

India, Pakistan Pull Back From Brink Agree to Ceasefire After U.S. Brokers Midnight Peace Deal Amid Fears of All-Out War

KO Web Desk

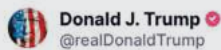
Srinagar: In a dramatic turn of events following days of intense cross-border hostilities and rising fears of full-scale war, nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan announced an immediate ceasefire late Saturday — a breakthrough brokered by the United States after emergency overnight diplomacy.

The ceasefire agreement followed the deadliest military confrontation between the two nations in decades. The fighting, which erupted weeks after a terrorist attack in Baisaran meadow on April 22 killed 26 tourists — quickly spiraled into missile strikes, drone assaults, and deadly artillery exchanges.

India blamed the attack on terrorists based in Pakistan and in retaliation launched targeted airstrikes under 'Operation Sindoor', on what

it described as terror infrastructure inside Pakistani territory, prompting the other side to respond with its own major military operation — dubbed Operation Bunyan ul Marsoos — targeting Indian military installations.

Scores of civilians were killed in shelling from across the border and LOC which



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE. Congratulations to both Countries on using Common Sense and Great Intelligence. Thank you for your attention to this matter!

also caused mass evacuations and widespread destruction on both sides of the Line.

Early Saturday, Pakistan's military announced that India had struck three military bases within Pakistan using missiles. In response, Islamabad said it launched retaliatory strikes on Indian bases. India | [More on P6](#)



Indian Forces Authorised to Respond: Misri

Hours after a ceasefire agreement was reached between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan to halt ongoing military actions, Pakistan violated the truce, according to Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri. The agreement, finalized earlier in the day, aimed to de-escalate

tensions along the border.

Misri condemned Pakistan's actions, stating, "For the last few hours, this understanding is being violated by Pakistan. The Indian Army is retaliating and dealing with this border intrusion." He described the violation as "extremely condemnable" and held Pakistan responsible for the escalation.

Misri urged Pakistan to take immediate steps to address the situation and halt the intrusions.

The Indian Army is actively responding to the breach, underscoring India's commitment to safeguarding its borders. The situation remains tense as diplomatic efforts continue to restore stability.

PM Chairs High-level Meeting After Ceasefire

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Minister Narendra Modi chaired a high-level meeting Saturday evening with top government functionaries, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, following the announcement that India and Pakistan have reached an understanding to stop military actions.

NSA Ajit Doval, Chief

of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and all three service chiefs were among those who attended the meeting.

The directors general of military operations (DGMO) of India and Pakistan have agreed to stop all firings and military action on land, air and sea with effect from 5 pm on Saturday, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said.

The brief announcement by the foreign secretary came | [More on P6](#)



Every Escalation Will Get Befitting Response: Indian Forces

Soon after India and Pakistan announced "immediate ceasefire," the armed forces on Saturday said that they would adhere to the understanding and reiterated that they are ready to deal with any situation and any escalation from Pakistan | [More on P6](#)

UN Sec Gen Welcomes Move

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Saturday welcomed "all efforts to de-escalate the conflict", as India and Pakistan agreed to an immediate ceasefire. "We are monitoring but we welcome all efforts to de-escalate the conflict," Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the | [More on P6](#)

Better Late Than Never: J&K Politicians

Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir Saturday welcomed the "ceasefire" between India and Pakistan and expressed hope of permanent peace in the region. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced that the directors general of military operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan have agreed to stop | [More on P6](#)

Rs 10 Lakh Relief For Shelling Victims' Families



Observer News Service

Jammu: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has expressed deep sorrow over the loss of innocent lives in the recent shelling from across the border. Calling the situation tragic, he assured that the government is taking all necessary steps to reduce the suffering of the affected people.

"No compensation can replace a loved one or erase the trauma faced by families," he said. However, as a mark of solidarity, the government will provide an ex-gratia relief of Rs 10 lakh to the families of those who lost their lives.

"We stand with every affected family in this hour of grief," the Chief | [More on P6](#)

CM Visits Family Of Slain ADDC

Omar Abdullah visited the residence of Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa (JKAS), Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Rajouri, who tragically lost his life in the line of duty due to cross-border shelling near his residence Rajouri. Expressing profound grief over the loss, the Chief Minister extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. | [More on P6](#)

Brick by Brick, Then Boom: What Uri Lost In Minutes

Taufiq Majeed

Srinagar: Days after the shelling stopped, Uri still smells like war. The border town is scorched and silent, its air thick with smoke, gunpowder, and the sting of burnt timber.

Amid the wreckage, a few residents are beginning to return. They're quiet, cautious, and unsure of what they'll find in the ruins of home.

"It smells of fire and fear," said Roshan Kumar, standing where his shop once stood in Lagama.

Kumar returned from Baramulla, stepping over cracked tiles and burnt signboards, searching for anything that could be salvaged.

"We built our lives brick by brick. It took minutes to lose everything."

On the night of May 8, Pakistani artillery pounded Uri in what many call the most intense cross-border assault since 1948, when this region first came under fire during the foremost India-Pakistan war.

More than 50 homes and buildings were damaged in the



KO PHOTO BY FAISAL KHAN

STREETS ARE SILENT AND SCORCHED after brutal shelling, but the real battle of Uri is only beginning as residents return to face the ruins.

recent flare-up. A woman was killed. Nine others, including children, were wounded. Bazaars burned, rooftops collapsed, and entire neighborhoods emptied overnight.

Now, survivors are trickling back, to see what remains of homes they fled in the dark. And what pieces of their lives can be carried out in plastic sacks and trembling hands.

In Salamabad, families picked through rubble with bare fingers. A broken cot. A rusted pressure cooker. A child's sweater, singed at the sleeves. "We left with nothing," said Bashira Bano, whose kitchen was flattened by a shell. "Now there is even less."

Kalgai, once a vibrant cluster of homes near the Line of Control, is | [More on P6](#)

'Indus Waters Treaty Will Remain In Abeyance'

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: India's punitive measures against Pakistan including putting the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance following the Pahalgam terror attack will remain in place, government sources said on Saturday.

The clarification came after India and Pakistan worked out an understanding on stoppage of firing and military actions, ending days of hostilities between their militaries.

India's measures announced against Pakistan on April 23 will remain effective, the sources said.

Terrorism will not go unpunished and India's resolve on terrorism remains firm, the

sources added.

On the understanding between the two sides to end the hostilities, the sources said Pakistan called it a bilateral arrangement.

US President Donald Trump was the first to announce the understanding between India and Pakistan and claimed credit for it.

"After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE," the US president announced in a post on Truth Social.

"Congratulations to both Countries on using Common Sense and Great Intelligence. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" Trump added.



