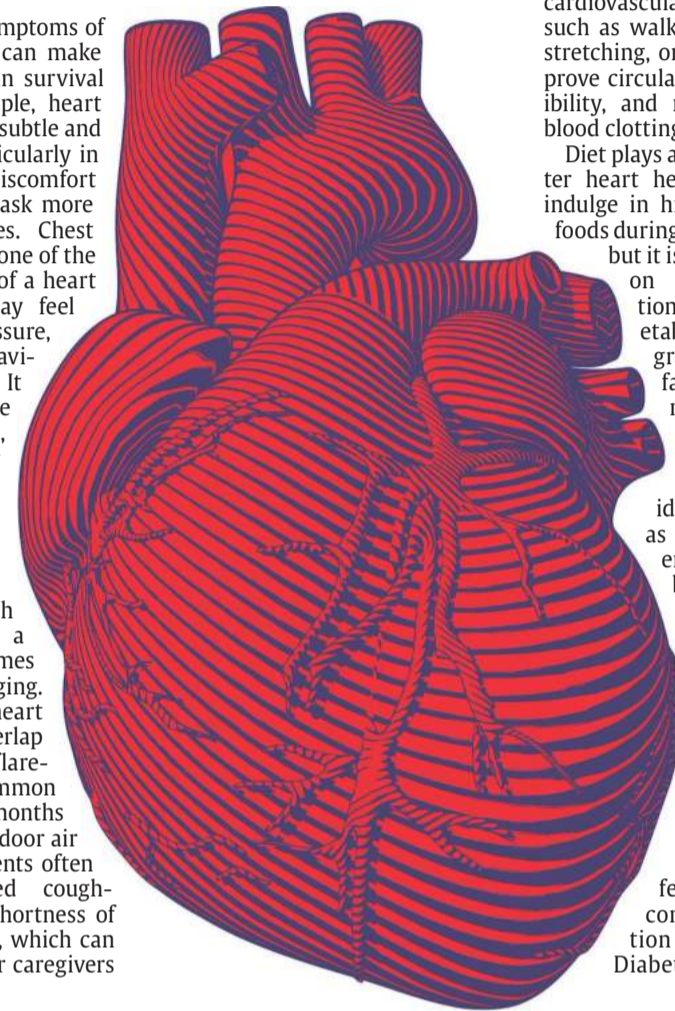
Moreover, healthcare infrastructure in the region must be strengthened to ensure accessibility during the harsh winter months. Medical facilities should remain operational despite heavy snowfall, and emergency services should be equipped to reach remote areas. This includes providing transportation for patients who may be unable to reach hospitals due to snow-blocked roads.

Public health initiatives should also include providing subsidies for heart health monitoring tools such as blood pressure monitors, glucometers, and cholesterol testing kits. This would empower individuals to take control of their health and act swiftly at the first sign of a problem. Community programs that promote healthy lifestyle habits—such as smoking cessation, regular physical activity, and healthy eating—will also go a long way in reducing the overall incidence of heart attacks in Kashmir.

### Conclusion

Kashmir's winter is more than just a season—it is a time that calls for heightened vigilance regarding heart health. Heart attacks during winter are a growing concern that requires immediate attention. By prioritizing prevention, increasing public awareness, and improving healthcare infrastructure, we can reduce the risks posed by the cold months. It is time for policymakers, healthcare providers, and individuals alike to come together to protect the well-being of Kashmir's residents, ensuring that winter remains a season of beauty, not a time of health crises. Together, we can make Kashmir's winters safer for everyone.

*The author is a dedicated medical professional with an extensive background in the field of healthcare. He holds a Master's degree in Medical Laboratory Technology (MSc, MLT) and a Bachelor's degree in the same field (BSc, MLT, BMLT).*



The importance of prevention during the winter months cannot be overstated. Individuals living with pre-existing conditions must take extra precautions to protect their cardiovascular health. One of the most basic, yet effective, ways to prevent heart attacks in winter is to stay warm

into thinking that the symptoms are simply related to their existing condition. In these cases, immediate medical attention is crucial, as both heart attacks and COPD exacerbations require different treatments.

For hypertensive and diabetic patients, being aware of the specific risks that winter poses

monitor their blood sugar levels and avoid sugary snacks. Hypertensive patients should check their blood pressure regularly, especially during cold spells when the risk of spikes is high. COPD patients should use their prescribed inhalers and avoid exposing themselves to cold air.

The importance of prevention during the winter months cannot be overstated. Individuals living with pre-existing conditions must take extra precautions to protect their cardiovascular health. One of the most basic, yet effective, ways to prevent heart attacks in winter is to stay warm. This can be achieved

# DeepSeek, Nvidia and the AI Race That's Shaping The Future

Daniele D'Alvia

The AI revolution is well under way and two companies - DeepSeek and Nvidia - stand out among those competing to lead it. Outside the financial world, the story might seem distant - but it really does have consequences for everyone. It comes down to why investors are paying so much attention to AI, and how this competition could affect the technology we use daily.

Developments in AI investment will shape the capabilities of the next generation of apps, smart assistants, self-driving technology and business practices.

DeepSeek, the new player on the scene, is a Chinese company that has been making huge waves in AI development. Its powerful technology could change things such as healthcare, finance - and even the way we interact with the internet. Investors are excited because they see DeepSeek as a potential leader in shaping the next generation of AI tools.

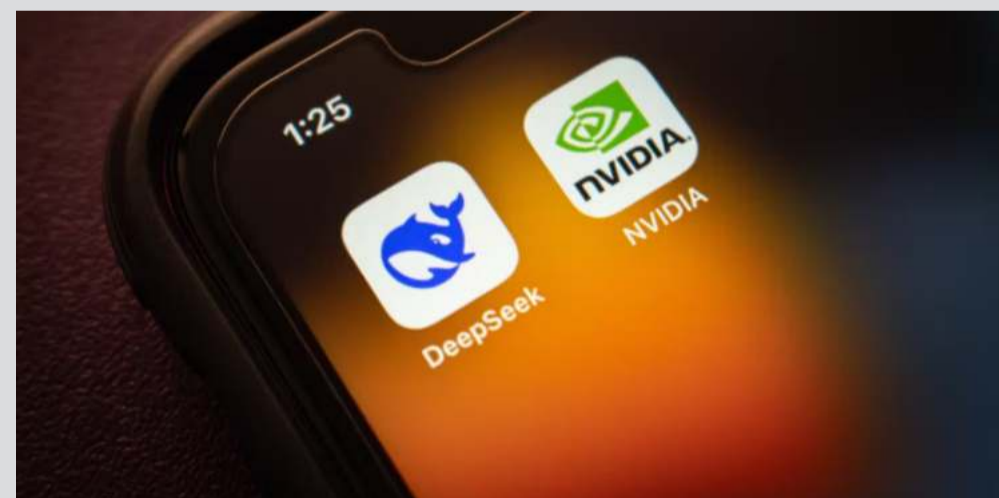
Meanwhile, Nvidia has long been a giant in AI hardware, producing the graphics processing units (GPUs, or chips) that power many AI applications. However, the rise of

DeepSeek has made some investors rethink their bets, leading to a sell-off in Nvidia shares, and wiping almost US\$300 billion (£242 billion) off the company's value.

