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BOOK APPOINTMENT

6 There is a forecast of more snow and rain for the next two days, which would likely reduce the rainfall deficit of this season.

A Breather: J&K's Rainfall Deficit Drops To 69%

More Rain, Snow Till Feb 28

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The fresh spell of precipitation has brought down the rainfall deficiency by 14 per cent as the deficit rainfall has reduced from 83 per cent last week to 69 per cent till Wednesday.

Major precipitation has been recorded at Kargil station in Ladakh as well as Rajouri and Poonch districts in Jammu division over the last one week. After zero rainfall in the first 50 days of this year, Kargil recorded 16.4 mm rainfall against the normal precipitation of 25 mm in the last 57 days of 2025.

The precipitation deficit has reduced from above 70 per cent to 50 per cent in Rajouri and Poonch districts of Jammu division, reveals data.

In the entire Jammu and Kashmir, the deficit rainfall has reduced to 69 per cent compared to 83 per cent last week. According to data, against the normal precipitation of 215.5mm, the region recorded a rainfall of 65.8 mm from January 01, 2025, to February 26, 2025.

However, other districts of Jammu and Kashmir despite witnessing a reduction in the precipitation deficiency continued to be categorised in the large deficiency list.

The data | [More on P6](#)

Temp Plumets, Travel Advisory Issued

Amidst the forecast of wet spell, the fresh snowfall occurred at multiple places across Kashmir while the intermittent rains continued for the second consecutive day on Wednesday. The fresh snowfall was | [More on P6](#)

No Reservation For Transgender Individuals In J&K: Govt

M Ahmad

Srinagar: There is no reservation earmarked for the transgender community, the Jammu and Kashmir government has informed the High Court of J&K and Ladakh.

During the hearing of a Public Interest Litigation, Government advocate Faheem Nissar Shah submitted that till date and as per the instructions received by him from the concerned authorities there is no reservation earmarked for the transgender community. However, he sought time to file an affidavit in this regard which was granted to him by a Division Bench of Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice Mohd. Akram Chowdhary.

Meanwhile, the Division Bench granted Ms. Rehana Qayoom, counsel appearing for Ladakh, more time to enable her "to do the needful in terms of previous order dated 16 October last year" when the UT administration was directed to file fresh compliance report disclosing action taken by the Committee constituted to identify the number of transgender individuals | [More on P6](#)

J&K Assembly Gears Up For Crucial Budget Session

All Eyes On Fiscal Policy & Developmental Priorities | 5 Nominated Seats Still Unfilled

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Preparations are underway for the highly anticipated Budget Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, which is set to begin on March 3, 2025.

The session will be inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in Jammu, who is expected to address the members and present the government's vision for the upcoming fiscal year.

According to officials, extensive arrangements have been made to ensure the smooth conduct of the session.

Security measures have been heightened around the legislative complex, and essential infrastructure upgrades are being completed to accommodate the participants.

The session, which will include key financial discussions and deliberations on the budget, is expected to be crucial for the Union Territory.

The Budget Session comes at a time when the Jammu and Kashmir administration is



focusing on infrastructural development, welfare programs, and policies aimed at boosting economic growth in the Union Territory.

Officials have also hinted that the budget will reflect a continued focus on key sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and education.

With Jammu and Kashmir experiencing a shift in its political and developmental landscape, all eyes will be on the legislative proceedings, which are expected to set the tone for future governance in Jammu and Kashmir.

This marks the first budget presentation under the Omar Abdullah-led National Conference government since it assumed power on October 16, 2024, bringing an end to six years of central rule.

However, a significant aspect of the session remains uncertain—the nomination of five non-elected members to the Assembly.

Despite the provision for these seats under the J&K Reorganisation Act, neither Raj Bhawan nor the state

government has initiated the process of filling them.

The restructured J&K Legislative Assembly consists of 90 elected members, with the potential to expand to 95 when five nominated members are included.

The J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019, empowers the Lieutenant Governor to nominate two women to the Assembly if female representation is deemed insufficient. Additionally, a 2023 amendment allows for the nomination of three more members—two from the Kashmiri migrant community, including one woman, and one representing displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK).

Despite this legal framework, the nomination process remains in limbo. Government insiders suggest that discussions on the matter have stalled, with no clear directive on whether the nominations should be made solely by the LG or on the advice of the elected government. | [More on P6](#)

J&K Targets 2200 MW Power Boost by 2030

Agencies

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir has informed Central Electricity Authority (CEA) that it has planned an additional 2200 Megawatts (MWs) of power till 2030.

This includes nearly 1,000 MWs of coal and solar energy with the officials saying that "Last JKPDD has already entered a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) of coal-based power of over 390 MWs under Shakti Policy."

The official documents accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reads, "According to the data provided by Jammu and Kashmir, an additional 392 MW of Coal (Shakti Scheme), 620 MW of solar and 1206 MW of hydro is planned till 2030."

It also said that Jammu and Kashmir being a hilly state, the share of Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) in the Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) trajectory has been taken as half of the share as stipulated in RPO-2023. "The other half of the DRE component has been considered to be met from RE general and from other sources."

Referring to resource adequacy plan for | [More on P6](#)



Hearath Celebrated Across Kashmir Valley

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Hindu community in Kashmir, along with tourists, celebrated Mahashivaratri here on Wednesday.

Local Hindus, who are a minority in the valley,

visited the Shankaracharya temple atop Zabarwan hills here early in the morning to pay obeisance to lord Shiva on the occasion also called 'Hearath' here.

Braving the chilly and wet weather conditions, devotees formed long queues to

seek blessings at the revered temple, which was beautifully decorated for the festival.

The worshippers, while chanting hymns and performing rituals, expressed their devotion to lord Shiva.

Mohan, a devotee in Srinagar | [More on P6](#)

Govt Plans New 'Universal Pension Scheme'

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: The government is working on a 'universal pension scheme' that will be available to all citizens, including those in the unorganised sector, Labour Ministry sources said on Wednesday.

At present, those in the unorganised sector - such as construction workers, domestic staff, and gig workers - don't have access to government-run large savings schemes.

The scheme will also be open to all salaried employees and the self-employed too.

However, a crucial distinction between this new proposal and existing schemes, like the Employee Provident Fund Organisation, is that contributions for the former will be on a voluntary basis, and

the government will not make any contributions from its side.

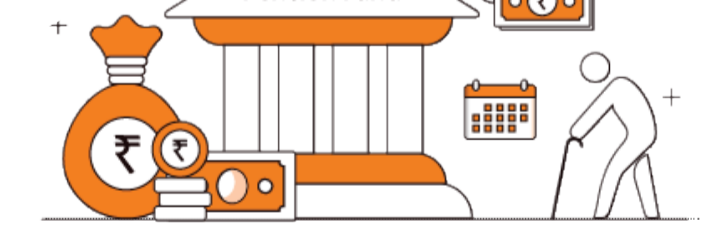
The general idea, sources said, is to offer a 'universal pension scheme' - i.e., to streamline the pension/savings framework in the country by likely subsuming a few existing schemes.

These, sources said, will be seen as a safe option for any citizen on voluntary basis.

The new scheme, dubbed 'New Pension Scheme' for now, will also not replace or subsume the existing National Pension Scheme, also a voluntary pension scheme, sources stressed.

Stakeholder consultation will begin once the proposal document is completed, sources said.

As of today, there are several government-run pension schemes for the unorganised sector, such as the Atal Pension Yojana, which | [More on P6](#)



Govt Notifies Use Of Electronic Evidence

Observer News Service

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir Home Department has issued a notification under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, defining "audio/video electronic" evidence for official use.

As per an order, recordings from mobile phones, tablets, CCTV cameras, body-worn cameras, and other digital equipment used by authorized police officers will be considered valid.

Additionally, any electronic device authorized by the Police or Home Department will also be recognized. Officers assigned ICJS/CCITNS IDs will be deemed authorized to handle such evidence.

HC Orders Reduction Of Toll Rates In J&K

'Levy Only 20% Fee At Lakhapur, Ban Toll Plazas'

Observer News Service

Jammu: In a major relief for commuters, including pilgrims to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has directed the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to slash hefty toll fees in the region within four months.

It also said the fees collected at the Lakhapur and the Bann toll plazas would be 20 percent of the rates in force prior to January 26

last year till the national highway from Lakhapur to Udhampur could become fully operational.

According to the judgment, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer, the court ruled that only 20 percent of the toll fee should be collected until the completion of the construction work under the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway project.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice MA Choudhary stated that toll fees should not be collected from commuters if the highway is in poor condition due to ongoing construction. The highway is being | [More on P6](#)

Centre to SC: Life Ban on Convicted Lawmakers Too Harsh

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Centre has opposed in the Supreme Court a plea seeking life ban on convicted politicians, saying imposing such a disqualification was solely within the domain of Parliament.

The centre argued before the Supreme Court that such a disqualification, extending beyond the current six-year period after serving prison sentences, would be "unduly harsh".

In an affidavit filed in court, the Centre said the prayer in a plea, seeking the same, amounted to re-writing of the statute or directing Parliament to frame a law in a particular manner which was wholly beyond the powers of judicial review.

"The question whether a



life-time ban would be appropriate or not is a question that is solely within the domain of the parliament," the affidavit said.

By confining the operation of penalty to an appropriate length of time, deterrence was ensured while undue harshness was avoided, it added.

There was, said the Centre,

nothing inherently unconstitutional in limiting the effect of penalties by time and it was a settled principle of law that penalties were limited either by time or by quantum.

"It is submitted that issues raised by the petitioner have widely ranging ramifications and clearly fall within the legislative policy of Parliament and the contours of judicial review would be suitably altered in such regard," the affidavit said.

The plea in the top court filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeks a life ban on convicted politicians aside from the expeditious disposal of criminal cases against MPs and MLAs in the country.

In its affidavit, the Centre underlined that the apex court had consistently | [More on P6](#)

Terrorists Fire At Army Vehicle In Rajouri

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: An army vehicle came under fire from suspected terrorists in a forward village near the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Wednesday, officials said.

There were no immediate reports of any casualties in the brief firing near Phal village in the Sunderbani sector, they said.

They added that the terrorists, believed to be hiding in a forest, fired a few rounds at the army vehicle passing through the area -- considered a traditional infiltration route for militants.

