

[illegible]

‘No Limit On Student Half-Fare Concession On JKRTC, Smart City Buses’

Agencies

Srinagar: A recent Right To Information (RTI) reply has clarified longstanding confusion regarding the student half-fare concession on Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) and Smart City buses across the union territory.

Social activist Shahid Shafi from Chakoor Pulwama had sought clarity after reports, supported by some drivers and district General Managers, that only five students per bus could avail of the concession.

The RTI response from the JKRTC, clearly states that there is no rule limiting the number of students eligible for a half fare on a single bus. "The only requirement is a valid college or school identity card; no additional paperwork or permissions are necessary," it said.

Contrary to circulating rumours, students are not assigned reserved or fixed seats. The concession applies universally to any seat, provided the student presents a valid ID, the response added.

Since the scheme's introduction in June 2017, JKRTC has issued directives instructing bus staff and managers to honour the half-fare concession without restrictions.

The department also clari-

fied that students who are denied their benefit can file a complaint directly with the General Manager (Operations) at JKRTC, M A Road, Srinagar.

Interestingly, records show no official grievances in the past three years, which might indicate either a lack of awareness among students or a reluctance to report issues.

The department reassured that every genuine student presenting a valid ID is entitled to the half-fare, regardless of how many other students are travelling on the same bus. Passengers facing denial of the benefit or being charged full fare are advised to note the details of the bus, such as route number, date and time, and report the incident to the GM (Operations).

The scheme also extends concessions to categories like differently-abled persons, war widows, and HIV/AIDS patients, each with specific documentation guidelines. For example, children up to three years old are exempt from fare calculations, while children aged three to twelve are charged half the fare. Fifty per cent of the seats in all state-registered stage carriage vehicles are reserved for women and persons with disabilities, with provisions allowing other passengers to occupy these seats if vacant, and no fare is charged for mobility aids like wheelchairs and tricycles—(KNO)

Javid Dar Assesses Functioning Of Sheep Breeding Farm Khimber

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar, today visited Sheep Breeding Farm (SBF) Khimber here to assess the functioning of the facility and inspect the newly introduced Texel sheep breed imported from Australia.

MLA Hazratbal, Salman Ali Sagar; Director Sheep Husbandry Kashmir, Rafiq Ahmad and other senior officers of the department also accompanied the Minister during the visit.

While inspecting the facility, the Minister said, “The Tex-

el sheep breed will emerge as a revolutionary force in the livestock industry in J&K. Its introduction offers tremendous potential for transforming sheep rearing practices, enhancing productivity, and ultimately improving the livelihoods of our farming community.”

He directed the concerned officers to organize awareness camps to educate farmers on the benefits and management practices associated with the Texel breed. He highlighted that the awareness camps will serve as vital platforms to disseminate technical know-how and improve adoption of scientific sheep husbandry practices.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The name of my daughter has been wrongly written in her adhaar card as Muskana Jan while her correct name is Muskan Manzoor which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Manzoor Ahmad Dar
F/O Muskan Manzoor
R/o Chukar Tehsil Kunzer

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change my name in my aadhar card bearing no 2565 4994 5344 from Saika Salam (old name) to Hafsa Shakeel (New name). If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Hafsa shakeel
R/O :- kral teng Anantnag

jvd

NORTHERN RAILWAY				
E-TENDER NOTICE				
Tender No.-08 & 09-2025-26-ADEN-I-ASR			Date: 30.04.2025	
DEN-III/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date- 22.05.2025 & 21.05.2025 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on www.ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft Banker Cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information login to www.ireps.gov.in				
Tender Type		Tendering Section		Bidding System
Open		Works		Single Packet System
Date of Uploading Tenders		Bid Starting Date		Bid Closing Date/Time
29.04.2025		08.05.2025 & 07.05.2025		22.05.2025 & 21.05.2025 / 15:00 Hrs
S. No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender		
1.	08-2025-26-ADEN-I-ASR	CTR(s) 1.00 KM in Mechanical Workshop at ASR in c/w Augmentation of facility for testing of newly built wagon by ASRW for G-105 certification.		
		Advised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer Period of Completion
		89,59,612.92/-	1,79,200.00/-	60 Days 04 Months
		Similar nature of work - "CTR/TRR/TFR/TTR including raising of track/screening distressing of track/pre & post works for track maintenance machine like tamping machine/ballast screening/regulating machines & TTR by T-28."		
2.	09-2025-26-ADEN-I-ASR	Augmentation of Amritsar Workshop by providing new administrative building with Account department & Personal department at Amritsar Workshop.		
		Advised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer Period of Completion
		3,26,09,280.69/-	3,13,100.00/-	60 Days 06 Months
		Similar nature of work - "Any civil work other than track work."		
Note 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender.				
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE				1307/25



Amid Gusty Winds, Boat Capsizes In Dal Lake

One Fisherman Rescued, Another Missing

<p>Observer News Service</p> <p>Srinagar: A boat carrying two fishermen capsized in the Dal Lake near Duck Park on Friday afternoon, triggering a massive rescue operation that had to be suspended later in the evening due to poor visibility and fading light.</p> <p>The incident occurred during gusty winds that caught the fishermen off guard. According to officials, their boat was overwhelmed by the sudden weather change and overturned near Duck Park.</p>	<p>“The two fishermen jumped into the water in an attempt to save themselves,” an official said. “One of them, identified as Abdul Majeed Khosa, son of Mohammad Sultan Khosa, a resident of Rainawari, Srinagar, was rescued immediately.”</p> <p>However, the second individual, Taufeeq Ahmad Chopan (24), son of Ghulam Mohammad Chopan of Chopan Mohalla, Rainawari, remains missing despite extensive efforts throughout the day.</p> <p>The rescue operation, which involved the State Disaster Re-</p>	<p>sponse Force (SDRF), divers, and specialised rescue boats, scoured the area thoroughly. An SDRF official confirmed that despite deploying specialised equipment, no trace of the missing person had been found by nightfall.</p> <p>“As darkness set in, the operation was suspended due to limited underwater visibility and poor lighting conditions,” the official said. “The rescue teams will resume the search at first light tomorrow (Saturday) morning to ensure all efforts are exhausted in locating the individual.”</p>
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SKIMS Achieves Milestone With First Successful Fetoreduction Procedure

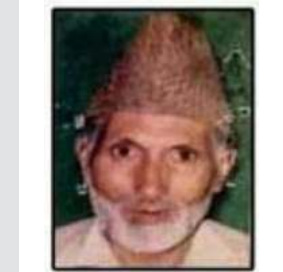
<p>Observer News Service</p> <p>Srinagar: SKIMS MC & Hospital achieved a major milestone by successfully conducting its first Fetoreduction procedure, performed through a seamless collaboration between the Departments of Radiodiagnosis and Gynaecology.Team of Department of Radiodiagnosis and a team of Gynaecologists jointly decreased 2 fetuses in quadruple pregnancy to two to decrease the risk to mother and</p>	<p>other two fetuses.</p> <p>HOD, Radiodiagnosis said that Fetoreduction is a delicate and specialized intervention aimed at improving outcomes in high-risk multiple pregnancies. He elaborated that fetal reduction is a medical procedure used when a woman is pregnant with more than two babies, like triplets or more. To lower the risk to the mother's health and help the remaining babies grow better and healthier, doctors may re-</p>	<p>duce the number of babies, usually to two. This helps increase the chances of a safer and more successful pregnancy for both the mother and the babies.</p> <p>Principal SKIMS MC Bermana congratulated and appreciated the team for achieving the milestone in fetoreduction with an excellent outcome. This landmark success reinforces our commitment to delivering high-quality, patient-centered healthcare , he added.</p>
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موت اس کی ہے کرے جس پے زمانہ انوس

