

## Valley Weather Turns Harsh: Rain, Snow, Hail Disrupt Life

### MeT Issues Alerts, Advises Caution

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: A fresh wave of turbulent weather swept across Jammu and Kashmir, plunging the Valley into a chilly spell marked by heavy rain, snowfall in upper reaches, and back-to-back hailstorms that wreaked havoc—particularly in South Kashmir's orchard-laden districts.

The abrupt weather change, which began Thursday night, brought widespread disruption across the region. From Srinagar's rain-soaked streets to snow-draped mountains in Tulail and



Sithan Top, residents woke to a sharp dip in temperatures and warnings from the Meteorological Department. On Friday evening,

intense hail storms accompanied by lightning, thunderstorms, and strong winds wreaked havoc in several | [More on P6](#)



#### Forecast For Next Few Days

- April 20: Light rain, snow (higher reaches), thunderstorms, gusty winds.
- April 21: Cloudy, light rain, thunderstorms.
- April 22-28: Dry with cloudiness on April 25.

#### Advisories

- **Yellow alert in effect.**
- **Avoid travel in high-altitude areas.**
- **Farmers advised to halt activities.**

### Hailstorm Shatters Harvest Hopes In Kashmir's Apple Heartland

#### Dr. Waseem Ahmad

Srinagar: Ghulam Nabi paced through his orchard at dawn, boots crunching over a carpet of ice and torn pink petals. Just hours earlier, his apple trees—swollen with delicate white blossoms—had promised a bumper harvest. Then the sky turned violent. “It sounded like stones raining,” Nabi muttered, gesturing to broken branches and bare twigs. “One storm, and my family's income for the year... gone.”



This is Shopian, Kashmir's “apple bowl,” where 80% of families survive on orchards. But a merciless hailstorm ripped through villages like Keller, Trenz, and Pahnoo, striking at the | [More on P6](#)

### Heavy Downpour Triggers Flood-Like Conditions

Necessant rainfall over the past 24 hours has triggered waterlogging and flash flood-like conditions across various parts | [More on P6](#)

### Key Roads Closed

Owing to the moderate snowfall, the Gurez-Bandipora Road has been closed for traffic, the officials said. A few other areas in the higher reaches, including Zoji La along the Srinagar-Leh National Highway, | [More on P6](#)

### No Flood Threat: I&FC

The Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Department on Saturday confirmed there is no imminent threat of flooding in the Kashmir Valley, even as relentless rains, gusty winds, and hailstorms triggered emergency | [More on P6](#)

### 22 Families Evacuated In Kishtwar

At least 22 families have been shifted as a precautionary measure due to the lurking threat of a landslide in the Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir, a government official said. | [More on P6](#)

### Lightning Kills 2 In Reasi

Two persons, including a woman, were killed and another woman sustained injuries after they were struck by lightning in a remote village in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on | [More on P6](#)

## Hard Work, No Hype Budgam Girl Achieves Top JEE Score In J&K

#### Dabirah Hassan

Srinagar: Early this year, Attiya Zehra scored 84.10 percentile in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), one of India's toughest engineering entrance tests. It wasn't enough for the schools she had hoped for, but she didn't dwell on the result.

A few months later, she came back with 99.84 percentile, the highest score among female candidates in Jammu & Kashmir. “I just focused on what I had to do better,” she said.

There was no dramatic overhaul, no change in coaching institutes, no new test prep subscriptions. Attiya kept her schedule tight, cut back on distractions, and stuck to a plan. She revised old material, took mock tests, and kept her phone use minimal. She credits her



success to consistency.

A student of Alasma Educational Institute and later Spring Buds School Budgam, Attiya was known by her teachers for being focused and disciplined, though never the kind to raise her hand first or speak the most.

“She was not loud about her efforts,” one of her school teachers recalled. “But she always delivered when it mattered.”

Her family supported her decision to try again. Her father, Ghulam Hassan Khanday, is a Physical | [More on P6](#)

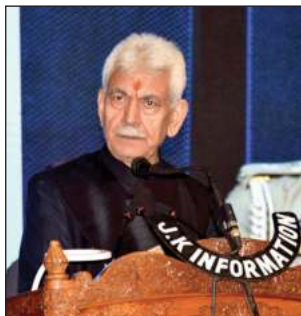
## Will Not Allow ‘Conflict Entrepreneurs’ To Rise Again: LG

Seeks Promotion Of Sufism Among Youth To Combat Extremist Ideology

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said that spilling the blood of innocents had become the biggest business for the “masters of terror” and “conflict entrepreneurs” in the Union Territory as he vowed not to allow them to raise their heads again.

Sinha said that in the last five years, police, security forces and administration, with the support of the people, have succeeded to a large extent in



taking J&K out of that phase, but there is still a long way to go.

“I want to say this with responsibility that murdering

innocents had become the biggest business for the masters of terror and conflict entrepreneurs. Conflict entrepreneurs had created a huge ecosystem around terror (in J-K),” the LG said addressing an event here.

“There are still some conflict entrepreneurs who are trying to be active, but I assure you that no such person will be allowed (to reemerge). I am happy that the youths of J&K have started to understand their sinister plans,” he added.

Sinha appealed to Sufi scholars attending | [More on P6](#)

### ‘Jammu On Track For Full Peace In 6 Months’

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said that peace would be established in the Jammu region of the Union Territory, hit by a spate of terror attacks in the recent past,

within the next six months.

Sinha made these remarks at an interaction with the members of YPO-Global One, an international network of leaders and CEOs in business, here. | [More on P6](#)

## Govt Committed To Business-Friendly Reforms: CM

#### Observer News Service

Jammu: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday reiterated his government's commitment to creating a business-friendly environment by streamlining regulatory frameworks and cutting down compliance burdens across sectors in the Union Territory.

He was speaking at a high-level meeting held to review the status of compliance reduction and deregulation under the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) initiative — a national reform agenda spearheaded by the Union Cabinet Secretariat in collaboration with the PMO, NITI Aayog, DPIIT, and the Ministry of MSME.

The ongoing reform drive aims to eliminate outdated regulations, simplify compliance processes — particularly for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises — promote

digitisation, enable single-window clearances, and decriminalise business laws wherever necessary.

In the meeting, Abdullah directed officials to break down action plans — most of which span five to six months — into smaller, achievable fortnightly goals. He stressed the importance of tracking progress closely and identifying reasons for any delays.

He also instructed departments to promptly upload finalised action plans on the MIS portal and begin implementation without delay. “My government is committed to fostering a business-friendly environment and streamlining regulatory frameworks across various sectors,” Abdullah said.

To ensure accountability, the Chief Minister announced a structured review mechanism under which the reform progress will be | [More on P6](#)

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# 'Biological Activity On Exoplanet May Change How We See Night Sky'

Press Trust Of India

Evidence of biological activity outside the solar system can potentially change the way the night sky is fundamentally perceived, from seeing it as a physical, inanimate sky to thinking of it as a "living sky", astrophysicist Nikku Madhusudhan has said.

A professor of astrophysics and exoplanetary science at the University of Cambridge, Madhusudhan is the lead researcher on a study that has found fingerprints of dimethyl sulphide and dimethyl disulphide molecules on an exoplanet -- K2-18 b -- about 120 light years from Earth.

The molecules, known to be produced on Earth by marine organisms, are considered predictors of life or habitability on exoplanets.

The results of the study, published in The Astrophysical Journal Letters, are

the strongest signs yet of life outside the solar system.

Madhusudhan told PTI Videos, "It is entirely possible that if we spend a few more observations on (K2-18 b), then, in a few years, we may be able to increase the significance substantially and very confidently detect these molecules."

Currently, the study provides evidence of "three-sigma" significance. The statistical term is an objective measure, indicating a 99.7 per cent confidence that the study's results are not a "fluke".

"Three sigma means you would still have a 0.3 per cent chance that it's a statistical fluke -- (about) three in a thousand chance of it being a fluke," Madhusudhan said.

While this level of significance was seen "respectably", when it comes to a scientific result carrying massive implications -- such as 'we might not be



alone in the universe' -- "you want to be really, really sure", according to the

astrophysicist.

"When you have big breakthroughs,

big paradigm shifts, you want to be really, really sure because it changes the very fabric of science and society in fundamental ways," Madhusudhan said.

"So then, the measure of robustness there is that we want to be sure to a level that there is less than one part in a million chance of a fluke, which is a very, very, very small chance of a statistical fluke or a 'just by chance'. We want to be that robust," he added.

Born in India in 1980, Madhusudhan graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology (Banaras Hindu University), Varanasi, with an undergraduate degree in engineering.

He went on to pursue a masters in engineering in 2004 and a PhD in physics in 2009 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), US.

He held postdoctoral positions at multiple institutes, including MIT, before joining the University of Cambridge as

faculty in 2013.

Over the past decade, the astrophysicist has made influential contributions to the field of exoplanetary science, especially on the atmospheres of "Hycean worlds" -- a type of exoplanet entirely covered by an ocean beneath a hydrogen-rich air.

Madhusudhan's team coined the term five years ago while trying to find planets potentially habitable, yet be big enough and have properties that can be observed using currently available technical instruments.

"So, we came up with this concept and K2-18 b is a good candidate for that. If you take the mass radius or equilibrium temperature of the planet. It matches that description," said the astrophysicist, whose work has been recognised by the Yale Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics and the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics.

## Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name

IET India Scholarship Award 2025

Description: The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) invites undergraduate engineering students to showcase their creativity, innovation, and leadership. This scholarship recognizes and nurtures India's future engineering leaders, empowering them to excel.

Eligibility: Open to full-time 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-year UG engineering students from AICTE/UGC-approved institutions across all branches. Applicants must have cleared all credit courses in a single attempt with a minimum of 60% marks in aggregate (or 6.0 CGPA on a 10-point scale). There is no age limit.

- Prizes & Rewards: Scholarships worth INR 10,00,000
- Last Date to Apply: 31-05-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/IET5](http://www.b4s.in/observer/IET5)
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scholarship-media/20251744626967.png>



Scholarship Name

Education Future International Scholarship 2025

Description: Education Future International Scholarship 2025 is offered by the Education Future organisation to meritorious Indian students who are pursuing studies overseas in any of the top universities globally.

Eligibility: Application is open to Indian nationals with a valid passport. Applicants must be pursuing an undergraduate/postgraduate course overseas in a recog-

nised institution outside India. They must have secured a minimum of 60% marks in Class 10 and 12, and be able to prove the absence of any means for education funding.

- Prizes & Rewards: A scholarship ranging between 2 to 10 lakh.
- Last Date to Apply: Round The Year
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/EFIS5](http://www.b4s.in/observer/EFIS5)
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scholarship-media/20251743482407.png>

Scholarship Name

Sydney Scholars India Scholarship Program 2025-26

Description: Sydney Scholars India Scholarship Program 2025-26 is an opportunity offered by the University of Sydney to Indian students who want to pursue their undergraduate or postgraduate studies in Sydney.

Eligibility: Open to Indian citizens who are classified as international students under the definition outlined in the Higher Education Support Act 2003. Applicants must have applied to an undergraduate or postgraduate coursework program at the University of Sydney, but their studies must not have commenced yet. They also need to have an unconditional offer letter.

- Prizes & Rewards: Up to 100% tuition fee scholarships.
- Last Date to Apply: 25-05-2025
- Application mode: Online Applications Only
- Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/SSIS4](http://www.b4s.in/observer/SSIS4)
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scholarship-sydney-scholars-india-scholarship-program-2025-261744627181.png>

### اطلاع عام

برخاستہ و عام کو بذریعہ اشتہار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ مورخہ 18 اپریل کو دوران سفر واگرسے بدگام تک میرا آدھا زریہ نمبر 736603219776 اور PAN زریہ نمبر BDWPD4189D کہیں کم ہو گئے ہیں۔ اگر کسی شخص نے اٹھایا ہو تو برائے انسانیت نیچے دیے گئے پتہ پر واپس کریں۔ بصورت دیگر ان کے ڈپلیکٹ کٹائی مطلوب ہے۔ اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر متعلقہ محکمہ کو اطلاع کریں۔

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### Public Notice

I Suhail Ahmad Magray, father of Safoora Suhail R/o Chaki Sidqi Khan, Tehsil Hermain, District Shopian want to correct the parentage of my ward in Aadhaar and municipal record which has been wrongly entered as Shamim Ahmad Magray instead of Suhail Ahmad Magray. Now correction is required. If anybody has any objection, may contact concerned Aadhar Centre Jammu/Srinagar or Municipal Council Shopian within 7 days.

fko

### Public Notice

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 935532563452 the name is entered as RIASA while my actual name is RAVEESA GULZAR. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.  
RAVEESA GULZAR  
W/O GULZAR AHMAD WANI  
R/O OLD BARZULLA SANAT NAGAR SRINAGAR.

mcb

## NOTICE

I Zakir Hussain S/o Hussen Ud Din R/o Illahibagh, want to transfer my electricity connection from Zakir Hussain to Ab Rashid Matta **Bearing Consumer ID 0204020011788, Installation No. 38928.** Regard this, if any person should have any kind of objection he/she may file the same to the Subdivison Office Rainawari within a week at the most, after that no objection will be entertained.