The troops returned fire while reinforcements were rushed to neutralise the terrorists, the officials said.

The army | [More on P6](#)



PUBLIC NOTICE

Cancellation of Electric - Connection
As I have closed my shop at Buchpora. I want to cancel my Electric connection. Anybody having objection Should contact office of Ex. Engineer Sub-Division Hawal (Bagi-Ali Mardan) Sgr. Within seven (07)days from the date of issuance of this notice. Afterwards no such objection will be entertained.

Habib-U-llah Mir
S/o Gh. Mohammad Mir
Shop No 1, Buchpora Sgr
Consumer ID 0204040014565
Installation No-1042.

NOTICE FOR GENERAL PUBLIC

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 774305374904 of my daughter the name is entered as REHANA AKHTER while her actual name is RAIHANA AFZAL. Now I want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department within a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
MUHAMMAD AFZAL GANIE F/o RAIHANA AFZAL
R/o MULASHULLA BEERWAH
BUDGAM CELL. 9103550997

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for the issuance of Fertilizer license under name and style "Sheikh Fertilizers". If anybody has any objection in this regard. They may file them in the office of the plant Protection Officer Lalmandi Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mudasir Rashid sheikh (Prop)
S/O Abdul Rashid Sheikh
R/O Tantarpora Palhallan Pattan Baramulla
Contact 6006733380

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Class 6 Discharge Certificate, issued by Crescent Public School, Naseem Bagh, Lal Bazar, Srinagar, has been lost. Despite extensive searching, I have been unable to find it. I now require a duplicate copy of the certificate.
If anyone has any objections regarding this matter, they are requested to submit them to the Principal's office at Crescent Public School, Naseem Bagh, within one week. No objections will be entertained after the given deadline.
Name: Ahmad Mujtaba Nagoo
S/O Altaf Hussain Nagoo
R/o Hassan Abad Rewari Sgr.

Public Notice

Subject:- Grant Of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & Style "Asifa Tour & Travels" Situated at Rakhi Arath, Bemina, Srinagar.
Whereas I, Asiya Jan D/O Mohd Maqbool Akhooon R/O Akhooon Mohalla Mir Behri Dal, Srinagar intend to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under the name & style of "Asifa Tour & Travels" Situated at Rakhi Arath, Bemina, Srinagar. under tourist trade act 1978/82/2011-12.
Whereas I will submit state subject / Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, pan card \ Experience Certificate (Minimum 5years). Police character certificate, Bank statement (minimum balance 10000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent deed duly attested by sub Registrar, printing material (Latter head / Visiting card) Photograph of the unit (indoor and outdoor) and Two passport size photographs to the department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist 1 Prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency.
Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12) before my case is processed for my registration by the Competent Authority, the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/ Financial institutions/Bank/ Organization, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration(email id: ddtregl23@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in a leading newspaper/newspapers of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my wallet containing some cash, documents and identity card issued by the National Institute of Rural Department (NIRD) while travelling from Narwara to Eidgah on February 23, 2025. If anybody has found the same, please return on the address given below.
Objections, if any, be filed before the National Institute of Rural Department (NIRD), Rajendra Nagar, Hyderabad (500030), within a week of the publication of this public notice.

Gazala Nasir
Project Manager (NIRD)
Residence: Khaliwan, Narwara, Srinagar
Jammu and Kashmir

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یا اجلاس منظور استن کان
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تاریخ: 28-02-2025
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Why Do We Fall For Wellness Scams? Our Cultural Biases, Myths Often To Blame

The Conversation

Netflix's Apple Cider Vinegar has renewed interest in Belle Gibson's infamous wellness scam, reminding us how vulnerable we can be to deception. While Gibson's scheme eventually collapsed, her story highlights how fraudsters can exploit our psychological and cultural biases to lure us into wellness traps. Part of our culture includes the shared mythologies and symbols that help us make sense of the world. These stories and symbols seem to make our lives more "efficient" by surpassing tedious fact-checking. Over time, these cultural codes become embedded into our psychologies, operating as background biases that shape our decision-making. By becoming aware of these biases, we can develop a more critical approach to evaluating information presented to us. In doing so, we can protect ourselves from the Belle Gibsons of the world.

A desire for inner bodily purity

One pervasive wellness mythology suggests health can be found in the "pure" state of the body, and that illness occurs when outside contaminants pollute the body. As anthropologist Mary Douglas notes, we symbolically equate the "inner" with purity and the "outer" with pollution. This leads to efforts to protect ourselves from outside threats. We are disgusted by the idea of the harmful "outside" getting inside and violating the body's inner sanctum. Gibson's cookbook and app promoted a diet that claimed inner health problems (such as cancer) are the result of outside contamination, in this case by "bad" foods. This symbolism also appears in various diets that advocate for removing certain types of food, such as sugar or gluten, to achieve a state of inner sanctity and, therefore, health.



“The “appeal to nature” bias persists because it resonates with our collective intuition that modern life has somehow disconnected us from important truths or healthier ways of living.

Similarly, various “clean eating” diets will specifically link certain foods to cleanliness and others to dirtiness. In their most extreme form, these diets constitute orthorexia, a clinical condition defined by an “obsession” with healthy eating.

The allure of 'ancient wisdom'

Each day we face an overwhelming array of choices, from the products we use to how we construct our identities. As people living in modern, affluent societies we are, as philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre put it, “condemned to be free”. In this context of choice overload and decision fatigue, ancient wisdom offers a seductive simplicity:

a return to simpler times. In 1953, psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan observed that we possess a nostalgia for an idealised golden age (regardless of whether it ever truly existed). We yearn for a mythical era of simplicity, safety and happiness. This psychological bias for the past manifests as a deep reverence for “ancient wisdom”, seemingly passed down through generations and untainted by modern influence.

This preference can be seen in our instinctive trust in grandparents' remedies and traditional healing practices, even when scientific evidence doesn't always support them. Gibson and others co-opt this nostalgia by selling us products that connect us to the past.

Suspicion of industrial-scale production

Our minds are often suspicious of large-scale and complex manufacturing processes, and will often devalue industrially produced products. This scepticism of scale stems from negative associations with factory work, questionable standards and a history of multinational corporations prioritising profit over people. As a public, we are growing understandably weary of the multinational companies whose influence we can't seem to escape. Politicians often further this narrative by claiming that globalisation – replacing local cottage industries with industrialised mega-companies – screws the little guys like you and me.

Gibson capitalised on a growing suspicion of the industrial-scale pharmaceutical industry to promote her bespoke “homegrown” wellness products. Locally-made goods often have increased value simply because they are made on a smaller scale, regardless of their quality or materials. Historically, various groups including the Luddites and the hippie movement have rejected the industrial push. More recently, we saw these dynamics play out in COVID-19 vaccine denial, which partially stems from suspicions of the pharmaceutical companies.

A preference for natural over artificial

Culturally, the concept of the “natural” holds powerful meaning, positioning things found in nature as inherently superior to those manufactured by humans (deemed “artificial”). This natural/artificial dichotomy establishes a symbolic framework in which natural remedies, raw foods and authenticity represent the “proper” order of things – how life should be. The “appeal to nature” bias persists because it resonates with our collective intuition that modern life has somehow disconnected us from important truths or healthier ways of living. Research has demonstrated we tend to have a positive association with the concept of the “natural”, which we understand as objects not altered by human intervention. This preference isn't merely aesthetic. It also reflects our belief in a moral order. Gibson famously claimed alternative therapies – most notably apple cider vinegar – helped treat her alleged cancer. Similar patterns appear throughout the wellness industry, where influencers and companies market products by emphasising their natural origins and minimal processing. These claims leverage our psychological bias toward natural remedies, even when the scientific evidence for their efficacy is lacking.

Study Suggests Brain Development In Childhood Could Be Less Exible In Those With Schizophrenia



Press Trust Of India

Brain development during childhood appears to be less exible in people with schizophrenia, especially in regions that link thought and feeling processes, according to a review.
The findings, published in the American Journal of Psychiatry, provide a neurobiological basis for the mental disorder, which is marked by an impaired ability to perceive reality and delusional beliefs. Researchers at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, stated that about 80 per cent of people with schizophrenia display impaired cognitive functioning. Symptoms can include hallucinations and highly disorganized behavior that may appear bizarre or purposeless.
The symptoms also vary greatly between individuals. For some patients, disturbances in perception are the main problem, while for others, cognitive impairments are more prevalent, the team said.
“In this sense, there is not one schizophrenia, but many, each with different neurobiological profiles,” said rst author Wolfgang Omlor, a senior physician at the University Hospital of Psychiatry Zurich.
However, the review found a uniform pattern of brain folding in the mid-frontal region -- responsible for attention, working memory, and language -- that suggested a developmental trait common to people with

“The symptoms also vary greatly between individuals. For some patients, disturbances in perception are the main problem, while for others, cognitive impairments are more prevalent, the team said.

schizophrenia. Brain folding occurs in the cerebral cortex, the outer layer of the brain, which is responsible for higher cognitive functions, such as decision-making and attention. More folding is linked with more advanced and complex cognitive abilities. Because brain folding is largely completed in early childhood, brain development during this period appears to be less exible in schizophrenia patients, particularly in areas responsible for linking thinking and feeling processes, the team said. They also observed differences in brain structures of the patients, which could react the varying symptoms they might experience.

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Rising Blazes Downtown Residents Demand Fire Safety Measures

Agencies

Srinagar: Amid rising fire incidents in Srinagar, particularly in the congested Downtown area, residents have urged authorities to make fire extinguishers mandatory in homes and conduct regular fire safety audits to prevent disasters.

Residents from various parts of Downtown said that due to closely packed wooden houses and narrow lanes, even a small fire quickly turns into a major disaster.

"We have witnessed multiple fire incidents in Srinagar recently, causing huge property damage. The houses here are built close to each other, and fires spread within minutes," said Bilal Ahmad, a resident of Nowhatta.

Another local from Chattabal, Mohammad Ashraf, called for strict fire safety laws, making it compulsory for every household to have fire extinguishers and regular audits.

"Prevention is the only way to safeguard our homes and lives. We urge the authorities to introduce fire safety laws for Downtown Srinagar," he added.

