

HC Stays Rs 16K Cr GST Demand Against J&K Bank

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has stayed the recovery of a Rs 16,261 crore demand and penalty under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime issued against Jammu & Kashmir Bank.

The interim relief was granted after the bank filed a writ petition challenging the demand notice issued by the Additional cum Joint Commissioner, Central GST.

Represented by Advocate Tasaduq H Khawaja, the petitioner bank argued that the demand arose from a misinterpretation of its internal financial practices. The bank stated that it functions as a single legal entity registered under both the Central GST and the J&K GST Acts, with all its operations monitored by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The bank's counsel submitted

that the funds moved between its branches and corporate office under a Transfer Pricing Mechanism (TPM) represent internal accounting measures and do not constitute taxable transactions.

According to the petition, the bank collects deposits through its branches and allocates those funds for lending within the same structure. It earns interest on loans and pays interest to depositors. These internal fund transfers are not carried out as services between distinct entities and do not meet the criteria for GST applicability.

The petition maintained that the funds involved in such transfers are not defined as goods or services under the GST Act, and the interest earned is exempt from tax. The bank further said it has consistently filed GST returns showing nil liability on [More on P6](#)



Quiet hustle: A woman vendor waits for customers at her vegetable stall in Srinagar. KO Photo By Faisal Khan

Terrorist Killed In Kishtwar Encounter

Observer News Service

Jammu: One terrorist was killed Friday in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, army officials said.

They said the encounter broke out during an intelligence-based search and destroy operation launched jointly by the Army and the Jammu and Kashmir Police in the Chhatru forest area in Kishtwar district.

During the operation, the forces managed to establish contact with the terrorists. "The terrorists were effectively engaged and firefight ensued. One terrorist has thus far been neutralised," the Army's White Knight Corps, or 16 Corps, said in a post on X.

"Despite a hostile terrain and adverse weather, relentless operations by our brave soldiers continues," he said.

According to Shridhar Patil, Deputy Inspector General Kishtwar [More on P6](#)

Another Group Dissociates From Hurriyat: Shah

» '12 Organizations Have Renounced Separatism Till Now'

» Calls Move Victory Of PM's Vision For Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Another constituent of separatist amalgam Hurriyat Conference, Jammu and Kashmir Mass Movement, has rejected secessionism and declared complete commitment to the unity of the country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced on Friday.

He said with this, as many as 12 Hurriyat-linked



organisations in Jammu and Kashmir have broken off from separatism, resting trust in the Constitution.

"Under the Modi gov't the spirit of unity rules J&K. Another Hurriyat affiliate organisation, Jammu and Kashmir Mass Movement, has rejected separatism, declaring complete commitment to the unity of Bharat. I sincerely welcome their [More on P6](#)

Rs 55 Lakh Loan Irregularities

ACB Books Ex-MD J&K Cooperative Housing Corp

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Friday registered a case against Brij Bhushan Sharma, former managing director of Jammu and Kashmir Cooperative Housing Corporation Limited, and others in connection with alleged financial irregularities.

A case has been registered under the Prevention of Corruption Act and criminal conspiracy in Jammu, an ACB spokesperson said. "Others

named in the case include Sewa Ram, then in-charge of the Accounts Section, and Bharat Bhushan, another former MD of the corporation," he added.

According to the ACB, the case was registered following a verification which revealed that Sharma, who retired on June 30, 2006, had obtained a total loan of Rs 23 lakh from the corporation allegedly without due approval, mortgage, or supplementary documentation, thereby [More on P6](#)



NC Moves SC Against Waqf Act

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir's ruling National Conference (NC) on Friday said it has filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the recent amendments to the Waqf Act.

The party first announced its decision to

challenge the Act, which it termed a constitutionally "alarming interference" in the religious affairs of the Muslim community, on Wednesday. The same day, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah defended protests by NC MLAs in the legislative assembly against the Act, saying



[More on P6](#)

PDP's Protest Blocked By Police

Police here on Friday prevented a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) march against the passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, barricading the party office and restricting the protestors within the premises. Led by party general secretary Khurshid Alam, scores of PDP workers had [More on P6](#)

Budgam, Nagrota Bypolls.

ECI's Special Summary Revision Picks Up Pace

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The activities of Special Summary Revision 2025 for the twin Assembly Constituencies of 27 Budgam and 77 Nagrota have gained momentum following the guidelines of Election Commission of India.

The integrated draft electoral rolls for the two constituencies

have already been published on 8th April 2025 with 1st April 2025 as the qualifying date. The period for filing claims and objections in that respect shall end on 24th April with the disposal of claims and objections by 2nd May 2025 and final publication of Electoral Rolls on 5th May 2025.

It is pertinent to mention here that the [More on P6](#)



26/11 Accused Sent To 18-Day NIA Custody

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency on Friday began an extensive interrogation of Mumbai terror attack mastermind Tahawwur Hussain Rana to uncover the "deeper layers of the conspiracy" as the probe agency told a Delhi court it suspects he had plans to target other Indian cities as well with similar large-scale strikes.

Rana, the 64-year-old Pakistani-origin Canadian



businessman, was brought to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) headquarters here early this morning shortly after a Delhi court granted the agency his [More on P6](#)

Another Wet Spell From April 18: MeT

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir witnessed rains and snowfall for the fourth straight day on Friday, while the weatherman predicted improvement in the conditions from Saturday.

The fresh spell of light snowfall was recorded in Sinthan Top, Razdan Pass, Pir ki Gali and other places, bringing down the mercury further across the Valley. The plains including [More on P6](#)

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IAPSMCON 2025 Kicks Off In City

Agencies

Srinagar: The 52nd Annual National Conference of the Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine (IAPSMCON 2025) commenced on Friday in Srinagar, drawing over 1,200 delegates from across India, including representatives from all 36 states and Union Territories.

Organised by the Department of Community Medicine, Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, the three-day conference is one of the largest medical and public health events ever hosted in Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the event, Secretary of Health and Medical Education, Syed Abid Rasheed emphasised the significance of the conference in aligning advancements in medical education with public health practices.

"This conference is a reflection of our commitment to academic excellence and innovation in public health. It offers a platform to bring together diverse voices and experiences from across the country," he said.

Dr Abid called for leveraging national-level advancements for the benefit of local medical professionals and, ultimately, patients. "Doc-

tors from Kashmir have earned global recognition, and integrating new knowledge through such forums will further enhance their capabilities," he added.

The Secretary Health further said Kashmir is evolving as a tourist hub, making the region more conducive to hosting such large-scale academic events. He hinted at more such conferences being planned in the future.

The event includes 10 plenary sessions, 20 best practice presentations, over 560 research paper presentations, and daily sessions from 9 am to 5 pm, with a valedictory session on day 3.

Experts in medicine, public health and health policy will discuss emerging challenges, innovations, and strategies in healthcare delivery and education. The conference also provides a valuable networking and learning platform for students, researchers, and practitioners.

A senior official from GMC Srinagar said, "This initiative will showcase the academic strength of J&K and bolster national-level collaborations in healthcare." The conference is expected to contribute to policy development, healthcare delivery improvement, and the integration of public health with academic medicine across India.



A local vendor arranges spring flowers and saplings for sale at Hazratbal, Srinagar. KO Photo Faisal Khan

Market Inspections Conducted To Check Quality Of Food Items

7 FBOs Found Operating In Unhygienic Condition In Hazratbal Area Penalized

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, a Food Safety Team conducted intensive inspections of various food outlets in Hazratbal area of the District.

During the inspection, some street vendors in Hazratbal market were found violating provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act. These violations included Temperature Control; High-risk food was exposed to temperature danger zones. Environmental Protection: High-risk food was not protected from environmental hazards.

At Hazratbal market about 7 FBOs were found operating in insanitary/ unhygienic condi-

tions and improper handling of High Risk foods. Accordingly challan was submitted before Adjudicating Officer (ADC) Srinagar for violating various provisions of the Food Safety Act.

The Srinagar Food Safety Team led by Assistant Commissioner, Yameen ul Nabi has been working to strengthen its intelligence network to gather information about unhygienic or misbranded food items. This initiative aims to enhance food safety enforcement in District Srinagar.

Those Food Business Operators especially dealing with High Risk food are directed to maintain high standards of sanitary and Hygiene conditions of their establishments failing which strict action un-

der FSS Act will be initiated against defaulters.

The Food Safety Team actively made food business operators aware of food safety laws. They were cautioned that strict action will be taken against violators.

Meanwhile, taking cognizance of the viral video that surfaced on social media yesterday, the Food Safety team inspected a meat shop in Hazratbal.

The shop was found to be non-operational for over 10 years, as confirmed by locals and the shopkeeper. However, the owner was discovered to be running a street vending business selling chicken, potentially storing equipment like wooden logs and knives within the shop premises.

Anant National University Ahmedabad Reaches Out To School Students

Observer News Service

Srinagar: With an aim of reaching out to school students in Kashmir and creating awareness about Design Thinking & Climate Technology the Provost (Vice Chancellor) of Anant National University Prof Anunya Chaubey conducted a series of workshops in Srinagar, Pampore and Shopian area in the last three days. Prof Chaubey on Friday interacted with the media in Srinagar. Through impactful workshops for both students and teachers and meetings with civil society actors and officials, Dr Chaubey showcased Anant National University's pioneering approach to design education, sustainability and innovation.

As part of his itinerary, Dr Chaubey led a series of hands-on workshops at

prominent schools, including Birla Open Minds International School Pampore Pulwama, NIPS Zainapora Shopian, Life School Kashmir Chararsharif, Dolphin International School Pulwama. He will be visiting WhizKids School & ML Higher Secondary School Bijbehara Anantnag on Saturday.

These sessions were aimed at inspiring students to delve into design fundamentals, cultivate innovative thinking and embrace a problem-solving mindset. The sessions also explored how design thinking integrates multiple disciplines to solve problems, highlighting design as a mega discipline that unites humanities, commerce and science. Through an interdisciplinary approach, students learnt to blend

Commissioner SMC Reviews Progress Under PMAY-U 2.0

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Commissioner SMC, Dr.Owais Ahmed Friday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban 2.0 (PMAY-U 2.0).

The meeting focused on intensifying efforts to provide 'Housing for All' and ensuring that the benefits of the scheme reach the intended urban poor

and homeless populations.

A key outcome of the discussion was the directive to conduct ward-wise intensive beneficiary identification camps across the city.

Commissioner emphasized the importance of transparency and inclusivity in the implementation process and instructed the teams to ensure proper field verification and documentation for each identi-

fied beneficiary. He also called for enhanced inter-departmental coordination and public outreach to raise awareness about the scheme.

"Every eligible person must be given the opportunity to live in a dignified and secure home. The goal of 'Housing for All' is inclusive urban development, and we must act swiftly and efficiently to achieve this target," said Dr. Owais.