Why does this matter? To put it simply, the AI race isn't just about corporate profits. The technology developed by companies such as DeepSeek and Nvidia is what powers voice assistants, recommendation systems on streaming platforms, self-driving car software and even medical breakthroughs. As investment flows into AI, it means that innovation could become more advanced and accessible - much faster than we previously expected.

When investors hear about a new company like DeepSeek making big advances, they often react by shifting their investments. This is what happened with Nvidia. Some investors sold their shares, fearing that DeepSeek might take away some of Nvidia's dominance in AI. This does not necessarily mean the company is struggling - only that markets move based on expectations, rather than just current success.

Speculation - where investors accept uncertainty and high risks in return for poten-



tially big returns - plays a key role in these shifts. Investors do not always wait for solid proof that a company will succeed, instead they often act based on excitement, predictions or just fear of missing out. This can cause rapid changes in stock prices, even before new technology is widely available.

Speculation can sometimes lead to instability, but it also helps to drive innovation. When investors put money into AI companies, it allows those companies to develop technology that could improve people's daily lives. This has happened before - during the

dotcom boom of the 1990s, investment rushed into internet startups. While many companies failed, others like Amazon and Google became global leaders.

Similarly, cryptocurrency investment surged in the past decade. While the hype led to many failures, blockchain technology - one of its key innovations - has since become a major part of modern finance and security systems.

### Is it a bubble?

With so much excitement around AI, some experts worry that the industry is experiencing a speculative bubble. A

bubble happens when investors pour money into a sector too quickly, driving up prices beyond their real value. This happened in the early 2000s with the dotcom crash that followed the boom years of the previous decade. Many internet companies received huge investments, but when they failed to deliver on their promises markets crashed.

Could the same happen with AI? It's possible - but unlike some past bubbles, AI is already being widely used in everyday life. The key question is not whether AI is important, but whether current investments reflect realistic

long-term growth or over-optimistic speculation.

The sell-off of Nvidia shares does not necessarily mean it is losing its place in AI. Instead, it could reflect investors trying to hedge their bets, moving some of their money to newer companies such as DeepSeek while still keeping Nvidia in their portfolios.

In other words, investors are looking into the potential "next big thing" (Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, for example, is touting a new AI model that claims to be superior to those of DeepSeek and Meta). Savvy investors often shop around like this to spread risk to avoid relying too much on a single company to bring them returns.

Beyond Nvidia and DeepSeek, there is a larger global race for AI dominance. Countries, including the United States, China and some European states, are investing heavily in AI research because they recognise how much power and influence this technology could bring. Governments are funding AI initiatives, and businesses are pouring resources into being the first to create groundbreaking AI systems.

But while speculation and innovation drive growth, reg-

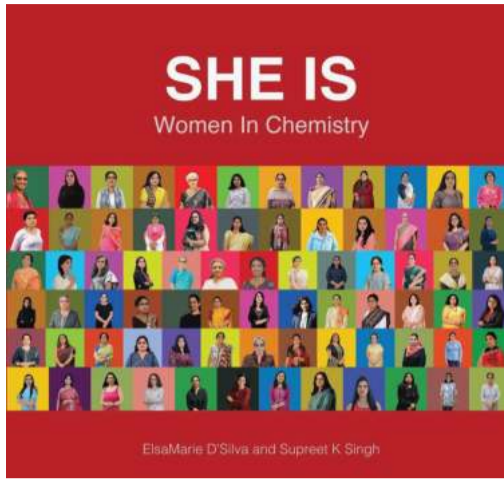
ulation is needed to prevent market and financial instability. The history of economic crashes shows that unchecked hype can lead to over-investment and eventual collapse. Regulators need to ensure that AI companies and investors operate responsibly, balancing growth with stability.

For example, regulators should provide clear AI investment guidelines, endorse transparency around the financial risks of investing, and be on the lookout for possible AI investment bubbles. Importantly, they should also introduce consumer protection policies to shield retail (non-professional) investors. And they should encourage international cooperation around regulation, working towards common principles.

The battle between DeepSeek and Nvidia is a sign of how AI is transforming the world. Investors, regulators and everyday consumers all have a stake in how this technology develops. While financial speculation can be unpredictable, it is also one of the driving forces behind the innovation that's shaping the future.

*By arrangements with The Conversation*

# Dr. Fatima Jalid from NIT Srinagar featured in 'She Is - 75 Women in Chemistry'



Srinagar, Feb 12: Dr. Fatima Jalid, Assistant Professor in Department of Chemical Engineering at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, has been featured in the recently launched book, 'She Is - 75 Women in Chemistry'.

The book, published by Beyond Black in collaboration with the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India and the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), UK, was officially unveiled on February 6 at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Bhopal.

Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, and Institute's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman, have

extended their heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Jalid.

In his message, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia stated that Dr. Jalid's recognition in 'She Is - 75 Women in Chemistry' not only highlights her individual achievements but also serves as an inspiration for aspiring women scientists across the nation.

"Her journey exemplifies the spirit of perseverance and innovation, reflecting the core values of NIT Srinagar and the broader scientific community," he said.

Prof. Atikur Rehman also extended his best wishes to Dr. Fatima Jalid for her future endeavors, emphasizing that she should continue to inspire young minds in the field

of science and research.

Meanwhile 'She Is - 75 Women in Chemistry' celebrates the journeys of 75 distinguished women from India who have made significant contributions to chemistry and allied sciences. Authored by ElsaMarie D'Silva and Supreet K Singh, it is the fourth book in the 'She Is' series, aiming to amplify the voices of women breaking barriers in STEM fields.