ہمارے والد محترم کی تیسری برسی پر خراج عقیدت

رخصت ہوئے تو آنکھ ملا کر نہیں گئے آپ کیوں گئے یہ بھی بتا کر نہیں گئے

یوں لگ رہا ہے جیسے ابھی لوٹ کر آؤ گے جاتے ہوئے چراغ بجھا کر نہیں گئے






تین برس قبل آج ہی کے دن یعنی 3 مئی 2022ء بمطابق یکم شوال ۱۴۴۳ھ ہمارے رفیق و شفیق ہمدرد دل عزیز والد غلام نبی بابا اس دار فانی سے رحلت کر کے خالق حقیقی سے جا ملے اگرچہ تین برس گزر گئے مگر ہم ایک پل بھی بھول نہ سکے۔ آپ کی یاد ہمارے ذہن دل سے اک لمحے کے لئے بھی جُدا نہ ہوئی مگر ہماری آنکھیں آج بھی آپ کی راہ کنی تھکتی نہیں بلکہ ہم سب آپ کے اپنے قریب محسوس کرتے ہیں۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت الفردوس میں جگہ عطا فرمائے اور دیدار نبی ﷺ سے نوازے۔ آمین


دوستوں، رشتہ داروں اور خیر خواہوں سے مودبانہ درخواست ہے کہ وہ مرحوم کے حق میں دعائے مغفرت کریں اور انہیں اپنے دعاؤں میں یاد رکھیں اور آپ عند اللہ ماجور ہوں گے۔

یُکُوْ دُنْیا ہن سآری کھیئے یُکُوْ نی سآری پائس سَتر

دُنْیا دُنْیا کر ن ترا وُکُوْ نیو دُنْیا پائس سَتر

آپ کو یاد کرنے والے.....فرزند ان و دختر

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<div> <div> <div>AIRPORTS</div> <div>SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311</div> </div> <div>  </div> </div>	
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This Day In History

- 1515- Persian Gulf: Portugese fleet occupies Ormuz
- 1660- Sweden, Poland, Brandenburg & Austria sign Peace of Oliva
- 1678-French conquering fleet at Curacao, 1200 die
- 1715- Edmund Halley observes total eclipse phenomonon "Baily's Beads"
- 1830-1st regular steam train passenger service starts
- 1919-Afghanistan Emir Amanoeallah begins war against Great Britain
- 1928- Japanese atrocities in Jinan, China.
- 1938- Vatican recognizes Franco-Spain
- 1939- The All India Forward Bloc is formed by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.
- 1941-German air raid on Liverpool
- 1942- Japanese troop attack Tulagi, Gavutu & Tanambogo, Solomon Islands during WWII
- 1945- Allies arrests German nuclear physics Werner Heisenberg
- 1945- British troop join in Rangoon
- 1945- WWII: German ship "Cap Arcona" laden with prisoners sunk by Royal Air Force in East Sea, 5,800 killed - one of largest maritime losses of life
- 1946- International military tribunal in Tokyo begins
- 1947- New post-war Japanese constitution goes into effect.

From KO Archives

Tsunami Theory Has ‘Support’ In Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR - The report on April 17 that a retired Atomic Energy Department scientist had attributed the Asian tsunami to planetary alignment has come as a boost for those who believe that cosmic changes influence events on earth.

A Kashmiri Naqash Ghulam Jeelani who says he has written about the phenomenon of interplanetary and cosmic forces having a bearing on what happens on earth as far back as IW1, feels vindicated by the report. Also, he takes issue with the view by some scientists

I hat (he earthquake which caused the Asian tsunami might have changed the earth's spin, Naqash says: "My point is that if at all there is a connect ion between earth's spin, wobble, axial till and the tsunami, then the wobble, or change in spin or axial tilt must have occurred first, causing the Asian tsunami."

"Because, primarily my opinion is based on the observation that cosmic changes or forces, and interplanetary changes affect intra-planetary activities and phenomena."

Naqash says that he has neither the resources nor the equipment to collect data about natural disasters but his opinion stems, among other things, from "observations" about the varying frequency of incidence of events such as earthquakes, appearance of comets, cyclones and formation and extinction of geographical features, "which have sometimes occurred at a high rate of movement and sometimes at a comparatively low rate."

Paramahatnsa Tewari, the retired Atomic Energy Department scientist, had said that his conclusion about the causes of the tsunami stems from his theory that all spinning cosmic objects including the sun develop electric fields that repel each other.

According to Tewari on December 26, 2004 when the Saturn, Moon, Earth and the Sun were perfectly aligned, there was an imbalance of these electrical forces on Earth, because the repulsive force due to Sal urn was reduced as it as shielded by the Moon which does not spin, while the Sun, which was on the other side exerted its force on Earth.

Tewari had said that the imbalance pushed solid earth away from the sun causing sc water to overflow due to its fluidity, causing the tsunami.

(Kashmir Observer, 03 May, 2005)

Kashmir's Unseen Burden

Mental health isn't just depression or anxiety, it's the hidden battles beneath the surface, waiting to be uncovered.

Musaib Bilal

For a long time, I thought I was only anxious. I had the signs: racing thoughts, sleepless nights, the panicked second-guessing of every choice. Some days I felt like I was drowning. Other days, it was like I had a drummer in my chest, beating a war song no one else could hear.

But depression and anxiety were only symptoms. I didn't realize something deeper was running the show.

It was my mentor who said it first: "You're not just anxious. You're ashamed."

Shame? The word stung. I hadn't done anything disgraceful. I wasn't hiding a scandal. What did I have to be ashamed of?

It took me six months to even consider it. But slowly, through therapy, I saw what I had never wanted to look at. Shame doesn't always wear a name tag. It hides in small moments. Being ignored. Being overlooked. Failing. Losing. Shame was there, whispering that I wasn't good enough. That I never would be.

It rewrote my past. It told me that every broken friendship was my fault. That every academic stumble proved I was a fraud. Even when I succeeded, I thought I had fooled people into thinking I was worth something.

So I did what many do. I chased perfection. I told myself if I worked harder, got better and kept it together, I could outrun that whisper.

But perfectionism is a trap. No matter how much I achieved, I was still terrified of failure. And when I did fail, shame said, "I told you so." I didn't need anyone else to tear me down. I was doing it myself.

Eventually, I started to avoid trying. If I didn't try, I couldn't fail. But I also couldn't grow. So I stayed stuck, in a cycle of overachieving, self-sabotaging, and quietly falling apart.

Shame also shaped how I loved. I wanted people close but feared they'd see through me. I feared being too much. I feared being left.

In Kashmir, there's pressure to stay strong. Crying is weakness. Therapy is for the broken. If you see a therapist, people think it must be because of a breakup. They laugh. They call you crazy. They say, "Pagal hai kya?" But therapy saved me. It helped



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me name what was unspoken.

Some people come to therapy for loss. Some come for failure. Some come because their minds don't work the way the world wants them to: ADHD, autism, mood disorders. But

instead of support, they get shame.

No one shames a diabetic for needing insulin. But say you need a therapist, and people act like you've failed at being human.

We carry so much silently. We walk around with past wounds dressed as bad habits. Sometimes we don't even know they're wounds. We just bleed on the people around us.

I wore fake confidence for years. I was scared someone would see the truth. But healing started when I let myself be seen.

Shame is a lie that says you have to earn your worth. But the truth is simple: you are already enough.