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 PDD: 0194-2450213
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 2479488,2452222,2452155
 CAPD: 18001807011
 SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
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 BIJHERA: 01932-228243
 PAMPORE: 01933-294132
 PATTAN: 01954-293507
 QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
 13 Shawwal
 1446

PRAYERS

| | |
|--------|-------|
| FAJR | 4: 38 |
| ZUHR | 12:32 |
| ASR | 5: 09 |
| Magrib | 7:02 |
| ISHA | 8: 27 |

This Day In History

- 1648 - University of Harderwijk Neth solemn opens
- 1654 - Ordinance of Union between England and Scotland passed by the Council of State
- 1713 - Dutch State-Gen signs peace with France: Netherlands loses Orange Princedom
- 1770 - British parliament repeals the Townshend Revenue Acts, which had fueled opposition to British rule in colonial America
- 1776 - Halifax resolution for independence adopted by North Carolina
- 1783 - Tipu Sahib drives out British from Bednore, India
- 1869 - Hudson Bay Company cedes its territory to Canada
- 1811 - 1st US colonists on Pacific coast arrive at Cape Disappointment, Washington
- 1820 - Alexander Ypsilantis is declared leader of Filiki Eteria, a secret organization to overthrow Ottoman rule over Greece.
- 1826 - Weber's opera "Oberon" premieres in London
- 1844 - Texan envoys sign Treaty of Annexation with the United States

From KO Archives

Sumo-Borne Men Abduct, Beat Cop

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR : A traffic police constable was admitted in the hospital in a critical condition after being dropped half dead by some unidentified abductors outside the Batwara gate of the army headquarters in Badamibagh cantonment here this afternoon.

According to reports, Ghulam Muhammad, a constable in the traffic control department deployed in the Regal chowk to enforce one way movement stopped a white Sumo from proceeding in the wrong direction. At this, the unidentified persons pounced on the constable and beat him.

Watching the scuffle, some shopkeepers tried to rescue the policeman. But, the Sumo-borne men putted him in and fled away. The incident took place in broad day light at 3:45 p.m. At about 6.30 p.m. the army authorities informed the police about the constable lying at the mail gate of the BB Cantt almost half dead. However, the police refused to pick up the injured constable and instead demanded the inspector general of police or any other senior officer to go to the spot for the purpose. Eventually, it was the superintendent of police traffic, Riyaz Ahmad Bedar, who went to the BB Cantt gate and removed the constable to the SMHS hospital where the doctors attending on him said, late in the evening, that his condition was stable.

Kashmir Observer, 12 April, 2000

THE ADMINISTRATION OF UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE WARDEN
KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALYA, BURAN PATTAN
 (NEAR DAAR UL ULOOM NOOR UL HARMAIEN, GANIEPORA BURAN PATTAN - 193121)
 Email ID: kgbvganieporaburan@gmail.com Contact No.: +91-9797930490

TENDER CALL NOTICE
NOTICE No. 337/KGBV/2025, DATED: 10-04-2025

Sealed tenders are invited from the intending Dealers / Distributors / Wholesale Sellers / Manufacturers preferably having valid TIN Number, Sale Tax / GST Registration for the supply of different consumables and non-consumable items for Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), Ganiepora Buran running in Ganiepora Buran near Daar-Ul-Uloom Noor-Ul-Harmain under Pattan Block of Baramulla District, having 30 Girl Students in the age group of 11 to 16.

The envelope containing the tender form and documents should be sent by Regd. Post / Speed Post / By Hand addressed to Warden, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Ganiepora Buran Pattan - 193121 and super-scribed with "Application for supply of Consumable & Non-Consumable items for KGBV" on or before **19-04-2025 by 3:30 P.M.** The same will be opened on **22-04-2025 at 11:00 A.M.** by the ZEO Pattan & School (KGBV) Level Purchase Committee for KGBV, Ganiepora Buran at KGBV Ganiepora Buran.

The category-wise items, specification, terms and conditions can be collected from the office of the Warden, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Ganiepora Buran during official hours. Applications received after due date shall not be entertained.

The authority reserves the right to cancel any or all tender without assigning any reason thereof.

Warden - cum - Chairman,
 School (KGBV) Level Purchase Committee

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, ELECTRIC DIVISION-GANDERBAL.
 Email: Edgbl123@gmail.com Tel No. 0194-2416237 Fax No. 0194-2416237

e-TENDER ABBREVIATED NOTICE
e-NIT No. EDG/V/024 of 2025-26, dt:10.04.2025

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Electric Division-Ganderbal invites online e-bids from registered A-Class Electrical Contractors/firms for as under:

| S.No | Particulars | Estimated Cost (In Lacs) |
|------|---|--------------------------|
| i | Carriage Installation of 14No.Transformers available at site and along the Yatra track from Dumail to Holycave including erection of Substation frames and operation maintenance (Skilled persons) during the period of yatra 2025. | 37.31 |

The complete tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidder/ tenderers may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below. Bidding Documents contain Qualifying Criteria for Bidders, Specifications, Bill of Quantities, Terms and Conditions of Contract and other details.

| | | |
|-------|---|---|
| i) | Date and Time of downloading/ Sale (Start) of Tender Document | 10.04.2025; 16:00 Hrs |
| ii) | Date & Time of Download/ Sale (End) of Tender Document | 01.05.2025; 16:00 Hrs |
| iii) | Date & Time of Bid Uploading (Start/End) | 10.04.2025; 16:00 Hrs to 01.05.2025; 16:00 Hrs |
| iv) | Commercial/ Technical Bid Opening Date & Time | 02.05.2025 at 13:00 Hrs |
| v) | Financial Bid Opening | Shall be declared later on for the technically qualified bidders |
| vi) | Venue of Commercial/ Technical Bid Opening | Electronically on J&K Government e-Procurement System website http://jktenders.gov.in (Non-refundable) [Treasury Receipt/ Demand Draft] |
| vii) | Cost of e-Bid document | Rs.1000.00 (Rupees One Thousand Only) |
| viii) | Amount of Earnest Money Deposit | Rs.74,700/= (Rupees Seventy Four Thousand Seven Hundred Only) |

Sd/-
 Executive Engineer
 Electric Division Ganderbal

DIPK-NB-187/25
 dated: 11-04-2025

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-Auction Notice

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

| Catalogue No. | Auction Start | Name of work |
|---------------|------------------------|--|
| EAZR-SLR25-57 | 30/04/25 at 11:00 Hrs. | Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 11058/R1, 12904/R1 & 12926/R1. |
| EAZR-SLR25-58 | 01/05/25 at 11:00 Hrs. | Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 15212/F1, 22318/F1, 19612/F1, 14662/R1, 14662/F2, 14662/F1, 19226/R1, 12414/R1, 19416/F1 & 14504/F1. |
| EAZR-SLR25-59 | 02/05/25 at 11:00 Hrs. | Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 14606/F1, 14601/R1, 14601/F2, 14614/R1, 14601/F1, 12412/F1, 14614/F1, 20498/F1, 12474/F1 & 12032/F1. |
| EAZR-SLR25-60 | 03/05/25 at 11:00 Hrs. | Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 14508/R1, 22126/F1, 14508/F2, 12588/F1, 14654/F2, 14508/F1, 14654/R1, 14654/F1 & 22486/F1. |

For other details and registration, please visit Railway website www.ireps.gov.in

SERVING CUSTOMER WITH A SMILE 1099/2025

Table, Talks and Treatment

In terms of status, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's current position appears to echo that of Ivan Dmitritch Tchervyakov, a character from Anton Chekhov's celebrated short story.

Suhail Farooq

In a recent political development, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah was conspicuously absent from a high-level security meeting convened by Home Minister Amit Shah. This glaring omission has raised serious concerns about Delhi's defiant engagement with Kashmir representation.

The meeting's agenda revolved around the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, a region historically riddled with sensitive geopolitical dynamics. Despite its significance, the person most directly elected to represent the voices of the 1.44 crore citizens of J&K was not invited. This exclusion isn't just an administrative lapse; it's a political message.

So, are we witnessing a calculated sidelining of democratic structures in favor of bureaucratic centralism? The CM, chosen by the people in a democratic process, finds himself sidelined in critical decisions affecting the region. This creates a disturbing precedent.

Jammu and Kashmir has a unique political landscape, now more so post the abrogation of Article 370 and the reorganization of the state into a Union Territory in August 2019. Since then, the balance of power has tilted heavily in favor of the Centre. The Lieutenant Governor, appointed by the President of India, has been exercising powers that were traditionally under the domain of the elected government. One such example was seen in December last year when LG Manoj Sinha unilaterally extended the tenures of vice-chancellors of two premier universities in J&K. The decision was taken without any consultation or coordination with the Chief Minister's office. This move was widely criticized for bypassing the democratic mandate and undermining the state's higher



“Jammu and Kashmir has a unique political landscape, now more so post the abrogation of Article 370 and the reorganization of the state into a Union Territory in August 2019. Since then, the balance of power has tilted heavily in favor of the Centre

education governance.

In another striking case, the Abdullah-led government expressed dismay over the transfer of Vishesh Paul Mahajan, a JKAS officer, from a district-level posting to the tourism department in Jammu. The transfer, which fell under the Chief Minister's jurisdiction, was executed without prior consultation or approval from the CM's office.

In the backdrop of this new reality, the National Conference (NC), once critical of Delhi's approach toward the Valley, has undergone a significant ideological transformation. This political recalibration was also necessitated by electoral compulsions and the aspiration to regain relevance in a post-370 Kashmir. However, this shift in stance appears hypocritical to many. A party that once positioned itself as the defender of Kash-

mir's autonomy now seeks favor from the same establishment it once opposed.

Nevertheless, the recent exclusion of CM Omar Abdullah from the security meeting reveals that the central government continues to view the elected government with suspicion, if not with outright hostility. This undercuts the NC's attempt to bridge the ideological divide and casts a long shadow over the credibility of their political reinvention.

And in the meantime, the historic decision of August 5, 2019, which revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370, continues to haunt the region. In the first session of the new Legislative Assembly, PDP MLA Waheed Para raised these very concerns. However, instead of encouraging democratic dialogue, Para was harshly

criticized for doing so. This reaction only underscores the Centre's discomfort with open political discourse around Kashmir's altered constitutional status. Omar Abdullah, already marginalized, now appears to be a symbolic figurehead—an “unarmed soldier in the war of governance.”

But, was the exclusion of the CM from the security meeting merely an oversight? Highly unlikely. However, the fact that a meeting intended to discuss the security of Jammu and Kashmir did not include the region's Chief Minister is telling. This not only damages the prestige of the CM's office but also sends a message that local governance is secondary to central oversight. It also stokes fears among the people of Kashmir who have already experienced years of political alienation and disenfranchisement.

Having said that, the

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019 significantly altered the political architecture of the region. The Act reduced the powers of the Legislative Assembly and vested substantial authority in the LG. It allowed the Centre to retain control over key portfolios, including police, public order, and land rights. Since its implementation, several instances have highlighted the Centre's growing authority: unilateral appointments and administrative decisions without consulting the elected government; centralization of university governance and educational reforms; land law amendments allowing non-residents to purchase land in J&K, which was earlier restricted; and reorganization of district boundaries and police jurisdictions without local input.