Enemy Making Desperate Attempts To Divide Us: LG Says J&K A Centre Of Unity & Brotherhood

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday interacted with community and religious leaders, civil society members and heads of Industry and Trade organisations at Raj Bhawan.

The Lieutenant Governor called for unified efforts to strengthen national unity and thwart Adversary's conspiracy to divide the people on religious and sectarian lines.

"Jammu and Kashmir is more than just a geographical area; it is a vibrant centre of social unity, harmony, peace, and brotherhood. The enemy is making desperate attempts to create a divide among our people and it had attacked our sacred places. We must rise above religious



and sectarian divides and come out as a formidable united force to thwart this conspiracy," the Lieutenant Governor said. He said, it is our collective responsibility to safeguard the social harmony and to work together to ensure the resilience and high morale of our society.

"Since ages, our nation has followed the principles of co-existence and it has enriched the great diversity of India,

which has been a home to all major religions known to humankind. We must protect these values and give a befitting reply to the enemy by strengthening our brotherhood," the Lieutenant Governor observed.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated that the Government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is resolved to take strong action against terrorists and those

aiding and abetting terrorism. "Operation Sindoor" has avenged the brutal killing of innocent people in Pahalgam. India's action was a focused and measured response, showcasing remarkable sensitivity and restraint by targeting 9 terrorist hideouts in different parts of Pakistan.

Since the night of 7th and 8th May, Pakistan has been relentlessly attacking innocent citizens of India. For three consecutive nights, civilian areas, key installations, and military establishments of India are being continuously targeted. Many innocent civilians have lost their lives and many injured, especially in border districts like Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu, Kupwara and Baramulla.

"We don't | [More on P6](#)

Haj Flights Cancelled Till May 14

Agencies

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Haj Committee on Saturday announced the cancellation of all chartered Haj flights scheduled up to May 14, 2025, citing the prevailing situation in the region as the reason. In a notification, the committee stated, "In continuation to this office notification dated 09-05-2025, it is to intimate that in view of the prevailing situation, all chartered Haj flights which were scheduled up to 14-05-2025 stand cancelled." The

committee has advised pilgrims to remain patient and await further instructions, assuring that the revised flight schedule for alternate arrangements will be communicated promptly through official channels. The decision comes amid heightened tensions across Jammu and Kashmir, affecting both civil aviation and routine administration. The Government of India has also announced the temporary suspension of all civil flight operations at 32 airports across northern and | [More on P6](#)

Jamia Millia Reschedules Exams For J&K Students

On the request of Jammu and Kashmir Government and in view of the prevailing situation, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) has announced rescheduling the Admission Tests for the students | [More on P6](#)

Avoid Air Raid Sirens: Govt To TV Channels

Observer News Service

New Delhi: The government on Saturday advised all media channels to refrain from using civil defence air raid sirens in their programmes other than community awareness drives.

In an advisory, the Directorate General Fire Service, Civil Defence and Home Guards said exercising the powers conferred under the Civil Defence Act, 1968, all media channels were requested to refrain from using civil defence air raids sirens sounds in their programmes other than for educating the community.

It said that the routine use of sirens may likely to reduce the sensitivity of civilians towards the | [More on P6](#)



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Scholarships This Week

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

Scholarship Name 1: VAIBHAV Fellowship 2025

Description: VAIBHAV Fellowship 2025 is an initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India. It aims to connect Indian overseas scientists to universities, colleges, and government-funded research places in India for collaboration on ongoing research projects.

Eligibility: This is open to PhD/M.D./M.S./M.Tech degree holders. Applicants must be a Non-Resident Indian (NRI), overseas, or a Person of Indian Origin (PIO). They must be engaged in active research and should have at least 5 years of work experience in a foreign institute/university.

- Prizes & Rewards: Up to 4,00,000 per month and other benefits.
- Last Date to Apply: 30-05-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/VAIF1
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/flipkart-fellowship-20251746455099.png>



cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/flipkart-foundation-scholarship-2024-251741170736.png

Scholarship Name 3: The Rhodes Scholarships for India 2026

Description: The Rhodes Scholarships for India 2026 is the initiative of Rhodes Trust in partnership with the second-century founder of McCall MacBain Foundation (NGO), John McCall MacBain OC for Indian postgraduate applicants to pursue full-time studies at the University of Oxford.

Eligibility: This is open to Indian citizens aged 18 to 27 as of 1 October 2025.

Applicants must have completed their undergraduate studies by July 2026 and have at least 4 years of formal education in India within the last 10 years (including secondary school exams or an undergraduate degree from an Indian university.)

They must also possess an offer for a postgraduate taught course at the University of Oxford.

- Prizes & Rewards:
- Course fee, a living stipend of £19,800 per annum, and other costs.
- Last Date to Apply: 23-07-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/TRSI3
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/the-rhodes-scholarships-for-india-20261746455042.png>

Scholarship Name 2: Flipkart Foundation Scholarship 2024-25

Description: Flipkart Group is committed to strengthening the retail sector including the Kirana Stores which form a significant part. As part of our endeavour, the Flipkart Foundation is supporting a scholarship for children of Kirana Store Owners to make them future-ready. This scholarship is

dedicated to empowering children of Kirana Store Owners enrolled in professional STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) undergraduate programs.

Eligibility: Applicants must be currently studying in the 1st year of professional undergraduate STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) courses at government colleges in India. One parent must be a Kirana Store Owner (KSO).

Applicants must have scored at least 60% in their Class 12 exams. The annual family income should not exceed INR 5 lakh from all sources.

- Prizes & Rewards: Fixed scholarship of INR 50,000
- Last Date to Apply: 20-05-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/FLIP1
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/flipkart-foundation-scholarship-2024-251741170736.png>

Lost of R.C.

I have lost my original Registration Certificate of my vehicle Scooty, bearing Registration Number JK01V-8705. While travelling from Badshahnagar to Channapora Srinagar

Now I have applied for its duplicate. Anybody have any objection may contact Regional Transport officer Kashmir within a period of 7 days after which no objection will not be entertained. If any one has found it should intimate me on the following address so that I have not to apply for the duplicate.

Mohd Anwar Wani fko
S/o Mohammad Sultan Wani
R/o Stadium Colony Budshah Nagar Srinagar

Invitation Cancelled

Asalamu alaykum,

In light of the prevailing unfavorable circumstances, the wedding ceremony of the esteemed son of Dr. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, resident lasjan Srinagar, which was scheduled to take place on the 15th and 16th of May, will now be held in a simple and modest manner. All previously issued invitation cards are hereby considered cancelled.

FA

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR PATTAN.

Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice

The registrar birth BDO pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Khushboo Majeed D/o Abdul Majeed Shah R/o Buran Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 10/10/2008 occurred at home in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

SD
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Dignified Farewell

Transforming Kashmir's Final Rides

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



Donate Now!



