

Who Used Chartered Flights?

J&K Assembly Seeks Probe Into ₹35 Cr Expenses

Observer News Service

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly witnessed uproar on Thursday as treasury and opposition benches clashed over an Independent MLA's demand for a probe into alleged extravagant spending on chartered flights and other expenses in the Union Territory. Members of the ruling National Conference (NC) and Congress called for the formation of a house committee to investigate the expenditure of crores of rupees by the administration on guests visiting the region. During discussions on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's grants, MLA Shabir Ahmed Kullay from Shopian raised concerns over 35 crore spent on chartered flights and hospitality, including for G20 events.

"I received details in the cut motion about this massive spending. A probe is necessary," Kullay asserted. He questioned who authorized the funds and who benefitted from the chartered flights, calling it a case of bureaucratic corruption. Several treasury bench members backed the demand for an inquiry. "A house committee must be constituted to investigate," NC's Javid Beigh said, prompting NC, Congress, and some Independent members to stand in support. BJP members, however, countered the demand, arguing that the funds were used for G20 guests and tourism promotion. BJP leader Balwant Mankotia defended the Chief Minister's authority over the expenditure and suggested the probe should also cover | [More on P10](#)



J&K Assembly Passes Multi-Crore Grants For Key Sectors

CM Grants One-time Power Amnesty To Domestic Consumers



Observer News Service

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly today passed grants amounting to Rs 59,431.23 lakh for the General Administration Department (GAD), Rs 56,009.69 lakh for Planning, Rs 14,183.38 lakh for Information, Rs 12,47,727.65 lakh for the Power Development Department (PDD), Rs 62,70,347.94 lakh

for Finance, Rs 7,083.77 lakh for Parliamentary Affairs, Rs 76,284.53 lakh for the Law Department (excluding the Election Department), Rs 81,073.94 lakh for Revenue, Rs 4,06,130.30 lakh for Housing & Urban Development (H&UDD), Rs 61,280.18 lakh for Tourism, Rs 46,683.86 lakh for Hospitality, Protocol & Estates, Rs 20,459.31 lakh for Culture, and Rs 1,96,369.04 lakh for | [More on P10](#)

CM Slams LoP's 'Legislative Jihad' Remark

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday advised the members of the Assembly to avoid making comments on religious affairs that hurt people's sentiments. Talking to reporters outside the Assembly here, Abdullah also said that nobody should feel that they are not heard in this government. He also expressed confidence in resolving the issue of 39 shopkeepers who have been served notice to pave way for construction of a flyover at Satwari Chowk here. "They are using the word Jihad (holy war) in everything | [More on P10](#)

Budget Approvals

- » ₹12,47,727.65 lakh for Power Development
- » ₹62,70,347.94 lakh for Finance
- » ₹4,06,130.30 lakh for Housing & Urban Development
- » ₹61,280.18 lakh for Tourism
- » ₹1,96,369.04 lakh for Disaster Management

CM's Speech Highlights

- » Economic Development & Employment
- » Legal & Political Issues
- » Urban Development & Infrastructure
- » Tourism & Cultural Heritage
- » Disaster Management & Rehabilitation
- » Hospitality & State Infrastructure
- » Accommodation & Allotment Discipline
- » State Aircraft Mismanagement
- » Media, Transparency & Srinagar Press Club
- » Power Amnesty & Consumer Responsibility
- » MLAs' Salaries & CDF
- » E-governance & Judicial Reforms

Ex-MLA Gurez Shoots Self Dead



Observer News Service

Srinagar: BJP leader and former Independent MLA from Jammu and Kashmir's Gurez Faqeer Mohammad Khan on Thursday allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself, party officials said. Khan (62) shot himself using his security personnel's SLR rifle inside his official accommodation in the Tulsibagh government quarters here, they said. BJP spokesperson Altaf Thakur, while confirming the incident, said the former MLA has died due to suicide. It was not immediately known as to why Khan took the extreme step. Khan, who was elected to the Jammu and Kashmir assembly in 1996 as an Independent candidate, had joined BJP in 2020 and | [More on P10](#)

No 'Pick And Choose' Policy In Newspaper Ads: CM

Observer News Service

Jammu: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has ruled out any "pick and choose" approach in the allocation of government advertisements to newspapers in Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing concerns raised by MLAs in the Legislative Assembly, he assured that the distribution process would remain fair and transparent. The Chief Minister emphasized that selective advertising must come to an end, asserting that publications overly dependent on government revenue cannot serve as true voices of journalism. He warned that such newspapers risk turning into mere government mouthpieces. "A newspaper that only carries press notes and my photograph on the front page is not



a newspaper; it's a mouthpiece," he said. "Newspapers that rely solely on government ads cannot function as independent media. While we will support media houses, we must discourage mushrooming of newspapers that exist only to publish government press releases." Reaffirming his commitment to press freedom,

Abdullah assured that no punitive action would be taken against newspapers for reporting the truth. However, he cautioned against the spread of misinformation, urging journalists to verify facts before publication. "Fake news spreads quickly, and by the time we clarify, the damage is already done," he said. Abdullah encouraged media houses to | [More on P10](#)

6 NEWSPAPERS THAT RELY SOLELY ON GOVERNMENT ads cannot function as independent media. While we will support media houses, we must discourage mushrooming of newspapers that exist only to publish government press releases."

J&K Govt Plans To Fill 7,253 Vacancies By Year-End

Observer News Service

Jammu: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah informed the J&K Legislative Assembly that the government aims to fill 7,253 Gazetted and Non-Gazetted vacancies by the end of this year. He highlighted that 11,526 selections have been completed over the past two years. Out of the total vacancies, 1,502 are Gazetted posts, while 5,751 are Non-Gazetted. Responding to a query from MLA Satish Kumar Sharma, Abdullah shared that as of January 31, 2025, J&K had 32,474 vacancies across 38 government departments, including 2,503 Gazetted posts, 19,214 Non-Gazetted posts, and 10,757 Class-IV (MTS) posts. The Chief Minister outlined key recruitment efforts, stating that 13,466 Non-Gazetted vacancies were referred to the J&K Services Selection Board (JKSSB) in the past two years, with 9,351 selections completed. He added that 2,390 Gazetted vacancies were sent to the J&K Public Service Commission (JKPSC), leading to 2,175 appointments.

Additionally, 10,757 Class-IV vacancies have been identified and are under Finance Department review before referral, while more than 6,000 vacancies are ready to be sent to recruiting agencies. To streamline the recruitment process, Abdullah announced several reforms, including the abolition of interviews for Pay Level 5 (29,200-92,300) under S.O. 180, dated May 28, 2020. He also said that interviews for Level 6 posts where interviews can be eliminated to further accelerate hiring. The Chief Minister stated that revised JKSSB regulations, notified on November 22, 2022, have introduced online CBT-based examinations and a single-exam system for multiple posts where feasible. He emphasized that JKPSC and JKSSB have been directed to take a proactive, target-based approach to | [More on P10](#)

Centre Constructing 47 Highway Projects In J&K

Agencies

New Delhi: As many as 47 highway projects spanning 810 km in J&K, costing Rs 41,735 crore, and six projects covering 159 km in Ladakh, costing Rs 2,076 crore, are currently under construction in both the Union Territories. According to the data shared by the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways J&K and Ladakh are among the key regions benefiting from the government's highway expansion plan, which has seen the country's national highway length grow from 91,287 km in

2014 to 1,46,204 km in 2025. "These projects are expected to improve connectivity, enhance trade routes, and provide year-round accessibility to remote regions," the ministry said, adding, "Measures such as mandatory road safety audits, rectification of accident-prone black spots, and the introduction of advanced safety technologies in vehicles are being implemented." The government has planned wayside amenities (WSAs) at 40-60 km intervals along national highways, with fuel stations, EV charging points, rest | [More on P10](#)

MIRAE ASSET Sharekhan

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Contact: M I Securities - 9906518342 / 9906684475

1, 10 Samad Complex, Ma Link Road, Srinagar, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, Srinagar - 190001



'Dry Air, More Common In Warmer World, Could Increase Risk Of Inflammation In Airways'

Press Trust Of India

An increased exposure to dry air -- occurring more due to global warming -- could heighten risk of dehydration and inflammation in breathing tracts, a study has found. Inflammation in the airways can increase one's risk of respiratory infections and worsen conditions such as asthma.



hydration of our airways is as essential as managing their cleanliness," said David Edwards, an adjunct professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University, and lead author of the study published in the journal Communications Earth and Environment. "Understanding how our airways dehydrate on exposure to dry air can help us avoid or reverse the inflammatory impact of dehydration by effective behavioural changes and preventive or therapeutic interventions," Edwards said.

sion occurred in cells lining the upper airway in humans, the team exposed lab cultures of these cells to dry air. They found that cells exposed to periods of dry air showed a thinner mucus and high levels of cytokines or proteins known to indicate inflammation in cells. The results were in line with the team's theoretical predictions that a thinning of mucus occurs when exposed to dry air environments, thereby producing a compression enough to trigger inflammation. Further, the researchers exposed healthy mice and mice with a pre-existing dryness in the airways -- commonly seen in chronic respiratory diseases -- to a week of intermittent dry air. Mice already having the dryness showed immune cells in their lungs, indicating a high inflammatory response, while those exposed only to moist air did not, the team said. The study's results have implications for other similar processes in the body, namely dry eye and the movement of water in mucus linings in the eye, the researchers said.

email: exenifcdkupwara@ifckashmir.com Fax/Phone: 01955-252159
Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir
JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (IRRIGATION & F C), DIVISION
Kupwara -193222
Notice inviting e-Tender

e-NIT No: 07 of 2024-25 Date: -18/03/2025
For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, e-tenders (in Single Cover System) on percentage basis are invited from approved and eligible contractors for the following work to be opened by the Executive Engineer Irrigation & F C Division Kupwara on at 11:30 AM.

Table with 8 columns: S No, Name of work, Estt. Cost (Rs. in lakh), Earnest Money @ 2%, Cost of T/ Doc. (in Rs.), MH of Account, Time of Completion, Class of contract. It lists multiple items for irrigation and restoration work in Kupwara.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)
Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.
PUBLIC NOTICE
The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagora) / chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MARFAT ALI HAJI S/O MOHD YOUSUF HAJI R/O ATHOORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 10/03/2006 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained
Executive Magistrate 1st Class KREERI
FKO

Ph. No. 0194-2311325 Fax No.2310007 E-mail ddkashmir@gmail.com
GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR KASHMIR HORTICULTURE (P&M)
RAJBAGH SRINAGAR.
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
FRESH e-NIT AUCNotice21OF 2025-26 Dated: 19-03-2025
Outsourcing of Gate Entry Contract with respect to F & V Market Prichoo Pulwama
For and on behalf of Market Administrative Committee (MAC) Fruit Mandi Prichoo Pulwama, e-bids, accompanied with CDR worth Rs 41,019/- (Fortyone thousand and nineteen only) pledged to Member Secretary MAC Fruit Mandi Prichoo Pulwama as earnest money and DD for an amount of Rs 500/- pledged to Member Secretary MAC Fruit Mandi Prichoo Pulwama as tender processing fee are invited from the interested parties/ persons having valid GST Registration for outsourcing of collection of Gate Entry fee at F&V Market Prichoo Pulwama for the year 2025-26 (upto 31.03.2026). The minimum reserve bid amount is fixed at Rs.13,67,300/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakh sixty seven thousand and three hundred only). The tender documents can be downloaded from http://jktenders.gov.in The Tenders/bids shall be opened online in the Office of the Deputy Director Kashmir/Chairperson MAC on bid opening date.

Table with 5 columns: Name of work, Minimum Reserve Bid, Earnest Money in the shape of CDR/FDR, Cost of Tender Document, Period of Contract. It details the requirements for the gate entry contract.

Critical Dates Table with 2 columns: S.No, Publishing Date, Document Download/Sale Date, Bid Submission start Date, Bid Submission Closing Date, Bid Submission Opening Date.

Table with 3 columns: S.No, Type of Vehicle, Entry Fee Per Trip for 2025-26. It lists vehicle types and their respective entry fees.

The committee will comprise of the following members:-
1. Deputy Director Horticulture (P&M) Kashmir : Chairman
2. Accounts Officer Horticulture (P&M) J&K : Member
3. Member-Secretary MAC /Area Marketing Officer Prichoo Pulwama : Member
4. Assistant Grading and Marketing Officer Prichoo Pulwama or Grading and Marketing Inspector : Member

The other terms & conditions are as under:-
The Successful bidders shall have to enter into an agreement with the Member Secretary MAC Fruit Mandi, PRICHOO PULWAMA.
The offer shall be super scribed as gate entry Tender Document of Fruit and Vegetable Market PRICHOO PULWAMA.
The Entry fee shall be charged by the successful Bidder every time on entry into the Fruit & Vegetable Market PRICHOO PULWAMA as per the above prescribed fee structure.
The successful bidder shall have to enter into an agreement with Member secretary MAC Prichoo Pulwama before taking over of gate.
The success fulbidder shall have to deposit 75% of the bid amount before taking over the gate and rest 25% after two month from the date of taking over of the gate.
The Agreement shall be executed within 2 weeks after allotment of contract.
The defaulters of the MAC PRICHOO PULWAMA are not eligible unless they clear their previous outstanding if any.
The Successful bidder is bound to maintain a register regarding outflow of trucks (destination wise) as per the format provided by Member Secretary /Grading/ Marketing Inspector or any other official of the Department for record and reference of this office.
The Successful bidder shall have to maintain the weighing Bridge and the equipment provided by MAC PRICHOO PULWAMA in proper condition and in case of any technical fault or any other damage the successful bidder shall have to make arrangement for making good the damages and maintenance of weighing bridge and equipment of his own and no compensation shall be entertained on this account.
The successful bidders shall have to utilize the room available with the weighing bridge for collection of weighing fee and cannot raise any other structure for any purpose in the Mandi premises during the contract period.
The Successful bidder shall have to abide by all laws and regulations governing the operation of the facility, especially labour laws as applicable from time to time.
The offered highest bid shall be the Net amount that the highest bidder is expected to deposit with the Member Secretary MAC and all taxes and levies, liabilities due to any local laws shall be borne by the successful highest bidders.
The specimen of the receipt to be used by the successful bidder shall be provided by the Member Secretary Market Administrative Committee
In case of any dispute between the parties the matter shall be referred to the Director Horticulture Planning & Marketing and his decision shall be final and binding upon both the parties.
The MAC F&V Market PRICHOO PULWAMA shall not be responsible for less or nil dispatches in the market due to Curfew / Harats / Strikes or for any other reason.
The earnest money shall be released only after the facility is certified and taken over by MAC PRICHOO PULWAMA after the expiry of the contract period.
The Member Secretary MAC F&V Market PRICHOO PULWAMA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons thereof.
The workers engaged by the contractor for the purpose of collection Of the gate entry fee shall wear proper uniform as shall be prescribed by the MAC PRICHOO PULWAMA.
The bid amount offered in the tender shall be mentioned in words as well as in figures and tenders with over writing/cuttings shall be rejected outrightly.
The successful Bidder shall have no right to sublet the contract during the contract period/agreement. The main entry gates of F&V Market PRICHOO PULWAMA and service roads shall remain open on Sundays as well and after 3.00 P.M. onwards the vehicles shall be allowed to proceed towards Mandi blocks on Sundays.
The successful bidder shall install computer system and other necessary equipments on his own for collection of fee/data entry purposes. Manual data collection shall not be entertained.
Clause on Arbitration issued by Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary affairs UT of J&K and Circular no. 16-jk(LD) of 2023: dated: 28-12-2023 shall be applicable.

Sd/- Deputy Director (K), Horticulture (P&M), Srinagar
No:- 142-III/MAC/DDK/HPM/2025/5484-88 Dated:- 20-03-2025
DIPK-13247/24

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is informed to the General public that my name and Date of Birth in my Aadhar Card bearing Aadhar No:- 5102 6972 8569 has been wrongly mentioned as Mubeena Bano & DOB 19.01.1998. instead of Mubeena Mohi Ud Din .DOB .25.02.2001. Now I am applying for its Correction as per School record . 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.
Mubeena Mohi Ud Din
D/O. Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Ganala
R/O :- Takiya Langate .Tehsil :- Langate . Distt :- Kupwara .
Post office Langate Pin Code 193302 .
FKO



PUBLIC NOTICE
I have applied for the issuance of DOB certificate in favour of my daughter Asra Ahad who was born on 03-07-2015 . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the Naib Tehsildar Palhallan within 4 days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Abdul Ahad Bhat
F/o Asra Ahad
R/o Palhallan
FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE
In Aadhaar Card records under Aadhaar No: xxxx 3764 my daughter's name has been recorded as Kousar akhtar instead of kausar imtiyaz. Now I want to correct the same. If anybody has any objection, he/she may contact Concerned Authorities within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice; after that, no objection shall be entertained.
Imtiyaz hussain Dar F/o kausar imtiyaz
R/O Chandapora
Cell no 7006119474
mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE
In Aadhaar Card records under Aadhaar No: xxxx 7255 my daughter's name has been recorded as Amina akhtar instead of AAMINAH FERAZ. Now I want to correct the same. If anybody has any objection, he/she may contact Concerned Authorities within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice; after that, no objection shall be entertained.
Feroz Ahmad aiaie F/o AAMINAH FERAZ
R/O labertal budgam
Cell no 6006325890
mcb

اطلاع عام
برخاس وعام کو بذریعہ اشتہار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ میرے جہول و کشمیر کے ایک ایڈمنسٹریٹو آفیسر کے نام پر 0078040100767305 میں میرا نام غلطی سے میرا نام غلام حسن کے نام سے درج ہوا ہے جبکہ دراصل میں میرا نام غلام حسن کو ہے۔ اب اس کی درستگی کرانی مطلوب ہے۔ اس بارے میں اگر کسی کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتے کے اندر اندر براہ مستقیم میرے کے بینک بڈگام کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ بعد ازاں میٹھا کوئی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
غلام حسن گوردلہ غلام قادر گوردلہ کن کشنوار بڈگام
فون - 9797214060
mcb

Position of AAA : Accorded.
Position of T.S. : Under process
Position of funds : Budgetary Provision under M&R 2025-26"

Table with 2 columns: S.No, Date of issue of Tender Notice, Date of start of downloading, Bid submission start Date Technical/ Financial, Bid Submission end date, Date & Time of opening of Tenders (online).