Media Line Ads

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Hajira Banoo W/o Ab Qadoos Kaloo R/o Allowpora Ahgam Tehsil Keegam District Shopian want to change my name on Aadhaar record and pension book from (Old Name) Hajra Begum to (New Name) Hajira Banoo. If anybody has any objection may contact concern Aadhaar Centre Jammu/Srinagar or concern authorities within 7 days.

fko

### Public Notice

The mother's name of my ward has been wrongly written in his school records as Syeda Kownsara while the correct Mother's name is Kouser Bano which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the ZEO Singhpora, Pattan within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Kouser Bano

bmg

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

### DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE PROTECTION OFFICE OF THE WILDLIFE WARDEN, SHOPIAN

Tele/Fax 01933 261918 email address [wildlifeshopian@gmail.com](mailto:wildlifeshopian@gmail.com)

PUBLIC ADVISORY

Department Issues Stern Warning Against Littering in Hirpora and Tral Wildlife Sanctuaries

Shopian, April 18th, 2025 — The Department of Wildlife Protection, Shopian Wildlife Division, expresses serious concern over the increasing instances of non-biodegradable waste dumping—particularly plastic bottles, bags, and wrappers—within the ecologically sensitive Hirpora and Tral Wildlife Sanctuaries.

This growing trend poses a significant threat to wildlife habitats, disrupts natural ecosystems, and undermines the core objectives of wildlife conservation in these protected areas. The Department strongly condemns such acts and issues a public appeal urging all visitors, tourists, and locals to refrain from littering or leaving behind any form of waste, especially plastic and other non-biodegradable materials.

**As per existing legal frameworks, strict penalties will be enforced against violators:**

- Under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, individuals causing damage or pollution in wildlife sanctuaries may face up to 3 years imprisonment or a fine of 25,000, or both. In aggravated cases, this may extend to 7 years imprisonment.
- The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 provides for imprisonment up to 5 years or a fine up to 1,00,000, with additional fines for prolonged non-compliance.
- The J&K Non-Biodegradable Material (Management, Handling and Disposal) Act, 2007 empowers authorities to impose fines of up to 5,000 for first-time offenses, and 10,000 and two months imprisonment for repeat violations.

To curb such violations, the Department has intensified field surveillance in and around tourist trails, forest tracks, and water bodies using camera traps and patrolling staff. All such offenses will be treated as cognizable environmental crimes, and appropriate action will be initiated without delay.

Further, field staff have been directed to submit regular violation reports, while efforts are underway to work in tandem with panchayat bodies, eco-guides, and volunteer groups to conduct awareness campaigns and sensitization drives promoting responsible tourism and environmental stewardship.

The Department calls upon every citizen and visitor to act responsibly and contribute to the protection of Jammu & Kashmir's natural heritage. The sanctuaries of Hirpora and Tral are not just tourist destinations—they are critical habitats supporting rare and endangered species that require our collective respect and protection.

Keep our forests clean. Protect our wildlife. Say no to plastic.

Issued in Public Interest by:

Wildlife Warden  
Shopian Wildlife Division

No: WLW-Spn/Estt/2025/635-39

DIPK-583/25

Dated:- 19. 04.2025

(GOVERNMENT OF INDIA)

(UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR)

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CITY ROADS (SMC) DIVISION SRINAGAR.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No:- E-NIT/04/CRD/SMC/SGR/2025-26 DATED: 19-04-2025.

For and on behalf of the Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, e-tenders (in Single cover System) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments.

S. No	Name of Work	Advt. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit @2% of days Adv. Cost	Completion	Class of Contractor	M.H of A/C
1	Fencing and Beautification of Central Median from Karan Nagar Junction to Darish Kadal Srinagar.	49.00	1100/-	98000/-	60 Days	AAV/BEE Class	NCAP (2025-26)
2	Upgradation of road leading to JK Public Service Commission Solina for dust suppression and creation of Green Zones by way of Landscaping/ plantation on available open spaces.	41.00	1100/-	82000/-	50 Days	AAV/BEE Class	NCAP (2025-26)

AAA: Accorded.

- The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specification, Drawings, bill of quantities, (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per the schedule of dates given below:  
Scheduled Dates & Time of Online Tenders.

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice Online	19-04-2025.		
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	FROM	21-04-2025 10:00 A.M	
3.	Bid submission Start Date	21-04-2025	FROM	10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	29-04-2025	UPTO	4:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	30-04-2025 at 10:00 A.M	in the office of the Executive Engineer City Roads SMC Division Srinagar.	

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of introducing Bank Receipt as a tender fee paid in the Municipal Account No: 0216010200000007 payable at J&K Bank Branch Dood Ganga Balgarden, Srinagar payable at Srinagar (With NIT No. and S.No. of work mentioned) by simply uploading a copy of necessary Bank Receipt.
- Bids must be accompanied with Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) @2% of the advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar which shall be uploaded with the tender documents at the time of tendering. The same shall be released after receipt of 5% of performance security which should be valid till completion of DLP from the successful Bidder.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar (Tender receiving authority).
- The bids for the work shall remain Valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.
- The lowest bidder (L1) also called the successful Bidder has to produce a performance security amount equal to 5% (five percent) of the contract value in the shape of CDR/ FDR/ BG immediately after the opening of financial bids, but prior to fixation of contract. The validity period of the FDR/ BG for requisite amount shall be upto DLP. Any FDR/ BG having less validity period shall not be entertained. The CDR/ FDR/ BG shall be released after successful completion of the Defect Liability Period (DLP).
- If any bidder / tenderer withdraws/ modified his bid during the period of validity etc, the Department is at liberty to suspend the bidder for one year or as shall be deemed suitable by the tender inviting Authority. Same shall hold good if the bidder fails to produce performance security within the specified time.
- The successful bidder (L1) shall have to furnish hard copy of the uploaded documents viz Registration card duly renewed, Valid GST Registration, PAN Card, GSTR-3B etc. alongwith Treasury Challan Receipt.
- The tender / bid is liable to rejection if it does not fulfill the requirements as laid down in NIT and SBD.
- Any of the unforeseen conditions of the contract not mentioned above shall be dealt as per Manual Procurement 2022.
- The contractor shall apprise himself with site and nature of work before bidding so as to have complete know how of the type of machinery and labour to be provided for hassle free execution and on time completion of the allotted work. No excuse shall be entertained or accept as such after tendering process is over.
- The execution of works falling under the jurisdiction of LAWDA shall be subject to NOC from LCMA (LAWDA) Department.

NIT/04/CRD/SMC/SGR/2025-26/e-tendering/

DATED:-19-04-2025.

DIPK-572/25

dated: 19-04-2025

Executive Engineer,  
City Roads (SMC) Division,  
Srinagar.



# Waterlogging On Key City Roads Sparks Anger

Agencies

Srinagar: Frequent waterlogging in several parts of Srinagar, particularly on the Humhama-Airport Road—a VVIP route leading to the city’s international airport—continues to cause massive traffic jams and inconvenience to commuters, residents, and tourists.

Despite repeated complaints, authorities have failed to find a permanent solution, leaving the public frustrated.

According to details available, rainfall began late Thursday night and continued into Friday, once again exposing the poor drainage infrastructure in the city.

A stretch of road outside Sher-e-Kashmir Park turned into a virtual pool, forcing pedestrians to wade through ankle-deep water. Videos of the scene quickly went viral on social media, drawing sharp criticism from the public.

“This is the so-called Smart City. One rainfall and the road looks like a swimming pool,” said Irfan Ahmad, a commuter.



KO Photo Faisal Khan

Several other areas—including Lal Chowk, Dalgate, Karan Nagar, Bemina, and the Humhama-Airport Road—also witnessed severe water accumulation. Residents complained about traffic chaos and the disruption of daily life.

A local resident near Sher-e-Kashmir Park said even light showers result in flooding. “The drainage is either blocked or poorly planned. Crores have been spent on the Smart City

project, but we see no relief,” he said.

Other residents echoed similar concerns, questioning the utility of installing fancy lights and fountains when basic infrastructure like drainage remains inadequate. “This reflects poor planning,” said Arif Wani, another local.

Residents living along the Humhama-Airport Road, frequently used by VIPs and tourists, said the problem is getting

worse every year. “This is the first impression visitors get when they arrive in Kashmir. It’s embarrassing,” said another local.

With the city bracing for more seasonal rains, residents are demanding immediate action to upgrade the drainage system and ensure that Srinagar lives up to the promise of being a Smart City.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters about the ongoing waterlogging, the SMC Commissioner said that a total of 104 dewatering stations have been made functional. These stations, according to him, are operating smoothly and currently running below capacity, with water being managed efficiently.

He added that in areas where dewatering stations are not yet in place, mobile pumps have been deployed. For instance, in areas like IG Road, which experienced water logging, a permanent dewatering station has now been sanctioned. Until its construction is complete, a mobile dewatering pump has been stationed at the site—(KNO)

## SMC Deploys 104 Dewatering Stations In City


Observer News Service

Srinagar: In response to continuous rainfall on Friday night and throughout Saturday, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Commissioner Dr. Owais Ahmad visited multiple locations across the city to assess the waterlogging situation and oversee mitigation efforts.

During the inspection, Dr. Owais stated that although several complaints of water accumulation had been received, the city’s dewatering infrastructure was performing efficiently and was not operating at full capacity.

“A total of 104 dewatering stations have been made functional and are effectively managing the current levels of rainfall,” he said, noting that the existing infrastructure has been able to handle the water flow adequately.

In areas lacking permanent dewatering facilities, the SMC has mobilized alternative solutions. “For example, IG Road witnessed water accumulation today. A permanent dewatering station has now been sanctioned for the area. Until it becomes operational, a mobile dewatering pump will be stationed there to manage the situation,” Dr. Owais explained.



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- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

**HIGHWAY STATUS**

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



**HIJRI**  
**CALENDAR**  
21 Shawwal  
1446

**PRAYERS**

FAJR	4: 27
ZUHR	12:32
ASR	5: 13
Magrib	7:09
ISHA	8: 35

## This Day In History

- 1611 - First known performance of Shakespeare's tragedy Macbeth at the Globe Theatre,
- London, recorded by Simon Forman
- 1650 - Dutch East India Company (VOC) management sets new guidelines
- 1657 - Battle in Santa Cruz Bay, Tenerife: English fleet under Robert Blake sinks Spanish silver fleet
- 1689 - The former King James II of England, now deposed, lays siege to Derry
- 1702 - Comet C/1702 H1 approaches within 0.0437 AU of Earth
- 1792 - France declares war on Austria, Prussia & Sardinia
- 1809 - Napoleon I and French forces defeat Austria at Battle of Abensberg, Bavaria
- 1862 - The first pasteurization test is completed by Frenchmen Louis Pasteur and Claude Bernard.
- 1910 - Halley's Comet passes 29th recorded perihelion at 87.9 mn km
- 1915 - The Armenians rise and seize the Turkish town of Van, which they hold until Russians relieve them on 19 May; thousands of Armenians are killed
- 1916 - German-British sea battle off Belgian coast
- 1940 - 1st electron microscope demonstrated (RCA), Philadelphia

## LG Attends Inaugural Ceremony Of Ram Katha

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Saturday attended the inaugural ceremony of Ram Katha, at Srinagar, by Pujya Morari Bapu.

The Lieutenant Governor said, the sacred Ram Katha has the universal language and Prabhu Shri Ram's message of righteousness, compassion, justice and duty resonates across culture and sects.

“Ram Katha has un-

deniably shaped societies, offering moral guidance, shared narratives, and a sense of unity for billions over centuries. Lord Ram's blessings have illuminated paths for humanity and Ram Katha by Morari Bapu across the world have united people, and inspired wisdom,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that the Ram Katha will continue to guide us in building a better society.