In the past few weeks, Srinagar has witnessed several major fire incidents, including in Rajbagh and E-

dgah, which left nearly half a dozen families homeless and caused massive damage to houses.

Nazir Khan from Habba Kadal said that most houses in Downtown Srinagar are made of wood, making them highly vulnerable to fire. "We need proper safety measures before another tragedy strikes. The government should take immediate action," he said.

In May 2022, after several fire incidents in which many government buildings were gutted, the administration ordered a "Fire Safety Audit of all Government buildings across J&K." In this regard, an order was issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), stating that the audit across the Union Territory was to be carried out immediately, while the concerned authorities were directed to take necessary measures based on the audit reports.

The residents demand mandatory installation of fire extinguishers in homes and businesses; regular fire safety audits of residential and commercial buildings; strict implementation of fire safety laws in congested areas; and increased awareness and training programmes on fire prevention—(KNO)



PIC: Abid Bhat/KO

'Soan Meeras': Dal Lake Comes Alive With Shikara Rally

Agencies

Srinagar: The world-famous Dal Lake came alive on Wednesday as the ongoing Srinagar Heritage Festival—'Soan Meeras' featured a vibrant Shikara rally, showcasing the region's rich cultural heritage.

The function held in and around Ghat No. 18 of Dal Lake, featured traditional performances and floating markets, drawing a large number of visitors and artists.

As per details collected, the festival aimed at preserving Kashmir's heritage, witnessed artists

performing on beautifully decorated Shikaras, creating a mesmerizing scene on the waters of Dal Lake.

Notably, the rally was organized to commemorate the ancient customs of the area, based on its cultural and artistic identity.

A local musician, who performed at the rally, expressed his joy and said that participating in this festival was an honor. "Such festivals provide us with a platform to project our art and preserve our culture," he said.

Tourists and locals alike were equally surprised, and most stopped their cars along Dal Lake shores to witness the scenery. A local resident, Zubair Ahmad mentioned,

"It is wonderful to witness such an event in Srinagar, particularly on Dal Lake. The combination of cultural shows and Dal Lake's beauty makes it a special occasion."

Importantly, Soan Meeras festival is a part of a greater effort to honor and protect Kashmir's rich heritage. Over the years, the government and cultural organizations have made efforts to revive traditional art, crafts, and heritage tourism.

Speaking about the event, an official said the festival is an effort to revive and promote Kashmir's heritage while also boosting tourism. "The Shikara rally is a tribute to our rich traditions," he said—(KNO)

Highway Robbers Impersonating As Commandos Arrested

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police on Wednesday said to have arrested a gang of robbers, who were posing as Police Commandos to loot trucks during nighttime.

The operation led to the recovery of dummy guns, a vehicle, black uniforms, and other incriminating materials used in the crime, a police spokesman said in a statement issued

"On February 22, 2025, Police Station Shalteng received a complaint from Chanchal Singh, son of Sher Singh, a resident of Haryana, stating that during the night hours, unidentified individuals stopped his vehicle at Maloora, Shalteng, and robbed him of cash and valuables at gunpoint. Based on this

complaint, an FIR (No. 15 U/S 307, 126(2), 3(5)) was registered, and an investigation was launched," police said.

Acting swiftly, Srinagar Police said that it formed multiple teams and conducted an extensive search operation. Within days, four accused persons were identified and arrested from different areas of the city.

They have been identified as Sahil Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-Din Sheikh, resident of Narakh Budgam, Aqib Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-u-Din Sheikh, resident of Narkarah Budgam, Arbaz Ahmad Wani, son of Hilal Ahmad Wani, resident of SD Colony Batmaloo and Faisal Ahmad Shah, son of Azad Ahmad Shah, resident of Nowhatta.

KU Hosts Intl Conference On Trans-Himalayan Borderlands

Agencies

Srinagar: To promote academic discussions on the evolving cultural, economic, and social landscape of the Trans-Himalayan region, the Centre of Central Asian Studies (CCAS), University of Kashmir (KU), hosted a two-day international conference on "Trans-Himalayan Borderlands: Dynamics of Connectivity, Culture, and Change."

According to the Associated News Bureau, scholars and academicians from prestigious institutions in India, including JNU, Pondicherry University, and Jamia Millia Islamia participated, besides International experts and academics from France, Australia, and Italy who joined the conference in online mode

Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, who was the chief guest at the inaugural session, highlighted the strategic significance of trans-Hi-

malayan borderlands in shaping regional histories, trade networks, and socio-political dynamics.

"Conferences like these help us deepen our understanding of the intricate connections that have historically defined the Himalayan region and its neighboring cultures," she said.

Keynote speaker, Prof. Parth Chauhan, Head, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IISER Mohali, provided a detailed analysis of pre-historic migrations, technological advancements, and environmental interactions in Kashmir and the trans-Himalayas.

Director, India Central Asia Foundation and Head, MERI Centre of International Studies, New Delhi, Prof. Ramakant Dwivedi, in his special remarks, underscored the historical trade and cultural exchanges between South and Central Asia, emphasizing their relevance in contemporary times. ANB

Probe Launched Into Tetra Milk Pouch After Video Goes Viral

Agencies

Srinagar: A team from the Food Safety department, led by Assistant Commissioner Yameen Ul Nabi of Srinagar, has initiated an investigation into a viral video showcasing a tetra milk pouch. The investigation, which is still underway, saw the team—comprising Food Safety officers Khalid Bashir, Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, and Hakeem Adil—inspecting locations in

Karan Nagar and Umarabad HMT and collecting samples of the milk pouch for further analysis.

Assistant Commissioner Yameen Ul Nabi has urged the public to directly share any evidence or videos related to food safety concerns with the department before posting them on social media. This request is aimed at preventing any potential wrongdoers from becoming aware of the issue and possibly concealing violations prior to the department's intervention.

The probe underscores the importance of rigorous food safety standards and highlights the critical role the community plays in identifying and reporting potential hazards. While tetra milk pouches undergo ultra-high temperature (UHT) processing—which allows for longer storage without refrigeration—ensuring that these products are manufactured and distributed safely remains paramount to protect public health. (KINS)

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HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PRAYERS	
FAJR	5: 40
ZUHR	12:44
ASR	4: 45
Magrib	6:28
ISHA	7: 48

HIJRI CALENDAR
28 Shaban
1446

This Day In History

- 1454- Siege of Malbork, including its castle, seat of the Teutonic Order begun by Polish and Prussian forces - captured September 1454
- 1531- Evangelical German towns form Schmalkaldische Union
- 1557- 1st Russian Embassy arrives in London
- 1594- Henry IV crowned King of France
- 1626- Yuan Chonghuan is appointed Governor of Liaodong, after he led the Chinese into a great victory against the Manchurians under Nurhaci
- 1665- Battle at Elmina, Gold Coast: Vice-admiral De Ruyter beats English
- 1667- Abraham Crijnsen conquers Fort Willoughby (Zeelandia), Suriname
- 1700- English explorer William Dampier is the 1st British person to visit the Pacific Island of New Britain, which he names
- 1713- French troops bomb Willemstad, Curacao
- 1803- Great fire in Bombay, India
- 1844- Dominican Republic gains independence from Haiti (National Day)
- 1860 - Abraham Lincoln makes a speech at Cooper Union in the city of New York that is largely responsible for his election to the Presidency
- 1879 - Constantine Fahlberg discovers saccharin (artificial sweetener)
- 1881 - Battle at Amajuba: South African Boers vs British army under General Colley
- 1900 - Battle at Pietershoogte during the Boer War
- 1908 - Sacrifice fly adopted (repealed in 1931, reinstated 1954)
- 1929 - Turkey signs Litvinov-pact
- 1930 - Bouvet Island declared a Norwegian dependency
- 1938 - Britain & France recognize Franco government in Spain
- 1939 - France recognizes Franco's regime in Spain
- 1942 - J S Hey discovers radio emissions from Sun
- 1949 - Chaim Weizmann becomes 1st President of Israel
- 1950 - General Chiang Kai-shek elected president of Nationalist China
- 1958 - USSR performs nuclear test at Novaya Zemlya USSR
- 1961 - The first congress of the Spanish Trade Union Organisation is inaugurated.
- 1962 - South Vietnam President Ngô inh Dim's palace bombed by dissident air pilots in a failed assassination attempt
- 1967 - Antigua & St Christopher-Nevis become associated states of UK
- 1967 - Dominica gains independence from England
- 1968 - CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite delivers a scathing editorial on America's chances of winning the Vietnam War
- 1969 - General Hafez al-Assad becomes head of Syria via military coup
- 1972 - US President Richard Nixon and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai issue Shanghai Communiqué
- 1976 - Final meeting between Mao Zedong and Richard Nixon
- 1980 - Israel & Egypt exchange ambassadors
- 1987 - Donald Regan resigns as White House chief of staff
- 1987 - NCAA cancels SMU's entire 1987 football schedule for gross violations of NCAA rules regarding athletic corruption
- 1988 - Bonnie Blair (US) wins Olympic 500m speed skating in record 39.1
- 1988 - Gulfstream G-IV goes around the world 36:08:34
- 1989 - German war criminals Aus der Funten and Fischer freed in Holland
- 1995 - Car bomb explodes in Zakho, North-Iraq (54-80 killed)
- 1998 - Apple discontinues development of the Newton computer
- 1998 - Britain's House of Lords agrees to end 1,000 years of male precedence by giving a monarch's first-born daughter the same claim to the throne as any first born son
- 1999 - Korea International School is founded by Soon-Il Chung
- 2004 - A bombing of a Superferry by Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines worst terrorist attack kills 116

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KO VIEW

Jamaat's New Avatar?

The decision of Jamaat-i-Islami leaders who unsuccessfully contested last year's Assembly election to float a new political party has generated some interest in the Valley. Named as the Justice and Development Front (JDF), the party will contest the upcoming grassroots elections. It will be the third new political party in Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. First two were the Apni Party led by Altaf Bukhari and the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) founded by the former Congress veteran Ghulam Nabi Azad. Both of them have not been able to make any mark since their advent. In fact, the DPAP has all but disappeared from the political scene and Azad has almost retired from politics. Jamaat contestants in last year's election too couldn't win a single seat despite initial excitement. Except for Sayar Ahmad Reshi who polled 25000 votes in Kulgam, others were defeated by heavy margins.