- 2. Bid Security/ Earnest Money and Cost of Tender Document
2.01 Bids must be accompanied with Earnest money and cost of tender document (Non- Refundable/Non-transferable) to be deposited under MH: 0702-Rev. Misc. in shape of Treasury Challan/ receipt or e-Challan (mentioning therein NIT No. S No of work and Adv. Cost of work) and to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Department (Irrigation & F C) Division Kupwara & date on the instruments must not be prior to date of issuance of this tender Notice.
2.02 Bids must be accompanied with Earnest money as per column 04 of above abstract.
2.03 Earnest money in favour of Successful tenderer shall be released after production of Performance Security @ 5% of upper ceilings.
2.04 1st lowest bidder will submit the CDR/FDR within Three days after opening of tender failing which 2nd lowest will be approached. Besides 1st lowest will be debarred from participating in tendering process for one year in this Division.
Additional performance security for unbalanced bids is to be submitted by the lowest bidder before issuance of Allotment as per procedure in vogue.

Table with 2 columns: S.No, Bidder's performance based on percentage of lowest bidder. It lists categories like 'Up to and including 15% below' and 'Greater than 15% up to and including 20% below'.

- 3. Bidders must ensure to upload all the documents clearly and no clarification shall be asked for later on. However, the documents shall be received only from 1st lowest tenderer (L-1) at the time of fixation of contract.
4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of Price bids.
5.01 Instructions to bidders regarding e-tendering process. Bidders are advised to download the bid submission manual form the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in in accordance bid submission process.
5.02 To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per information Technology Act- 2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor. The bidder has to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.
5.03 Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in above at S. No. 1.
6.01 The Bid Security/ Earnest Money shall be forfeited if: Any bidder / tenderer withdraws his bid tender during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
6.02 Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required Performance Security within the specified time limit of seven days from the date of notification of same to the bidder by the tender opening authority.
6.03 Failure to produce the original documents necessary for verification on declaration of the lowest bidder (L-1) on which bidder was qualified by or before 07 days of the opening of Price Bid / generation of comparative statement.

No. I&FCD/Kup/CS/2568-79 Dated: -20/03/2025.
Executive Engineer Irrigation & F C Division Kupwara

Zakoora Mini Maternity Hospital Vacated By Security Forces

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday announced that security forces have vacated the Mini Maternity Hospital at Zakoora after occupying the facility for four years. Plans are now underway to restore the hospital to full functionality.

Responding to a query from MLA Salman Sagar, Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo stated that with the hospital now vacated, authorities are working in coordination with the Managing Director of the J&K Housing Board to finalize a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for necessary repairs and renovations. "The government is committed to making the hospital operational at the earliest," she said.

Addressing another query regarding healthcare infrastructure at Fakir Gujri, Minister Itoo clarified that the term "Mini Hospital" is not recognized under Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS). However, she noted that the Sub Centre at Fakir Gujri had been upgraded to a New Type Primary Health Centre (NTPHC) in 2014 under Government Order No. 585-(HME). The upgrade included the appointment of a

6 The government is committed to making the hospital operational at the earliest."

Medical Officer and the deployment of a Block Health Worker (BHW) and Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) from Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Hazratbal.

Additionally, Itoo mentioned that a postgraduate doctor from the Department of Community Medicine visits the Fakir Gujri facility three times a week, while a Medical Officer provides ultrasound services once or twice a month. She emphasized that upgrading facilities into NTPHCs is part of a broader initiative to modernize healthcare services in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a separate update, the minister confirmed that the Anchar-side entry gate of SKIMS, Soura, remains closed for security reasons as per recommendations from security agencies. "There are no current plans to reopen the gate due to security concerns surrounding SKIMS," she said.

No Proposal For Constructing Dharbagh- Kursoo Footbridge



Agencies

SRINAGAR: The government on Thursday said there was no proposal under consideration for the construction of a footbridge from Dharbagh-Shivpora to Kursoo Rajbagh in the Lal Chowk constituency.

In response to a query raised by MLA Ahsan Padesi in the Assembly, the Public Works (R&B) Department

clarified that multiple bridges and footbridges already exist in the vicinity of the proposed location, making additional construction unnecessary.

Deputy Director Planning, PW R&B Department, in a written reply, stated that due to the availability of existing infrastructure, the department is not planning any new footbridge in the area—(KNO)

On Person Detained For Spreading Sectarian Content

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Police have taken action against attempts to spread sectarian division on social media, detaining one person for questioning while identifying others for further legal action.

In a post on X, Srinagar Police stated, "Srinagar Police has taken cognizance of attempts to spread sectarian

division on social media. One person has been detained for questioning, and others have been identified for action."

The police urged people to refrain from posting sectarian content, warning that strict legal measures would be taken against those inciting division. "Everyone is urged to avoid posting sectarian content lest they face the rigour of the law," the police said.

Commissioner SMC Inspects Dewatering Stations



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Commissioner SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed conducted a comprehensive inspection of dewatering stations and Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) at various locations in Srinagar.

Accompanied by senior officials from the Urban Environmental Engineering Department (UEED) and SMC, the inspection aimed to evaluate the operational capabilities and maintenance of these critical facilities.

During the visit, Dr. Owais assessed the functionality of several dewatering stations that play a crucial role in managing excess water and mitigating flood risks in urban areas. He examined the equip-

ment, processes, and overall efficiency of these plants.

Highlighting the significance of these facilities, Dr. Owais stated, "Our dewatering stations and STPs are essential for effective urban management. By ensuring their optimal operation, we can significantly reduce the risk of waterlogging and pollution in our beautiful city."

Throughout the inspection, Dr. Owais engaged with concerned officials, discussing the challenges they encountered and recognizing their contributions to the community. He emphasized the importance of continuous monitoring and improvements to enhance the performance of these essential services.

Tourists Mesmerized By Almond Blossoms At Badamwari

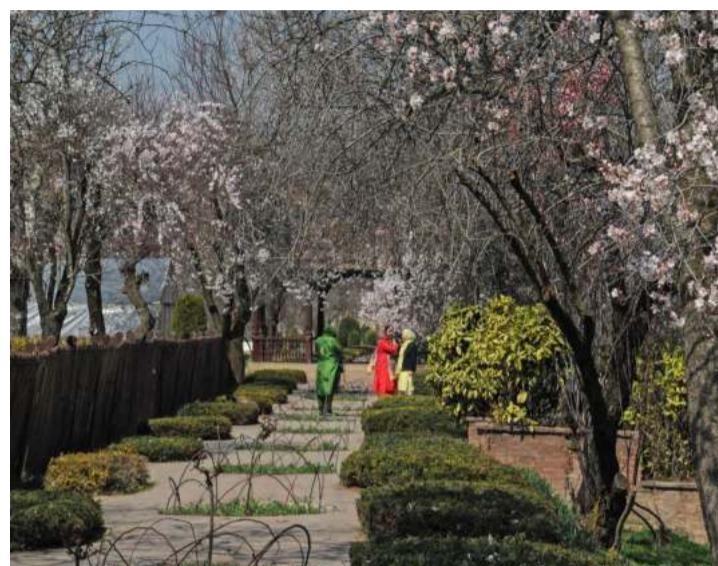
Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As the soft hues of almond blossoms sway in the gentle spring breeze, Badam Vaer in Srinagar has once again transformed into a captivating haven for nature lovers. Tourists and locals are flocking to this picturesque garden, eager to witness the breathtaking floral spectacle that heralds the arrival of spring in Kashmir.

For Suresh Kumar, a visitor from Gujarat, the experience was nothing short of magical. Sitting on the garden's ancient steps, he soaked in the mesmerizing beauty of the white and pink almond flowers. "It feels like nature is celebrating a festival of colors," he said while capturing the enchanting view on his phone.

Nestled in the foothills of Koh-e-Maran, Badam Vaer has long been a cherished retreat, known for its historical and cultural significance. Over the years, efforts to restore its former glory have turned it into a major attraction, especially during March when the almond trees are in full bloom.

The influx of visitors has also brought cheer to local vendors and photographers who capitalize on



FILE PHOTO

the scenic charm of the garden. Mohammad Ashraf, a photographer, noted that this is the best season for his work. "Tourists want to take back memories of this paradise, and we help them capture the perfect moment," he said.

Believed to have existed before the 15th century, with some historians linking it to the era of Sultan

Zain-ul-Abidin, Badam Vaer was once a royal retreat, renowned for its lush almond orchards. Although it fell into neglect over time, its revival as a public garden has restored its lost grandeur, making it a must-visit destination for those seeking both natural beauty and a glimpse into Kashmir's rich heritage. (with KNO inputs)

6 TOURISTS WANT TO TAKE BACK MEMORIES of this paradise, and we help them capture the perfect moment,"

Raja Tasleem Abbas Laid to Rest, Hundreds Attend Funeral

Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: Raja Mohammad Tasleem Abbas Khan, Additional District and Sessions Judge, was laid to rest on Thursday at his ancestral graveyard in Botraj Mohalla, Inside Kathi Darwaza, amid an outpouring of grief. His funeral prayers were led by Dr. Aga Syed Mudaris Rizvi. Hundreds of mourners, including members of the judiciary, legal fraternity, and the public, attended his funeral to pay their final respects.

Raja Tasleem passed away on Wednesday night at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) in New Delhi, where he had been undergoing treatment for liver-related ailments. He was 57. His untimely demise at the peak of his career has left his colleagues and admirers in deep shock.

Hailing from the Botraj clan of the Nagar princely state, Raja Tasleem was known for his unwavering commitment to justice. Last year, he took charge as the Special Judge for UAPA cases in Baramulla, following an illustrious career as Chief Judicial Magistrate in Anantnag and later Srinagar. His tenure was marked by integrity, fearlessness, and a deep sense of duty toward upholding the rule of law.

Respected for his upright attitude, Raja Tasleem played a key role in



Shoaib Nazir

handling sensitive cases with impartiality and professionalism. His passing has left a significant void in the legal fraternity, with colleagues remembering him as a man of principles, sincerity, and humility.

Condolences have poured in from across Jammu and Kashmir, recognizing his contributions to the judiciary and society at large. His legacy as a dedicated jurist and a compassionate human being will continue to inspire generations to come.

A condolence meeting was held in the Conference Hall of District Court Complex Srinagar in which all the Judicial Officers and employees posted in the District Court Complex

Srinagar participated to mourn the demise of Raja Mohammad Tasleem, Special Judge, UAPA Court, Baramulla, who left for heavenly abode after brief illness.

The participants also observed two minute silence to pay homage to the departed soul.

The participants in the meeting prayed for the peace and tranquility to the departed soul and also prayed for patience to the bereaved and grief stricken family to bear this irreparable loss.

Raja Mohammad Tasleem was a noble and pious soul whose untimely demise has left a vacuum in the institution of Judiciary.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

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

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

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

If you or some one you know is experiencing symptoms of OCD, seeking professional help is crucial. You do not have to fight your battles alone. There is no need for referral, simply call us for registration.

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

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092, 2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488, 2452222, 2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJBERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
20 Ramadan
1446

PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 11
ZUHR	12: 40
ASR	4: 58
Magrib	6: 46
ISHA	8: 06

This Day In History

- 630- Byzantine emperor Heraclius restores the True Cross to Jerusalem
- 717- Battle of Vincy fought in the Cambria during Frankish Civil War; Charles Martel's forces defeat those of King Chilperic II and his mayor Ragenfrid
- 1188- Accession to the throne of Japan by emperor Antoku
- 1804 -Napoleonic Code adopted in France, stresses clearly written and accessible law
- 1864- Battle at Henderson's Hill (Bayou Rapids) Louisiana
- 1865- Battle of Bentonville ends, last Confederate effort to stop Sherman
- 1899 - British & French accord over West Africa
- 1907 - US sends troops to Honduras to halt the Nicaraguan army takeover
- 1918- World War I: Germany launches Somme offensive
- 1925- Iran adopts Khorshidi solar Hijri calendar
- 1927- Guomindang Army conquers Shanghai as British marines flee
- 1934- Fire destroys Hakodate Japan, killing about 1,500
- 1935- Persia is officially renamed Iran
- 1942 - Convoy QP9 departs Great Britain to Murmansk
- 1943 - Assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler fails
- 1945 - During WW II Allied bombers begin 4-day raid over Germany
- 1958 - USSR performs atmospheric nuclear test
- 1962 - Yogi the bear becomes the 1st creature to be ejected at supersonic speeds by the US military testing ejection seats
- 1965 - US Ranger 9 launched; takes 5,814 pictures before lunar impact
- 1975 - Ethiopia abolishes its monarchy after 3,000 years
- 1979 - Egyptian Parliament unanimously approve peace treaty with Israel
- 1990 - Namibia becomes independent of South Africa, Sam Nujoma becomes president
- 1991 - 27 lost at sea when 2 US Navy anti-submarine planes collide
- 1991 - UN Security Council panel decided to lift the food embargo on Iraq
- 1992 - Pakistan scores 6-264 to overhaul NZ in exciting World Cup semi
- 1994 - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) enters into force after being ratified by the required number of nations
- 1999 - Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones become the first to circumnavigate the Earth in a hot air balloon.
- 2002 - In Pakistan, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh along with three other suspects are charged with murder for their part in the kidnapping and killing of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl.
- 2006 - Immigrant workers constructing the Burj Dubai in Dubai, The United Arab Emirates and a new terminal of Dubai International Airport join together and riot, causing \$1M in damage.
- 2012 - Five former Guatemalan paramilitaries are sentenced to 7,710 years in jail for their role in the Plan de Sanchez massacre in 1982
- 2012 - Greek Parliament votes in favour of an international bailout deal
- 2013 - 42 people are killed and 84 are injured by a bombing in a mosque in Damascus, Syria
- 2013 - At least 45 people drown and 60 are missing after a Nigerian boat sinks off the shore of Gabon
- 2013 - 24 people are killed and 100 are injured by a tornado and hail storm in southern China
- 2013 - The European Space Agency reveals new data that indicates that the universe is 13.82 billion years old
- 2014 - Russia formally annexes Crimea amid international condemnation
- 2018 - Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg admits they "made mistakes" after data on 50 million users is harvested by Cambridge Analytica
- 2018 - Nigerian government confirms 101 out of 110 schoolgirls kidnapped from Dapchi returned
- 2018 - Peru's President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski offers his resignation amid vote-buying scandal
- 2018 - Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi accepts plea deal for 8 months in prison after slapping Israeli officer
- 2018 - Suicide bomber kills 31 in crowd celebrating Persian New Year in Kabul, Afghanistan

On Trump's Orders, Thousands Of Jfk Assassination Documents Newly Public

Agencies

WASHINGTON: Thousands of pages of digital documents related to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy are now available for historians, conspiracy theorists and the merely curious, following orders from US President Donald Trump.

The president, shortly after taking office for his second term in January, signed an executive order directing national intelligence and other officials to quickly come up with a plan "for the full and complete release of all John F. Kennedy assassination records."

The archives' Kennedy assassination collection has more than six million pages of records, the vast majority of which had been declassified and made public before Trump's order. Trump told reporters on Monday that 80,000 pages would be released on Tuesday. Justice Department lawyers got orders Monday evening to review the records for release. The digital documents did not start appearing until 7 p.m. (2300 GMT) Tuesday on a National Archives web page. As of 10:30 p.m. Tuesday (0230 GMT Wednesday), the National Archives had published 2,182 PDFs totaling 63,400 pages.

The archives did not immediately respond on Wednesday to a request for comment on whether more documents would soon be released in response to a

“There will be people who will be looking at the records and seeing if there is any hint of any confirmation about their theory

January order from Trump.

Kennedy's murder has been attributed to a sole gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald. The Justice Department and other federal government bodies have reaffirmed that conclusion in the intervening decades. But polls show many Americans still believe his death was a result of a conspiracy.

"There will be people who will be looking at the records and seeing if there is any hint of any confirmation about their theory," Larry Schnapf, an environmental lawyer who has researched the assassination and pushed the government to make public what it knows about what led up to the shooting in Dallas on a November afternoon six decades ago, said on Wednesday. Schnapf, who stayed up until 4 a.m. poring over the documents, said that what he found as he went through them was less illuminating about Kennedy's assassination than about US spy operations.