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For queries call

Farooq A Ashai (Coordinator)

Ph: +91 788-9402837

Email : farooq.ashai@motherhelpage.org





KCCI Welcomes India-Pakistan Ceasefire

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) has welcomed the Ceasefire between India and Pakistan, viewing it as a pivotal step towards restoring peace and stability in the region.

“This development brings significant relief to the residents of Jammu and Kashmir, who have endured the hardships of recent hostilities, including loss of lives, damage to property, and widespread fear,” KCCI in a statement said.

“As a longstanding advocate for peace and economic development, KCCI believes that the cessation of hostilities offers an opportunity to rebuild lives, communities, and trust. The Chamber commends the leadership on both sides for their commitment to dialogue and de-escalation, and acknowledges the efforts of international mediators who facilitated this agreement,” it said.

KCCI also expressed deep sympathies with the families of those who lost their lives during the recent escalation, including the family of Raj Kumar Thapa, the Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) of Rajouri, whose service and dedication will be remembered with profound respect and admiration.

“We urge the govern-

ment to announce ex-gratia payments for the next of kin of all deceased, and to provide immediate relief to those injured.”

Furthermore, KCCI called upon the Government of India and the administration of Jammu and Kashmir to conduct a swift and comprehensive assessment of the losses suffered due to the recent tensions.

“It is imperative that adequate compensation is provided to those who have lost property, and that rehabilitation measures are undertaken for displaced families.

Beyond the human toll, the violence has led to substantial damage to private and public property, livestock, horticulture, and other livelihood sources—especially in vulnerable border belts. KCCI strongly demands that the government immediately initiate a comprehensive assessment of all such losses to ensure that adequate compensation and rehabilitation reach the affected families without delay.”

The Chamber emphasises the importance of restoring normalcy in the affected areas, ensuring the safety and well-being of residents, and facilitating the resumption of economic activities. KCCI remains committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.

Apni Party leaders visit Dilshad Shaheen's Residence

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Apni Party President Altaf Bukhari, on Saturday, led a delegation of senior party leaders to pay a condolence visit to party colleague Dilshad Shaheen, President of the Women's Wing, following the passing of her beloved mother, who passed away on Friday.

According to a press release, Apni Party leaders visited the residence of the bereaved family in Srinagar's Hyderpora area, where they met Dilshad Shaheen and other family members to extend their condolences.

On this occasion, the party leaders expressed sorrow over the family's loss and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

They expressed solidarity with the bereaved family during this time of grief.

Besides the party president, the prominent party leaders who joined this condolence visit included Se-

nior Vice President Ghulam Hassan Mir, Chairman of the party's Parliamentary Affairs Committee Mohammad Dilaw Mir, General Secretary Rafi Ahmed Mir, Provincial President Mohammed Ashraf Mir, President of party's Youth Wing Yawar Mir, Media Advisor Farooq Andrabi, Chairman DDC Srinagar and party's Provincial Secretary Aftab Malik, Spokesperson Ishrat Bhat, District Secretary Peer Wajahat, Constituency incharge Sonawari Imtiyaz Parray, constituency incharge Central Shalteng Zafar Habib Dar, Constituency incharge Habba Kadal Jeelani Hamid Kumar, Constituency incharge Khanyar Mohsin Zafar Shah, Ward President Natipora Arjmand Makhdoomi, Ward President Hyderpora Shiekh Muzaffar Ali, Ajaz Ahmed Rather, Mir Imaad, Mustakeem, Sheikh Nisar, Sheikh Imtiyaz, Sheeraza Jee, Saima Jee, and others.

City's Cycle Sharing Project Under Lens

Observer News Service

Jammu- The ambitious public bicycle sharing project rolled out in Srinagar under the Smart City Mission has come under scrutiny after official figures revealed that the scheme, which became operational in May 2023, has generated a meagre revenue of Rs 4.48 lakh, despite infrastructure and viability gap funding totalling a hefty Rs 13.20 crore.

The details were revealed in responses submitted by the administration in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly to questions raised by legislators Shamim Firdous and Mushtaq Guroo. The disclosures have raised concerns regarding the project's sustainability and public reception.

According to the official data, Rs 9.06 crore has been spent on constructing dedicated cycle tracks in the Srinagar constituencies of Batamaloo, Hazratbal, and Lal Chowk. These tracks form part of broader urban renewal initiatives under the Smart City umbrella, including the Lakefront Development along the northern foreshore of Dal Lake and the

Complete Street projects in Batamaloo and Lal Chowk.

In addition to the cycling infrastructure, the government has approved Rs 4.14 crore as viability gap funding for the bicycle sharing initiative, which is being executed through a public-private partnership (PPP) model. Of the approved amount, Rs 1.2 crore has already been released to the private operator managing the project. This operator is tasked with maintaining a fleet of 900 bicycles and 100 docking stations under a five-year agreement.

The bike-sharing service was officially launched on May 20, 2023. From its inauguration until now, the project has only generated Rs 4,48,333 from user fees, raising questions about public uptake and operational viability.

The docking stations have been strategically placed across several key city zones, including Lal Chowk, Dal Gate, Hazratbal, Eidgah, Chanapora, and Bemina. The highest concentrations of these stations are found in Lal Chowk, Hazratbal, and Chanapora, selected in line with the Smart City Mission's focus on promoting non-motorised transport and improving last-mile connectivity.



Idara Falah-I-Aam Holds Free Medical Camp

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A free medical ear check-up camp was organized by Idara Falah-i-Aam Waqf, Alamgari Bazar, in collaboration with the Voluntary Medicare Society. A team of doctors volunteered for the noble cause, and the camp was held at Iqbal Khomeini Hall, Mohalla Syed Afzal Sheerhat, Srinagar, on Friday.

The camp was inaugurated at 10 a.m. by the Chairman of Idara Falah-i-Aam Waqf, Munshi Abrar Hussain, who was accompanied by the General Secretary, Imdad Saqi, and other dignitaries of the Idara.

A team of volunteer medics, led by Dr. Umeeq Jeelani, examined around 135 patients from various areas of the Valley who availed themselves of the services provided at the camp. Out of the 135 patients examined, 82 were provided with free advanced hearing aid devices on the spot, based on the recommendations of the attending medics. The camp concluded at 4:30 p.m.

A visitor from District Budgam expressed gratitude to Idara Falah-i-Aam Waqf for organizing the ear check-up camp and appealed to the Chairman to hold similar camps in other far-flung areas so that more underprivileged people can benefit from

“**Out of the 135 patients examined, 82 were provided with free advanced hearing aid devices on the spot, based on the recommendations of the attending medics.**”

such medical services.

