

## J&K BUDGET SESSION DAY 4

### CM To Present Budget In Assembly Today

Observer News Service

Jammu: After a gap of seven years, Jammu & Kashmir's annual budget for 2025-26 will be presented in the Legislative Assembly on Friday by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who is also serving as finance minister of the Union Territory.

central rule in Jammu & Kashmir in 2018, the budget documents of the UT were tabled annually in the Parliament by the Union Finance Minister. It is for the first time in history that the CM would unveil the budget in the Assembly. As already reported, the cabinet gave its go-ahead to the budget during its meeting on March 02. As per the calendar issued by the Legislative Assembly secretary, there will be general discussions on the budget on March 8, 10, and 11. The Finance Minister, who is also the Chief Minister, will conclude discussion on the budget on March 11 with his reply. All eyes are on the budget given commitments made by the National | More on P6



### J&K Economy Projected To Grow At 7.06% In 2024-25

The economy of Jammu and Kashmir is projected to grow at 7.06 per cent in real terms, while the nominal Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is expected to rise by 11.19 per cent in 2024-25, according to the Economic Survey Report (ESR) for 2025. The report said that J&K has shown | More on P6

### Business Rules Sent To LG For Approval

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said business rules for the government have been framed and sent to the Lieutenant Governor for approval to facilitate smooth governance without confusion. "Until we receive statehood, it is necessary to establish business rules for clarity. It took some time, but | More on P6

### Name One Project That Needed Art 370's Removal: CM To BJP Criticizes Use Of PSA To Detain Individuals Without Trial | 'July 13 Martyrs' Sacrifices Can't Be Erased'

Observer News Service

Jammu: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah launched a strong attack on the BJP, questioning its claims that the removal of Article 370 was essential for development.

Speaking during the Motion of Thanks on the Lieutenant Governor's address in the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister demanded that the BJP name a single project that could not have been executed before 2019. He challenged the opposition to name one development project that could not have been implemented without the removal of Article 370. "Most of the projects you listed were started before 2019. But I won't get into that debate. I am asking you to name one development-related project that was not possible before the removal of Article 370," he said. Omar also refuted claims that Article 370 was

responsible for corruption, nepotism, and terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. He pointed out that terrorism has not ceased after the abrogation of Article 370, particularly in Jammu. "If

PREVENTIVE DETENTION is needed when you cannot build a case against someone.



ALL MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY WOULD support a resolution in favor of statehood if brought to the floor.

there is more to it," he said. Asserting that sacrifices of "July 13 Martyrs" cannot be erased, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday, said that late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's stature was not tied to December 5 holiday. Speaking during the Motion of Thanks on the Lieutenant

WHETHER JULY 13 AND DECEMBER 5 are declared holidays or not, it will not matter because the people respect them from their hearts."

Governor's address in the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister said, "The sacrifices of the martyrs and the contributions of Sher-e-Kashmir remain indelible in the hearts of the people, regardless of political | More on P6

'Not Just PoK, Reclaim China-Held J&K Too'

Omar Abdullah on Thursday said they would be grateful to the BJP-led government if alongside Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) it also retrieves the part of the Union Territory | More on P6

### Some People Trying To Silence Us: CM

Asserting that nobody can snatch a right from citizens to discuss Article 370, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said some people are trying to "intimidate, threaten and silence us" but his party will continue its fight for the rights of people of Jammu and Kashmir. Winding up the discussion on motion of thanks to Lt Governor Manoj Sinha's address, Abdullah said the dignity of J&K has gone with the downgrading of the erstwhile state into the Union Territory. "...I am not fighting for statehood for my own self, this fight is in the interest of J&K. The things which we want to do can be given the practical shape only when we get back to statehood. The things which we want back and the things which need to be changed," the chief minister said.

Referring to Peoples Conference legislator Sajad Gani Lone's demand that a resolution should have been passed in the House for restoration of statehood instead of passing the resolution in the cabinet meeting, he said such a resolution was not deliberately moved in the House considering that every member is supportive of the demand. "Our dignity has gone with the downgrading of the state (to Union Territory). If you wish to move a resolution on it, please go ahead and we will support you," he said. He said the fight for statehood is based on "truth, justice and law" and its restoration | More on P6



Faith in solitude: An elderly man's quiet moment reading the Quran inside Srinagar's historic Jami Masjid. KO Photo By Faisal Khan

### J&K Council Of Ministers Capped At 10%

Agencies

Jammu: The Jammu & Kashmir Government on Thursday said that the council of ministers in Jammu & Kashmir shouldn't consist of more than 10 percent of the total members in the Legislative Assembly.

In a written reply to question of MLA Handwara, Sajad Gani Lone, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who happens to be minister in-charge of the General Administration Department, said that strength of the council of ministers shouldn't be more than 10 percent of the total members of the Assembly as per Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019. To a question | More on P6

### Tarigami Bats For Job, Land Rights For J&K Residents Slams BJP For Undermining Dogra Legacy

Observer News Service

Jammu: During the ongoing Jammu and Kashmir Assembly session, CPI(M) Central Committee Member and MLA Kulgam, Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami, called for the restoration of job and land rights for the residents of Jammu and Kashmir, as originally guaranteed by Maharaja Hari Singh.

Tarigami also demanded that the region be restored to its original constitutional status, emphasizing the need to protect the core interests of its people.

The discussion took place during the Motion of Thanks on the Lieutenant Governor's address, where



Tarigami strongly rebutted remarks made by BJP's Leader of Opposition (LOP) Sunil Sharma regarding the July 13, 1931 martyrs.

Tarigami expressed disappointment over the comments made by senior BJP members, stating, "It is unfortunate that senior | More on P6

### LG's Address A Love Letter From NC To BJP: Lone

Observer News Service

Srinagar- Peoples Conference MLA Sajad Gani Lone on Thursday described LG's address as a "love letter" from the National Conference (NC) to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from the J&K Assembly.

During discussions on the Motion of Thanks on the LG's address, Lone stated that the LG's address appears to be a love letter from the NC to the BJP.