Dr. Jalid's inclusion in this esteemed list highlights her impactful research and dedication to the field of chemical engineering.

Dr. Jalid's inclusion in this prestigious list recognizes her contributions to chemical engineering.

She completed her B.Tech at NIT Srinagar in 2015, graduating as valedictorian and receiving a gold medal. She later earned her Ph.D. from IIT Delhi, specializing in computational catalysis and microkinetic modeling.

Her research has been published in high-impact journals, and she was awarded the Gandhian Young Technological Innovation Award in 2018.

Dr. Jalid's research interests include computational catalysis, microkinetic modeling, and the design of bimetallic alloy catalysts. Her work has been published in several high-impact journals, contributing to advancements in sustainable chemical processes.

## CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

### 3 MLAs Submit

across Jammu and Kashmir and presents a grave threat to the very fabric of our society. Since 2019 the issue has been compounded by its easy availability because of the mushrooming of liquor stores. Kudos to PDP MLA @ MirMohdFayaz for introducing a private (member's) bill seeking a ban on alcohol consumption. Much needed," PDP leader Itija Mufti said in a post on X.

"Liquor has no place in our spiritually rich society. A land known as 'Reshwa'er' (the land of saints) should not be tainted by alcohol trade. Since 2009 Er Rashid has been fighting against this menace and AIP remains steadfast in its mission to declare Jammu and Kashmir a dry state," a spokesperson of the party, led by Sheikh Abdul Rashid or Engineer Rashid, said in a post on X.

He said the AIP is also spearheading a move to ban online gaming, which has led to financial and emotional ruin for countless families.

"Unregulated online gaming has pushed many young people into gambling addiction and debt. This must be curbed before it causes more devastation," he added.

Pardesi also took to social media to announce that he has submitted a private member's bill seeking a ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The unchecked sale of alcohol disregards the religious and cultural ethos of Kashmir. Our heritage has always stood against intoxicants, and this bill is a step toward preserving those values," he said.

### Politicians Extend

the sale, consumption, and promotion of alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr. Nirmal Singh said, "I fully support the bill advocating for a ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir. The BJP has never supported alcohol consumption, and wherever our government is in power, we have taken strong measures against it," he said.

Dr. Singh highlighted the growing awareness in Kashmir regarding the adverse effects of alcohol but stressed the need for similar consciousness in the Jammu division. "If there are restrictions in Kashmir, why not in Jammu? The open sale and use of alcohol near schools, temples, and mosques is a serious threat to our society. Alcohol has destroyed families, and unfortunately, women are the worst victims," he added.

Addressing concerns about the economic impact on businesses dependent on alcohol sales in Jammu, Dr. Nirmal Singh dismissed such arguments, stating, "If we justify the business of alcohol, then what stops us from legalizing drugs? Both are harmful, and there must be strict restrictions. The health and well-being of our people are far more important than commercial interests."

Nizam-ud-Din Bhat, Congress MLA from Bandipora, on Wednesday said that the party considers liquor as a social evil and that they will assess the contents of the proposed bill when it is formally proposed in the assembly.

Addressing reporters in Bandipora, Bhat said the bill proposed by National Conference MLA Ahsan Pardesi calling for a liquor ban is a private member's bill, rather than an official proposal from the National Conference.

"This is not a National Conference bill; it is most likely a private member's bill. It remains to be seen whether or not the bill will be passed. It is within the jurisdiction of the Speaker and the Assembly Secretariat, and they will examine it," Bhat stated.

CPI(M) senior leader and MLA Kulgam M Y Tarigami, has said that the numbers are not a problem for the liquor bill to become law in the Assembly.

"We don't have our own constitution and we can't amend the constitution of India so the liquor ban bill requires only a simple majority to pass in the Assembly. It is not a constitutional amendment. The numbers don't seem to be a problem for the bill to become law," Tarigami told Greater Kashmir.

Tarigami however said that it needs to be seen whether the bill will be introduced in the upcoming session of Assembly. "There is a set procedure and the procedure is that the bill is first introduced and then put up for discussion before being put to vote. If the bill will be in the business of the House in the upcoming Assembly session, we need to see how the government replies to it. But when it comes to numbers and voting, I don't think that there would be a problem," he said.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) senior leader and chairperson Waqf J&K Dr Darakhshan Andrabi also supported introducing a bill in the assembly seeking a ban on liquor in Jammu and Kashmir.

"If law is implemented, it will be a good step," BJP leader said.

"We need to protect young people from drug abuse, stressing that efforts should be made to keep them away from such harmful substances," she added.

### Online Support

prohibit alcohol in the Union Territory. Expressing strong views on the matter, Hafiz Lateef, social media user, tweeted, "If beef is banned in other states of India where the majority is Hindu, out of respect for Hindu sentiments, why is alcohol easily available in Kashmir, where the majority is Muslim, disregarding Muslim sentiments? Ban alcohol in Kashmir!"

Similarly, Saurabh Gautam posted on X: "Alcohol has been banned in Gujarat for over a quarter century. It was done as a state government initiative. If the J&K government bans it, then it will be in good company."

The growing demand for declaring Jammu and Kashmir a dry state is reflected in legislative efforts, with three MLAs taking the lead in pushing for a ban. People's Democratic Party (PDP) MLA from Kupwara, Mir Mohammad Fayaz, Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) legislator from Langate, Sheikh Khurshid Ahmad, and ruling National Conference (NC) MLA from Lal Chowk, Ahsan Pardesi, have all submitted separate private members' bills advocating for a liquor ban.

The bills are expected to be tabled in the forthcoming session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, set to convene in Jammu for the budget session from March 3. Proponents of the ban argue that alcohol consumption contradicts the cultural and religious ethos of the region and has led to social and health concerns.

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Voicing his support for the initiative, Ekram Chikla, a resident of Srinagar, said: "Finally someone has come forward to address a complete ban on alcohol here in Kashmir. May Almighty Allah grant them success in this brilliant move. There are many other issues that today's youth are indulging in, but something is better than nothing. This initiative will be good for many Kashmiri families."

Rafi Mir also emphasized the need for the ban, stating: "Kashmir, known for its purity and rich heritage, does not need alcohol to thrive. A complete ban will help safeguard our youth from addiction and uphold our ethical and cultural values. Prioritizing health over revenue is the need of the hour!"