Farooq Ahmad Dar, another visitor, also appealed to the Chairman to organize an eye check-up camp, particularly for those associated with handicrafts, including Paper Maché artisans, carpet weavers, chain stitch workers, woodcarvers, and others.

On the occasion, Director of the Voluntary Medicare Society, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Lone, accompanied by Dr. Farooq Ahmad Kaloo, visited the camp, interacted with visitors, and assured them that every possible help would be provided.

Mirza Abdul Majeed, Syed Muzaffar Jalali, Khawaja Nisar Hussain, Khawaja Bashir Ahmad, Tafazul Hussain, and Prof. Nazir Ahmad Mirza (Ex-Patrons

of Idara Falah-i-Aam Waqf) also visited the camp and interacted with the visiting patients.

The people of the area praised Idara Falah-i-Aam for organizing the camp and also appealed to the Idara to hold such camps regularly—ideally once a month—with a particular focus on eye check-up camps.

A team comprising six members of the Idara Falah-i-Aam Waqf supervised the camp. The members included Dr. Kouncer Jabeen and were coordinated by Joint Secretary Syed Javed, Chief Organizer Showkat Ali Wani, Secretary Finance Muhammad Ali, Trustee Mohammad Maqbool Wani, and Abdul Rashid Magloo.

The Chairman of Idara Falah-i-Aam Waqf also presented a letter of appreciation to the Director of the Voluntary Medicare Society, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Lone, and expressed heartfelt gratitude to the entire team of the VMS for their dedicated support.

He also extended his thanks to the volunteers, especially the Associate Members of Idara Falah-i-Aam Waqf, whose active participation contributed significantly to the success of the camp.

At the end, the Chairman expressed his appreciation to the managing body of Iqbal Khomeini Hall for providing the space for conducting the camp.

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HIGHWAY STATUS



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



PRAYERS

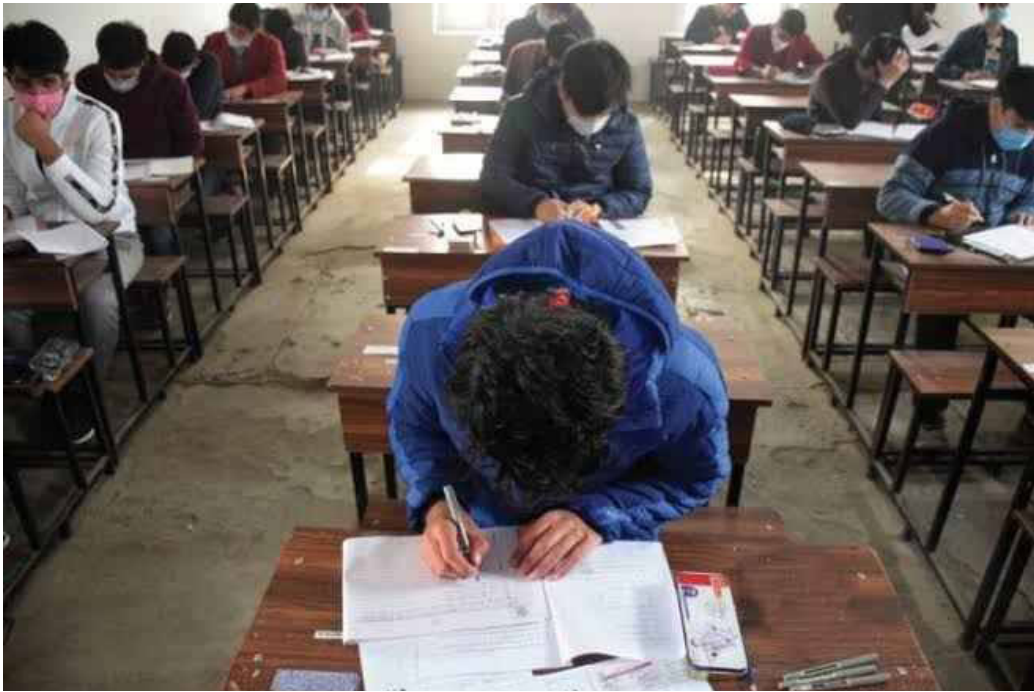
FAJR	3: 57
ZUHR	12:27
ASR	5: 19
Magrib	7:25
ISHA	8: 58

This Day In History

- 330 - Constantinople (Byzantium) becomes the capital of the Roman Empire
- 868 - The Diamond Sutra, the world's oldest surviving, dated, printed, book printed in Chinese and made into a scroll
- 1189 - Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa and 100,000 crusaders depart Regensburg for the Third Crusade
- 1310 - Fifty-four members of the Knights Templar are burned at the stake in France for being heretics
- 1421 - Jews are expelled from Styria Austria
- 1674- Netherlands & Cologne sign peace treaty
- 1752 - 1st US fire insurance policy issued in Philadelphia
- 1784 - Britain & Tippu Sahib of Mysore sign peace treaty
- 1792 - Columbia River discovered & named by US Captain Robert Gray
- 1800 - French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck give a lecture first outlining his theories of evolution at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle in Paris, France
- 1812 - Waltz introduced into English ballrooms. Some observers consider it disgusting and immoral.
- 1812- British Prime Minister Spencer Perceval is assassinated by John Bellingham in the lobby of the House of Commons, London. Ironically, descendants of both were later elected to Parliament at the same time.
- 1820 - Launch of HMS Beagle, the ship that would later take a young Charles Darwin on his famous scientific voyage
- 1867 - Treaty of London drawn, concerning Luxembourg
- 1907 - A derailment outside Lompoc, California, kills 32 Shriners when their chartered train jumps off the tracks at a switch near Surf Depot
- 1911- The United States becomes a signatory to the Buenos Aires copyright treaty.
- 1921- The Allied Supreme Council warns Germany to pay reparations or the entire Ruhr Valley will be occupied; Germany agrees
- 1924- Mercedes-Benz is formed by Gottlieb Daimler and Karl Benz merging the two companies.
- 1942- Japanese troops conquer Kalewa
- 1943- US 7th div lands on Attu, Aleutian, (1st US territory recaptured)
- 1944- Opposition group surprise attack post office Washer
- 1949- By a vote of 37-12, Israel becomes 59th member of UN
- 1949-Siam renames itself Thailand
- 1955- Israel attacks Gaza
- 1956 Pinky Lee Show last airs on NBC-TV
- 1960-The first contraceptive pill is made available on the market.
- 1962- US sends troops to Thailand
- 1965 -1st of 2 cyclones in less than a month kills 35,000 (India)
- 1965- Bangladesh windstorm kills 17,000
- 1967-Great Britain, Ireland & Denmark apply for EG membership
- 1975- Israel signs an agreement with European Economic Market
- 1983- Comet C/1983 H1 (IRAS-Araki-Alcock) approaches 0.0312 AUs of Earth
- 1984- Transit of Earth as seen on Mars
- 1985- Booby trap bomb kills 86 people in India
- 1989 France performs nuclear test at Mururoa atoll
- 1989 Kenya announces worldwide ban on ivory to preserve its elephant herds
- 1989- US President George H. W. Bush orders 1,900 additional troops to Panama
- 1995- More than 170 countries agree to extend the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty indefinitely and without conditions to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons
- 1996- Valujet DC-9 crashes in Miami, 109 die
- 1998- India conducts three underground nuclear tests in Pokhran, including a thermonuclear device
- 2000- India's population officially reaches 1 billion - Astha Arora named India's billionth baby
- 2010- David Cameron becomes Prime Minister of the United Kingdom after forming a coalition government between the Liberal Democrats and his own Conservative Party