Mental health isn't just about naming a diagnosis. It's about naming what's underneath. In my case, it was shame.

It shaped how I saw myself, how I moved through the world, how I reached, or didn't, for the things I wanted.

The path to healing isn't straight. But it starts with honesty. With pulling the shame out from the dark. With letting ourselves be soft in a world that teaches us to harden.

I'm still learning. Still failing. Still healing.

But every time I name what I used to hide, I feel a little freer.

The writer is a postgraduate student of psychology based in Kashmir.

Education or Extortion?

Many private schools in Kashmir are hiking fees, withholding grades, and shaming kids to squeeze money from families. Parents are fighting back, but will anyone listen?

Javid Amin

Imagine scrimping and saving to send your child to school, hoping they'll learn, grow, and chase their dreams. Now picture that school turning into a money-hungry machine, demanding cash you don't have while punishing your child for your empty wallet. This is the reality for parents across Kashmir, where private schools are squeezing families dry with skyrocketing fees and ruthless tactics.

The problem starts with fee hikes that hit like a punch to the gut. Schools announce hikes without warning, slapping vague labels like "technology fund" or "maintenance charge" on the bills. A father in Srinagar told me his daughter's school raised fees by 20% last year, citing "infrastructure upgrades." He's still waiting to see a single new desk.

When parents can't keep up, schools turn cruel. They withhold report cards, blocking kids from advancing to the next grade. Teachers refuse to check homework or mark attendance. Some schools even bar students from class activities, leaving them to sit in shame while their peers move on. One mother in Ganderbal described her son coming home in tears after his teacher announced his unpaid fees in front of the class. He's 10 years old.

It gets worse. Some schools demand payment for the entire year upfront, even if a family plans to withdraw their child. It's a trap, forcing parents to fork over thousands of rupees for services they won't use. Many, already stretched thin by Kashmir's high cost of living, take desperate measures. They work extra jobs, borrow from relatives, or skip meals to scrape together the cash. Still, they're made to feel like failures.

The emotional toll on children is heart-breaking. Kids live in fear of being singled out for their parents' struggles. Their confidence crumbles, their grades slip, and their mental health suffers. Education, meant to spark hope and ambition, becomes a source of dread. A 12-year-old girl in Baramulla told her parents she'd rather quit school than face another day of humiliation. No child should feel this way.

This isn't just unfair. It's illegal. Laws in Jammu and Kashmir forbid schools from withholding results or denying educational services over unpaid fees. Yet these rules gather dust while schools act with impunity. Parents who complain to education boards or local officials often get shrugs or empty promises. The system, it seems, is complicit.



The schools, though, wield serious clout. Many have ties to powerful figures, making reform feel like a pipe dream. They've turned education into a business, prioritizing profits over learning. Classrooms that should nurture young minds are now battlegrounds where families fight to survive.

This can't go on. Kashmir's children deserve better. Education should lift them up, not tear them down. Parents, teachers, and communities must demand accountability. The government needs to enforce its own laws, audit school budgets, and protect families from this financial abuse. Media must amplify these voices, shining a light on the injustice.

As one father put it, "They're not just taking our money, they're stealing our kids' futures." He's right.

Every day without change, another child's dreams slip away. Kashmir's schools must return to their purpose: empowering the next generation, not exploiting them. The fight for fair education is a fight for justice. It's time to win it.

Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.

The Tyranny of Marks

In Kashmir, academic pressure is warping childhoods and wrecking mental health. Behind every topper's name on a wall, there are students quietly falling apart.

Arshid Qalmi

In Kashmir's tuition-laden evenings, where streetlights blur into the glow of cram-school signboards, a quiet emergency is taking shape. It has no curfews, no slogans, no headlines. But it's real, and it's claiming young minds every day.

At the centre of this crisis is a single figure: the student score.

In classrooms and homes across the Valley, children are being measured, compared, and judged by the marks they secure in exams. High grades mean praise, pride, and future prospects. Anything less, even an 89%, invites questions, disappointment, silence.

The stakes are clear. In a region with political instability and limited jobs, academic success is seen as the safest way forward. Parents, often with the best intentions, tie their child's worth to board results and entrance ranks. Careers in medicine and engineering dominate aspirations. Failure is seen not as part of learning, but as a personal flaw.

And the pressure begins early.

By age ten, children know their family's hopes depend on their scores. At thirteen, many are enrolled in coaching centres that run longer than the school day. By sixteen, they speak of percentages the way others speak of weather, unavoidable and often grim.

This system doesn't just chase excellence. It crushes variation.

A student who writes poetry, sketches, plays football, or codes in silence is told to "focus." Schools hang banners with toppers' photos, while those struggling are left behind, both literally and emotionally. Few schools have trained counsellors. Fewer still have time for students who don't fit the academic mould.

Psychologists across Kashmir say they've seen a sharp rise in students with anxiety, depression, panic attacks, and insomnia — many tied directly to academic stress. Chil-

dren as young as eleven report symptoms. Some are placed on medication just to survive the school year.

And in tragic cases, the pressure turns fatal.

Over the past few years, multiple student suicides in the Valley have been linked to poor academic performance. The notes they leave behind speak not of laziness or rebellion, but of shame. The system made them believe they had failed at life — for not topping an exam.

Inside schools, there's little relief. Teachers, themselves under pressure from boards and parents, often reinforce grade-based hierarchies. A student's value is discussed through their rank, not their effort. Many children, struggling silently, drop out emotionally long before they do on paper.

There are glimpses of hope. A few educators are trying to shift focus from performance to potential. Some parents are learning to ask better questions. But these efforts are scattered and slow.

What Kashmir needs is a fundamental change in how success is seen.

Children are not percentile machines. They are people, with uneven talents, different speeds, and rich inner worlds. Not all of them will top physics. Some will build things. Some will write. Some will listen better than they speak. That should be enough.

Mental health cannot be a luxury. It must be part of the curriculum, the culture, and the conversation. Parents need support, too, not just to help children score better, but to help them stay whole.

The tragedy is not that a child fails an exam. It's that they start to believe they are a failure.

In Kashmir's race for marks, it's time to ask: Are we raising toppers — or are we raising children?

Writer can be reached out at aqalmi303@gmail.com

What We Did To The Water

Once a place where water was treated with sacred reverence, Kashmir now swims in filth. Our environmental decay reflects a deeper, moral unravelling.

Dr. Ashraf Zainabi

I remember my grandfather standing by the brook for ablution, careful not to spit the rinse water back into the stream. Even while refilling his hukka, he would step away from the water to empty the residue elsewhere. He wasn't a man of degrees, but he carried a rare wisdom—an unspoken reverence for the land and its lifelines. That consciousness, that instinctive respect for nature, was in his blood.

Today, I look around and wonder: where did it all go?

We seem to have lost something elemental. It's not just the rivers or lakes that are choking, it's our moral fibre. Once considered paradise, Kashmir is now comfortably coexisting with garbage on the streets, plastic in the rivers, and sewage in the air. Filth has become ordinary. Unnoticed. Unchallenged.

The River Jhelum, the artery that runs through the Valley, is dying silently. From Anantnag to Uri, untreated sewage, plastic, pesticides, even animal carcasses are dumped straight into its waters. We all know it. Few seem to care. Once sacred, Jhelum is now an open drain. Who did this? We did. All of us.

Even those with the means to change things have stepped back. The educated elite who sip bottled water at home speak of environmentalism in panel discussions. Government officials publish reports from behind their desks, rarely venturing out to see the rot for themselves. Climate seminars are held in five-star hotels while drains overflow just outside their gates.