Each of these acts points to a consistent pattern, consolidating central control while weakening local institutions. And as things stand, the prospect of restoring full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir seems uncertain. Although the Centre has made rhetorical commitments toward restoration, its actions suggest otherwise.

Should this trend continue, it is possible that the role of the Chief Minister may become largely ceremonial. The LG may continue to be the de facto head of governance, especially on matters of security, education, and land policies. Moreover, there could be an increased tendency to replace local leadership with bureaucrats.

However, this path is fraught with risks. Any further erosion of democratic structures may lead to heightened political alienation, undermining the long-term peace and stability of the region.

The author is a law scholar at Kashmir University. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.

Reporting Kashmir from Delhi

Some of the finest scribes of Kashmir are shifting bases, choosing to report from the national capital as professional sustainability becomes hard at home.

Nahida Mushtaq

For years, Kashmir remained a hub and heartland of remarkable reporters who documented its complex socio-political landscape. However, in recent times, a noticeable trend has emerged. Driven by growing disillusionment with the state of journalism, scores of educated, professionally-trained journalists are increasingly leaving the region to report from outside. They're now watching Kashmir, as Agha Shahid would've said it, from New Delhi, and beyond.

This exodus is not merely a personal choice but a symptom of a deeper malaise. It's an ethical crisis that has engulfed Kashmiri journalism marred by sensationalism, bias, and exploitation.

Kashmir has historically produced credible and up-right journalists. Despite the omnipresent risks of working in a strife space, they've sought to uphold the principles of truth, objectivity, and public service.

Many of these shifted scribes were educated in prestigious institutions, both within India and abroad, where they were trained in the ethics of reporting, the importance of verification, and the responsibility of wielding the power of the pen. They exemplified the potential of educated journalism by winning international accolades for courageous reporting. Their work was grounded in a commitment to factual accuracy and a refusal to succumb to the pressures of propaganda, whether from state or non-state actors.

However, the landscape has shifted dramatically in recent years. And the decline of ethical journalism can be attributed to several interconnected factors.

First, the rise of self-styled “citizen journalists” and social-media influencers has muddied the waters. Armed with smartphones and a hunger for attention, these individuals often lacking formal training or an understanding of journalistic ethics have flooded platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and X with unverified reports, sensationalized narratives, and exploitative content. The 2024 Gandbal boat-capsizing tragedy in Srinagar, where six people lost their lives, is a stark example.

As grieving families mourned, Facebook journalists descended upon the scene, thrusting microphones and cameras into their faces, prioritising viral footage over empathy or consent. This is not journalism, it is opportunism masquerading as reporting.

Second, the traditional media has not been immune to ethical lapses. The pressure to survive in an increasingly hostile environment has pushed them to the wall. Others, desperate for relevance in a crowded digital space, have resorted to sensationalism or partisan reporting, amplifying divisive narratives rather than fostering understanding.

The 2020 media policy, which empowers government officials to label content as “fake,” “unethical,” or “anti-national,” has only exacerbated this trend, creating a chilling effect on story enterprise.

Third, the sudden clampdown of institutions like the Kashmir Press Club in 2022 shook the professional journalistic community. And therefore, the decision to leave the valley became a hard choice.

For many of these individuals, Kashmir is not just a beat; it's home woven into their native identity. Yet, the conditions within the region have become crippling, stifling their professional growth.

The exodus reflects a moral stance as well. For those who've studied the principles of journalism verification, balance, and humanity, the current storytelling degradation is unbearable. Reporting from outside allows them to reclaim their integrity, to tell their homeland stories in right spirit.

This remote reporting provides them a degree of range and reach as well. They can access international platforms, collaborate with global newsrooms, and publish without any issue. They can also draw on a broader range of sources—exiled activists, diaspora voices, and declassified documents that enrich their reporting.

This external vantage point has produced some of the most compelling journalism in recent years. Yet, this approach is not without its challenges. Distance can dull the immediacy of reporting, making it harder to capture the raw, on-the-ground reality that defines the Kashmir story. Sources may dry up as trust erodes between journalists and locals who feel abandoned by those who “fled.”

Moreover, the reliance on secondary accounts risks introducing inaccuracies or biases, particularly if the journalists' perspective is shaped more by their new environment than by the Valley itself. The danger of becoming detached or worse, irrelevant looms large.

The departure also has big implications for how Kashmir is understood. The vacuum inside the valley is filled by less scrupulous voices who distort the public perception with half-truths and sensationalism. Over time this could lead to a sanitized or oversimplified version of the Kashmir story, one that prioritises geopolitical analysis over lived experience.

The flight of educated journalists from Kashmir is a tragedy, but it is not irreversible. To stem this tide, the region's media ecosystem must undergo a radical transformation. There must be a concerted effort to rebuild ethical standards and to revive the culture of credible chronicling.

The author is a Kashmiri scribe whose works have appeared in regional and national media. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.

A Home for Hope in Kashmir

A glimpse into an orphanage where education isn't just taught, but lived—and where every child is nurtured to rise above circumstance.

Durdanah Masoodi

Education is an empowering tool, but does it reach those who can't afford it for multiple reasons? No, it does not. We have numerous examples of how children drop out or in the first place can't even register themselves to get educated in any school.

But that does not end the story here. For those who are truly committed to a cause, they pursue it tooth and nail.

This is the story of my experience and observations at CHINAR Kashmir Home (CK Home)—an orphanage located in Khanpora, Budgam, that has become much more than a shelter. Thanks to the unwavering dedication of the people behind it, it's a true home for the children who live there. CK Home is run by CHINAR Kashmir, an NGO based in Barzulla, Srinagar.

What began as a short fellowship turned into nearly three transformative months for me. Those weeks were rich with learning, reflection, and personal growth. But more than anything, I was moved by the NGO's deep commitment to sustain CK Home and nurture every child it shelters. When I was there, around 40 children were staying at the home and all of them registered in a nearby decent private school. The very first impression was that it is ‘quality’ over ‘quantity.’

Every meeting with the Board of Directors, and every other person serving CK Home in their individual capacity, delighted and humbled me. The Board Members are senior and retired fellows but still carry within them that spark and enthusiasm to serve back their community, especially the underprivileged sections.

The NGO runs numerous other programs as well, all of which are



directed towards the upliftment of various sections of society. But to all of them, CK Home is the center of attention. And if you ask them why? What are we without education, is the answer. Importantly, their idea of education isn't limited to academics. Personal growth, emotional well-being, and building life skills are just as crucial. The organization uses a well-defined process to select children, and once they're in, everything possible is done to make them feel at home—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And the name CK Home starts to make complete sense.

From LKG to Class 10, the children are bright young minds full of love, hope, and curiosity. Two qualities stood out to me most. One, they don't shy away from trying. They embrace challenges, even if it means risking failure. In doing so, they remind you of one of life's most valuable lessons—Try, and keep trying. Don't escape. Second, they are open to learning.

The home welcomes volunteers from across Kashmir, Mainland, and even abroad. Despite their backgrounds and personal hardships, the children are remarkably receptive to new ideas and experiences. This openness is not something we can take for granted, especially when we consider their circumstances. But that's where CK Home kids stand apart—they listen, adapt, and grow.

Apart from their academic stuff, they are active kids, they love playing different games, and they will make sure that you are part of it, basically, you are never a stranger for long. Besides, they are well aware of how to go about their routine things: cleaning, serving, organizing, and a lot more. I could sense there and then that most of them would have an easy hold over many things in life ahead.

So why did I write this? Because there are two powerful sources of inspiration here. And a call for awareness. We often speak about education as a

right, but seeing it effectively practiced is a different thing. This place reinforces the power of grassroots effort and community leadership. It reminds you that: One educated child is a step toward a stronger society. And that retirement can be a beginning, not an end. Also, true learning is a two-way street—between mentors and children, volunteers and communities.

As far as inspiration is concerned, the first is the NGO itself—the entire management, the Board of Directors (many of them a retired group of engineer friends) who chose not to rest after retirement. They aimed amongst themselves for a great cause, for providing resources, means, and support for the education of just a single child, believing that such an effort is worthwhile.

And they are collectively working towards that, no doubt, amidst many struggles and worries. But not looking back, sitting back, and mere imagining, but daring to put efforts together. These efforts are cultivating bright and responsible brains, efforts that aim to contribute to society by giving it educated minds and not the ones who loom in the shackles of ignorance.

The second is the children. Their presence teaches you about hope, resilience, and what it means to keep going despite the odds. They show us how learning can happen anywhere—in a classroom, on a playground, or in simple conversations.

If you ever doubt the power of education or the impact of small efforts—spend some time at CK Home. It will remind you that real change, though slow, is deeply human, and always worth it.

The author is an Independent Researcher from Kashmir. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.

The Story of Bhagat Singh's Prison Diary

As India quietly remembers the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev, Bhagat Singh's jail diary opens a window into the reflections of a young revolutionary whose words still echo through time.

Kalpna Pandey

The diary, similar in size to a school notebook, was given to Bhagat Singh by jail authorities on September 12, 1929, with an inscription stating "404 pages for Bhagat Singh." During his imprisonment, he made notes in this diary based on 43 books written by 108 different authors, including Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Lenin. He took extensive notes on history, philosophy, and economics.

Bhagat Singh's focus was not only on the struggle against colonialism but also on issues related to social development. He was particularly inclined toward reading Western thinkers. Moving beyond nationalist narrow-mindedness, he advocated for resolving issues through modern global perspectives. This global vision was something only a few leaders of his time, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, possessed.

In 1968, Indian historian G. Deval had the opportunity to see the original copy of Bhagat Singh's jail diary with Bhagat Singh's brother, Kulbir Singh. Based on his notes, Deval wrote an article about Bhagat Singh in the periodical People's Path, where he mentioned a 200-page diary. In his article, G. Deval noted that Bhagat Singh had made annotations on topics like capitalism, socialism, the origin of the state, Marxism, communism, religion, philosophy, and the history of revolutions. He also suggested that the diary should be published, but this did not materialize.

In 1977, Russian scholar L.V. Mitrokhov came across information about this diary. After gathering details from Kulbir Singh, he wrote an article that was later included as a chapter in his book Lenin and India in 1981. In 1990, Lenin and India was translated into Hindi and published by Pragati Prakashan, Moscow, under the title Lenin Aur Bharat.

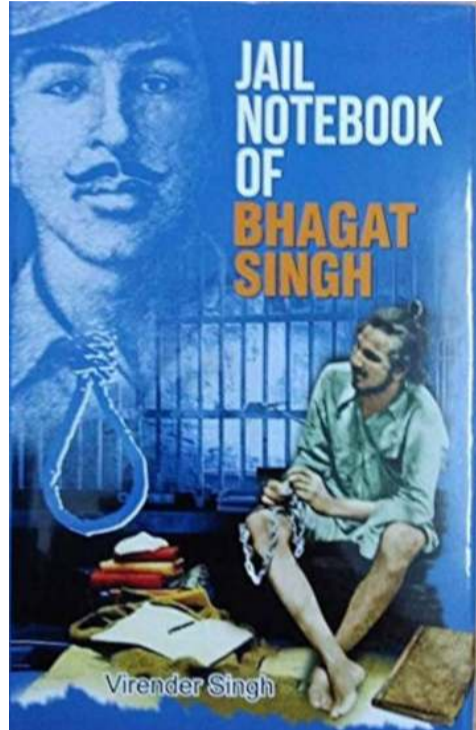
On the other hand, in 1981, G.B. Kumar Hooja, then Vice-Chancellor of Gurukul Kangri, visited Gurukul Indraprastha near Tughlaqabad, Delhi. The administrator, Shaktivesh, showed him some historical documents stored in the basement of the gurukul. G.B. Kumar Hooja borrowed a copy of this notebook for a few days, but he was unable to return it as Shaktivesh was murdered shortly after.