“Ram Katha powerfully emphasizes ethical and moral values. Lord Ram's life values hold immense power for the society to ensure equity and equal opportunity,” he said.

The Lieutenant Governor spoke on the life-long campaigns of Pujya Morari Bapu ji dedicated to awakening society and spreading the teachings of Shri Ram through the core principles of truth, love, compassion and universal brotherhood.



## MEDIALINE® ADVERTISING AGENCY CONDOLENCE

**A Condolence Meeting of the entire Media Line Advertising Agency was held today to express sorrow over the sad demise of Muneera Akhtar R/o Tangpora Zoonimar Dr Ali Jan Road Sgr, wife of Javaid Ahmad Dar (Senior Video Journalist, working with 'Daily Excelsior') Who left for heavenly abode on Friday 18th April 2025. Team of Media Line Advertising Agency Express their heartfelt grief for the departed soul and prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow his blessings on the departed soul besides grant forbearance to the bereaved families to bear this loss.**

Sd/ Administrator

### CONDOLENCE SAD DEMISE

It is to inform with grief and sorrow that Ms Yasmeena Akhtar S/o Irfan Hussain Akhron R/o Zaildar Mohalla Saida kadal srinagar left for heavenly abode on 17th April Thursday 2025 after a brief illness at SMHS HOSPITAL Srinagar



She was pious, down to earth and staunch believer of Ahlubait a.s.

Congregational prayers will be observed on friday the 21th April 2025 at their ancestral graveyard at imam Bara Hassanabad (Rainawari) at 06:30 am in the morning after that day long condolence will continue at his Residence Dar-ul-Asgar Zaildar Mohalla Saida Kadal Srinagar for the whole day.

May Allah bestow the Departed soul Highest place in Paradise and give fortitude to the bereaved family to bear this irreplaceable loss.

Breaved family

inf

## CONDOLENCE

**DAILY EXCELSIOR MANAGEMENT & STAFF EXPRESSES CONDOLENCE WITH JAVAID AHMAD DAR**

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of **wife of Javaid Ahmad Dar, (Senior Video Journalist, working with 'Daily Excelsior') passed away on Friday April 18.** Her last rites were conducted on Friday evening at her ancestral graveyard in Zoonimar area of Srinagar. May Almighty Allah (SWT) grant jannatul-firdous to the departed soul. Daily Excelsior Management & Staff expresses condolences with Javed Ahmad Dar, pray for the departed soul and the family members to bear this grief.

Media Line Advt



محلس ترجم

موت العالم موت العالم

عالم ربانی، محقق زمان، عارف باللہ، ناصر ولایت، مرحوم و مغفور حضرت علامہ آغا سید محمد باقر الموسوی الصفوی النجفی (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) ساکن بدگام کشمیر کی اجتماعی قرآن و فاتحہ خوانی بروز بدہ، مورخہ 23 اپریل 2025ء صبح 7 بجے آستان عالیہ پر منعقد ہوگی۔ بعد ازاں ان کے دولت خانہ پر دن بھر مجلس ترجم جاری رہے گی۔

سگواران

حساندان الموسوی الصفویہ (آغا حساندان)

بدگام کشمیر

**FATEHA KHAWANI**


**منیرہ اختر زوجہ جاوید احمد دار**  
(18 April 2025)

آنے سے ہم ملیں ہر گن کر کے لے والیں باغ ابدیم قایم کر پٹے

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of **wife of Javaid Ahmad Dar S/o Late Abdul Aziz Dar, R/o Tangpora Zoonimar Dr Ali Jan Road Sgr, passed away on Friday 18 April 2025.** May Almighty Allah (SWT) grant jannatul-firdous to the departed soul. The Congregational Fateha Khawani will be observed on **Monday (21 April 2025, 9:30 am.)** at their ancestral graveyard Tangpora Zoonimar, Eidgah Srinagar.

**Note: Ladies are strictly requested not to bring any kind of eatables along them.**

**Bereaved Family**  
**7006831347**

**عشائی خاندان کو صدمہ**

**اہلیہ مرحوم بہار شاہ عشائی انتقال کر گئیں**

یہ خبر انتہائی دکھ اور افسوس کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ ہماری والدہ محترمہ **زوجہ مرحوم بہار شاہ عشائی** ساکنہ عمر گالونی ٹی لین نمبر ۱۹ اپریل ۲۰۲۵ء بروز پیر کو دل کی تھکنے والی وجہ سے دارفانی سے وداع کر گئیں۔ مرحومہ کو اپنے آبائی مقبرہ واقع نزد یک مسجد غزالیہ ملہکھاء میں پیر دعا ک کیا گیا۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحومہ کو جنت الفردوس میں جگہ عطا فرمائے۔ اس سلسلے میں مرحومہ کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی 22 اپریل ۲۰۲۵ء بروز منگل اور جمعہ صبح ۷ بجے (10:30) ان کے آبائی مقبرہ واقع نزد یک مسجد غزالیہ ملہکھاء میں انجام دی جائے گی۔ بعد میں مرحومہ کے گھر واقع عشائی منزل عمر گالونی ٹی لین نمبر ۱۹ میں تعزیتی مجلس منعقد ہوگی۔ انشاء اللہ

**سگواران خاندان** : محمد یحیٰ عشائی حاجی الطاف حسین کوکو

**Cell Nos: 9419015304**

نوٹ: بہن سوتار سے گزارش کی جاتی ہے کہ وہ اپنے ساتھی بھی قسم کو بدو وغیرہ ساتھ نہ لائے۔



# Jhelum Is Dying. Why's Nobody Accountable?

Unchecked sewage from Kashmir towns is polluting the lifeline of the Valley. The Pollution Control Committee must act before courts force its hand—again.

Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

River Jhelum, Kashmir's main waterway, is slowly choking under the weight of untreated sewage and official apathy. Despite repeated warnings, the J&K Pollution Control Committee has failed to enforce environmental laws. The problem is no longer about broken systems, it is about the absence of accountability.

In a recent Assembly session, the legislator from Bijbehara, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Veeri, questioned the government on untreated sewage entering Jhelum from the towns of Anantnag, Mattan, and Bijbehara. The Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) admitted that wastewater from these towns is drained into nearby streams, which eventually flow into the Jhelum. However, it misleadingly claimed that sewage is treated through existing networks, when in reality, no operational sewage treatment plant (STP) exists in Anantnag district.

This is not just a bureaucratic failure, it is a violation of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. Section 25 of the Act prohibits the discharge of untreated waste into water bodies. Violation of this law can result in imprisonment of up to six years. Yet, municipalities and urban environmental departments continue to construct drainage systems that dump directly into rivers and streams. And the Pollution Control Committee remains silent.

Jhelum originates from the Verinag spring in Anantnag and travels 402 kilometers before merging with the Indus in Pakistan. It serves as a vital drinking water source and irrigation lifeline for Kashmir. But towns along its path—Anantnag, Bijbehara, Awantipora, Pampore, Srinagar, Sopore, and Baramulla—are polluting it daily.

The issue is systemic.



During an investigation for my weekly program Inkishaf, I discovered untreated drainage from Lal Ded Hospital entering Jhelum at Lal Mandi. The hospital claimed the water was flowing from another area and pointed to a functioning STP. I alerted the Member Secretary of the Pollution Control Committee, who promised an inspection. A week passed—no update.

The story repeats across Srinagar. From Rajbagh to Noorbagh, untreated sewage flows directly into the Jhelum. Water drawn downstream for public use is chlorinated and supplied, but this process doesn't remove all contaminants. This is the water people drink.

Another critical tributary, Doodh Ganga, is similarly polluted. This stream supplies drinking water to over half a million residents in Srinagar's uptown neighborhoods. Last year, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) imposed a Rs 42 crore environmental compensation on the Srinagar Municipal Corporation for

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The story repeats across Srinagar. From Rajbagh to Noorbagh, untreated sewage flows directly into the Jhelum. Water drawn downstream for public use is chlorinated and supplied, but this process doesn't remove all contaminants. This is the water people drink.

polluting Doodh Ganga. The J&K government allocated Rs 140 crore for STPs at Barzulla, Chanpora, and Chadoora, of which Rs 60 crore got administrative approval. Still, the work hasn't

begun, largely due to delays in land acquisition.

The Pollution Control Committee's own reports show that Doodh Ganga's water quality is poor. Faecal coliform levels far exceed permissible limits. In Chadoora, the water tested nearly three times above the acceptable limit for bathing. This water is later lifted for domestic supply in areas like Humhama, Rawalpura, and Sanatnagar—after chlorination, but still unsafe.

From Barzulla to Tengpora, open drains empty into Doodh Ganga. The stream continues to Hokersar wetland, another ecologically fragile site, and eventually enters the Jhelum near Narbal, extending the contamination.

Why is the Pollution Control Committee passive? It has the power to penalize violators, enforce clean-up, and order shut-downs of illegal drainage systems. Yet it rarely acts unless directed by the NGT or High Court. This inaction emboldens polluters and weakens public trust in

environmental regulation.

There are solutions. First, third-party audits of all existing STPs must be conducted immediately to assess their functionality. Second, the Pollution Control Committee should launch suo motu actions against municipalities and departments violating the Water Act. Third, untreated sewage must be diverted from all water bodies until proper treatment infrastructure is built.

Environmental degradation is not a future threat, it is happening now. Every day of delay means more toxins in our rivers and more risk to public health. Jhelum is more than a river. It is the memory and future of Kashmir.

If we don't act now, we may soon cross the point of no return.

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow, Chair of the J&K RTI Movement, head of the Climate Action Group, and an Anant Fellow for Climate Action.

## The Quiet Coup in Kashmir's Academia

*Jammu and Kashmir's plan to extend professors' retirement age on merit risks turning into another tale of privilege dressed as performance.*

Dr. Ashraf Zainabi

The word “merit” used to mean something in the academic world. It stood for rigour, honesty, impact. But in Jammu and Kashmir today, it has become a slogan stretched too thin, especially with the latest move to selectively extend the retirement age of university professors from 62 to 65. The government says the extension will be based on merit. But what does that even mean anymore?

In universities across the region, the reaction has been a mix of cautious hope and quiet disbelief. Everyone knows how things usually work. When rules are vague, it is the well-connected who benefit. In this case, the absence of any clear definition or public criteria for “merit” makes the entire proposal suspect. Without transparency, this promise begins to look less like reform and more like another opportunity to reward friends in high places.

There is a deeper unease here, one rooted in decades of academic decay. Nepotism is no stranger to our institutions. Promotions have often been decided not in classrooms or research labs but in corridors of power. The professor who knows someone in the secretariat is more likely to rise than the one publishing serious research or mentoring students through sleepless nights.

Now, with the retirement extension policy, this imbalance may become further entrenched. Those who have already occupied top posts and cultivated influence over time are best placed to push their cases forward. These are individuals who sit on committees, who know how to draft glowing self-assessments, who can quietly nudge the right people at the right time.

Meanwhile, many deserving educators, especially those who have stayed away from the power games, stand to be left out. These are teachers who have no godfathers, no fancy networks, but have kept the academic engine running in silence. They have guided generations, kept departments functional during crises, and shown up even when the system gave them little in return.

To imagine that true merit can be captured by publication numbers or student evaluations is to overlook how easily such metrics can be manipulated. Journals now accept payment for publication. Students, particularly current ones, can be coached or pressured into writing positive feedback. Certificates of excellence are handed out at institutional functions where real merit is the last thing being measured.

What makes a professor truly deserving of an extension is not the number of conferences attended or titles held. It is their long-term influence, their problem-solving skills, their resilience during institutional failures, and the success stories of students who went on to do meaningful work because of their mentorship. These are things not easily bought or faked. These are signs of real academic legacy.

Unfortunately, the current policy makes no room for these deeper indicators. There is no independent oversight. No blind review. No firewall between the applicant and the reviewers. This leaves the entire process vulnerable to lobbying, influence, and bias.

If the government is serious about fairness, the parent university of the applicant should have no role in the selection process. A truly independent nodal agency must receive applications directly, assess them without disclosing the applicant's identity to the review panel, and draw evidence not from the current students or administrative heads, but from older batches of students and peer feedback from non-teaching staff.

Every step of the process should be traceable and open to scrutiny. Timelines must be fixed. Records must be archived for possible audits. And above all, any attempt to sway the process using power, position, or money must lead to disqualification, not promotion.