Expressing his views on the legislative efforts, Rafi Ahmad said: "I think this is a big issue taken up by these MLAs, and other members should support such a bill. This presents a big challenge for the current government. The common Kashmiri wants an alcohol-free Kashmir."

While support for the move is evident among a significant section of the populace, some voices have raised concerns about the economic implications of such a ban, particularly its impact on tourism and state revenue. However, advocates for prohibition maintain that public welfare and moral considerations should take precedence over financial concerns.

As the legislative process unfolds, all eyes will be on the J&K Assembly to see whether the proposed bills gain traction and lead to significant policy changes in the Union territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

### Crush Terrorism

to carry out disruptive activities.

"I have asked the senior officials to take strict action against the elements exploiting cyber space to carry out their disruptive activities and disinformation campaign. We must aggressively counter fundamentalist and extremist ideas and take action as per the law," he added.

The meeting was attended by DGP J&K, Nalin Prabhat; ADGP Hqrs, MK Sinha; ADGP CID, Nitish Kumar; Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari; IGP Kashmir, Vidhi Kumar Birdi; IGP Crime, Dr Sunil Gupta; IGP Security, Sujit Kumar; IGP Railways, Vivek Gupta; Range DIs, SSPs, Commandants of AP/IR Battalions and various other senior officers of J&K Police, in person and through virtual mode.

The DGP briefed the chair regarding the present security scenario of the valley and the roadmap put in place to counter the various security challenges like counter insurgency, law & order, protection of minorities, terrorist recruitment etc. at zonal, range and district level.

The IGP Kashmir also gave a detailed presentation highlighting the challenges and the

achievements of the Kashmir Zone and strategic foresight for the future.

LG Sinha wrote on X: "Directed officials to follow a zero tolerance policy to tackle terrorism. I have given JKP & Security Forces free hand to neutralise the terror ecosystem operating in the shadows. Those supporting & financing terrorism will have to pay a very heavy price."

"I have asked the senior officials to take strict action against the elements exploiting cyber space to carry out their disruptive activities and disinformation campaign. We must aggressively counter fundamentalist and extremist ideas and take action as per the law," the Lieutenant Governor added.

The Lieutenant Governor took appraisal of the working of various wings of J&K Police and expressed his satisfaction with regard to the crime related performance indices especially related to UAPA and NDPS.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the senior police officials and head of its various wings to work in close synergy with each other and intensify the efforts to crush terrorism and those aiding and abetting terrorists.

"Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Jammu Kashmir is witnessing an era of peace, progress and prosperity. I have full faith in your valour, effective, focused measures and better institutional arrangements to make Jammu Kashmir terror-free. Improved intelligence generation, coordination and precision in anti-terror operations are vital to meet the future security challenges," the Lieutenant Governor said.

### Probe Into Civilian

killed in Army firing on February 5 when he allegedly refused to stop his vehicle at a check post.

After the two deaths, the chief minister had said that incidents like these "risk alienating the very people who we need to carry with us on the road to complete normalcy".

"I have taken up these incidents with the Union Government & insisted that both incidents are inquired into in a time bound, transparent manner. The Government in J&K will also order its own inquiries," Abdullah had said in a post on X on February 6.

On Wednesday, Abdullah also said restoration of statehood to J&K was also discussed in the meeting with Shah.

"We also discussed the forthcoming budget session. We are currently in a Union Territory setup and the Centre has a role to play in the budget," he added.

### Holds Pre-Budget

During the discussions, the MLAs of Srinagar sought liberal funding for priority developmental projects and key public welfare initiatives in their respective constituencies, keeping in view the significance of the capital city. MLAs Ali Muhammad Sagar, Mubarak Gul, Shamim Firdous, Tanvir Sadiq, Ahsan Pardesi, Salman Ali Sagar discussed their plans in the meeting.

Notably, Jammu & Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) Chief, Tariq Hameed Karra skipped the meeting.

The consultation covered a wide range of issues, including traffic decongestion by exploring alternate routes, parking lots in downtown Srinagar, reducing vehicular pressure on roads, constructing flyovers, community halls. The restoration of water bodies, improvement of sports infrastructure, vertical housing projects, dredging of Dal interiors and the development of an efficient drainage system were also discussed.

MLAs highlighted the need for better drinking water quality, upgraded sewage treatment plants, improved electricity supply, and an effective solid waste management system. They further stressed the importance of scientific disposal of waste at Achan landfill site, identifying new dumping sites, introducing water ambulances in Dal Lake, dredging its canals, enhancing relief for fire victims, widening of interior roads & boulevard road and removing existing bottlenecks. A demand for creating employment avenues for the youth of Srinagar was also emphasized and making some provisions in the annual budget.

The meeting held with elected representatives from Bandipora and Ganderbal districts was attended by chairman DDC Bandipora, MLAs of Gurez, Sumbal, and Bandipora constituencies, and MLA of Kangan constituency from Ganderbal district. Notably, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah represents the Ganderbal constituency in the J&K Assembly and was briefed about budget proposals for Ganderbal district.

During the meeting, the MLAs presented various developmental proposals and infrastructure plans for their constituencies, focusing on providing of fire service stations, National Highway status for Bandipora-Gurez road, allowances for officials serving in far flung areas, employment to locals in HEP projects, providing critical medical equipment in Bandipora health institutions, basic facilities for tribal areas, reviving minor irrigation khuls, fish rearing and creating income generation opportunities in tourism centric locations.

They highlighted the need for improvements in health and education, as well as infrastructure development in respect of roads, water supply, power distribution, and irrigation.

The discussions also centered on boosting tourism and enhancing youth services and sports facilities. The MLAs emphasized the importance of ensuring employment opportunities for local youth in various projects and addressed key public demands concerning their respective constituencies.

The Deputy Commissioners from each district presented detailed presentations outlining the district profiles, demographics, and existing infrastructure in key sectors, including health, education, roads, drainage, public health engineering (PHE), and power sector.

The presentations also provided insights into the District Capex, Centrally Sponsored Schemes and ongoing projects under the current plan.

All MLAs expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister for involving them in the pre-budget consultations and acknowledged the inclusive approach of the government.

The meeting was also attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary Finance Santosh D Vaidya, Director General Budget M.S. Malik, Director General Expenditure Sajad Hussain and the Deputy Commissioners of Srinagar, Ganderbal and Bandipora with participants joining the meeting either personally or virtually through video conference.