In 1989, on the occasion of the martyrdom day of March 23, some meetings of the Hindustani Manch were held, attended by G.B. Kumar Hooja. There, he shared information about this diary. Impressed by its significance, Hindustani Manch announced the decision to publish it. The responsibility was given to Bhupendra Hooja, editor of the Indian Book Chronicle (Jaipur), with support from Hindustani Manch General Secretary Sardar Oberoi, Prof. R.P. Bhatnagar, and Dr. R.C. Bharatiya. However, it was later claimed that financial difficulties prevented its publication. This explanation seems unconvincing, as it is unlikely that the educated middle-class individuals mentioned above could not afford to print a few copies at a time when costs were relatively low. It is more plausible that they either failed to recognize its importance or simply lacked interest.

Around the same time, Dr. Prakash Chaturvedi obtained a typewritten photocopy from the Moscow archives and showed it to Dr. R.C. Bharatiya. The Moscow copy was found to be identical, word for word, with the handwritten copy retrieved from the basement of Gurukul Indraprastha. A few months later, in 1991, Bhupendra Hooja began publishing excerpts from this notebook in the Indian Book Chronicle. This was the first time Shaheed Bhagat Singh's jail notebook reached the readers. Alongside this, Prof. Chamanlal informed Hooja that he had seen a similar copy in the Nehru Memorial Museum, Delhi.

In 1994, the jail notebook was finally published in book form by Indian Book Chronicle, with a foreword written by Bhupendra Hooja and G.B. Hooja. However, neither of them was aware that the original copy of the book was with Bhagat Singh's brother, Kulbir Singh. They were also unaware of G. Deval's article (1968) and Mitrokhin's book (1981).

Furthermore, Dr. Jagmohan Singh, son of Bhagat Singh's sister Bibi Amar Kaur, never mentioned this jail notebook. Similarly, Virendra Sandhu, daughter of Bhagat Singh's brother Kulbir Singh, wrote two books on Bhagat Singh, but she too did



not reference this diary. This suggests that Bhagat Singh's family members were either unaware of the notebook's existence or had no interest in it. Although Kulbir Singh possessed the diary, he never attempted to share it with historians, publish it as a book, or release it in newspapers. His financial condition was not so dire that he could not afford to publish it himself.

It is unfortunate that Indian historians neglected this significant historical document, and it was first published by a Russian author. The Congress party, which remained in power for the longest time, showed no curiosity about Bhagat Singh's intellectual and ideological contributions to the freedom movement. Their ideological differences with him might have been the reason why they never focused on researching Bhagat Singh's thoughts and actions.

After establishing the Bhagat Singh Research Committee, Bhagat Singh's nephew, Dr. Jagmohan Singh, and Professor Chamanlal from JNU's Indian Languages Center compiled and published the writings of Bhagat Singh and his comrades for the first time in 1986 under the title Bhagat Singh Aur Unke Sathiyon Ke Dastavej. Even in that publication, there was no mention of the jail notebook. It was only in the second edition, published in 1991, that it was referenced. Currently, the third edition of this book is available, in which the two scholars have undertaken the invaluable task of adding several rare pieces of information and presenting them to the readers.

The notes taken by Bhagat Singh in this notebook clearly reflect his perspective. His restless yearning for freedom led him to transcribe the thoughts of Byron, Whitman, and Wordsworth on liberty. He read Ibsen's plays, Fyodor Dostoevsky's renowned novel Crime and Punishment, and Victor Hugo's Les Misérables. He also read the works of Charles Dickens, Maxim Gorky, J.S. Mill, Vera Figner, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Charles Mackay, George de Hesse, Oscar Wilde, and Sinclair.

In July 1930, during his imprisonment, he read Lenin's The Collapse of the Second International and "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder, Kropotkin's Mutual Aid, and Karl Marx's The Civil War in France. He took notes on episodes from the lives of Russian revolutionaries Vera Figner and Morozov. His notebook even contained verses from Omar Khayyam. To obtain more books, he persistently wrote letters to Jaid-e-Gupta, Bhau Kulbir Singh, and others, requesting them to send him reading material.

On page 21 of his notebook, he wrote the quote by the American socialist Eugene V. Debs: "Wherever the lower class exists, I am there; wherever criminal elements are, I am there; if anyone is imprisoned, I am not free."

He also made notes on the freedom struggles of Rousseau, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry,

as well as on the inalienable rights of man. Additionally, he recorded the famous quote by writer Mark Twain: "We have been taught how horrifying the beheading of people is. But we have not been taught that the death wrought by the lifelong imposition of poverty and tyranny upon all people is even more dreadful."

To understand capitalism, Bhagat Singh made numerous calculations in this notebook. At that time, he recorded the inequality in Britain – one-ninth of the population controlled half of the production, while only one-seventh (14%) of the output was distributed among two-thirds (66.67%) of the people. In America, the wealthiest 1% held \$67 billion in assets, whereas 70% of the population possessed only 4% of the assets.

He also quoted a statement by Rabindranath Tagore in which the Japanese people's lust for money was described as "a terrifying threat to human society." Furthermore, he referenced bourgeois capitalism by drawing from Maurice Hillquit's Marx to Lenin. Being an atheist, Bhagat Singh recorded under the heading "Religion – the Proprietor of the Established Order: Slavery" that "in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, slavery is endorsed, and God's power does not condemn it." While trying to understand the causes behind the emergence of religion and its functioning, he turned to Karl Marx.

In his writing titled Attempts at the Synthesis of Hegel's Philosophy of Justice, under the heading "Marx's Thoughts on Religion," he writes: "Man creates religion; religion does not create man. To be human means to be part of the human world, the state, and society. The state and society together give rise to a distorted worldview of religion..."

His approach appears to be that of a social reformist, aimed at overthrowing capitalism and establishing classical socialism. In his notebook, he has included several quotations from the Communist Party's manifesto. He also recorded the lines of the anthem The Internationale. In Friedrich Engels' work, through quotations concerning revolution and counter-revolution in Germany, he is seen opposing his comrades' superficial revolutionary ideas.

In the country, a series of mob lynchings—executions carried out by crowds—in the name of religion, caste, and the cow have begun, and the references he raised from T. Paine's Rights of Man remain relevant even today. In his notebook, it is written: "They learn these things from the very governments under which they live. In return, they impose upon others the very punishment to which they have become accustomed... The impact of the brutal scenes displayed before the masses is such that it either dulls their sensitivity or incites a desire for revenge. Instead of reason, they construct their own image based on these base and false notions of ruling over people through terror."

Regarding "natural and civil rights," he noted, "It is man's natural rights alone that form the basis of all civil rights." He also recorded the words of the Japanese Buddhist monk Koko Hoshi: "It is only appropriate for a ruler that no person should be tormented by cold or hunger. When a person does not even have the basic means to live, he cannot uphold moral standards."

He provided references from various authors on subjects such as the aim of socialism (revolution), the aim of world revolution, social unity, and many other issues. Bhagat Singh's associates have noted that while in prison, he wrote four books. Their titles are: 1. Autobiography, 2. Revolutionary 3. Movements in India, 4. The Ideals of Socialism, 5. At the Doorstep of Death. These books were destroyed after he was released from prison, out of fear of reprisals from the British authorities.

Bhagat Singh's outlook was directed toward building a just, socialist India—free from casteism, communalism, and inequality—in the post-independence era. His writings and articles clearly indicate this vision, and the prison notebook stands as evidence of his profound study. Bhagat Singh's prison notebook, is not only a record of his revolutionary thoughts and intellectual pursuits but also a testament to his enduring legacy in the struggle for freedom.

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An Ode to Books: Why Kitaben Jhankti Hain is a Must-Read

In an age where reading habits are declining, this book serves as an important reminder of why books matter.

Sadaket A Malik

Books have always been a source of knowledge, inspiration, and joy. They help us understand the world, explore different perspectives, and enrich our thoughts. However, reading books is not enough; it is equally important to reflect upon them and analyze their content. This is where literary criticism plays a significant role. S. Mashooq Ahmad's book, "Kitaben Jhankti Hain", is a wonderful example of how book reviews can enhance our understanding of literature. It is a collection of thirty essays on various books available to the writer, offering readers a deep and thoughtful analysis of different literary works.

The title "Kitaben Jhankti Hain" (meaning "Books Peek") itself is quite symbolic. It suggests that books are always there, waiting for someone to pick them up, read them, and discover the knowledge hidden inside them. In today's world, where digital distractions have reduced people's interest in reading, this book serves as a reminder of the beauty and importance of literature.

S. Mashooq Ahmad is a passionate reader and a skilled writer. His love for books is evident in every page of this collection. In the introductory section, he shares a beautiful thought:

"Most of my evenings are still spent in the company of books, and after reading a good book, I feel the sweetness on my tongue as if I have tasted honey."

This statement reflects his deep connection with literature. It shows that for him, reading is not just a habit but an experience that brings joy and fulfillment. This kind of passion is rare in today's fast-paced world, where people often read for information but rarely take the time to truly engage with a book.

One of the most impressive aspects of this book is its diversity. "Kitaben Jhankti Hain" does not focus on a single genre or type of book. Instead, it covers a wide range of literary works, from fiction to non-fiction, from essays to poetry. This makes the book appealing to a large audience, as there is something for everyone.

The author does not merely summarize the books he reviews; he goes deeper, analyzing their themes, writing styles, and literary value. He examines each book critically, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses. This balanced approach makes his reviews more meaningful. Readers do not just learn about the books but also gain insights into how to appreciate literature on a deeper level.

His writing style is one of the most enjoyable aspects of this book. He does not write in a dry or overly academic manner. Instead, his reviews are engaging, full of wit, humor, and personal reflections. This makes the book not only informative but also entertaining.

For example, while discussing Muhammad Asadullah's book "Hawain", he writes: "My love for the essay genre is as intense as a 21-year-old youth's love for his beautiful beloved."

This humorous comparison adds charm to his writing. It makes the reader smile and feel connected to the author's thoughts. Such expressions make the book lively and enjoyable, unlike traditional literary criticism, which can sometimes feel dull and overly technical.

This book carries an important message: books should not just be read and forgotten. They should be discussed, analyzed, and appreciated. Through "Kitaben Jhankti Hain", the author encour-



ages readers to engage more deeply with books. He reminds us that books have a life of their own, and they "peek" from our shelves, waiting to be picked up and explored.