"You have sent many love letters to the BJP, and this one is from the Assembly," Lone remarked.

Reading out from NC's manifesto, Lone heavily criticized the ruling party for not mentioning Article 370, Article 35A, the Public | More on P6

### Fight Against Drugs, Terrorism On Same Pedestal: DGP

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Accusing Pakistan's army and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of controlling narcotics smuggling through terror groups and pushing drugs into the Indian side, Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat said on Thursday that the fight against drugs and terrorism will be fought "on the same pedestal".



He also called for a crackdown on public consumption of liquor in vehicles in the region.

"The fight against drugs will be on an equal pedestal as combating terrorism," Prabhat said during an interaction at the Thana Diwas programme here.

The Director General of Police emphasised that the drug menace is a reality and efforts to combat it are inadequate.

"No matter how much we fight, it is still inadequate. The police are fighting it. The law is fighting it. It is an organised crime network," he said while accusing agencies from Pakistan of pushing the contraband

"from our western borders". "It is being controlled by Pakistan's army and ISI through their terror outfits to engineer smuggling into our territory... This is a challenge, and the police will continue to fight it until the end," he said.

"We are fighting it, but society has to come forward," he said and suggested monitoring the activities of children at the family level.

He lamented lack of parental oversight and noted that even schoolchildren, in uniform, are found selling small bags of drugs and other contraband substances. "There needs to be a focus on this," he said.

"There is a lack | More on P6

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City Getting Sufficient Portable Water Supply: Javed Rana

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmad Rana on Thursday informed the House that all areas in Srinagar have been covered and the people are being supplied scheduled portable water supply by the department.

The Minister was responding to a question from legislator Shamima Firdous. The Minister said that the government is committed to facilitate supply of essential services to the people and ensure timely repairing of defunct water supply schemes.

He maintained that no water supply pipeline is defunct in Srinagar city and whenever any distribution line gets damaged, the same is restored under stage contracts and the damaged pipelines beyond repair are replaced by new pipelines properly.

The Minister said that the department is providing sufficient potable water supply as per schedule of existing water treatment plants and currently there is no area as uncovered.

MLA, Mubarak Gul, also raised supplementary questions on the question. Replying to another question raised by MLA Reyaz Ahmad Khan, the Minister said that, PHE works are being executed by PHE Division Bijbehara while as irrigation works are being looked after by Irrigation Division Anantnag and flood related works are being executed by the Flood Control Division Anantnag for Shangus.

The Minister said that there is no requirement for creating these facilities separately for Shangus as of now. He assured that the government is committed to provide all basic facilities to the people in all far flung areas.

Seminar On 'Integrating Digital Learning In Teacher Education' Held

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Govt. College of Education (IASE), M.A. Road, Srinagar, organised a two-day National Seminar, sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), North Western Regional Centre, P.U. Chandigarh.

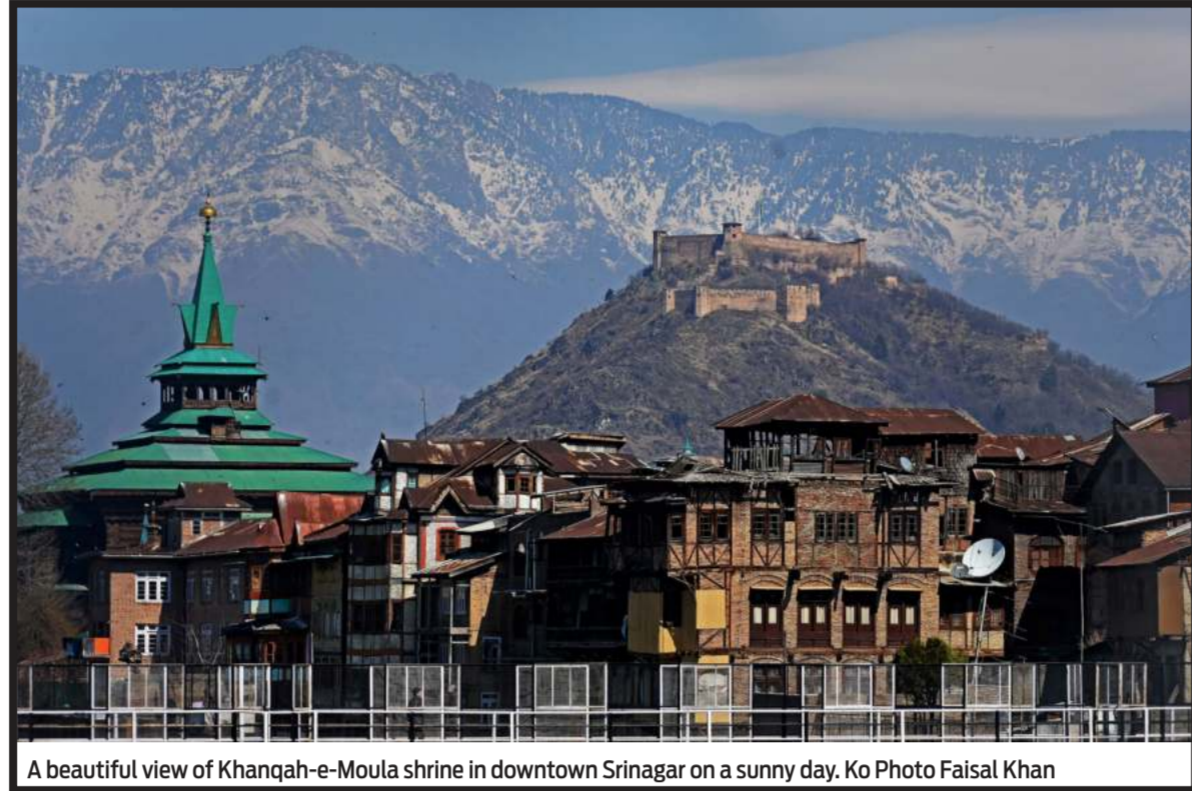
The event was organized under the leadership of Principal GOE Srinagar, Prof Seema Naz.