The Jal Jeevan Mission has brought taps to homes. But what flows through them is often far from clean. Water from polluted streams and nallahs is lifted directly into supply tanks with little to no filtration. "Har Ghar Jal" might be true. "Shudh Jal"? Not quite. And now, doctors are seeing the result: rising cases of liver disease, kidney failure, and infections tied to contaminated water.

Where is the outrage?

We rely on spreadsheets and san-

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itized data, but rivers don't speak in numbers. They scream through their stench. They plead through their silence. And yet, there is silence, from officials, civil society, and religious leaders alike. NGOs chase foreign grants. Universities stay quiet beyond research papers. Mosques are cleaned for prayer, but the streets outside are left littered with garbage.

How did we reach a point where it's acceptable to dump kitchen waste, plastic wrappers, and even sanitary pads into our water bod-

ies? What moral high ground can a society claim when it treats its lifelines like landfills?

We don't just need laws. We need a shift in consciousness. Every school must teach that cleanliness is not someone else's job. Every adult must feel shame, not resignation, in the face of dirt. Our leaders must do more than post selfies from 'clean-up' drives.

Let's take bold steps. Recognise Jhelum as a living entity with rights. Enforce strict penalties for polluters. Name them. Shame them. Create dis-

strict-level river protection forces. Let mohallas adopt streams. Let colleges clean canals. Let this be personal.

Because this isn't just about the environment anymore. It's about who we are becoming. If we lose our rivers, we lose our reflection. And if we keep walking past filth in silence, we are not victims of decay. We are its agents.

The clock is ticking. Let this be our moment of return.

Writer is a Chadoora-based teacher-researcher.



Kashmir's Pollination Hero

In the quiet of Kashmir's dawn, one man's love for bees revived a valley's fading apple groves.

Dr. Waseem Ahmad

Dr. Manzoor Ahmad Parray walks softly through Kashmir orchards, where morning mist curls like a whispered secret. The air hums with the buzz of bees, and apple trees stretch their blossom-laden arms toward snow-capped peaks. This serenity masks a struggle that nearly silenced the valley's pulse. For years, Dr. Parray has been its quiet savior.

Kashmir's orchards, the heart of its economy, were once fading. Apples dwindled as barren trees stood empty. Farmers watched helplessly as their future withered.

The cause was simple: the bees had vanished. Without their pollination, blossoms couldn't bear fruit. Without fruit, the orchards faced ruin.

Dr. Parray, an entomologist with over thirty years of dedication to insects, refused to accept defeat.

He saw the bees' absence not as nature's failure, but as a world changing too quickly for them to adapt. The land still had life to give; it just needed guidance.

He began by experimenting with hand pollination, patiently brushing pollen from flower to



HE SAW THE BEES' ABSENCE NOT AS NATURE'S FAILURE, but as a world changing too quickly for them to adapt. The land still had life to give; it just needed guidance.

flower. It was slow, but it worked.

Then came bouquet pollination, clustering blooms to lure bees back. Slowly, apples returned to the branches, and the buzz of bees filled the air once more. Hope bloomed with it.

But Dr. Parray knew revival wasn't enough. He envisioned a valley in harmony with bees, a landscape where they could thrive.

He mapped seasonal blooms, tracking where and when bees would be most active. Like a conduc-

tor, he moved hives in sync with the flowers, creating a balance between the bees, the blooms, and the people. No one had attempted this before.

He shared his knowledge with farmers, students, and anyone willing to learn. These weren't mere lessons, they were acts of creation. People planted, pollinated, and worked side by side with him.

Slowly, a new generation of beekeepers was born, grounded in a deeper understanding of nature.

From this labor came Shalimar Honey, a golden product that captured the essence of Kashmir's flowers. Its pure sweetness spread far beyond the valley, but it was more than just honey. It was proof that Kashmir still had beauty to offer, that the land could still give. For farmers, it was a new source of pride.

Dr. Parray seeks no spotlight. Fame and awards mean little to him. His reward is the valley's pulse: orchards alive with apples, bees humming, and farmers smiling.

As he walks the orchard paths, notebook in hand, he sees his work reflected in every blossom, every harvest.

The world may not know his name, but the land does. The bees do. And that is enough.

Soil Scam

In Kashmir, earthworms are quietly healing the soil, but fake compost threatens their work.

By Javaid Ahmad Mir

In the apple orchards of Shopian, where mountain air smells of blossoms and earth, something small but powerful is at work. Earthworms, quietly burrowing through cow dung and kitchen waste, are reviving tired soil and restoring hope to Kashmir's farmers. But as this organic revolution gathers momentum, it's being quietly undercut by fake compost disguised as the real thing.

Like much of India, Kashmir's soil has suffered under decades of chemical farming. The Green Revolution promised abundance, but over time, synthetic fertilizers drained the land of life. Fields hardened. Yields plateaued. Costs soared. In recent years, desperate for alternatives, farmers turned to a simple, ancient practice: vermicomposting.

It works like this. Earthworms, tiny creatures like *Eisenia fetida*, feed on organic matter and produce vermicast, a rich, crumbly compost teeming with beneficial microbes. Unlike regular manure or chemical fertilizers, true vermicompost heals the soil. It improves structure, balances pH, boosts nutrients, and helps crops resist disease. It also offers a sustainable way to manage

biodegradable waste in a region where agriculture and ecology are tightly entwined.

I've seen its promise firsthand. In Shopian, women's self-help groups and smallholder farmers are using vermicompost to bring dead soil back to life. Their vegetables are greener, their trees fuller, their fields softer underfoot. This isn't just farming, it's repair.

But the process isn't easy. Making genuine vermicompost takes months. It needs the right moisture, temperature, and time. It's labor-intensive and costs up to 70% more than shortcuts. And that's where the trouble begins.

To cash in on rising demand, some producers are skipping the worms entirely. They use acids, water pressure, or machine processing to break down waste, then market it as vermicompost. It looks similar, but it lacks the microbial vitality of the real thing. These fake versions cost less and sell more. Many farmers, unaware of the difference, buy them, believing they're investing in soil health.

But when results disappoint, trust in vermicomposting itself erodes. The damage runs deep. Honest producers—those who work patiently and responsibly—can't compete. The market gets flooded with cheap imitations, and

the very practice that could transform Kashmir's soil is discredited.

The government has done well to promote vermicomposting in principle. But that's no longer enough. We need action. Start with clear standards: define what qualifies as true vermicompost, and how it's made. Mandate proper labeling and traceability. Certify genuine producers and audit big buyers, like orchard owners. And run awareness campaigns so that farmers know what they're buying, and why it matters.

Because this isn't just about compost. It's about protecting rural livelihoods, restoring trust in organic farming, and defending a low-cost, high-impact tool for ecological recovery. In Kashmir, where land is not just property but legacy, we cannot afford to lose this battle.

The earthworm doesn't hurry. Its work is slow, quiet, and exacting. But the results are transformative. We owe it to our soil, and to those who care for it, to match that diligence with honesty and regulation. Let's protect what's real, before the fakes bury the future.

Javaid Ahmad Mir is District Programme Manager with JKRLM in Shopian, where he works with farmers and women's groups to promote sustainable agriculture.



This Kashmiri Is Digging Deep to Rewire Global Agriculture

Aashiq Hussain Andrabi

Dr. Tavseef Shah is not your typical startup founder. Trained as an environmental engineer in Germany, he turned away from a career in steel to focus on soil. Specifically, how the Earth's most overlooked ecosystem—our agricultural land—can be healed using AI, agroecology, and the wisdom of farmers.