The Exam Trap

The pressure of academic success is pushing young minds to the edge. It's time to rethink how we define failure, and what it means to truly succeed.



Mohammad Arfat Wani

Exam season is more than just a period of study in Kashmir, as in many parts of South Asia. It becomes a storm that swallows entire families. Homes turn quiet. Temples and mosques fill with whispered prayers. Mothers lose sleep. Fathers grow distant. And children begin to question their worth.

Whether it's NEET, JEE, the Civil Services, or board exams, these tests carry a weight far heavier than the marksheet they produce. They don't just judge what you know. They begin to define who you are.

But what happens when a child doesn't clear the test? Often, the result is more than disappointment. It's heart-break. It's shame. It's silence at the dinner table. In some tragic cases, it becomes something far worse.

According to the World Health Organization, academ-

“British psychologist Susan Barnett once said exam fear isn't just fear of failure, it's fear of losing your identity. In Kashmir, that rings painfully true. You're either a topper or a tragedy.

ic failure is the third leading cause of suicide among young people aged 15 to 29. That's not just a statistic. That's hundreds of families, from Kupwara to Kanyakumari, left to mourn a life that didn't need to end.

We've built a system where scores have become status. A 95% student is a star; an 80% student feels invisible. And the one who doesn't make it through? Society acts like they've failed at life itself.

In Kashmir, where strife and uncertainty already cloud the future, this obsession with academic perfection adds a quiet, invisible trauma. I've seen it in classmates—bright, hardworking students who begin to wither under pressure. I've seen it in my own mirror.

Parents, often with the best intentions, expect excellence. But when love becomes conditional on results, it stops feeling like love. A study shows that three out of four students in our region study not for themselves, but to please their parents. When they stumble, many start believing they're no longer wor-

thy of that love.

We must ask: is our education system really measuring talent? Or is it just rewarding the ability to memorize, perform under pressure, and repeat facts on command?

When exams decide everything—college admissions, job prospects, even marriage proposals—we reduce human potential to a number on a page.

British psychologist Susan Barnett once said exam fear isn't just fear of failure, it's fear of losing your identity. In Kashmir, that rings painfully true. You're either a topper or a tragedy.

But life doesn't follow a syllabus. Edison, Lincoln, and even Musk didn't top every test. And countless children around us carry brilliance that can't be graded: a knack for poetry, a passion for coding, a heart for caregiving. We just don't notice, because our system doesn't look. It's time we did.

The media needs to stop chasing toppers like celebrities. Teachers must care more about understanding minds than ranking them. Parents must let love breathe, even in failure. And society must stop whispering when a child doesn't succeed the first time.

As the WHO puts it, mental health in schools must be a policy, not an afterthought. It's a shared responsibility. And it starts with believing that no exam has the power to define a life.

Jaun Elia wrote, Kuch nah n ho sak ham re s th, phir bh ham kitne k my b hain—Nothing ever worked out for us, yet how successful we are.

That's the spirit we must pass on. That success isn't one exam. It's the courage to get up again. To keep going. And to know that even when a door closes, the world is still wide open.

Mohammad Arfat Wani is a medical student and social activist from Kuchmulla Tral.

Pulwama's Pride

A young woman in Kashmir turns personal pain into power, offering free lessons and quiet hope to children in a Pulwama village.

Gowher Bhat

In a modest home tucked into the village of Chewakalan in South Kashmir's Pulwama district, a soft-spoken young woman begins her day with a chalk-board, a prayer, and a purpose.

Soliha Jan, 27, is not a typical teacher. She doesn't draw a salary or work in a school building. Her classroom is wherever her students gather. Under tin roofs, in shared rooms, or in open yards. She teaches English, science, and math to children from poor families, all without charging a rupee.

Her journey to this point was not easy. For most of her teens and early twenties, Soliha battled severe depression. She describes those years as isolating, confusing, and silent. "It felt like I didn't belong anywhere," she says.

Mental health care remains a taboo in much of rural Kashmir. When Soliha finally sought help, she had to fight the stigma on her own. She leaned on books, prayer, and self-discipline to cope. She eventually earned a Master's degree in English and completed her B.Ed., but she says the real test came after.

"I wanted to do something that mattered," she says. "Something that felt real."

Chewakalan is the kind of place where dreams often shrink. Families rely on subsistence farming or daily labor. Children, especially girls, drop out of school early. Private tutoring is a luxury most cannot afford.

Soliha saw that gap and stepped in quietly. What began with a few students in her home now draws over two dozen children every week. Word has spread to nearby villages. Parents trust her. Students adore her.

"She believed in us when nobody else did," says Hiba Sofi, a former student now studying pharmaceutical sciences. "I didn't think I'd ever make it to college."

Another student, Sana Khan, says Soliha's influence went beyond textbooks. "She made us feel seen," she says. "She made us believe that we mattered."

Aqib, a teenager with ambitions of becoming a lawyer, says he couldn't speak English before meeting Soliha. "Now I can hold a conversation. I can argue my point. She gave me that."

Soliha doesn't consider herself a mental health expert, but her past makes her sensitive to what many children carry silently. She talks openly about therapy, meditation, and emotional balance. "It's okay to say you're not okay," she often tells her students.

She encourages young people to seek help, even when their families don't understand. She teaches them how to breathe through panic, how to journal their thoughts, how to recognize the signs of stress. For many, this is the first time anyone has talked to them about mental health.

“What began with a few students in her home now draws over two dozen children every week. Word has spread to nearby villages. Parents trust her. Students adore her.

But Soliha doesn't just teach and counsel. She also checks in on sick neighbors, helps students with forms for scholarships, and recommends books. She reads constantly. Philosophy, theology, psychology, and literature. "Everything I read ends up helping my students somehow," she says.