The seminar, themed 'Integrating Digital Learning and Technology in Teacher Education,' attracted a plethora of distinguished intellectuals and luminaries across India, including Prof Renu Nanda from the PG Department of Education, University of Jammu; Dr. Deepak Bishla, Head Department of IT, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University; Prof Khurshid Ahmad Mir, Dean Academics and Controller of Exam Cluster University Srinagar; Dr. Sameer Babu M, Associate Professor in Educa-

tional Administration, Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi and Dr. Kajal Kalsi, Assistant Professor Department of Sociology University of Jammu.

A host of faculty members from diverse universities, colleges, and research scholars across the nation attended the seminar both online/offline.

Prof. Mohammad Mobin, the Vice-Chancellor of Cluster University Srinagar was the chief guest in the Inaugural session. Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest, Prof. Mobin asserted that technology possesses the transformative potential to profoundly alter the landscape of teaching and learning. However, he emphasized that this potential can only be actualized through deliberate, thoughtful implementation, sustained professional development for educators, and a comprehensive understanding of how to leverage technology in ways that foster student centered, inclusive, and dynamic learning experiences.



A beautiful view of Khanqah-e-Moula shrine in downtown Srinagar on a sunny day. Ko Photo Faisal Khan

Burzahama Hospital To Be Constructed At Alternate Site: Sakeena Itoo

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo on Thursday informed the House that the Burzahama Hospital will be constructed at an alternate site and appropriate provision of funding will be kept for timely execution of the project.

The Minister made these remarks while replying to a starred question raised by Salman Sagar in the Legislative Assembly.

She informed that the construction work on Burzahama Hospital building was stopped on the objections of the Archaeological Survey of India, Union Ministry for Culture.

"During the year 2013-14, the construction of PHC Burzahama was taken up in hand under State Sector Capex Budget at an estimated cost of 179 lakh through JK-PHC, against which 17 lakh were released. However, the construction work could not be carried out due to objections raised by the Archaeological Survey of India as the construction site comes under their jurisdiction thereby, causing

the work on the project to halt", apprised the Minister.

The Minister further said that the Intezamia Committee Burzahama offered a piece of Auqaf land for construction of the Health Centre at an alternate site but the Revenue Authority (Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar) has not yet transferred the land to the department for execution of this vital project.

"The department shall explore the possibility for construction of this health project at an alternate site and make appropriate provision of funding for timely execution", the Minister informed.

Srinagar Police Designates Grievance Redressal Officers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a bid to strengthen transparency and accountability in policing, Srinagar Police has appointed Complaint and Grievance Redressal Officers in all police stations across the city. The move aims to ensure prompt and effective resolution of public concerns, reinforcing public trust in law enforcement.

According to officials, these designated officers will be responsible for addressing grievances and ensuring that every complaint is heard and acted upon as per the law. The initiative is part of the police department's commitment to responsive and accountable policing.

Citizens have been encouraged to approach their respective police stations for assistance regarding any issues they may face.

Srinagar Police has reiterated its dedication to serving the public with fairness, efficiency, and integrity, emphasizing that such measures will improve community-police relations.

Authorities believe that the establishment of grievance redressal officers will enhance transparency in policing and create a more accessible mechanism for people to seek redressal for their concerns.



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HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
06 Ramazan
1446

PRAYERS

- FAJR 5:30
ZUHR 12:43
ASR 4:51
Magrib 6:34
ISHA 7:55

This Day In History

- 1964 - Cassius Clay converts to Islam, and is renamed Muhammad Ali
1965 - US begins regular bombing & strafing of N Vietnam
1967 - A fire at a restaurant in Montgomery, Alabama kills 25 people.
1969 - Al-Fatah-leader Yasser Arafat becomes president of PLO
1971 - Switzerland votes for national women's suffrage in a referendum
1974 - Grenada gains independence from Britain (National Day)
1976 - World's largest telescope (600 cm) begins operation (USSR).
1977 - Soyuz 24 launches with 2 cosmonauts
1978 - Ethiopian offensive in Ogaden desert
1986 - Haiti's President-for-Life Jean-Claude Duvalier flees to France Henri Namphy becomes leader of Haiti
1986 - Corazon Aquino defeats incumbent Filipino dictator Ferdinand Marcos but fraudulent returns gave the election to Marcos.
1987 - Police in South Korea make hundreds of arrests during protest demonstrations, the country's biggest for 6 years, after a student died in custody.
1990 - Karachi police kill 22 anti-nationalistic demonstrators

From KO Archives

People Line Up For Historic Bus Travel

Observer News Service

Srinagar - Hundreds of enthusiastic people lined up at Regional Passport Office in Srinagar on Friday for application forms for travel on the first bus in 57 years to other part of Kashmir separated by a military Control Line.

New Delhi and Islamabad agreed in February to start (lie bus service between two capitals of Srinagar and Muzaffarabad on either side of the divide.

Significantly both rivals dropped their rigid stances and agreed demands by Kashmiris to use simple permits instead of passports of either country for traveling from one part to another of the divided state which people here regard as a single entity.

Kashmiris will use special permits, issued by both sides, to cross the Line of Control, instead of passports and visas. On the first day the Passport Office, designated as issuing authority, provided 100 application forms to people wishing to travel on April 7 and 14.

"We have issued 100 application forms to people wishing to travel on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on April 7 and 14," said passport officer John Silshi. Sixty people will be allowed to make the trip on those dates after security and intelligence agencies check their applications.

"It's a great day. I heard an announcement on radio and came rushing. Thank God I got the form! Now I hope that I will get a permit as well," said Mohammad Shafi as he clutched the document.

However, many others were disappointed. Omar Imtiyaz from Baramulla said he could not apply for the permit. It wasn't immediately clear why.

"They should have issued more application forms," he said. "I have been waiting for this day since the service was announced. I am sad."

The 105-mile bus route culling through the scenic Kashmir valley along the river Jehlum was a major all-weather trade route till 1948.