US Indo-Pacific Chief Pushes 10-Year Defence Deal with India

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Ways to further advance the India-US military ties, including a likely renewal of a 10-year defence framework, figured prominently in talks Admiral Samuel J Paparo, the commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command, held with India's top civil and military brass this week.

Paparo met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, according to an American readout.

The top American commander visited India from March 16 to 19 to advance the US-India comprehensive global strategic partnership and attend the Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship conference on geopolitics.

Paparo's trip advanced the US-India initiative, COMPACT (Catalysing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce and Technology) for the 21st Century, the readout said.

In February, US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Modi launched the COMPACT that seeks to drive transformative change across multiple

pillars of cooperation, including defence, trade and investment, energy, technology and innovation, and people-to-people ties.

It is learnt that top defence and security officials of the Quad nations - India, the US, Australia and Japan - held extensive talks on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue.

"The work throughout the Raisina Dialogue enhances the mutual understanding and alignment of goals as the US and India seek to renew a 10-year framework for the US-India Major Defence Partnership that will propel cooperation through the next decade," the US readout said.

"The US-India Major Defence Partnership has become a cornerstone of global peace," it added. In 2016, the United States designated India as a "Major Defence Partner".

Commensurate with this designation, India was accorded the "Strategic Trade Authorisation tier 1" that allowed the country to receive licence-free access to a wide range of military and dual-use technologies regulated by the US Department of Commerce.

The major defence partnership is up for renewal next year. In New Delhi, Paparo also

met with Chief of Staff of the Japan Joint Staff General Yoshida, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines General Romeo Brawner, Australian Chief of Joint Operations Vice Admiral Justin Jones, French Deputy Director General for International Relations and Strategy Lieutenant General Eric Peltier and the United Kingdom's National Security Advisor Jonathan Powell.

At the Raisina Dialogue, Paparo spoke during a panel discussion on "Deepwater Perils: Securing Trade Through Red Zones", alongside top military officials from India, Australia, Japan and the Philippines.

They highlighted maritime threats, risks for global security and trade, the importance of working with allies and partners to ensure freedom of navigation, and integration of artificial intelligence and unmanned systems into military preparedness.

Paparo also participated in a US-India Strategic Partnership Forum event where discussions focused on the future of the strategic and security partnership between the two nations, including integration of artificial intelligence and defence cooperation.

Cyber Crooks 'Hold Hostage' 85-Year-Old, Extort Rs 20 Crore

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai: An 86-year-old woman from south Mumbai lost more than Rs 20 crore of her savings over two months to a 'digital arrest' fraud, police said on Thursday.

One of the fraudsters posed as a 'CBI officer' to extort money from the woman, they said, adding three persons have been arrested in connection with the crime which took place between December 26, 2024 and March 3 this year.

The accused persons had also forced the victim to stay at home for two months and to check her location daily by calling her every three hours, an official said.

The cyber police have managed to freeze Rs 77 lakh belonging to the woman by identifying the bank accounts to which the money was transferred, he added. 'Digital arrest' is a new and grow-

put pressure on the victims to make payments.

As per the police complaint filed by the woman earlier this month, she had received a call from a man, who claimed to be a CBI officer, and told her that based on her Aadhaar Card, a bank account had been opened which was used for money laundering.

The man then told her that the case was being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and she should stay in her room, while threatening her with "digital arrest". He also threatened to arrest her children, the official said.

A domestic help at the woman's house observed her behaviour as she used come out of her room only for food and "shout at someone" in her room. The maid then informed the woman's daughter about it, he said.



ing form of cyber fraud in which fraudsters pose as law enforcement officials or personnel of government agencies, and intimidate victims through audio/video calls. They hold the victims hostage and

The fraudsters asked the elderly woman to share with them her bank details under the pretext of verifying funds of her account which were connected to criminal activity, the official said.

Nagpur Violence Accused Booked for Sedition

ASI puts tin sheets around Aurangzeb's tomb



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Police have booked Fahim Khan, key accused in the Nagpur violence, and five others on charges of sedition and spreading misinformation on social media, officials said on Thursday, adding that curfew was lifted or relaxed in parts of the city three days after the violence.

Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi, a Bareilly sect cleric, wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking a ban on the film 'Chhava', alleging it was inciting communal tensions and was directly responsible for the Nagpur violence.

Amid demand from right-wing organisations that Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's tomb at Khultbad in Maharashtra's Sambhajinagar district be demolished, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has put up tin sheets on two sides of

the 18th century structure.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condemned Monday's violence in Nagpur, asserting that India is known for unity in diversity.

The cyber crime department has asked for information from Facebook, X, Instagram and YouTube authorities about 230 profiles on their platforms and sought that they be blocked, DCP Cyber Crime Lohit Matani told reporters in Nagpur.

The probe so far has indicated that misinformation was spread initially after some videos were shared on social media, which fuelled the violence and more videos "glorified" the violence, he said. Six persons, including Khan, who is Minority Democratic Party city chief, have been booked for sedition in the cyber police FIRs, Matani said.

174 Palestinian Children Killed, Deadliest Day For Children In Gaza's History

Agencies

Gaza City: At least 174 Palestinian children in Gaza were killed in Israeli airstrikes on Tuesday, marking one of the largest single-day death tolls since the beginning of the genocide and in Gaza's history, according to Defence for Children International - Palestine (DCIP).

Israeli occupation forces launched the deadly assault without warning on sleeping Palestinians on Tuesday morning, unilaterally ending the ceasefire.

More than 400 Palestinians, including at least 174 children, have been killed in multiple attacks and massacres committed by the occupation, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health. DCIP noted that the death toll is expected to sharply rise as many people are missing under the rubble of buildings destroyed in the attacks.

"The airstrikes mark a dis-

tinct violation of the truce agreement between the Israeli government and Palestinian armed groups, indicating that Israel is prepared to resume full-scale military operations against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip," alleged DCIP, the Palestinian human rights organization specifically focused on child rights.

"Today marks one of the largest one-day child death tolls in Gaza in history," said Ayed Abu Eqtaiash, accountability program director at DCIP.

"Israeli forces have signed a death warrant for Palestinian children in Gaza as they carry out non stop attacks, continue to destroy civilian infrastructure and prevent any humanitarian aid from reaching Palestinians in need. This is nothing short of genocide," he asserted.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, since October

7, 2023, more than 18,000 Palestinian children have been killed in Israeli onslaught in the Gaza Strip.

However, DCIP highlighted that the true death toll is likely to be much higher, and children continue to suffer from serious communicable and preventable conditions like hypothermia, malnutrition, dehydration, and scabies.

They said the Israeli authorities have refused to allow any goods or humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza Strip since March 2, drastically impacting Palestinians' access to clean water, food, fuel, electricity, medical supplies, and other essential goods and services.

DCIP pointed out that, under international humanitarian law, Israel, as an occupying power, is obligated to ensure the well-being and survival of the civilian population and to prevent conditions that cause unnecessary suffering.

Union Minister's Nephew Shot Dead in Water Tap Feud



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: A dispute over drawing tap water snowballed into a full-blown gun-battle in a Bihar village on Thursday, leaving Union Minister Nityanand Rai's nephew dead and two others - the deceased's mother and brother - seriously injured, police said.

The incident took place at Jagatpur village in Naugachia police district adjoining Bhagalpur, where brother duo Vishwajit and Jayjit Yadav picked up a quarrel over drawing water from a tap, Naugachia Superintendent of Police Prerna Kumar said.

"As the brothers clashed, their mother tried to intervene. Vishwajit was shot at and died on the spot while his brother and mother were taken to a hospital. Further investigations are underway," she said. She replied in the affirmative when asked whether the deceased

“As the brothers clashed, their mother tried to intervene. Vishwajit was shot at and died on the spot while his brother and mother were taken to a hospital. Further investigations are underway

was a 'bhanja' (sister's son) of Nityanand Rai, the Union Minister of State for Home, who hails from Vaishali district.

"We have received information (of the relationship)... we are, however, treating this case as we do regarding any incident of this kind. The officials concerned have visited the hospital to record the statement of the accused. Forensic experts are at the site of the incident," the SP added.

NEWS MAKERS

Trump To Order A Plan To Shut Down The US Education Department



The Trump administration has already been gutting the agency through layoffs and program cuts. Its workforce is being slashed in half and there have been deep cuts to the Office for Civil Rights and the Institute of Education Sciences, which gathers data on the

nation's academic progress.

The department sends billions of dollars a year to schools and oversees \$1.6 trillion in federal student loans.

Currently, much of the agency's work revolves around managing money - both its exten-

sive student loan portfolio and a range of aid programs for colleges and school districts, from school meals to support for homeless students. The agency also plays a significant role in overseeing civil rights enforcement.

Federal funding makes up a relatively small portion of public school budgets - roughly 14 percent. The money often supports supplemental programs for vulnerable students, such as the McKinney-Vento program for homeless students or Title I for low-income schools.

Colleges and universities are more reliant on money from Washington, through research grants along with federal financial aid that helps students pay their tuition.

Republicans have talked about closing the Education Department for decades, saying it wastes taxpayer money and inserts the federal government into decisions that should fall to states and schools. The idea has gained popularity recently as conservative parents' groups demand more authority over their children's schooling.

'No wealth left in Bangladesh'

NEW DELHI: Former Labour minister Tulip Siddiq, the niece of Sheikh Hasina, has accused Bangladeshi authorities of launching a "targeted and baseless" campaign against her and thereby urging an immediate end to what she described as damaging allegations.

In a strong response, Tulip Siddiq's legal representatives have called for an immediate halt to a series of "false and damaging" allegations made against the British Member of Parliament regarding financial irregularities linked to the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant built with the Russian help.

In a letter to the Bangladesh's Anti Corruption Commission (ACC), Siddiq's lawyers from Stephenson Harwood reiterated her position that she had no involvement in the nuclear plant deal, despite being photographed at a signing ceremony in the Kremlin in 2013 alongside then Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The letter said: "It is not uncommon for family members to be invited to accom-



pany Heads of State on state visits."

The lawyers also dismissed claims that a £700,000 flat in London's King's Cross, gifted to Siddiq in 2004, was linked to embezzlement, calling the allegations "absurd" as the flat was acquired a full 10 years before the nuclear deal was made.

Siddiq's father was a university professor in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, and her mother was granted political asylum in the UK as the younger sister of Sheikh Hasina. In January, Siddiq resigned from her role as economic secretary to the Treasury, where she was responsible for addressing corruption in the UK's financial market.

In 20-years, J&K Witnesses More Than 7000 Bus Accidents

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir has recorded more than 7000 bus accidents during the past two decades.

In response to a query about bus accidents raised by MP Krishna Prasad Tenneti in Lok Sabha, the Union Ministry of Road and Transport stated that hundreds of bus accidents continue to be reported annually across the country.

The data shared by the union ministry revealed that J&K recorded 1,494 bus accidents in 2004, the number dropped to 612 in 2008. However, the trend did not remain consistent, with accidents rising again to 1590 in 2014 and 1,583 in 2015.

A decline was observed in 2017, with just 399 cases, but the numbers fluctuated again in subsequent years—425 in 2018, 344 in 2019, 348 in 2020, 412 in 2021, and 357 in 2022.

In Ladakh, separate accident data was not recorded until

2021, when no bus accidents were reported. However, in 2022, 36 bus accidents occurred.

Responding to the data, Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said that the government has implemented several measures to improve road safety, including road safety audits, rectification of accident-prone black spots, and new vehicle safety norms.

He said that the National Road Safety Strategy has also been expanded to cover Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, aiming to reduce traffic-related fatalities further.

Authorities have introduced stricter enforcement of traffic laws, awareness programs for drivers, and improved emergency response systems to address the issue.

Also, the installation of crash barriers, better road engineering, and the promotion of modern safety technologies in public transport vehicles are among the key initiatives.

DYSS Budgam Conducts Plantation Drive



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSS) Budgam, in collaboration with Zone Beerwah and Zone Chadoora, organized a plantation drive across various educational institutions and surrounding areas under the Green Kashmir initiative.

Students, teachers, and DYSS

officials actively participated in the drive, planting saplings to promote environmental sustainability and green awareness. The initiative aims to enhance the region's green cover and instill ecological responsibility among youth.

DYSS Budgam remains committed to such initiatives to foster a cleaner and greener environment.

CM Omar Criticises BJP for Altering Maharaja-Era Laws In J&K



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday criticized the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for making amendments to laws introduced during the Dogra rule in Jammu and Kashmir, questioning the party's commitment to preserving the region's historical legacy.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, Omar accused the BJP of double standards, pointing out that while the party claims to respect the Maharaja's rule, it has significantly altered laws enacted during his time.

"You accuse us of disrespecting the Maharaja, but tell me—who really insulted him? You changed the very map of J&K, abolished the state subject law implemented by the Maharaja. Even BJP's Pathania Sahib once practiced under the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC), a law named after Maharaja Ranbir Singh. Under which law does he practice today?" Omar questioned.

Referring to the revocation

Announces Hike In CDF, MLA Salaries

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday announced an increase in the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and a salary revision for the Personal Assistants of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs).

While addressing the Legislative Assembly during a discussion on grants, Omar stated that MLAs' salaries had not been revised since 2016. To ensure a structured and transparent revision process, he proposed the formation of a House Committee under the Speaker's supervision to periodically assess and adjust salaries in line with those of Members of Parliament (MPs).

"Our goal is to implement an automatic and transparent salary revision mechanism, following the pattern of Parliament," he said.

Omar argued that the Maharaja's state subject laws were intended to safeguard the rights of Jammu's resi-

Additionally, he announced an increase in the CDF allocation, raising it from 3 crore to 4 crore to boost development initiatives at the constituency level. "This will ensure that MLAs can undertake more meaningful projects for their respective constituencies," he added.

In response to legislators' demands for a salary hike for their Personal Assistants, Omar assured them that their remuneration would be revised accordingly. "I will ensure that their salaries are adjusted fairly," he said.

He further emphasized that the CDF guidelines would be streamlined with the MPLAD (Members of Parliament Local Area Development) scheme to enhance fund utilization. "If additional changes are necessary, we will make them to ensure better efficiency in development work," he concluded.

dents from external influences, particularly from Punjab. He challenged the BJP's stand on equality, pointing out that similar restrictions exist in states like Himachal Pradesh, where strict land ownership and employment laws are in place. "If you want true equality, why not implement the same policies everywhere?" he asked.

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dents from external influences, particularly from Punjab. He challenged the BJP's stand on equality, pointing out that similar restrictions exist in states like Himachal Pradesh, where strict land ownership and employment laws are in place. "If you want true equality, why not implement the same policies everywhere?" he asked.

MLA Nomination Case

HC Fixes Apr 30 For Final Hearing

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Thursday fixed April 30 for the final hearing in the Public Interest Litigation challenging absolute powers of the Lt Governor to nominate five MLAs to the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

The PIL filed by Advocate Ravinder Sharma Ex-MLC and Chief Spokesperson JKPC came up on Thursday before the special Division Bench

Comprising Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Rajesh Sekhri.

As the case came up, the Petitioner Ravinder Sharma, who appeared in person, pointed out to the bench that no reply had been filed by the respondents despite numerous opportunities and requested for an early hearing in the matter, which was of great public importance.

Upon this the bench directed the matter to be listed on April 30 for a final hearing, observing that no further op-

portunities are to be granted, if the pleadings are not completed before the next date of hearing.

Meanwhile, Advocate S S Ahmed also appeared on behalf of applicants Ravinder Singh and Gurdev Singh, requesting the court to allow their request to intervene. The petitioner Ravinder Sharma did not object to the prayer.

The PIL will now come up on April 30 and be heard finally, even if no reply is filed from the other side before that date.

Admin Imposes Ban On Yaum-e-Ali Procession In Mirgund

'Restrictions In Mirgund, Mirchimar To Maintain Law & Order On 21st Ramazan'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Citing security concerns, the Baramulla administration has imposed restrictions in Mirgund, Mirchimar, and adjoining areas ahead of the Yaum-e-Ali procession in the area on 21st Ramazan, Saturday.

The curbs under Section 163 BNSS shall come in force from 8 PM on March 21 to 9 PM on March 22, a government order said. The order bans gatherings, processions, and the use of loudspeakers, while also prohibiting weapons, except for security personnel.

According to the order, the decision follows a report from the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Baramulla, who highlighted concerns over potential clashes

With the recent ban on Ittehadul Muslimeen by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the authorities deemed it necessary to prevent any related activities, including the proposed procession"

between two factions of the Shia community in the area. The order cites a history of violent confrontations between the groups and a recent escalation on March 4, 2025, as 'key reasons' for imposing the restrictions.

The SSP's report also noted that a religious event marking the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Ali (AS) is scheduled to take place at Imambargah Mirgund on 21st of Ramazan

on Saturday. The event traditionally includes a procession from Imambargah Mirgund to Imambara Mirchimar led by Moulvi Masroor Abbas Ansari of J&K Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen. "However, with the recent ban on the said organization by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the authorities deemed it necessary to prevent any related activities, including the proposed procession", it said.

"To ensure public safety, restrictions will be in effect from 8:00 PM on March 21 to 9:00 PM on March 22, 2025. During this period, no assembly or gathering of four or more people will be permitted in the affected areas. Processions of any kind will not be allowed. Carrying of firearms or any article that may be used as a weapon is

strictly prohibited, except for security personnel and authorized officials. The use of loudspeakers or amplifying devices for speeches or announcements is banned unless prior permission is obtained from the District Magistrate", the order reads.