Now, the question arises whether a new party could help these candidates. It may or may not do. There are no guarantees in politics. The USP of being a Jamaat-i-Islami is its religio-political agenda and its loyal cadre. Also, if we go by the Jamaat's history, the party despite its religious image hasn't only been about the religion. Jamaat schools were and continue to be forward-looking in matters of education. While religious instruction in these schools is a must, it is not the paramount and exclusive focus of education like the madrassas that sprang up in hundreds across the Valley through the nineties. Long before madrassas started turning out youth with knowledge restricted to religion, Jamaat produced doctors and engineers, scientists and academicians, even administrators, some of whom occupy posts in the higher echelons of the state bureaucracy.

Would this history and the background transfer to the JDF? Again, it may or may not happen. Over the last three decades of Jamaat's absence from electoral politics, generations have grown without any familiarity with Jamaat. They will find it difficult to relate to Jamaat, let alone a party with a purported connection to the parent organization. Anyways, the new party seems to have no connection to the parent in terms of its ideological leanings. Going forward, the JDF is likely to be judged on its own merits, and how best its leaders retain draw on Jamaat discourse and ideology. Not being able to do so will only detract from the organization's authenticity, in turn impacting its electoral chances.



Did You Know?

Building A Legacy: The Shift From Consumption To Education In Real Estate Investment In Kashmir

Irshad Mushtaq

The past two decades have brought transformative changes to the real estate market in Kashmir, especially in land values. Prices have surged from 5 to 10 lacs to astonishing figures of 1.5 to 2.5 Crores today. This dramatic increase—15 to 25 times appreciation over 20 years—highlights the lucrative potential of real estate investment in the region, showcasing a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 15 to 20%.

However, the landscape contrasts sharply when it comes to constructing homes. Two decades ago, building a house would cost about 40 lacs. In today's market, that same construction has risen to around 1.20 Crores—an increase of only 2.5 – 3 times. This striking disparity emphasizes a crucial understanding: while land tends to appreciate significantly, constructed properties do not exhibit the same return on investment.

Despite these insights, many individuals find themselves ensnared by a painful reality: considerable resources are often spent on cars—depreciable assets that yield minimal returns. This misallocation can adversely affect our financial well-being and bear heavy emotional implications, especially concerning the future of our children.

To remedy this disparity, we must embrace a transformative change in our financial priorities. Rather than obsessively acquiring possessions, we should focus on investing in our most important asset—education. By directing our finances toward skill development, we not only safeguard our financial futures but also empower the next generation with essential tools for success.

Let us resolve to provide our children with the wisdom of prudent financial practices and a legacy grounded in education, rather than material accumulation. By investing in their professional development, we equip them to navigate the complexities of the evolving financial landscape.

Read the full article on our website: <https://kashmirobsvserver.net>

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Wajahat Qazi

When prejudice masquerades as 'intellect' and 'analysis' and when certainty induced criticism is a proxy for narcissistic self-aggrandizement in society, the intellectual, poetic and literary foundations are hollowed out. This general and generic statement holds resonance across societies and cultures but has particular salience for our Kashmir. Undoubtedly, these words have a harsh ring to them but unfortunately these correspond to a bitter social and cultural truth. The intellectual foundations and bases of our society and culture are withering away at the altar of these insalubrious themes and issues. This condition is at great odds with our great and sublime legacy in terms poetic and literary output in the past. What do I mean by what I have suggested in flowery terms?

A disclaimer on my part is warranted here (before I elaborate upon my argument and support it): I am neither a repository of intellect, nor do I have a special claim and prosaic but obscure truths in social, cultural, intellectual and scientific domains. What I am is an observer and I may be flattering myself here as an analyst of cross cutting themes and issues. This is my vantage point. From this 'perch', I feel sad and bad about the inexorable decline in our intellectual and social standards. Now let me dwell on the central point and theme of this essay. Broadly, a given society's intellectual quest must be to probe for and find truths referred to in the essay, explicate on these and render these as the predicate for further truths. (I must emphasize here that as Muslims, there are clear boundaries to the truth discovery process. There is just One Absolute Truth. But worldly truths are there awaiting discovery and there may be an element of relativism to these worldly and prosaic truths). The base of the argument and the central

'I, Me and Myself' Syndrome

Can Kashmir Still Produce Great Works?



point established, what relevance does this have to Kashmir and Kashmiris?

Again, broadly speaking, the cardinal premise for discovering worldly truths has to be induction of uncertainty in one's quest—psychically and temperamentally. It is then that the world opens up to the seeker of these truths. Second, there is a difference between truth, ideology and prejudice. (This is self-evident). But the challenge is how to differentiate between these before one becomes a victim of 'false consciousness'—mistaking truth for ideology or prejudice or vice versa. This is easier said than done. But it is not impossible. The essential (but preliminary) stepping stone for this may be by not being too self-referential, transcend the limitations of the self, having empathy, and last not but the least disavowing narcissism. Grafting these onto our collective consciousness and our collective unconscious, plus our psychic world, none of these elements are found wanting in us. We are self-referential to the point of being self-centered, we appear to be unable to think being the narrow confines of ourselves. Combine the two together, the 'end product' is a narcissistic self. The consequences of these are that we have become hyper critical people (but mostly with respect to fellow Kashmiris); when we criticize or offer a critique say of a work of art, literature, or anything else,

I will dwell upon this assertion of mine by positing it against a hypothetical. If we take our starting point as the hypothetical that the west is our adversary, should we base our assessment of the same on prejudice and a certainty inflected 'I know it all' point of view, overlaid by a bit of a personal criticism?

there are threefold dynamics at work: one, there is a decided element of the personal in our critiques, and an underlying passive aggression in it (this may be suggestive of a fragile psyche where everything is seen as personal and taken personally); two, because there hardly any rigor and vigor in our research, prejudice masquerades as truth; and three, the 'uncertainty principle' (in worldly relative truths) is missing: we think we know it all. In combination, these elements make up for a condition that militates against higher order thinking, sublime and great thoughts.

I have a personal anecdote to illustrate this. In a gathering of some eminent people, I was honored and made part of a panel discussion. The perspective that I offered was that Kashmiri poetry had a universal resonance and that with due

diligence and vigor, it could be universalized. I cited the great Mawlana Rumi and the Turkish author Orhan Pamuk and their appeal across the world as illustrative examples. The moment the panel discussion was wrapped up, one of the panelists (in a pointed attack on me) went on a rant on Pamuk and Rumi dwelling on what he believed to be the real reasons for their appeal (incredibly saying that both privileged the body over anything else!!!). He also mentioned Gaza and so on. When I requested for an elaboration of these assertions, this was denied with the reason of paucity of time. To me this serves as a metaphor for our intellectual condition. The reasons for this appear to be in the elements I have delineated in this essay.

I will dwell upon this assertion of mine by positing it against a hypothetical. If we take our starting point as the hypothetical that the west is our adversary, should we base our assessment of the same on prejudice and a certainty inflected 'I know it all' point of view, overlaid by a bit of a personal criticism? Or should we instead of interpolating and putting our own spin on a given assertion and suggestion, take the assertion on its import and then discuss it? Consider the west again here. If it is our adversary, should we not better understand it than speculating wildly and getting the assessment and the 'response' wrong. (I am neither defending

the West here nor being a western apologist but I am putting matters into perspective. In fact, I have at times been hard done by the West. But I have learnt a great deal from it. This learning—philosophy, culture, economics, political theory and so on has not been a gift of the West to me. I have taught myself mostly what I know (very little) and this has been an intense endeavor. I stand both enriched—because of my Western exposures—and more appreciative of my own culture, faith and traditions but at the same time not demeaning the western scholarly traditions).

The portrait that I have painted is not a sanguine one. But if my assertions hold water, then this alarming condition should be seen as a call for action. Our slide into intellectual torpor, sleep walk into a condition where our quest becomes mere money and materialism (necessary but only up to a point), and where narcissism rules the proverbial roost undercuts our beautiful legacy and some of our bold traditions. Is there a way out of this morass? Can we elevate our thinking, intellect and orientation from a debased one to a sublime one? Possibly. But this can perhaps only be done by, first inculcating humility in ourselves, inducing the uncertainty principle vis a vis the world and its material, social and cultural truths and crafting an expansive self that neither has a need for validation nor seek validation by gratuitously criticizing others for just the heck of it. With faith in the Almighty and the Absolutes He has determined for us and certainty of the same, there is scope for redemption. Alternatively, doom and gloom await us!

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The author has a Masters with Distinction in International Relations from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Worked as Associate Editor of Kashmir Observer



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Forcing Your Children to Marry Unwillingly is Un-Islamic

It is important first to understand how forced marriage differs from arranged marriage. In the latter, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the young people. In forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved. The force may include threats of actual physical or sexual violence, financial abuse (e.g., the taking away of someone's wages) and/or the individual being made to feel they are bringing 'shame' on the family by refusing to marry. Sometimes the victim is unable to explain that no one was physically forcing him to do it but it was clear he had no choice? The pressure to accept was overwhelming. It is important to note that forced marriage is not sanctioned within any culture or by any religion.

Islam and Forced Marriage

Despite numerous contentions to the contrary, forced marriage is not an Islamic tradition; it is a jahiliyya custom (pre-Islamic era), rooted in indigenous cultures, that has persisted in some Muslim communities.

Islam does not sanction or advocate any form of forced marriage. Unlike secular law, marriage within the ambit of Islam is not only a civil contract but a religious and spiritual contract between two people—which must be entered into freely and with mutual consent. According to Islamic custom, parents and guardians have specific rights in this matter; to arrange the marriage ceremony and conduct it as a respectful family event; give their advice and recommendation for a life partner for their children. These rights are encapsulated within the philosophy of 'willayah'. However, Islam does not allow parents, guardians or other relatives to enforce their will or choice on a boy or a girl since it is they who are the real parties to that contract. The right to exercise free will and consent in choosing a spouse is a God given right.

There are a myriad of reasons for forced marriage. In Muslim communities, misguided religious teachings and perverted interpretations of Islam lead families to believe that they are complying with Islamic ruling. Other factors may include the notion of protecting children; upholding cultural traditions; preserving family honor; social status; and building stronger families. Forced marriage

also is used to prevent so-called "unsuitable" relationships outside regional & ethnic groups.