Shah, who grew up in Kashmir and now serves as COO of CinSOIL, works at the nexus of science, policy, and technology. His startup builds AI tools to monitor soil carbon stocks—an innovation that could fast-track the adoption of regenerative agriculture globally.

With over a decade in research and policy, including stints with the UN FAO and WWF, Shah has become a key voice on the future of food, farming, and climate action.

We caught up with him to talk about systems thinking, the promise of carbon farming, and why he believes farmers—not corporations—are best placed to lead climate action.

You trained as an engineer. What pulled you into agroecology?

I always wanted to work on tangible problems—that led me to engineering. But during my master's in Germany, I visited Kashmir and witnessed the 2014 floods. That experience was transformative. I began to think more systemically—how agriculture, land use, and climate are deeply connected. That eventually led me into agroecology.

Was Kashmir's agricultural culture an influence growing up?

Not really at first. But the floods changed my perspective. I spoke with professors about what happened and started to see the links—how poor land use could



exacerbate disasters. Later, I did my field research in Kashmir, which helped shape my focus on soil and regenerative farming.

CinSOIL uses AI to track soil carbon. How does it work?

It's a digital tool that estimates and monitors soil carbon stocks using satellite data. The aim is to support farmers in adopting carbon farming—practices that store more carbon in the soil, reducing agriculture's climate footprint.

We provide decision support for projects that want to scale this approach.

What's holding back carbon farming from wider adoption?

The bottleneck is measurement. Without data, it's hard to verify outcomes and reward farmers. Our tool helps solve that. But adoption also needs trust, education, and incentives, especially in smallholder-dominated regions like Kashmir.

Why does carbon farming matter for Asia?

Asia's agrifood systems are huge emitters. If we shift them towards regeneration, the impact could be massive. In Kashmir and similar regions, it could make agriculture part of the climate solution, not just the problem.

You've worked with UN agencies and global think tanks. What lessons could shape Kashmir's farm policies?

The biggest difference is how farmers are treated. In the EU, farmers are seen as ecosystem stewards and can be paid for that. In South Asia, they're often viewed as burdens. But there are some promising projects that show alternatives are possible—sustainable, profitable, and scalable.

How can tech like AI or remote sensing support small farmers?

Traditional cues—weather patterns, soil health, water—are no

longer predictable. At the same time, younger generations are losing interest in farming. Digital tools can help fill that gap: by offering decision support, fostering peer learning, and making agriculture more adaptive and data-driven.

Regenerative practices come with risk. What would make farmers more willing to try them?

Margins are already razor-thin. That's why policy incentives and income diversification are crucial. If farmers can earn from composting, or biochar, or even ecosystem services, the risks become manageable. It's not about teaching them agriculture—it's about equipping them for new realities.

You advocate for insetting over offsetting. Why?

Offsetting lets polluters pay others to clean up. It doesn't fix the root problem. Insetting, on the other hand, means companies take responsibility within their own value chains. That's how real decarbonisation happens—by transforming how we produce, not just compensating for emissions.

Any advice for young scientists or startups in agriculture?

Starting something new is never easy, and the opportunity costs are real. But the moral clarity you get from solving real-world problems is worth it. If you're studying agriculture, you could be shaping the future of food. If it's sustainability, you're safeguarding the planet's life systems. Keep learning, stay adaptable, and always stay close to the problem.

What's next for CinSOIL?

We're still early stage, learning as we go. Over the next few years, we aim to scale carbon farming projects across Europe and—eventually—explore other regions.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Kashmir Hit

guard when their boat capsized near Duck Park during sudden gusts. One of them, Abdul Majeed Khosa, was rescued, while the other, 24-year-old Taufeeq Ahmad Chopan, remains missing.

Rescue teams from SDRF and local divers launched an operation, but the search was called off late in the evening due to low visibility. "Despite extensive efforts, there were no signs of the missing person. The operation will resume with first light on Saturday," an SDRF official said.

SC Halts Deportation

If petitioners are dissatisfied by the final decision, they can approach J&K&L HC. Order not to be treated as precedent," the bench said.

The family, which lives in Kashmir and whose sons work in Bengaluru, faced deportation to Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people lost their lives.

Observing that the issue involves a human angle, the bench gave the family the liberty to approach the Jammu and Kashmir high court in case they are aggrieved by the document verification order.

Advocate Nanda Kishore, appearing for the family, claimed they had valid passports and Aadhaar cards.

He said the family members in Srinagar were bundled into a jeep and ferried the Wagah border and now were at the "threshold of being thrown out of the country".

The bench while directing the authorities to verify all the documents said that a decision be taken at the earliest, though no time limit was fixed.

Justice Kant asked the petitioner's counsel, "How did the father come to India? You have said he was in Pakistan."

Kishore said he came to India in 1987 on a valid visa and surrendered the Pakistani passport at the border.

One of the sons, who was appearing virtually, claimed the father came to India from Muzaffarabad, from the other side of Kashmir.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said it would be appropriate that the petitioners approach the authorities concerned first so that their claims were verified.

"Let them approach the authorities," Mehta said while assuring the bench that no coercive action would be taken against them till a decision was arrived at on the documents.

"It was a case, where these people have overstayed the visa," he

submitted.

The bench, however, said the oral undertaking might pave way to uncertainties.

The top court was hearing a plea by Ahmed Tarek Butt and his five family members who claimed they were detained and taken to the Wagah border for deportation to Pakistan despite having valid Indian documents.

The bench noted that following the Pahalgam attack, the Centre in a notification dated April 25 has revoked the visa of Pakistani nationals except for those provided in the order itself and gave a specific timeline for their deportation.

Cross-border

most recent cross-border shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) began on April 23, 2025, with unprovoked firing from Pakistan reported in the Tattapani sector of Poonch.

This marked the start of a series of ceasefire violations by Pakistani forces, escalating tensions following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, 2025, which killed 26 people, mostly tourists.

Since then, shelling and small-arms fire have continued intermittently, with notable incidents reported across multiple sectors, including Naushera, Sunderbani, Akhnoor, Kupwara, Baramulla, and the Pargwal sector along the International Border, occurring over several consecutive nights up to last night.

It may be recalled that during a hotline conversation on April 30, 2025, between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan, India issued a stern warning to Pakistan, reiterating that such unprovoked actions violate the 2003 ceasefire agreement and will not be tolerated.

The Indian DGMO emphasized the need for Pakistan to adhere to bilateral commitments and cease all hostile activities along the LoC and IB. (KNO)

India Blocks SM

and former Pakistani cricketers including Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan and Wasim Akram on Friday, intensifying its digital crackdown on influential personalities across the border in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack.

The list of restricted accounts also includes Test captain Shan Masood, pacers Hasan Ali and Naseem Shah, batter Imam-ul-Haq, all rounder Shadab Khan and former stars Shoaib Akhtar and Shahid Afridi.

Additionally, the account of cricket captain Imran Khan is also now

inaccessible in India.

The government had earlier this week blocked 16 Pakistani YouTube channels for allegedly disseminating "false, provocative and communally sensitive content" about India and has also strongly objected to the BBC's reportage on the Pahalgam attack.

The government's move follows recommendations from the Ministry of Home Affairs in the wake of the April 22 terror attack in the upper reaches of the Kashmir resort town in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

Besides, the Ministry of External Affairs will be monitoring the reporting of the BBC, which termed terrorists as militants, officials had said.

The YouTube channels blocked are Dawn News, Irshad Bhatti, SAMAA TV, ARY NEWS, BOL NEWS, Raftar, The Pakistan Reference, Geo News, Samaa Sports, GNN, Uzair Cricket, Umar Cheema Exclusive, Asma Shirazi, Muneeb Farooq, SUNO News and Razi Naama.