The restrictions have been enforced to maintain peace and prevent any risk to life and property, the order stated. Authorities have urged residents to comply with the directives to avoid any legal action. It bears mention that members of Shia Association led by Moulvi Imran Ansari have declared that they will not allow the traditional procession from Mirgund led by Ittehadul Muslimeen to culminate at Imambargah Mirchimar sparking tension in the area.

Waterlogging, Dust Pollution Around Ring Road Project Irks people

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The farmers, commuters and local residents living around the under-construction Srinagar Ring Road project have appealed Deputy Chief Minister who also holds the charge of PWD -R&B Departments to take action against the construction company NKC Projects Pvt Ltd as they have failed to make proper drainage system around the proposed road especially near the underpasses and bridges.

A delegation of locals from Kuzwera, Wathoora and Batpora in Budgam alleged there is huge dust pollution in the areas around Ring Road from Pampore to Narbal during dry and sunny days and when there is rainfall the waterlogging impacts the agricultural land and orchards especially. The most impacted areas are Kuzwera, Bugam, Wathoora, Batpora, Lalgam and Gudsathoo villages. The construction of the Srinagar Ring Road project has raised significant concerns among local villagers, farmers

and environmental activists. The project involves earth filling on a vast area using clay excavated from Karewas.

"The clay emits huge dust that has damaged the apple and plum orchards in Wathoora, Batpora, Gudsathoo, Panzan and other villages. The natural drainage system has been choked which isn't restored and in rains the apple and plum orchards get waterlogged and in the last two years many farmers have been affected. As the local administration failed to act & some farmers went to National Green Tribunal -NGT which asked JK Pollution Control Committee to submit the

report. These reports make it clear that the area around Wathoora has a lot of air pollution due to dust and breach of irrigation channels caused massive water logging in the area last year in April" said Advocate Badrul Duja, a noted Environmental Lawyer.

The waterlogging at Kuzwera, Wathoora Batpora, Wathoora -Bugam and Panzan Gudsathoo underpasses is also irking commuters and nobody is taking any action against the construction company. They have appealed to Dy CM who also holds the charge of PWD R&B Departments to take stern action against the construction

company.

"NKC company is working recklessly on the highway project and has been involved in illegal riverbed mining as well. My own apple orchard remained under water for 2 months and in-spite of repeated communications with NHAI, I didn't get any relief. It has been almost damaged and my entire investment is gone. The underpass near Wathoora Batpora also gets waterlogged when it rains and during dry weather we have huge dust in the area that is also impacting the apple orchards plus human population as well". Chulam Nabi Bhat an aggrieved farmer said.

Massive Fire Guts 20 Houses in Anantnag's Kadipora, Scores Left Homeless



Agencies

ANANTNAG: A devastating fire incident in the Gujrag Kadipora area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district today reduced nearly 20 residential houses to ashes, leaving hundreds of people homeless in the holy month of Ramadan.

According to eyewitnesses, the fire started from the house of the late Nisar Ahmad Lulu and spread rapidly to adjacent houses. The densely packed structures and lack of adequate firefighting resources exacerbated the destruction, as flames quickly engulfed the entire row of homes.

Locals, assisted by firefighters and police, made desperate efforts to douse the blaze. However, they faced severe challenges due to a shortage of water and defunct fire hydrants. "We tried our best, but the unavailability of water and non-functional fire plugs made it impossible to control the fire in time," said a distressed resident.

The incident once again highlighted the vulnerability of Anantnag's congested old town areas to major fire mishaps. Kashmir News Trust had earlier reported that many localities in

South Kashmir's Anantnag district lack a functional fireproof system, with most fire hydrants installed decades ago now lying defunct due to rust and lack of maintenance.

Locals lamented that despite repeated appeals, authorities failed to upgrade the firefighting infrastructure in the district.

"The fire plugs in our area were installed around 35 years ago. They have rusted and become useless. Very few new ones have been added over the years, leaving us at the mercy of such disasters," said another resident.

Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Fakhuruddin Ahmad, along with police and civil administration officials, visited the area to assess the damage and assured immediate relief to the victims. "In this holy month of Ramadan, we will ensure that emergency assistance is provided to all affected families at the earliest," he stated.

Meanwhile, the victims, now homeless and struggling for basic necessities, have urged the administration to expedite rehabilitation efforts and strengthen firefighting infrastructure to prevent such tragedies in the future. [KNT]

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EAZR-SLR25-47	08/04/25 at 11:00 Hrs.	Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 15098/F1, 12422/F1, 11450/F1, 11532/F1, 16318/F1, 12478/F1, 14632/F1, 14632/R1, 12446/F1 & 12476/F1.

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In Loving Memory of

Raja Tasleem

With profound sorrow, we mourn the untimely passing of Raja Tasleem Abbas, a distinguished jurist known for his integrity, fairness, and unwavering commitment to justice. Respected for his fearless adjudication and dedication to public service, he leaves behind a legacy of honesty and moral strength. His passing is an immense loss to the legal fraternity and the people of Kashmir.

May his soul rest in peace.

FAMILY & FRIENDS
Note- Congregational Fateh's shall be held on Sunday at 8 AM

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KO VIEW

Rationalizing Reservation

If any issue has assumed the most prominence in J&K's political discourse since the elected government took power, it is that of reservations in jobs. The recent data presented in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on the distribution of job quotas between Kashmir and Jammu regions reveals a glaring imbalance. One can't deny the rationale of affirmative action to uplift marginalized communities and create equitable opportunities, but it can't be done at the expense of the other communities, be it in the Valley or in Jammu. It is clear that the current policy appears to disproportionately favor one region over the other. This has rightly triggered a political chorus in the Valley for an urgent review and rationalization of the reservation system to ensure fairness and justice for all.

The figures tabled in the Assembly showed all Scheduled Caste (SC) beneficiaries from Jammu, and not a single recipient from Kashmir. Similarly, 85.3% of those benefiting under the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category are from Jammu, and only 14.7% from the Valley. Ditto for Economic Weaker Section (EWS) category: 92.3% of the beneficiaries are from Jammu and a mere 7.7% are from Kashmir. Jammu-based candidates also dominate across other categories, such as the Actual Line of Control (ALC) and International Border (IB).

This certainly is shocking especially considering that Kashmir comprises around 55% of J&K's population, as per the 2011 census. True, reservation policies are designed to uplift those in need, regardless of their geographical location, but the current arrangement is clearly skewed heavily in favor of Jammu at the cost of Kashmiri-speaking populations. This is neither just nor in line with the fundamental ideals of reservation. J&K has now just 30 percent reservation quota for the open merit category. The reduction followed the LG administration's decision early last year to raise reservation for Parahis by 10 percent and that of the other tribes and the Other Backward Classes by 8 percent. According to the 2011 census, 69 percent of the J&K's population falls under the general category, which includes those not classified under Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. But while reservations in the rest of the country have been capped at 50 percent, in J&K they have been fixed at 70 percent. This is a gross injustice. There's hope that the J&K Cabinet Sub-Committee examining reservations in recruitment will set things right. The subcommittee will present the report in six months and has promised rationalization of the job quotas.



Did you know?

How to Protect Yourself from Financial Scams

Irshad Mushtaq

In recent years, the financial sector has seen a surge in scams, particularly in Kashmir, where scammers exploit people's trust and lack of knowledge. Understanding how these fraudsters operate is essential to safeguarding your hard-earned money. This article aims to educate locals about various types of financial scams, warning signs, and proactive measures to protect yourself.

Understanding Financial Scams

Scammers often use sophisticated techniques to deceive people, particularly those who may not be well-versed in financial matters. They may pose as financial advisors, using edited audio and video clips of reputed individuals to gain credibility. These fraudulent activities can take many forms, including:

- 1. Fake Investment Opportunities:** Scammers present enticing investment options, such as cryptocurrencies or massive guaranteed returns. They lure victims with promises that their investments will double or triple within a short time frame.
- 2. High-Pressure Sales Tactics:** Fraudsters may pressure you into investing quickly, creating a sense of urgency so you don't have time to think it through.
- 3. Phishing Scams:** Scammers often use phishing techniques to collect personal and financial information by masquerading as legitimate institutions through emails, texts, or phone calls.
- 4. Ponzi Schemes:** In these schemes, returns to older investors are paid using the investments made by newer investors, making it unsustainable in the long run.
- 5. Romance Scams:** Scammers build emotional relationships online and trick victims into sending money, often using various fabricated stories to extract funds.

Warning Signs of a Scam

To safeguard yourself, be aware of the following red flags:
Unsolicited Promotions: Be cautious of unsolicited investment opportunities, especially those received via social media or messaging apps.

Lack of Registration: Always check whether the advisor or scheme is registered with the Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Reserve Bank of India (RBI), or Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA). If they lack proper registration, it's likely a scam.

Incredible Promises: If an investment sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Be wary of guaranteed high returns with little risk.

Pressure to Act Quickly: Legitimate investments allow you time to think. If someone is pushing you to make a quick decision, it's a red flag.

Vague Information: Fraudulent advisors often provide little information about their company or investment strategy. Always seek clarity on how your funds will be managed.

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

Learn from the insights of @IrshadMushtaq, Writer, Investor, Entrepreneur & Founder of M1 Securities! Connect for valuable financial advice at miscurities@bp.sharekhan.com

Disclaimer: This article is for information only and doesn't offer investment advice. It's not an endorsement or an offer to buy or sell any financial products. If you decide to act on the information here, you do so at your own risk

Rethinking Ramazan

Have We Forgotten the Essence of Ramazan?

Peer Mohammad Amir Qureshi

Ramazan is a month of divine mercy, the crown jewel of all months, when the heavens seem to draw closer to the earth. Not long ago, its arrival would bring a palpable shift in the air—a blend of joy and reverence, hope and self-accountability. The mere mention of its approach would stir even the most heedless hearts. A week before its onset, the atmosphere would transform: streets would quieten, hearts would soften, and even those entangled in sin would feel the weight of Allah's gaze, prompting a longing for redemption.

In those days, every Muslim—no matter how distant from faith—would make a sincere resolve: "I must abandon my bad deeds. I must refrain from them." Watching movies, listening to music, using abusive language, and exploiting others for profit—these vices would be cast aside, if only for this sacred month. The air itself carried a divine urgency, a call to purify, to repent, to rise.

But now, as I look around, I am struck by a painful truth: that Ramazan, that sacred transformation, seems to have faded. The mosques may be fuller, and the streets may echo with Quranic recitations, yet the hearts within them remain unchanged. The essence of Ramazan—its call to self-discipline, its demand for spiritual reckoning—seems buried under the weight of our distractions.

Have We Traded Reflection for Rituals?

We fast from dawn to dusk, abstaining from food and drink, yet we indulge in lies, gossip, and greed. We stand in prayer, our foreheads touching the ground in a gesture of humility, yet our minds remain entangled in the endless scroll of social media, the fleeting allure of entertainment, and the ceaseless distractions of a world that refuses to pause.

Have we turned Ramazan into a mere cycle of hunger and thirst rather than a season of spiritual rejuvenation? Do we fast only to satisfy tradition rather than transform our hearts? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Indeed, Allah does not look at your appearances or wealth, but He looks at your hearts and actions." (Muslim)

If we stand in prayer but our thoughts are elsewhere, if we recite the Quran without absorbing its meaning, if we give charity while exploiting others—what remains of the Ramazan we claim to observe?

The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned, "Whoever does not give up false speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink." (Bukhari) These words cut deep, for they seem to describe our condition today—outwardly observing Ramazan while inwardly neglecting its true purpose.

Are We Truly Upholding the Spirit of Ramazan?

Ramazan was meant to be a time of transformation, yet we must ask ourselves: have we truly embraced its essence? Have we upheld the values of mercy, humility, and generosity that this sacred month demands?

Are our fasts bringing us closer to righteousness, or have they become mere physical routines? Do our prayers reflect sincerity and devotion, or are they empty gestures? We abstain from food and drink, yet do we also abstain from dishonesty, arrogance, and injustice?

Ramazan is not just about controlling hunger—it is about purifying the heart. It is meant to refine our character and elevate our faith. But if our actions remain unchanged, if our hearts remain unmoved, then what have we truly gained from this blessed month?

A Ramazan of Profits or a Ramazan of Piety?

As the crescent moon of Ramazan graces



Why is it that during Ramazan—when generosity should flourish—businesses hike prices instead of easing burdens? Why do traders who claim to fast and pray exploit the very people they kneel beside in Salah?

the skies, another shadow looms over Kashmir—a shadow of exploitation. The holy month, meant to be a time of spiritual reflection and communal harmony, is increasingly marred by a stark and unsettling reality: the relentless surge in prices of daily essentials.

Fruits like papaya, watermelon, and bananas—symbols of abundance and joy—now bear the weight of greed, their prices soaring beyond the reach of the common man.

Why is it that during Ramazan—when generosity should flourish—businesses hike prices instead of easing burdens? Why do traders who claim to fast and pray exploit the very people they kneel beside in Salah?

The contrast with other festive seasons is striking. During various cultural and religious celebrations, businesses introduce discounts, offers, and special provisions to make festivities accessible to all. Yet, during Ramazan, when selflessness should be at its peak, we find the opposite—an economy of excess that burdens the struggling.

Is this the legacy we want to leave behind? That in a month meant for giving, we take? That in a season of mercy, we become merciless?

Allama Iqbal's poignant words echo in my mind, a haunting reminder of our fall from grace

"Woh mu'azzaz thay zamane mein insaan ho kar,
Hum khuaar hue tareek-e-Quran ho kar."

(They were honored in the world for their humanity,
We have been disgraced despite claiming the path of the Quran.)

How true these words ring today! The very values that should define us—justice, compassion, and selflessness—are now overshadowed by greed and indifference.

Reclaiming the Spirit of Ramazan

Ramazan is not just about fasting from food and drink; it is about fasting from greed, from exploitation, from injustice. It is about remembering the less fortunate, sharing our blessings, and embodying the mercy and compassion of Allah.

Yet, what do we see? A marketplace

where the rich grow richer, and the poor grow poorer. A society where the spirit of Ramazan is buried under the weight of materialism.

This is not the Ramazan our faith envisions. This is not the Ramazan our Prophet (peace be upon him) exemplified. This is a Ramazan in danger of losing its soul.

How long will we allow this travesty to continue? How long will we remain silent as the essence of Ramazan is trampled underfoot? How long will we let greed overshadow piety, and profit overshadow devotion?

The time has come to reclaim the true spirit of Ramazan. To hold accountable those who exploit the vulnerable. To remember that fasting is not just about abstaining from food, but about feeding the hungry, easing the burdens of others, and embodying Allah's mercy in every action, every transaction, every interaction.

Let us not be the people who dishonor the Quran by our deeds. Let us be the people who honor it by our humanity. Let us make Ramazan what it was meant to be—a month of mercy, not of exploitation; a month of unity, not of disparity; a month of devotion, not of hypocrisy.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The best charity is that given in Ramazan." (Tirmidhi) Let us strive to embody this spirit—not just in our giving, but in our every action. Let us remember that Ramazan is a time for reflection, for repentance, for renewal. It is a time to reconnect with our Creator, to recalibrate our hearts and lives, to rise above our flaws and touch the Divine.

Let us not let this Ramazan pass us by—another missed opportunity, another year of empty rituals. Let us make it a month of true transformation, a month of mercy, a month of grace.

Let us make it a Ramazan that honors the Quran, that honors our faith, that honors our humanity.

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

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Keep Your Locality Clean

As Muslims, we often emphasize the importance of prayer, fasting, and charity in our faith. However, there is another crucial aspect of our Deen that is often overlooked: cleanliness. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of cleanliness, saying "Cleanliness is half of faith" (Sahih Muslim).

Unfortunately, many of our mohallas (neighborhoods) are plagued by litter, garbage, and filth. This not only creates an unpleasant environment for residents but also poses serious health

risks. As Muslims, it is our responsibility to ensure that our communities are clean and hygienic.

The Quran reminds us that Allah loves those who are clean and pure (Quran 9:108). By keeping our mohallas clean, we are not only fulfilling our duty to our communities but also pleasing Allah.

I urge all members of our community to take responsibility for keeping our mohallas clean. We can start by disposing of trash properly, avoiding littering, and participating in community clean-up initiatives. Let us work

together to create a cleaner, healthier, and more beautiful environment for ourselves and our families.

By doing so, we will not only be fulfilling our duty to our communities but also upholding the values of our faith.

Furthermore, I would like to suggest that our community leaders and local authorities take proactive steps to address the issue of cleanliness in our mohallas. This can include increasing the frequency of garbage collection, providing adequate waste disposal facilities, and launching public awareness campaigns to promote

cleanliness.

Additionally, we can also encourage our children to participate in cleanliness drives and educate them about the importance of keeping their surroundings clean. By instilling these values in our children, we can ensure that future generations will continue to prioritize cleanliness and community responsibility.

Faiq Khan
Ganderbal

On World Poetry Day

Remembering RASOOL MIR

The Bard Beyond Time And His Struggle To Preserve Kashmir's Legacy

Peerzada Mohsin Shafi

On World Poetry Day, as UNESCO's call to honour poets and preserve linguistic heritage echoes globally, my mind drifts to the immortal poet of my area—Rasool Mir Shahabadi, a poet whose name is whispered with reverence. Born around 1840 in the Mir Mohalla of Mirmaidan, Dooru Shahabad, Anantnag Rasool Mir's life—though tragically brief, ending around 1870—burned with a creative fire that forever altered Kashmiri literature. Misattributed by many that he lived near Khanqahi Faiz Panah shrine, the truth is different, his true roots lie in the Mir clan of Mirmaidan, Doru, a fact etched into the weathered wooden homes and cobbled paths of his ancestral neighbourhood, where his clan still reside today.