Recent heavy snowfall which blocked Kashmir's only road link with India created severe shortages of essentials in the Kashmir valley besides stranding thousands for the weeks together leading to deaths of scores of passengers. The road has been since come to be known as a killer highway. The reopening of new road is being viewed as a major development ever since Kashmir conflict began nearly six decades ago.

(Kashmir Observer, 07 March, 2005)

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card bearing no: 7017 7799 0907 as Tanveer Qayoom while my correct name is Tanveera Zahooh which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Tanveera Zahooh W/o Zahooh Ahmad Bhat R/o Pattan Tehsil Pattan fko

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card bearing no: 2002 4809 8007 as Shagufta Bano while my correct name is Shugufra Akhter which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Shugufra Akhter D/o Ab Khaliq Bhat R/o Sheerabad Khore Tehsil Pattan fko

Public Notice
I want to change my name in my aadhar card bearing no 5829 8588 4772 from Ng Hannan Mushtaque to N G Hannan Mushtaque. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. N G Hannan Mushtaque R/O :- Panthachowk Lasjan jvd

PUBLIC NOTICE
I have changed my Name from (Old Name) Bilal Ahmad Wagay to (New Name) Bilal Ahmad Shergoiji in future I will be known as (New Name) Bilal Ahmad Shergoiji. If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 (Seven) days after 7 days no objection will be accepted. Bilal Ahmad Shergoiji JNA7780878931

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth BDO Khore Sherabad has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Gh. Mohd Dar s/o Mohada Dar R/o Shirpora pattan with verified date of birth 01/03/1979 occurred at home in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained. SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is informed to the General public that my daughter's name parantage and DOB in her Aadhar Card bearing Aadhar No- 7619 5895 4726 .has been wrongly mentioned as Sadiya Jaan D/O. Mohd Shafi Mir DOB. 05.04.2014 instead of Sadiya Shafi D/O. Mohammad Shafi Mir DOB. 05.07.2014. Now I am applying for its Correction as per School and Date of Birth (DOB) Certificate . if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact the same in the office of the General Manager Ranbir Govt Press Jammu within a period of seven days from the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after expiry of stipulated period. Mohammad Shafi Mir fko F/O. Sadiya Shafi R/O :- Unisoo .Tehsil :- Langate Distt : Kupwara .Pin Code 193302.

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Students desirous of seeking admission in the below mentioned UG programmes at IUST for the Academic session 2025 are hereby informed in their own interest to register and appear in the CUET-UG 2025 in the papers as shown below:

Table with 6 columns: Degree, Programme/Course offered, CUET-UG 2025 Test Paper (Code), Degree, Programme/Course offered, CUET-UG 2025 Test Paper (Code). Rows include B.A. (FYUGP), B.Sc. (FYUGP), B.Sc. (FYUGP), B.S. (FYUGP), BS (FYUGP), B.Sc. (FYUGP), B.A. (FYUGP), B.Sc. (FYUGP), B.A. (FYUGP), B.Sc. (FYUGP).

Candidates need to submit the online application form on https://cuet.nta.nic.in to appear in the test conducted by NTA.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Online Submission of Application Form 01st March 2025 to 22nd March 2025 (up to 11.50 PM)
Mere appearance in test will not confer any right on the candidate who shall have to apply in response to the Advertisement Notice as and when issued by IUST.
If and wherever the programme requirements demand, IUST may in addition to above prescribe other modes as preferential and/ or otherwise conducting own test, qualifying exam etc.

For detailed information, the candidates may visit the website https://cuet.nta.nic.in No: IUST/DAA-Acad/25/289 Dated: 05-03-2025 DIPPK-NB-3661/24 dated: 06-03-2025

Sd/- Dean Academic Affairs

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# How Justified Is The Demand For A Liquor Ban In Kashmir

Dr. Fiaz Maqbool Fazili

The demand for a liquor ban in Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region and a popular tourist destination, is a complex issue that involves balancing religious, cultural, social, and economic considerations. Crafting the best argument for a liquor ban requires addressing these dimensions while also considering the political motivations behind such campaigns. Below is a breakdown of the strongest arguments and the political dynamics at play.

### Best Arguments to Justify a Liquor Ban in Kashmir

- 1. Religious and Cultural Alignment**  
Argument: Kashmir is a Muslim-majority region, and Islam prohibits the consumption of alcohol. A liquor ban would align with the religious and cultural values of the majority population, promoting social harmony and respect for local traditions.  
Supporting Point: Respecting the religious sentiments of the majority fosters a sense of inclusivity and strengthens the moral fabric of society.
- 2. Public Health and Social Welfare**  
Argument: Alcoholism is a major public health issue, leading to addiction, mental health problems, and chronic diseases like liver cirrhosis. A ban would reduce these health risks and alleviate the burden on healthcare systems.  
Supporting Point: Studies show that regions with alcohol restrictions often experience lower rates of alcohol-related diseases and accidents.
- 3. Social Stability and Crime Reduction**  
Argument: Alcohol consumption is linked to social issues such as domestic violence, crime, and road accidents. A ban would contribute to a safer and more stable society.  
Supporting Point: Reducing alcohol availability has been shown to decrease crime rates and improve family cohesion in other regions.
- 4. Protecting the Youth**  
Argument: Alcohol availability can negatively influence young people, leading to addiction and risky behaviors. A ban would protect the younger generation from these harmful effects.  
Supporting Point: Youth are particularly vulnerable to peer pressure and advertising, making restrictions on alcohol crucial for their well-being.
- 5. Tourism Can Thrive Without Alcohol**  
Argument: Kashmir's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and hospitality are its primary attractions, not alcohol. Promoting alcohol-free tourism can attract families and religious tourists who prefer such environments.  
Supporting Point: Many global tourist destinations, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, thrive without alcohol, proving that it is not a necessity for tourism.
- 6. Economic Diversification**  
Argument: Instead of relying on liquor sales for revenue, the government can focus on promoting other industries like handicrafts, agriculture, and ecotourism. This would create a more sustainable and ethical economy.



roots support for the cause, giving politicians a mandate to push for the ban. It also demonstrates their commitment to representing the people's will.

port, demonstrate leadership, and address the moral and ethical concerns of their constituents. While challenges exist, a well-planned and inclusive approach can make the case for a liquor ban both compelling and feasible.

