

Scooters, Stigma, & Survival: Inside Kashmir's Food Delivery Scene

Tashir Khan

Srinagar: Mohd Aneeq Shah navigates the crowded streets of Srinagar on his scooter, skillfully avoiding potholes, stray dogs, and impatient drivers. A bag of freshly prepared biryani, still steaming, is strapped to his back. It's 4 p.m., and he's racing against time, not only to satisfy a hungry customer



IF A CUSTOMER COMPLAINS, OUR ACCOUNTS GET SUSPENDED IMMEDIATELY. The company only starts an investigation after the suspension, not before."

but also to maintain his delivery rating. Like

Aneeq, hundreds of food delivery workers navigate Kashmir's unpredictable weather, facing challenges like snow in winter, scorching heat in summer, and heavy rains that can make driving dangerous.

The increasing demand for online food delivery has given rise to a new class of workers in Kashmir: young men, students balancing their

education with employment, and older individuals who find it difficult to secure alternative jobs. However, their work is anything but easy.

Unemployment Pushed Gig Work

Recently, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for July to September 2024, revealing concerns about unemployment rates. Among urban job seekers aged 15 to 29, Jammu & Kashmir recorded the highest unemployment rate at 32%. This crisis has compelled many young people to seek employment in the gig economy, with food delivery services being one of the | [More on P6](#)

Indian, Pak Armies Hold Talks Along LoC

Agencies

Jammu: Representatives of India and Pakistan Armies on Friday agreed to uphold the February 2021 ceasefire agreement and explore measures to prevent future misunderstandings.

An official said that Brigade commanders of both the countries held a flag meeting in Poonch district to ease tension after recent skirmishes and improvised explosive device (IED) incidents along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border.

"Besides agreeing to uphold the ceasefire agreement renewed on February 25, 2021, commanders | [More on P6](#)

'Remarks Against Islam' Srinagar Court Orders Arrest Of UP's Tyagi

KO Correspondent

Srinagar: A court here has ordered concerned SSP to constitute a team to arrest Jitendra Narayan Tyagi alias Waseem Rizvi in connection with a case registered over his alleged statement against a particular religion in 2021.

The directions by the court of Second Additional Munsiff, Judicial Magistrate 1st Class Srinagar, Vikas Bhardwaj, followed submissions by the counsel for the complainant that despite several processes, the accused has not appeared before the Court.

"Despite several endeavours, the presence | [More on P6](#)

Fresh Rain, Snow Renew Kashmir's Vital Lifelines

Jhelum Levels Rise, Achabal Spring Flows Again

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Fresh precipitation has brought some respite as it has led to increase in the water level in river Jhelum and its tributaries. Rains and snow have also refurbished Achabal Spring in South Kashmir.

According to the data, Jhelum's level at Sangam increased from -1.05 ft at 5:00 PM on Thursday to -0.74 ft at 5:00 PM on Friday.

At Ram Munshi Bagh, the level increased from 3.44ft from last evening to 3.54 ft till this evening, it added.

The water level of river Jhelum is below zero at multiple stations, the data states, adding that Rambiyara, Lidder and

Pohro Nallas were among the streams that were flowing below zero level on Friday evening.

The famous spring at the tourist spot Achabal in Anantnag, which had dried up for the first time in history, has rejuvenated and returned to its original state. Locals expressed relief that the water flow has been fully restored.

"It is heartening to see the spring replenished. I believe it is due to prayers. Even though the temperature was high and no rain or snowfall was expected in the valley, this revival feels miraculous," Mohammad Ashraf, a local, said.

Residents called for the preservation of water bodies. "Our lives depend | [More on P6](#)



A SEASONED UPHOLSTERER, SURROUNDED BY BAGS, fabric scraps, and a sewing machine, rests inside his modest shop in Srinagar. KO Photo by Faisal Khan.

Investments In J&K Must Have Land Investment Safeguards: CM

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday attended the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Jammu & Kashmir Annual Session-2025 titled "AMAZING J&K: Aspiring For New Growth Goals".

The event, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) J&K Council, brought together business leaders, industrialists, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders to discuss strategic actions to boost J&K's economic growth and development, driving the region's competitiveness and



business potential through a robust and resilient industrial and sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystem. | [More on P6](#)

'Will Live Up To People's Expectations'

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said his government would make attempts to live up to the expectations of the people but all issues cannot be addressed in one go. "I know people have expectations (from us) and it will be our endeavour to live up to those. But you should also realise that people have given us five years' time (mandate). It cannot be that all the demands can be fulfilled in the first budget itself. "A good start will | [More on P6](#)

SED Orders Return Of Attached Teaching Staff

Observer News Service

Srinagar: School Education Department Friday reprimanded all teaching staff deployed and attached for administrative works in different offices and institutions within or outside parent departments in Kashmir region.

In this regard, a latest official communiqué was issued by the Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK).

DSEK said that all the Teaching Staff deployed or attached for administrative works in different offices and departments were recalled with the directions to report to their original place of postings on December-12-2021 and July-01-2024.

The directorate said that despite clear cut instructions, it has come to notice of DSEK that a number of teaching officials have been made to continue in different office and institutions within or outside parent departments for administrative works on one pretext or the other without obtaining prior approval and orders of DSEK.

"The continuation of teaching staff in different offices and departments for administrative works despite instructions and orders conveyed from time to time reflects non-seriousness on the part of Chief Education Officers (CEOs), Drawing and Disbursing | [More on P6](#)



MeT Predicts 4-day Wet Spell From Feb 25

A four-day yellow alert has been issued by the local Meteorological Department from February 25 in Jammu and Kashmir divisions. With the forecast of dry weather conditions for next three days, Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow | [More on P6](#)

Property Cannot Be Seized Without Due Process: HC

M Ahmad

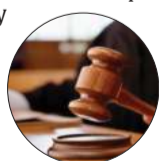
Srinagar: Observing that the right to property is a constitutional right guaranteed under the Constitution of India, the High Court J&K and Ladakh on Friday cannot be taken away without adopting due process of law.

Hearing a plea, a bench of Justice Sanjay Dhar also directed that then Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal "deserves to be proceeded against for having filed a false pleading" before the District Judge, Ganderbal.

The case pertained to taking over

possession of a building by District Development Commissioner and Additional Deputy Commissioner "without even informing the petitioner (owner) not to speak of obtaining his consent."

"The petitioner was not aware as to who is in possession of the building in question and it is only during the course of civil suit filed by him before the learned Principal District Judge, Ganderbal, that he came to know from the report of the Commissioner that the building is occupied by the District Administration," the Bench said, | [More on P6](#)



SC Seeks Yasin Malik's Virtual Presence

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday directed jailed JKLF chief Yasin Malik to appear in a Jammu court from Tihar Jail through video-conferencing on March 7. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan noted that the Jammu sessions

court was "well-equipped" with the video-conferencing system enabling the virtual examination.

The CBI sought the transfer of the trials in the 1989 case of the kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of former union minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, and the 1990 | [More on P6](#)

CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu

Sh. Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister

NATIONAL STARTUP FESTIVAL

22-23 February 2025, JAMMU

Dr. Jitendra Singh
Hon'ble Union Minister of State and Vice President, CSIR

Inauguration by

Dr. Jitendra Singh

Hon'ble Union Minister of State (I/C) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Minister of State in the PMO, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, DoAE, Department of Space and Vice President, CSIR

Venue: Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu



To place an advertisement

CALL +91-194 2502327

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

'Many Gluten-Free Foods Are High In Calories And Sugar Low On Fiber And Protein And They Cost More'

The Conversation

US consumers often pay more for gluten-free products, yet these items typically provide less protein and more sugar and calories compared with gluten-containing alternatives. That is the key finding of my new study, published in the journal *Plant Foods for Human Nutrition*.

This study compared gluten-free products with their gluten-containing counterparts, and the findings suggested that many perceived benefits of gluten-free products – such as weight control and diabetes management – are exaggerated. Currently, many gluten-free products lack dietary fiber, protein and essential nutrients. Manufacturers often add supplements to compensate, but the incorporation of dietary fibres during processing can hinder protein digestion.

In addition, gluten-free products generally contain higher sugar levels compared with other products containing gluten. Long-term adherence to a gluten-free diet has been associated with increased body mass index, or BMI, and nutritional deficiencies. Gluten-free products – defined in the US as those that contain less than or equal to 20 parts per million of gluten – largely lack wheat, rye, barley and sometimes oats, all rich sources of arabinoxylan, a crucial non-starch polysaccharide. Arabinoxylan provides several health benefits, including promoting beneficial gut bacteria, enhancing digestion, regulating blood sugar levels and supporting a balanced gut microbiota.



Our study also pointed out that it is difficult to find a gluten-free product that excels in all nutritional areas, such as high protein and fibre content with low carbohydrates and sugar.

On the other hand, gluten-free seeded bread contains significantly more fibre – 38.24 grams per 100 grams – than its gluten-containing counterparts. This is likely due to efforts by manufacturers to address fiber deficiencies by using ingredients such as pseudo-cereals, such as amaranth and quinoa hydrocolloids – meaning water-soluble macromolecules used in gluten-free baked goods made with quinoa flour.

These improvements, however, vary by manufacturer and region. For example,

gluten-free products in Spain tend to have lower fibre content than their gluten-containing counterparts.

Why it matters

The term "gluten-free diet" has become a buzzword, much like "organic," and is now a part of everyday life for many people, often without a full understanding of its actual benefits. While a gluten-free diet is a medical necessity for people who are sensitive to gluten, a condition called celiac disease, or for those with wheat allergies, others adopt a gluten-free diet due to perceived health benefits or because it's a trend. In 2024, the global gluten-free product market was valued at USD 7.28 billion and projected to reach USD 13.81 billion by 2032.

The US market share is estimated to be USD 5.9 billion – a little less than half of the global figure. Approximately 25 per cent of the US population consumes gluten-free products. This figure is far higher than the roughly 6 per cent of people with non-celiac wheat sensitivity, 1 per cent of people with celiac disease and even lower percentages of people with wheat allergies.

This suggests that many people adopt gluten-free diets for reasons other than medical necessity, which may not offer health or financial benefits.

What's next Investment in research and development is essential to create more nutritionally balanced gluten-free products using locally available ingredients. This will require human feeding trials with different formulations of gluten-free products to ensure that these products meet nutritional needs without adverse effects. Collaborations between governments could help secure subsidies, which would reduce production costs and make these products more affordable. Although the initial costs of research and maintaining a gluten-free production line are high, using local ingredients and financial incentives can make these products more cost-competitive compared with their gluten-containing counterparts.

Public education is also important to keep people informed about the pros and cons associated with a gluten-free diet.

'Narcissists More Likely To Feel Excluded, Which Can Further Intensify Personality Trait'

Press Trust Of India

An narcissist is more likely to be perceived as being excluded in a social situation, compared to those less self-absorbed, and the feeling can further intensify the personality trait, a study has found. Researchers, led by those from the University of Basel in Switzerland, said the perception of feeling excluded could stem not only because of one's narcissistic tendencies -- excess focus on oneself and own needs -- but also from a tendency to misinterpret ambiguous social signals as exclusion.

"Feeling ostracised is a subjective experience based on the perception of social cues by the individual. Some may be intentionally ostracised, while others may merely believe they are being excluded when that's not the case," lead author Christiane Buttner from the University of Basel, said. The study, published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, performed

multiple analyses of data collected from questionnaires and observations of participants while engaging in group activities.

In one of the analyses, the researchers looked at 2,500 participants in a virtual ball-tossing game, where two other players either included or excluded them. Another experiment presented hypothetical social scenarios and asked participants to assess how excluded they felt.

The results showed that narcissistic individuals were more likely to perceive ambiguous social interactions -- where ostracism is not explicitly clear -- as exclusionary. "Our findings suggest that individuals with higher levels of narcissism are more sensitive to exclusion cues, leading them to perceive ostracism more frequently," Buttner said.

However, the team performed additional experiments and found that people often prefer to avoid highly narcissistic individuals.

The result provided evidence that the relationship between narcissism and social exclusion is possibly two-way.

Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER BANDIPORA

Email: cmobandipora2@gmail.com, P.No: 01957225551,225535

NOTIFICATION

Sub:-2nd Tentative Seniority List of Jr. Assistants borne on the strength of District cadre Bandipora as it stood on 17.12.2024.