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There is a deeper unease here, one rooted in decades of academic decay. Nepotism is no stranger to our institutions. Promotions have often been decided not in classrooms or research labs but in corridors of power. The professor who knows someone in the secretariat is more likely to rise than the one publishing serious research or mentoring students through sleepless nights.

This is not just about a retirement extension. It is about setting a precedent. Either we let this be a turning point for meritocracy, or we continue the slow erosion of trust in our institutions. Universities in Jammu and Kashmir are already fragile. Many departments are struggling to stay relevant in a world that is racing ahead with AI, climate science, and interdisciplinary research. Repeating old mistakes now could set us back another generation.

At the heart of it, this is a moral question, not just a policy one. If those in power choose to treat this opportunity as a favour to be granted rather than a standard to be upheld, they will only confirm what most already suspect — that merit in our part of the world is often just a polite lie.

But it does not have to be that way. This policy could still be saved, restructured, and turned into something that inspires confidence. It could become the first step toward fixing a broken system. That would require courage, clarity, and an honest look in the mirror. Whether the leadership in Jammu and Kashmir is ready for that is the real test.

Author is a teacher-researcher and can be reached out at bhatashraf@gmail.com. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.  
Teacher and Researcher

## What I Saw in Kashmir's Silent Forests

A firsthand account of the troubling die-off of Pine trees in Kashmir, and why we must act now to save our “green gold.”

Peerzada Aarif

I recently walked through the forests of north Kashmir, places I've known and admired since childhood. But this time, something felt off.

The towering trees that once stood in full strength looked tired. Many were drying up, their needles brittle, their bark faded. Some stood dead altogether.

At first, I thought it was just one patch. But as I moved through different forest ranges, I saw the same pattern. The Pines are dying, and not quietly.

This isn't just something I noticed. Environmental experts have been warning about it, and now, seeing it with my own eyes, I understand the urgency. These trees are being hit hard by changing weather, the kind we didn't grow up with. Long dry spells. Sudden heat spikes. Temperatures rising year after year. It's climate change, plain and simple. And it's squeezing the life out of our forests.



In Kashmir, we call our forests green gold. They're more than just trees. They're part of who we are. They protect our water, keep our soil in place, shelter our wildlife, and even shape our seasons. When the Pines die, everything connected to them begins to unravel. Water cycles shift. Soil erodes. Birds and

insects lose their homes. The whole ecosystem feels the shock.

That's why this moment matters. We can't afford to treat this like just another forest issue. The Forest Department needs to start with a proper, ground-level survey. They need to figure out how many trees we've already lost, map out

the worst-hit areas, and understand why this is happening in real time. Not next year. Now.

Once we have the data, we need a clear plan. Not just planting new trees for photos, but reforesting with purpose. Choosing the right species, building climate resilience, and most importantly, addressing the root causes of this die-off. That includes tackling the larger climate challenges facing Kashmir.

I've spent enough time in these forests to know they won't wait for us forever. If we keep dragging our feet, we risk losing more than just the Pine trees. We risk losing the natural systems that keep this valley alive.

So let's act, and let's do it together. Government, scientists, forest workers, local communities — we all have a role. Our forests are not a luxury. They're the foundation. And without them, Kashmir will be a poorer, weaker place, for us and for those who come after.

- The author is a teacher and freelance writer. He can be reached at aarifpeerzada1@gmail.com





## A Sunni Disciple's Tribute to His Shia Mentor

Remembering Agha Syed Baqir Al-Mousvi Al-Najafi, a man whose silent grace, deep scholarship, and human warmth transcended sectarian lines and lit a quiet fire in hearts across Kashmir.

Aubaid Akhmoon

I still remember the first time I sat before him as a young student of Arabic grammar. I came from a Sunni background and he was one of the most respected Shia scholars in Kashmir. He welcomed me with a calm smile and began his lesson. For an eager learner, he became a lantern.

In a world obsessed with speech, Agha Syed Baqir Al-Mousvi Al-Najafi preferred silence. He was not quiet because he lacked conviction. He was quiet because his presence, words, and gaze carried weight. Where others debated, he reflected. Where others performed piety, he lived it — softly, simply, and steadfastly.

Born in 1940 in Budgam, Agha Baqir Sahab belonged to the renowned Agha family, spiritual custodians of the Shia tradition in Kashmir. This family's legacy traces back to Syed Hyder, a healer and mystic who arrived from Najaf around 150 years ago. His descendants carried that spiritual lineage with a commitment to ilm (knowledge), ikhlas (sincerity), and khidmat (service).

Baqir Sahab inherited this legacy not through birthright alone, but by earning it through years of rigorous scholarship and soulful restraint. He studied at Babul Ilm in Budgam and later at the Hawza Ilmiyya in Najaf, Iraq — a city that had shaped many towering intellectu-

als of Shia Islam. Yet he returned not with superiority, but with sobriety. He never brandished his credentials. He carried them lightly, like a man aware of the fragility of fame.

Over decades, he authored works in Arabic, Persian, and Kashmiri. His writings, especially on Ijtihad and the poetry of Allama Iqbal, revealed a mind steeped in tradition yet attuned to modernity. He believed that faith must stay rooted but not rigid. His essays on Ijtihad weren't academic indulgences; they were calls for thoughtful engagement, for balancing timeless principles with timely concerns.

He also had a deep affection for Iqbal, whose verses he interpreted with a spiritual lens — drawing out themes of selfhood (khudi), divine yearning, and communal renewal. But true to his nature, Baqir Sahab never promoted these works. It was as if he feared that attention might dilute sincerity.

And yet, his influence was undeniable. Every Friday sermon, every classroom interaction, every funeral prayer he led — was marked by a rare composure and warmth. I never saw him raise his voice. His sermons were soft, yet stirring. His counsel was never prescriptive, but gently persuasive.

In our divided times, where the faultlines of sect can quickly become chasms, Baqir Sahab embodied a healing presence. I, a Sunni

student, found in him not just a teacher but a mirror — one who reflected the shared beauty of Islamic ethics across sects. He made me realize that the soul recognizes truth not by the banner it flies, but by the light it gives.

He never aspired to become a political figure or a public icon. He stayed away from the limelight, choosing instead to serve as a quiet spiritual anchor for his community. He bore the title "faqeer" with grace. Not as a rhetorical flourish, but as a lived truth. Even in his final years, despite failing health, he would spend hours in study and prayer, refusing comfort if it came at the cost of simplicity.

His funeral, attended by tens of thousands, bore witness to the silent impact of his life. People from across the Valley came to pay respects. Some had studied under him, others had read his works, and many had simply heard of his goodness.

As I stood in the crowd, I felt the weight of his absence, but more importantly, the presence of his legacy. A legacy of humility, deep faith, and quiet reform. A legacy that reminds us that not every fire makes noise. Some fires, like his, glow in silence and light generations.

*- The author is a motivational speaker and editor.  
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## Kashmir's Bestseller Bids Farewell

As Kashmir's iconic bookstore shutters after 45 years, the valley loses more than just a shop. It loses a sanctuary of musing, memory, and meaning.



Hirra Azmat

In a quiet but heartbreaking update, 'Bestseller'—Kashmir's oldest and most cherished bookstore—has announced its permanent closure.

The news came with a melancholic Ghibli-style illustration posted by owner Saniyasnain Chiloo: "A lone bookseller staring at empty shelves, surrounded by piles of rare and classic titles packed in cardboard boxes."

The image said it all—it was the final chapter of a 45-year-old legacy.

Located just a stone's throw away from Srinagar's iconic clock tower at Lal Chowk, 'Bestseller' wasn't just a bookshop—it was a cultural landmark, a haven for readers, and a place where stories lived and breathed.

But on a quiet Friday, Sani broke the news that the shop would be shutting down for good.

"Retail bookstores weren't the real threat—we had loyal readers who stuck with us. But everything changed when Flipkart and Amazon entered the scene," Sani shared. "People began ordering books online with huge discounts, delivered right to their doorstep. Why would anyone battle traffic or parking when they could just tap a button?"

The challenge wasn't just digital convenience—it was also a generational shift.

"The reading culture among today's youth has dropped drastically," Sani continued. "Earlier, people read for knowledge and peace. Now, it's

mostly just about gathering information, or worse, it's been replaced by Instagram reels and food vlogs."

Founded in the 1980s by Sanaullah Chiloo, the bookstore carried a legacy that spanned decades. His son Saniyasnain aka Sani took over in 2017 and revamped the store, turning it into a vibrant space filled with literary fiction, non-fiction, Islamic literature, Classical literature, Kashmir history, ecology, and poetry.

The bookstore was known for housing treasures you couldn't find anywhere else in the valley—or even online: rare diwans of poets like Sahir Ludhianvi and Saagar Siddiqui, works of Islamic Sufism, and Patras Bukhari's classic humour-filled essays.

You could stumble upon complete sets of Arthur Conan Doyle or O. Henry, and all at prices that welcomed students. In fact, students were a special part of Bestseller's story.

"I've been coming here since 8th grade—almost 17 years," shared longtime patron Faizan Bhat. "Sanaullah uncle treated us like his own kids. We'd get massive discounts and sometimes even take books on credit. This place was always my first stop at Lal Chowk. It's more than a bookshop—it's a part of who we are. Its closure says so much about what Kashmir is becoming."

Similarly, Khawar Khan Achakzai, an avid reader and frequent visitor to the bookstore, yearned: "I considered it the only truly complete bookstore in Kashmir—it had everything from fiction and politics to poetry, philoso-

phy, and history. The owner would always go beyond his capacity in helping his customers. Many a times he would buy rare books for me when he was out of Kashmir. It is sad how such a wonderful bookstore is forced to shut down, mainly because of shrinking readership in Kashmir."

The grief extended beyond Srinagar. Bashir Ahmad from Kargil said, "I've been getting books from there for eight years—swift service, amazing collection. I wish this wasn't happening."

The closure of bookstore also signals a deeper shift in the cultural rhythm of Srinagar. It's a change that feels both inevitable and unsettling—a gentle fading of a reading culture that once defined the soul of the city.

Sani points out, "Yaqoob Booksellers became a bakery. Others like Presentation Books, Global Books, Lords, and Book Vision, Shah Book store—all shut down. The next generation will only read about bookstores online."

A reader, Sajad Rasool poignantly wrote on his Facebook timeline, "I went to Lal Chowk to buy a few books for my father, hoping to revisit a beloved local bookstore. Instead, I found books being packed away, two men quietly taking stock—another bookstore shutting down. Once a lively space for readers and thinkers, now just silence."

Meanwhile, Sajad added, Srinagar is sprouting cafes faster than thoughts. "Fewer bookshops, more cappuccinos—maybe that's who we are now," he concluded.

## A Chronicle of Clarity in a Valley of Fog

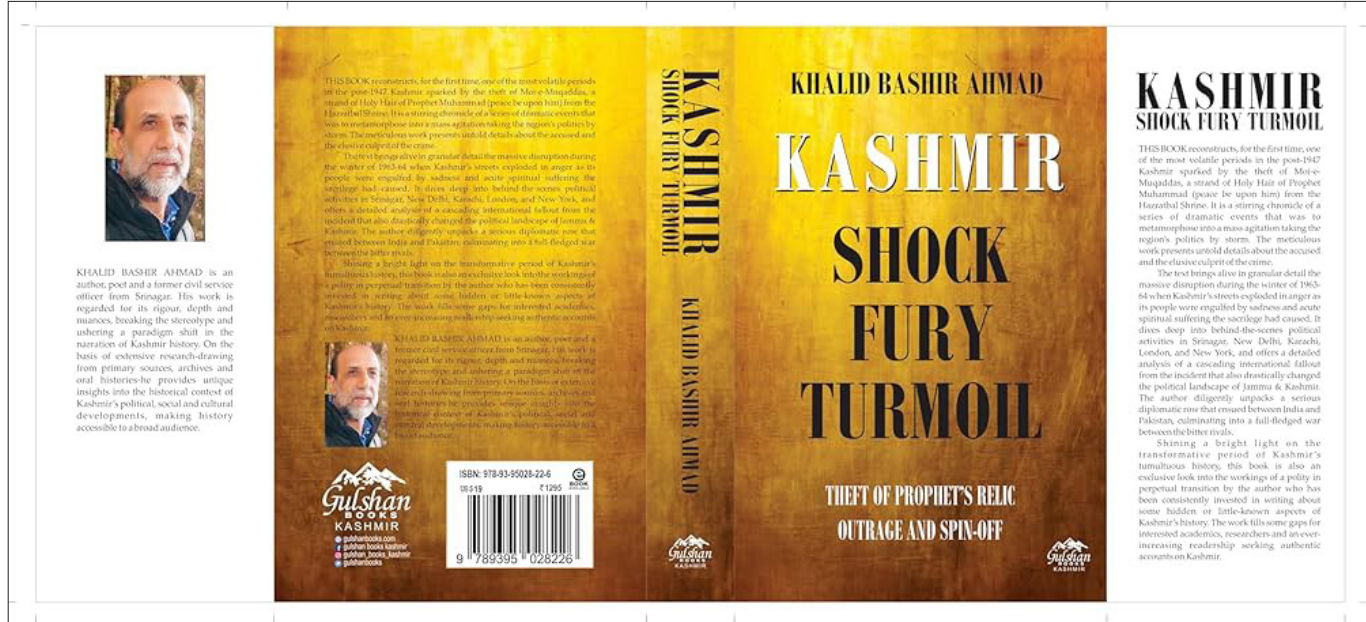
Kashmir: Shock, Fury, Turmoil isn't just about a political strife or a religious artifact; it's about a people grappling with a loss that extends far beyond a single object.