My earliest memories of Rasool Mir are painted in the vibrant hues of childhood wonder. Each year, our school celebrated Rasool Mir Day with a zeal and zest that transformed classrooms into stages. Debates crackled with energy, quizzes tested our knowledge of his couplets, and rehearsals of his poems filled the air. I was in the class 2nd when I first stumbled upon his verse *"Rinde Poosh Maal Gindenay Draee Lolo"*. The rhythmic cadence of the words, sung by a group of girl students, captivated me. "Who wrote this?" I asked my teacher, expecting a living name. "Rasool Mir!" she replied, as though invoking a saint. After returning from the school that evening, I sprinted home to my father, who, with a playful wink without telling the truth, declared, "Rasool Mir is our neighbour!" He even recited one of his famous couplet.

*Yi Chu Rasool Mir Shahabad Dooray
Tami Chu Trovmut Ashiqeh Dukaan
Yevah Aashqow Cheveh Tor-Re Tor-Ray
Meh Chu Mooray Lalvun Nor*

*Here stands Rasool Mir at Shahabad Dooru,
Where a tavern of love he opens anew.
Come, O lovers, drink deep from the chalice,
For the fiery flames of love burn through me, true.*

The next morning, during rehearsals, an elderly man arrived, Ghulam Jeelani Mir Sahab, a descendant of the poet and former village head. He corrected a misrecited line and I, wide-eyed, believed I'd witnessed Rasool Mir himself as last night my father had told me that Mir is our neighbour. Racing home, I breathlessly announced, "Rasool Mir



light filtered like gold dust. "This," he murmured, "is where Rasool Mir walked, wrote, and dreamed."

The air felt heavy with ghosts of poetry. I traced my fingers over the grooves of ancient wood, imagining the poet's hand on the same beams. In that moment, the boundary between past and present blurred. Though just seven years old, I felt the weight of legacy settle on my small shoulders. By the time we returned home, my tears had dried into awe.

The next morning, I marched to school, chest puffed with pride. To my wide-eyed classmates, I became a storyteller—a keeper of secrets. "I've seen his house!" I declared, recounting the wooden planks, the school's chalk-dusted windows, the very air that once held his breath. For a fleeting moment, Rasool Mir lived again—not in verses or textbooks, but in the wide-eyed wonder of children.

Years melted into decades, but Rasool Mir's presence never faded. As I grew older, his name blossomed from a local tale into a cultural monument. He is celebrated as the *"Keats of Kashmir"*—a title that mirrors his

nals of Kashmiri poetry not merely through verses, but by forging a linguistic alchemy uniquely his own. His genius lay in the meticulous selection and fusion of words—Persian elegance woven into Kashmiri earthiness; mystic abstraction tethered to visceral emotion. To read him is to navigate a labyrinth: his poems, dense with layered metaphors and philosophical depth, challenge even seasoned scholars. Yet this very complexity rendered his work inimitable. While many poems borrowed from tradition, Rasool Mir became tradition—a standard against which Kashmiri lyricism is measured.

Celebrated as the "Keats of Kashmir", the title transcends mere comparison. Like Keats, Mir possessed an almost supernatural insight into human frailty and desire. His exploration of romance was not monochromatic; it spanned the spectrum from earthly passion to divine yearning. He is the first Kashmiri poet who introduced Kashmiri Gazals. In his ghazals, love is a paradox—a destructive flame and a redemptive force, a personal ache and a universal truth. This multidimensionality, coupled with his psychological acuity, cemented his place as "Imam-e-Ishqiya Shayri"—the master/pioneer of romantic verse.

A defining chapter of his legend unfolded in his youth, during a fateful encounter with Mehmood Gami, the towering poet-sage of the era. Drawn by Gami's renown, young Rasool Mir ventured into a mehfal (poetic gathering), where the air thrummed with reverence. Gami, seated like a mystic monarch amidst disciples, was immersed in meditation as singers performed. Mir, the unassuming newcomer, sat transfixed, his soul swaying to the rhythm of the ghazals.

When the song ended, Gami's gaze fell on the unfamiliar face glowing with silent intensity. Summoning the boy, he asked, "Who are you?" Rasool Mir, trembling yet resolute, introduced himself. Gami, intrigued, invited him to recite. Hesitation gripped Mir—here was a colossus of poetry, and he, a sapling. But courage prevailed. He recited his verses, each word a brushstroke painting world.

The room stilled. Gami, renowned for his stoicism, sat wide-eyed. The verses—crafted with a maturity belying Mir's youth—were flawless. Thematic depth, structural precision, emotional resonance—all hallmarks of a master. Gami, uncharacteristically speechless, finally murmured to his disciples: "Amis Cheh Jaaneh Margi Hind Kairan" (This boy will not live long). The prophecy, chilling yet poetic, stemmed from a belief that such perfection, achieved in boyhood, defied nature's balance. A soul so luminous, he implied, was destined to burn briefly. This encounter, etched into oral histories, reveals Rasool Mir's duality: a prodigy who mastered life's profundities in a handful of years, yet remained tethered to mortality. His early death, as Gami foresaw, transformed him from a poet into a myth—a comet whose fleeting blaze still illuminates Kashmir's literary sky.

While Rasool Mir's romantic poetry earned him the title "Imam-e-Ishqiya Shayri", his true genius lies in the mystic undercurrents that ripple through his verses—a

dimension often overshadowed yet radiant with spiritual profundity. Beyond the sighs of earthly lovers, Mir's pen danced with divine longing, crafting poems that transcend time and dogma. His Sufi ethos, steeped in the quest for union with the Infinite, pulses through lines where love is not merely human passion but a sacred dialogue with the cosmos.

Sufis and scholars alike regard his mystic verses as masterpieces of Kashmiri literature, believing Mir attained a spiritual zenith few poets ever reach. His work is not just art; it is a revelation—a mirror reflecting the soul's journey from mortal confines to eternal truth. Two couplets, inscribed on his tombstone, encapsulate this transcendent vision:

*Kad Choon Alif, Laam Zulf, Meem Dahaan
Tchuie,
Pur Aqaleh Sabak Shakleh Alim Laam
Nigaroo.*

*Your stature is like Alif, your locks resemble
Laam, and your lips are as beautiful as Meem.
O beloved, your form is a divine script, and
my soul has witnessed its sacred essence.*

Here, Mir merges the Arabic alphabet with celestial metaphor. Alif, the first letter, symbolizes the upright, God-conscious human; Laam mirrors cascading locks, embodying worldly beauty; Meem evokes the curve of a lover's lips. Together, they spell Alif laam—"the Knower" or Divine—a sublime play on script and spirit. Together, this first couplet speaks of divine beauty, the sacred allure of the beloved, and the wisdom of recognizing this beauty on a higher, spiritual level. The poet uses the Arabic alphabet as metaphors to evoke the divine and the connection between spirituality and physical beauty.

*Rasal Tchu Zaenith Deen-o-Mazhab Rukh
Ti Zulf Cheen
Kaw Zaani Kya Gow Kufur Tie Islam Nigaroo.*

*My faith is captivated by your face and hair,
leaving me in awe.
What is disbelief, and what is Islam, when
your presence transcends all understanding?*

In these lines, Mir dismantles the binaries of religion. The beloved's beauty—both face (ruk) and curls (zulf)—obliterates the boundaries between kufr (disbelief) and Islam (faith). For Mir, divine love exists beyond labels; it is a force that renders dogma meaningless. To the Sufi, this is fanaa—the annihilation of self in the Beloved—where rituals dissolve into rapture. It discusses the intense spiritual and emotional struggle of the lover who is so deeply enamored by the beloved (who symbolizes the divine or spiritual truth) that it confounds religious distinctions. The poet implies that such intense love might transcend the boundaries of religious practice, where the beloved represents the ultimate spiritual attraction, and the lover feels caught between devotion to the beloved and the question of spiritual purity.

These verses are not mere poetry; they are portals. Mir's mysticism challenges readers to see the sacred in the sensuous, the eternal in the ephemeral. His words echo the Sufi credo: "Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God." Yet, as he warns, "every eye may not be perceptible"—only those attuned to the unseen can grasp the layers beneath his metaphors.

It is a harsh but prevailing misconception that all Sufi poets are illiterate, yet this is far from the truth. In the case of Rasool Mir, his adept use of metaphors in poetry clearly illustrates that he was an educated individual, well-versed in the literary traditions and in-

tellectual currents of his time. His poetry is rich with intricate metaphors, such as the "Kandhar Zoon" (moon of Kandhar), which not only reflect his deep understanding of Persian and Kashmiri poetic traditions but also show his awareness of global cultural and literary influences. The moon, often symbolizing divine beauty and unattainable perfection, is a metaphor widely used in Sufi poetry across regions. Rasool Mir's use of such imagery demonstrates that he was not only familiar with the local literary landscape but was also attuned to the intellectual currents of the wider world. Due to space constraints, I could not include specific couplets, but these metaphors reveal that Rasool Mir's education and knowledge were far-reaching, integrating both regional and global literary influences into his work.

It is a bitter irony that Rasool Mir, Kashmir's poetic titan, remains a stranger in his own land. The bulk of literature celebrating his genius has been penned by outsiders—scholars from distant cities, historians in ivory towers—while his hometown, Dooru Shahabad, has watched in silence. Despite being home to educators and intellectuals, the village has failed to honour its prodigal son beyond token gestures. A tombstone in ivory towers—while his hometown, Dooru Shahabad, has watched in silence. Despite being home to educators and intellectuals, the village has failed to honour its prodigal son beyond token gestures. A tombstone in ivory towers—while his hometown, Dooru Shahabad, has watched in silence. Despite being home to educators and intellectuals, the village has failed to honour its prodigal son beyond token gestures.

UNESCO's World Poetry Day (March 21), established in 1999 to revive poetic traditions and safeguard linguistic diversity, offers a mirror to our neglect. While the world unites to celebrate verse, Shahabad's apathy reflects a broader malaise: we have outsourced our cultural memory. The poet who immortalized our valleys, rivers, and longing now belongs more to academia than to the soil that nurtured him. This is not just about Rasool Mir—it is about every local legend fading into oblivion. Festivals and tomb renovations are meaningless if children cannot recite a couplet, if parents cannot recount how his words once healed broken hearts, or if teachers reduce his mysticism to exam footnotes. Heritage is not preserved in marble; it lives in the stories we tell, the songs we sing, and the pride we instill.

On this World Poetry Day, let us pledge to rewrite this narrative. Parents: Replace bedtime screens with bedtime couplets. Teachers: Turn classrooms into mehfals where students dissect wisdom word of our ancestors. Institutions: Digitize oral histories, translate verses of local celebrated personalities into global tongues, and collaborate with artists to reimagine his work. The stakes are existential. In an age of algorithm-driven amnesia, we risk losing not just our drives, but a piece of our soul. To forget our ancestors is to surrender our identity; to celebrate him is to armour our future.

UNESCO's vision was clear: poetry is not a relic—it is resistance. Let people of Kashmir rise again and save their heritage this time particularly people of Shahabad should rise from its slumber. Let Rasool Mir's ghazals echo in kitchens, fields, and WhatsApp statuses. Let his tombstone be more than a photo op—let it be a pilgrimage for poets, a classroom under the sky. For in the end, heritage is not inherited—it is chosen. And on this day, we choose to say: No more. No more outsourcing our pride. No more reducing legends to hashtags. From Shahabad to Srinagar, let Rasool Mir's words become the anthem of a generation that refuses to let its roots wither.

Views expressed are the author's own

The Author is M.Tech Infrastructure Development & Management, Member IAENG and ASCE, Researcher Contracts & Planning belongs to Mirmaidan Anantnag which was the home place of Rasool Mir



THE POET WHO IMMORTALIZED OUR VALLEYS, RIVERS, AND LONGING NOW BELONGS MORE TO ACADEMIA THAN TO THE SOIL THAT NURTURED HIM. THIS IS NOT JUST ABOUT RASOOL MIR—it is about every local legend fading into oblivion. Festivals and tomb renovations are meaningless if children cannot recite a couplet, if parents cannot recount how his words once healed broken hearts, or if teachers reduce his mysticism to exam footnotes

visited our school!" My mother, with tender amusement, shattered the illusion: "He died 127 years before you were born." The revelation struck like a summer storm. When my mother gently explained that Rasool Mir had passed away long before I was born, my young heart shattered. Tears streamed down my cheeks—a blend of betrayal and grief—as I grappled with the idea that the poet I believed was my neighbour existed only in whispers of the past. Sensing my anguish, my father, with his quiet wisdom, took my hand and led me on a tour to Mir Mohalla, a mere 50 meters from our home.

There, time folded into itself. Before me stood a weathered building of creaking wooden planks which belong to the clan of Rasool Mir, its facade etched with decades of sun and rain. The ground floor buzzed with the hum of shops—tailors stitching, bakers kneading, vendors calling and barbers trimming—while one wing housed the Government Middle School Mirmaidan famously known as *"Muqdam School"*. My father guided me deeper into the labyrinth of the Mohalla, through narrow lanes where sun-

lyrical intensity—and revered as *"Imam-e-Ishqiya Shayri"* (the sage of romantic verse), a beacon for generations of Kashmiri poets who've dipped their pens in the ink of his influence. His verses, once confined to recitals, now echo in academic corridors, Sufi gatherings, and the quiet hum of lovers' whispers.

Driven by pride and curiosity, I plunged into the labyrinth of his life. Maturity had sharpened my questions. Who was Rasool Mir beyond the myths? Did his bloodline still pulse through our neighbourhood? I interviewed elders with memories as fragile as autumn leaves, and traced oral histories that twisted like village alleys. Yet, the poet's descendants remained phantoms. A neighbour claimed Mir's two sons had migrated to Banihal long ago, vanishing into the mist of time. No records, no graves, just rumours, fragile as cobwebs. The irony stung, the man who immortalized love in Kashmir's soul left no tangible thread to his own lineage. His legacy, like the Jhelum River, flows unseen in some places, surges boldly in others but never truly dries.

Rasool Mir carved his name into the an-



RASOOL MIR CARVED HIS NAME INTO THE ANNALS OF KASHMIRI POETRY NOT MERELY THROUGH VERSES, BUT BY FORGING A LINGUISTIC ALCHEMY UNIQUELY HIS OWN. His genius lay in the meticulous selection and fusion of words—Persian elegance woven into Kashmiri earthiness; mystic abstraction tethered to visceral emotion

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan..
Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth BDO Lalpora has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Shahzain Bilal S/o Bilal Ahmad Khan R/o Babagund Mamoosa with verified date of birth 15/03/2022 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
FKO Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan.
Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
PUBLIC NOTICE..
The registrar birth BDO pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Faizan Ahmad Rather s/o Mohammad Akbar Rather R/o Pakipora Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 10/02/2008 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
FKO Naib Tehsildar Pattan

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No:- 331-2024-25-DEN-TRACK-FZR Date: 19.03.2025
DEN/Track/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.treps.gov.in with closing date-10/04/2025 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original /revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. In place of Earnest money deposit, "Bid Security Declaration" is to be submitted or prescribed format as available in document section on the portal.

Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System
Open	Works	Single Packet System
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time
18.03.2025	27.03.2025	10.04.2025 15:00 Hrs

S.No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender
1	331-2024-25-DEN-Track-FZR	Pre & post attention works in connection with screening of shoulder ballast left by FRM over FZR division. Advertised Value (Rs.) 1,50,63,036.72/- Earnest Money 2,25,300.00/- Validity of Offer 60 Days Period of Completion 12 Months Similar nature of work:- CTR/TRR/TFR/TTR including raising of track, Deep screening, distressing of track, pre & post works for track maintenance machine like tamping machines/ballast screening/regulating machines/ballast screening/regulating machines & TTR by T-28.

Note 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender. 860/2025
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Muhammad Hibbaan Bhat s/o Bashir Ahmad Bhat R/o Tilgam Pattan with verified date of birth 06/11/2020 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
SD
FKO Naib Tehsildar Pattan

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, GULZAR Ahmad Wani, father of MAHKEEY GULZAR R/O SAFNAGRI SHOPIAN, want to correct the name and D.O.B of my ward, which has been wrongly entered as MAHKI Jan instead of MAHKEEY GULZAR and D.O.B wrongly entered as 05-06-2007 instead of 10-04-2009. Now correction required. If any body has any objection, may contact Concerned Aadhaar Centre Jammu/Srinagar or Concerned Authorities within 7 days.
FKO

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS MANAGEMENT (PURCHASE-II) SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA SRINAGR
email: ammopurchase2@skims.ac.in
e-NIT No: SIMS 03 (P-II) OF 2025
DATED: 15/03/2025

Sub: - Abbreviated Notice inviting e-tenders for supply of Mini spares/Electronic Components of various UPS brands for SKIMS Soura.

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor UT of Jammu & Kashmir, through Director Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Soura, Srinagar, e-tenders are invited under two bid system on item rate basis from Original Manufacturers/ their authorized distributors/dealers for supply of Mini spares/Electronic Components of various UPS brands for SKIMS Soura, Srinagar details are given as Annexure-A.