The demand for a liquor ban in Kashmir reflects a combination of religious, cultural, health, and social concerns. While alcoholism is widely recognized as harmful, imposing a ban involves navigating economic, enforcement, and societal challenges. The debate often centers on balancing public health and moral values with economic realities and individual freedoms.

### Comparisons With Other Restrictions

Pilots, Drivers, Surgeons, Machine Operators, and Critical Machine Operators: Alcohol restrictions for these professionals are based on public safety concerns. Similarly, a liquor ban is often justified as a measure to protect society at large.

Cigarettes and Drugs: Like alcohol, these substances are regulated or banned due to their harmful effects on health and society. However, outright bans often face similar challenges, such as black markets and enforcement difficulties.

For many, the call for a liquor ban is rooted in religious principles and the desire to align public policy with these values. However, the issue is not solely religious; it also has socio-economic and political dimensions. Some argue that the availability of alcohol leads to social problems, such as addiction, public disorder, and health issues. On the other hand, there are unassessed concerns about the economic impact of a liquor ban, as the sale of alcohol generates significant revenue for the government and supports livelihoods in the hospitality and tourism sectors.

The demand for a liquor ban often becomes politicized because it intersects with identity, governance, and public morality. Away from politics or religious sanctions, a simple question lingers in my mind: Is alcoholism good or bad? It calls for a unanimous answer and a definitive solution.

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

*The writer is a surgeon at Mubarak Hospital in Srinagar, a senior columnist, and writes for social, moral, and religious columns. He can be contacted at drfiazfazili@gmail.com*

“ For many, the call for a liquor ban is rooted in religious principles and the desire to align public policy with these values. However, the issue is not solely religious; it also has socio-economic and political dimensions. Some argue that the availability of alcohol leads to social problems, such as addiction, public disorder, and health issues

### Challenges and Counterarguments

**1. Economic Impact**  
Critics argue that a liquor ban could hurt the tourism industry and reduce government revenue. However, proponents can counter this by emphasizing the potential for alcohol-free tourism and economic diversification.

**2. Enforcement and Black Markets**  
A ban could lead to the rise of illegal alcohol trade. To address this, strict enforcement mechanisms and public awareness campaigns would be necessary.

**3. Tourist Preferences**  
Some tourists may prefer destinations where alcohol is available. Proponents can argue that Kashmir's unique attractions can still draw visitors without relying on alcohol.

**The Wisdom in Prohibition: A Case for a Healthier, Safer, God-Fearing, and Culturally Aligned Kashmiri Society**

The best argument for a liquor ban in Kashmir combines religious and cultural alignment, public health benefits, social stability, and the potential for alcohol-free tourism. Politicians align with this sentiment to gain public sup-

Supporting Point: Diversifying the economy reduces dependency on harmful industries and aligns with long-term development goals.

### Why Politicians Align with Popular Sentiment

**1. Gaining Public Support**  
Politicians often align with popular sentiments to gain the trust and votes of the majority. In a Muslim-majority region like Kashmir, advocating for a liquor ban resonates with the religious and cultural values of the people, making it a politically strategic move.

**2. Signature Campaigns and Public Mobilization**  
Signature campaigns and public demonstrations show grass-

## Winter's Last Gift

In a pleasant turnaround, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed 30% above-average rainfall over the past five days, leading to a rise in water levels in the Jhelum River and other streams. Except for Srinagar, Kashmir Valley has received significant snowfall with higher accumulation in upper reaches. This comes in the wake of a largely snowless winter and should therefore go some way to replenish glaciers and recharge the water table.

One positive fallout of this has been that the government has given a go ahead for the Khelo India Winter Games, earlier deferred due to lack of adequate snow cover. The postponement, as the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said, proved fortuitous. The games will now be held between March 9-12. The now snow-bound slopes of Gulmarg will provide the perfect setting for the games, ensuring that athletes from across India experience the thrill of winter sports in one of the world's most scenic locations.

Beyond the sporting arena, the snowfall is a boon for tourism in the Valley. A largely dry winter led to a spate of cancellations of bookings. Snow, it goes without saying, is a novelty for most Indians, drawing them to Kashmir in winter in the first place. But late winter snow will certainly make a redeeming difference. The new snowfall, however, has reversed the trend, bringing a surge of last-minute reservations in Gulmarg and Pahalgam. Hoteliers and tour operators, who had braced for a lackluster season, now anticipate a strong finish.

However, the early March snowfall is the winter's last hurrah. It is now the onset of spring. A winter capped with a heavy precipitation makes for a brighter spring, so we can expect more tourist arrivals in the season. There's every expectation that this year's arrivals will break last year's record. One benefit of snowfall-heavy winter is that it brings foreign tourists to the Valley. Other three seasons aren't any less appealing in drawing visitors to the Valley from far and wide. Last year, 43,000 international visitors arrived in the Valley compared to 37,000 in 2023. According to the official data, the total tourist footfall in 2024 stood at 2.95 million, a conspicuous rise from the 2.71 million visitors in 2023 and 2.67 million in 2022.

This has generated substantial employment in the union territory. The tourism sector forms 6.8 percent of Kashmir's GDP and employs two million people. The sector has the potential to shore up the Valley's beleaguered economy. The waning militancy in recent years has created conditions for unhindered tourism in the Valley. Here's hoping that the Valley continues to enjoy peace this year also.



## How to Handle a Falling Market

Irshad Mushtaq

Instead of putting all your money into a single stock, consider spreading it out. Investing in a variety of assets like ETFs (Exchange-Traded Funds), REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts), and both global and Indian ETFs can give your portfolio a stable foundation. Diversification means not putting all your eggs in one basket, which helps in managing risks better.