Her success stories are piling up. Students who once struggled to write a sentence now read fluently. Girls who never raised their voice in class now ask questions with confidence. Boys who mocked English now use it with pride.

What makes her work stand out is not just the content she teaches but the intent behind it. There's no fee, no publicity, and no ambition to start a school. "I just want to do this right now," she says. "This feels enough."

Soliha's presence in the village has quietly shifted attitudes. Parents who once kept their daughters home now send them to her classes. Teenagers, often left to their own devices, now spend evenings practicing grammar and writing essays. Her influence feels both soft and firm. Never demanding, always steady.

In a place where daily life is uncertain and opportunity feels distant, Soliha has created a space where learning is both free and freeing. She says it's not just about education. "It's about reminding people, especially children, that they are not alone."

Soliha is still studying herself. She's preparing for the National Eligibility Test, which could allow her to teach at the university level. But she isn't rushing. "I'm doing what I can with what I have," she says. "And that feels like enough."

She doesn't consider herself extraordinary. But to her students and her village, she's quietly changing everything.

The writer is a Pulwama based English language instructor.

Window to the World

In a sleepy Kashmiri village, a young girl discovers the weight of silence, and the fire of hope.

Sabreena Bhat

That morning, the sky above Shopian was pale and hushed. Snow clung to rooftops and pear trees, blanketed the narrow path leading to the old wooden gate. Crows had not yet started their chorus. In the room above the kitchen, she pulled the curtain back with fingers still warm from sleep and let in the whiteness.

Outside, children were already at play. One boy in a saffron cap slid down a slope, arms spread wide, while two girls scooped snow to mold a kangri that fell apart before it took shape. Smoke curled up from the neighbour's kitchen. A cluster of elders stood around a crackling fire, the men's noses red from the cold, their breath mixing with the smoke in the air.

She watched it all in silence. Her breath fogged the glass. She didn't smile, not quite. But something in her eyes softened. Something unguarded, a little wild.

Then her mother's voice rang out from the stairwell. "Why are you at the window?" "Draw the curtains." "What's there to see?"

She stepped back. The warmth vanished.

The curtain closed with a soft swoosh. She returned to her spot in the corner, between the wooden almira and the wall where her grandfather's prayer beads once hung. It had become hers over the years. The one place no one entered, or asked about. Her own little world, stitched together with forgotten school notebooks,

pressed flowers, and an old muffler she hadn't worn in years.

She curled into it like a secret.

Earlier that day, her reflection had caught her by surprise. Hazel eyes lit up. A smile that made her cheeks round and her dimple bloom. She had looked alive. Not joyful, exactly—but full of something tender. Something almost like belonging.

But the questions, always the questions, had sent her back to herself. That evening, she arrived late. The matador drivers were on strike. She had walked in snow for nearly forty minutes. Her feet were wet. Her hands tingled with cold.

No one asked why she was late. Only the questions came. "Who gave you permission?" "Do girls from good families come back at this hour?" "What are we raising you for?"

She didn't answer. She climbed the stairs, one hand on the rail, the other clenched in her pocket.

In her room, she pressed her face to the carpet and cried the way she always did—without noise. Her tears ran down into the wool, warm for a second before they disappeared.

That night, she dreamt of walking through an orchard. The sky above her thundered. Trees bowed under wind. But at the bend of the path, she saw it: a patch of gold light spilling between two chinar trunks. It was soft. Waiting.

She awoke before her mother called for breakfast. A friend had once told her about a conference in Pulwama. Something about peace. She had dismissed it then. But now, something inside her stirred.

She boarded a shared cab. Paid the fare with coins saved from lunch money. At the conference, she sat in the back. The speaker, a tall man with a quiet voice, spoke not of treaties or maps, but of what it means to find peace when the world inside you is louder than the one outside.

In the break, he passed by. She didn't mean to speak. But something about the way he stood—still, attentive—made her say it. Just a few words. A corner of her story. A glimpse of the room no one else had ever entered.

He didn't offer advice. He just nodded, and for a moment, she felt seen.

At the end, he stepped up to the mic. Folded his prepared speech into his coat pocket.

"I met someone today," he said, "who reminded me of who I once was. If my words mean anything, let them give her—just her—a reason to believe."

She looked down, fingers laced in her lap. She didn't cry. But something cracked, and the light slipped in.

Three years later, she stood in Harvard, wrapped in her mother's old shawl. Her voice—firm, clear—filled the room. She spoke of windows. Of girls who watch from behind curtains. Of corners where dreams go to hide, and where, sometimes, they are born again.

And somewhere in the audience, he was listening.

The writer is a Srinagar-based HR Manager.

The Great Kashmiri Bus-tle

Where a bus isn't just public transport but a mobile epic of chaos, comedy, and choreography.

Tariq Misgar

The bus is not merely a mode of transport in Kashmir. It is theatre, tension, poetry, and pure improvisation on wheels.

Anything with a vaguely rectangular shape and the ability to carry more than a dozen people qualifies as a bus. But don't be fooled by the humble metal chassis or the faded paint job with its peeling stickers that say things like "Smile is Sunnah" or "Gulmarg Express."

This is not an ordinary vehicle. This is Kashmir's social centrifuge, a daily referendum on personal space, patience, and negotiation skills.

At the heart of this kinetic drama is the Kaleen-ar. Part conductor, part ringmaster, part airborne gymnast. He doesn't merely collect fare. He conducts the orchestra.

Perched at the door with one foot permanently out, his vocal cords double as a loudspeaker system. Each announcement of destination is tailored—sung softly near schools, bellowed in markets, roared into traffic like a battle cry: "Hyderpora, Parraypora, Peerbagh!"

Sometimes it sounds like a love song. Other times, like an air raid warning. Either way, you know what's next: him slapping the side of the bus, yanking an uncle in by the collar, and leaping back on like he's been rehearsing stunts for a career in Bollywood.

Inside, things are less poetic and more tightly packed. If you're lucky, you find a seat next to a window that opens only with divine intervention. If not, you're wedged between a man carrying a leaking paint bucket and a student revising for an exam on their phone.

The aisle becomes a tightrope of elbows, schoolbags, and reluctant children. At every stop, bodies shift, and a new configuration emerges.

Conducting this chaos from the front seat is the Wasta, the bus driver, whose temperament is a cocktail of experience, exhaustion, and existential freedom.

The younger ones drive like they're in a video game with no restart button. The older ones steer with the detachment of monks: indifferent to honks, passengers, or the concept of brakes.

“Sometimes it sounds like a love song. Other times, like an air raid warning. Either way, you know what's next: him slapping the side of the bus, yanking an uncle in by the collar, and leaping back on like he's been rehearsing stunts for a career in Bollywood.