IWT- Pak To Issue

constitutional consultations were held in response to India's unilateral move, and preliminary groundwork has been completed after which it has been decided to formally serve a diplomatic notice to India over the suspension of the treaty.

Ties plummeted between India and Pakistan following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people. India, among other punitive actions, announced to suspend the key water accord, signed in 1960, which governs water sharing between the two countries.

Officials confirmed that the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Water Resources, and Law have coordinated to finalise the process, and a formal notice will be issued to New Delhi in coming days through diplomatic channels.

Sources within the Indus Commission said the notice will seek concrete explanations from India for its suspension of the landmark treaty.

Discussions are also underway to lodge formal protests at global forums to highlight what Pakistan claims as Indian water aggression against it.

Pakistan believes it holds legal precedence on the treaty and hopes that India will be compelled to revisit its decision. All actions will be taken following approval from the federal cabinet, the Express News added.

J&K Class 12

be out, we had a final meeting that evening. But what surfaced online was a fake result. It was repeatedly

clarified on social media that the result was fake. An FIR was registered and the official result was announced on April 30 at 2 PM. A press conference was held at 1:50 PM before releasing the actual results."

She clarified that any result circulated before this press conference was not genuine. Notifications were already issued stating that the board had not declared the result on April 29.

On the other hand, students expressed that the leak was a serious violation of their privacy and urged the board to take stronger measures to protect such critical data. While the official results were indeed declared on April 30, the hacking incident has cast serious doubts on the board's cybersecurity systems.

Now, all eyes are on the cyber police investigation and the board's future strategies for data protection.

Congress Seeks

alleged role in the Pahalgam attack and urging the government to set a fixed timeline for the implementation of caste enumeration.

The party is also likely to seek a constitutional amendment to remove the 50% cap on reservations and push for the enforcement of Article 15(5), which allows reservations in private educational institutions.

Speaking earlier, Rahul Gandhi said the perpetrators of the Pahalgam attack — which left 26 people, mostly tourists, dead — must be held accountable, and the Prime Minister should respond firmly.

He welcomed the government's recent "sudden" decision to include caste enumeration in the next decadal census but questioned its intent, stating, "After 11 years of opposing it, the Centre must now fix a timeline for implementation. We don't want this to go the way of the Women's Reservation Bill — passed but not implemented."

Rahul credited sustained pressure from the Congress for the shift in government policy. "The pressure we applied has worked, but it's not enough to just announce it — there has to be a deadline," he said.

This is the second CWC meeting on the issue in recent weeks. The earlier meeting, held on April 24, had already termed Pakistan as the mastermind behind the Pahalgam attack and sought strong retaliatory measures.

The Congress also wants the caste census to be integrated into the upcoming national census, with sufficient funding and legal safeguards to ensure its timely and effective rollout.

Srinagar Court Drops

permission from Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla dated 28 February 2025 and 4-hour permit for severing liquor in connection with get together in favour of Nedous Hotel Gulmarg issued by Deputy Excise Commissioner (Executive) Kashmir Division for demonstrating that no offences as alleged has been committed.

"...two models wearing skimpy clothes or swim wear in the broader scheme of the event does not attract the penal offence of obscenity so far as facts disclosed in the complaint pertain hence cognizance cannot be taken of such offence," the court said.

Regarding the offence under Section 299 BNS which proscribes deliberate malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs, the court said, "...section 217 of BNSS, 2023 states that no court shall take cognizance inter alia of offence under section 299 BNS except with the previous sanction of the Central Government or of the State Government."

As regards the offence stated to be committed by accused under Section 50-A of the Jammu and Kashmir Excise Act 1958 which proscribes drinking in public or any place of worship. The court said that proviso to sub section (2) of section 45 of the Act bars the cognizance of offence under the Excise Act on the complaint made by private individuals. It is only the Deputy Commissioner, police and other authorities stated under the Act who have the locus to maintain a complaint under the Excise Act, the court said.

After discussing all the points in detail, the Judge ordered: ".....this Court deems it fit not to proceed further in the complaint and is, accordingly, disposed of as such."

India's Strength

armed forces to decide on the mode, targets and timing of response to Pakistan.

During the past ten days PM Modi has chaired two back to back meetings of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) and has passed strict directions to eliminate terror and its supporters.

Budgam, Nagrota

the National Conference appears to be in a strong position to win the Budgam seat, benefiting from a divided opposition in Kashmir. Meanwhile, the BJP is expected to retain the Nagrota seat with minimal challenges. In the 2014 and 2024 assembly

elections, these seats were won by the NC and BJP, respectively.

The Night Dilli Haat

store. His hands, used to delicate brushes and fine lines, now sifted through charred wood and crumbled color.

"It wasn't just my work," he said. "It was my identity. My dignity."

Nearby, Shauket Ahmed stared at the remains of his exhibition. A veteran in the trade, he estimated his losses at over 1.5 crore.

"We couldn't save a single thing," he said, his voice flat. "The fire took everything. Even the pieces that took months to make."

Dilli Haat wasn't just a market. It was a lifeline. A place where artisans from far-off corners of India brought their cultures to the capital. For Kashmiri craftsmen, it was a bridge between conflict and calm, between forgotten alleys and curious visitors.

"This place gave us visibility," said Shuja. "Here, people saw the beauty of our work. They touched our shawls and asked about our stories. It felt like we mattered."

But as flames rose that night, panic spread. Vendors ran, shouting for help. Thirteen fire trucks arrived, but many say they came too late. Some watched their life's work turn to ash before a single hose was turned on.

"Everything was gone before the water came," said a cloth merchant, shaking his head.

Police are now reviewing CCTV footage to find out what started the fire. The fire department's response is also under scrutiny. For the artisans, though, the damage is already done.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta called the fire "unfortunate" and promised help. Tourism Minister Kapil Mishra visited the site and vowed justice. But those who lost everything say words are not enough.

"We don't just need money," said Shuja. "We need a place to start again."

In Srinagar, National Conference MLA Tanvir Sadiq said the tragedy demands more than sympathy. "These craftsmen are the soul of Kashmir," he said. "They deserve dignity, support, and answers."

Now, Dilli Haat is quiet. The laughter, the footfall, the scent of food, the touch of handmade fabric, everything is gone. In its place is silence, smoke, and the soft crunch of ash underfoot.

Shuja comes back each day. Not to sell, but to wonder: "How do you stitch beauty again, when everything you had has burned?"



The methods used to consume news have changed over time from newspapers, to television, to the Internet on our computers to carrying the news around with us 24/7 on smartphones in our pockets.

Kashmir Observer, with 28 years of experience in news gathering is now available 24x7 on all digital platforms like laptops, cell phones or via Bluetooth on your smart TV's across the world.

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Dy CM Inspects Progress On Construction Works In Dak Bungalow Nowshera



Observer News Service

RAJOURI: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today visited the PWD Dak Bungalow in Nowshera to inspect the progress on construction works being executed there.

The visit aimed to evaluate the progress on ongoing developmental works, especially the conference hall at PWD Dak Bungalow Nowshera.

During his visit, the Deputy Chief Minister was apprised that the estimated cost of the project is Rs 249 Lakh and it will be completed by December 2025.

The Dy CM inspected the quality of construction works and directed the executing

agencies to expedite the pace of progress while maintaining high standards in work execution.

Highlighting the significance of infrastructure development, he directed the officials to ensure strict adherence to deadlines besides addressing any bottlenecks hindering the timely completion of projects.