Whereas, vide Notification No. CMOB/Estt/2024-25/1600-1604 Dated:-17-12-2024, a 1st Tentative Seniority list of Jr Cadre Posts viz., Jr Theatre Tech/ Jr Lab Tech/Jr Dental Tech/ Jr Physiotherapist/ Jr Drivers/Jr X Ray Tech./BHWs/FMPHW/Jr. Grade Nurses/Jr. Assistants borne on the strength of District cadre Bandipora as it stood on 17-12-2024 was notified and uploaded on the official website of District Administration Bandipora for information of all concerned; and

Now 2nd tentative seniority list of Jr. Assistants borne on the strength of District cadre Bandipora as it stood on 17-12-2024 is hereby notified as per Annexure-I of this notification for information of all concerned through their controlling officers as well as through official website of District Administration Bandipora viz., www.bandipora.nic.in

Any official having objection in this regard shall submit the representation through their controlling officers along with documentary evidence to this office within seven (07) days from the date of issuance of this notice thereafter no objection shall be entertained and this seniority list shall be treated as final and notification in this regard shall be issued.

No:-CMOB/Estt/2024-25/2146-51
DIPK-12272/24
Dated:- 21-02-2025

Chief Medical Officer
Bandipora.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir UT. OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION BARAMULLA.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

e-NIT No:- 119/11595-604/2024-25/RnB/Bla Dated 19.02.2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders (In Single Cover System) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors Regd. on JKPWDOMS With J&K UT Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works. The Contractors should mandatorily be registered on JKPWDOMS for making online payment to the agency as per Govt. Order No.:186-PW(R&B) of 2023 dated 08-05-2023:-

| S. No | Name of Work | Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs) | Earnest money (In Rs.) | Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs.) | Time of completion | Class of Contractor | Major Head of Account | Project Authority | Position of AAA | Position of funds |
|-------|--|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Development of Public Park at Doolipora Kreeeri, Baramulla (Balance Work). | 9.98 | 4 | 600/- | 15days | C&D | MH-4059-UT Sector | PWD (R&B) | Accorded | Available |

1. The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the scheduled date given below.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | Date of issue of Tender Notice | 19.02.2025 |
| 2 | Period of downloading of bidding documents | From 20.02.2025 to 25.02.2025 4:00PM |
| 3 | Bid submission Start date | 20.02.2025 |
| 4 | Bid Submission End Date | 25.02.2025 upto 4:00PM |
| 5 | Date and time of Opening of Bids (Online) | 26.02.2025 upto 11:00AM in the office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla |

2. Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059 mentioning there in the name of work/ NIT No. in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.

3. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG (between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Baramulla. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award in the form of CDR/FDR/BG (The Bank Guarantee should be valid for 45 days beyond DLP), strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the total cost, which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.

4. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site at the office of the Executive Engineer, R&B Division Baramulla.

5. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of technical bids.

6. The bidder shall be debared for tendering process if-
a) Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
b) Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
c) Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

7. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form).

No. 11595-604
DIPK-12267/24

Executive Engineer
R&B Division Baramulla

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION CONSTRUCTION DIVISION, SRINAGAR.

Gist of Notice Inviting e-Tender

e-NIT Nos. MICD/60, MICD/61, MICD/62 and MICD/63 of 2024-25 all dated: 20-02-2025.

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of UT of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited in two cover reputed Mechanical/Electrical SSI unit holders/contractors/fabricators/firms for following works respectively. The bidding process shall be completed online in two covers viz. Cover '1st' -Tender fee and Earnest Money details, Deposit, fulfillment of prequalification criteria, technical specifications and acceptance to terms and conditions of the tender. Cover '2nd' - Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

| e NIT No. | Name/ Particulars of the work | Name of Division | Quantity. | Cost of document/ tender fee (In Rs.) | Earnest money (In Rs.) | Validity of Rates |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| MICD/60 of 2024-25 Dated: 20/02/25 | Various electrical and plumbing works required in main wash room and in the office of Chief Engineer at Directorate Office I&FC Department, Srinagar | Mechanical Irrigation Construction Division, Srinagar | As per requirement | Rs. 100/- | Rs. 420/- | 90 days |
| MICD/61 of 2024-25 Dated: 20/02/25 | Repairs to 6.6/0.44KV 500 KVA HT Auxiliary transformer at Rafiabud High Lift Irrigation Scheme | | | Rs. 100/- | Rs. 400/- | |
| MICD/62 of 2024-25 Dated: 20/02/25 | Loading, unloading and stacking of material from Peerzoo park near G.P.O Srinagar to Lethpora Divisional store MICD Srinagar by mechanical transport | | | Rs. 200/- | Rs. 1800/- | |
| MICD/63 of 2024-25 Dated: 20/02/25 | Repairs to electrification in Corridor of administrative Section of Directorate Office of I&FC Department Srinagar | | | Rs. 100/- | Rs. 400/- | |

Position of funds:- Demanded ARD Approved
AAA:- Available
Key/critical Dates

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Date of Hosting In Website/ Publish date | 20/02/2025 (1600Hrs) |
| Document download/sale start date | 20/02/2025 (1600 Hrs). |
| Bid submission start date | 20/02/2025 (1600Hrs) |
| Bid submission end date | 01/03/2025 (1500 Hrs) |
| Bid opening date | 02/03/2025 (1600 Hrs) |

Each tender should be accompanied with a Bid declaration Form/Cost of tender document in the form of as detailed above, pledged to the Executive Engineer MICD Srinagar in absence of Bid declaration form, the Tenders shall be rejected outrightly.

Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Any information regarding the tenders can be had from this office on all working days.

DIPK-12264/24
dated: 21-02-2025

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Mech. Irr. Const. Division, Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change my name in my Aadhar card bearing no 7667 6302 5067 from Naseema banoo (old name) to Sabreena Mushtaq (new name) . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Sabreena mushtaq
R/o Ladhoo khrew pulwama

jd

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name in the electricity connection bearing consumer ID -- 020605000727 from Syed Atiqullah Shah, S/O Syed Noor Ud Din Shah, R/O Peer Mohalla Path Pora, Narbal, Budgam to Syed Athar Hassan, S/O Syed Atiqullah, R/O Pethpora, Narbal, Budgam.
Anybody having any objection in this regard may contact Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited, Sub Division Narbal, Budgam within seven days from the publication of this notice. After which no objection will be entertained.

Syed Athar Hassan
S/O Syed Atiqullah
R/O Pethpora, Narbal, Budgam

HKO

Subject:- Grant Of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & Style "M/S Just Married Holiday Tour and Travels situated at Dhoiwan

Public Notice

Whereas I, Mr. Fayaz Ahmad Khan S/o Ab Ahad Khan R/o Mamoosa Pattan KASHMIR intend to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under the name & style of M/S Just Married Holiday Tour and Travels situated at Dhoiwan KASHMIR 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 (Letter 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. / Adventure Tour Operator 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/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration(email id: ddtregl23@gmail.com) within a period of 7days 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.

bmj

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 Madhat Manzoor Bhat S/o Manzoor Ahmad Bhat R/o Chichilora Tehsil Kharhama Distt Baramulla with verified date of birth 22/05/2020 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.

fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

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 Mohammad Anas Bhat S/o Ishfaq Ahmad Bhat R/o Khambayar Tehsil Pattan distt Baramulla with verified date of birth 06/08/2020 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.

fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the General public that my Son's name and parantage in his Aadhar Card bearing Aadhar No:- 3745 3986 0985 , has been wrongly mentioned as Sajid Hamid Rather S/O:- Ab Hamid Rather instead of Sajid Hameed S/O :- Abdul Hameed Rather . Now I am applying for its Correction . If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact the same in the office of the General Manager Ranbir Govt Press Jammu within a period of seven days from the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after expiry of stipulated period.
Abdul Hameed Rather
F/O. Sajid Hameed
R/O :- Nahama .Tehsil . Qaziabad Kralgund
Distt : Kupwara .Pin Code 193302 .



fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my Adhaar card bearing no: 524806427151 as Noora Begum while my correct name is Noori Begum which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Noori Begum
W/o Gh Rasool Najar
R/o Andergam Pattan

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

Its for the information of general public that I want to change my name in driving license bearing licence no JK052008004111 from Fayaz Ahmed Rather S/o GHULAM RASOOL RATHER R/O WAGOORA to Fayaz Ahmad Rather if anybody having any objection to this change of name he/she may file his /her objections in the office of Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO), Baramulla, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection will be entertained.

Name: Fayaz Ahmad Rather
S/O: GHULAM RASOOL RATHER
R/O: Wagoora Distt Baramulla

fko



CM Reviews Functioning Of Raabita Office

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday chaired a review meeting of the CM's Public Services and Outreach Office, Raabita, in Srinagar to assess its functioning and strengthen its role in addressing public grievances effectively.



During the meeting, the Chief Minister directed that Raabita Nodal Officers be designated at the district level to ensure prompt and efficient handling of public issues. He stressed the need for a proactive approach in reaching out to people, ensuring that government initiatives and grievance redressal mechanisms are accessible to every citizen.

A detailed presentation was given on the office's working, highlighting key achievements and ongoing initiatives aimed at enhancing public service delivery.

The Chief Minister reiterated his government's unwavering commitment to a transparent, accountable, and people-centric administration. He instructed officials to adopt a more responsive and result-oriented approach, ensuring that grievances are resolved in a time-bound manner. He emphasized on improving the quality of disposal of public grievances and to ensure that grievances are actually resolved when updating the final disposal of each grievance.

30-Hour Water Shutdown JSD Keeps Stock Of 2.61 Lakh Liters Of Water Available

Agencies

Srinagar: Ahead of the 30-hour water shutdown, the Jal Shakti Department (JSD) has kept over 2.61 lakh liters of water stock available for the consumers in the areas where the water supply would remain affected from today.

A top official in the JSD said that 15 water tanks with the capacity of 9,000 liters each have already been kept available for the consumers while additional 14 water tankers with the capacity of 9,000 liters have been brought from different areas to ensure that the consumers in the affected areas would not face any hardships.

"In order to cater the needs of people in the next 30 hours from tomorrow, we have made available a total of 29 water tankers with 9,000 liters each. We will ensure that nobody faces inconvenience in the next 30 hours from (Saturday)," he said.

The 29 water tankers having a capacity of 2.61 lakh liters water has been stocked for the consumers

Pertinently, the Executive Engineer Water Works Division Srinagar had on last Tuesday issued an "urgent public notice" regarding a 30-hour shutdown of the Sindh Power Canal HEP Old Ganderbal and desilting of the Forebay.

As per the Urgent Public Notice, this shutdown is scheduled to take place from '22nd to 23rd February 2025' as part of necessary repair work by the Department of Civil Investigation & Design Wing, JKPCDC.

As a result of this work, raw water supply to the Water Treatment Plants of Nishat, Alusteng, and Rangil will be severely impacted. Consequently, potable water supply will be affected in major parts of Srinagar City and surrounding areas.

Tulip Garden Generates Over Rs 14 Cr Revenue In 1 Year

Agencies

Srinagar: The famous Tulip Garden, located at the foothills of the Zabarwan Mountains here, is proving to be a 'goldmine' for the Jammu and Kashmir Government.

According to the official documents accessed, the garden generated Rs 14.35 crore revenue in the year 2024, an all-time high since it was first inaugurated in 2007 by then J&K Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Notably, UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi was among the first to enter into the garden in 2007, buying a ticket for Rs 50 out of her own pocket.

The documents reveal that the garden's revenue has seen a steady increase over the years. In 2020-21, it generated Rs 2.49 crores, followed by Rs 6.70 crores in 2021-22. The revenue rose to Rs 13.46 crores in 2022-23 and reached an estimated Rs 14.35 crores in the last financial year (2023-24). This revenue was generated from entry tickets, permissions for videography, and the sale of plant material.

Notably, the Tulip Garden, a visual spectacle of vibrant colors, showcased 1.7 million flowers this year, including 73 varieties of tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, and other spring blooms.

The 2023-24 season witnessed an unprecedented 4.46 lakh visitors, comprising local, national, and international tourists, marking an all-time high in the garden's history.