### Kashmir Gears Up

The Auqaf said the sermon will be followed by a collective session of repentance and supplication (Tawba & Istighfar), and Isha prayers will be offered at 9:00 PM. "Notably, the arrival of Mirwaiz to Jamia Masjid is scheduled as per the allowance from authorities."

In Shia-dominated areas, Shab-e-Barat is observed with zeal, as the community holds the night in high esteem, illuminating their shrines and homes across Kashmir.

The cemeteries in Shia populated areas become a focal point for dua (supplication), Quran recitation, and seeking forgiveness. Devotees often light lamps and offer special prayers for the departed souls, as Shab-e-Barat is also considered a night when destinies are written.

In Zadiabal quarter of the old Srinagar, historic Baba Mazaar turns into a celebration ground on the occasion.

### CM Omar Not

an invitation to Omar Abdullah, despite his extensive experience in governance and security matters.

"We have already acknowledged that the Lieutenant Governor is responsible for overseeing law and order. However, in principle, Omar Abdullah should have been invited to the meeting due to his vast experience in handling security matters in Jammu and Kashmir," Wani said.

"This is not the first time the Chief Minister has been overlooked for such critical meetings. While we understand that security is not under the direct purview of the elected government in a Union Territory, Omar Sahib brings invaluable experience to the table. He served as the Chief Minister of a fully empowered state for six years and has a deep understanding of the region's security dynamics. His participation would have been beneficial for the LG administration itself," he said.

The security review meeting, chaired by LG Manoj Sinha at the Police Control Room (PCR) in Kashmir, was attended by senior officials from the Police, Army, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and other security agencies. The meeting discusses the current security situation and strategies for upcoming challenges in the region.

### Will J&K See

the majority of the areas.

It further said, "As of now we have sufficient power available and we are catering the same in accordance with the ongoing power curtailment schedule. We have also reduced the power curtailment in many areas of Kashmir region."

Pertinently, the Power Development Department (PDD) has been able to produce only 24 Megawatts (MWs) of electricity against the total capacity of around 250 MWs from the power plants of Kashmir region.

A top official from JKSPDC had said that it was producing only around 60 MW of power from the Kashmir power plants that have a power generation capacity of around 250 MW.

There is a total power generation capacity of around 1200 MW from the power projects of Jammu and Kashmir and 2250 MW from NHPC.

Earlier, Jammu and Kashmir was facing power generation shortage of nearly 80 Percent in the months of November and December.

From across the regions, PDD was generating only 200-260 MW of power from all power projects in Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

### Curve Electric

operates an innovative e-bike sharing platform aimed at reducing congestion and pollution, particularly in tourist-heavy cities. The funding round saw participation from key investors, including Jinesh Shah from Omnivore, Abhishek Agarwal from Accion, seasoned angel investor Komal Nailwal, and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from the Netherlands. This strategic investment highlights Curve Electric's potential as a major player in the sustainable urban transportation sector.

The fresh capital will be used to scale operations, advance technology, and expand accessibility. Since its launch, Curve Electric has completed over 60,000 rides, covering 750,000 kilometres, and offsetting 150 metric tonnes of carbon emissions. Operating with a fleet of 100 e-bikes across 11 docking stations in Srinagar, the platform has seen a high user retention rate, with 80 per cent of its riders being locals and 20 per cent tourists.

Co-founder Sheikh Yameen expressed optimism about the funding, stating, "This investment is a testament to the potential of sustainable innovation in our region. At Curve Electric, we aim to not only preserve the natural beauty of Kashmir but also redefine mobility for future generations, fostering hope and opportunity for our community."

ALSiSAR Impact, a key investor, lauded the startup's vision. "We aim to empower ventures focused on sustainability. Curve Electric exemplifies how innovation can protect the environment while driving economic growth," said Anuj Sharma, founder of ALSiSAR Impact.

Curve Electric was recently recognised after appearing on Shark Tank India, where its business model received widespread appreciation. Looking ahead, the company plans to expand to 10 cities across the Himalayan region within the next three years. It is also exploring off-grid solutions, such as solar-powered charging stations, to build a fully sustainable e-bike ecosystem. By partnering with hotels and resorts to set up docking stations, Curve Electric aims to promote eco-friendly tourism while contributing to the local economy and environmental conservation.

Sources said they have given a small percentage of the shareholding to the investors and secured an amount that will fuel the start-up growth in next few years.

### HC Issues Arrest

order 27 December last year, the Bench had observed that conduct of the authorities "prima facie shows their disdain for the Court orders."

"Once there is an order passed by this Court directing the respondents (authorities) to release withheld salary of the petitioner (Mir Aftab Yaseen) at admissible rates, the respondents had no option but to comply with the same, notwithstanding any Government instruction or Circular to the contrary."

If the authorities had any grievance against the orders, the court said, the only option available with them was to seek legal recourse against it.

### Army Man Killed

Bri Kamila village in the border district of Samba, Manhas was given a tearful adieu as thousands of mourners turned up at his funeral, which was held with full military honours.

Emotional scenes were witnessed as the mortal remains of the soldier reached his home, with his sisters placing a "rakhi" and "sehra" on his head before the last journey.

The villagers remembered Manhas as an enthusiastic cricketer, an extrovert and someone who was always ready to extend a helping hand to the needy.

"He served the Army for more than nine years and a half. He was posted in Siachen glacier (in Ladakh), Kashmir and Punjab, before moving to Akhnour recently. He returned to his unit on January 28 after a two-week leave from duty for his ring ceremony," his father Chagatar Singh, a retired police personnel, told reporters.

Manhas, whose younger brother is also in the Army, was supposed to get married around April 20-21, the grieving father said, as his relatives and neighbours made a beeline in front of the house to convey their condolences.

Chagatar Singh said his son joined the Army at a very young age to fulfil his desire to serve the country.

"His two sisters, one elder to him and another younger, are married. He was a cricket lover and made extraordinary efforts during his recent stay in the village to prepare a cricket pitch for youngsters," Mahesh, a childhood friend of the slain soldier, said.

Chuni Lal, another resident of the village, said Manhas was full of energy and was always motivating youngsters to get involved in sporting activities.

"We have lost a true gem in a cowardly terror attack. The enemy has no courage to face our brave soldiers and is undertaking such types of actions. We believe our forces will take appropriate action to ensure justice for the martyrs," he said.