The detailed tender document containing terms and conditions, quantity of Mini Spares/Electronic Components of various UPS brands, is available on www.jktenders.gov.in and can be downloaded and submitted by the interested eligible agencies as per following schedule:

S. No.	Description	Schedule
01	Tender Fee	Rs. 1000.00 (One thousand only)
02	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs. 15,000.00 (Fifteen Thousand Only)
03	Bid Publish Start Date	15.03.2025
04	Clarification Start Date/End date	15.03.2025 to 20.03.2025 (during office hours)
05	Bid submission Start Date/end Date	22/03/2025 to 04.04.2025 12:00 p.m.
06	Date & time for opening of technical bids	07/04/2025 at 2:00 p.m.

Complete bidding process will be online at www.jktenders.gov.in. (Technical and Price bids shall have to be submitted in electronic format on the said tender portal and in no case be submitted in physical form.)
Director SKIMS reserves the right to accept/reject or cancel any tender or all tenders in full or part thereof without assigning any reason. The tenders must be submitted strictly in accordance with the provisions of the detailed NIT.

SD/-
Materials Management Officer (Purchase-II)

No: SIMS 325-06/2024- 545-52
DIPK-NB-3849/24
Dated: 20/03/ 2025

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan..
Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth BDO Lalpora has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Mohammad Usman Mir S/o Gulzar Ahmad Mir R/o Mamoosa Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 14/03/2021 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
FKO Naib Tehsildar Pattan

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)
Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.
PUBLIC NOTICE
The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHAMMAD AMAAN NAJAR S/O AJAZ AHMAD NAJAR R/O ATHOORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 25/05/2021 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection .
if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained
Executive Magistrate 1st Class
KREERI
FKO

Office Of The Naib Tehsildar Pattan..
Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice..
The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Ahmad Mudasir Kawa s/o Mudasir Ahmad Kawa R/o Sofi Hamam Sopore Tehsil Sopore Distt baramulla with verified date of birth 02/07/2021 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained .
SD
FKO Naib Tehsildar Pattan

PUBLIC NOTICE
I have lost my 8th pass DOB issued by Govt high school palhalan. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the above mentioned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Rohiejan
D/o Ghulam mohd Gojree
FKO

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan..
Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
PUBLIC NOTICE...
The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Hamza Malla s/o Manzoor Ahmad Malla R/o Mian Mohalla Pattan Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 07/08/2021 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
SD
FKO Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Dignified Farewell

Transforming Kashmir's Final Rides

In Kashmir, it is a painful irony that the departed, who leave behind a lifetime of earnings, are often transported to their final resting place in load carriers – vehicles they would never have used for commuting while alive. This stark contrast raises a profound question: shouldn't every soul be granted a dignified farewell, just as they lived with dignity? It is time to ensure that the last journey of our loved ones reflects the respect and honor they deserve. Since launching a dedicated funeral service in Islamabad in 2014, Mother Helpage now invites you to donate generously to provide these services for Srinagar, Budgam, and Baramulla.



Donate Now!



- Account Name: **Mother Helpage**
- Ac Number : **0472010100001092**
- IFSC : **JAKA0SAADIQ**
- Branch: **Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd, Sadiqabad, Anantnag.**

For queries call
Farooq A Ashai (Coordinator)
Ph: +91 788-9402837
Email : farooq.ashai@motherhelpage.org

Bullion Markets End Three-Day Rally; Gold Falls ₹300 To ₹91,650 Per 10 Gram

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices declined by Rs 300 to Rs 91,650 per 10 grams on Thursday, bringing an end to the three-day rally in the national capital, amid fall in precious metal rates globally, according to the All India Sarafa Association.



On Wednesday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed Rs 700 higher at its lifetime high of Rs 91,950 per 10 grams.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity, which ended the previous session at Rs 91,500 per 10 grams, slipped by Rs 300 to Rs 91,200 per 10 grams on Thursday.

Silver prices also tanked by Rs 1,500 to Rs 1,02,000 per kg from Wednesday's closing level of Rs 1,03,500 per kg, also its historic high.

In the preceding three sessions, gold added Rs 2,500 per 10 gram to hit its all-time

high level, while silver surged by Rs 2,300 per kg to reach its fresh peak during the period.

In the global markets on Thursday, spot gold fell by USD 14.44 or 0.47 per cent to USD 3,033.35 per ounce. In the morning trade, it rose to hit a lifetime high of USD 3,057.36 per ounce.

Similarly, Comex gold futures for April delivery slipped 0.11 per cent to USD 3,038 per ounce. During the session, it touched a fresh peak of USD 3,065.09 per ounce.

"Comex gold futures surged to a record USD 3,065.2 per

ounce, subsequently retracting to around USD 3,042, yet maintaining gains.

"The prices are steady near record highs as it is underpinned by robust safe-haven demand amidst escalating geopolitical tensions," Kotak Securities said in a note.

Further, persistent concerns over global trade disputes, including impending new duties and existing US tariffs, contributed to market volatility, the brokerage firm added.

According to Abans Financial Services' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta, market participants will closely monitor US weekly unemployment claims to be released later on Thursday to assess the strength of the labour market.

"Investors will also seek insights from US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's press conference in Washington, looking for indications of how policymakers are factoring in Trump's policies and how they might respond if economic conditions worsen," Mehta added.

"The prices are steady near record highs as it is underpinned by robust safe-haven demand amidst escalating geopolitical tensions,"

Trump Says He Believes India Will Lower Tariffs On US Goods

Press Trust Of India

NEW YORK- President Donald Trump has said that he believes India will lower its tariffs on American goods, even as he reiterated his threat to impose reciprocal US tariffs on the country starting April 2.

In an interview with Breitbart News, an American news, opinion, and commentary website, Trump discussed the US' relationship with India.

Asked about his summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month, Trump said he has a "very good relationship" with India.

"But the only problem I have with India is they're one of the highest tariffing nations in the world," the website quoted Trump as saying.

"I believe they're...probably going to be lowering those tariffs substantially, but on April 2, we will be charging them the same tariffs they charge us."

When asked about the India-Middle East-Europe-Economic Corridor (IMEC), a deal he signed the US on to during Modi's visit to the US, Trump did not mention China in particular but said it was a "group of wonderful nations" banding together "countering other countries that look to hurt us on

trade."

"We have a powerful group of partners in trade," Trump said.

"Again, we can't let those partners treat us badly, however. We do better in many ways frankly with our foes than we do with our friends," Trump was quoted as saying by the website.

"The ones that wouldn't be as friendly to us in some cases treat us better than the ones that are supposed to be friendly, like the European Union, which treats us terribly on trade," Trump said.

"India and everybody would think of them as an ally. I can say the same for others. But this is a group of wonderful nations that is countering other countries that look to hurt us on trade," he added.

Trump earlier this month said that India has agreed to cut its tariffs "way down" as he reiterated his claim that the country charges Ameri-



ca massive tariffs that make it difficult to sell products there.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal, however told a Parliamentary panel in New Delhi on March 10 that negotiations are still on and no agreement on trade tariffs has been reached so far between India and the US.

Trump has been criticising the high tariffs charged by India.

In his address to the joint session of Congress on March 4, the first of his second term in the White House, Trump criticised the high tariffs charged by India and other countries and termed them "very unfair".

In the past, Trump has called India a "tariff king" and a "big abuser".

India had said it was looking at deepening trade ties with the US, including by reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers, under a bilateral trade agreement.

THIS UNCERTAINTY HAS PROMPTED CENTRAL BANKS WORLDWIDE to stockpile gold at unprecedented levels, diversifying their reserves away from US Treasuries"

EPFO's Net Member Addition Rises 11.67 % To 17.89 Lakh In Jan

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Retirement fund body EPFO has added 17.89 lakh net members in January this year, reflecting a year-on-year growth of 11.67 per cent, according to payroll data released on Thursday.

An increase of 11.48 per cent has been registered in net payroll addition in the month under review compared to December 2024, a labour ministry statement said.

According to the statement, the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) has released provisional payroll data for January 2025, revealing a net addition of 17.89 lakh members.

Further, the year-on-year analysis reveals a growth of 11.67 per cent in net payroll additions compared to January 2024, signifying increased employment opportunities and heightened awareness of employee benefits, bolstered by EPFO's effective outreach initiatives, it added.

The EPFO enrolled around 8.23 lakh new subscribers in January 2025. The net subscribers addition shows a growth of 1.87 per cent year-on-year.



It also stated that a noticeable aspect of the data is the dominance of the 18-25 age group, as 4.70 lakh new subscribers were added in the category, constituting a significant 57.07 per cent of the total new subscribers added in January 2025.

New subscribers in the 18-25 age group added in the month show a growth of 3.07 per cent year-on-year.

Further, the net payroll addition for the age group 18-25 for January 2025 is approximately 7.27 lakh, reflecting an increase of 6.19 per cent compared to December 2024 and an 8.15 per cent growth year-on-year.

This is in consonance with the earlier trend, which indicates that most individuals joining the organised workforce are youth, primarily first-time job seekers, the statement said.

The payroll data highlights that approximately 15.03 lakh members exited and subsequently rejoined EPFO, reflecting a 23.55 per cent growth year-on-year.

These members switched their jobs and re-joined the establishments covered under the ambit of EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying for final settlement thus safeguarding long-term financial well-being and extending their social security protection.

Gender-wise analysis of payroll data unveils that out of the total new subscribers added during the month, around 2.17 lakhs are new female subscribers. This figure exhibits its significant year-over-year growth of 6.01 per cent.

Gender-wise analysis of payroll data unveils that out of the total new subscribers added during the month, around 2.17 lakhs are new female subscribers. This figure exhibits its significant year-over-year growth of 6.01 per cent.

While the total number of registrations by Ola Electric on the Vahan portal for February stood at 8,652, the company had reported sales of over 25,000 units during February 2025. As of March 20, the company's registrations stood at 11,781 on the Vahan portal.

Ola Electric is a beneficiary of the FAME II and PM E-DRIVE



J&K Bank Runs Month-Long Awareness Campaign On Consumer Rights

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Close on the heels of World Consumer Rights Day on 15th March, J&K Bank has initiated a month-long awareness campaign to educate its customers about their rights and the available grievance redressal mechanisms. The initiative is aligned with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) directives to enhance public awareness about consumer protection and promote responsible banking.

The campaign emphasises in detail the key themes of the Charter of Customer Rights issued by the RBI that includes Right to Fair Treatment, Right to Transparency, Right to Honesty, Right to Suitability, Right to Privacy, and Right to Grievance Redressal and Compensation. In addition, the Bank will highlight the timelines applicable for compensating customers for financial losses resulting from any deficiencies in banking services across its channels.

Speaking about the initiative, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "Empowering our

customers with knowledge about their rights is a cornerstone of responsible banking. Through this campaign, we aim to ensure that our customers are well-informed about their rights; so that they feel empowered to make prudent and secure financial decisions."

"And being a socially-responsible financial institution, we are committed to upholding the highest standards of customer service and addressing grievances promptly and fairly," he added.

The comprehensive campaign has been rolled out across television, radio, print media, and the Bank's official social media platforms. In order to make the campaign effective, the Bank will also utilize its network of business correspondents, and financial literacy centres across J&K and Ladakh to disseminate information through interactive sessions and its signage.

With this initiative, the Bank continues to demonstrate its dedication to customer-centric banking and further strengthen its relationship with its valued customers.

Investors' Wealth Surges ₹17.43 Lakh Cr In Four Days Of Market Rally

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Market investors kitty swelled by Rs 17.43 lakh crore in four days of sharp rally in equities where the BSE benchmark Sensex jumped over 3 per cent.

On Thursday, the 30-share benchmark Sensex jumped 899.01 points or 1.19 per cent to settle at 76,348.06, regaining the 76,000 level. During the day, it soared 1,007.2 points or 1.33 per cent to 76,456.25.

In four days, the Sensex zoomed 2,519.15 points or 3.41 per cent.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged Rs 17,43,418.8 crore to Rs 4,08,61,851.73 crore (USD 4.73 trillion) in four days.

"Benchmark indices got a Fed booster shot on Thursday extending gains for fourth straight session, after the US Fed kept the forecast for two rate cuts in 2025 intact despite inflation risks from Trump's trade war. Broader mid and smallcaps also posted gains for the day. All major sectors also logged gains in broad-based rally with Nifty IT recovering from steep losses in recent weeks," Satish Chandra Aluri, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

The US Fed is undoubtedly the driving force behind today's market rally as markets took comfort from the strong overnight gains in US indices, after Fed kept the projection for two rate cuts in 2025 unchanged, he



added.

From the Sensex pack, Bharti Airtel, Titan, Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, Infosys, Nestle, Reliance Industries, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank and Tata Motors were the biggest gainers.

However, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finance and UltraTech Cement were the laggards.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.73 per cent and midcap index went up by 0.61 per cent.

All BSE sectoral indices ended higher where telecommunication jumped 1.94 per cent, teck (1.89 per cent), oil & gas (1.56 per cent), energy (1.42 per cent), auto (1.39 per cent) and BSE Focused IT (1.23 per cent).

"The rally was driven by gains in the US market after the Federal Reserve maintained its forecast of two rate cuts this year despite the ongoing tariff concerns," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

As many as 2,410 stocks advanced while 1,606 declined and 129 remained unchanged on the BSE.

BMW To Hike Car Prices By Up To 3% From April

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- BMW Group India on Thursday said it will increase prices by up to 3 per cent across the BMW and MINI car range from next month.

This is the second price hike this year by the carmaker.

The new prices will be effective from April 1, 2025, onwards, the group said in a statement.

It had also undertaken a similar price hike in January this year.

Earlier in the day, automaker Renault India said it will increase prices of its entire model range by up to 2 per cent from April. This is the first price hike announced by Renault India since February 2023.

'Indian 5G User Base to Grow to 770 Million by 2028'

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Average 5G data consumption in India has peaked to 40 GB per user per month and its total subscriber base is expected to grow by 2.65 times to around 770 million in the next three years, telecom gear firm Nokia said on Thursday.

The mix of data consumption across 4G, 5G etc has increased by compounded annual growth rate of 19.5 per cent over five years to 27.5 GB in 2024, Nokia's annual mobile broadband index (MBit) report said.

According to the report, there was a remarkable three-fold year-on-year surge in 5G data traffic across India in 2024.

"Average 5G data consumption in India per user was recorded at 40 GB in December 2024. We expect the 5G user

base to grow to around 770 million by 2028 from 290 million in 2024," Nokia India, Head of Technology and Solutions (Mobile Networks), Sandeep Saxena said during the report launch.

According to the report, the continued rise of 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) is driving increased data usage, with FWA users now consuming over 12 times more data than the average mobile data user, driven by new services in both residential and business settings.

"The 5G device ecosystem in India continues to evolve rapidly, with the number of active 5G devices doubling year-on-year to reach 271 million in 2024. This trend is expected to accelerate, with nearly 90 per cent of smartphones to be replaced in 2025 are expected to be 5G-capable," Saxena said.

Govt Asks ARAI To Probe Ola Electric's Sales Figure Mismatch, Consumer Complaints

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Heavy Industries Ministry has directed Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) to probe the mismatch between Ola Electric's reported sales figures and actual vehicle registrations along with numerous consumer complaints against the Bhavish Aggarwal-owned electric two-wheeler maker and submit a report within 15 days, sources said.

While the total number of registrations by Ola Electric on the Vahan portal for February stood at 8,652, the company had reported sales of over 25,000 units during February 2025. As of March 20, the company's registrations stood at 11,781 on the Vahan portal.

Ola Electric is a beneficiary of the FAME II and PM E-DRIVE

schemes and its eligibility certificate has been provided by ARAI, a certification and testing agency under the administrative control of the ministry.

"It is the responsibility of ARAI to ensure that the guidelines of the PM E-DRIVE Scheme are followed. The ARAI will probe the sales figures mismatch and also the consumer complaints against Ola Electric. We have told ARAI to submit a report within 15 days," officials said, requesting anonymity.

Ola Electric has been facing regulatory heat with multiple authorities including consumer rights regulator CCPA ordering probes into complaints related to alleged "deficiencies" in services and electric two-wheelers manufactured by the company.

When contacted, Ola Electric declined to comment.

However, sources said, due to negotiations with registration agencies, Vahan numbers for February have been temporarily impacted and the same was informed to the stock exchanges on February 19.

"The company's registration process is now back on track and daily registrations of around 1,500 are almost double of the average daily sales of around 800. With this process in place, the company has fast-tracked the clearance of the registration backlog," a source said.

The company expects to register all the vehicles sold in February within March itself, the source said, adding that vehicles sold in the last week of March may have a registration spill-over in the first week of April 2025.

Last week, Ola Electric Mo-

bility Ltd had said its vehicle registration service provider Rosmerta Digital Services Ltd had sought initiation of insolvency proceedings against its wholly owned arm Ola Electric Technologies Pvt Ltd.

Rosmerta Digital Services had submitted a petition before the National Company Law Tribunal - Bengaluru Bench, alleging default in payment towards the services rendered by the operational creditor and seeking initiation of the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) against Ola Electric Technologies Pvt Ltd.