Traders Association Central Lal Chowk Erected information boards urging tourists to avoid liquor consumption at public places. KO Photo Abid Bhat

'Avoid Liquor, Drugs, Spitting' Traders In Lal Chowk Launch Unique Campaign

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Traders in Srinagar's commercial hub of Lal Chowk have put up signboards and standees in front of their establishments to appeal to the tourists visiting Kashmir to refrain from consuming liquor and drugs.

The traders said they welcome tourists with open arms, but urge them not to consume liquor and drugs.

The sign boards put up at several places in Lal Chowk read: "Welcome dear tourists. The Traders Association, Central Lal Chowk invites you to experience the beauty of our heaven on earth! For a memorable and enjoyable trip, we kindly request: Love and cherish your family."

"Avoid liquor, drugs, spitting on roads and smoking. Respect our culture and traditions. Stay blessed and enjoy time in our enchanting city," it added.

President of the Traders Association, Bilal Ahmad, said the initiative was launched following frequent incidents of tourists consuming liquor and getting into fights in the area, especially with their families.

Avoid liquor, drugs, spitting on roads and smoking. Respect our culture and traditions. Stay blessed and enjoy time in our enchanting city

"Often, shopkeepers in Lal Chowk have witnessed drunken tourists fighting with their families. Women and children are seen upset, often crying and in shock. As hosts, we welcome all visitors, but we strongly urge them to refrain from consuming liquor to ensure a peaceful and pleasant atmosphere for all," he said.

The association's general secretary, Sheeraz Ahmad Mir, also supported the move, saying it is a shared responsibility of all to maintain the cultural ethos of the city while providing a safe and enjoyable experience for the tourists.

The traders expressed hope their message will promote responsible tourism and encourage visitors to respect the traditions of Kashmir while enjoying their stay in the valley.

The initiative was welcomed by the locals and tourists as well.

"We want tourists to come here and enjoy, but the culture and tradition of this place should also be respected. Drinking alcohol or consuming other intoxicants is harmful for health, so one should refrain from it," a local Faisal Dar said.

A tourist, Sujata, said, "If you are coming with family, roam around and enjoy. What will you get by consuming intoxicants?"

"But, if you have come with friends and you want to enjoy a little, then do it sitting in the hotel. It does not look good to do something like this in the open," she added.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MACHINERY DIVISION KASHMIR, Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Department, Srinagar. CANCELLATION NOTICE

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DIVISION SHOPIAN. CORRIGENDUM NO:-0L Subject:- Providing or Raw water main from Singloo Nallah to SSFP Kundalan and Providing of Filter Media to SSFP Kundalan for WSS Manzimpora.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-Tender Notice 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 with closing date-11.03.2025 up to 15:00 Hrs.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-Auction Notice The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Northern Railway, Firozpur for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Auction from eligible and registered bidders for the following works over Firozpur Division:

TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686 PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883 PDD: 0194-2450213 FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155 CAPD: 18001807011 SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081 Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +919484100200 AIRPORTS SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 RAILWAYS SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259 ANANTNAG: 0192-228243 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: 44 ZUHR 12:45 ASR 4: 41 Magrib 6:25 ISHA 7: 45 HIJRI CALENDAR 23 Shaban 1446

This Day In History 896 - Pope Formosus crowned Arnulf King of Carinthia and Holy Roman Emperor 1071 - Battle of Cassel; Robert I the Frisian defeats Arnulf III/I 1281 - Simon de Brion elected Pope Martinus IV 1288 - Girolamo Masci elected Pope Nicolas IV 1300 - Pope Boniface VIII delegates degree 1495 - French King Charles VIII enters Naples to claim crown 1744 - Battle of Toulon or Battle of Cape Sicié: British vs. French & Spanish fleet 1746 - French troops conquer Brussels 1784 - 1st US ship to trade with China, "Empress of China", sails from NY 1797 - The Last Invasion of Britain by the French, begins near Fishguard, Wales 1821 - Spain sells (east) Florida to United States for \$5 million 1825 - Russia & Britain establish Alaska-Canada boundary 1828 - Russia & Persia sign Peace of Turkmentsjal 1836 - Dutch garrison evacuates fort Du Bus New Guinea 1864 - Battle at Dalton Georgia 1904 - The United Kingdom sells a meteorological station on the South Orkney Islands to Argentina; the islands are subsequently claimed by the United Kingdom in 1908. 1904 - The Hague Tribunal gives its decision in claims against Venezuela; it sets the sum to be paid by Venezuela and gives preferential treatment to the three powers that initiated the block - Britain, Germany, and Italy. 1922 - London issues a unilateral declaration of Egyptian independence 1940 - German air force sinks 2 German destroyers, killing 578 1942 - World War II: President Franklin Roosevelt orders General Douglas MacArthur out of the Philippines as American defenses collapse 1945 - Arab League forms (Cairo) 1945 - British troops take Ramree Island, Burma 1965 - USSR launches Kosmos 57 into earth orbit (Voskhod Test) 1966 - Soviets launch Kosmos 110 with Veterok & Ugolek, 1st 2-dog crew 1972 - US President Richard Nixon, meets with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in Beijing. 1973 - US & China agree to establish liaison offices in Beijing & Washington, D.C. 1979 - St Lucia gains independence from Britain. 1980 - Afghanistan declares martial law 1983 - Hindus kill 3000 Muslims in Assam, India. 1986 - Start of the People Power Revolution in the Philippines. 1989 - UK physicist Stephen Hawking calls Star Wars a "deliberate fraud". 1989 - US authors demonstrate against Iranian death threats against Salman Rushdie, author of "The Satanic Verses" 1991 - Bush & US Gulf War allies give Iraq 24 hrs to begin Kuwait withdrawal. 1995 - Algiers police kill at least 99 prison rioters. 997 - Dolly the Sheep, world's first cloned mammal (from an adult cell) is announced by the Roslin Institute in Scotland. 2012 - Train crash in Buenos Aires, Argentina, kills 50 and injures hundreds. 2013 - 29 people are killed and 150 are injured by 3 Syrian army missiles in Aleppo. 2013 - The European Commission forecast for 2013 expects growth of 0.1% across the 27 members of the EU but a contraction of 0.3% in the Eurozone economy. 2014 - Matteo Renzi becomes Prime Minister of Italy 2016 - 10 million people are without water in Delhi after caste protests in Jat sabotage the Munak water canal 2017- Discovery of 7 Earth-sized planets orbiting star Trappist-1 announced in Journal "Nature" - raises possibility of alien life 2018- Neanderthals, not humans, were the first artists on Earth, producing red cave paintings 65,000 years ago in Spain, according to new research published in "Science"

Why has Education Taken a Hit in Kashmir?

Tehreer

“
Despite rapid technological advancements and evolving global job market demands, nearly 40% of courses in the region have not been updated for over a decade, according to a 2023 report by the Jammu and Kashmir Higher Education Council. This disconnect leaves students ill-prepared for contemporary careers, as rote learning takes precedence over critical thinking and problem-solving

As Jammu and Kashmir grapples with an alarming dropout rate of 25.33% at the secondary level—above the national average—districts like Anantnag (46.61%) and Budgam (43.18%) paint a bleak picture of educational disengagement. The universities, once bastions of academic excellence, now languish at the bottom of national rankings, their infrastructure and resources woefully inadequate. A 2020 report revealed that only 20% of these institutions have digital classrooms, a mere 15% possess functional laboratories, and just 10% have digital libraries. These staggering numbers illustrate the systemic neglect of the region's education sector, where chronic underfunding, outdated curricula, and socio-economic factors threaten to undermine the future of the generations to come.

Underfunding and Infrastructure Deficits: A Barrier to Competency

The chronic underfunding of Jammu and Kashmir's higher education system has debilitating consequences. With only 2,432 crores allocated to education in 2020-21—a mere 2.3% of the state budget—institutions are left grappling with outdated infrastructure and inadequate resources. In stark contrast, states like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu allocate 4.2% and 4.5% of their budgets, respectively. The impact of the underfunding is glaring: crumbling classrooms, ill-equipped laboratories, and a glaring absence of digital learning resources. Such deficiencies hinder meaningful learning and limit students' exposure to modern educational practices. In remote districts, schools and colleges face additional challenges like frequent power cuts and inadequate internet connectivity, making digital learning nearly impossible. With no robust infrastructure for research and innovation, students in Jammu and Kashmir are often disadvantaged compared to their peers in other states, reducing their competitiveness in national and international academic arenas.

The Erosion of Creative Learning

The psychological burden has exacerbated the whole mental outlook. In an environment dominated by competition, creativity has taken a backseat. Social media amplifies this stress, compelling students to chase fleeting online trends instead of pursuing meaningful academic goals. A 2020 report by Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) found that 67% of students in the region believed social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok interfered with their academic responsibilities. Creativity fuels ad-



vancements in technology, literature, arts, and social innovation, making it essential for holistic societal development. The decline in creative learning is not just a problem for individual students but a societal concern as well. Without nurturing creativity, problem-solving skills, and innovative thinking, the region risks falling behind in a rapidly changing world that increasingly values these attributes.

Economic Instability and the Education-Employment Gap

Jammu and Kashmir's staggering unemployment rate of 23.1%—with young women facing a shocking 48%—creates a bleak scenario for students. Economic insecurity often forces them to abandon education in favor of immediate, precarious employment opportunities. For many rural and economically marginalized students, supporting their families becomes a priority, making higher education seem irrelevant. This economic disconnect is further exacerbated by the growing obsession with coding boot camps and certificate courses. Driven by the fear of missing out (FOMO), students pursue multiple short-term skills without mastering any. The fragmented knowledge they acquire makes them less competitive in the job market, both within and outside the region. Most educational institutions in Jammu and Kashmir offer theoretical knowledge with limited opportunities for practical application. As a result, students graduate with degrees that fail to match the demands of contemporary job markets.

Outdated Curriculum and Pedagogical Methods

A significant yet often overlooked challenge is the outdated curriculum and traditional pedagogical methods

prevalent in Jammu and Kashmir's higher education institutions. Despite rapid technological advancements and evolving global job market demands, nearly 40% of courses in the region have not been updated for over a decade, according to a 2023 report by the Jammu and Kashmir Higher Education Council. This disconnect leaves students ill-prepared for contemporary careers, as rote learning takes precedence over critical thinking and problem-solving. The emphasis on rote learning stifles creativity and critical thinking, leaving students ill-prepared for modern careers that require problem-solving skills and adaptability. Teaching methods remain largely lecture-based, with minimal use of digital tools, interactive learning modules, or experiential teaching approaches. The absence of project-based learning further limits students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios. This not only hampers their employability but also contributes to the brain drain, as talented students seek better educational and career opportunities outside the region.

Reviving the Lost Virtue of Learning: The Way Forward

Reversing the decline in Jammu and Kashmir's higher education system requires a multi-pronged approach. Firstly, increased investment can serve as a catalyst. Additionally, public-private partnerships (PPPs) should be leveraged to modernize infrastructure, establish research centers, and set up digital learning hubs. Encouraging corporates to adopt educational institutions through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework can provide long-term financial stability and bring expertise-driven improvements to education delivery.

Addressing the funding deficit re-

quires urgent intervention. One solution lies in adopting community-driven models like Rajasthan's "Adarsh Vidyalaya" initiative, which encourages local businesses, NGOs, and alumni associations to contribute resources and funds. The government can incentivize these contributions by offering matching grants, thereby fostering a collaborative ecosystem to improve educational infrastructure and reduce financial dependency on state resources.

To counter the negative influence of social media, integrating digital literacy and responsible social media use into educational curricula is essential. The European Union's Digital Competence Framework offers a practical model for fostering balanced online habits. Incorporating such modules in teacher training and student programs can reduce distractions and promote healthier learning.

Additionally, schools must offer counseling services focused on mental health and stress management. Workshops on creative thinking and mindfulness, along with community-led initiatives involving parents, teachers, and counselors, can foster holistic and engaging learning environments. Solving the employment education gap requires vocational training and strong industry-academia ties. Career counseling services and financial incentives for companies hiring local graduates can boost employment. Additionally, university incubation centers can foster entrepreneurship and reduce reliance on traditional jobs.

Modernizing the curriculum in line with UGC guidelines and adopting innovative teaching methods are imperative. Encouraging project-based learning and industry collaborations, as demonstrated by Australia's STEM Education Strategy, can re-engage students. Institutions should form curriculum revision committees comprising academics, industry experts, and student representatives. These committees can ensure that the curriculum remains dynamic and aligned with global trends. Additionally, incorporating experiential learning through simulations, case studies, and fieldwork can make education more engaging and practical.