Tasleem Banday

It began quietly. A whisper. A piece of sacred history had gone missing. On a chilly December morning in 1963, people in Srinagar woke up to news that the Prophet's relic, kept for centuries in the Hazratbal Shrine, was gone. No one knew exactly how it happened, but everyone felt it.

This wasn't just a theft. It was a wound. One that spread throughout Kashmir, affecting every Kashmiri. The relic wasn't simply a religious symbol. It was part of the heartbeat of the people, woven deeply into their identity and their complicated relationship with the state. Khalid Bashir Ahmad's Kashmir: Shock, Fury, Turmoil doesn't start with the dry recounting of a crime. It begins with the silence that followed the loss, an unsettling silence that echoed for decades after.

Khalid Bashir doesn't follow the usual paths of historical storytelling. He doesn't give us a clean, step-by-step timeline of events. Instead, he presents the emotions of the moment when the relic disappeared, painting a picture of grief, con-



fusion, and anger. The theft, he shows, was not just an act of crime. It was a blow to the very spirit of Kashmir. The relic was never just a piece of the Prophet's hair; it was the center around which Kashmiri identity revolved. It was more than a holy artifact. It was a thread that connected the region's people, bridging divides

of class, caste, and creed. When it disappeared, it left a void. What was left in its place? An empty shrine? A broken promise? Or was it something deeper, the unraveling of trust in the very institutions meant to protect Kashmiri heritage?

Khalid Bashir's approach cuts through the political and religious tensions surrounding the

relic's loss, but he never offers simple answers. He doesn't just ask what happened to the relic; he questions what happens when faith itself is torn apart. His book asks, in essence, how a loss so profound can reshape a people's relationship with their faith, their politics, and their own identity.

The theft became a focal

point for a much larger conversation about Kashmir's troubled relationship with establishment, the role of religion in shaping politics, and the failure of institutions meant to safeguard the region. The political response was predictable: denials, misdirection, and finger-pointing. But the response from Kashmiris was far

from ordinary. It was filled with grief, anger, and suspicion. They didn't just mourn the loss of an object; they mourned the loss of something integral to their sense of self. The questions it raised were not just about the relic itself, but about the very fabric of Kashmiri society.

Through interviews, archival research, and meticulous investigation, Khalid Bashir pieces together the tangled web of events that followed. What he uncovers is a landscape full of contradictions, where the authorities seemed as invested in managing the political fallout as they were in solving the crime. What's striking about Khalid Bashir's book is its refusal to tie everything up neatly. The case was never fully solved, the relic's return remains mysterious, and the truth is buried beneath layers of political and religious complexity.

Khalid Bashir's narrative raises a deeper question: Can we ever fully understand an event when the forces shaping it—religious, political, and social—are so tangled and deeply entrenched? The theft was not just a moment of rupture. It was also a revealing moment, shedding light on the frag-

ile balance between faith and identity in Kashmir. It was a reminder that when the things that give us a sense of belonging are torn from us, what remains is often more complex than we can imagine. The theft of the Moi-e-Muqaddas was not simply the loss of an object. It was the loss of something far more intangible: a collective sense of faith and unity.

Kashmir: Shock, Fury, Turmoil isn't just about a political dispute or a religious artifact; it's about a people grappling with a loss that extends far beyond a single object. In this sense, the relic's theft serves as a metaphor for Kashmir itself: a place, a people, and a history constantly in search of its own place in the world.

There are no easy answers in this treatise. No tidy conclusions. Instead, what we find in Kashmir: Shock, Fury, Turmoil is a slow, painful unfolding of a region, a people, and a belief system that has been torn apart and slowly, painfully, rebuilt in the rubble. It's not a story of victimhood, but of resilience.

*- The reviewer is a Srinagar-based scholar.*



# DIC Budgam Conducts Udyam Registration Drive Under RAMP

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The District Industries Centre (DIC) Budgam, under the guidance of the Director, Industries & Commerce Kashmir and the supervision of the General Manager, DIC Budgam, successfully conducted the inaugural event of the Udyam

Registration Drive under the RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance) Programme. The event took place at Sheikh-ul-Alam Hall, DC Office Budgam. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 200 local entrepreneurs, business owners, and aspiring MSMEs. It was also

attended by the Financial Literacy Counsellor (FLC) from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and a representative from MSME Development Institute (MSME DI), who provided valuable guidance to participants on financial inclusion and MSME support schemes. The Udyam Registration Drive is aimed at formalizing

unregistered and emerging Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by facilitating their registration on the Udyam portal. The initiative connects MSMEs with government schemes, financial incentives, and market linkages, thereby supporting their business growth and sustainability. As a centrally sponsored

initiative, the RAMP Programme is a World Bank-assisted effort by the Government of India to improve the productivity, competitiveness, and resilience of MSMEs across the country. Speaking on the occasion, the General Manager, DIC Budgam, highlighted the importance of this initiative: “We are committed to ensuring

that every eligible MSME in Budgam gets the support it deserves. Today’s turnout reflects the growing awareness and enthusiasm among entrepreneurs to formalize their operations and tap into new opportunities.” Following the directive of the Director, Industries & Commerce Kashmir, the Udyam

Registration Drive is being conducted across all districts of Kashmir. In Budgam, the drive will cover all 17 blocks in a phase-wise manner, with trained staff deployed to support MSMEs at the grassroots level. Functional Managers are acting as nodal coordinators to ensure smooth implementation at each location

## CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

### Valley Weather

districts, destroying fruit-laden trees and crops. The worst affected areas include Shopian, Pulwama, Kulgam, Anantnag, Budgam, Baramulla, and Kupwara, where apple, cherry, pear, and plum orchards suffered significant losses.

Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, Director of the MeT Department, said moderate to heavy rain accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds is likely to continue across many areas till midnight. He urged people to avoid water bodies, landslide-prone areas, and take shelter during severe weather spells.

The MeT has issued yellow alerts for the next two days, warning of light to moderate rain and snow in most places and the possibility of intense spells in isolated pockets. Weather is expected to remain generally cloudy with light rainfall on April 21, before transitioning to a dry phase between April 22 and 28.

Water bodies like the Jhelum, which had been running low for months, have shown signs of revival due to the ongoing rains.

Owing to the moderate snowfall, the Gurez-Bandipora Road has been closed for traffic, the officials said.

The authorities have ordered the suspension of school up to Class 8 in Tulail and up to Class 5 in Gurez due to the continuous snowfall and inclement weather.

A few other areas in the higher reaches, including Zoji La along the Srinagar-Leh National Highway, and Mughal Road, the alternate road connecting the valley with Jammu, also received fresh snow, the officials said.

Traffic has been suspended on the Zoji La and the Mughal Road due to the snowfall, they added.

Widespread rain lashed most parts of the valley, including Srinagar.

Most areas of Kashmir also witnessed thunderstorms and gusty winds during the night, with a few areas receiving hail that damaged produce in orchards, the officials said.

Meanwhile, the advisory also calls for farmers to suspend all agricultural activity till April 21 and cautions about potential landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones in vulnerable terrain. Locals have been advised to follow administrative and traffic advisories closely.

### Hailstorm Shatters

worst possible moment: peak bloom season. For apple trees, blossoms are babies, the stage when flowers morph into fruit.

The damage is deep. Orchards resemble battlefields: buds battered, branches snapped, ice sheathing the ground. Farmers who spent weeks, and thousands of rupees, on fertilizers and sprays now tally losses in crores. “We’ve had storms before, but never during bloom,” said 62-year-old Farooq Ahmed, kneeling beside a tree stripped bare. “Even if some fruit grows, it’ll be deformed. No market value.”

Horticulture experts warn of cascading crises. Bruised trees are vulnerable to fungal diseases like collar rot. Without urgent fungicide sprays, next year’s growth could falter too. But many farmers lack supplies or guidance. “Copper-based sprays can help, but who’s showing us how?” asked Nabi.

The storm exposed cracks deeper than weather. Crop insurance? Most farmers scoff. Despite government schemes like PMFBY, few here enroll. “Last year, my neighbor waited eight months for a claim. He got 5,000 against 5 lakh in losses,” said Farooq, quoted above. “Why bother?”

Debt is another specter. Many growers rely on Kisan Credit Card loans from Jammu & Kashmir Bank. After back-to-back climate disasters, repayments are impossible. “I took 8 lakh for sprays and workers. Now, no apples, no money,” said Nabi. “The bank calls daily. What do I tell them?”

Dr. Zahoor Ahmad, a horticulturist who regularly advises farmers, urges authorities to declare Shopian a “distress zone”, freeze loans and fast-track aid, “Without debt relief, things might turn desperate,” he said.

Some solutions are clear but out of reach. Hail nets, protective canopies over orchards, slash damage by 70%. But costing 1-2 lakh per acre, they’re a fantasy for small farmers. “The government must subsidize 80% of nets,” argued Dr.

Zahoor. “Otherwise, only rich growers survive.”

While modernizing Kashmir’s orchards is key, farmers for now salvage what they can. Nabi’s sons scrape ice from soil, hoping to save roots. His wife worries about upcoming family weddings and school fees. “Allah decides our fate,” Nabi sighed, “but what about the officials?”

The storm’s message is clear: Kashmir’s apple economy hangs by a thread. Without swift aid, insurance reforms, and climate-smart farming, Shopian’s blizzards will leave more than ice in their wake, they’ll bury a way of life.

“This isn’t just about apples,” said Dr. Zahoor. “It’s about protecting families, culture, and the land itself. If we act now, tomorrow’s harvests can still bloom.”

The author is a Horticulture Scientist, SKUAST-K, Shopian.

### Heavy Downpour

of Kashmir, causing widespread distress among residents and inflicting significant damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and horticulture.

Details indicate severe flooding in the Hanjiwera Pattan area, with locals blaming poor drainage infrastructure. Residents cited repeated appeals to the authorities for the construction of a proper drainage system and dredging of Nallah Ferozpora, which frequently overflows, damaging crops and encroaching onto the main road.

“We have urged the authorities multiple times, but nothing concrete has been done,” a local resident said.

In response, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain, visited the affected areas and assured immediate support. He directed concerned departments to construct temporary bunds to prevent further flooding at vulnerable points.

MLA Pattan, Javid Reyaz Bedar, also visited affected areas in Pattan and directed line departments to provide emergency assistance, including deploying Jal Shakti water tankers to the affected localities.

“The matter has already been taken up with higher authorities for long-term redressal,” Bedar said, acknowledging the toll this situation is taking on the people.

In Sopore’s Haritar village, flood threats loomed large as rising water levels in nearby water channels sparked fears of inundation in residential areas. The administration, however, swiftly responded by deploying men and machinery. Immediate protection measures were taken to safeguard vulnerable spots and prevent the water from entering homes.

Similar reports emerged from Bandipora, where residents of Gorpora-Papchan are grappling with the looming threat of floods.

“The administration is fully prepared to handle any situation arising from the prevailing weather conditions,” said Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri.

In Kupwara, panic spread among residents as Kehmil Nallah overflowed at Tumina Chowkibal and entered residential areas, forcing several families to relocate to safer locations.