### Balance Your Portfolio Wisely:

Consider pairing your ETFs with other investments like gold and silver. This mix not only spreads risk but also offers stability during market downturns. Remember, the goal is to balance your portfolio—not clutter it with too many different things.

### Don't Put All Your Money in One Stock:

It's crucial to avoid investing all your funds in a single stock, especially when markets are falling. This can be risky if the market continues to drop. Instead, focus on spreading your investments and managing risks sensibly.

### Make Informed Decisions:

Rely on logic and common sense when investing. The market is full of opportunities, especially with the help of technology. Use these tools wisely to make calculated investment decisions.

### Prioritize Quality Investments:

Always choose quality over quantity when investing, even if prices seem attractive. A well-diversified and thoroughly researched portfolio will stand the test of time much better than one filled with subpar options.

In conclusion, approach the market with a clear mind and logical strategies. Investing isn't about chasing trends or making hasty decisions based on emotions. It's about creating a stable and diversified portfolio that can withstand economic shifts. Whether you are new to investing or an experienced investor in Kashmir, following these guidelines can help you navigate a falling market more effectively.

*Learn from the insights of @Irshad Mushtaq, Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of M1 Securities! Connect for valuable financial advice at [misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com](mailto:misecurities@bp.sharekhan.com)*  
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## Giving Iftar to the Needy

I am writing to highlight the importance of a wonderful practice that should be practiced during the holy month of Ramadan – providing iftar meals for those in need. It is a deeply rooted tradition in many communities to share the blessings of the fast with others, especially the less fortunate. Ramadan teaches us the values

of compassion, generosity, and empathy. Offering iftar to the needy not only helps them meet their basic needs but also fosters a sense of community and solidarity. In a world where many suffer from hunger and poverty, this simple act can make a significant difference, bringing hope and joy to those who may otherwise go without.

It is heartening to see that many individuals, local organizations, and mosques are taking this practice to heart, ensuring that no one feels excluded during this blessed month. This practice reflects the true spirit of Ramadan – an opportunity to reach out, support one another, and strengthen the bond of humanity. I hope that more people will con-

tinue to embrace this noble tradition of sharing iftar with the needy, not just during Ramadan but throughout the year, as acts of kindness have the power to bring about lasting change in our communities.

Tauseef Khan  
Srinagar

Mindful Fridays

# Ding! Ding! Ding!

Scene 2: The phone rings



**LET ME GET TO A BIT OF AN EXTREME: I SHOULD MOURN** for the decomposed dead body from the days of your youth. They have been a back-breaking nine years and gratefully you have found some answers

Aisha Hasnain

Someone asked an orator: "How long does it take you to prepare your speeches?" The orator replied: "It depends. If I am to speak ten minutes, I need a week for preparation; if fifteen minutes, three days; if half an hour, two days; if an hour, I am ready now."

I have been given seven and a half hours to write this article so gauge its splendour on that parameter.

Ah, so Aisha, where are we? March 2025! Nine years. How heart-breaking it is that nine years ago in class 11 you had worked on your first article, almost reached the end of the process but eventually decided not to get it published. The reason being your anxiety issues gaining momentum. Your article was about hope and courage but when challenges starting pour-

ing your way, your mettle was put to test and you questioned the sincerity in your article. You did not feel ready and I feel sad for the fragile 11th grade student you. And feel I should. Let me get to a bit of an extreme: I should mourn for the decomposed dead body from the days of your youth. They have been a back-breaking nine years and gratefully you have found some answers. Aisha, sometimes the only thing that makes trials difficult for a person is their age. You were a tiny doll who lived like a 70 year old woman in her mind. Thankfully you have been able to shatter that web and let yourself live for once like a 26 year old that you are. Keep going.

You lost seven years of academic life and your well-wishers have constantly said that you were committing a sin by letting your intelligence go to waste like that. This is their concern for

“When was it that you received a phone call from God telling you that you are a writer and not a mathematician? Last year June. Math was always the easiest to prepare for in school. No rote learning. You were as bad at parrot-fashion as you were good at completing your home-work with dedication

you. The only way you can convey the intensity of your anxiety to them is revealing the fact that the SOS medication does not help you whatsoever. It does nothing. Don't take their words to heart. Don't succumb to the

pressure. They don't know that it will only land you in an asylum. How much can one explain? And you don't need to explain every time. Have courage for silence. You keep your focus on your values and disorganized goals. They

don't know that you are waiting in a huge line under a merciless heat for your turn to rise and that waiting there alone needs one hell of grit. Keep going, I said.

When was it that you received a phone call from God telling you that you are a writer and not a mathematician? Last year June. Math was always the easiest to prepare for in school. No rote learning. You were as bad at parrot-fashion as you were good at completing your home-work with dedication. Rote-learning was a nightmare. I think you must have received a volume of messages from God about the writing instinct in you but they were left unattended because of your never-ending love for mathematics even after it broke up with you in grade 12. He was compelled to call you. Now you have become fond enough of writing that when recently someone saw your artwork and told you that you express

yourself better as an artist than a writer, you didn't take it as a compliment. Take it from me that these 9 years have led you very close to your turn and your ideas about living have become very meaningful. You received quite some spanking from life until it made you learn to spell it right.

This article is one small badge of honour you will wear on your heart for show-off that your therapist chose you for today's column of Mindful Fridays instead of his own article. This is your first published work, on the first Friday of Ramadhan. Good luck with your upcoming book. This time you are not waiting to see the sincerity in your ideas. You are presenting your journey unapologetically raw and naked, with sincerity.

The author goes by her pen name, Aisha Hasnain. She can be reached at aishahasnain02@gmail.com



Artwork by author

## Ramazan Muslims: Hypocrisy or Reverence?

Jewel Khufia Noor

The month of Ramazan is a time of spiritual rejuvenation and introspection for Muslims around the world. It is during this sacred month that many individuals, who may not actively practice their faith throughout the year, find themselves drawn to Masajids, prayer, and acts of charity, earning them the label of 'Ramazan Muslims' (Muslims only in Ramadan).