It needs strong determination from the state government and policymakers to make necessary changes at the right time to stop this growing exodus of students from classrooms.

*Report prepared by: Falak, Saifulah Bashir, Rifat Mir, Nawreen Rafiq, Irene Keen, Adeeba Amin, Afreena and Musab, Maleeha Shafiq. Research cell of the Department of Political Science, University of Kashmir

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

Climate Change Is Nobody's Baby

Net-zero appears a distant dream for India; globally, the situation is much the same.

Somit Dasgupta

One of the decisions taken in the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP) was the preparation of a biennial update report (BUR), which was to be submitted every two years. In compliance to this, India submitted its fourth BUR (BUR 4) in December 2024, after the first three submissions in January 2016, December 2018, and February 2021. In addition to this, India has submitted three national communication (NC) reports (as mandated by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992) in June 2004, April 2012, and December 2023. Both these reports — BUR and NC — are expected to provide an inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the country in question along with the mitigation and adaptation measures initiated. The difference is that the NC is a comprehensive report that is submitted every four years whereas the BUR is a shorter, more frequent update of the progress, to be submitted every two years. An analogy which comes to one's mind is the difference between the erstwhile Five-Year plans and the annual plans which put into action the targets

visualised in the Five-Year plans.

BUR 4 contains data for 2020 and the total GHG emissions have been estimated at 2.9 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. GHG consist primarily of CO₂, methane, and nitrous oxide, and the total GHG content prevalent in the atmosphere is arrived at not by adding up the individual units but by adding up the warming potential of each gas. That is why GHG is measured in terms of CO₂ equivalent, where the warming potential of CO₂ is taken as the numeraire. To give an example, if the warming potential of CO₂ is taken as 1, the corresponding figures for methane and nitrous oxide are 21 and 310 respectively over a 100-year period. As far as India is concerned, CO₂ accounts for 80% of its GHG whereas methane and nitrous oxide account for 13% and 5% respectively.

According to Our World in Data (a non-governmental organisation based in the UK), India's CO₂ emissions have grown from 1.68 billion tonnes (BT) in 2010 to 2.42 BT in 2020. This translates to a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 3.7%. The CAGR for 2000-2010 was relatively higher at 5.4%, as carbon emissions went up from 0.99 BT to 1.68 BT. In contrast, the global CAGR for carbon emissions for 2000-2010 and 2010-2020 were 2.7% and 0.5% respectively.

Net Zero Tracker (an open-source independent organisation collating data on climate), has enumerated that 145 countries covering 76% of global emissions, 78% of the world's gross domestic product, and 84% of the population have declared to go net-zero. This declaration could be through a policy document, a pledge, or even by enacting laws. Incidentally, 53 countries are absolutely silent on the issue. To go net-zero by 2050, carbon emissions have to be reduced by half by 2030. We are nowhere near this goal. Carbon emissions did come down during the pandemic but have gone up again. An element of despondency has crept in among the developing nations, and one of the main reasons is the reluctance of the developed world to provide grants/concessional aid to tackle climate change. This was repeated at COP29 where only \$300 billion was agreed to when the actual requirement is in trillions, perhaps \$6 trillion. The move by the US to exit the Paris treaty was the final nail in the coffin. If the world's largest cumulative polluter can simply walk away, it will have some demonstration effect. One can clearly see a rethink on the part of some countries, including India, of what they plan to do to battle climate change. The latest Economic Survey (2024-25) ac-

knowledges that low carbon growth has significant trade-offs and that India's goal is to become a developed country by 2047. A veiled reference seems to be that if required, fossil fuels will be tapped to achieve developed country status. There are other telltale signs too. India has missed the deadline (December 31, 2024) to submit its Biennial Transparency Report and has also missed the deadline (February 10) for submitting its revised nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Only 13 countries have submitted their updated NDCs till now, giving targets for 2035.

What is India's status on decarbonisation? The energy sector accounts for 91% of the CO₂ emitted primarily by burning fossil fuels used for power generation, industries, and road transport. We seem to have some plan for decarbonisation only for the power and road transport sectors, and that too is faltering. India's addition to renewable generation is much less than what is required keeping in mind the growth in demand. Consequently, we are trying to maximise our coal-based generation by importing more coal and delaying the retirement of old coal-generating stations. Battery storage is still expensive, and in any case, India is fully dependent on importing critical minerals to

manufacture batteries. Regarding road transport, the growth of electric cars is waning due to inadequate charging stations, high upfront cost, low mileage per charge, etc. As far as the industrial sector is concerned, the remedy probably lies in green hydrogen which, frankly speaking, is a mirage today. Green hydrogen is difficult to produce and store, and difficult to transport, apart from a host of other problems. Experts say green hydrogen will not be competitive vis-à-vis fossil fuel-based hydrogen in the near future. Moreover, carbon capture and storage are uneconomical and will remove a very small portion of the carbon generated. All these issues are merely scratching the surface of what otherwise is a huge problem.

Readers can draw their own conclusion whether net-zero by 2070 is a possibility for India. The only solace is that globally, the situation is much the same. The fact is that climate change is nobody's baby.

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

Whispers of the Silk Route

The Uyghurs' Hidden Legacy at Yarkand Sarai

Ayat Adil

The Yarkand Sarai is a modest two-story structure with a rich history of trade, culture, and tenacity. Located in the vibrant city of Srinagar, where the Jhelum River runs serenely, it was constructed between the 18th century and the early 20th century. This caravanserai was an essential refuge for Central Asian traders, particularly those escaping peril and seeking safety in the stunning Kashmir Valley. Among these traders were the Uyghurs, an ethnic Turkic minority whose journey to this historic place is replete with tales of survival and hardship.

The Uyghurs: A Brief History

Originating from numerous Central Asian nomadic tribes, the Uyghurs have a rich history spanning more than two millennia. They are primarily Muslims who have created a distinctive cultural identity characterized by their language, traditions, and rituals. The Uyghurs were well known for their significant role in trade along the Silk Road, which linked East and West through commerce and cross-cultural interaction.

Nonetheless, the Uyghurs' recent history has been fraught with difficulties. When the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the Chinese government increasingly harassed them. Attempts to integrate ethnic minorities into Han Chinese society led to considerable turmoil for the Uyghur community. Reports of human rights violations, such as mass detentions in "re-education camps," have drawn international condemnation.

The Journey to Yarkand Sarai

In the late 1940s, as conditions in Xinjiang worsened due to political crackdowns and violence, about 70 Uyghur families set out on a difficult journey to find safety in Kashmir. This migration involved crossing the dangerous Karakoram mountain range during harsh winter weather. Many faced great hardships along the way; historical records indicate that over 400 people lost their lives due to freezing temperatures and treacherous terrain.

Upon arriving in Kashmir, these families sought refuge in Yarkand Sarai—a historic caravanserai that had provided rest for traders for centuries. Initially welcomed by local communities, the Uyghur refugees found comfort in a land that offered them protection from their oppressors. They began to rebuild



YARKAND SARAI

their lives while holding onto their cultural heritage.

Life at Yarkand Sarai

For many years, the Uyghur community thrived at Yarkand Sarai. They enriched local trade and culture while preserving their unique identity. By establishing businesses and connecting with local markets, they introduced their delicious dishes—like lagman (hand-pulled noodles), kebabs, and various types of bread—into the local food scene.

The community's spirit was marked by resilience as they adapted to life in a new place while honoring their traditions. They celebrated festivals and maintained cultural practices that reflected their identity as Uyghurs. The lively bazaars of Srinagar were filled with laughter and conversation as families came together for weddings or religious holidays, blending Kashmiri customs with their own.

However, over time, the political landscape in Kashmir changed significantly. The ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan over territorial disputes began to overshadow local concerns. The rise of violence and unrest made life increasingly difficult for all communities in the region. Amid this chaos, many members of the Uyghur community chose to migrate to countries like Turkey or Saudi Arabia in search of better opportunities or safety.



By recognizing their history and advocating for their rights, we contribute to a more inclusive narrative that celebrates diverse cultures enriching our world. The story of the Uyghurs is not just one of loss but also one of hope—a demonstration of human resilience that deserves acknowledgment and support as they navigate an uncertain future while cherishing their cultural heritage within Kashmir's intricate landscape

The Current Situation: A Silent Struggle

Today, only one Uyghur family remains in Kashmir, quietly living in the Rajbagh neighborhood of Srinagar. This family has chosen to stay anonymous due to fears for their safety and well-being. Living under constant threat from both local authorities and external pressures related to their heritage, they are reluctant to engage with the media or discuss their identity publicly. Their desire for privacy stems from genuine concerns about potential repercussions.

The remaining family members face numerous challenges: limited resources, financial struggles, and an uncertain future amidst ongoing political unrest. Their situation reflects broader issues faced by marginalized communities in conflict zones as they strive for recognition while trying to maintain their cultural identity.

Cultural Preservation Amidst Adversity

Despite these challenges, this last remaining Uyghur family is dedicated to preserving their cultural heritage even in a tough environment. They quietly uphold traditional practices by preparing dishes that connect them to their culinary roots and celebrating festivals that reflect their customs—though they do so cautiously to avoid drawing unwanted attention.

Yarkand Sarai stands as a powerful symbol of Kashmir's historical role as a key trading hub between South and Central Asia. Once bustling with traders from diverse backgrounds—including Uyghurs—the caravanserai represents perseverance against hardship. The bond between Kashmiri culture and Uyghur heritage is significant; both groups share stories of displacement and struggle against oppressive forces—Kashmiris against Indian governance and Uyghurs against Chinese authorities—creating a connection rooted in shared histories of resilience.

The Legacy of Yarkand Sarai

Yarkand Sarai is more than just an old building; it is a living testament to the rich history of trade and cultural exchange that once thrived along the Silk Route. Established in the 18th century by Maharaja Pratap Singh, this caravanserai was an important rest stop for traders coming from regions like Yarkand and Kashgar.

During its prime, Yarkand Sarai served as more than just a way station; it became a melting pot where merchants would gather to share stories while conducting business. This blending of cultures significantly fueled urban development in Kashmir and helped shape its unique identity.

However, after India's partition in 1947 and subsequent geopoliti-

cal changes, traditional trade routes were disrupted. The once-bustling community of Uyghur traders saw a dramatic decline as many either returned home or sought new opportunities elsewhere.

Today, Yarkand Sarai houses about 50 families, primarily consisting of underprivileged Ladakhi residents who struggle to navigate life within this crumbling structure, deemed unsafe by authorities. These families face challenges in meeting basic needs like clean water and sanitation while also dealing with eviction threats from the government.

Conclusion: A Call for Recognition

The story of the Uyghurs at Yarkand Sarai is one marked by strength amid adversity—an integral part of Kashmir's complex history. From their historical migration seeking safety from persecution to their ongoing fight for survival and anonymity, they exemplify the complexity of displacement and the quest for cultural preservation.

As global conversations about human rights continue, it is vital to highlight the experiences of this last remaining Uyghur family in Kashmir alongside those living at Yarkand Sarai today. Their struggles serve as a reminder of the broader challenges faced by ethnic minorities seeking refuge from oppression but often encountering new hurdles in foreign lands.

By recognizing their history and advocating for their rights, we contribute to a more inclusive narrative that celebrates diverse cultures enriching our world. The story of the Uyghurs is not just one of loss but also one of hope—a demonstration of human resilience that deserves acknowledgment and support as they navigate an uncertain future while cherishing their cultural heritage within Kashmir's intricate landscape.

In honoring this history and supporting its current inhabitants—both those who remain hidden out of fear and those who tirelessly advocate for survival amid challenges—we not only respect our shared past but also lay down pathways for better understanding across borders defined by conflict rather than unity.

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

Youtube at 20

Alex Connock

The world's biggest video sharing platform, YouTube, has just turned 20. It was started inauspiciously in February 2005 by former PayPal employees Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim – with a 19-second video of Karim exploring San Diego Zoo.

That year, YouTube's disruption of the media timeline was minimal enough for there to be no mention of it in The Guardian's coverage of TV's Digital Revolution at the Edinburgh TV Festival.