Somewhere in between, a trance sets in, punctuated by the radio's crackle, a Quranic verse or a 90s Bollywood remix, depending on the driver's mood and the alignment of stars.

There's no such thing as a routine ride. One moment, an elderly woman is telling her life story to a stranger who doesn't understand a word. The next, two lovers, trying to act casual, board together and stand apart, until someone says something loud enough to make the girl blush and the boy change stops.

Sometimes, a man argues over a fare he has no intention of paying. Other times, someone gets slapped, by fate, or by a fellow passenger.

All of this unfolds in a rickety container of mismatched steel, sound, and sweat, a capsule where social norms are rewritten by the minute.

The back of the bus doubles as a dating zone, the front for prayerful silence, the middle: pure negotiation. Children dangle from their mothers, the elderly glare their way into seats, and teenagers stare out windows, headphones in, waiting for escape.

In Kashmir, you don't simply board a bus. You enter a narrative. You give up the illusion of control, grab a handle, and become part of a collective momentum—chaotic, absurd, loud, but somehow still heading exactly where it needs to go.

The writer is a Srinagar-based trader.

Lost in the Plot

Caught between icy roads and a storm of bookish characters, I realised just how deeply fiction had shaped my sense of self.

Hirra Sultan

It was one of those rare winter days when everything looks perfect. The sun was high, the sky was brilliantly blue, and snow from the day before still blanketed the earth in blind-white.

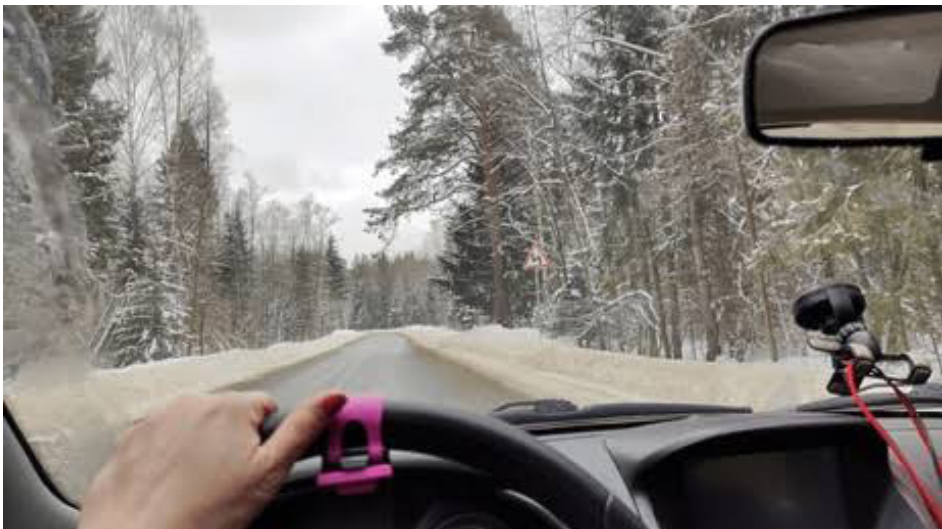
After being stuck indoors, I was finally stepping out, hoping to soak up the warmth of the sun and the cold of the snow at once. I was unusually cheerful.

I wasn't the only one. Near the Dal Lake, people had poured out like spring after a long frost. Tourists posed for photos, kids threw snowballs, and couples sipped kehwa. Even the famously lazy locals had made an exception for the weather.

The mountains in the distance looked dipped in white. The evergreens had been gently dusted, and black clouds hovered above them, threatening more snow.

I was there to meet a friend for a driving lesson. Learning to drive had been on my list for a while, mostly because I've always liked wandering, and driving felt like freedom. I imagined myself behind the wheel, taking off into the unknown, chasing roads without maps.

After a few warm-up rounds—clutch here, brake there—I finally hit a stretch of empty road. It felt like mine. I gently pressed the accelerator, aiming just to glide forward. But instead, I was



suddenly somewhere else.

It was morning again. I was in a car, next to Kemal Bey. We were driving out of Fatih, headed toward Europe. I was dizzy from too much wine, the weight of betrayal, and a string of broken dreams. Then I rammed the car into a tree. No hesitation. Just pain.

The vision startled me so much I had to pull over. I took deep breaths, trying to remember where I really was. Who I really was. I told my instructor I wasn't feeling well and would continue later. Then I walked away, shaken.

Once alone, I wondered if I was losing it. Was I slipping into someone else's story? Did Fusun, did Kemal Bey—characters I hadn't thought of in years—just hijack my thoughts? Was fiction bleed-

ing into my reality?

I've been a bookworm all my life. Before I could even borrow books from the school library, I would spend recess buried in them. When the librarian finally let me take books home, I felt like I'd won a lottery. Even the new librarians who quizzed me couldn't quite figure out how or why I read so much. My father once said novels weren't good for me. I'd shrugged it off.

Now I wasn't so sure. The snow started again. Light, soft, and steady. I thought of Snow, of K wandering Kars. And then, sitting by the lake, I felt like Ella—calm on the outside, chaos rippling within.

Was I still me? Sometimes I'm Salaar's lover. Sometimes I'm wait-

ing for Santiago. Or hoping for a magic mirror to reach Wonderland. I see Pip, Mitch, Anna, Anne Frank, Havisham. I see them all. I feel their pain, their joy, their longings. These stories aren't just things I've read. They've stayed. They've shaped me.

The world always shrunk for me, and books became my only real escape. But somewhere along the way, they stopped being escapes. They became parts of me.

On my way back, coffee in hand, I wondered if this was madness or magic. Maybe it's both. Maybe being a bibliophile means you don't just read stories. You live them. Carry them. And sometimes, you lose yourself in them.

The writer is a Srinagar-based techie.

The Literature Shortcut

In the rush to get published, young Kashmiris are seemingly skipping the step that matters most—reading. The result is a flood of books and a drought of literature.

Nawaz Shah

Self-publishing has taken Kashmir by storm. It has given everyone—from schoolkids to first-time diarists—a shortcut to becoming an author.

Platforms that once promised to liberate the voices stuck outside traditional publishing now serve as expressways for unpolished, unchecked, and often unreadable manuscripts.

With little editorial oversight, books are being pushed out in a hurry. The goal? Not storytelling. Not literature. Just a cover with your name on it.

In Srinagar's café circuits and college corridors, being a "published author" is no longer rare or revered. It's expected.

Teenagers are skipping the phase of reading widely and thinking deeply, and going straight to writing. At times, they're barely old enough to understand the books they've read, if they've read at all.

At a recent local book launch, a 13-year-old read aloud from her self-published poetry collection. The audience clapped, phones were out, and selfies followed. But no one seemed to notice the rhymes were broken, metaphors clumsy, and grammar inconsistent. This wasn't literature. It was aspiration printed and bound.