This is also clearly evident from important commandments given by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in numerous Hadith, which lay down the foundational principles of formulating a marriage contract.

In the Sahih Al-Bukhari, for example, a chapter in the book of marriage has been given the heading: "No father or mother or any close relation can force his/her children to marry anyone against their free will and consent".

Within this chapter Abu Hurairah transmits from the Holy Prophet (PBUH) who said: "No female whether a widow or divorcee will be forced to marry anyone unless her express and categorical consent has been freely taken and in the same way a woman not previously married can never be forced to marry anyone unless her free consent and permission is taken".

Imam Bukhari has set another chapter heading within the book of marriage: "If parents force their daughter to marry someone against her wish then the marriage will be void".

Under this chapter Imam Bukhari reports a Hadith of the Holy Prophet

(PBUH) from Khansa Bint e Hizam Al Ansariyah. She states that her father married her off to someone forcefully whom she did not like. She took her case to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and upon listening to her; the Holy Prophet (PBUH) rejected the marriage and declared the marriage as void".

In another Hadith in the Sahih of Imam Bukhari it is narrated by Abdullah Ibn Abbas (r.a.d) that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said that if a woman wants to marry and is already a divorcee or widow, her right of free consent and free choice is superior then the right of her guardian. If she is not previously married and this is her first marriage even then her parents or other guardians cannot enforce their choice on her. They are not allowed to force her to marry anyone against her free choice and free consent.

It is thus clearly apparent that forced marriages are totally unacceptable in Islam. Islamic commandments as mentioned above are very categorical in nature. Those who invoke Islam in order to justify their actions do so for ulterior motives. There is a need to educate all and sundry on these issues.

Abid Hussain
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Need for Kashmir-Centric Urban Planning

A Conversation with Prof. Haenraets

KO Web Desk

Urban planning in Jammu and Kashmir is at a very critical juncture. The Institution of Engineers, in collaboration with civil society groups, organized a thorough workshop in which by-laws were deliberated upon. Kashmir Observer interviewed Professor Jan Haenraets, Professor of Practice in the Preservation and Studies Program at Boston University. He has done extensive work in Kashmir. Following are the excerpts from the interview.

Kashmir Observer: Tell us about the kind of technicalities that were discussed in the workshop regarding land pooling and land bylaws. Please talk us through it.

The panel brought together a number of speakers and a wider public audience for consultation and inputs. The speakers focused on proposals for changes to the bylaws. My perspective, as a conservation architect who focuses on the historic landscape, was that Srinagar is a very historic urban landscape, different from other cities in the subcontinent. You need a particular set of guidelines and regulations to ensure that the sustainable livability of the city is retained. What the speakers mentioned were the implications of some of the suggestions, such as the removal of certain elements of the bylaws, and how that could open the door to very free development. While I think everybody agreed that regulations should evolve, it is crucial that they are adapted carefully, especially for a particular place like Srinagar in Kashmir, not just Kashmir but the entire Kashmir valley.

Kashmir Observer: Have you visited the downtown part of Srinagar, and did you experience the current Smart City? How would you draw the difference between the two parts of the city?

I have been involved in Kashmir for about 15 years, and I have visited



Jan Haenraets
Professor, Boston University

historic places. The downtown, the old city, is remarkable, and I have seen huge changes taking place, such as the widening of roads and other changes we do need in a historic city. Srinagar doesn't have many multi-story buildings; it retains a kind of medieval atmosphere, which is excellent and beautiful at the same time.

Progress is something that every citizen should receive. You should have a level of progress in your urban environment. But what happens at the same time, while we have these historic areas, is an explosion of automobile traffic, which has had a major impact, especially over the last 15 years, on the historic city. At the same time, we've seen stabilization in the valley, and the 2019 bill shifted the government more centrally to Delhi. In that whole context, we've seen an influx of tourism and visitation from national visitors to the valley. With the centralized government behind that, they've created ideas such as Smart City projects, which are implemented throughout the nation. Now, in the case of Srinagar, it is a good thing that there is significant investment in the public realm, including infrastructural elements like bus systems. But the problem is that those

The Smart City infrastructure, to me, is a complete failure. I believe everyone in Kashmir welcomes the financial investment in the region, but the proposals are being designed outside Kashmir by consultants who don't really understand the valley

proposals are not Kashmir-specific. We see developments with materials, designs, and systems like bicycle paths and electric bicycles, even though bicycling was not something

common in Kashmir. So investments are happening here, but the execution is very poor. We see a contrast between the old city, where infrastructural improvement is necessary, and the new tourist hotspots, which feel somewhat alien to Kashmir.

Kashmir Observer: According to the Building Bylaws 2021, a lot of changes have been suggested by experts sitting in Delhi, which have likely been contested by stakeholders and experts here in Jammu and Kashmir, not just in Kashmir but also in Jammu. How do you view these bylaws and their context?

There was a lot of discussion about that, and we need to recognize that bylaws are highly subjective. Some people will support certain proposals, while others may not. I have a particular view, as I come from a historic landscape background, focusing on environmental quality, livable cities, and the historic significance of places. However, others may come from economic or tourism backgrounds. I must say, some people mentioned that some of these shifts in the bylaws could benefit them, especially in terms of economic development, such as hotels or new town areas

where complete new developments may occur. Deregulation might benefit such projects. But again, in the historic city, this becomes problematic. So, there were different views.

Kashmir Observer: As an expert, are you satisfied with the way the Smart City is coming up? Given the different landscaping elements and other features in the city, do you think it is satisfactory, or do you have your own opinion?

I will give my personal opinion: I think it is a complete failure in Kashmir. The Smart City infrastructure, to me, is a complete failure. I believe everyone in Kashmir welcomes the financial investment in the region, but the proposals are being designed outside Kashmir by consultants who don't really understand the valley. They use design approaches that may be suitable for other cities in India, but they are not place-specific. For landscape infrastructure, urban realms, and public spaces, you need to understand the place. It's not enough to design in a drawing room and expect it to work. For landscape and public realm projects, you must understand the historic layers, climate, environment — all aspects of the place. One area where the Smart City project stands out as a failure is in horticulture and vegetation. They create paved surfaces with little to no horticulture. For any outdoor public space, you need to consider maintenance alongside the infrastructure. But what's happening here is more like interior decoration done outdoors — benches and flowers that could be found anywhere, which aren't place-specific, and there's no consideration for horticulture. Srinagar, Kashmir, is known for its green environment, but many trees are being cut down or damaged during this process, and green spaces are being replaced with concrete and stone pavements. To me, it's a pity. With the budget for that project, we could have completely landscaped the urban public realm of the old city.

We see developments with materials, designs, and systems like bicycle paths and electric bicycles, even though bicycling was not something common in Kashmir. So investments are happening here, but the execution is very poor. We see a contrast between the old city, where infrastructural improvement is necessary, and the new tourist hotspots, which feel somewhat alien to Kashmir

Technology in Modern Criminal Investigations

A vital tool which can be used by police for law and order



Khalid Mustafa

The modern world has integrated technology into a variety of fields, including criminal investigations. Criminal investigations have seen significant technological changes in recent years. Technology has made it easier to perform criminal investigations, enabling investigators to collect evidence without human intervention, analyze it, & present it in court. New tools & techniques have made it possible for defence agencies to solve crimes faster & more effectively, leading to the identification & punishment of criminals. Technology is a crucial part of law enforcement in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), which is known for its unique challenges. The J&K Police, which manages complex & evolving security matters, can depend on modern technology to increase public safety, crime control & investigation efficiently. Digital evidence & forensics science have become increasingly widespread in modern criminal investigations. Criminals are using online platforms & devices to do crimes in the digital age. Digital tools have been created which are available & can be utilized by law enforcement agencies to solve crimes. The digital evidence consists of the information from various devices such as mobile phones, computers & as well as social media. Evidences like location, Internet Protocol Detail Records (IPDR), Call Detail Records (CDR data), communication records & financial transactions can be used to establish a timeline of events for investigators to follow in order to identify suspects.

Technology's Impact on criminal investigations & the challenges faced in utilizing technology.

In modern criminal investigations, technology is heavily used to improve the efficiency & precision of law enforcement. A series of traditionally used methods of investigating have always been important: questioning, collection of material & witness accounts, & eyewitness

testimony. The advancement of technology has provided law enforcement with a more extensive range of tools to collect & analyze evidence. By utilizing these tools, investigations are expedited significantly, human errors are reduced, & cases are resolved more quickly. One of the primary concerns in criminal investigations is the protection of data security & privacy through technology. The abundance of data being gathered & stored has raised questions about its utilization, possessors, & safeguarding. Another problem with the use of technology in criminal investigations is the digital divide. Despite the availability of modern technology, not every law enforcement agency has access to it due to budgetary restrictions or inadequate training. Due to this difference, investigations may not be conducted effectively & results may vary significantly depending on the jurisdiction. Fairness & justice in the criminal justice system can only be achieved through the implementation of technology & training for all law enforcement agencies. Here are some examples of how modern criminal law is being used in the field:

a. Digital Forensics & Cybercrime Investigation.

Digital forensics is one of the most significant developments in criminal investigations. The use of computers, smartphones, tablets, & other digital tools has become increasingly common among criminals as they try to plan & execute crimes. The retrieval & analysis of data from these devices to obtain evidence in criminal cases is referred to as digital forensics. By employing digital forensics techniques to monitor hackers, cybercriminals, & those engaging in illegal online activities such as hacking or fraud, the J&K Police can enhance their investigative efforts. By using specialized software, investigators can track internet searches & other data, recover lost or deleted files, & monitor the communications with suspects. The development of these technologies will be crucial to the fight against crime in J&K, as cybercrime & inter-state crimes continue to grow.

b. CCTV Surveillance & Face Recognition Technology.

The use of CCTV cameras has made urban public areas more accessible for surveillance. Apart from detecting criminal activity, the cameras are essential in



case of an incident. The integration of advanced technologies like facial recognition software is being used in CCTV systems to identify & track individuals, in addition to traditional surveillance. In Jammu & Kashmir, where ongoing conflicts & crimes are a concern, CCTV surveillance can be particularly effective as compared to other methods. By comparing their facial features with databases of known criminals or people of interest, facial recognition software can be used to track suspected criminal activity, those involved in anti-national activities, or any other criminal.

c. The use of drones in surveillance & crime scene documentation is possible.