In Handwara’s Gulab Colony Bakiaker, residents demanded the immediate construction of safety bunds, stating that a nearby waterbody is eroding a vital road. “We haven’t slept the whole night,” said one resident, reflecting the fear and uncertainty.

Residents claimed to have approached the concerned departments multiple times, but said they received no response.

Meanwhile, adding to the crisis, hailstorms and strong winds ravaged parts of Baramulla and Handwara—particularly in Boniyar and Rafiabad—damaging orchards and uprooting trees. A major tree fall along the Handwara-Magam road was promptly cleared by police to restore traffic.

Affected residents have urged the administration to prioritize long-term mitigation measures, including the development of proper drainage systems, permanent bunds, and the dredging of water bodies to prevent recurring distress with every spell of rain.

Expressing concern over the extensive damage, the Minister for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Agriculture Production said the recent spell of adverse weather has dealt a severe blow to livelihoods

dependent on agriculture and horticulture.

“We are actively assessing the ground situation. The government is fully committed to providing timely relief and every possible support to the affected families,” he said.

The Meteorological Department had earlier issued an alert for adverse weather, prompting district and sub-district administrations to activate control rooms and advisories. (KNO)

### Key Roads

and Mughal Road, the alternate road connecting the valley with Jammu, also received fresh snow, the officials said.

Traffic has been suspended on the Zoji La and the Mughal Road due to the snowfall, they added.

Passenger vehicles plied from both sides on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NHW) on Saturday, while heavy motor vehicles (HNVs) were also allowed from Jammu towards Srinagar.

Officials said that traffic is being managed in a regulated manner at Mehad, Cafeteria, and Ramban due to a single-lane stretch of around 150 to 200 metres.

“Commuters have been advised to maintain lane discipline and avoid overtaking or driving in the wrong lane, which could cause congestion. They must be patient, especially when traffic is moving from the opposite direction,” he said.

Passengers have also been advised to undertake travel on the Jammu-Srinagar highway during daylight hours and avoid unnecessary halts between Ramban and Banihal due to the risk of landslides or shooting stones, the official said.

### No Flood Threat

assessments and precautionary measures across districts. The reassurance came during an emergency meeting chaired by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri in Srinagar to evaluate the ground situation and direct coordinated response measures. The I&FC Department presented real-time data on water levels across the Jhelum and its tributaries, stating that all readings remain well below the danger mark.

Despite the absence of a flood threat, the Div Com directed the Srinagar Municipal Corporation to deploy dewatering pumps in waterlogged areas to prevent localised flooding and ensure smooth urban drainage.

The meeting reviewed reports of crop damage in Shopian district following a hailstorm and instances of wind-related damage to structures in other areas. Deputy Commissioners were instructed to extend immediate relief to affected families as per official norms.

To maintain uninterrupted essential services, the Chief Engineer of KPDCI was asked to restore damaged power lines and transformers on priority. The Div Com also took stock of the availability of essential commodities, including food grains, LPG and petroleum products.

Emphasising road safety, Bidhuri directed the Traffic Police to issue travel advisories for weather-sensitive routes such as the Gurez road, Mughal road, Sinthan Top, and Razdan Top to avoid the stranding of passengers amid changing weather conditions.

Health services were also reviewed, with instructions issued to ensure the smooth operation of hospitals and health centres across affected regions.

The meeting was attended by the Commissioner SMC, all Deputy Commissioners, SSPs, and senior officials from departments, including the IMD, Health, FCS&CA, Education, Agriculture, Horticulture, ULB, LCMA, and various engineering wings.

According to the Meteorological Department, the current weather system is expected to begin receding from late Saturday night, with gradual improvement forecast through Sunday afternoon.

Control rooms have been activated in all districts to ensure prompt coordination, real-time assessment, and response to any emergencies, even as officials maintain heightened alertness across vulnerable zones.

### 22 Families

Traffic remained suspended on the Kishtwar-Paddar road, connecting

the famous Machail Mata shrine for the third day on Saturday.

District Development Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan conducted an inspection of the landslide-prone area at Singrah Nallah, Patharnaki along the Kishtwar-Peddar Road with a focus on assessing the vulnerability of the area to landslides and evaluating the progress of mitigation measures in place.

“We have taken some preventive measures for the safety of the locals due to the continuous sinking and lurking threat of a landslide. Some 22 families at the hilltop village have been evacuated and provided tents and rations. None of the houses have developed any cracks though,” Nagsini Tehsildar Mohd Rafi Naik told PTI on the phone.

Naik, who is monitoring the situation at the landslide-prone area, said a portion of over 200 metres of the road got damaged due to the sinking, while the continuous shooting stones from the hillock are hampering road clearance operations.

He said the district administration is alive to the situation and is keeping a close watch to avoid any untoward incident.

Machail Mata shrine was reopened for the pilgrims only a week ago after winter, marking the commencement of the annual yatra season. However, the closure of the road and the threat of the landslide near Patharnaki hit the yatra.

The local residents blamed massive blasting by the executing agency working on the 624 MW Kiru Hydro-Electric project, a run-of-river scheme, as the reason behind the scary situation.

The district development commissioner, during his visit to the site on Friday, was briefed by officials from the General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) on the current status of the ongoing restoration and construction works on the damaged route.

After a thorough examination of the site, the DDC issued necessary directions to the GREF authorities to expedite the work while ensuring safety and sustainability, an official said.

He directed the local administration to stay on high alert and conveyed to the GREF authorities the importance of strengthening the affected section to ensure uninterrupted connectivity and to safeguard commuters, especially during the monsoon season.

The deputy commissioner advised hydroelectric project authorities to strictly adhere to standard operating procedures (SOPs) to minimise further impact and avoid exacerbating existing cracks.

Pathernaki and Kiru segments of the road are highly slide-prone and remain at constant risk of disruptions. Hence, continuous monitoring and prompt responsiveness from all stakeholders remain imperative, the official said.

BJP local MLA Sunil Sharma called for a permanent solution to the issue, saying the area has become prone to frequent landslides over the past one-and-a-half years.

“The concerned agencies have been managing the slide zone temporarily to avoid traffic disruption but the issue needs a permanent solution,” he said.

Sharma, who is also the leader of the opposition in the legislative assembly, said he had already raised the issue with the deputy commissioner and “we are looking forward to a permanent solution” to the issue.

The closure of the road caused immense hardships to the residents of Paddar and Pangni who are now using an alternate trekking route to move in and out of the region.

### Lightning Kills

Saturday, officials said. They said that over 100 houses suffered damages due to gusty winds in Rajouri district.

Two women, identified as Shahnaz Begum and Rasheed Ahmad, lost their lives when lightning hit their Dharhote village in Arnas area of Reasi late Saturday evening, the officials said.

Another woman -- Gulzara Begum -- was also injured in the incident, which also perished nearly 50 sheep and goats, they added.

In another incident, over 100 residential houses suffered minor to partial damages after high velocity winds swept Kalakote in Rajouri district.

Confirming the damage, Kalakote

Additional Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Tanveer said that the rooftops of majority of the residential houses were swept away by the gusty winds.

However, there was no report of any casualty, he said, adding the district administration has mobilized its resources to provide relief to the affected population. (PTI)

### MHA Panel

officers like Owais Mushtaq (Health & Medical Education), Nuzhat Khurshid (Tourism), Ata-ul Munim Tak, Shabnam Rashid (State Taxes), Raeis Ahmad Bhat, Shurjeel Ali Naik, Mir Zahida (IMPA&RD), Najwan Nazki (FCS&CA), Suhail ul Islam (SMC Secretary), Sartaj Hussain (Estates), Mantasha Binti Rashid (Rural Sanitation), Ajaz Ahmad Shah, Bashir Ahmad Lone (GM DIC Kulgam), Nasir Mehmood Khan (Tourism), and Syed Nadeem Iqbal Andrabi (Industries & Commerce) have been assigned responsibilities in Kashmir Division, it reads.

“The above officers are directed to report to the Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir, respectively on 23.4.2025, for briefing on their roles and responsibilities.”

### Govt Committed

assessed every two months.

Earlier, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Vikramjit Singh briefed the meeting on the efforts of the J&K State Task Force, which is headed by the Union Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.

Singh said the Task Force has identified 23 priority areas, including land use, labour laws, building regulations, utility permissions, and broader governance practices. Action plans for each have been developed with defined timelines and specific reform measures.

Key reforms discussed during the meeting included:

Introduction of flexible zoning frameworks for mixed-use development

Digitisation and simplification of the land use change (CLU) process

Streamlined clearances from fire services and rationalisation of road width norms for rural industries

Updated building bylaws aimed at minimising land wastage

The meeting also deliberated on the GIS mapping of industrial estates and their integration with the India Industrial Land Bank (IILB). Labour reforms such as allowing night-time employment of women and increasing workforce thresholds, decriminalising minor violations, and simplifying licensing procedures were also on the agenda.

Additionally, officials reviewed the integration of water and electricity services into the single-window system and the full linkage of J&K’s portal with the National Single Window System (NSWS).

Abdullah called for a proactive approach, underlining the importance of regular monitoring and timely execution of reforms to make J&K a more conducive place for investment and enterprise

### Will Not Allow

the event to make sure that such “conflict entrepreneurs” have no space in society.

“I also request the Sufi scholars that there is a need to make a long-term plan to make Sufism popular among the youth so that extremist ideology will not get a chance to flourish among the people,” he said.

The LG said if there is a need to make ideals of Sufism modern to achieve that, “then it is essential to work on that”.

“We have to take it (message of Sufism) to the youths through new mediums,” he added.

### ‘Jammu On Track For

The lieutenant governor said that Jammu and Kashmir under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership has witnessed a transformative era, fostering peace and inclusive development.

“We don’t believe in buying peace but establishing peace. J&K Police and security forces are on the job. Soon we will completely eliminate terrorism and its entire ecosystem. With the ongoing efforts, I believe the Jammu region is on track to fully regain peace within the next six months,” he added.

Speaking to reporters at a separate event, the lieutenant governor said

that separatism and terrorism have no future in Jammu and Kashmir.

Sinha categorically stated that Pakistan should stop exporting terror.

“There is no future of separatism and terrorism in J&K. I have said it several times that our neighbour is battling its internal issues, it is not even taking care of the basic rights of its citizens. It should stop exporting terrorism,” he said.

During an interaction with the members of YPO-Global One, the lieutenant governor highlighted the strategic, multi-faceted approach for Jammu and Kashmir’s holistic development over the last five years, including economic growth, sustainability and seamless implementation of social welfare schemes.

“Our aim is to achieve faster, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. A strategic, multi-faceted approach was adopted to tap the industrial potential of J&K so as to strike the right balance between economic growth, sustainability and social development,” he said.

The lieutenant governor shared the insights into Jammu and Kashmir’s evolving industrial landscape and the emerging opportunities in the sector.

“I want the industrial growth to benefit all the citizens of Jammu Kashmir. This is my resolve. My second resolve is to ensure that industrial growth is environmentally sustainable,” said Sinha.

“One of our objectives is to make J&K a leader in innovation to attract investments in research, IT and ITes (Information Technology enabled Services). We have analysed locally available skill set and natural resources in order to promote the relevant sectors as per our advantage,” he added.

For industrial growth of Jammu Kashmir, the lieutenant governor said the government has focused on sectors, which are the strength of the region.

“For example, the Tourism Sector has witnessed massive increase in tourist influx. There is immense potential in this sector for unexplored destinations, film tourism, entertainment sector, hotels and resorts and theme parks. Since we have given industry status to tourism, I am sure the tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir can be tapped,” he added.

Sinha said the initiatives taken by the government in the past few years have doubled the export of handloom and handicrafts and horticulture products are reaching the global market.

“Today, J&K has no competition in handicraft, handloom and horticulture products,” he added.

During the interaction, the lieutenant governor addressed the queries from YPO members on Jammu Kashmir’s industrial growth.

“I think Jammu and Kashmir has many factors such as economic stability, skilled labour, raw material, better incentives, enabling a safe business environment, high productivity, high potential of value addition, strong infrastructure, transparency and high level of innovation, which makes it an attractive investment destination,” said Sinha.

“Public safety, strong healthcare system, higher education, low expense burden, high productivity, composite culture, all these systems are perfectly suitable for the operations of multinational companies in the J&K UT,” he added.

### Budgam Girl

Education Master and serves as the Incharge Activity Officer at the District Youth Services and Sports Office in Budgam. Her two older sisters—one a journalist, the other a scholar—have also taken academic and professional paths that required long hours and steady work.