This term often carries a hint of skepticism, questioning the sincerity of these temporary changes. However, could these seasonal transformations be indicative of a deeper, underlying faith waiting to be reignited? Is this phenomenon a form of hypocrisy, or does it reveal the presence of dormant faith, however faint, within the hearts of Muslims?

**Ramazan's influence in awakening the Spiritually Dormant**

The symbolism of Ramazan, with the opening of the gates of Paradise and the closing of the gates of Hellfire, holds deeper significance than mere metaphors.

These things happen in the realm of the unseen and the

spiritual part of the believers perceive these changes, resonating with their spiritual senses and drawing them closer to acts of worship and self-reflection.

One striking manifestation of this spiritual awakening is witnessed in the phenomenon of 'Ramazan Muslims,' individuals whose devotion intensifies during this month. Despite their minimal engagement with religious practices outside Ramadan, they find themselves drawn to religious acts, indicating a hidden faith yearning to be revived.

An illustrative example of this awakening is observed in the story of a non-Hijabi girl embracing the Hijab during Ramadan. Her Hijab, becomes a visible sign of the light that exists within her heart.

Similarly, individuals grappling with Quranic recitation find solace in the knowledge that their sincere efforts are valued by the Divine.

Moreover, the sight of Masajids bustling with worshippers during Ramadan symbolizes more than increased religious fervor; it signifies that the truth still exists within the community.

**The Damaging Effect of Excessive Criticism on Religious Growth**

Critiquing and failing to encourage the small acts of devotion exhibited by Ramadan Muslims can have a detrimental effect on the delicate seed of faith (Iman) sown during this blessed month. Each individual's spiritual journey is unique, akin to a seed that requires nurturing and care to blossom into a beautiful flower of faith.

It is crucial to understand that not everyone progresses at the same pace on their spiritual journey. Some individuals may experience rapid growth and profound spiritual transformations within a short period, while others may stumble and need to restart multiple times. This diversity in progression is part of the human experience and should be embraced rather than criticized.

The disparity in religious journeys, including failures and setbacks, highlights the importance of embracing imperfections and learning from them. In many other aspects of life, such as education or career development, failures are seen as opportunities for growth and learning. However,



The sincere repentance of a person, regardless of their past actions or shortcomings, can be accepted and rewarded by Allah (SWT). Conversely, even acts of worship spanning decades may be rejected if tainted by ostentation or insincerity

when it comes to religious practice, there is often an expectation of perfectionism, which can be unrealistic and discouraging.

Instead of focusing solely on outward displays of religious devotion, it is essential to value intentions and efforts. God appreciates sincerity and the striving spirit more than flawless execution. Every small act of worship contributes to the overall growth of faith.

**Realigning Our Spiritual Objectives: Clarity, Compassion, and Shared Success**

As Muslims, our ultimate goal is to attain Jannah (Paradise) for ourselves and our loved ones. However, in our pursuit of this noble aspiration, it is essential to maintain clarity in our objectives and cultivate compassion towards others.

Just as a child passionately defends her favorite toy or treat in front of her mother, we should strive to protect and cherish the spiritual well-being of ourselves and those around us. This means focusing on the positive aspects of people's actions and encouraging their efforts towards improvement, rather than dwell-

ing on their shortcomings.

Having a clear vision entails seeing beyond differences and recognizing the sincerity in others' intentions. It involves wishing for them the same mercy and understanding from Allah (SWT) that we seek for ourselves, ultimately aiming for collective success in attaining Jannah.

By embracing this mindset of compassion and clear vision, we not only strengthen our own spiritual journey but also contribute to a more supportive and harmonious community, where everyone strives towards the shared goal of pleasing Allah (SWT) and earning His ultimate reward.

**Respecting Divine Authority: Leaving judgment to Allah**

It's important to refrain from judging the intentions of others, especially among Ramadan Muslims, as we cannot accurately analyze their hearts and motives. Only Allah (SWT) has the ultimate knowledge and authority to judge individuals' sincerity and intentions.

The sincere repentance of a person, regardless of their past actions or shortcomings, can be accepted and rewarded

by Allah (SWT). Conversely, even acts of worship spanning decades may be rejected if tainted by ostentation or insincerity.

Therefore, our focus should be on our own sincerity, seeking forgiveness, and striving to improve ourselves without passing judgment on others. Ultimately, the reward and acceptance of our deeds lie in the hands of Allah (SWT), who knows the true intentions behind every action.

Let God do his job and not try to take over his role.

**Conclusion**

Ramadan acts as a mirror, reflecting the latent spirituality within individuals, akin to detecting life in a cataleptic patient. The crucial question is whether we will endeavor to revive and nurture these spiritual traces or allow them to wither under the weight of our criticism!

Let's reflect and relate the wisdom captured in these lines:

Abhi Sooraj dooba nahi, zara se shaam to hone do..

Me khud he laut jawaga, mujey nakaam to hone do!

The author is an engineer





# India Have Clarity On How They Operate In Dubai: Williamson

Press Trust of India

LAHORE: New Zealand batting mainstay Kane Williamson reckons India have "real clarity" on how they want to operate in Dubai, having played all their Champions Trophy games at the same venue but his team will also be reasonably well-prepared for the tournament finale due to its limited past familiarity with conditions.

Williamson did not specifically say that India had an advantage of playing at one venue, choosing to compare it to New Zealand's understanding of conditions in Lahore, where they beat South Africa on Wednesday to set up a final clash against the Rohit Sharma-led side in Dubai on Sunday.

New Zealand had played two games in Lahore during the preceding tri-series involving Pakistan and South Africa.

"I suppose having played



there on a number of occasions; there's real clarity in how they want to operate," said Williamson when asked if India go into

the final with an advantage of knowing the conditions.

"A little bit like our opportunity here, having played a num-

ber of times at this venue as well and I think that's part and parcel in cricket," he added.

Having scored a hundred in

the semifinal, Williamson is high on confidence and looking forward to the final.

"It is what it is (India play all games in Dubai). Our focus is the next match, the location of that match, the opposition, they're all factors. Obviously, we played India once there," he said.