## Expecting Statehood Soon, Discussions On: Itoo

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Senior National Conference leader and cabinet minister Sakina Itoo on Wednesday said discussions over the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir are going on and that they are expecting it to be restored soon.

Speaking to reporters in Jammu, Sakina, said discussions regarding the restoration of statehood are going on.

Terming statehood as the right of J&K people, she said a resolution in this regard was passed in the assembly as well, adding that Home Minister Amit Shah has already made commitments over the restoration of statehood in the Parliament.

Earlier, Itoo, who is the Minister for Health and Medical Education, said that directions were passed for the release of salaries to National Health Mission (NHM) employees.



In a post on X, Itoo said the government is committed to the welfare of healthcare workers and ensuring timely support.

**"Have passed the directions for the release of salaries of NHM employees. The government remains committed to the welfare of healthcare workers and ensuring timely support for their invaluable services," she said.**

"Have passed the directions for the release of salaries of NHM employees. The government remains committed to the welfare of healthcare workers and ensuring timely support for their invaluable services," she said.

Earlier, NHM employees had raised concerns over the delayed salary and urged the government to address the issue at the earliest—(KNO)

## Gujjarpatti Zalloora Residents Decry Official Neglect

Agencies

**SOPORE:** Residents of Gujjarpatti Zalloora, a remote village on the edge of Sopore bordering north Kashmir's Kupwara district have expressed anguish over years of administrative neglect, asserting that they too are an integral part of Kashmir and deserve equal access.

From inadequate healthcare to erratic electricity and lack of safe drinking water, the villagers say they have been left to fend for themselves, with little government intervention.

The villagers said that despite being part of north Kashmir's major township, the village still relies on outdated wooden electric poles, faces skyrocketing electricity bills without a steady power supply and suffers from acute water scarcity.

"Earlier, we used to pay Rs 110 per month, but now the charges have skyrocketed to Rs 1,000 or even Rs 1,500. We don't even get proper electricity, so why should we pay such hefty amounts?" a local resident questioned.

Raising concerns over the severe water crisis, another resident said that despite having pipelines, there is no proper drinking water supply. "We

have 'Nal without Jal' — there are pipes, but no water," one of the aggrieved residents said.

The villagers appealed to the government, including Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to address their long-standing grievances and provide them with the basic facilities they are entitled to.

Meanwhile, Additional Deputy Commissioner Sopore, S.A Raina, in a maiden public grievance darbar at the village assured the residents that their concerns would be addressed at the earliest.

Raina said several issues were resolved on the spot, while others beyond his jurisdiction would be taken up with the higher authorities.

Regarding the water scarcity issue, the ADC said Zalloora and its adjoining areas are currently being supplied water from a nearby spring. However, he admitted that rising demands and a shortage of mechanical staff have hindered proper distribution.

"A Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) scheme is already completed in the area, but lack of mechanical staff has delayed its implementation. We have taken up the matter and it is expected to be resolved soon," he assured—(KNO)

## Waqf Board Orders Audit Of Mehboob-ul-Aalam Shrine

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board has constituted an Audit Committee to review the accounts and properties of the Shrine of Mehboob ul Aalam (RA) at Gundpora village of north Kashmir's Bandipora district, covering the period from 2010-11 onwards.

The decision comes in response to public representations submitted to the Chairperson (MoS) of the J&K Waqf Board, followed by subsequent instructions for a thorough financial and administrative review of the shrine's assets.

As per an order, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Ob-

server, the committee comprises Nazir Ahmad Wani, I/c Auqaf Section – Committee Head, Sajad Hussain Bhat, Administrator, Sub Unit Ahemi Shareef Bandipora, Member Manzoor Shah, Accounts Assistant, Accounts Section, Member Reyaz Ahmad Wani, Teacher, Sheikh Hamza Waqf Middle School and industrial units," he said.

The CEO further informed that around 70% of the town's

The committee has been tasked with reviewing financial records, inspecting properties, and submitting a comprehensive report with recommendations within 21 days.

The committee has been directed to ensure transparency and accountability in managing shrine affairs.

## 5 Drug Peddlers Arrested Across Kashmir

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Continuing its fight against the drug menace, Police on Wednesday said to have arrested five drug peddlers in Srinagar, Kupwara & Anantnag districts, and seized contraband substances from their possession.

A Police team of Srinagar Police at a checkpoint established at General Road Allochibagh Bund near Sacred Mission School, intercepted a suspicious person who after noticing police team tried to flee but was apprehended tactfully, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to Kashmir Observer.

During the search, a sub-

stantial quantity of contraband substance was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Majid Shafi Najar son of Mohammad Shafi Najar resident of Chan Mohalla Allochibagh Srinagar.

In Kupwara, a Police team from Police Post Drugmulla, at a checkpoint established at FCI Bumhama intercepted two suspicious individuals. During the search, 1220 grams of Charas-like substance came from their possession.

They have been identified as Aijaz Ahmad Ganie son of Khazir Mohammad Ganie resident of Khumriyal and Hakim Din Khatana son of Taj Din Khatana resident of Gagal Katiyawali, police said.

No Passport Denial Over Kin's Militancy Links

## Political Parties Welcome High Court Decision

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Political parties on Wednesday welcomed the decision of Jammu and Kashmir High Court that passport cannot be denied to an individual over kin's militancy links.

National Conference spokesperson and MLA Zaidal, Tanvir Sadiq, termed the High Court ruling as a vital affirmation of individual rights. "Every citizen must be judged on their own conduct," he said, emphasizing that justice must be rooted in fairness. "The NC is committed to protect constitutional rights and dignity for all," he added.

J&K Peoples Conference President and MLA Handwara, Sajad Lone, welcomed the High Court's ruling and called the judgment a significant step against discrimination, stating that his party had already challenged the misuse of police verification as a tool for "collective punishment" through a petition filed by advocate Syed Sajad Geelani.

He expressed optimism that a broader ruling would follow, ensuring uniform application across J&K. "This should have happened much earlier, but better late than never. Our petition seeks a Pan-J&K extension of this verdict to help thousands



**THE HONORABLE HIGH COURT'S DECISION OF NOT DENYING a passport to an individual for merely being related to a terrorist is a step in the right direction.**



facing similar restrictions," he said.

Lone emphasized that their petition specifically demands strict implementation of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Validation of Character and Antecedents) Instructions, 1997, and amendments in the Government Order of 2021 and Circular of 2024, which mandate clear timelines for police verifications.