In modern criminal investigations, drones are increasingly being used to monitor large or risky areas. The use of drones is a viable option in areas like Jammu & Kashmir where remote terrain poses logistical challenges. Law enforcement can make use of drones for crowd management, surveillance purposes & crime scene recording. In addition to conventional surveillance techniques, drones can also be utilized to monitor critical zones, crime hideouts, deep gorges & areas where the terrain is challenging to navigate.

d. Biometric Identification & Fingerprint Analysis.

The use of biometrics for identification is another area where technology has proven to be highly beneficial. The use of biometric technologies, including

eye scanning, face recognition, & fingerprints, has been linked to increased criminal investigations. The use of fingerprints at a crime scene is still an effective method of identifying suspects. The use of biometric databases enables defence agencies to quickly identify suspects by cross-checking them with a database of criminals. By utilizing biometric systems in criminal investigations, the J&K Police could potentially aid their investigation in an area where fugitives may attempt to circumvent arrest by altering their identity or appearance. Fingerprint matching can be a trustworthy approach to identifying suspects in cases of crimes.

e. GPS Tracking & Electronic Monitoring.

Criminal investigations often involve the use of GPS-based tracking systems & electronic monitoring devices to track the movements of suspects. These are especially useful in cases where long-term tracking of a suspect's whereabouts are needed. The use of GPS trackers & electronic monitors by authorities can ensure that suspects are following laws such as house arrests, geofencing etc during course of investigations. The J&K Police stated that GPS tracking can aid law enforcement agencies in their efforts to catch criminals. Moreover, law enforcement can access real-time data on crimes like kidnappings, murder planings & car thefts that could lead to the recovery of lost property or the rescue of victims.

f. Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR)

ALPR technology enables law enforcement to scan & track vehicle license plates automatically. This system can be utilized to patrol perimeter security, monitor movement of suspects, & identify if they have stolen a vehicle or even can track the lost vehicle. Because ALPR can identify vehicles of interest quickly without human intervention, it's especially useful in densely trafficked urban areas with multiple entry points. The J&K Police could make use of ALPR to oversee crucial entrance & exit points in the region, like non toll post crossings or key roads. Hence, they could monitor the movements of suspects trying to enter or exit sensitive areas or track cars involved in criminal activities.

Recent Event: Technological advancements are necessary for J&K Police to meet their needs.

In a recent event in Kashmir, the family of Umar Yaseen, a resident of Nowgam who disappeared on 22nd Dec 2024 & later found dead at Digidol Ramban eight days prior, is seeking justice for Umar Yaseen with respect to the murder or conspired accident that led to the discovery of his body. In that case & other long pending cases in J&K, the Jammu & Kashmir Police should proceed with their criminal investigations using modern technology. By utilizing state-of-the-art technology, case resolution & crime prevention can be significantly enhanced due to the local law enforcement challenges & crimes. To tackle these problems, the J&K Police should consider investing in cutting-edge technologies such as digital forensics, drone technology, biometric systems, & predictive planning. These technologies would enable the police to maintain order, gather more credible evidence, & respond better to incidents. It would also focus on investigations that are most important to public safety, allowing J&K Police to solve cases faster.

Application of Big Data Analytics in Criminal Investigations.

Criminology has been revolutionized by big data analytics, which empowers law enforcement agencies to analyze vast amounts of information in real time & extract relevant insights. Every day, social media, financial transactions, telecommunications, & IoT devices generate vast amounts of data in today's digital world. These numbers are used by police

forces to uncover hidden patterns, & in particular, enable them to solve crimes, identify suspects & help prevent crime.

The use of advanced techniques like machine learning & predictive modelling enables investigators to efficiently analyze large data, identify suspicious behaviour & give priority to leads for further investigation. Social networking can uncover connections between criminals, while financial transaction enables the identification of illegal financial transactions. However, the application of big data analytics in criminal investigations raises ethical & privacy concerns as well as questions about the collection, storage, & sharing of sensitive personal information. As a result, it is crucial for defence agencies to validate data protection regulations, ensure transparency in their investigation procedures, & protect the rights of individuals while using big data analytics to combat crime effectively.

Future Technological developments in the field of criminal investigation?

Rapid technological innovation & changing law enforcement needs are anticipated to pave the way for significant advancements in the use of technology in criminal investigations. Artificial intelligence (AI) & machine learning algorithms are being increasingly integrated into investigative techniques, enabling law enforcement agencies to analyze vast amounts of data more effectively & obtain valuable information. Advanced predictive analytics models will enable investigators to predict criminal activities, identify new threats, & allocate resources wisely. Technology is now a necessary component of criminal investigation, along with an improved approach. By utilizing these technological advancements, the Jammu & Kashmir Police can better manage sensitive security situations in the area. The use of technology can transform investigations, crack the (murder, cyber & terror) cases & improve public safety, including using the advanced surveillance techniques & digital forensics. By adoption of such technologies, J&K can enhance the security situation in their region & improve police force effectiveness. The J&K Police must enhance more technology to remain a forceful in the fight against crime with transparency & excellent policing.

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CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

A Breather: J&K's

reveals a deficiency of 60 to 84 per cent in other districts of Jammu and Kashmir including Srinagar, the summer capital of the Union Territory, having a deficiency of 74 per cent during the period.

There is a forecast of more snow and rain for the next two days, which would likely reduce the rainfall deficit of this season. The weatherman has issued yellow and orange alerts for Jammu and Kashmir, predicting light to moderate rainfall till February 28.

Amid the declining trend in precipitation for the last three consecutive years, Kashmir Valley has recorded the worst-ever deficit rainfall in 2025 in the last eight years.

Official data revealed that a deficiency of 70 per cent was recorded from December 2024 to February 2025.(KNO)

J&K Assembly

Before the Assembly elections in October 2024, there was speculation that these five nominated members could play a crucial role in shaping the balance of power. However, with the National Conference securing a comfortable majority of 42 seats, supported by the Congress, the urgency around these nominations has diminished.

The first Assembly session in November last revolved around the demand for restoring J&K's statehood. (KINS)

J&K Targets

the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh 2034-35, CEA has said, "One of the main criteria of resource adequacy studies is to determine the reliability of the system to meet the demand adequately at very instance of time. This reliability is measured with two indicators including Loss of Load Probability (LOLP) and Expected Energy Not Served (EENS)."

Pertinently, it was earlier reported that Jammu and Kashmir is currently relying on more than 85 percent of coal and solar power amid acute deficit of hydro power generation.

Officials of PDD department had claimed that local hydro power generation from the local power plants have reduced by nearly 90 percent.

An official had informed that "At present Jammu and Kashmir is 85-90 percent dependent on coal and solar energy that is being procured from the other states because as of now we don't have a local power generation."

"In winters the local hydro power generation of Jammu and Kashmir power plants has reduced by almost 90 percent and in order to cater the requisite power demand, we need to have a base power availability that we procure from outside states. The energy is coal based energy," the official had said.(KNO)

Temp Plummetts,

recorded at Gulmarg, a famous ski-resort

and other places today, which led to temperatures plummeting in the Valley.

As per the details shared by an Independent Weather Forecaster, Aadil Maqbool, Sadhna Top and Zojila Pass recorded a snow depth of 2 feet. Z Gali, Gurez, Sinthan Top and Gulmarg recorded a snow depth of one feet each till this evening while Sonamarg recorded 1.5 ft and Doodhpathri recorded 8 inches.

Pahalgam and Kupwara recorded rainfall of above 20 mm in the last 24 hours while Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, witnessed the rainfall of 7.8 mm during the period.

Chill returned to Srinagar as the city recorded the maximum temperature of 6.6 degree Celsius.

In its week-long weather forecast, Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at most places with isolated heavy rain and snow over both Kashmir & Jammu divisions for next two days.

On March 1 & 2, Ahmad said that amid generally cloudy weather, there is a forecast of light rain and snow at isolated to scattered places, adding that on March 3, light to moderate rain and snow is expected at many places.

From March 4 & 6, he said generally dry weather is expected.

Meanwhile, in its advisory, the local MeT department has said that there is a possibility of temporary disruption of surface transportation mainly over Sadhna pass, Razdan Pass, Sonamarg-Zojila-Gumri axis, Mughal Road, Sinthan Pass and other major roads of hilly districts are expected.

Tourists, travelers and transporters are advised to plan accordingly & follow administration and traffic advisory, it reads, adding that farmers are advised to suspend irrigation & other farm operations.

Significant fall in day temperature is expected during the above period, the MeT added.

Govt Plans New

provides a monthly return of Rs 1,000 - Rs 1,500 after the investor turns 60, and the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan Yojana (PM-SYM), which seeks to benefit street vendors, domestic workers, or labourers, among others.

There are also schemes designed for farmers, such as the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Mandhan Yojana, which provides Rs 3,000 monthly after the investor is 60 years old.

Hearath Celebrated

said Maha Shivaratri holds great significance for them. "Every year, we come here to offer prayers and seek divine blessings," he said.

Another worshipper at the shrine said the festival symbolises spiritual awakening and unity. "This festival is about faith and devotion. We pray for peace and prosperity," he added.

Maha Shivaratri, meaning "The Great Night

of Shiva", is a Hindu festival dedicated to lord Shiva. Observed annually, it is believed to be the night when Lord Shiva performed the "Tandava", the cosmic dance of creation, preservation and destruction. Devotees fast, offer milk and bel patra (Bilva leaves) to Shiva Lingams, and engage in night-long prayers.

Security measures were arranged at the Shankaracharya temple to provide a smooth and peaceful celebration. The temple authorities also made necessary arrangements for devotees

Dozens of tourists also visited the temple to observe Mahashivaratri. Devotees also offered prayers at the Martand Sun temple in South Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah extended Mahashivaratri greetings to the Hindu community.

"Wishing everyone a blessed and Happy Maha Shivratri! May this sacred occasion bring peace, prosperity, and divine blessings to all and guide us towards strength, wisdom, and harmony," Abdullah said in a post on X.