In today's world, where social media and technology dominate our lives, fewer people take the time to read books. Even those who do read often do not engage in meaningful discussions about them. This book serves as a wake-up call for all literature lovers. It reminds us that reading should be an active process, one that involves thinking, questioning, and sharing ideas.

Apart from its content, the book itself is well-designed. The cover is attractive, the printing is of high quality, and the layout is clean and readable. These small details make a big difference because a well-presented book is always more enjoyable to read.

Professor Ghazanfar, a well-known literary figure, perfectly summarizes the essence of this book when he writes: "Extracting pearls from the depths of the literary ocean is no less challenging than retrieving gems from the sea. Mashooq Ahmad, in this regard, appears to be a passionate seeker who strives to achieve his goal with great determination."

This comparison beautifully captures the effort and dedication that Mashooq Ahmad has put into this book. Reviewing books is not an easy task. It requires patience, understanding, and a deep love for literature. Through this book, the author has proven that he possesses all these qualities.

This book is more than just a collection of book reviews; it is an invitation to rediscover the joy of reading. It encourages readers to look beyond the surface of a book and truly appreciate its literary and intellectual depth. S. Mashooq Ahmad has done a commendable job in presenting thoughtful and engaging critiques that will appeal to both casual readers and serious literature enthusiasts.

In an age where reading habits are declining, this book serves as an important reminder of why books matter. It will be a valuable addition to the libraries of those who love literature and wish to engage with books in a meaningful way. Without a doubt, "Kitaben Jhankti Hain" will be well-received in literary circles and appreciated by all who understand the magic of books.

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Kashmir's Cultural Torchbearer

Beyond his creative achievements, Rabbani is a mentor and guide, inspiring countless students and young poets. His efforts have empowered marginalized communities, promoting education, art, and social service.

Peerzada Aarif

Reyaz Rabbani Kashmiri, born Reyaz Ahmad Alai in 1988 at Waripora Payeen, Baramulla, is an educator, poet, writer, artist, and social activist. His dedication to literature, education, and social reform has significantly contributed to Kashmiri culture and heritage.

Rabbani's academic journey reflects his thirst for knowledge. He holds degrees in Mass Communication, Political Science, Urdu, and Journalism and is currently pursuing research in Political Science. His early involvement in the National Cadet Corps (NCC) further demonstrates his commitment to discipline and

service.

In 2010, Rabbani became a teacher and resource person in his village, where the literacy rate was alarmingly low. Through his dedication, the literacy rate rose to 85%. His efforts extended beyond education – during the COVID-19 pandemic, he provided essential support to over 450 families in 21 villages. Additionally, he has supported orphaned girls' marriages, aided widows, and contributed to constructing a mosque and Darasgah in his village.

Rabbani's literary contributions are extensive. His notable book, Waavas Atthe Rou'tt, reflects Kashmiri cultural themes. He also edits The English Boost-

er, enhancing linguistic skills. His poetry, popular on social media, resonates with themes of love, sorrow, and cultural identity.

To promote Kashmiri literature and culture, Rabbani founded the Hum Sukhan Cultural & Welfare Organisation Kashmir. This platform nurtures emerging poets, writers, and artists. He has revived the legacy of Persian scholar Hazrat Qadoos Mir Kreeri R.A., bringing his forgotten contributions back into public awareness.

Rabbani's impact extends to journalism as well. In 2014, he qualified as an announcer for Radio Kashmir Srinagar's Yuwani Service and contributed to the popular Kashmiri program

Tohenz Pasand. His journalistic work demonstrates his deep understanding of socio-political issues.

He has represented Kashmiri literature on national platforms, including a prestigious conference organized by the Haryana Academy of Art & Culture in 2024. His captivating poetry at the event highlighted Kashmiri culture's richness.

Reyaz Rabbani's remarkable contributions have earned him numerous awards, including the Best All-Rounder Award (2018), State-Level Young Poet Award (2020), Best Artist Award (2015), and COVID-19 Social Work Recognition. He has also been honored by various organizations for

his contributions to literature, education, and social work.

His media presence, including appearances on DD Kashir, Radio FM, and JK Maraz Kamraz Academy, has further amplified his role as a cultural and literary ambassador.

Beyond his creative achievements, Rabbani is a mentor and guide, inspiring countless students and young poets. His efforts have empowered marginalized communities, promoting education, art, and social service.

-The author is a teacher and a freelancer. He hails from Baramulla and can be reached at aarifpeerzada@gmail.com

European countries vow billions in military support for Ukraine as US envoy meets Putin

Agencies

Brussels, Apr 11 (AP) European countries vowed Friday to send billions of dollars in further funding to help Ukraine keep fighting Russia's invasion, as a US envoy pursued peace efforts in a trip to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin amid growing questions about the Kremlin's willingness to stop the more than three-year war.

Russian forces hold the advantage in Ukraine, with the war now in its fourth year. Ukraine has endorsed a US ceasefire proposal, but Russia has effectively blocked it by imposing far-reaching conditions.

European governments have accused Putin of dragging his feet. "Russia has to get moving" on the road to ending the war, US President Donald Trump posted on social media. He said the war is "terrible and senseless."

In Russia, the Kremlin said Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff was meeting with Putin in St Petersburg. Witkoff, who has been pressing the Kremlin to accept a truce, initially met with

Putin envoy Kirill Dmitriev, footage released by Russian media showed.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Witkoff during his visit to Russia was discussing efforts to end the war with Putin and other officials. "This is another step in the negotiating process towards a ceasefire and an ultimate peace deal," she said.

After chairing a meeting of Ukraine's Western backers in Brussels, British Defence Secretary John Healey said that new pledges of military aid totalling over 21 billion Euros (USD 24 billion), "a record boost in military funding for Ukraine, and we are also surging that support to the frontline fight."

Healey gave no breakdown of that figure, and Ukraine has in the past complained that some countries repeat old offers at such pledging conferences or fail to deliver real arms and ammunition worth the money they promise.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said last week that Ukraine's backers have provided



around USD 21 billion so far in the first three months of this year. European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said Friday that more than USD 26 billion have been committed.

Ahead of the "contact group" meeting at NATO headquarters, Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov said a key issue was strengthening his country's air defences.

Standing alongside Healey at

the end of it, Umerov described the meeting as "productive, effective and efficient," and said that it produced "one of the largest" packages of assistance Ukraine has received. "We're thankful to each nation that has provided this support," he said.

Britain said that in a joint effort with Norway just over USD 580 million would be spent to provide hundreds of thousands of military drones, radar

systems and anti-tank mines, as well as repair and maintenance contracts to keep Ukrainian armoured vehicles on the battlefield.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has renewed his appeals for more Patriot systems since 20 people were killed a week ago, including nine children, when a Russian missile tore through apartment buildings and blasted a playground in his home town. Zelenskyy joined Friday's meeting by video link.

Russia holds off agreeing to ceasefire

The Russian delay in accepting Washington's proposal has frustrated Trump and fuelled doubts about whether Putin really wants to stop the fighting while his bigger army has momentum on the battlefield.

"Russia continues to use bilateral talks with the United States to delay negotiations about the war in Ukraine, suggesting that the Kremlin remains uninterested in serious peace negotiations to end the war," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington

think tank, said in an assessment late Thursday.

Washington remains committed to securing a peace deal, even though four weeks have passed since it made its ceasefire proposals, State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said.

"It is a dynamic that will not be solved militarily. It is a meat grinder," Bruce said Thursday about the war, adding that "nothing else can be discussed ... until the shooting and the killing stops."

Observers expect a new Russian offensive

Ukrainian officials and military analysts believe Russia is preparing to launch a fresh military offensive in coming weeks to ramp up pressure and strengthen the Kremlin's hand in the negotiations.

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said that his country would provide Ukraine with four IRIS-T short-to-medium-range systems with missiles, as well as 30 missiles for use on Patriot batteries. The Netherlands plans to supply a

Hawkeye air defence system, an airborne early warning aircraft.

Estonian Defence Minister Hanno Pevkur said that his country is monitoring the world armaments market and sees opportunities for Ukraine's backers to buy more weapons and ammunition.

Pevkur said he believes Putin might try to reach some kind of settlement with Ukraine by May 9 — the day that Russia marks victory during World War II — making it even more vital to strengthen Kyiv's position now.

"This is why we need to speed up the deliveries as quickly as we can," he said.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth was absent from the forum that the United States created and led for several years, although he spoke via video.

At the last contact group meeting in February, Hegseth warned Ukraine's European backers that the US now has priorities elsewhere — in Asia and on America's own borders — and that they would have to take care of their own security, and that of Ukraine, in future.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

HC Stays Rs 16K

these internal transactions.

The bank also referred to guidelines issued by the RBI in 1999 on risk and fund management, stating that the TPM system in question is used across the banking industry in India. The petitioner argued that the demand and penalty amount were based on a flawed interpretation of financial procedures.

Advocate T.M. Shamsi appeared for the Union Government and sought time to file a reply.

The division bench of Justice Rajnesh Oswal and Justice Mohammad Yusuf Wani observed that the case raised serious legal issues and issued an interim stay on the GST recovery process. The matter has been listed for the next hearing on May 7, 2025. (KNO)

NC Moves

law had hurt the sentiments of the majority of the people in Jammu and Kashmir.

"On the directions of Party President Dr. Farooq Abdullah, and in the interest of the minorities of India, JKNC has challenged the Waqf Amendment Act in the Supreme Court. Our MLAs @arjunsinghraj, @AdvReyazkhan & Hilal Lone have filed a writ petition today seeking justice," the NC said in a post on X on Friday.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill was passed by Parliament on April 4 after marathon debates in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

The discussion witnessed staunch objections from opposition parties, which termed the Bill "anti-Muslim" and "unconstitutional" while the government said the "historic reform" would benefit the minority community.

President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to the Bill on April 5.

Several Muslim bodies and leaders of different opposition parties have challenged the constitutionality of the law in the Supreme Court, which is set to hear the case on April 16.

Jammu and Kashmir's opposition parties like PDP, People's Conference and Awami Ittehad Party have said it is a violation of freedom of religion as guaranteed by the Constitution.

PDP's Protest

assembled at the party headquarters near the Sher-e-Kashmir Park here to protest against the passage of the act last week.

The PDP workers tried to march out of the party office and towards the city centre, but were met by a posse of police personnel who prevented them from moving out. Police had barricaded the gates which restricted the protesters on the premises.

The protesters carried placards with messages like "we reject the Waqf Bill" and "NC's (National Conference) silence is criminal", and raised slogans for the repeal of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.

Later, the protesters dispersed peacefully. Speaking to reporters, Alam said they wanted to protest peacefully, but police prevented them.

"We wanted to protest against the Waqf bill. We understand that no section of the society accepts the bill. The way it was passed in parliament in the dead of the night, we reject that," he said.

The PDP general secretary said while the BJP's approach towards Muslims of the country is condemnable, "the criminal silence of the NC on the issue is regretful".

"We condemn the role of NC in the passing of the Act," he said, adding the NC was "befooling" people.