"The conditions are different, so it's important that we try and take away some of those positives and be nice and clear in how we're trying to operate come two or three-days' time in the final," he said referring to New Zealand's loss to India in the group stage.

Both Williamson and Rachin Ravindra struck hundreds to fashion New Zealand's emphatic win.

The conditions in the UAE have favoured spinners with the slow surface making stroke-making tough. But the fact that New Zealand have played a game in Dubai can only help them in the final, feels Williamson.

## South Africa's Miller Hopes New Zealand Beat India In CT Final

Press Trust of India

LAHORE: Frustrated with the scheduling of Champions Trophy's second semifinal after to-and-fro flights between Pakistan and Dubai in a span of just 12 hours, South African batter David Miller is now hoping for a New Zealand victory in the tournament's title clash against India.

With a brilliant hundred, Miller was the lone ranger in his side's defeat to the Black Caps in their last-four stage clash in Lahore on Wednesday.

"I'll be honest with you. I think I'll be supporting New Zealand," Miller was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

South Africa had to take an early morning flight to Dubai the night after playing their final group game in Karachi. With the tournament being played in a hybrid model, both Australia and South Africa were camped in Dubai



waiting for the result of the group game between India and New Zealand.

As Group B toppers, South Africa had to take the flight back to Pakistan to play their semifinal as the last-four match involving India was to be held in Dubai.

After scoring a hundred in a losing cause, Miller termed the scheduling not ideal.

"It's only an hour-and-40-minute flight, but the fact that we had to do that. It's early morning, it's after a

game, and we had to fly. Then we got to Dubai at 4pm.

"And at 7.30 in the morning we had to come back. It doesn't make it nice. It's not like we flew five hours, and we had enough time to recover and recuperate. But it was not an ideal situation still," Miller said.

The final will be played in Dubai on Sunday.

Miller's comments came after his teammate Rassie van der Dussen had referred to India's advantage of playing all their games at one venue.

## Aaqib, Selectors Responsible For Pak's CT Show: Gillespie

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Pakistan's former red-ball head coach, Jason Gillespie has said that interim head coach, Aaqib Javed and the national selectors should take the responsibility for the team's poor performance in the ICC Champions Trophy.

Hosts Pakistan were eliminated prematurely after losing their group games in the marquee tournament to New Zealand and India.

"We saw the results were not good enough. Ultimately he (Aaqib) has to bear the responsibility. He wanted complete control (of the affairs of the team) and he got it. The national selectors also have a lot of responsibility to take for the squad they picked to play in the tournament," said Gillespie, the former Australian pace bowler, in conversation with Pakistani cricket content creator Saj Sadiq.

Gillespie added that he always felt something was going on behind the scenes in Pakistan cricket when he was the head coach.

"I always felt there were things going on behind the scenes I was not



aware of. And it didn't surprise me when he (Aaqib) was announced as interim coach," Gillespie said in a video posted on social media.

"In my opinion it (Aaqib's appointment) was always on the cards that this was going to happen. You can read into it as you want," he added.

Gillespie blamed Aaqib for undermining him and white-ball coach Gary Kirsten.

"He made it clear he wanted to be chief selector and he made it clear how he wanted the team to go about their work. He wanted complete control and he got it."

### Short TAKES

#### Reiffel, Illingworth To Be On-Field Umpires For CT Final

Australia's Paul Reiffel and England's Richard Illingworth will be the on-field umpires, while Sri Lanka's Ranjan Madugalle will be the match referee for the Champions Trophy final between India and New Zealand here on Sunday.

Reiffel, 58, a former Australian fast bowler with more than 200 Test and ODI wickets, was one of the on-field umpires during South Africa's semifinal against New Zealand in Lahore.

Illingworth, 61, a former England left-arm spinner, was part of the action in India's last-four clash against Australia in Dubai.

Illingworth, the four-time ICC Umpire of the Year, also stood in the final of the 2023 ODI World Cup in India and the 2024 T20 World Cup in the Americas.

#### Pacer Shami Committed Sin By Not Fasting: Bareilvi Cleric

The national president of the All India Muslim Jamaat, Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi Bareilvi, said on Thursday that Indian cricketer Mohammed Shami has committed a sin by not fasting during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

"In the eyes of Shariat, he is a criminal, he should not have done this at all," the Bareilvi cleric said.

In a video, Shahabuddin said Shami was seen drinking something from a bottle on the field during a match against Australia on Tuesday.

He advised Shami to follow the rules of Shariat.

"It is the responsibility of all Muslims to follow the rules of Shariat. Fasting is obligatory in Islam. If a person does not keep a fast intentionally, he is considered a sinner according to Islamic law," Razvi said.

"Playing cricket is not bad, but Mohammed Shami should fulfil his religious responsibilities. I advise Shami to follow the rules of Shariat and be responsible towards his religion," he added.

#### Neymar In Brazil Team For WC Qualifiers v Colombia & Argentina

Former captain Neymar has been recalled by Brazil after an absence of almost 1 1/2 years.

The 33-year-old striker was included in the national squad by coach Dorival Junior on Thursday for World Cup qualifiers against Colombia and Argentina this month.

Neymar recently returned to action with Santos after an ACL injury in October 2023.

He left Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal in January and signed a six-month contract with his boyhood club.

Brazil, fifth in South American qualifying, will host Colombia on March 20 and travel to leader Argentina five days later at Monumental de Nunez Stadium in Buenos Aires.

**Goalkeepers:** Alisson (Liverpool), Bento (Al-Nassr), Ederson (Manchester City).

**Defenders:** Vanderson (Monaco), Wesley, Leo Ortiz, Danilo (all Flamengo), Gabriel Magalhães (Arsenal), Marquinhos (Paris Saint-Germain), Murillo (Nottingham Forest), Guilherme Arana (Atletico Mineiro).

**Midfielders:** André (Wolverhampton), Bruno Guimarães (Newcastle), Gerson (Flamengo), Joelinton (Newcastle), Neymar (Santos).

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

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