Hurriyat Conference Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq also extended Hearath wishes to Kashmiri Pandit community. Hearath is celebrated by Kashmiri Pandits a day ahead of Mahashivaratri.

"Warm greetings to our Kashmiri pandit brethren on the occasion of Hearath. Pray for restoration of the bond of love and coexistence that is an inherent component of our shared heritage," Mirwaiz posted on his X account.

No Reservation For

and also disclose the name of the hospitals where the medical care facilities are being available to them. The UT of Ladakh was also asked to file a detailed report with regard to framing of schemes for grant of pensionary benefits to the community.

HC Orders Reduction

extended to be connected to the expressway.

"There should not be mushrooming of toll plazas in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh only with the sole aim and objective of minting money from the general public... Respondents are charging hefty toll fees at Bann toll plaza, whereas toll fees at other toll plazas are also high," the bench said in a 12-page order issued on Tuesday.

"Thus, not only the treasures of NHAI (National Highways Authority of India) are being filled with thousands of crores of rupees, private contractors are also enriching themselves by accumulating crores of rupees," it added.

Since the fees must be fair enough for the general public and should not be a source of revenue-generating mechanism, the respondents -- particularly the Union ministry concerned -- are directed to consider levying of "fair and genuine" fees at the toll plazas,

thereby slashing the existing fees at all the plazas as the current rates are on the higher side, the high court said.

"The decision in this regard (will) be taken positively within a period of four months from today (Tuesday)," according to the order.

The high court also ordered the respondents -- the NHAI, Jammu and Kashmir government and the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways -- to withdraw within one week the order or direction regarding redistributing the influence length from Lakhanpur to Udhampur between the Lakhanpur and the Bann toll plazas with effect from January 26 last year after closure of the Thandi Khui toll plaza.

"Respondents are directed to levy only 20 percent of the toll fee with immediate effect, ie, the toll fee at Lakhanpur toll plaza and Bann toll plaza shall be 20 percent of the rates earlier in force before 26.01.2024 till the national highway from Lakhanpur to Udhampur gets fully operational for smooth utilisation of the public," the high court said.

"Respondents charge the full toll at both these toll plazas only after the issuance of a certificate in this regard by an independent surveyor," it said.

The high court also directed the respondents not to establish any toll plaza within 60 kilometres of National Highway 44. "If there is any toll plaza in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir or in the Union Territory of Ladakh within 60 kilometres on the national highway, respondents (are directed) to remove the same within two months from today (Tuesday)."

The respondents and the contractors of the toll plazas were directed not to employ anyone with a criminal background.

The high court also directed the respondents and the contractors to deploy personnel at the toll plazas only after verification by police agencies concerned. "In case of any deviation in this regard, the concerned SHO or in-charge shall be personally responsible for the same."

Centre to SC

held that the legislative choice over one option or the other couldn't be questioned in courts over its efficacy or otherwise.

Under Section 8 (1) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the period of disqualification was six years from the date of conviction or in case of imprisonment, six years from the date of release, it added.

"The disqualifications made under the impugned sections are limited by time as a matter of parliamentary policy and it would not be appropriate to substitute the petitioner's understanding of the issue and impose a lifetime ban," it said.

The Centre said as a matter of judicial review, the court could declare the provisions to be unconstitutional, however, the relief sought by the petitioner effectively sought to read "lifetime" instead of "six years" in all sub-sections of Section 8 of the Act.

It said lifetime disqualification was the maximum that could be imposed under the provisions and such a discretion was "certainly within the power of Parliament".

"However, it is one thing to say that a power exists and another to say that it must necessarily be exercised in every case," the Centre argued.

The affidavit said the impugned laws were "constitutionally sound" and "did not suffer from the vice of excess delegation" aside from being intra vires the powers of Parliament.

While imposing any penalty, it said, Parliament considers the principles of proportionality and reasonability as for instance, the entirety of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, or penal law provide for imprisonment or fines up to certain limits and the rationale behind it was that the punitive measures would correlate with the gravity of offence.

There were numerous penal laws that prescribe imposing restrictions on the exercise of rights and freedoms, which in most cases are time-specific, it said.

The Centre said the petition failed to make the crucial distinction between basis of disqualification and effects of disqualification.

"It is true that the basis of disqualification is conviction for an offence and that this basis remains unchanged so long as the conviction stands. The effect of such conviction lasts for a fixed period of time. As stated above, there is nothing inherently unconstitutional in limiting the effect of penalties by time," it said.

The affidavit said the petitioner's reliance on Articles 102 and 191 of the Constitution was totally misplaced.

Articles 102 and 191 of the Constitution deals with disqualifications for membership of either house of parliament, legislative assembly or legislative council.

The Centre said Clause (e) of Articles 102 and 191 were enabling provisions that confer on Parliament the power to make laws governing disqualification and it was in exercise of this power that the 1951 Act was enacted.

"The Constitution has left the field open to Parliament to enact such further law governing disqualifications as it deems fit. Parliament has power both to determine the grounds for disqualification and the duration of disqualification," it said.

The Centre said the grounds for disqualification in the articles included holding of an office of profit, unsoundness of mind, insolvency and not being a citizen of India.

"It is submitted that these are not permanent disqualifications," it added.

The apex court on February 10 sought responses of the Centre and the Election Commission on the challenge to constitutional validity of Sections 8 and 9 of Representation of People Act. (inputs from PTI)

Terrorists Fire

has launched a cordon and search operation in the area.

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Javed Rana Reviews Functioning Of Jal Shakti, Forest Departments



Observer News Service

POONCH: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana emphasised efficient service delivery and timely implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Pir Panjal region.

He made these remarks during his visit to the region conducted to assess the progress on developmental activities including JJM in Pir Panjal region. Rana emphasised the need for expediting the water supply schemes in Pir Panjal region and set strict timelines for their completion to ensure safe drinking water for all. He directed the officials to work on a war footing basis, regularly monitor progress while highlighting the need for adherence to laid-down parameters.

He also reviewed the measures to maintain continuous supply of water in remote areas and called for proactive initiatives, including a robust complaint redressal mechanism, to address public grievances effectively.

While reviewing the working of the forest department, Javed Rana called for effective strategies that lead to sustainable development while taking into consideration environmental concerns along with economic prosperity.

Rana expressed hope that the forest fraternity shall work in tandem with communities to conserve and protect forests and environment. He exhorted upon the officers to work with dedication and sincerity to solve public issues and concerns. He further said that there is a need to attach high importance to addressing the challenges of climate change. He also laid stress on forest fire prevention and management mechanisms that have gained added significance due to the adverse climatic conditions and mitigation measures need to be taken beforehand.

He directed the officers for optimum utilisation of available resources for revenue generation and sustainable livelihoods created through eco-tourism and forest recreation. During his tour, the Minister also visited Kotli Kalaban in Rajouri, Harni and Galotha villages in Mendhar and interacted with local inhabitants there.

The delegations highlighted pressing issues such as water, forest rights, road connectivity, tribal issues, rural infrastructure and healthcare services.

The Minister assured the delegations of the government's commitment towards resolving their concerns in a time bound manner, emphasising inclusive and sustainable development.

43 Bn CRPF Organize Reception For Returnees Of Bharat Darshan Tour



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: 43 Bn CRPF hosted a reception for 20 students who participated in the Bharat Darshan Tour organized under the Civic Action Program on 26 Feb 2025.

After a week of exploring various historical sites in Delhi/Agra, the students returned safely and were warmly welcomed at the District Police Lines Budgam. The tour provided students a unique opportunity to experience India's rich cultural landscape, instilling a deep sense of patriotism and self-confidence.

During the reception, officials of 43 Bn CRPF congratulated the students for seizing the opportunity to visit significant

heritage sites. The students also expressed their excitement and gratitude to 43 Bn CRPF for facilitating the tour and described the tour as a resounding success, noting that it provided them with invaluable experiences, exposure, and confidence. They shared insights about the diverse places they visited, emphasizing the knowledge gained throughout the tour. Speaking on the occasion, R. Jaya Kumar, CO 43 Bn, CRPF extended his best wishes to all students for a bright future and also reaffirmed CRPFs commitment to community welfare, announcing that more such Bharat Darshan Tours would be organized in the coming months to continue fostering national awareness among students.

BSF Foils Infiltration Bid Along IB

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Border Security Force (BSF) personnel foiled an infiltration bid along the International Border in Pathankot sector, officials said on Wednesday.

An official said "BSF personnel observed a suspicious movement across the International Border at Tashpatan, Pathankot border area.

An intruder was observed crossing the IB, he was challenged by the alert troops but he paid no heed and kept on moving; BSF troops sensing threat neutralised the intruder."

The official said that the identity of the intruder is being ascertained. "Strong protest will be lodged with Pakistan Rangers at the highest level," the official added—(KNO)

Police Registers First-Ever E-FIR Via Email In Awantipora

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a sophisticated way towards digital policing, Police in Awantipora on Wednesday said to have registered its first electronic First Information Report (e-FIR) following a complaint lodged via Email.

The complaint was filed by Mushtaq Ahmed Bhat resident of New Colony Khrew, against Adil Ahmad Bhat and Bilal Ahmad Bhat both residents of New Colony Khrew, a police spokesman said in a statement issued

to Kashmir Observer. The complainant alleged them about assaulting his whole family causing injury to them. The complainant has supported the complaint with an OPD ticket from PHC Khrew and a copy of Aadhaar card as evidential proof, police said.

Upon examining the complaint, the cognizance was taken by registering e-FIR, covered under a case FIR number 17/2025, under the relevant sections of the BNS in Police Station Khrew.

Sakeena Itoo Reviews Functioning Of JKMSCL



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the performance and functioning of Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (JKMSCL).

The meeting was attended by Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed; Managing Director, JKMSCL, Principals of all GMCs, Principals of Dental Colleges, CMOs of all districts and other concerned officers, either in person or virtually.

Addressing the officers, Sakeena Itoo underscored the need for further strengthening the monitoring system of medical supplies for enhanced healthcare service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir. She called for bringing added transparency and efficiency in medicine distribution for patients in all district and Sub-district hospitals as well as health centres.

The Minister asked the Principals of all GMCs to maintain proper record of medicines distributed among patients at their respective hospitals as well as of those prescribed for patients but not available in their stocks.