"Quality should not be compromised at any cost, as these projects are pivotal for overall development of the region and well-being of the people," Surinder Choudhary remarked.

The Deputy Chief Minister called for regular monitoring and evaluation of ongoing works to ensure transparency and accountability.

Pahalgam Attack Will Be Avenged: LoP Sharma

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Stating that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi April 22 Pahalgam attack will be avenged, Leader of Opposition and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, Sunil Sharma on Friday said that the perpetrators will be hunted down and taught a lesson.

Sharma said, "Everyone is aware that PM Modi fulfills his promise. But, we will have to wait for the revenge of the Pahalgam attack. Those responsible will be hunted down."

Sharma also said that the country under the leadership of PM Modi has witnessed a change.

"The time has gone when the other countries would dare to undermine Bharat. It is Modi's Bharat and those responsible will be brought to justice," he said. "Bharat continues to follow values of humanity even after witnessing the attacks like



Uri, Pulwama and Pahalgam. India has never compromised with these values and witnessed the growth. However, some people who are not happy with this growth are trying to destabilize the peace and killing innocents," he said.

He added that PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have already promised that the Pahalgam terror attack will be avenged. "India stands at the top and follows the values of humanity in letter and spirit," he said.

Sharma also remembered Adi Shankaracharya and greeted the people on the occasion of Shankaracharya Jayanti.

Drug Control Team Cracks Down On Violations Along Baltal Route

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In view of the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2025, the Drugs Control Department of Ganderbal district intensified inspections of pharmacies and medical establishments along the Baltal axis through Sonamarg, a critical route for yatra pilgrims.

According to officials, the inspection drive was carried out on April 26 under the supervision of Dr. Shabeer Ahmad Bhat, Assistant Controller Drugs for Ganderbal and Bandipora.

The team inspected 20 medical shops in the area, out of which four were found flouting mandatory drug regulations and were consequently sealed on the spot under Section 22(d) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

Following this, a review inspection was conducted on May 1, where it was observed that the sealed shops had brought their operations into compliance. However, the license of one pharmacy in Kangan was suspended for three days due to continued non-adherence to guidelines.

An official said that pharma-



cies en route the yatra must uphold high standards of compliance. "Medical shops were directed to ensure availability of emergency medicines, staff must follow proper dress code, and signboards with license details and contact numbers should be displayed visibly," he said.

In a related development, the department also inspected the PHC Sonamarg, where six samples were taken from the drug-store for lab testing and analysis to ensure quality assurance in public healthcare services.

The department emphasized that these checks are part of a broader strategy to safeguard public health and ensure uninterrupted medical support during the pilgrimage. Officials stated that such proactive measures would continue in the run-up to SANJY 2025—(KNO)

Government Schools Show Remarkable Improvement In Board Exam Results

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Following the announcement of Class 12 examination results, it has become evident that teaching standards in government schools are progressing rapidly. There has been a significant and positive shift not only in innovative achievements but also in academic outcomes.

A recent example of this is the exceptional performance by students from the Valley in a national-level innovation competition, besides, remarkable performance of government school students by securing more than 100 merit positions in the Class 12 results.

Sharing the details, Director of School Education Kashmir, Dr. G. N. Itoo, stated that while the Class 12 results are encouraging with no school having a pass percentage close to zero, the performance in Class 10 exams is equally commendable with 438 schools achieving over 90 percent pass percentage.

He further added that 219 schools recorded a 100 percent pass rate, which is extremely encouraging.

Expressing satisfaction over the success, Dr. Itoo said these achievements are the result of the students' hard work, the dedicated role of teachers, and the growing trust of parents in government schools.

Director affirmed his full confidence in the overall success rate of students in both Class 10 and 12 examinations, emphasizing that these statistics indicate a significant improvement in the quality of education. He credited this progress to initiatives like the establishment of various laboratory facilities, ICT labs, implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and the provision of education aligned with modern-day requirements.

Dr. Itoo attributed this success to the collective efforts of teachers, school heads, and parents, stating that these achievements are the result of

Tribal Girl Felicitated For Scoring Over 92% Marks



Agencies

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom, on Friday felicitated Shabnum Sadiq, a tribal girl from the remote Paner area of Tral, for her remarkable academic achievement in the Class 12 examinations. Despite living in a polythene tent amid challenging conditions, Shabnum secured an impressive 463 marks—over 92%—without any coaching or external help.

Hailing from a marginalised tribal community and facing daily hardships such as long walks to school and extreme weather, Shabnum's determination has made her a symbol of hope for underprivileged students, especially girls. Her story has earned praise from officials, educators and civil society members across the region.

During the felicitation, DC Pulwama said her success highlights the hidden potential within remote and disadvantaged communities. "Shabnum has set a powerful example. Despite lacking resources, she has achieved excellence through sheer hard work and dedication," he said.

their consistent dedication.

He extended heartfelt congratulations to the successful students and assured that the government and the Department of Education will continue to ensure modern educational facilities are made

accessible to students in every corner of Jammu and Kashmir. It is worth noting that this year, 39,768 students appeared for the Class 10 exams, out of which 31,010 passed, bringing the overall pass percentage to 77.97 percent.

Shabnum, who aspires to become an IAS officer, expressed her desire to contribute to the development of her area, which still faces infrastructural challenges like poor road connectivity and inadequate educational facilities. "I want to clear the UPSC exams to bring positive change to our community so that no child has to struggle the way I did," she said.

She shared that meeting the Deputy Commissioner, an IAS officer himself, made her feel even more motivated and closer to her goal. "I will work hard and do my best to crack the UPSC exam and serve my people," she added.

Recognising her exceptional achievement and determination, the Deputy Commissioner presented her with a cash prize of Rs 50,000. He assured continuous support for her future endeavours and reiterated the district administration's commitment to improving educational standards in tribal areas.

Dr Qayoom acknowledged the connectivity and infrastructure issues faced by residents of Paner. He assured them that their concerns regarding road construction and infrastructure development would be addressed as a priority—(KNO)

DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL EDUCATION KASHMIR, DR. G. N. ITOO, STATED THAT WHILE THE CLASS 12 RESULTS are encouraging with no school having a pass percentage close to zero, the performance in Class 10 exams is equally commendable with 438 schools achieving over 90% pass percentage.

Police Arrest Drug Peddler In Baramulla

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police on Friday said to have arrested a drug peddler in Baramulla and recovered contraband substance from his possession.

"A Police party of Police Station Baramulla at a checkpoint established near HP Gas Agency Drangbal, intercepted a person identified as Mohammad Afzal Khan son of Ata Mohammad Khan resident of Bimyaar Boniyar, Baramulla. During the search, 1.15 kg of Charas-like substance was recovered from his possession. He has been arrested," a police spokesman said in a statement.

Accordingly, police said that a case under FIR number 63/2025 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Baramulla and investigation has been initiated.

"We urge the common masses that if you witness drug peddling or any other crime anywhere near you, feel free to contact the nearest po-

lice establishment or dial 112. People are requested to cooperate with police in curbing the menace of drugs from the society. We reassure the community members that police will act tough against the criminals as per law," police said.

Meanwhile, Baramulla Police successfully solved a theft case reported from the Mechanical Irrigation Subdivision Pattan, leading to the arrest of the accused and recovery of stolen property.

On 15/03/2025, Police Station Pattan received a written complaint from the AEE, Mechanical Irrigation Subdivision Pattan, regarding a theft incident at the Lift Irrigation & De-Watering scheme structure at Gund Ibrahim. As per the complaint, during the intervening night of 10-11/03/2025, unknown thieves had stolen copper coils and cables from the scheme structure after breaking into the premises.