Terrorist Killed

Doda Ramban Range, the operations in the Kishtwar region have been going on for the past three days. One terrorist was eliminated this morning.

He stated that the other terrorists in the region are trapped, and the operation will continue until they are all eliminated.

Jopher-Marta forests of Udhampur district, under the jurisdiction of Ramnagar police station. "Initiated on April 9, based on credible intelligence regarding terrorist activity, the operation has seen joint teams of the Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, and other security agencies establish a cordon-and-search operation (CASO) to track down a group of terrorists," he added.

"On April 9, a civilian named Rachpal reported that three heavily armed terrorists, dressed in black, entered his residence in the Basantgarh area around 8:30 p.m., consumed food, and left by 11:30 p.m., taking a mobile phone, clothes, shoes, a bag, and an umbrella. This incident, combined with intelligence reports, confirmed the presence of two to three terrorists in the Jopher-Marta belt."

Senior Superintendent of Police, Udhampur, Amod Ashok Nagpure, had said that contact was established with the terrorists on April 9, leading to a brief exchange of fire. The area has since been placed under a tight cordon, with night patrols, sniffer dogs, drones, and aerial surveillance deployed to prevent the terrorists' escape.

The operation has been extended to the higher reaches of Kathua and Rajouri districts, with a brief exchange of gunfire reported in the Billawar area of Kathua.

The twin operations in Kishtwar and Udhampur reflect heightened vigilance in response to recent terrorist activities in the Jammu region.

Security forces have intensified surveillance in high-altitude areas, particularly in the Baderwah area of Doda district, to counter potential infiltration attempts facilitated by melting snow in the higher meadows during summer months.

The operations follow a series of encounters in the Kathua-Udhampur-Kishtwar belt over the past month, during which several terrorists and security personnel have been killed. On March 28, 2025, four police personnel died and two terrorists were killed in a fierce encounter in Kathua's Sufian forest. (inputs from agencies)

Another Group

move. Till now as many as 12 Hurriyat-linked organisations have broken off from secessionism, resting trust in the Constitution of India. This is a victory of PM Shri @narendramodi Ji's vision for 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat,'" Shah wrote on X.

On April 8, Jammu Kashmir Islamic Political Party, Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Democratic League and Kashmir Freedom Front had disassociated themselves from Hurriyat Conference.

Among other groups which announced their separation from Hurriyat include Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement, headed by Shahid Saleem, Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Political Movement, led by advocate Shafi Reshi, and Jammu and Kashmir Freedom Movement, headed by Mohd Sharief Sartaj.

When the groups made the announcement on March 25, Shah had said the unifying policies of the Narendra Modi government have "tossed" separatism out of Jammu and Kashmir.

Two other constituents of Hurriyat -- Jammu and Kashmir Tahreeqi Isteqlal and Jammu and Kashmir Tahreek-I-Istiqamat -- had also announced their disassociation from the amalgam.

The J&K Tehreeqi Isteqlal is headed by Gulam Nabi Sofi and J-K Tehreek-I-Istiqamat is led by Gulam Nabi War.

Meanwhile, the Union Home Minister in an interview with a national news channel trained guns at Pakistan being unable to handle separatism in Balochistan and terrorism in their own country. "India is not supporting the Balochistan movement. Certain provinces of Pakistan are unhappy with the way the Pakistan Government is functioning," Shah said.

Pertinently, Pakistan has been facing increasing unrest not only in Balochistan but in other parts of the country also. "Pakistan should find out a solution to their problems," Shah added.

He reiterated that Pakistan occupied Jammu Kashmir (PoJK) belongs to India and that "our legal case is also strong."

"India's claim on PoJK is not a mere claim but a firm belief backed by historic documents and evidence," he added

ACB Books

"misusing" his official position.

The probe also found that the corporation's board of directors had approved a pension benefit plan for Sharma in March 2006, which involved a Rs 15 lakh deposit with the post office, with contributions shared equally between the corporation and Sharma, he said.

"His share of Rs 7.5 lakh was released to him with the condition that it would be recovered from his retirement dues. However, only Rs 1.5 lakh has been repaid by him so far," he added.

As per records, the total outstanding amount against Sharma, including interest on the housing loan and pension advance, stood at over Rs 55 lakh as of March 31, 2023.

The ACB further alleged that Bharat Bhushan, who took charge after Sharma's retirement, failed to take any legal or administrative action to recover the pending dues, he said.

Officials in the corporation were also accused of facilitating the loan without following due procedures and not acting to recover the money, resulting in a significant loss to the government exchequer.

ECI's Special

eligible voters can register themselves by filling Form 6 for inclusion (Form 6A in case of overseas elector, Form 7 for objecting inclusion or deleting of name and Form 8 for correction of particulars in the electoral roll or replacement of photograph). Electors can also submit their claims in their respective polling stations on 12th and 13th April wherein Special Camps are to be organised.

The filling of claims is a continuous process and shall be closed on 24th April 2025, reads the communiqué issued by the Office of Chief Electoral Officer J&K, Pandurang K Pole.

Pole, while highlighting the importance of voting, said that, "it is our duty to participate in the democratic traditions of our country and the first step towards that goal is getting ourselves registered as electors."

Speaking on the mechanism of grievance redressal of electors regarding inclusion/deletion; the Chief Electoral Officer assured that the issues/grievances of citizens shall be promptly addressed. He stressed that any aggrieved elector can appeal against the decision of the Electoral Registration Officer to the District Magistrate. If he/she is still unsatisfied with the decision, there is also a provision of second appeal before the Chief Electoral Officer, he added.

The Chief Electoral Officer has appealed the electors of 27-Budgam and 77-Nagrota to make the most of the Summary Revision and get themselves registered so that a pure and perfect Electoral Roll can be prepared.

26/11 Accused

18-day custody. Escorted by NIA officials, Rana reached Delhi on Thursday evening on a chartered aircraft after his extradition from the US ending a 16-year-long wait to prosecute one of the key accused in the deadly Mumbai attack in November 2008 in which 166 persons were killed and over 238 injured.

"His (Rana) prolonged custody has been deemed necessary to facilitate an extensive interrogation aimed at uncovering deeper layers of the conspiracy. We suspect that the tactics used in the Mumbai attacks were intended for execution in other cities as well, prompting investigators to examine whether similar plots were developed elsewhere," the NIA is believed to have informed special NIA judge Chander Jit Singh late Thursday while presenting its arguments, sources said.

Rana has to be confronted with a lot of evidence and his statements would lead to "additional discoveries", the NIA submitted. The agency further told the court it needed to investigate his links with other terrorists and those accused in the Mumbai attack case.

Rana, who is a close associate of 26/11 main conspirator David Coleman Headley alias Daoud Gilani, a US citizen, is accused of conspiring with the latter and operatives of designated terrorist organisations Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami (HUJI) along with other Pakistan-based co-conspirators, to carry out the three-day terror siege of India's financial capital.

As Rana's questioning began to "unravel the complete conspiracy behind the deadly 2008 attacks", it is learnt that the NIA's interrogation is focused on getting more details on his possible connection with Pakistan-based LeT, which had orchestrated the strike.

Sources said that Rana would also be questioned on his suspected links with the officials of Pakistan spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and his exact role behind the attack.

They further said that as part of the probe to piece together crucial evidence and retrace events from 17 years ago Rana may be taken to key locations, allowing them to reconstruct the crime scene and gain deeper insight into the larger terror network at play.

The investigators also hope to find some important leads on his travels in parts of northern and southern India, days before the carnage that began on November 26, 2008, they said.

Rana visited Hapur and Agra in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Kochi, Ahmedabad, and Mumbai with his wife Samraz Rana Akhtar between November 13 and November 21, 2008, the sources said.

They said there could have been a larger conspiracy aimed at targeting other places across the country behind his visits to these places, and the exact details would be ascertained only after his interrogation.

Rana is being kept in a highly-secured cell, inside the anti-terror agency's head office at CGO complex here, being guarded by security personnel round the clock, the sources said.

A 24x7 surveillance is being maintained and Rana has been provided with basic necessities like food and meals among others, they said.

Security around the NIA office has been beefed up. Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Delhi Police personnel are guarding the outer periphery of NIA headquarters.

The investigation is being led by NIA's Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Jaya Roy, who is also the Chief Investigating Officer, the sources said.

"Rana will remain in NIA custody for 18 days, during which time the agency will question him in detail in order to unravel the complete conspiracy behind the deadly 2008 attacks," said a statement issued by the probe agency soon after the court's order.

The NIA said that as part of the criminal conspiracy, Headley, who is the accused number 1, had discussed the entire operation with Rana before his visit to India.

Anticipating potential challenges, Headley sent an email to Rana detailing his belongings and assets, the NIA told the court, and Headley also informed Rana about the involvement of Pakistani nationals Ilyas Kashmiri and Abdur Rehman, who are also accused in the case, in the plot.

In its order, the court directed the NIA to conduct medical examination of Rana every 24 hours, and allow him to meet his lawyer every alternate day.

The judge allowed Rana to use only a "soft-tip pen" and meet his lawyer in the presence of

the NIA officials, who would be out of an audible distance.

Senior advocate Dayan Krishnan and Special Public Prosecutor Narender Mann represented the NIA.

The anti-terror agency had registered a case on November 11, 2009 under sections 121 A of Indian Penal Code (IPC), Section 18 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Section 6(2) SAARC Convention (Suppression of Terrorism) Act against Headley, Rana and others.

Rana is charged with numerous offenses, including conspiracy, murder, commission of a terrorist act, and forgery in the country.

During the NIA investigation, the roles of senior functionaries of terror groups LeT and Harkat-ul Jihadi Islami (HUJI) -- Hafiz Muhammad Saeed alias Tayyaji, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, Sajjid Majid alias Wasi, Ilyas Kashmiri, and Abdur Rehman Hashim Syed alias Major Abdurrehman alias Pasha -- had emerged, officials said.

They worked in active connivance with officials from the ISI, namely Major Iqbal alias Major Ali and Major Sameer Ali alias Major Samir, according to the NIA probe.

Another Wet

Srinagar recorded intermittent rains for the fourth straight day today

Meanwhile, the Director Meteorological department, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad here predicted the possibility of dry weather conditions from Saturday, saying that the weather would remain generally dry from April 12 to April 17.

However, as per the forecast, he said that a three-day moderate wet spell is also expected from April 18 in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Fresh spells of light to moderate rain and snow (higher reaches) at many places accompanied with thunder, gusty winds from April 18 evening onwards to April 20," Ahmad said.

Furthermore, the MET has issued an advisory, advising the travelers, tourists and transporters to follow administration and traffic advisory.

The farmers are advised to resume farm operations from 12th April onwards till 17th April, reads the advisory, adding that there is a possibility of thunder and gusty winds at few places.

Pertinently, the intermittent light rains and snow continued to occur across Jammu and Kashmir since April 08, leading to the dip in day temperatures by a few degrees. The four-day wet spell occurred just a day after the Valley including Srinagar recorded the hottest day of the season. Srinagar had recorded a day temperature of 28.2 degree Celsius on April 07. (KNO)

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SKUAST-K, AICRP Distribute Seed Among Tribal Farmers



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Budgam in collaboration with AICRP on Seed (Crops) NSP, Shalimar SKUAST Kashmir organized an input distribution programme under Tribal Sub-Plan at KVK Budgam.