He stressed that the ruling would rectify systemic flaws and provide relief, particularly to J&K's youth. "This will ensure they are not unfairly penalized and receive equal opportunities as others in the country," he stated.

J&K PDP chief, Mehbooba Mufti in a post on X, said that the honourable High Court's decision of not denying a passport to an individual for merely being related to a militant is certainly a step in

the right direction.

Pertinently, the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Tuesday ruled that an individual cannot be denied a passport solely because of a family member's past involvement in the militancy.

The verdict came in the case of Mohammad Amir Malik, a 29-year-old graduate from Shagan village in Ramban, who was denied a passport due to his brother's militant background and his father's alleged role as an overground worker (OGW) for a terror outfit. "Merely because the petitioner's brother was a terrorist and his father is an OGW, he cannot be deprived of his fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution," Justice M.A. Chowdhary had stated, while delivering the judgment—(KNO)

## SOPORE FIGHTS GARBAGE CRISIS:

### 85 Violators Penalised, Rs 73,000 Fine Collected

Agencies

**SOPORE:** Intensifying its crackdown on violators of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2016, the Municipal Council in Sopore has issued notices to 85 violators and collected fines amounting to Rs 73,000 from erring individuals and businesses.

The actions were part of enhancing sanitation standards and enforcing solid waste management regulations across the north Kashmir town, officials said.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the council, Dr Showket Ahmed Bhat said that despite the challenges in maintaining sanitation, the department has been rigorously working to ensure cleanliness in the town.

He said that during the financial year 2024 till date, they penalised over 85 violators who failed to adhere to SWM regulations. "We collected a fine amounting to Rs 73,000. Those penalised include hoteliers, food outlets, shopkeepers and industrial units," he said.

The CEO further informed that around 70% of the town's



sanitation concerns have been addressed, with door-to-door garbage collection now being actively implemented. "We have been making significant efforts to improve sanitation and people have started availing these services. This progress has been possible due to the dedication of our team," he added.

Sopore, once plagued by heaps of garbage accumulating at frequent intervals across the main markets and public spaces, has witnessed considerable improvement in waste management.

Bhat, however, cautioned residents against dumping garbage along roadsides and market areas, warning of strict

legal action against defaulters. He urged them to cooperate with sanitation efforts and abide by SWM rules to maintain a clean and healthy environment.

The town currently depends on an integrated solid waste management facility at Jetty, Baramulla, as it lacks its own waste processing facility despite being a major business hub and one of the highest tax-paying townships in north Kashmir.

The Municipal Council said it has been consistently urging higher authorities to establish a dedicated waste management facility in Sopore to streamline the process further—(KNO)

## Forest Minister Conducts Public Outreach Camp In Kathua

Observer news Service

**KATHUA:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana conducted an exhaustive public outreach camp at Barnoti in Kathua, to assess local issues besides taking stock of the development scenario of the area.

The Minister had exclusive interactive sessions with the local populace which apprised him of their grievances and demands seeking speedy redress of the same.

Several delegations comprising industrialists, farmers, youth and community representatives called on the Minister and projected their issues and concerns. They highlighted various issues which inter alia included water supply, forest rights, tribal welfare, enhanced road connectivity, environmental preservation and other vital matters concerning welfare of their respective areas.



The Minister was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Superintendent of Police and other senior officers from the district administration.

During the tour, the Minister also met people in Samba and Vijaypur and listened to their grievances and development issues.

The Minister instructed the concerned departments to address the grievances raised by the locals of Samba and Vijaypur on priority basis.

He assured the delegations of the government's commitment towards resolving their con-

cerns in a time bound manner while emphasising inclusive and sustainable development.

"Our government under the leadership of Omar Abdullah is duty bound to resolve all the issues faced by the people. We are taking administration to people's doorsteps to ensure rapid development of every nook and corner of the region," Rana said in his address to the people of Kathua.

Rana said that with the recently inaugurated 7 water supply schemes in Kathua, many issues related to water scarcity have been resolved.

## Leverage Govt Schemes For Self-Reliance: Singh To Students

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Union minister Jitendra Singh on Wednesday asked students from Jammu and Kashmir to take advantage of different central government initiatives aimed at empowering them financially and professionally.

In a luncheon interaction hosted for a group of J&K youth, currently on a visit to Delhi as a part of the central government's youth exchange programme, he also underscored the importance of self-awareness and career planning, advising them to identify their strengths and align their aspirations accordingly.

Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel, discussed the enormous start-up, entrepreneurship and livelihood opportunities being provided by the Modi government and urged them to avail of the same.

The minister engaged in an insightful conversation with the youth urging them to take advantage of various central government initiatives aimed at empowering them financially and professionally.

A total of 125 students from J&K participated in the programme, gaining exposure to opportunities available under government schemes.

He encouraged the youth



from Kashmir to explore opportunities in their region's rich heritage industries, such as Pashmina weaving and wood carving, to secure sustainable livelihoods.

Singh emphasised that the scheme not only enhances skill sets but also ensures economic stability by providing financial incentives and employment prospects.

The minister commended the technological advancements in Kashmir's apple industry, where modern interventions have doubled apple production and improved shelf life, allowing farmers to expand their markets beyond the region.

He urged young minds to embrace such technological innovations and drive progress in their respective fields.

Singh reassured the youth that the government remains committed to their development and urged them to seize the available opportunities for a brighter future.

## 'Pregnancy Requires Utmost Care For Well-Being Of Both Mother & Child'

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Pregnancy is a crucial phase in a woman's life that requires utmost care to ensure the well-being of both the mother and the unborn child. Experts said that proper prenatal care, a balanced diet and emotional well-being play vital roles in ensuring a healthy pregnancy and a safe delivery.

Dr Sabina, a gynaecologist at the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), said that a well-managed pregnancy significantly reduces the risk of complications, supports fetal development and prepares the mother for a smooth childbirth experience.

"Regular prenatal check-ups help in monitoring fetal growth, detecting potential complications early, providing necessary vaccinations and supplements and educating the mother about labour and postpartum care," she said.

Dr Shagufta, another gynaecologist, highlighted the importance of nutrition during pregnancy. She said that expectant mothers should maintain a healthy diet rich in essential nutrients such as folic

acid, iron, calcium, protein and omega-3 fatty acids.