Acting on the complaint, a case under FIR No. 36/2025 was registered at Police Station Pattan and initiated an investigation.

During the investigation,

reliable inputs suggested the involvement of one Nazir Ahmad Dar son of Sanaullah Dar resident of Hygam Sopore A/P Wushkar Sumbal, a known habitual thief, who was reportedly roaming in the area of Trikolbal Gund Ibrahim days before the incident. Despite multiple raids at various locations, the suspect managed to evade arrest, further strengthening suspicion about his involvement. However, based on specific intelligence and technical inputs, it came to fore that the suspect was moving towards Mirgund in a Mahindra Bolero load carrier bearing registration number JK05M 0894.

Accordingly, a checkpoint was laid at Dover Crossing, where the accused was apprehended tactfully along with the said vehicle. Upon sustained questioning, the accused confessed to the commission of the theft and disclosed the location where the stolen copper coils were concealed. The stolen property has since been recovered and seized. The said vehicle used in the commission of the crime has also been seized.

'J&K Students In Iran Can Now Transfer Tuition Fees Via UCO Bank'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a significant relief for Kashmiri students studying in Iran, the Ministry has approved a direct and legal route for transferring tuition fees through UCO Bank.

Parents of students enrolled in Iranian universities can now remit fees securely using the official banking channel, ending years of uncertainty and dependence on unofficial methods.

According to officials, this development follows two years of sustained efforts and coordination with the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New Delhi.

"Over the past two years, we have worked tirelessly to resolve the legal, financial, and diplo-

matic challenges involved. We are deeply thankful to the Iranian Ambassador, whose support and involvement were crucial in securing the necessary approvals," the officials said.

They added that the new arrangement ensures transparency, legal compliance, and a sense of security for students and their families.

"With UCO Bank now facilitating these transfers, the risk of using informal channels is eliminated. This is a major step towards safeguarding the interests of our students abroad," officials noted.

They further affirmed their commitment to continue working on simplifying such procedures to ease the academic journey of students pursuing education overseas.

Div Com Inspects Arrangements For Hajj-25



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Ahead of the commencement of Hajj-25, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri visited Hajj House Bemina to take first hand appraisal of arrangements & basic amenities laid out by various departments.

Intending pilgrims would start leaving for the pilgrimage from Sunday, May 04, 2025.

During the visit, Div Com was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Bilal Mohi ud din Bhat. Other officers present during the visit included the Director, Airport Authority of India, Srinagar International Airport, Regional Director of BCAS, representatives from the Health, PHE, KPDCI, Information, Hajj Committee, SMC, JK Police, Customs, Emigration, Spicejet, and various banks.

On the occasion, Div Com took a comprehensive inspection of services and infrastructure, in-

cluding forex counters set up by banks, baggage screening machines, e-bracelet counters, and boarding facilities.

Div Com also reviewed the cleanliness of lodging rooms and the availability of basic amenities, such as water and uninterrupted electricity supply.

On the occasion, Officers from the Hajj Committee briefed the Div Com on the extensive measures taken to ensure comprehensive arrangements for security, traffic management, sanitation, and other essential services.

Speaking on the occasion, the Div Com emphasized the importance of delivering meticulous services to the pilgrims during their time at the Hajj House and during their departure. He called for coordinated efforts to provide the best possible experience for the Hujjaj, ensuring their comfort and safety during the sacred journey.

Moulana Mubarki Laid To Rest In Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Thousands of mourners gathered at the historic Jama Masjid Srinagar on Friday to pay their final respects to renowned Islamic scholar and President of Bazm-e-Tawheed, Maulana Mubarak Mubarki, who passed away earlier in the day.

The funeral prayers (Namaz-e-Janaza), led by his son Ayub Mubarki, were held in the courtyard of the Jamia Masjid. Scholars, students, admirers, and citizens from across the Valley participated in the solemn ceremony, expressing their sorrow at the loss of a revered religious figure.

Prominent Islamic scholars and clergy, including Grand Mufti of Jammu and Kashmir Nasir-ul-Islam, Allama Sheikh Al-Kindi, Moulana Abdul Mageed Dar, and Moulana Akharni, were in attendance, underscoring the late Maulana's stature in the religious community.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq also took part in the funeral and offered heartfelt condolences. Reflecting on a recent visit to the ailing cleric, he recalled how



Maulana Mubarki, despite his frailty, recognized him and spoke affectionately. "His passing is a personal loss to me and a great misfortune for Kashmir's religious landscape," Mirwaiz said.

The first part of the funeral took place at 4:00 PM at Jama Masjid, followed by burial rites at Maulana Mubarki's residence in Sanat Nagar, Srinagar.

Known for his profound knowledge of Islam, Maulana Mubarki served for decades as Khateeb of Bazar Masjid Srinagar. His sermons, rooted in unity, humility, and service, inspired generations.

Tributes continue to pour in from religious bodies, scholars, and members of the public, all describing his death as an irreparable loss to Kashmir's spiritual and intellectual heritage.

Awareness Programme On New Criminal Laws Held In Handwara

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a significant initiative aimed at promoting legal literacy and civic responsibility, Police in Handwara organized an awareness programme on the newly enacted criminal laws at New Millennium Public School, Handwara. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, teachers and members of the local community.

During the session, students actively engaged with the officers, posing insightful questions related to the new

laws. The queries ranged from the advantages of specific legal reforms to their impact on everyday life. The officers welcomed this dialogue, fostering an open and educational environment that empowered students to better understand the evolving legal framework.

Speaking on the occasion, senior police officials highlighted the importance of community-oriented policing and legal education. They stressed that an informed citizenry is essential for the effective implementation of laws and emphasized that such awareness initiatives serve as a crucial bridge be-

tween law enforcement and the public.

The programme concluded with a collective pledge to uphold the rule of law and contribute to a peaceful and just society. School authorities expressed their gratitude to the police department for bringing legal awareness to the grassroots level.

This initiative is part of a broader outreach strategy by J&K Police to enhance legal consciousness and build public trust. Similar awareness campaigns are planned for other educational institutions and community centers in the coming weeks.

Ramban Admin Intensifies Anti-Drug Campaign

Observer News Service

RAMBAN: In a determined effort to combat the menace of drug abuse, the District Administration Ramban, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, intensified its anti-drug campaign under the nationwide Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan and Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir initiative.

A series of awareness activities were organized across various educational institutions in the district to

sensitize students and the community about the harmful effects of drug and substance abuse.

These initiatives are part of a sustained campaign initiated by DC Ramban Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary to eradicate drug abuse and build a safer, healthier future for the youth of Ramban.

In Gool, the girl students of the Government Model Higher Secondary School led from the front by conducting sensitization drives within their community. Their active participation and leadership

underlined the role of youth especially young women in driving social change.

At the PM Shri Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Tethar, students actively participated in anti-drug pledge ceremonies and awareness programs aimed at promoting a healthy and drug-free lifestyle.

Similarly, the PM Shri Government High School Chakka also held awareness events under the same campaign, where students took part in discussions and activities emphasizing the importance

of staying away from drugs.

In a notable grassroots effort, the students of the Government High School Shagan staged a Nukkad Natak (street play) highlighting the devastating impact of drug addiction. The performance received appreciation for its impactful message and creativity.

Meanwhile, students at Kaskoot, Bankoot and various other schools took a pledge to observe the Anti-Tobacco campaign and joined the Nasha Mukht Bharat campaign, reaffirming their commitment to an addiction-free lifestyle.



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