In that sense, Attiya’s result fits into a broader family pattern. “I had role models at home,” she said.

After the result, there was no celebration beyond a few messages and calls. Attiya says she’s happy with the outcome but is already thinking about what comes next.

She’s planning to pursue computer science and hopes to get into one of the top engineering institutes. But for now, she’s just trying to rest after months of focused preparation.

Her advice to students in similar situations is straightforward: “If it doesn’t work out the first time, go back, figure out why, and try again. That’s all I did.”



## FCIK Unveils Revamp Strategy To Boost Kashmir's Industrial Sector

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a major push to revive Kashmir's ailing industrial sector, the Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) has announced a strategic revamp plan aimed at addressing long-standing challenges, supporting entrepreneurship, and creating sustainable employment.

The announcement was made during a day-long meeting of industry stakeholders chaired by FCIK President Shahid Kamili. Organized by a group of reform-minded members, the session focused on re-defining FCIK's vision ahead of the upcoming elections, with a commitment to transparency, unity, and inclusive leadership.

Participants included Presidents of industrial estates, district heads, and sectoral representatives—many of whom are potential candidates for the upcoming Administrative Council elections. The event also featured a "Know Your Candidates" segment to introduce aspiring leaders.

Industry leaders voiced serious concerns over policy neglect, limited access to finance, inadequate public procurement

representation, and outdated infrastructure. The new strategy aims to tackle these issues through policy reforms, streamlined clearances, and enhanced credit access for MSMEs.

The plan also focuses on reviving sick units, boosting local manufacturing, increasing public procurement share, and expanding market access through trade fairs, digital platforms, and export promotion.

Upgrading existing estates and developing new industrial hubs with reliable power, connectivity, and modern facilities is also on the agenda. Implementation will begin with stakeholder consultations and phased rollout over the coming months.

Senior figures like Shakeel Qalander and Zahoor Ahmad Bhat emphasized the need for credible, regionally representative leadership to steer FCIK into a more dynamic era.

President Kamili highlighted the achievements of his tenure, noting sustained efforts to safeguard entrepreneurs' interests despite a difficult environment.

Mohammad Yousuf Techo was assigned to coordinate with the Election Commission to resolve issues regarding electoral rolls.

## Agha Baqir's Death Mourned By Ayatollah Khamenei's India Office

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In an eloquent expression of bereavement, the Office of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, in New Delhi, has articulated its profound sorrow over the passing of the eminent Kashmiri theologian and jurist, Allama Syed Muhammad Baqir Al-Mousavi.

The office, through its representative in India, Hujjatul Islam wal Muslimeen Abdul Majid Hakim Elahi, issued a formal message extolling the intellectual stature, moral rectitude, and pious legacy of the deceased scholar.

The message, dated 29 Sha'ban 1446 Hijri originally written in Persian stated: "The demise of the scholar, Hujjatul Islam wal Muslimeen Allama Syed Muhammad Baqir Al-Mousavi (may his soul rest in peace) caused great grief and deep sorrow.

This great scholar, throughout his blessed life, served Islam and the Muslim world. He was a shining figure who combined knowledge, ethics, and spirituality, and left a lasting impact on numerous students and followers.

I express my deepest condolences to the seminary community, the followers of Ahlulbayt (a.s), and especially the respected and faithful people of Kashmir and the bereaved family of the deceased.

I pray to God Almighty to raise his rank, grant him mercy and forgiveness, and reunite him with the pure Imams of Ahlulbayt (a.s), and grant patience to his family and loved ones."— Abdul Majid Hakim Elahi

Meanwhile, distinguished Iraqi cleric and political leader Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim, former



mer head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, also conveyed his sympathies on the loss of the revered Kashmiri religious figure.

In a message posted on his official Facebook page, Hakim wrote:

"To Allah we belong, and to Him we shall return.

We received with great regret the news of the demise of the representative of the Higher Religious Reference in Kashmir, His Eminence Allama Syed Muhammad Baqir Al-Muswi Kashmiri (may Allah have mercy on him).

The deceased commander had a remarkable impact through his religious guidance and the significant social role he played. We ask Allah to shower his pure soul with His vast mercy and to grant him a place in His spacious paradise.

We extend our deepest condolences and deepest sympathy to his family, relatives, and his disciples."

Observers say the passing of Allama Baqir Al-Mousavi Kashmiri marks the eclipse of a towering spiritual and intellectual luminary whose erudition and humility rendered him a lodestar for generations. His departure has left a vacuum that resonates far beyond Kashmir's frontiers, reverberating throughout seminaries, scholarly circles, and among devout adherents of the Ahlulbayt tradition across the Shiite world.

### World Liver Day

## SKIMS Medical College Launches Youth Screening Program For NAFLD

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** On the occasion of World Liver Day, SKIMS Medical College, Bemina organized an Awareness-cum-Screening Program focusing on Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) among youth aged 18 to 25 years. The program aimed to spread awareness and promote early screening for NAFLD, which is increasingly being seen in younger populations due to changing lifestyles and dietary habits.

Principal SKIMS MC Prof. Fazlul Qadir, while addressing the participants, stressed the need to focus on the younger age group for early detection of NAFLD. He described the initiative as a timely and relevant step towards preventive healthcare and appreciated the role of the departments involved in making the program a reality.

During the session faculty from the Department of Community Medicine SKIMS MC including Dr. Yameena Jan & Dr.

Beenish discussed the epidemiology, risk factors, and prevention of NAFLD.

While as Dr. Imran Nazir from Department of Radiodiagnosis highlighted the diagnostic methods including imaging tools used for detecting fatty liver.

Dr. Muzaffar A. Naik from the Department of General Medicine deliberated on detailed management strategies for NAFLD.

HOD, Community Medicine SKIMS MC Prof. Ashfaq Bhat in his concluding remarks, emphasized the importance of healthy eating, physical activity, and routine health checkups to maintain liver health.

Registrar Academics Prof. Aijaz A Rather in his address extended full support to the initiative and encouraged similar health-focused programs in the future.

The event reflected SKIMS Medical College's ongoing commitment to raising health awareness and promoting preventive care practices among students and the community.

## ‘Rising Fatty Liver Cases In Kashmir Due To Sedentary Lifestyles’

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Health experts in Kashmir have raised concerns over the increasing prevalence of fatty liver disease in the region. They say the condition is primarily due to sedentary lifestyles and widespread consumption of junk food, particularly among the youth.

According to medical professionals, one in every three individuals in the valley is now suffering from fatty liver disease, making it a pressing public health issue.

Prof Dr Iqbal Salim called on the public to adopt healthier lifestyles, stressing the need for nutritious diets, avoidance of alcohol and tobacco, and maintaining a happy, stress-free life to protect liver health.

Dr Zahoor, an oncologist, said there is a rapid rise in non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) and its more severe form, non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH).

"Fatty liver is closely linked to the consumption of high-calorie, processed foods, combined with a lack of physical activity. These factors contribute to obesity, hypertension, and diabetes—all of which are major risk factors for developing fatty liver," he explained.

He added that if left untreated, fatty liver can lead to liver fibrosis, chronic liver disease (CLD), and even liver cancer, which is increasingly overtaking hepatitis as a leading cause



of liver-related deaths.

Dr Tariq, a general physician, said the changing dietary habits in Kashmir—marked by increased intake of foods high in fat, salt and sugar, are key contributors.

"The growing culture of fast food and ready-to-eat meals has largely replaced traditional home-cooked meals, which once formed the foundation of a balanced and nutritious diet," he said.

Emphasising the growing threat among the youth, Dr Ismail, a physician in south Kashmir, said, "Fast food is no longer just a quick fix for working adults. Children and teenagers are now the primary consumers of unhealthy foods like pizzas, burgers, chips, sugary drinks, and frozen meals. This shift in dietary patterns is alarming."

He added that obese and diabetic individuals face even greater risk, as fast food exacerbates liver fat accumulation. "Fatty liver is now being found even in individuals in their early twenties," Dr Ismail observed.



**ACCORDING TO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS, ONE IN EVERY THREE individuals in Kashmir is now suffering from fatty liver disease, making it a pressing public health issue."**

## ACB Books 3 Officials In Hokersar Dredging Scam

LAWDA Officials Under Scanner For Illegal Building Permissions Near Boulevard

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Saturday said to have filed two separate cases in Srinagar and that three officials including two Executive Engineers and the then AEE of Flood Spill Canal Division of Narbal have been taken into custody for questioning.

Addressing a news conference, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) ACB, Javid Hassan Bhat said that the ACB P/S Srinagar has registered an FIR yesterday following a joint surprise check (JSC No. 17/2020) conducted to enquire into the allegations of irregularities and professional misconduct committed during the dredging of the Hokersar Wetland at Narbal.

"The enquiry conducted has uncovered serious lapses on the part of public officials and a private contractor company, M/S Reach Dredging Limited. The findings reveal that tenders were invited under NIT No.01 of 2018-19 dated July 7, 2018, for the work and construction of a channel across HokerSar Wetland. The work was allotted in favour of M/S REACH Dredging Ltd. for Rs. 2055.565 lacs by Chief Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Kashmir with the Provision that no material shall be dumped withing the periphery of Hokersar Wetland. Despite major works being executed based on altered parameters through a Letter of Intent (LOI), the work was awarded based on original advertised quantities and costs, with no clarity on dumping sites or the disposal of excavated material," he said.

The findings of the enquiry also revealed that significant variations in transportation leads (ranging from 8 km to 18 km) were clubbed together, allowing undue payments for transportation of excavated material, most of which was allegedly not disposed off as per the NIT. The manipulation of the specifications of work and quantities resulted in financial loss amounting to Rs. 2.29 crores (approx.), to the State Exchequer, excluding royalty and minor mineral



costs and further damage to the ecology of the wetland, he said.

The SSP added that public servants namely Siraj-Ud-Din Shah and Ghulam Ahmad Beigh, the then Executive Engineers Flood Spill Canal Division of Narbal and Irfan Ahmad Reshi, the then AEE Flood Spill Channel Division Narbal among others, colluded with the contractor company M/S Reach Dredging Limited thereby caused huge loss of funds to the State Exchequer and defeated the purpose for which the dredging in the wetland was initiated.

"Based on these findings the FIR No. 07/2025 under sections 5(1)(d) r/w 5(2) of the J&K Prevention of Corruption Act and section 120-B/RPC has been registered and investigation set into motion," he said, adding that the trio have been taken into the custody and said that the further remand is being sought.

Sharing details of the second case, the SSP said that case pertains to the illegal building permissions by the then Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA).

He said the ACB Srinagar has initiated legal action following a verification (SLK-12/2017) prompted by a complaint from the Intizamia Committee of Masjid Shareef, Gagrival Boulevard.

The complaint alleged that illegal construction activities by one Iftikhar Sadiq, S/o Rafiq Sadiq, a resident of Gagrival, who is accused of constructing multi-storey hostel buildings on approximately 12 kanals of custodian land at Gagrival, Srinagar, he said, adding that the verification revealed a criminal conspiracy involving

According to health experts, the prevalence of fatty liver among diabetics and obese individuals in Kashmir ranges from 60% to 70%. The condition often remains undiagnosed in its early stages, making early intervention and awareness critical.

To combat the growing health crisis, doctors recommend the following lifestyle changes: eat a balanced, nutritious diet low in fat, salt, and sugar; engage in regular physical activity and exercise; maintain a healthy body weight; manage blood sugar and cholesterol levels; avoid alcohol and tobacco and practice mindfulness and reduce stress.

"People need to prioritise their liver health. Staying physically active, managing stress, and steering clear of processed foods are simple yet effective steps to prevent fatty liver," doctors advised.

Dr Javid Iqbal talked about this year's theme, "Food is Medicine", saying, "It highlights the crucial role of nutrition in maintaining liver health and preventing liver-related diseases. Nourish the body with care to keep the liver healthy."

He recommended a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. "Prefer healthy fats and limit carbohydrates and processed foods, avoid added sugars and alcohol, include leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, fatty fish (twice a week), nuts, grapes and berries," he said—(KNO)

## Drugs Serious Threat To Well-being Of Humanity: HC

Upholds Preventive Detention Of 2 'Drug Peddlers'

M Ahmad

**SRINAGAR:** The drug problem is a serious threat to public health, safety and well-being of humanity, the High Court of J&K and Ladakh has said as it upheld detention orders under Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act against two alleged drug peddlers.