"Staying hydrated and engaging in moderate physical activity also contribute to overall maternal health," she said.

Dr Shagufta said that pregnancy complications can vary in severity, with common issues including gestational hypertension, which may lead to preeclampsia, gestational diabetes affecting blood sugar levels, anaemia causing fatigue and weakness, and thyroid disorders that impact metabolism and fetal development.

According to doctors, mental and emotional well-being are equally important during pregnancy. Both doctors said that pregnant women should seek support if they experience mood swings or feelings of sadness. They said practising relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and visualisation can help manage stress and promote a positive mindset.

The doctors advised that before taking any medication, herbs or supplements, pregnant women should always consult their healthcare provider to ensure safety—(KNO)

## DC Baramulla Presides Over Awareness Camp At Kunzer



Observer News Service

**BARAMULLA:** In a significant outreach initiative, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, presided over an Awareness Camp cum Block Divas at Town Hall, Kunzer. The event was organized to bring government services closer to the public, address grievances, and raise awareness about various welfare schemes.

At the outset, the DC inspected the stalls set up by various departments, where officials provided detailed information about key government schemes like PM Surya Ghar (Muft Bijli Yojana), Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Vishwakarma Scheme, PMAY and other flagship schemes. These stalls aimed to ensure that locals could easily access the information and resources available under these schemes.

In a further effort to ensure transparency and effective communication, concerned officers briefed the local public through video screens, offering clear and visual explanations of the application processes, benefits, and eligibility criteria for

each program which allowed for a more interactive and engaging experience for the public, helping them understand how to take advantage of these schemes.

During the camp, the DC interacted with the locals, listened to their concerns, and emphasized the importance of such outreach programs in addressing community issues and directed officers to ensure that grievances were resolved in a time bound manner, reiterating the administration's commitment to timely service delivery and people-centric governance.

Furthermore, Minga Sherpa encouraged the public to take full advantage of the various government schemes designed to benefit local citizens, with a particular emphasis on the PM-Surya Ghar initiative, highlighting that the scheme has been specifically introduced to help households reduce their electricity expenses by promoting the adoption of solar energy.

Later, Minga Sherpa distributed Sanction Letters, Ayush Cards, Land Passbooks and other certificates among eligible beneficiaries during the block.

## 1-Run Lead Wipes J&K's Bid For Maiden Ranji Trophy Semis Spot

Press Trust of India

PUNE: Kerala produced a doughty batting effort to hang on to a draw against Jammu and Kashmir, and progressed to the Ranji Trophy semifinals on the back of a slender 1-run first innings lead here on Wednesday.

Player of the match Salman Nizar (44 not out, 162 balls, 8x4) and Mohammed Azharuddeen (67 not out, 118b, 9x4 2x6) saw off nearly 43 overs during their unbroken 115-run alliance for the seventh wicket as Kerala made 295 for six in their second innings.

Their partnership was enough for Kerala, overnight 100 for two, to see off the final day's proceedings, and set up a semi-final meeting with former champions Gujarat from Febru-



ary 17. This will only be Kerala's second appearance in the Ranji Trophy last four round after the 2018-19 season.

They had lost to eventual champions Vidarbha by an innings and 11 runs at Wayanad last time.

"We believed in ourselves and took it (partnership) through the blocks of 10 runs each. J&K bowlers were also made our task tough. It was a similar approach we had adopted in

fully, we can achieve more," said J&K skipper Paras Dogra after the match.

Jammu and Kashmir left-arm spinner Abid Mushtaq also received an on-the-spot warning by on field umpires for chucking.

The delivery was deemed as a no-ball.

Kerala should also thank skipper Sachin Baby (48) and Akshay Chandran (48) for adding 58 runs for the third wicket stand but, more importantly, they had also consumed nearly 44 overs to ward of J&K bowlers.

**Brief scores:**

J&K: 280 and 399/9 declared drew with Kerala: 281 and 295/6 in 126 overs (Salman Nizar 44 not out, Mohammed Azharuddeen 67 not out, Sachin Baby 48, Akshay Chandran 48; Sahil Lotra 2/50).

the first innings," said Nizar during the presentation ceremony.

The left-handed batter had also made a vital unbeaten 112 in Kerala's first innings and stitched an 81-run alliance with Basil Thampi to give Kerala a crucial 1-run lead.

"We tried our best, but unfortunately we could not go all the way in this match. Credit to Kerala batters. But we are proud of the way fought till here, and hope-

## 3rd ODI: India Demolish England, Complete 3-0 Clean Sweep Of Series



Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD: A robust batting show led by the Shubman Gill's attractive century heralded India's 142-run hammering of England in the third and final ODI as the hosts completed a dominant 3-0 clean sweep to culminate preparations for the Champions Trophy, here on Wednesday.

India ticked all the remaining boxes with vice-captain Gill (112) following up his twin fifties earlier in the series with a seventh ODI ton of his career while middle-order mainstays Virat Kohli (52) and Shreyas Iyer (78) pushed India to a formi-

dable 356 in the first half. Indian bowlers then took over the mantle to complete the England demolition job, bundling out the visitors for a mere 214 in 34.2 overs to complete a comprehensive victory — their second largest in ODIs in terms of runs against a familiar opponent.

There was no change in the script for England, who came crashing down against spin after a sparkling start against pace, which was provided by the pair of Ben Duckett (34) and Phil Salt (24) in tow.

The slowness of the surface aided Indian bowlers as strike-making became difficult as the match progressed.

## Starc Withdraws, Smith To Lead Australia In Champions Trophy



Press Trust of India

SYDNEY: Steve Smith-led Australia will be without their frontline pace attack at the Champions Trophy after fast bowler Mitchell Starc withdrew from the tournament citing personal reasons.

The ODI World Cup holders have been forced to make several changes to their 15-member provisional squad due to injuries to captain Pat Cummins, pacer Josh Hazlewood, and all-rounder Mitchell Marsh, along with Marcus Stoinis' surprise retirement.

Starc, who appeared to be in discomfort due to a left ankle issue during the latter stages of the final Test in Galle last week, will also miss the upcoming ODI series in Sri Lanka starting Wednesday.

Crickets Australia said Starc has requested privacy and will not be commenting on his decision.

The development comes as a major blow for Australia, who will be without the three pacers -- Cummins, Hazlewood and Starc -- who played a crucial role in their 2023 ODI World Cup victory.

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