About 50 tribal farmers of village Lobran, Khag Block received 10q of high yielding SKUAST-K released varieties of paddy seed (SR4) and Seed bins (50).

Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Extension SKUAST-K, chief guest on the occasion, stressed the need for adoption and dissemination of the high yielding university-released variety of Paddy.

Explaining about the benefits of the SR4 paddy variety, Director Extension, SKUAST-K said that the variety is climate resilient, less susceptible to dis-

eases and has the potential to tolerate adverse weather conditions. She also briefed the farmers about the role of SKUAST-K in augmenting research in agriculture to facilitate the farming community in the valley.

Dr. Bilal Ahmad Lone (Prof. & Head KVK Budgam) briefed the tribal farmers about the role of KVK Budgam in facilitating agriculture and allied activities in the district through on farm trials, front line demonstrations and skill-based training/awareness programmes. He encouraged the farmers to avail the services of the Kendra for more profitable farming.

Dr. Gowhar Ali (Assoc. Prof. NSP) and Dr. Afalak Hamid (Assoc. Prof. NSP) deliberated upon the Package of Practices to be adopted for the SR4 variety.

Scientists and technical staff of KVK Budgam and NSP also attended the programme.

TLSC Organises Awareness Program On Child Abuse

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: Tehsil Legal Services Committee (TLSC) Gurez under the aegis of District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Bandipora organised an awareness programme on child rights and child abuse.

The programme was aimed to sensitize the public, especially students and parents, about the fundamental rights of children and the alarming issue of child abuse in its various forms.

Chairman Tehsil Legal Services Committee, Gurez, presided over the programme and emphasized the importance of safeguarding children's rights and ensuring a secure, nurturing environment for their growth and development.

In his keynote address, Chairman highlighted various legal provisions under the Protection

of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, and the Constitution of India, which guarantee the safety, education, and dignity of every child. He urged all stakeholders viz. parents, teachers, legal authorities, and the community at large to remain vigilant and report any instances of abuse or exploitation.

Resource person Adv. Javaid Iqbal, legal experts, Headmaster Boys Middle School addressed the gathering and conducted interactive sessions with the audience, shedding light on identifying signs of abuse and mechanisms available for legal and psychological support.

The event concluded with a pledge to collectively work towards the protection and empowerment of every child in the region.

ZEO Tangdar Orders Probe Into Alleged Teacher Negligence

Agencies

KUPWARA: Amid complaints of negligence by teaching staff at the Government Upper Primary School (UPS) Upper Jabdi in Tangdar, the Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) has launched a formal inquiry and sought immediate explanations from the concerned teachers.

Acting on multiple representations received from different sources regarding dereliction of duty by staff at UPS Upper Jabdi, the ZEO Tangdar has issued an explanation notice to five teachers posted at the school. The teachers have been directed to submit their individual responses within two days. Failure to do so, the order states, will be construed as acceptance of guilt, and disciplinary action under service rules will follow.

Pending the outcome of the probe, the ZEO has also ordered the withholding of salaries of all implicated staff members. Those named in the explanation notice include Mumtaz Malik (Teacher Grade II), Auraf

Lone (3rd Teacher), Nazir Ahmad (Rehbar-e-Taleem), Amjid Mushtaq (TGI), and Altaf Ahmad (TGI).

To investigate the matter thoroughly, a three-member committee has been constituted, headed by Imtayaz Alam Qureshi, Senior Lecturer at GHSS Tangdar. The committee also includes Master Mohammad Rafi Zargar and Senior Assistant Pir Hissam ud Din from GMS Nachyian.

The committee has been tasked with examining school records, assessing academic progress, and conducting a detailed academic inspection. Their findings, including observations on the performance of the teaching staff, will be entered into the service records of the concerned teachers. The committee has been directed to submit its report within a week.

The probe comes as part of a broader push by education authorities to ensure accountability and enhance academic standards in schools across the border area of Tangdar in north Kashmir. [KNT]

Mian Altaf Appointed Member Of J&K Haj Committee

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The government has appointed Mian Altaf Ahmad, Member of Parliament from Rajouri-Anantnag constituency, as a member of the Jammu and Kashmir Haj Committee.

The appointment has been made under section 17(1) and 18(1) of the Haj Committee Act, 2002, read with Rule 20 of the Haj Committee Rules, 2002.

His term of membership will be the same as that of the other members, who were appointed



through the government notification issued on July 20, 2022.

JK Likely To Require Additional 1862 MU Power In 2026-27

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Amid surge in power demand, Jammu and Kashmir is likely to require additional 1862.53 Million Units (MUs) of power from the year 2026-27.

According to the official documents available, the concerned authorities have projected that there will be a peak electrical requirement of 22,507 MU in the year 2026-27 with 3566 Megawatts peak electricity demand.

The documents further said that some intra-state transmission schemes are being planned to be implemented through Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) route by Jammu and Kashmir, Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) and Rajasthan.

In the meantime, the recent economic survey of the Jammu and Kashmir government reveals that from the fiscal 2020-21 to the year 2023-24, the power usage in the region had increased from 17,721.76 MU to 20,644.47 MU.

Recently, the government had said that Jammu and Kashmir had generated over 16,300 MUs of electricity from different hydel power projects in the

year 2023-24.

As already reported, Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness nearly 15 percent increase in peak power demand by the upcoming fiscal.

years, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed an average annual increase of 3.60 percent in electric power purchases while the growth stands at only 2.45 percent.

“The concerned authorities have projected that there will be a peak electrical requirement of 22,507 MU in the year 2026-27 with 3566 Megawatts peak electricity demand.”

An official had said that till the ongoing fiscal, Jammu and Kashmir has touched a peak power demand of nearly 3000-3100 Megawatts (MW) of power.

The official documents in this regard states that the region was having actual peak power demand of 2675 MW till the year 2016-17.

However, after six years, the peak power demand in the year 2021-22 had increased by 401 MW. In this fiscal, Jammu and Kashmir was having an actual power demand of 3076 MW.

Earlier this news agency had reported that in the past nine

An official had said, “Over the past years from 2016-17 to 2024-25, Jammu and Kashmir has experienced an average annual increase of 3.60 percent in electric power purchases, as per extrapolated data.”

“When considered on a per capita basis, the growth rate stands at 2.45 percent per year, reflecting the region's increasing energy demand. This growth is also in line with the region's population increase, which has been growing at an annual rate of 2.14 percent during the same period,” the official had said—(KNO)

‘Saudi Govt’s Visa Suspension Won’t Impact Hajj Pilgrims From J&K’

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Saudi Arabia government's recently imposed temporary ban on the issuance of Umrah, tourist and visit visas ahead of the Hajj-2025 has sparked concerns among the aspiring pilgrims in Jammu and Kashmir.

However, the officials clarified that this move was a routine pre-Hajj measure and will not affect the upcoming Hajj pilgrimage from India, including Jammu & Kashmir.

Executive Officer of the J&K State Haj Committee, Dr Shujaat Ahmad Qureshi, clarified that the ban applies specifically to Umrah, tourist and visiting visas and has been enforced in coordination with multiple countries.

The senior officer said that this decision will prevent the misuse of Umrah or visit visas by individuals, attempting to perform Hajj illegally—a prob-

lem that affected accommodations and logistics in previous years.

“Last year, those who went on Umrah or other visas often stayed back and performed Hajj without authorisation, which led to overcrowding, particularly in Mina tents,” the senior officer said. “This year, such practices will be curbed due to the ban and legitimate pilgrims will benefit with better access to facilities.”

He added that this was done every year, typically a few days before Hajj, however, this time the visa suspension was imposed nearly 20 days in advance, stating that might have caused some confusion.

The Executive Officer of the J&K State Haj Committee said that the move is expected to streamline the Hajj process and reduce issues faced by officially registered pilgrims, especially those who often encountered logistical challenges

due to overlapping stays by non-Hajj visa holders.

“It helps avoid unnecessary crowding and mismanagement, especially in tents and accommodation areas,” the official noted.

As for the current status of Hajj preparations from Jammu & Kashmir, over 3,600 pilgrims are scheduled to perform Hajj this year under the government quota. Their orientation and training programmes are currently underway, and vaccination drives will be completed in the coming days.

As per the tour operators, the temporary suspension of visas by Saudi Arabia does not impact Hajj pilgrims, who are travelling to Saudi Arabia strictly for Hajj and have secured Hajj visas.

As per the officials, the early travel restrictions comes after the tragedy during the 2024 Hajj pilgrimage, where over 1,000 people were killed—(KNO)

‘Sharper Probes, Better Prosecution To Boost Convictions In NDPS Cases’

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, chaired the 13th UT Level NCORD (Narcotics Coordination) meeting to review progress on tackling drug trafficking and abuse across Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting highlighted key achievements, ongoing challenges and future strategies to curb the menace of narcotics in the region.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary gave a set of comprehensive directions aimed at tightening the enforcement and judicial mechanisms under the NDPS (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) Act. He underscored the urgent need to adopt a multi-pronged strategy combining strict law enforcement, judicial efficiency and community awareness to successfully deal with this menace.

In a significant decision, the Chief Secretary asked for the constitution of District Monitoring Committees in each district of the UT. These committees, to be headed by the respective Deputy Commissioners, with SSPs and Public Prosecutors as members, will be responsible for regularly monitoring the status of NDPS cases. They will specifically focus on long-pending cases and facilitate their speedy trial and disposal, he added. He also directed that a police station-wise review of all NDPS cases



be carried out regularly to strengthen the quality of prosecution and enhance conviction rates.

The Chief Secretary also took stock of various FIRs registered years ago in different police stations that remain pending for final disposal. He asked the Deputy Commissioners and SSPs to personally monitor the progress on such cases and ensure investigations are concluded without any further delay.

The Chief Secretary raised concerns over underutilization of court time in handling NDPS cases, often due to gaps in the investigation process. He emphasized the need to identify these lacunae and hold officials accountable, particularly in instances where defective charge sheets (challans) delay or derail the judicial process. He asked the Police Department to closely examine whether procedural delays or poor-quality investigations were causing bail or acquittals, especially in serious cases involving commercial quantities of narcotics.

Recognizing the evolving nature of drug trafficking networks, Dulloo called for strengthening the intelligence-gathering mechanism to identify and apprehend key players involved in the drug trade. He advised the Police Department to utilize its intelligence network effectively to detect patterns, identify repeat offenders, and track supply chains.

In cases involving habitual or organized drug traffickers, he suggested invoking the provisions related to organized crime or Sec 346 of BNSS to effectively dismantle syndicates and create a strong deterrent in the society against drug trade.

The Chief Secretary expressed concern over the vulnerability of border districts to cross-border drug smuggling, particularly from neighbouring regions. He directed the concerned authorities to maintain heightened vigil in these areas and increase surveillance activities with several other measures to detect the involvement of locals in this illicit trade.