Sakeena further stressed on the management of JKMSCL to maintain quality standards in medical supplies as well as machinery and equipment being procured by the corporation.

Acknowledging the role of JKMSCL in upgrading the healthcare infrastructure across J&K, she urged the management to work towards a more responsive and efficient system that caters to growing medical needs of locals here.

While assessing the purchase status of machinery and other high end equipment for various healthcare facilities of J&K, Sakeena called upon the management of the Corporation to reduce delays in procurement and adopt an enhanced framework for timely delivery of machinery and

equipment. She directed the JKMSCL management to expedite pending procurement processes and ensure timely delivery of medical supplies, machinery and equipment, especially in rural and remote areas.

While reviewing the status of the Drugs and Vaccine Distribution Management System (DVDMS) portal, Sakeena Itoo stressed on the management of JKMSCL for physical monitoring of drugs being distributed among various health facilities. She asked them to constitute teams for conducting surprise inspections of drugs and medicines being delivered to hospitals and other facilities.

She further asked the management of the corporation to take action against officers who are yet to onboard the DVDMS portal.

During the meeting, MD, JKMSCL provided a detailed presentation on procurement mechanisms, supply chain management, availability of medicines as well as financial position of the Corporation.

6 SAKEENA FURTHER STRESSED ON THE MANAGEMENT OF JKMSCL to maintain quality standards in medical supplies as well as machinery and equipment being procured by the corporation.

REBUTTAL

Distt Floriculture Office Refutes Illegal Felling Of Trees In Rani Bagh

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The District Floriculture Office Anantnag strongly refuted the information circulated on various media platforms regarding illegal felling of trees in Rani Bagh.

While refuting the said information, the concerned officer of the department said, "It has come to the notice

that misleading information is being circulated regarding allegedly illegal tree felling in Rani Bagh, Anantnag, which is factually incorrect and baseless."

The facts are that only pruning of dried and hazardous branches of old Chinar trees was carried out with due authorization to ensure public safety, he said.

Following an open auction conducted on January 09, 2025 under the supervision of the District Floriculture officer, the process was conducted transparently and in accordance with regulations.

The public has been advised to refrain from sharing misleading information and have been asked to verify facts from the concerned authorities.

Three Schools From J&K & Ladakh Recognized At Wipro Earthian Awards 2024

Observer News Service

BENGALURU: Wipro Limited, a leading technology services and consulting company, recently held the 14th edition of the Wipro Earthian Awards 2024 at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru. These awards mark the culmination of an annual program aimed at fostering sustainability education and recognizing schools and colleges across India that actively promote sustainable action and thinking.

Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Manigam, Jammu & Kashmir: The school from the Kashmir Valley received recognition for its award-winning submission on solid waste management. The students effectively documented the challenges posed by increasing waste and highlighted the differences between linear disposal methods and circular recycling/reuse approaches. Their project demonstrated a strong understanding of the solid waste journey in their local area.

Lamdon School (Tsang Chu), Ladakh: The team from this Ladakh-based school provided a unique perspective on water management in the cold desert environment. Although water requirements are lower due to the cold climate, the region still faces challenges in storage and distribution. The students highlighted the difficulties of managing water resources in such an arid landscape. Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Leh, Ladakh: This team explored

the shifting attitudes toward climate change among the local population. Their project emphasized the significance of ice stupas in glacial water conservation and documented how climate change has dis-

rupted daily life. The students also demonstrated how the school implements drip and sprinkler irrigation methods to manage water consumption, a crucial practice for their residential institution. The winning teams were felicitated with certificates and cash prizes by Anurag Behar, Chief Executive Officer, Azim Premji Foundation, and Narayan P.S., Global Head of Sustainability and Social Initiatives, Wipro Limited, and Managing Trustee, Wipro Foundation.

Speaking on the occasion, Narayan P.S. said, "The annual Wipro Earthian Awards is the culmination of the 14th edition of Wipro's long-running program that seeks to ignite interest and foster learning in young minds on human-

ity's unique relationship with nature. Bringing students and teachers together from schools spread across the country, the Wipro Earthian program is designed to generate action-based learning that celebrates the underlying connectedness of the individual with the larger fabric of community and nature. We continue to be inspired by the spirit of resilience and optimism we see in our young citizens as they get ready to face the multiple challenges of sustainable development of the world faces."

The Wipro Earthian Program is one of India's largest sustainability education initiatives for schools and colleges. The 2024 edition received over 1,500 project submissions, out of which 23 winning entries and 43 shortlisted projects were selected by an independent jury. The winning teams showcased their deep understanding of biodiversity, waste, and water conservation through a combination of activity-based learning and written essays.

Since its inception in 2011, the Wipro Earthian program has engaged with over 50,000 schools, 4,000 colleges, 200,000 students, and 40,000 teachers. This year, participation remained strong with more than 1,500 submissions from schools and over 700 from colleges. The program's reach has expanded with support from Wipro's education partners, including CEE, CPREEC, Wild Eclogues, IIT Madras, IIM Bangalore, state governments, and educators in the SEN.

Dy CM Attends Shivratri Festivities At Rajouri, Jammu



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary attended several festivities held to mark Maha Shivratri celebrations at various places in Rajouri district.

At the main function held at Bhambla, the Deputy Chief Minister prayed for peace and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that these festivals are a strong projector to the composite culture of the region in which people from all communities have participated since ages.

"We should work together for strengthening the mutual

brotherhood and our composite culture and syncretic traditions, which is the need of the hour", the Deputy Chief Minister maintained.

On the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister inaugurated several public utilities. He also attended Shivratri festivities at Kameshwar Mandir Akhnour.

While interacting with the devotees there, the Deputy Chief Minister reiterated Government's resolve for ensuring quality deliverance of essential services. He said that requisite instructions stand passed to the concerned and the implementation is also being closely monitored.

Religious Fervour Marks Maha Shivratri Celebration Across Ramban

Observer News Service

RAMBAN: The holy festival of Maha Shivratri was celebrated with religious enthusiasm and traditional gaiety across Ramban district.

Maha Shivratri, known as the 'Great Night of Shiva,' holds immense significance in Hindu tradition and is observed on the new moon day in the month of Magha as per the Hindu calendar.

On this auspicious occasion, temples across the district were beautifully decorated and witnessed a massive influx of devotees since early morning.

A grand Shiv Shobha Yatra was also taken out amid participation of members of the Maha Shivratri Celebration Committee, including Neelam Langhe, Kunal Magotra, Gopal Raina, and Raju Sharma, along with numerous reli-

gious and political leaders and prominent citizens.

The Yatra commenced from Pracheen Shiv Mandir, Maitra, passing through Govind Pura Maitra, Boli Bazaar, and Main Bazaar, before culminating at Raghunath Mandir.

The district and police administration had made elaborate security and logistical arrangements to ensure a smooth and peaceful celebration. People from different communities, including men, women, and children, stood alongside the procession route, welcoming the Yatra with great devotion.

To mark the occasion, Langars were organized at Maitra by Sanatan Dharm Sabha and at Ramban by local residents, offering Prasad to devotees. The festival witnessed widespread participation, reflecting the spirit of unity and devotion among the people of Ramban.

CEC Extends Winter Vacation For Schools In Kargil Till Mar-15

Observer News Service

KARGIL: Amid inclement weather, the Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Kargil Wednesday extended winter vacations for all government and private schools till March-15.

Earlier on December-04-2024, the Chief Education Officer (CEO) Kargil had announced a phased manner of winter vacations for all government and private schools in the district.

For classes from 1st to 8th, the vacations were ordered from December-5-2024 to March-5-2025 and for classes 9th to 12th, the vacations were scheduled from December-15-2024 to March-5-2025.

Chairman and Chief Execu-

tive Councillor (CEC) of LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun on Wednesday chaired a meeting at the Council Secretariat to review the ongoing winter conditions and their impact on educational institutions.

Officials said, "In light of heavy snowfall and extreme cold, the CEC announced the extension of winter vacations for both government and private schools until March-15-2025."

The meeting was attended by Executive Councillor Kachho Mohd Feroz, Executive Councillor Aga Syed Mujtaba, Deputy Commissioner Kargil Shrikant Suse, and Chief Education Officer Kargil.

"This decision was made to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff amid the region's harsh weather conditions," the officials said.

Road In Hajin Along River Jhelum Caves In

Agencies

SRINAGAR: People of Hajin area in Bandipora are caught in a panicky situation as a major portion of road along embankment of Jhelum river in the area has caved in wake of fresh down-pour, reports and locals said.

Reports reaching news agency Kashmir Bulletin, said that a major portion of the road in Sheikh Mohalla Hajin, has already withered away, even as cracks grow wider with each passing hour.

The worrying development has been a cause of concern for the local populace, who have been decrying official apathy towards the matter.

"The road had shown signs of dilapidation some months before, but no one has come forward to do anything, leaving us at the sheer mercy of Almighty," said a group of locals, as per news agency Kashmir Bulletin.

"We have time and again asked the authorities and public representatives to intervene and get the road renovated, but to our misfortune no one has literally turned up to help us," they said, adding, "May be they are awaiting some tragedy to occur, so that they visit us and get some mileage for themselves."

"All that we demand for, is the immediate assessment of the damage and subsequent renovation of the road to save the public lives and property," they said, while expressing hope that the authorities would be visiting the area soon.

The locals have also said that the power supply to the area has also got disrupted, throwing normal life out of gear.

In a related development, authorities paying heed to the pleas of the public, have reportedly visited the area and assured that necessary works on the road will be taken up within the next two days. (KB)



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Bajaz Allianz Extra Care Plus policy along with the added benefits of Health Prime Rider ensures that you don't have to settle for less when it comes to you and your family's growing healthcare needs.

Bajaz Allianz Extra Care Plus's Features:



Long Term Discount



Option to Opt for Air Ambulance



Free health check-up

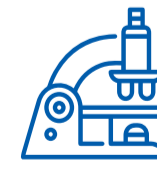
Benefits of Health Prime Rider:



Rider for both Individual & Family Floater Basis**



24*7 Unlimited Tele-Consultation



Investigations Cover

**Based on the variant opted in health plan

To know more, contact your **J&K Bank's Relationship Manager**

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