"The global drug problem presents a multifaceted challenge that touches the lives of millions worldwide," said a bench of Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul while dismissing pleas challenging the detention orders passed by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir against Ishfaq Ahmad Khan and Owais Ahmad Tag on 10 May 2024 and 2 September 2024 respectively.

"From individuals struggling with substance use disorders to communities grappling with the consequences of drug trafficking and organized crime, the impact of drugs is far-reaching and complex," the court said, adding, "There is a great loss of productivity associated with drug-related premature mortality. Although it is difficult to place a dollar value on a human life, a rough calculation of lost productivity can be made based on the present discounted value of a person's lifetime earnings."

There are also health-related productivity losses, the court underlined. "An individual who enters a residential drug treatment program or is admitted to a hospital for drug treatment becomes incapacitated and is removed from the labour force," the court said, adding, "Productivity losses in this area alone are enormous. Health-related productivity losses are higher still when lost productivity associated with drug-related hospital admissions, including victims of drug-related crimes, is included. These imperative aspects concerned with illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances cannot be overlooked or ignored."

The court said that the drug problem is a serious threat to public health, safety and well-being of humanity.

"Our global society is facing serious consequences of drug abuse and it undermines the socio-economic and political stability and sustainable development," the court said, adding, "Besides, it also distorts health and fabric of society and it is considered to be originator for petty offences as well as heinous crimes, like smuggling of arms and ammunition and money laundering."

Involvement of various militant groups and syndicates in drug trafficking leads to threat to the national security and sovereignty of States by way of Narcoterrorism, the court said.

"Drug trafficking and abuse has continued its significant toll on valuable human lives and productive years of many persons around the globe," the court said, adding, "With the growth and development of world economy, drug traffickers are also seamlessly trafficking various type of drugs from one corner to other ensuring availability of contrabands for vulnerable segment of society who fall into trap of drug peddlers and traffickers."

The court said that the Constitution framers had visualised danger of misuse of such type of substances and, thus, made it part of directives issued to the State.

"The Directive Principles, which are part of our Constitution, lay down that the State shall make endeavours to bring about the prohibition of substances injurious for health except for medicinal and scientific purposes," the court underlined, adding, "In recent years, India has been facing a problem of transit traffic in illicit drugs. The spill over from such traffic has caused tribulations of abuse and addiction. This trend has created an illicit demand for drugs within the country."

The illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances poses a serious threat to the health and welfare of the people and activities of persons engaged in such illicit traffic have a deleterious effect on the national economy as well.

"Having regard to the persons by whom and the manner in which such activities are organised and carried on, and having regard to the fact that in certain areas which are highly vulnerable to the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, such activities of a considerable magnitude are clandestinely organised and carried on, it is necessary for the effective prevention of such activities to provide for detention of persons concerned in any manner therewith," the court said emphasizing that the consequences of drug use usually are not limited to user and often extend to the user's family and the greater community.

"The consequences of illicit drug use impact the entire criminal justice system, taxing resources at each stage of the arrest, adjudication, incarceration and post-release supervision process," the court said, adding, "It impacts productivity. It causes premature mortality, illness, injury leading to incapacitation and imprisonment all serve to directly reduce national productivity." Public financial resources expended in the areas of health care and criminal justice as a result of illegal drug trafficking and use are resources which could otherwise be available for other policy initiatives, the court added.

**THE JAMMU & KASHMIR BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION**  
**NEW CAMPUS BEMINA SRINAGAR**  
**ATTENTION PLEASE**  
The candidate whose photograph in this notice reports that he has lost his qualification certificate having the following description.  
Roll No:- 132009057  
Class:- 10th  
Year & Session: March 2023  
Registration No: 213200000630008  
Name: Faizan Iqbal  
Father's Name: Mohammad Iqbal Hajam  
Mother's Name: Haseena  
Date of Birth: 06-05-2008  
Residence: Goosu Pulwama  
Now the candidate has applied for issuance of DUPLICATE QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATE/S. Before the case will be processed under rules, if somebody have any kind of objection in this regard he/she shall approach the office of the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publishing of this notice after expiring date no objection shall be entertained.  
(Besides, the losted "QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATE", bearing Serial No/s 23ARKAM2041889 is/ are be treated as CANCELLED").  
No'-F(Certs-I-DQC)/KD/20 Assistant Secretary  
Dated: FKO Certificates, KD

**OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR NEWA NOTICE**  
**Subject: Application of Mohammad Yousuf Thoker S/o Wali Mohammad R/o Gudoorah Tehsil & District Pulwama for grant of alienation permission.**  
It is for the information of general public that Shri Mohan Lal Koul S/o Late Kanth Koul & Smt. Jaya Koul Wd/o Makhan Lal Koul (S/o Late Kanth Koul) Residents of village Shupdani Newa Tehsil & District Pulwama Kashmir at present 338-339 Sector-4, Gangyal Garden District Jammu have applied for grant of permission to alienate their landed property measuring 01 Kanal 09 Marlas under Survey No. 984/443 & land measuring 14 Marlas under Survey No. 439 situated at village Shupdani Newa Tehsil Pulwama District Pulwama through attorney holder Mohammad Shaban Mir S/o Late Amir Mir R/o Inder Tehsil & District Pulwama in favour of the applicant (intending alliance).  
The case is under process in this office and before proceeding further in the instant matter it is notified for general public for information that if any person having any objection against the proposed alienation should file objection in writing to this office personally or through his authorized agent within a period of 15 days from issuance of this notice, failing which no claim will be considered.  
No: NTN/22 Executive Magistrate 1st Class  
Dated: 18/04/2025 Naib Tehsildar Newa  
FKO



# IPL Clasico: Change In Strategy For Resurgent MI Against CSK

Press Trust of India

**MUMBAI:** Chennai Super Kings' poor form may take the sheen off the return leg of this year's IPL Clasico but for Mumbai Indians, the contest will present a challenge to change strategy in order to maintain their winning run here on Sunday.

Mumbai Indians have done well to resurrect their faltering campaign with two consecutive wins over Delhi Capitals and Sunrisers Hyderabad, but Hardik Pandya's seventh-placed side still needs to steer through mid-table traffic with several other teams in a similar situation.

Mumbai Indians were spot on with their planning an execution on a tricky pitch here at the Wankhede Stadium on which



they took apart SRH's explosive batting style with precision.

That surface, an uncharacteristic one for Wankhede, had turn and grip for spin as well as pace off the ball for seamers

which took the fight out of SRH batters.

But such an approach against the spin-heavy CSK would not be the right way and has the potential to backfire. Noor Ahmad

has thrived in CSK colours with 12 wickets in seven matches which includes his three wickets against MI earlier this season, while the five-time winners also have two seasoned exponents in Ravichandran Ashwin (5 wickets) and Ravindra Jadeja (4).

MI, however, would still have the upper hand given their current form despite having lost to CSK in their season-opener in Chepauk.

Rohit Sharma hasn't notched up a big score yet but his brisk start against SRH gave MI the impetus they needed. Tilak Varma has been on a roll and so has been Suryakumar Yadav, with Ryan Rickelton's contribution at the top and Will Jacks' all-round show giving MI the

fuel for their win.

On their part, there are no signs yet that CSK have been able to end their troublesome run of four consecutive losses with a five-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants.

But MS Dhoni's return to the Wankhede — the venue for many battles between these teams — should spur the visiting side.

Dhoni's return as full-time skipper for the remainder of the season and CSK finding "manoeuvrability" with their bowling line-up was one positive sign for the old warhorse, who faces the task of reviving their disappointing campaign, contribute with the bat in death overs, and manage his knee injury amid all this.

Match starts at 7:30pm IST.

## Short TAKES

### J&K Cycle Polo Association Unveils Annual Activity Calendar

The Jammu and Kashmir Cycle Polo Association, affiliated with the Cycle Polo Federation of India and recognized by the J&K Sports Council, has officially announced its Annual Activities Calendar for the year 2025-26. The calendar was framed in coordination with all registered players, affiliated districts, and office bearers of the association.

The District Championships for the new sporting year will kick off on May 10, starting from District Srinagar, followed by events in Central Kashmir, South Kashmir, North Kashmir, and finally Jammu District.

The meeting to finalize the calendar was conducted under the chairmanship of President Vilayat Hussain and General Secretary Sheikh Zulfkar of JKCPA.

The association aims to further strengthen the presence of cycle polo in J&K by fostering talent and increasing grassroots participation.

### Jos Buttler Guides GT To 7-Wicket Win Over Delhi Capitals

Jos Buttler smashed an unbeaten 97 and shared an 119-run partnership with Sherfane Rutherford (43) as Gujarat Titans defeated Delhi Capitals by seven wickets in an IPL match here on Saturday.

Chasing a challenging 204-run target, Buttler took just 54 balls for his 97 (11x4, 4x6), as GT completed the task in 19.2 overs. Had Buttler scored a 100, it would have been his eighth IPL century.

Earlier, invited to bat, DC managed 203 for eight on an easy-paced pitch with skipper Axar Patel top-scoring for the visitors with his 39-run knock off 32 balls, while Tristan Stubbs (31) and Ashutosh Sharma (37) also made useful contributions for their side.

Pacer Prasidh Krishna (4/41) was the standout bowler for the home side.

#### Brief Scores:

Delhi Capitals: 203 for 8 in 20 overs. (Acar Patel 39, Tristan Stubbs 31; Prasidh Krishna 4/41).

Gujarat Titans: 204 for 3 in 19.2 overs (Sai Sudharsan 36, Jos Buttler 97 not out, Sherfane Rutherford 43).

## Arshid Rather: Driving Force Behind Kabaddi's Resurgence In J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Senior national player and NIS-certified coach Arshid Rather has emerged as a pivotal figure in the resurgence of Kabaddi in J&K, playing a transformative role in developing the sport and inspiring a new generation of athletes across the region.

Currently serving as a fitness trainer with the J&K Police, Arshid combines athletic excellence with a deep commitment to nurturing local talent. His guidance has significantly enhanced the physical conditioning, technical skills and tactical awareness of Kabaddi players



throughout the Valley.

In 2022, Arshid made a notable impact during the Special Yuva Kabaddi Series held at MA Stadium in Jammu. His influence grew further in 2024 when he played a key role in the Summer Kabaddi Camp in

Srinagar. Collaborating closely with Chief Coach Anil Sharma and Assistant Coach Firdous Rather, Arshid focused on refining athletes' core competencies while promoting a disciplined and professional training environment.

The camp—organized by the J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association in partnership with the J&K Sports Council under the My Youth My Pride initiative—was hailed as a major success.

Arshid plays an active role in talent identification and athlete development, particularly through his involvement in the Yuva Kabaddi Series selection process.

## Pakistan Won't Travel To India For Women's ODI World Cup



Press Trust of India

**LAHORE:** Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday announced that their women's team will not travel to India for the ICC ODI World Cup later this year and play their matches at a neutral venue, following the hybrid model accepted earlier this year.

When Pakistan hosted ICC Champions Trophy recently, BCCI had refused to send Indian team across the border due to diplomatic tension between the two nations and their matches were held in Dubai.

A hybrid model was agreed upon that allowed both India and Pakistan to play their matches at neutral venues if one of the two countries was to host an ICC event.

"Just like India didn't play in Pakistan in the Champions Trophy and

were allowed to play at a neutral venue, whatever venue is decided, we will play. When there is an agreement it has to be adhered to," he said.

The PCB chief said India and ICC being the hosts of the tournament would decide on the neutral venue.

India will host the tournament from September 29 to October 26 with Australia being the defending champions. Naqvi also expressed satisfaction over the impressive manner in which Pakistan women's team qualified for the World Cup.

Pakistan ended up winning all their five matches in the Qualifiers held in Lahore. They beat Ireland, Scotland, West Indies, Thailand and Bangladesh to qualify smoothly for the main round for which hosts India, England, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and Sri Lanka have already qualified.

## Inter-School Zonal TT Tournament Held In Budgam's Beerwah

Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** The Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam organised an Inter-School Zonal Level Table Tennis tournament in Beerwah on Friday.

The event, held at Boys Higher Secondary School Beerwah, was conducted under the guidance of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam G.H. Hassan Lone.

The tournament was officially inaugurated by Mudasir

Nabi, Lecturer in Physical Education at BHSS Beerwah.

The DYSSO Budgam said it continues to nurture sports talent at the grassroots level through such dynamic inter-school competitions.



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