In February, Ola Electric Mobility had stated that it was renegotiating the terms of agreement with its agencies, Rosmerta Digital Services Pvt Ltd and Shimnit India Pvt Ltd, to reduce cost and enhance registration process efficiencies.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

J&K Assembly Seeks

spending since 2009. This led to a heated exchange between the benches, with verbal duels and disruptions halting proceedings for a while. NC MLA Tanvir Sadiq reiterated the call for a probe, questioning who approved the expenditure and for whom. Congress's Nizamuddin Bhat emphasized the need to uphold the Assembly's sanctity, stating that the allegations must be verified through an official committee. BJP's Pawan Gupta, however, demanded that the accusations be backed by evidence, arguing that the House should not entertain baseless claims. In response, Independent MLAs Shabir Ahmed and Mehraj Malik walked to the Speaker's podium, presenting documents they claimed as proof. PDP's Fayaz Mir also weighed in, supporting the demand for a house committee, emphasizing that the issue involved state guests, including G20 delegates. As the debate grew more intense, Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather intervened, urging members to maintain decorum. He assured that the Chief Minister would address the concerns in his reply to the grants discussion. "The chief minister is still here. He will address them during his reply on the grants. The concerns will be addressed," he said.

Centre Constructing

areas, and food courts. Out of 700+ planned WSAs, 393 have been awarded, with 94 currently operational, it said. (KNO)

J&K Assembly Passes

Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRRR). The grants were passed following three days of extensive discussions in the House.

CM Omar Abdullah began his speech with a Kashmiri proverb: "Vandi txalli, sheen galie, bai yee bahaar" (Winter will pass, the snow will melt, and spring will come again). Responding to discussions on the Demands for Grants, the Chief Minister acknowledged concerns raised by members and emphasized the government's commitment to transparency and accountability. "Some honorable members felt that I was too pessimistic in my previous speeches. So today, I decided to start differently. We are not afraid of discussions. We do not shy away from difficult questions. We answer them openly, no matter how tough these are."

Addressing remarks made by an opposition member comparing his political strategies to cricket, the Chief Minister said: "A smart player adapts to the game. I was bowling pace when conditions favored it; now, I am bowling spin. But I have not changed the game—I remain committed to my responsibilities."

On Equality and Legal Changes The Chief Minister also addressed concerns regarding legal changes in Jammu and Kashmir. "Five years ago, we spoke of equality. Today, we are still demanding it. Ask yourself—are we truly equal to other states? The reality speaks for itself." He refuted allegations that his government had disrespected the legacy of Maharaja Hari Singh.

"The laws governing state subjects were not altered by us but by others. Before 2019, you practiced under the Ranbir Penal Code, named after Maharaja Ranbir Singh. Today, you follow a different law. Who, then, changed history?" On Economic Development and Employment The Chief Minister highlighted economic disparities and employment challenges, particularly for local youth. "If four people from Haryana can work here, then ensure the same opportunities exist for our people in Haryana, Himachal and beyond. Setting up industries in Himachal is difficult due to strict local policies. In contrast, we have no such restrictions.

He assured that new infrastructure projects would be undertaken with comprehensive planning and strict adherence to Detailed Project Reports (DPRs).

Aviation & Mismanagement of State Aircraft Responding to queries regarding government spending on chartered planes, the Chief Minister stated that 15 crores were spent over three years.

Expressing concern over the mismanagement of the state aircraft, he criticized its prolonged neglect, saying, "The plane purchased with taxpayers' money was left abandoned at

Urban Development and Infrastructure Speaking on urban infrastructure, the Chief Minister acknowledged shortcomings in Smart City projects. "We built footpaths, yet people still walk on roads. We created cycle tracks, but motorcycles now occupy them. We constructed multi-level parking facilities, yet vehicles remain parked on the streets. Infrastructure alone is not enough; we need a collective shift in mindset."

He also stressed the importance of decongesting cities through planned residential townships. "We are not settling outsiders. When your government spoke of New Srinagar and New Jammu, no one objected. Our goal remains the same—to develop new residential areas and prevent urban decay."

Disaster Management and Cultural Preservation Regarding disaster management and relief efforts, the Chief Minister reassured members about the government's commitment to providing proper rehabilitation and housing for displaced communities.

On cultural preservation, he highlighted ongoing restoration efforts at 33 heritage sites across Jammu and Kashmir, with a budget of 65 crore. Future plans include restoring 73 additional sites with an estimated cost of 170 crore. "Heritage defines our identity. Projects like the Mubarak Mandi restoration must be completed soon. We cannot let history fade."

The Chief Minister reiterated the need for efficient governance and accountability in planning and finance. "The Planning Department's role is crucial. It is not just about drafting policies but ensuring their execution. We must reconsider the decision to merge planning with finance and restore its independent role."

Hospitality, Protocol & State Infrastructure The Chief Minister emphasized that government expenditure on state guests is a common practice and has been followed by previous governments as well. While he refrained from detailing the exact spending, he assured the House that steps are being taken to utilize existing assets effectively.

Addressing concerns about lost properties after the reorganization of J&K and Ladakh, he stated, "The properties that are gone cannot be reclaimed, but we must make the best use of those that remain."

He highlighted ongoing efforts to convert the structure in Sector 17, Chandigarh, into a state guest house, which will cost approximately 13 crores and cater to patients, students, and public representatives. He reiterated the importance of vertical expansion due to space constraints, drawing parallels with Motibagh in Delhi, and assured the House that alternative accommodations for government officials are being planned.

Government Accommodation & Discipline in Allotment

The Chief Minister acknowledged the acute shortage of government accommodations, forcing many MLAs and ministers to seek private housing or live below their entitlement. At the same time, he pointed out the issue of unauthorized occupation, stating, "There are individuals who exceed their entitlement, and some who have no entitlement yet refuse to vacate. We are working towards enforcing discipline in this regard."

He assured that new infrastructure projects would be undertaken with comprehensive planning and strict adherence to Detailed Project Reports (DPRs).

Aviation & Mismanagement of State Aircraft Responding to queries regarding government spending on chartered planes, the Chief Minister stated that 15 crores were spent over three years.

Expressing concern over the mismanagement of the state aircraft, he criticized its prolonged neglect, saying, "The plane purchased with taxpayers' money was left abandoned at

Jammu Airport for five years, exposed to the vagaries of weather. This was an unnecessary and avoidable waste." He lamented the uncertainty over the cost of restoring the aircraft to make it airworthy and stressed that better management of public assets is crucial.

Tourism Development & Infrastructure Expansion

The Chief Minister highlighted the need for robust tourism infrastructure to fully exploit J&K's tourism potential. He noted that many MLAs had requested gondolas for their constituencies but clarified, "Building a gondola does not guarantee tourists will come. We need comprehensive infrastructure development."

He emphasized the importance of promoting pilgrim tourism in Jammu and proposed creating religious tourism circuits to enhance connectivity between different pilgrimage sites.

He invited MLAs to provide insights on their local religious sites to facilitate this development. He also acknowledged the suggestion of developing agri-tourism, particularly in regions known for Basmati rice cultivation, and assured collaboration on this front.

Media Advertisements & Transparency Addressing concerns regarding the distribution of government advertisements, the Chief Minister assured transparency and fairness.

He stated, "Newspapers that rely solely on government ads cannot function as independent media. While we will support media houses, we must discourage mushrooming of newspapers that exist only to publish government press releases."

He also declared that the Srinagar Press Club would be re-established and a fair election would be held to elect its members. He emphasized the need for a unified institution, stating that journalists would be responsible for forming a managing committee to oversee its functioning.

Power Amnesty & Consumer Responsibility Regarding power amnesty, the Chief Minister announced the extension of the amnesty scheme but stressed that frequent waivers are unfair to those who pay their bills on time.

He said, "We have given amnesty multiple times, but we must not continue this indefinitely. It is unfair to those who pay regularly."

He proposed a new scheme that would offer incentives on outstanding dues in proportion to future payments, encouraging a culture of timely bill payments. He also reiterated the importance of metering to improve revenue collection and reduce losses.

Legislators' Salaries & MLA CDF The Chief Minister addressed concerns over MLAs' salaries, noting that it had not been revised in ten years. He suggested forming a committee comprising leaders of political parties to implement a structured salary revision mechanism based on the parliamentary model. He also proposed aligning the CDF guidelines with the MPLADS framework for better fund utilization. While acknowledging the demand for an increase in CDF allocations, he stated that a reasonable enhancement crore would be considered to increase it from Rs 3 to Rs 4 crore for each MLA.

e-Governance & Judicial Reforms

The Chief Minister commended the successful implementation and functioning of e-office, which has improved efficiency and transparency in government processes. He highlighted efforts to integrate video conferencing in High Court proceedings, ensuring that virtual hearings remain a permanent feature.

The Chief Minister expressed gratitude to the legislators for their valuable contributions during the discussions. He assured that their concerns had been noted and would be addressed appropriately. He also requested the withdrawal of cut motions, which was subsequently agreed upon by the House.

The cut motions on Demands for Grants

were withdrawn by MLAs. More than 50 legislators took part in the debates.

CM Slams LoP's

but they get angry when any other member speaks about their religion. It is better to avoid talking about something which hurts the religious feelings of others," the chief minister said.

He was responding to a question about senior BJP leader and Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma using the term "legislative Jihad" to provide protection to alleged illegal encroachers during his speech.

"Every individual has a religious feeling and the BJP leaders were angry (in the House) because one member probably made some wrong statement which he should not have done. But what LoP wants to convey by using the word 'Jihad' repeatedly is that Muslims do not know anything except Jihad. This is also wrong," Abdullah said.

The Assembly witnessed noisy scenes on Thursday when several BJP members repeatedly charged towards the treasury benches to take on AAP legislator Mehraj Malik, accusing him of using derogatory words against Hindus and also disrupting the speeches of the opposition members in the House.

Malik said his remarks that some Hindus consume liquor during their parties and festivals were taken out of proportion as he was trying to condemn the opening of more liquor shops in the city over the past five years.

On LoP's remarks that people from Haryana are welcome in J&K, the chief minister said he had no objection if he settled them at his home in Kishtwar.

On the alleged suicide by BJP leader and former independent MLA from Gurez, Faqeer Mohammad Khan in Srinagar, the chief minister termed it as "very unfortunate" and said they do not know what led him to take such an extreme step.

"I informed the House about this (incident). He probably used the rifle of his PSO (personal security officer). Along with his family, I condole his death and pray for his soul. We do not know what led him to take such an extreme step but we have full sympathy with them," Abdullah said.

Ex-MLA Gurez

unsuccessfully contested the assembly polls on the party ticket last year.

Police, in a statement, said it has taken cognizance of the incident and launched legal proceedings.

"An incident of firearm discharge was reported today in the Tulsibagh area of Srinagar, resulting in the death of former legislator Faqeer Mohammad Khan, son of Jumma Khan, a resident of Gurez. Police have taken cognizance of the matter, and legal proceedings under section 194 of the BNSS have been initiated at Police Station Shergarhi," Srinagar Police said in a statement.

Initial findings suggest the incident to be a case of suicide. Further investigation is ongoing, considering all aspects, it added.

Legislative Assembly Mourns Demise The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly mourned the demise of former Legislator and BJP Leader, Faqeer Mohammad Khan.

Speaker Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, while remembering the legislator, prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and forbearance for the family to bear this irreparable loss.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed grief over the death of the former MLA.

"Deeply saddened by the passing of former legislator Faqeer Mohammad Khan. He was a true grassroots leader. My heartfelt condolences to his family. May his soul rest in peace. The House observed a two-minute silence in

his honour," Abdullah posted from the official X handle of J&K Chief Minister.

Leader of Opposition, Sunil Sharma and MLA Gurez, Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurezi) also expressed deep grief over the shocking demise of Faqeer Mohammad Khan.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also condoled the demise of former Member of Legislative Assembly Faqeer Mohammad Khan.

"Faqeer Mohammad Khan's contribution to the development of Gurez is immense and he touched and improved thousands of lives. On this extremely sad occasion, I extend my deepest condolences to his family, friends and followers. I pray for his soul," the LG said.

J&K Govt Plans

ensure timely recruitment.

Providing an update on key vacancies, Abdullah informed the Assembly that 150 Junior Engineer (Civil) posts have been referred to JKSSB for selection and that once the Cadre Schedule for Engineering Gazetted and Subordinate Services is finalized, the remaining engineering vacancies will also be sent for recruitment. He said that 150 Gazetted vacancies, including those for Assistant Professors, Librarians, and Physical Training Instructors in Higher Education, are under process for referral. Out of 840 vacancies referred, 476 have already been filled, while 364 are in the final stages of selection. In addition, 116 Non-Gazetted vacancies in Higher Education have been forwarded to the Finance Department for concurrence before referral.

Abdullah added that 56 Gazetted and 660 Non-Gazetted vacancies in Health and Medical Education have been referred for selection. He said that 597 Lecturer posts across 27 disciplines in the School Education Department were referred to JKPSB between November 2024 and January 2025. He further stated that all Administrative Departments have been directed to refer available vacancies to recruiting agencies without delays.

On the issue of regularizing daily wagers, the Chief Minister said the government has announced a high-level committee, headed by the Chief Secretary, to examine humanitarian, legal, and financial aspects related to the regularization of casual, seasonal, and other workers. He reiterated that the committee will propose a comprehensive policy for their regularization.

Highlighting key recruitment reforms, Abdullah said the J&K government extended the deadline for notifying recruitment rules by six months in November 2024. He explained that this decision, taken through executive orders, aims to resolve delays in formulating recruitment policies and ensure timely hiring for critical government positions. Furthermore, he noted that the JKSSB's mandate has been expanded to oversee Non-Gazetted recruitment in public sector undertakings, government companies, boards, and other state-controlled entities to streamline the hiring process. (With inputs from KNO)

No 'Pick And

move towards financial independence while reiterating the government's support in strengthening the media industry. He stressed that self-reliance is crucial for maintaining journalistic integrity.

Addressing concerns about accreditation delays, the Chief Minister directed the information department to speed up application reviews. He assured that applicants would be given opportunities to correct discrepancies rather than facing outright rejection.

On the issue of press clubs, Abdullah acknowledged the smooth functioning of the Jammu Press Club but noted that Srinagar's press body had become politicized, leading to its closure and the formation of a parallel club. To resolve the issue, he proposed that Kashmiri journalists hold elections to establish a legitimate press club.



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Team India To Get Rs 58 Crore Reward From BCCI For CT Victory

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The BCCI on Thursday announced a cash reward of Rs 58 crore for the Indian cricket team that won the ICC Champions Trophy earlier this month in Dubai.

The Rohit Sharma-led India defeated New Zealand by four wickets in the final to grab their third Champions Trophy title.

The financial windfall will cover the players, coaching and support staff and members of the men's selection committee headed by Ajit Agarkar. The Board did not give a break-up of the reward in its statement.

"Winning back-to-back ICC titles is special and this reward recognises Team India's dedication and excellence on the global stage," said BCCI president Roger Binny in a release.

Binny said the Champions Trophy triumph is a testament to India's strong cricketing eco-system.

"This was also our second ICC Trophy in 2025, following the



ICC U19 Women's World Cup triumph and it highlights the strong cricketing ecosystem in place in our country," he said.

In fact, it was India's third ICC trophy in the last eight months as they had won the last year's T20 World Cup, beating South

Africa in the final.

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said the victory justified India's top-ranking in white ball formats.

India dominated the Champions Trophy from the start, registering four commanding victories en route to the final.

India began their campaign with a solid six-wicket win over Bangladesh, then secured a convincing six-wicket triumph against Pakistan.

They continued their momentum with a 44-run victory over New Zealand before over-

coming Australia by four wickets in the semifinal.

"The dedication and commitment shown by the players have set a new benchmark, and we are confident that Indian cricket will keep raising the bar on the global stage," Saikia said.

BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla said Indian players displayed excellent composure under pressure during the ICC marquee event.

"The players exhibited remarkable composure under pressure, and their success is an inspiration to aspiring cricketers across the country.

"The team has once again proved that Indian cricket is built on a strong foundation of skill, mental toughness, and a winning mentality," he said.

Prabtej Bhatia, the BCCI treasurer, and joint secretary Rohan Gauns Desai too lauded the team and said the governing body will continue to work towards strengthening the cricketing infrastructure in the country.

BCCI Lifts Saliva Ban In IPL After Getting Captains' Thumbs Up

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The BCCI on Thursday lifted the ban on use of saliva on the ball in the upcoming Indian Premier League after a majority of captains agreed to its proposal, making it the first major cricket competition to do away with the restriction that was a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision was taken at the captains' meeting in Mumbai ahead of the league starting on Saturday.

"The saliva ban has been lifted. Majority of captains were in favour of the move. Some had reservations about the re-introduction, some sat on the fence but majority of them supported the move," a top BCCI official told PTI.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) had banned the age-old practice of applying saliva to shine the ball as a precautionary measure during the COVID-19 pandemic,

during which health practitioners advocated strict hygiene protocols and physical distancing.

In 2022, the world body made the ban permanent.

The IPL too included the ICC ban in its playing conditions in the aftermath of the pandemic but its guidelines are outside the purview of the sport's governing body.

With the development on Thursday, the IPL became the first major cricketing event to re-introduce saliva's use after the pandemic.

The captains meeting, which was scheduled to begin at 12.30 pm in Mumbai, did not start on time due to a delay in arrival of a few team officials at the BCCI office.

Now that the ban is revoked in the IPL, the ICC too might review its stance on the subject.