Twenty years on, it's a different story.

YouTube is a massive competitor to TV, an engagement beast, uploading as much new video every five minutes as the 2,400 hours BBC Studios produces in a whole year. The 26-year-old YouTube star Mr Beast earned US\$85 million (£67 million) in 2024 from videos – ranging from live Call of Duty play-alongs to handing out 1,000 free cataract operations.

As a business, YouTube is now worth some US\$455 billion (2024 Bloomberg estimate). That is a spectacular 275 times return on the US\$1.65 billion Google paid for it in 2006. For the current YouTube value, Google could today buy British broadcaster ITV about 127 times.

YouTube has similar gross revenue (US\$36.1 billion in 2024) to the streaming giant Netflix – but without the financial inconvenience of making shows, since most of the content is uploaded for free.

YouTube has 2.7 billion monthly active users, or 40% of the entire global population outside China, where it is blocked. It is also now one of the biggest music streaming sites, and the second biggest social network (to Facebook), plus a paid broadcast channel for 100 million subscribers.

YouTube has built a video Library of Babel, its expansive shelves lined eclectically with Baby Shark Dance, how to fix septic tanks, who would win a shooting war between Britain and France ... and quantum physics.

The site has taken over global children's programming to the point where Wired magazine pointed out that the future of this genre actually "isn't television". But there are flaws, too: it has been described as a conduit for disinformation by fact checkers.

So how did all that happen? Eight key innovations have helped YouTube achieve its success.

1. How new creativity is paid for

Traditional broadcast and print uses either the risk-on,

fixed cost of hiring an office full of staff producers and writers, or the variable but risky approach of one-off commissioning from freelancers. Either way, the channel goes out of pocket, and if the content fails to score with viewers, it loses money.

YouTube did away with all that, flipping the risk profile entirely to the creator, and not paying upfront at all. It doesn't have to deal with the key talent going out clubbing all night and being late to the set, not to mention other boring aspects of production like insurance, cash flow or contracts.

2. The revenue model of media

YouTube innovated by dividing any earnings with the creator, via an advertising income split of roughly 50% (the exact amount varies in practice). This incentivises creators to study the science of engage-

ment, since it makes them more money. Mr Beast has a team employed just to optimise the thumbnails for his videos.

3. Advertising

Alongside parent company Google/Alphabet, and especially with the introduction (March 2007) of YouTube Analytics and other technologies, the site adrenaalised programmatic video advertising, where ad space around a particular viewer is digitally auctioned off to the highest buyer, in real time.

That means when you land on a high-rating Beyoncé video and see a pre-roll ad for Grammarly, the advertiser algorithmically liked the look of your profile, so bid money to show you the ad. When that system works, it is ultra efficient, the key reason why the broad, demographics-based broadcast TV advertising market is so

challenged.

4. Who makes content

About 50 million people now think they are professional creators, many of them on YouTube. Influencers have used the site to build businesses without mediation from (usually white and male) executives in legacy media.

This has driven, at its best, a major move towards the democratisation and globalisation of content production. Brazil and Kenya both have huge, eponymous YouTube creator economies, giving global distribution to diverse voices that realistically would be disintermediated in the 20th century media ecology.

5. The way we tell stories

Traditional TV ads and films start slow and build to a climax. Not so YouTube videos – and even more, YouTube Shorts – which prioritise a big emotive hit in the first few sec-

onds for engagement, and regular further hits to keep people there. Mr Beast's leaked internal notes describe how to do sequential escalation, meaning moving to more elaborate or extreme details as a video goes on: "An example of a one thru three minute tactic we would use is crazy progression," he says, reflecting his deep homework. "I spent basically five years of my life studying virality on YouTube."

6. Copyright

Back in 2015, if someone stole your intellectual property – say, old episodes of Mr Bean – and re-broadcast it on their own channel, you would call a media lawyer and sue. Now there is a better option – Content ID – to take the money instead. Through digital rights monetisation (DRM), owners can algorithmically discover their own content and claim the ad revenue, a material new income stream for producers.

7. Video technicalities

Most technical innovations in video production have found their way to the mainstream via YouTube, such as 360-degree, 4k, VR (virtual reality) and other tech acronyms. And now YouTube has started to integrate generative AI into its programme-producing suite for creators, with tight integration of Google's Veo tools.

These will offer, according to CEO Neal Mohan, "billions of people around the world access to AI". This is another competitive threat to traditional producers, because bedroom creators can now make their own visual effects-heavy fan-fiction episodes of Star Wars.

8. News

YouTube became a rabbit hole of disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy, via a reinforcement-learning algorithm that prioritises view time but not editorial accuracy. Covid conspiracy fans got to see "5G health risk" or "chemtrail" videos, because the algorithm knew they might like them too.

How can the big, legacy media brands respond? Simple. By meeting the audience where the viewers are, and putting their content on YouTube. The BBC has 14.7 million YouTube subscribers. ITV is exploiting its catalogue to put old episodes of Thunderbirds on there. Meanwhile in February 2025, Channel 4 also announced success in reaching young viewers via YouTube. Full episode views were "up 169% year-on-year, surpassing 110 million organic views in the UK".

By arrangements with The Conversation

Messages Like ‘You Are Slim, Smart, Fair’ To Unknown Woman At Night Amount To Obscenity: Court

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai: A sessions court here has ruled that sending messages like “you are slim, look very smart and fair, I like you” to an unknown woman at night amounts to obscenity.

The Additional Sessions Judge (Dindoshi) D G Dhoble made

these observations while up-holding the conviction of a man booked for sending obscene messages on WhatsApp to a former corporator.

The obscenity must be judged from the perspective of an “average person applying contemporary community standards”, noted the order of February 18.

The court noted that pictures and messages were sent to the complainant between 11 pm and 12.30 am with content like “you are slim”, “you are looking very smart”, “you are fair”, “my age is 40 years”, “are you married or not?” and “I like you”.

No married woman or her husband who are “reputed and

(former) corporators” would tolerate such WhatsApp messages and obscene photos, particularly when the sender and the complainant do not know each other, the court said.

“Nothing has been brought on record by the accused that there was any relationship between them,” it said.

The judge held that the messages and the act amounted to an insult to the modesty of a woman.

Earlier, the accused was convicted by a magistrate court here in 2022 and sentenced to imprisonment for three months. He subsequently challenged the decision in the sessions court.

Moto Morini Seiemmezzo 650 Range—Now Starting at Rs.4.99 Lakhs

Srinagar: Adishwar Auto Ride India (AARI) has announced a significant price revision for the Moto Morini (MM) Seiemmezzo 650 line-up in India, making premium Italian motorcycles more accessible to enthusiasts. This strategic move aligns with AARI’s 2025 vision for Moto Vault and Moto Morini, reinforcing its

commitment to expanding the brand’s reach and appeal in the Indian market.

As part of this initiative, AARI has introduced the MY-2025 Seiemmezzo 650 Scrambler and Retro Street models at a new price, enhancing their value proposition for riders who appreciate Italian design, performance and heritage.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Scooters, Stigma,

few accessible options available to them.

At 23, Asif Ahmad from Khanar has been working with Swiggy since 2023. He took up the job after his father’s passing, becoming the family’s primary breadwinner.

What began as a means of survival has now become a full-time job, yet he notes that his earnings are declining while his hours are increasing. “A year ago, I could earn 1,500 per day, but now, even if I work from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m., I barely make 1,200,” he explains. “The competition has grown, and there are more delivery workers now. I work at least 13 hours a day, seven days a week.”

Financial Instability and Rising Fuel Costs Asif’s story is not unique. Many delivery workers depend on this job as their main source of income, and rising fuel costs have significantly reduced their earnings. “My petrol expenses alone are around 300 per day,” Asif explains. “After covering fuel and other expenses, I’m left with very little. It’s simply not sustainable.”

Mohd Aneeq, a commerce student who works for Swiggy, faces similar challenges. “I work less than 10 hours a day and earn around 500 to 700 daily, but 200 of that goes towards petrol alone. There are days when deliveries are slow, and I barely make enough to justify the work.”

The gig economy offers income, but it comes at the cost of job security. Delivery workers often face precarious employment, subject to rating-based systems where a single customer complaint can lead to immediate account suspension. “If a customer complains, our accounts get suspended immediately,” explains Aneeq. “The company only starts an investigation after the suspension, not before.”

Danish Ahmad, a delivery worker from Chanpora employed by Gatoes since May 2022, offers a different perspective. “I’ve been working with Gatoes for three years, and I’m currently pursuing my graduation through IGNOU,” he explains. “I took this job to support my family and become financially independent. I couldn’t rely on them forever.”

Danish views his delivery job as a reliable source of income and isn’t actively looking for other employment at the moment. However, he remains open to better opportunities. “I’m earning well, so I don’t plan to change jobs soon,” he says. “But if another company offers a higher salary, I’d consider it.” He added, “On average, I earn between 40,000 and 50,000 per month, and my monthly bike expenses are around 6,000 to 7,000.”

Battling Social Stigma In addition to financial challenges, delivery workers in Kashmir encounter significant social stigma. Although their jobs are essential, these positions are often viewed with disdain. “When I leave for work, I take off my company jacket and bag and store them on my scooter because my neighbours look down on me,” says Aneeq.

There are significant safety concerns for those working late at night. “Stray dogs are a major issue,” says Aneeq. “Some workers have been chased by these dogs while delivering food. The cold winter nights are also unbearable, but we have no choice.”

Asif shares this feeling: “People do not respect us when we deliver food, and those who live near us also look down on us. We are viewed as if this job is beneath our dignity.”

Danish believes that social stigma is influenced by people’s perspectives, but he feels that younger generations are generally more open to different types of work. “My family supports me in this job because I am not stealing; I’m earning money through hard work. Some of my friends who completed their B.Tech degrees are now doing this job as well.”

“When we started in 2020, I delivered food myself,” Danish Majeed, Gatoes’ first employee, and the chief financial officer recalls. “I understand what delivery workers go through because I’ve experienced the same challenges.”

Respect and fair treatment of delivery workers remains a priority for the company. “We have already instructed restaurants not to keep delivery boys waiting outside in the cold. Recently, some of our workers were denied access to elevators and forced to take the stairs. We told those restaurants that if our boys aren’t allowed to use the elevator, they should bring the parcel downstairs,” he explains. “Just because they work as delivery boys doesn’t mean they don’t deserve respect.”

The company also adjusts operations according to seasonal changes. “In winter, we don’t keep our delivery boys out too late because it impacts their health. If they fall sick, they lose their ability to work properly. In summer, they work later into the night,” Majeed says.

Dr. Aadil Bashir, an Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work at the University of Kashmir, discusses the stigma surrounding certain professions in Kashmir. He states, “When new opportunities arise in the market, people are often drawn to them; however, people frequently judge those who work in these industries. Instead of remaining idle, it is better to stay productive than to take the wrong path.”

The Growing Demand for Food Delivery Readily available food while providing employment opportunities for many has also transformed the eating habits of people. Consumers are increasingly relying on online

food services, either for convenience or due to personal constraints.

For 20-year-old Janat Khan, online food services offer an important alternative to dining out because of her struggles with social anxiety. “I have social anxiety, so I prefer to order food online rather than eat out. Since I cannot go to restaurants alone, I feel more comfortable eating at home,” she explained.

Even in social settings, she feels uneasy in crowded places, so ordering food at home allows her to enjoy meals without discomfort. “Ordering food at home gives me a sense of control, I don’t have to deal with noise, wait in line, or feel judged by others,” she explained.

Ordering food at any time has made life easier for many people. Mansha Parvez is one such customer who appreciates the convenience of having meals delivered right to her doorstep. “I typically order food once or twice a week whenever I crave something delicious. It’s convenient because I don’t have to cook, the food arrives prepared and ready to eat,” she explained.

On days when she feels too exhausted to cook, she considers food delivery a blessing. “With so many options available, I can order anything from a quick snack to a full meal with just a few taps on my phone.”

For many people, the appeal of food delivery goes beyond just convenience; it also caters to late-night cravings and social gatherings. “Late-night cravings are real! Sometimes I suddenly get the urge to have momos, pizza, or dessert, and I love that I can simply order it and have it delivered right to my door,” Mansha shared.