ECI Rejects Suggestions On EVMs’ Vulnerability To Hacking



Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Election Commission on Friday rejected the suggestions that Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) used in the country are vulnerable to hacking, asserting that the machines work like simple calculators which are not connected to the internet or infrared.

Referring to the reported remarks of United States Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard, that her office has obtained evidence of vulnerabilities to the hacking of electronic voting systems for manipulating votes, the sources pointed out that some countries use “electronic voting systems” which are a mix of multiple systems, machines and processes including various private networks including the Internet.

They underlined that India

uses Electronic Voting Machines that work like “simple, correct and accurate calculators” and cannot be connected to either the internet, WiFi or infrared.

These machines have stood legal scrutiny by the Supreme Court and are invariably checked by the political parties at various stages, including conduct of “mock polls” before actual polling starts.

More than five crore paper trail machine slips have been verified and matched while counting in front of political parties, they pointed out.

Then Chief Election Commissioner, Rajiv Kumar, had in January responded to Musk's claim saying, “A global IT expert said EVMs can be hacked while our elections are going on. They (the US) don't have EVMs, they have electronic voting mechanisms.”

Govt Focusing On Boosting Entrepreneurship, Employment: Dy CM



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, convened a comprehensive meeting to review the functioning of Labour and Employment department.

Secretary Labour and Employment, Rajiv Ranjan, Labour Commissioner, Charandeep Singh, Deputy Labour Commissioner, Assistant Labour Commissioner of Jammu division and other officers were present during the meeting.

The Department gave a powerpoint presentation highlighting its progress and achievements under various schemes. He apprised that the department intends to establish 1.5 lakh nano entrepreneurship which are under Rs 10 lakh and need no collateral from the applicant as overall budget for Mission YUVA is Rs 1830 crore.

The Dy CM had district wise review of all the schemes besides assessing the hindrances in desirable outcomes of the initiatives.

The Dy CM, while highlighting the need for creating awareness about various labour welfare schemes being implemented by the Government,

said that the same will help in ensuring the benefit percolates to the targeted population. He asked the officers to regularly hold awareness camps so that the information about the benefits of different schemes is

properly disseminated. “The officers should ensure that these camps are holistic, so that massive participation of stakeholders is ensured”, he maintained.

He asked the concerned officials to motivate the individuals and create a supportive environment for all businesses to thrive besides focusing on capacity building.

Surinder Choudhary reiterated the government's commitment to establish J&K as a thriving hub of enterprises and holistic employment by fostering entrepreneurship culture. “Government's prime focus is on boosting entrepreneurship and employment,” he added.

He also directed for undertaking regular inspection of various business establishments so that the welfare of workers is ensured. He said that there should be no laxity whenever a violation is observed. He asked the officers to conduct regular inspections of Industrial Estates, Hotels, Factories and other business establishments to gather feedback on production units besides the facilities and working conditions of human resource engaged there.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister met several deputations who projected their issues and sought redressal of the same

Surinder Choudhary assured them that the Government would ensure time bound redressal of their issues.

Cyber Police Jammu Refunds Rs 63 Lakhs To Victims

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Cyber Police Station Jammu has achieved a significant milestone in its efforts to combat cybercrime, successfully saving online financial fraud amounting to Rs 63,20,883 in the first quarter of 2025.

Out of this amount, Rs 28,77,296 has been refunded to victims, with the remaining amount under process with banks, a police spokesman said in a statement.

“The Cyber Police Station Jammu has been working tirelessly to protect citizens from falling prey to cybercrimes. The station has registered several First Information Reports in bank fraud and social media cases. Efforts are also underway to block calling numbers and mobile phone sets used in fraudulent activities,” the statement added.

To combat cyber stalking and

scams, the station has intensified awareness campaigns, advising citizens to be cautious when sharing personal information online and avoiding sharing sensitive details with unknown individuals or organizations, it reads.

“Citizens are warned to be cautious of ongoing scams, including fake online job offers, crypto currency investment schemes, and phishing attempts via email and SMS. Recently, there has been a surge in cases where scammers are posing as representatives from prominent companies, offering lucrative job opportunities or investment/trading schemes. Citizens are advised to verify the authenticity of such offers before providing any personal or financial information,” the statement added.

To report cybercrime incidents, citizens can call the helpline number 1930.

Desperate SRH Aim To Press Reset Button Against Punjab Kings

Press Trust of India

HYDERABAD: Desperate to arrest a worrying slide, Sunrisers Hyderabad will be eager to effect a turnaround when they host a power-packed Punjab Kings in their next IPL engagement here on Saturday.

Last season's finalists, SRH began their 2025 campaign on a thunderous note, racking up a mammoth 286 to dismantle Rajasthan Royals by 44 runs.

With an explosive batting line-up at their disposal, the 'Orange Army' seemed poised to become the first team to breach the 300-run mark but their ultra-aggressive approach has since backfired spectacularly.

In their last three matches, their attack-at-all-costs strate-



gy with the bat yielded underwhelming totals of 163, 120, and 152 resulting in crushing defeats, and leaving them languishing at the bottom of the points table. They have worst Net-Run-Rate of -1.629 as of

today. With the bat, Sunrisers Hyderabad need far more from their big names like Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan, and Heinrich Klaasen. Head and Sharma, who played

a crucial role in delivering explosive starts last season, have failed to find their rhythm this year. In fact, SRH's best opening stand so far is a paltry 15.

Head's performance has tailed off dramatically, returning scores of 67, 47, 22, 4, and 8. Abhishek, too, has struggled for consistency, with a top score of just 24 across five innings.

Kishan, after his unbeaten ton in the opener, has looked a shadow of himself, while SRH's middle-order mainstay Klaasen is yet to set the stage on fire.

Yet, the team appears committed to sticking with their aggressive blueprint. Head coach Daniel Vettori stressed on the need for better game awareness rather than a shift in philosophy after their last defeat.

While SRH's misfiring batting line-up has dominated post-match discussions, their bowling unit hasn't exactly lit up the tournament either.

The pace attack has failed to make any meaningful impact. Despite the presence of seasoned campaigners like Pat Cummins, Mohammed Shami, and Harshal Patel, SRH have struggled to make early inroads.

In stark contrast, Punjab Kings are riding a wave of early season momentum under the fresh leadership of Shreyas Iyer.

The Indian star has led from the front with the bat and displayed impressive tactical nous, guiding his team to three wins in four games as they sit at the fourth spot on the points table. Match starts: 7.30pm.

Short TAKES

LSG v GT: In-Form Pooran Will Have A Siraj Riddle To Solve

The prolific Nicholas Pooran will have his task cut out against a menacing Mohammed Siraj in a battle of equals as table toppers Gujarat Titans take on hosts Lucknow Super Giants in an IPL match here on Saturday.

In sapping Lucknow heat, an enticing battle is likely to ensue since there is not much to choose between the two teams. Titans have won four matches in a row to sit pretty on top of the table (8 points) by virtue of better net run-rate compared to Delhi Capitals, which also has four victories in its kitty.

LSG are currently fifth in a mid-table muddle with six points but it is a side on upward curve at the moment.

In all big battles, the important sub-plots hold the key and in this match, it would be a duel between tournament' top scorer Pooran and Siraj, the best fast bowler on view.

England Cricket Great James Anderson Awarded Knighthood

England cricket great James Anderson has been awarded a knighthood in former British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's resignation honors list.

Anderson — often referred to as "Jimmy" — retired from test cricket in July with more wickets than any other fast bowler in the history of the format.

According to the British government, Anderson will be knighted for "services to cricket."

The 42-year-old Anderson is England's all-time leading test wicket-taker with 704, putting him third all-time behind Australia great Shane Warne (708) and Sri Lankan Muttiah Muralitharan (800). Both were spinners.

Anderson extended his playing career in January by signing a one-year contract with Lancashire. He is playing his 25th first-class season.

Mohamed Salah Signs New Two-Year Deal At Liverpool

Mohamed Salah's trophy-laden spell with Liverpool is set to extend to a decade after the prolific Egypt forward signed a new contract with the Premier League leader, ending months of uncertainty over his future.



The 32-year-old Salah was one of three key senior players — with Trent Alexander-Arnold and Virgil van Dijk — due to be out of contract at the end of this season.

He is the first to extend his stay, having already established himself as a club great with 243 goals in 394 appearances, placing him third in the list of Liverpool's all-time top scorers.

Liverpool didn't disclose the length of Salah's new deal in an announcement on Friday but manager Arne Slot did, saying in a news conference it was a two-year contract.

DYSSO Anantnag Holds Meetings Over New Activity Calendar

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: To ensure effective implementation of the newly framed Departmental Activity Calendar, the District Youth Services & Sports Officer (DYSSO) Anantnag convened a series of planning meetings across nine YSS zones of the

district. The meetings were held under the chairmanship of DYSSO Anantnag, accompanied by the District Activity Incharge, and covered the zones of Anantnag, Achabal, Bijbehara, Doru, Verinag, Mattan, Srigufwara, Ashmuqam and Shangus.

These comprehensive zonal meetings witnessed

the enthusiastic participation of all field staff including Zonal Physical Education Officers. The central agenda of the discussions revolved around the effective and timely execution of the new Departmental Activity Calendar issued by the Directorate of Youth Services & Sports, J&K.

Inter-School Zonal Level Chess Competition Kicks Off In Budgam

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSSO) Budgam kick-started its annual calendar of activities with the Inter-School Zonal Level Chess Competition for Under-14 and Under-17 girls at Zone Narbal.

The event, hosted at Holy Mission High School Narbal, was formally inaugurated by Incharge Activity Zonal



Physical Education Officer, Bashir Ahmad Sheikh. This competition marks the beginning of a series

of inter-school sporting events aimed at promoting talent and competitive spirit among young athletes.

IPL: Clinical KKR Dominate, Beat CSK By 8 Wickets



Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: A clinical Kolkata Knight Riders thrashed a completely disoriented Chennai Super Kings by eight wickets in an Indian Premier League match here on Friday.

Sent in to bat, CSK could manage only a paltry 103 for nine, their lowest total at their home ground Chepauk. It was CSK's third lowest total in the IPL and the lowest by any team in this edition so far.

Shivam Dube (31 not out), Vijay Shankar (29) and Rahul Tripathi (16) were the main run getters for CSK.

For KKR, Sunil Narine (3/13) was the pick of the bowlers, while Harshit Rana (2/16) and Varun Chakravarthy (2/22)

picked up two wickets each.

Captaining CSK after Rituraj Gaikwad was ruled out of the remainder of the IPL due to an injury, MS Dhoni could only make just one off four balls before getting out in the 16th over after coming out to bat at number nine.

The chase was a cakewalk for KKR as they overwhelmed the target in 10.1 overs, reaching 107 for two.

Brief Scores:

Chennai Super Kings: 103 for 9 in 20 overs (Shivam Dube 31 not out, Vijay Shankar 29; Sunil Narine 3/13).

Kolkata Knight Riders: 107 for 2 in 10.1 overs (Sunil Narine 44; Noor Ahmad 1/8).

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