On the sidelines of the ICC Champions Trophy, senior India pacer Mohammed Shami had spoken about the need to

use saliva on the ball in what has become a predominantly batters' game.

The likes of Vernon Philander and Tim Southee had backed Shami's call.

"We keep appealing that we should be allowed to use saliva so that we can bring reverse swing back into the game and it becomes interesting," Shami had said during the 50-over event in Dubai, where India emerged victorious.

Also on the agenda of captains' meeting was the contentious Impact Player rule which the BCCI had already extended till at least 2027.

The likes of Rohit Sharma and more recently Hardik Pandya have expressed their reservations on the playing strategy.

"While a few have raised objections on the Impact Player rule, it has benefitted uncapped batters and bowlers who otherwise won't get to play," the official said.

PCB To Be Richer By \$10 Million After Hosting CT



Press Trust of India

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday claimed that it is set to earn approximately USD 10 million as profit by hosting the Champions Trophy, where the Indian team emerged champion.

PCB spokesperson, Aamir Mir and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Javed Murtaza addressed media following reports that Board had suffered financial losses by hosting the ODI tournament and spending enormous amounts on upgrading stadiums in Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi for the event.

"All expenses for the tournament were covered by the ICC," Mir said adding that the PCB generated revenue through gate money and ticket sales.

"Additionally, after the audit, we expect to receive another Rs 3 billion from the ICC," he added.

He also claimed that PCB had initially targeted Rs 2 billion in earnings from the Champions Trophy, but they surpassed this goal.

He also claimed that the PCB's total revenue for the 2023-24 fiscal year reached Rs 10 billion—a 40% increase from the previous year.

"With this financial strength, PCB now ranks among the top three richest cricket boards in the world," Mir said.

"The board has also paid Rs 40 million in taxes," he added.

Murtaza added that PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi played a key role in revising the fiscal targets, showing active involvement in improving the board's financial performance.

He said that the PCB had several financial investments and that the budget for stadium upgrades was set at Rs 18 billion.

For Phase one of the project, Rs 12 billion was allocated, and Rs 10.5 billion has already been spent, he said.

"The remaining funds will be used to further improve these and other stadiums, including those in Karachi, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi," said Murtaza.

The CFO said that the PCB had completed major renovations in just four months, ensuring that venues now meet international standards.

Talking about the reduction in salaries of domestic men's and women's players, Mir said Chairman Naqvi had reversed the decision to cut their salaries.

Regarding the PCB's absence from the final stages of the ICC Champions Trophy, the officials said they are still awaiting a full explanation from the ICC.

Murtaza said very soon the PCB would make available all its financial details relating to the Champions Trophy on the Board's official website for transparency.



England Must Shed Fear Of Losing, Says New Coach Tuchel

Agencies

LONDON: For the fans who grimaced their way through England's run to the Euro 2024 final, new head coach Thomas Tuchel's pledge on Thursday that his team will focus on the joy of winning and not the fear of losing will be music to their ears.

German Tuchel takes charge of his first game on Friday as England host Albania at Wembley in their opening World Cup qualifier -- the first step in a journey the Football Association hope will lead to glory in the United States.

England reached their second successive European Championship final last year in Germany but it was anything but a barnstorming run with timid displays against the likes of Denmark, Slovenia and Slovakia.

Tuchel was reminded about comments he made while working as a pundit at Euro 2024 in which he said Gareth Southgate's England were shackled by pressure.

"It was my feeling, was my feedback in front of TV long before I thought I would be in charge," the former Chelsea manager told reporters before taking



the final training session at Tottenham Hotspur's training ground.

"I think it has to be the other way around. I want us to play with excitement and hunger and the desire to win and the joy to win and the acceptance of failure is part of it.

"I want players to feel safe to express themselves and play with joy to win, not the fear to lose."

Asked if the England shirt weighed heavily on a squad full of regular trophy winners, a relaxed Tuchel injected humour, displaying his linguistic expertise.

"I heard that it's a heavy shirt, but it's in fact not, it's a high quality shirt that will weight less when we come to America that adapts to the climate there," he said.

From Ronaldo To Hamilton, Sport's Elite Defy Their Age

Agencies

LONDON: Cristiano Ronaldo was 40 last month and is top scorer in Saudi soccer's top flight. Lewis Hamilton hit the same age in January and is after an eighth Formula One title. LeBron James, also recently 40, is the first NBA player to score 50,000 combined points.

They are big name examples of the growing multitude of modern sportspeople performing at remarkable levels at an age when in yesteryear they would probably be long retired.

Experts attribute the growing longevity in elite sport to a host of steadily-evolving conditions: from improved diet and mental wellbeing to better recovery and training facilities.

"A whole constellation of factors ... it's like pouring gasoline," Canadian performance nutritionist Dr Marc Bubbs, author of "Peak" about science in sport, told Reuters of the additional factors fueling top performance.

In his field - nutrition - athletes are far more thoughtful about what they eat, some hiring chefs to prepare tailored meals, others like Hamilton embracing high-fibre, plant-based diets. "They should be getting injured more, but they aren't," added Bubbs of the improved health for older competitors.

In Europe's top five soccer leagues, the number of over-35 players topped 100 for the first time in 2020 and has been there for all but one of the following years, according to database Transfermarkt. By contrast, in 1980, there were only 12 men of that age playing in those elite leagues.

In tennis, the trio of Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer famously dominated their sport into ages that would previously have been considered prime.

Still at it aged 37, Djokovic attests to the advances in nutritional science after switching to a gluten-free



diet mid-career. "Suddenly there was an X factor, a change in my diet that allowed my body to perform the way it was meant to," he wrote in his book "Serve to Win".

MONEY MOTIVATES

The ATP men's singles top 100 currently has more than 10 over-30s, with five of them over-35 whereas over in 1995 there were six over-30s.

In women's tennis too, 19 of the top 100 WTA singles rankings are 30-plus, with the oldest, Tatjana Maria and Laura Siegemund, both 37. Back in

Short TAKES

KKR-LSG Clash On April 6 Set To Be Shifted To Guwahati

Kolkata Knight Riders' home game against Lucknow Super Giants on April 6 is set to be shifted to Guwahati as police has expressed its inability to provide security for the IPL contest due to 'Ram Navami' celebrations in the city on the day, CAB president Snehasish Ganguly told PTI on Thursday.

BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari had announced that over 20,000 processions are being organised across West Bengal to celebrate the festival.

"We have informed the BCCI to reschedule the match, but there is no scope for rescheduling the game in the city later and I'm now hearing that it's going to be shifted to Guwahati," Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) President Ganguly told PTI.

The clash between KKR and LSG, owned by RPSG Group chairman Sanjiv Goenka, was expected to draw a packed house, with both teams boasting strong local support.

An official statement from the IPL however is yet to arrive.

In season 2024 also, the IPL fixture between KKR and Rajasthan Royals had to be rescheduled due to lack of security arrangements on Ram Navami.

IPL 2025: DRS Extended To Review Height And Off-Side Wides

The BCCI on Thursday approved the use of DRS for height wides and wides outside the off-stump.

"Hawk eye and ball tracking will be used to decide on the height wides and wides outside the off-stump," the official added.

It was also decided that one ball will be changed in the second innings of an evening game after the 11th over due to dew.

"This is not a rule change, it's just an understanding for this year between teams and umpires. The changed ball will have wear and tear," an official said.

No Match Bans For IPL Captains For Over-Rate Offences

Captains in the Indian Premier League will not be banned for over-rate offences and instead will be docked demerit points.

The call was taken at the captains' meeting in Mumbai on Thursday.

The move comes after Hardik Pandya and Rishabh Pant, captaining Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals respectively, were handed a one match ban for the team's third over-rate offence in the 2024 edition.

Hardik will be serving that ban in the 2025 edition by missing the first game against CSK.

"A Level 1 offence will lead to deduction of 25 to 75 percent match fees with demerit points which will be calculated for next three years. Level 2 offence if serious will result in four demerit points.

"For every four demerit points accumulated, the match referee can impose a penalty, either in the form of a 100 percent fine or additional demerit points. These demerit points could convert into a match ban in the future but for slow overrate there won't be a match ban," said a BCCI source.

Chelsea Splash \$80 Million On Pair From Sporting Portugal

Chelsea is spending more than 74 millions euros (\$80 million) on two youngsters from Sporting Portugal, continuing its strategy of building a squad around highly rated promising players.

The Portuguese team said late Wednesday that it reached an agreement with the Premier League side for the transfer of Geovany Quenda and Dario Essugo.

Quenda, a 17-year-old winger, will join for just above 52 million euros.

Essugo, a 20-year-old midfielder, for a fee of more than 22 million euros.

Quenda will remain with Sporting until the end of next season. Essugo will remain on loan with Spanish club Las Palmas before heading to Stamford Bridge next season.

Essugo and Quenda are the latest youngsters to agree to join Chelsea after the London team also secured the transfers of 17-year-old Brazilian Estevao William and 17-year-old Ecuadorian Kendry Paez.

MANOJ SINHA
Lieutenant Governor,
Jammu & Kashmir



RAJ BHAVAN
JAMMU-180001/SRINAGAR-190001

MESSAGE

On this International Day of Forests, I extend my warm greetings to the people of Jammu & Kashmir. This year's theme, **"Forests and Food,"** highlights the vital role forests play in sustaining life. As Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani (Nund Reshi) wisely said: **"Ann poshiteliyeli wan poshi"** (Food will thrive only when forests thrive). Protecting our forests is essential for a sustainable and food-secure future.

Jammu & Kashmir has recorded an increase of 91.25 sq.km in forest cover, as per the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023. The report shows that the forests of the J&K have best health indicators having highest per capita growing stock in the country among the States & Union Territories, thanks to initiatives like the Green J&K Drive, community-led afforestation, and effective conservation measures.

The government is also committed to social justice through Forest Rights Act (FRA) implementation. Government is working to further streamline the implementation of the act and ensure its benefits flow to all deserving members of the tribal community. The government is also committed to strengthening forest-based livelihoods through implementation of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) Policy, promoting the sustainable use of wild edibles, medicinal plants, and other forest produce. The policy aims at democratization of the NTFP collection through locals and benefitting the people living in forest fringe villages. Such initiatives are important to develop green jobs and to have a sustainable economy in this eco-sensitive region.

I urge upon all the citizens to join hands with Forest Department in protecting our forests, planting and nurturing trees, use forest resources responsibly, and support conservation efforts.

Manoj Sinha
Manoj Sinha

Omar Abdullah
Chief Minister
Jammu & Kashmir



MESSAGE

The International Day of Forests, observed on March 21st every year, is a global initiative aimed at raising awareness about the vital role forests play in maintaining health of our planet and supporting the well-being of all living beings. In 2025, the theme of this day is **"Forests and Food"**, which highlights the importance of forests in ensuring food security.

Jammu & Kashmir is home to the most diverse range of forest types in India, making it an important region for understanding the significant contributions forests make to local communities. These forests are a vital source of livelihood, providing essential resources to the people living near them. The forests also serve as habitats for biodiversity, including pollinators that are crucial for our agriculture and horticulture productivity.

The celebration of the International Day of Forests emphasizes the need to raise awareness about the importance of forests in sustaining human life and their role in combating hunger and malnutrition. Forests not only provide food directly but also support agriculture by improving soil fertility and retaining water.

As we mark this special day, let's take a moment to appreciate and protect our forests. Whether its planting a tree, supporting conservation efforts or simply spreading awareness, every action counts toward preserving these precious eco-systems for generations to come.

Omar Abdullah
Omar Abdullah

Javed A. Rana
Minister for Jal Shakti,
Forest Ecology & Environment
& Tribal Affairs Department, J&K



MESSAGE

As we celebrate International Day of Forests on 21st March, I wish all the citizens of our Jammu & Kashmir my warmest greetings. This year's theme **"Forests and Food,"** puts into focus the critical relationship between our forest ecosystems and food security, nutrition and sustainable livelihoods. Our revered saint Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani (Nund Reshi) centuries ago gave this advice to us through his verse **"Ann poshiteliyeli wan poshi"**, which means Food will thrive only when forests thrive. Thus, protection and conservation of forests is essential for sustainable and food-secure future.

In Jammu & Kashmir, we have 20,194 sq. km. recorded forest area which is about 48% of our geographical area. As per the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023, released by Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, Jammu & Kashmir has recorded an increase of 91.25 sq.km in forest cover. The report also shows that the forests of the J&K are having highest per capita growing stock as well as per hectare carbon stock in the country when compared to other States & UTs. The department is approaching 15 million planting target during 2025-26.

The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has already enunciated Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) Policy, 2022 which aims to promote the sustainable use of wild edibles, medicinal plants, and other forest produce. The policy has benefited 1350 families in 2022-23 accruing Rs. 540 lacs income to them and during 2023-24 benefitted 2218 families accruing Rs. 1160 lacs income to them.

We must pledge to protect and restore our forests not just as landscapes, but as life-giving ecosystems that provide food, sustenance, and resilience for generations to come.

Javed A. Rana
Javed A. Rana

Atal Dulloo, IAS
Chief Secretary
Jammu & Kashmir



MESSAGE

On the occasion of International Day of Forests, we recommit ourselves to conserving and augmenting the bountiful forest legacy of Jammu & Kashmir, a land famous for its varied flora, dense forests and critical ecosystems. Trees are not only a reflection of natural splendor but a pillar of environmental sustainability, conservation of biodiversity and climate resilience.

Jammu & Kashmir is endowed with approximately 48% of geographical area as recorded forest land. I am pleased to share the encouraging findings from the FSI's latest India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2023 with respect to Jammu & Kashmir. The report reveals an increase of 91.25 sq.km in the forest and tree cover of the Union Territory vis a vis ISFR 2021. The forests of Jammu & Kashmir have highest per ha growing stock at 296.22 m³, which is highest among all the States and UTs of our country.

Jammu & Kashmir Government is working aggressively on afforestation initiatives such as the Green J&K Drive, resulting in the plantation of millions of saplings in urban and rural areas. Such interventions in line with India's efforts towards fighting climate change and increasing carbon sinks demonstrate our shared commitment to sustainable growth. Initiatives to set up Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) and practices of agroforestry and urban greening reinforce our shared commitment to sustainable development.

On this day, I appeal to citizens, students, green activists and stakeholders to come together and plant trees, conserve our forests and foster a greener, healthier Jammu & Kashmir in spirit to this year's theme i.e., **"Forests and Food."**

Atal Dulloo
Atal Dulloo

Sheetal Nanda, IAS
Commissioner Secretary
Department of Forest, Ecology
& Environment, Jammu & Kashmir



MESSAGE

The essence of Jammu and Kashmir lies in its majestic Forests, which shape its landscape, culture and economy. Forests are home to a wide variety of plants, animals, insects and micro-organisms. They act as massive carbon sinks, storing vast amount of carbon dioxide which helps mitigate climate change. Forests help to regulate water cycle, prevent soil erosion and ensure clean water supply.

The International Day of Forests, being observed on 21st March, 2025 with the theme **"Forests and Food"** offers an opportunity to realize their indispensable role in sustaining life and livelihoods. Jammu & Kashmir is having 48% of its geographical area as recorded forest land. J&K has notified its Forest Policy in 2011 and Non Timber Forest Produce Policy in 2022. Under the campaign "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam", J&K is going to achieve its plantation target of 15 million during 2025-26. Plantation closures raised by Forest Department, besides augmenting green cover, also provide livelihood to locals by supplementing their fodder, fuel wood and Minor Forest Produce needs.

Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department remains committed to protecting and managing these forests sustainably, ensuring they continue to support communities and ecosystems. Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department is also committed to strengthen and promote the implementation of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) policy to encourage the sustainable collection and use of wild edible mushrooms, medicinal plants and other forest produce.

Today on the International Day of Forests, let us all pledge to conserve and restore our forests - for a greener, healthier and more resilient Jammu and Kashmir.

"Each tree we plant today is an investment for the health of future generations".

Sheetal Nanda
Sheetal Nanda

Suresh K. Gupta IFS
PCCF & HOFF
J & K Forest Department



MESSAGE

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir is rich in forest resources with 20194 sq. km. recorded forest land and 42 forest types. India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2023 shows that J&K has 54% forest, tree cover and meadows and average growing stock per ha. in J&K forests is highest in the country. The report also shows that J&K forests have 174.10 tons of carbon stock per ha. which is also highest in the country.

J&K Forest Department has taken several initiatives for protection and conservation of forest resources. Under Green J&K Drive plantation activities continue through out the year with active involvement of all sections of society. Under the campaign "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam", the department is going to achieve plantation target of 150 lakh this year. Department is also working on promoting ecotourism by way of developing trek routes, Biodiversity Parks and Eco Parks. 93 Trek Routes, 05 Biodiversity Parks/Eco Parks have been made operational and 40 Nagar Vans are being established under Nagar Van Yojna of Government of India.

The Jammu & Kashmir Policy for Sustainable Collection and Utilization of NTFP in J&K, 2022, is proving very useful towards livelihood improvement. The policy has resulted in establishment of 68 NTFP depots, accrual of about Rs. 17.00 crores income to NTFP collectors during last two years and deposition of about Rs. 53 lacs into the accounts of local Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs).

On March 21st, 2025, we stand with the word in celebrating the International Day of Forests, embracing this year's theme "Forests and Food".

Suresh K. Gupta
Suresh K. Gupta

Dated: 20.03.2025
DIPK-13277/24

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