She also noted how food delivery has transformed family dining experiences. “Even during family gatherings, we often choose to order food instead of spending hours cooking in the kitchen. It saves time and effort, allowing us to enjoy restaurant-quality meals in the comfort of our own home.”

“Zomato or Swiggy, readily available at the tap of a phone, not only cater to hunger but also offer convenience to those with busy schedules, including working professionals and students. Additionally, they provide a crucial service for women, particularly those juggling multiple responsibilities or facing mobility constraints, making food accessibility easier than ever,” he said.

A Changing Industry According to a news outlet, Gatoes delivers to more than 45,000 customers a month; the app receives about 1,600 orders per day and lists more than 1,200 restaurants and cafes in Jammu and Kashmir. The company works with more than 200 delivery workers in the region and has 50 full-time employees.

Danish Ahmad also acknowledges the growing demand for food delivery. “When I started working in 2022, we used to get around 20 to 25 orders per day, and it increased over the years. I have seen a large shift since 2023, with more rush in online delivery compared to dine-in customers. I think most people prefer eating at home these days. I usually work from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., but when there is a rush, we extend our working hours till 11 p.m.”

In 2023, with fewer delivery workers on the road, riders handled a higher number of daily orders. But as demand surged in early 2024, companies aggressively expanded their workforce, which ultimately reduced the per-person share of deliveries.

“Back in 2023, we used to get around 30 orders per day because there were only about 500 delivery workers. But as demand spiked in early 2024, companies started hiring rapidly. By mid-2024, the workforce had grown to over 1,500, and now, with nearly 2,000 riders, we barely get 10 to 15 orders a day,” says Asif Ahmad.

Mukhtar Ahmad, Manager at Chiliz – The Pizza Shop, notes that food delivery has become an integral part of restaurant business models. “We started our delivery service five years ago. On average, we receive 20 to 25 orders daily, but in summer, that increases to 40 or more. Winter is slow for both dine-in and delivery.”

Imtiyaz Mir, manager at Grill-Inn, shares a similar perspective. “We started online delivery two years ago, and it has helped our business a lot. In summer, we get around 20 to 30 orders a day, but in winter, it drops drastically—we hardly get 5 to 10.”

Food delivery in Kashmir has changed eating habits and created employment opportunities for many individuals, but the challenges associated with this industry cannot be overlooked. While customers appreciate the convenience of having restaurant-quality meals delivered to their doorsteps, delivery workers often face financial instability, safety risks, and social stigma.

Despite these difficulties, many workers remain dedicated to their jobs, hoping that as the industry evolves, conditions will improve. Until then, they continue to navigate traffic, endure harsh weather, and confront social stigma, delivering more than just food; they offer a glimpse into the changing landscape of work and consumption in Kashmir.

Experts like Dr. Asil Bashir, Associate Professor in the department of social work, believe that societal attitudes towards the delivery workers need to change. He states, “There is a stigma attached to nearly all jobs in Kashmir. We must change how we perceive employment and recognize that any form of

work is valuable.”

For delivery workers such as Aneeq and Asif, the future is uncertain. Asif expresses a blend of resignation and hope when he says, “I don’t know if I’ll ever do anything else, but I hope that one day we’ll be treated with respect.”

Indian, Pak Armies

also agreed upon leveraging established communication channels to de-escalate tensions,” he added.

“Both sides emphasised on the importance of the ceasefire agreement in maintaining stability along the border and LoC,” the official said.

He said the meeting between two sides took place at the Chakkan-Da-Bagh crossing point, a designated spot for such interactions, against the backdrop of heightened tensions in the region.

The official said the meeting, which lasted approximately 75 minutes, was conducted in a cordial atmosphere. This meeting was significant as it was the first of its kind in four years, he added.

The official said the primary focus was to address the recent surge in cross-border firing and IED attacks that have disrupted peace along the LoC. “The primary objective of the meeting was to address the recent escalation in tensions along the LoC, driven by cross-border firing, sniper attacks, and IED incidents,” he said, adding, “Both sides stressed the importance of maintaining peace and stability along the border. They agreed to honour the ceasefire agreement in the larger interest of de-escalation.”

On February 11, an IED attack in the Akhnour sector of Jammu claimed the lives of two Indian Army soldiers, including a Captain. This incident was followed by multiple ceasefire violations, resulting in injuries to soldiers on both sides and reported casualties on the Pakistani side due to Indian retaliatory actions.

The flag meeting comes at a time when intelligence reports suggest that the absence of significant snowfall this winter has left traditional infiltration routes accessible, potentially contributing to the recent uptick in hostile activities.

However, the Indian Army maintains that the ceasefire remains intact as per the mutual understanding, with minor incidents being a recurring feature along the LoC.

This meeting is viewed as a constructive step toward reducing hostilities and fostering dialogue between the two nations.

Poonch Residents Relieved Meanwhile, the residents of border villages in Poonch have expressed relief following the flag meeting between Indian and Pakistani army officers.

“We have spent sleepless nights worrying about the cross-border shelling. The meeting gives us hope that peace will hold,” said Mohammad Yousuf, a resident of Poonch.

Others said that even temporary stability allows them to carry on with daily activities without fear.

A 65-year-old farmer recalled the horrors of past escalations. “In the ‘90s decade and a few years following 2000, we lived in bunkers for weeks. We don’t want those days to return. The ceasefire has given us a chance to live a normal life,” he said. (KNO)

Srinagar Court

of the accused could not be secured. Therefore in order to secure the presence of the accused, SSP concerned is hereby directed to constitute a team to arrest the accused and produce him before this Court by next date of hearing,” the court said and posted the case for further consideration on April 25.

Former UP Shia Waqf Board chairman, Tyagi, converted to Hinduism in 2021. The complaint has been filed by one Danish Hassan Dar, a resident of Srinagar. He has submitted that Tyagi “outraged, attacked and tarnished his religious feelings” by his statement in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh made on 6 December 2021 that “Islam was a group or organization and that the Holy Book of Muslims Quran is a false and frivolous literature which has no basis at all.”

Fresh Rain, Snow

on water. The coming generations will never forgive us, as we have spoiled and destroyed our water bodies,” said another resident.

Achabal spring supplies water to over 15 Jal Shakti water supply schemes.

Assistant Executive Engineer of Jal Shakti Sub-Division Anantnag, Gowhar Hussain Ganie, told KNO that the water supply has been restored in the spring and is running smoothly. “All water supply pipelines are functioning properly now,” he said.

The Achabal Mughal Garden, built in the 17th century by Noor Jahan, wife of Mughal Emperor Jahangir, has long been a major tourist attraction due to its lush greenery and flowing springs.

Assistant Floriculture Officer Imran Ahmed said there has been a rise in tourism compared to a decade ago. “Tourism boomed, especially after COVID. Achabal alone recorded around 1.75 lakh visitors in July last year,” he said.

Pertinently, the majority of places across Kashmir received rainfall during the last 24 hours.

According to the details, Batote and Bhaderwah recorded the highest precipitation of 48 mm and 41 mm respectively.

As per the details, Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a rainfall of 11.4 mm in the last 24 hours. Kokernag recorded 27.2 mm rainfall during the period while 7.8 mm rainfall and 7.0 cm of snowfall were recorded in the last 24 hours at Gulmarg.

Above 14 mm rainfall was recorded in Pahalgam and Qazigund in the last 24 hours, the data reads, adding that 9.8 mm rainfall was recorded in Kupwara during the period.

Jammu district recorded a precipitation of 27.4 mm during the period while Banihal recorded 38.9mm rainfall since last evening. Katra witnessed a precipitation of 27.7 mm during the period.

Furthermore, the weatherman has predicted another wet spell this week.

MeT Predicts 4-day

at most places with isolated heavy rain and snow over both Kashmir division & Jammu division from February 25 to February 28.

Investments In J&K

Addressing the session, the Chief Minister emphasized that such interactions are pivotal to enhancing efficiency, competitiveness, and creating business opportunities for industries through a range of specialized services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues.

The Chief Minister sought suggestions and valuable insights from the participating entrepreneurs and other stakeholders that can be incorporated into the upcoming budget of Jammu and Kashmir for the overall welfare and benefit of the public, as well as for industries, tourism, and other sectors.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah emphasized the need for responsible entrepreneurial practices to foster an economic ecosystem that ensures sustainability across J&K.

While advocating for expanding investments in J&K, the Chief Minister underscored that such investments must be regulated by laws protecting the agricultural land and having land investment safeguards, like in Himachal Pradesh which has put reasonable restrictions and at the same time it would ensure jobs for local youth.

The Chief Minister noted that Himachal Pradesh has adopted a strict policy in this regard and stressed the adoption of a similar policy in J&K.

He commended the resilience of J&K’s industry, acknowledging businesses that have endured challenging times without solely relying on government subsidies. He stressed the importance of ensuring long-term business sustainability, proposing a mechanism to track businesses’ viability beyond ten years.

On the ease of doing business, the Chief Minister advocated for a genuine single-window clearance system, addressing concerns over bureaucratic hurdles, particularly in obtaining clearances from forest and environment boards, which hinder manufacturing growth.

He encouraged stakeholders to provide suggestions and feedback for the upcoming budget, reinforcing the Government’s commitment to an industry-friendly policy framework.

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Satish Sharma, who attended the event as Guest of Honour, also spoke at the event. He emphasized the need to address past deficiencies and underscored the importance of promoting sports tourism, health tourism, and border tourism while leveraging Kashmir’s renowned hospitality through innovative marketing strategies.

Madhav Singhania, Joint Managing Director & CEO, JK Cements Limited & Chairman, Confederation of Indian Industry, Northern Region; Syed Junaid Altaf Group Executive Director, FIL Industries Pvt. Ltd. & Chairman, CII J&K; Dr. M. A. Alim Director, Package Design Industries & Vice Chairman CII J&K were also present on the occasion.

‘Will Live Up To

be made and we will try to lay a foundation on which we will continue to build upon for the next five years and resolve the problems and demands of the people,” Abdullah told reporters here.

Asked about the brigade commander-level flag meeting between India and Pakistan along the Line of Control in Poonch district on Friday, the chief minister called it a good move to ease tension.

“The aim of the flag meeting was to decrease tension without using any force,” he said.

India and Pakistan on Friday held the flag meeting in an effort to ease tension after several recent incidents of cross-border firing and an IED attack.

The meeting, which started around 11 am and lasted for 75 minutes, took place in the Chakkan-Da-Bagh crossing point area wherein both sides highlighted the need to maintain peace along the borders.

SED Orders Return

Officers (DDOs) and Head of Institutions (Hols) who have failed to get the orders implemented on ground by ensuring that these officials report back to their original assignment of teaching for which they have been employed in the SED,” it reads.

DSEK said that in order to ensure full compliance of the instructions and orders issued from time to time, all the teaching staff including lecturers, masters and teachers working in different offices and institutions within or outside parent department for administrative works in contravention of their job profile, without formal orders of administrative department and DSEK are ordered to report to their substantive place of posting in educational institutions without fail.

“All the non-teaching staff of school education working outside the parent department without formal orders of department, administrative department and DSEK shall report to their substantive place of posting without any fail,” it reads.

The communiqué further states that, “All the teaching and non-teaching officials shall be deemed to have been relieved and detached to report back to their original place of postings, forthwith.”

“Any DDO who is found to have drawn the salary of any such official in violation of the order shall face strict action including recommendation of RDA against them,” it reads.

DSEK in this regard asked the CEOs of the region to furnish compliance report to along with the requisite details of all such employees indicating the name, actual place of posting, place where working on deployment basis, nature of duty assigned, stay with date at place of deployment, reference of deployment or attachment order, date of reporting back at substantive place of posting and any other information as may be deemed necessary.

“The Chief Accounts Officer of DSEK shall personally monitor the implementation of instructions in letter and spirit and liaison with concerned Treasury Officers for getting inputs about drawal of salary against the defaulters,” it reads.

Property Cannot

adding, “To top it all, the then Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal, filed a palpably false pleading before the learned Principal District Judge, Ganderbal, stating therein that the building in question is not in occupation of the District Administration. This stand of the Deputy Commissioner is contrary to the stand of the respondents taken in this writ petition.”

This conduct of a “responsible officer of the Government” the Bench said, is “reprehensible and shows that the said officer has no respect for rule of law.”

“The officer concerned did not think twice before filing a false written statement before the learned trial court with a view to defeat the claim of the petitioner,” the court said, adding, “The Courts generally trust the statements of public officers given by them in their pleadings at their face value as there is a presumption of correctness attached to the pleadings filed by the public officers in the course of their official duties but the present case is a classic example of a public officer filing misleading pleadings before the Court just to defeat the rightful claim of a litigant.”

The then Deputy Commissioner, therefore, deserves to be proceeded against for having filed a false pleading before the learned District Judge, Ganderbal, the court added.

SC Seeks Yasin

Srinagar shootout case, from Jammu to New Delhi.

During the hearing, solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, informed the court that as per the report filed by the registrar general of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, the video-conferencing system was working properly in the Jammu court.

Mehta said it appeared all the accused were working in tandem to delay the trial while pointing out that Malik refused to engage a lawyer and others were opposing the transfer of trial.

The top court previously directed the registrar general of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court to ensure proper video-conferencing facilities at the Jammu special court while hearing two cases against Malik and others.

The top court on December 18, last year, gave six accused two weeks to respond to the CBI’s plea to transfer the trial of the cases.

The plea is over the two cases in which four Indian Air Force personnel were killed on January 25, 1990 in Srinagar and the abduction which took place on December 8, 1989.

Malik, chief of the proscribed JKLF, is facing trial in both cases.

The top court was hearing a CBI plea against the September 20, 2022 order of a Jammu trial court directing Malik, serving a life term in Tihar jail, to be produced before it physically to cross-examine prosecution witnesses in the abduction case.

The CBI said Malik was a threat to national security and couldn’t be allowed to be taken outside the Tihar jail premises.

Rubaiya, who was freed five days after her abduction when the then BJP-backed V P Singh government at the Centre released five terrorists in exchange, now lives in Tamil Nadu. She is a prosecution witness for the CBI, which took over the case in early 1990s.

Malik has been lodged in Tihar jail after he was sentenced by a special NIA court in May 2023 in a terror-funding case.

Traffic Violations Decline In Sgr Amid Stringent Enforcement

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The continuous traffic enforcement drives in Srinagar City and parts of the valley alike have reduced traffic violations across Kashmir, bringing a visible change, said officials.

Speaking on the impact of these drives, a senior official from the Srinagar Traffic Department informed that un-

local residents have also commended the Traffic Department Srinagar.

Mudasir Ahmad, a resident of Lal Bazar Srinagar, said earlier traffic violations were common, but now the situation has improved. "We rarely see minors driving, and people are more cautious on the roads, and accidents have also become very low," he said.

Shabir, another local from

"We rarely see minors driving now, and a noticeable change has occurred. I cannot specify a percentage, but residents themselves can confirm the difference."



derage driving has been successfully controlled, along with other different traffic violations.

"We rarely see minors driving now, and a noticeable change has occurred. I cannot specify a percentage, but residents themselves can confirm the difference," he said.

Additionally, the ongoing efforts by traffic authorities have led to fewer reported violations, contributing to better road discipline in the city, while

Rajbagh Srinagar said that the continuous traffic drives have made a big difference. "Frequent traffic checks have made people think twice before violating rules and the roads feel more organized now," he said.

Notably, the traffic police have launched a drive to enforce traffic rules and reduce violations. Since then, the traffic police in Srinagar have conducted multiple drives to enforce traffic rules and curb violation—(KNO)

Vehicles With Expired Documents To Be Blacklisted By Feb 28: ARTO Bla

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a strict enforcement drive, the authorities here have announced that vehicles with expired documents will be blacklisted from February 28 and seized on the spot, if found operating on roads.

Addressing media persons, the Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) Baramulla, Muazzam Ali warned the vehicle owners and transport operators to renew their documents within a week to avoid seizure and legal action.

He said that the department has decided to take a tough stance against those operating with expired fitness and permit certificates, stressing that such violations pose a serious risk to road safety.

Responding to growing demand from the public, ARTO said that on the directions from the higher ups, the number of driving test slots has been increased from 240 to 360 per week, allowing more applicants

to undergo tests.

Additionally, the driving test schedule has been expanded from two days to three—Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday—to streamline the process and reduce waiting times.

With schools set to reopen in March, the ARTO specifically directed school authorities to update and renew their transport documents. "All school buses and transport vehicles must be fully compliant with regulations to ensure student safety and avoid legal action."

Strict enforcement drives will be intensified to ensure strict compliance with transport regulations. The vehicle owners are urged to take immediate action to avoid penalties and ensure compliance with the latest regulations.

"No leniency will be shown to violators and those found flouting the rules will face immediate blacklisting and on the spot seizure," transport official warned—(KNO)

MVD Gbl Seizes 11 Vehicles For Traffic Violations

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a bid to enforce road safety and discipline, the Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) of Ganderbal conducted a surprise checking operation on Thursday, leading to the seizure of 11 vehicles for various traffic violations.

The drive was carried out under the directives of the Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) and was led by MVD Inspector Manzoor Qureshi.

The operation, which targeted key areas in the district, aimed to curb reckless driving, overloading, and other traffic offenses that endanger public safety. Officials reported that the seized vehicles were found violating multiple traffic rules, including driving without valid licenses, improper documentation, and overloading.

Inspector Manzoor Qureshi

emphasized the importance of such operations in maintaining road discipline and ensuring the safety of commuters.

"This is not a one-time drive but part of our ongoing efforts to enforce traffic rules and regulations. We will continue to conduct similar checks to ensure that drivers adhere to road safety norms," he stated.

The MVD has urged drivers and vehicle owners to comply with traffic regulations to avoid penalties and contribute to safer roads. Officials also warned that strict action would be taken against repeat offenders.

This crackdown comes as part of the department's broader initiative to reduce accidents and improve traffic management in the region. The MVD has assured the public that such drives will continue in the future to promote responsible driving and road safety awareness—(KNO)

CSIR NET Aspirants Demand Examination Centers In Srinagar

Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: Kashmiri students appearing for the CSIR-UGC NET JRF exam on March 1, 2025, have urged the National Testing Agency (NTA) to allocate examination centers in Srinagar, citing logistical and financial difficulties in traveling to distant locations.

During the application process, students had selected Srinagar as their preferred choice, as the exam has historically been conducted in nearby centers. However, many have now been assigned centers in Jammu and as far as Noida, Uttar Pradesh, contrary to their

initial preference.

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, an aggrieved student said, "We demand that our examination centers be set up in Srinagar. Traveling to Noida or even Jammu is a huge burden for us, both financially and mentally."

Another student stated, "Given the unpredictable weather conditions and travel uncertainties, it is unfair to expect us to appear for the exam outside Kashmir. The authorities must reconsider their decision."

The CSIR-UGC NET is a crucial examination for determining eligibility for Junior Research Fellowships (JRF) and Lectureship (LS/

Assistant Professorship.

Students said the unexpected allocation of distant exam centers has left students anxious about their ability to appear for the test without undue hardship.

The affected candidates have collectively demanded that NTA set up centers in Srinagar to accommodate Kashmiri students. "We request immediate action from NTA to ensure that our examination centers are within Kashmir," pleaded a group of aspirants.

Students said that they have been mailing NTA but they have received no response. They have urged the government to take up the issue with NTA.

"GIVEN THE UNPREDICTABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND TRAVEL UNCERTAINTIES, it is unfair to expect us to appear for the exam outside Kashmir. The authorities must reconsider their decision."

International Mother Language Day

Make Kashmiri Subject Compulsory Upto Class 10th, Urges KLU

Agencies

SRINAGAR: On International Mother Language Day, the Kashmiri Language Union (KLU) Friday urged the government to fill all the vacant posts of Kashmiri teachers and make the subject compulsory up to 10th standard.

The union members demanded government intervention for protecting Kashmiri language and stressed on the need for new recruitments to fill vacant positions of Kashmiri language educators.

The union held a peaceful protest at Sher-e-Kashmir Park here to press for their demands.

Majid Ganaie, a union member said that under National Education Policy (NEP), steps have been taken for the promotion of Kashmiri language but things mentioned in the policy aren't being fulfilled on ground.

He said that there aren't special educators available in the schools, so Kashmiri is often taught by teachers of other subjects, who are unable to do

justice with it.

Dr Rifat said that due to unknown reasons, people in Kashmir feel disgrace in speaking Kashmiri language and "why a child is being taught other languages when

mother language as so far no recruitment has taken place.

He claimed that around 5000 posts of Kashmir subject are lying vacant in the school education department and they need to be filled at an earliest. "If up to 8th class Kashmiri subjects are compulsory, the question here is who teaches Kashmiri language in schools," he said.

كاشر

he is still in the cradle and it seems we ourselves have been degrading our language."

She said that Kashmiri language is the identity of the people and it needs to be preserved.

Ashiq Hussain Lone, another member of the association said that every year 200-300 students have been completing their post graduate in Kashmiri and if government won't take up recruitment process for scholars of Kashmiri, where will they go and then who will show inclination towards the

responsibility of parents too are responsible for this as they prefer to teach their beloved other languages. He said that everybody needs to take steps for the promotion of the language.

Union members said that they have brought these issues to the notice of LG Manoj Sinha and CM Omar Abdullah and they are hopeful of positive steps in this regard.

They have once again requested concerned authorities to look into the matter at an earliest and take immediate steps in this regard—(KNO)

SED To Conduct Student Enrolment Drive From 1st March

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: School Education Department (SED) Friday ordered its officials to conduct 15 days student enrolment drives from March-01 in Kashmir division.

The order in this regard issued by Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) reads, "All the CEOs, ZEOs, complex, cluster heads and Hols are directed to conduct enrolment drives in their respective jurisdictions as per the prescribed dates and modus operandi."

The director said that since Schools are going to reopen from March-01-2025 after winter vacations with new hopes and commitment, it is crucial that the department work collectively to ensure maximum student enrollment for the current academic session.

"We encourage all stakeholders to actively and effectively participate in the enrollment drive to be conducted from March-01 to March-15 which will be monitored by DSEK," it reads.

In addition to this, DSEK said that its senior functionaries and respective district administration shall be visiting personally some areas to boost the drives.

It further reads, "All the concerned field functionaries shall conduct this activity as per

and ZEOs have been ordered to start the drive from the potential area of their district. "Every CEO, cluster heads and ZEOs shall lead the campaign. This will inspire the school heads and teachers to bring more and more enrolment for our schools."

"Door to door campaigning by Hols and teachers, rallies by children, parent motivation camps involving SMC, VEC and other Community leaders, PRIs, village elders, with particular focus on potential areas shall be mandatory," reads the order.

It also asked the concerned officials to update village education register for identification of Out of school Children, and Children with Special Needs

"All the officers of the department including CEOs, principal DIETS, HoDs of DIETS, Deputy CEOs, DEPOS, DIET faculty, ZEOs and Zonal Education Planning Officers shall visit at least one or more habitations as part of the door-to-door campaign in order to inspire field functionaries," it reads.

the prescribed timelines and document the achievements thereof without disturbing the school functioning."

The enrollment drive will be inaugurated by the DSEK and simultaneously, all the CEOs

on both retired and working employees, as well as contractors who play a crucial role in building the public sector. "Pensioners are dealing with immense uncertainty. Denying them their rightful dues is a human rights violation and intolerable in any sane governance system. The financial stability of government employees is also under severe threat," he said.

PDP Concerned Over JK's 'Dire Financial Situation'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Friday expressed concern over media reports about treasuries in Jammu and Kashmir running dry, with cases of unpaid pensions, GP Fund, gratuity, and leave salaries piling up.

The party urged Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who also holds the Finance portfolio, to

address the difficulties being faced by various sections of society due to the ongoing crisis.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, PDP leader and former minister Naeem Akhtar said that disturbing reports have emerged about dry treasuries across Jammu and Kashmir, with employees' GP Fund cases, SLI cases, gratuity, and leave salaries of retired employees remaining unpaid since April

last year. Additionally, contractors who have invested their own money and completed their works are left in the lurch as their bills gather dust in treasuries.

"Never in history have we seen pensioners being denied even their Dearness Allowance arrears, or those who retired in April last year still waiting for their gratuity and leave salaries. The release of Dearness Allow-

ance was announced by the Jammu and Kashmir government seven months after it was granted by the Government of India, and the arrears are yet to be paid to employees as well as pensioners. Inflation is already exposing people to severe hardships, and denying the DA arrears is unfortunate," Akhtar said.

Akhtar expressed deep concern over the impact of the crisis

TRAI Proposes 'Lower Authorization Fee For J&K Radio Broadcasters'



Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has recommended a reduced authorization fee for radio broadcasting services in Jammu and Kashmir, as it proposed a phased increase under its new framework aligned with the Telecommunications Act, 2023.

In its latest recommendations, as per the details accessed, TRAI has suggested that radio broadcasters in J&K, along with those in the Northeast and island territories, pay only 2% of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) for the first three years. After this period, the fee will rise to 4% of AGR, bringing it in line with charges applicable to other regions.

This recommendation as per details was aimed at easing the financial burden on service providers while encouraging the growth of radio broadcasting

in J&K. In the meanwhile, TRAI also proposed removing mandatory co-location requirements for broadcasters by offering greater flexibility in operations.

Furthermore, the regulator advised delinking service authorizations for Terrestrial Radio Services from frequency assignments, with spectrum allocation for FM radio to be handled separately through auction process.

"These changes fall under the new service authorization framework, replacing the outdated Indian Telegraph Act, 1885. Existing license holders will have the option to migrate voluntarily to the new regime without any processing or entry fees," the details read.

TRAI expects these measures to boost the ease of doing business and drive technological advancements in the sector. The full set of recommendations is available on TRAI's official website—(KNO)

Cross-Border Terrorism Biggest Threat To people: MEA

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Reiterating that cross-border terrorism remains the biggest threat to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the Ministry of External Affairs on Friday asked Turkey not to interfere in India's internal matters.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, while addressing a news conference in the national capital said, "Pakistan's persistent policy of using terrorism as a tool against India is a matter of grave concern."

"Pakistan's policy of sponsoring terror remains the biggest threat to the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

Jaiswal's remarks came in re-

sponse to recent comments by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who called for a "resolution of the Kashmir issue" through dialogue between India and Pakistan, taking into account the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Rejecting Turkey's stance, the MEA spokesperson said, "Such unwarranted statements on India's territorial integrity and sovereignty are unacceptable."

He emphasized that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India, and no country has the right to interfere in its internal affairs.

The MEA spokesperson said, "We have lodged a formal protest with the Turkish ambassador in New Delhi."—(KNO)

Man Dies Of Suffocation After Fire Engulfs House

Agencies

BARAMULLA: A disabled man died due to suffocation after fire engulfed his house here in North Kashmir on Friday.

Officials said that the fire gutted double storied house, which claimed the life of a 31-year old Zubair Siraj, son of Mohammed Siraj, having disability. He was trapped in the attic

portion of the house.

Locals along with fire and emergency personnel, worked tirelessly to contain the flames and prevent further destruction. Fire caused a significant damage to the house.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident and investigation has been started to determine the cause of fire—(KNO)

IGP Birdi, IG CRPF Chair Joint Security Review Meeting



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A joint security review meeting was convened on Friday at the Police Control Room (PCR) Kashmir, co-chaired by IGP Kashmir V.K. Birdi and IG CRPF Mitesh Kumar.

As per a statement issued, the meeting was attended by senior officials from both the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), including DIG CKR Srinagar Rajiv Panday, DIG CRPF South Parveen Kumar Singh, DIG CRPF North Sudhir Kumar, SSP Srinagar, SSP Budgam, SSP Ganderbal, and the Commandants of CRPF.

The primary objective of the meeting was to assess and enhance the existing security measures in the region, with a focus on improving coordination between the J&K Police and CRPF. The goal was to strength-

en the collaborative efforts of both forces in maintaining law and order, as well as ensuring peace in the Kashmir Valley, the statement reads.

A comprehensive review of the current security situation was conducted, focusing on joint operations and strategies to improve operational coordination between the forces, ensuring a swift and effective response to emerging security challenges. Emphasis was placed on refining counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations, with particular attention given to intelligence sharing and logistical planning, it added.

At the end, both IGP Kashmir and IG CRPF reiterated their commitment to working together to uphold peace and security in the region through joint strategic planning and inter-agency cooperation.

Champions Trophy: England Face Depleted Australia

Press Trust of India

LAHORE: An off-colour England and an injury-hit Australia will be eager to start their Champions Trophy campaign on a winning note in what seems like an evenly-matched Group B contest between the Ashes rivals here on Saturday. Both teams have struggled

in the ODI format recently, with world champions Australia losing to Sri Lanka (0-2) and Pakistan (1-2) in their last two rubbers.

England, who are now coached by Brendon McCullum in all formats, have not won an ODI series since their disastrous 2023 World Cup campaign. The Jos Buttler-led side is

coming off a 0-3 drubbing by India, where they appeared out of sorts and failed to match up to the hosts.

Both teams will be eager to make their mark in this ICC showpiece event.

Australia are missing five key players from their initial squad. Their pace attack will be particularly affected, as they will

be without their famed trio of Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, and Mitchell Starc, all ruled out of the tournament.

They will also be without all-rounders Mitchell Marsh (back injury), Cameron Green (injury) and Marcus Stoinis, who has made a shock retirement from the format. Match starts: 2.30PM IST.

Kerala Enter Historic Ranji Trophy Final

Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD: A resilient Kerala on Friday sealed their maiden Ranji Trophy final by taking a dramatic two-run first-innings lead over Gujarat, 68 years after making their debut in Indian cricket's premier domestic competition.

Going into the final day at 429/7, the home side, who won the Ranji title in 2016-17, needed just 29 runs to take a first-innings lead.

However, left-arm spinner Aditya Sarwate delivered un-

der pressure, taking all three wickets to bowl Gujarat out for 455 in 174.4 overs to leave them two runs short of the mark.

Making only their second semifinal appearance, the visitors had been left frustrated by a dogged 72-run eighth-wicket stand between Jaymeet Patel (74 overnight) and Siddharth Desai (24 overnight). They started the day needing three wickets with just 28 runs to defend.

Kerala, who last made the semifinals in 2018-19 after

making their Ranji debut back in 1957, will face Vidarbha in the summit clash after the latter defeat heavyweights Mumbai by 80 runs in the other semifinal.

BRIEF SCORES:

Kerala 457 and 114 for 4 in 46 overs (Jalaj Saxena 37 not out, Rohan Kunnummal 32; Manan Hingrajia 2/22, Siddharth Desai 2/45) vs Gujarat 455; 174.4 overs (Priyank Panchal 148, Jaymeet Patel 79, Aarya Desai 73; Jalaj Saxena 4/149, Aditya Sarwate 4/111).

Women Match Officials' Workshop Begins In Srinagar



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Match officials from North India participated in the Women Match Officials' Workshop in Srinagar on Friday. The workshop is being held under the leadership of Nazir Ahmad Bhat (ZRDO AIFF and Head of Referees, JKFA) and Miss Maria Rebello (AIFF, Goa).

All India Football Federation and Reliance Foundation Youth Sports collaborated to organise this prestigious workshop, with the participants shortlisted by the AIFF. The two-day workshop will culminate on Saturday.

"This initiative is a landmark step in empowering women match officials and elevating the standards of refereeing in Indian football," the J&K Football Association said in a statement.

"JKFA looks forward to welcoming the officials and supporting their growth in the field of refereeing," it added.

VC IUST Honours Students For Winter Sports Triumph



Observer News Service

AWANTIPORA: The Vice Chancellor, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, led a felicitation ceremony to celebrate students who excelled at the All-India Inter-University Winter Sports 2025.

The ceremony was attended by Registrar Prof. Abdul Wahid, Deans of various schools, the Controller of Examination, Assistant Directors of Sports, and other staff, underlining the university's support for sports alongside academics. Dr. Hilal Ahmad Rather, Assistant Director of Physical Education & Sports, opened the event with an overview of the competition.

Prof. Romshoo praised the athletes for their hard work and also announced cash rewards for the players. The event concluded with the distribution of certificates and mementos to the winners.

Champions League Draw Serves Up Madrid Derby

Agencies

NYON: A Madrid derby. A German classic. A rare meeting between Liverpool and Paris Saint-Germain. The Champions League got more heavyweight clashes when the draw for the round of 16 was made Friday.

Defending champion Real Madrid's reward for ousting 2023 title winner Manchester City this week in the knockout playoffs is two city derbies against Atletico Madrid — the team it beat in the final in 2014 and 2016.

Bayern Munich was paired with Bayer Leverkusen — the Bundesliga leader against its defending champion, who played a tight 0-0 draw just last weekend.

Liverpool was the top-seeded team in the draw after finishing first in the 36-team standings last month but still got a tough assignment as the Premier League leader was paired with No. 15 seed PSG.

Liverpool and PSG have never met in knockout games in the Champions League or the old European Cup. Their previous meetings were in the group stage in 2018-19, trading home wins in a season that ended with Liverpool winning its sixth European Cup title.

The first-leg games will be played March 4-5, with the return games one week later.

Also in the draw, No. 2 seed Barcelona was paired with Benfica — which it beat 5-4 in Lisbon one month ago — Arsenal will face PSV Eindhoven and Inter Milan plays Feyenoord.

Feyenoord goes back to San Siro, where it already eliminated AC Milan this week in the knockout playoffs round. All three Italian teams in the playoffs lost, including another exit to a Dutch team when PSV got past Juventus in extra time.

Club Brugge, which got into the knockout stage in the 24th and final qualification place, will face Aston Villa, which it already beat in November. Borussia Dortmund will play Lille.

Friday's draw also put Real Madrid and Liverpool in the same half of the bracket and on a path to meet in the semifinals.

Both could have English opponents in the quarterfinals. The Madrid derby winner will face Arsenal or PSV, and if Liverpool eliminates PSG it will face Villa or Brugge. (AP)



Mahakumbh of Top-Notch Facilities




Healthy Mahakumbh

- 6,000 beds in government/private hospitals
- 43 hospitals in the mela area, 381 doctors deployed
- 125 road, 7 river and air ambulances deployed
- Upgradation of CHCs/PHCs on key routes

Clean Mahakumbh

- Deployment of 10,200 sanitation workers in 850 teams
- 1,800 Ganga Doots deployed for monitoring cleanliness
- 25,000 dustbins with liner bags, 300 suction vehicles
- 120 tipper-hoppers and 40 compactor trucks equipped with GPS

Safe Mahakumbh

- 37,000 police personnel and 14,000 home guards deployed
- 2,750 AI-based CCTV cameras and 80 VMD TV screens
- 3 Jal police stations, 18 Jal police control rooms
- 50 fire stations, 20 fire posts, 50 watch towers, 4,300 fire hydrants

• 4000 hectares of Mela area • Well-organised in 25 sectors • 1,850 hectares of parking area • 1,50,000 toilets • 1,60,000 tents
 • 67,000 LED streetlights • 2 new power sub stations • 66 new transformers • 2,000 solar hybrid streetlights • 1,249 km of water pipeline • 200 water ATMs • 85 tubewells • Fleet of 7,000 buses • 550 shuttle buses • 7 new bus stops • 30 pontoon bridges
 • 9 permanent ghats • 7 riverfront roads • 12 km temporary ghats • 14 new flyovers and underpasses • Construction of 11 new corridors • 13,000 trains including 3,000 special trains • New terminal at Prayagraj airport

Sanatan Garv, Mahakumbh Parv

- Travel guide to assist devotees and tourists • Kumbh Sah 'AI' yak AI chatbot for assistance • Bird Sound Therapy for relaxation and inner peace
- Confluence of artisans and craftsmen from across the country
- Boat ride facilities for devotees at the Sangam • Crossroads bringing to life the tales of Vedas and Puranas • Captivating musical, instrumental and dance performances on cultural stages
- Excellent parking facilities available



Kumbh Administration



Emergency Assistance



Hotel and Food



Achievements of UP



Scan to Chat



Send 'Hi' to Kumbh Sah'AI'yak No. 8887847135




Mahakumbh Helpline

1920

Mahakumbh Mela Helpline

112

Emergency Service

1010

Food and Civil Supplies Helpline

102,108

Ambulance Service

18004199139

Railway Helpline

Information & Public Relations Department, Uttar Pradesh | UPGovtOfficial | CMOUttarpradesh | CMOfficeUP | mahakumbh_25/ | upmahakumbh | MahaKumbh_2025 | https://kumbh.gov.in/