There's something deeply troubling about this speed-run to authorship. In a place like Kashmir, with its centuries-old literary tradition—one that gave us Lal Ded's mysticism, Mahjoor's pastoral Kashmiri verse, and the quiet elegance of Agha Shahid Ali—writing was always



rooted in reverence. You read before you wrote. You waited. You rewrote.

But in today's rush, books are being printed without editing, mentorship, or criticism. Many writers don't even know what a second draft looks like. And self-publishing houses, smelling the business opportunity, rarely say no.

They'll design, print, and list your book on Amazon, for a price. The results vary. Some books are readable. A few are good. But most don't pass the first paragraph test.

Traditional publishers in the region aren't entirely innocent either. The bar has been lowered across the board. Caught between market pressure and the need to stay relevant, even established names are fast-tracking manuscripts that would've been sent back for rework just a decade ago.

To be clear, this isn't an attack on self-publishing as a format.

It has its place. Many important voices, especially marginalised ones, have found expression through it. And yes, among the flood are real talents.

But when being published becomes a form of social currency rather than creative expression, we have a problem.

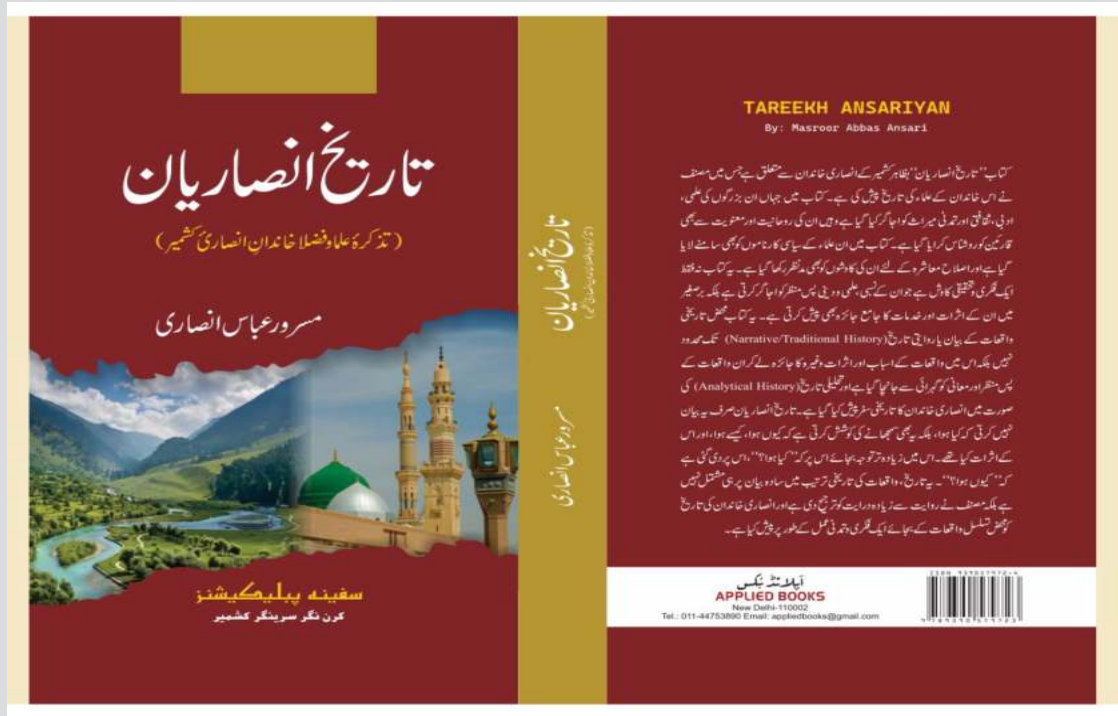
Some big Kashmiri writers, or even contemporary poets, didn't emerge overnight. Their work rests on years of reflection and discipline. That's what writing demands. Not a printer's bill and an ISBN.

If Kashmir's young writers truly care about literature, they need to slow down. Read more. Rewrite harder. Embrace the lonely, invisible work that precedes a book. Otherwise, they risk becoming a generation of authors without readers, and literature without legacy.

The author is a Literature scholar based in Anantnag.

The Ansaris of Kashmir

A landmark book charts the 600-year journey of Kashmir's Ansaris—from Madinah to the Valley—and their lasting legacy in faith, politics, and culture.



KO Books Editor

Tareekh-e-Ansariyan, or The History of the Ansaris is a comprehensive scholarly work that explores the rich legacy of the Ansari family of Kashmir. Authored by the young religious scholar Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari, a distinguished member of the Ansari family, the book presents a meticulous and insightful account of the family's contributions across various spheres of life.

The book highlights not only the scholarly, literary, cultural, and civilisational heritage of the family but also delves deeply into their spirituality and inner depth.

It brings to light their political achievements and underscores their efforts in social reform. This work is far more than a genealogical or biographical compilation; it is an intellectual and research-driven endeavour that evaluates the family's historical journey with depth and nuance.

Unlike traditional historical narratives that focus primarily on events, the book emphasizes insight (dirayat) over mere narration

(riwayat). The book seeks not only to tell what happened, but also to explain why it happened, how it happened, and what its broader impacts were.

Thus, it offers an analytical approach to history, portraying the evolution of the Ansari family as part of a broader intellectual and civilisational process.

A unique strength of this book lies in its fresh perspective and its focus on two crucial but previously neglected aspects:

a) The Transregional Historical Context

The history of the Ansari family is not simply a collection of isolated biographies. Rather, it is a chronicle that spans several centuries and regions. Previous historians often overlooked the fact that the family's roots are deeply connected to the histories of Madinah, Kufa, Qom, and Kashmir.

Accordingly, the author begins with a discussion of the Ansar of Madinah, then traces their migration to Kufa and Qom, and ultimately their arrival in Kashmir. This provides a broader context and a more

profound understanding of the family's historical evolution.

b) Six Centuries of Influence in Kashmir:

The Ansari family has played a central role in the religious, intellectual, social, and political life of Kashmir for over six hundred years. This enduring influence is carefully documented through credible and well-established sources, lending both authenticity and reliability to the narrative.

The book traces the family's journey from the arrival of their ancestor, Mulla Alam Ansari, in Kashmir to the present day.

Over this 600-year historical voyage, it sheds light on the lives and legacies of the family's jurists, scholars, intellectuals, authors, poets, elegy writers, reformers, and political leaders.

It recounts the trials and tribulations they faced and celebrates their remarkable contributions in religious, political, social, educational, economic, cultural, and humanitarian spheres—achievements that serve as a source of pride for the community and the nation as a whole.

Syllables of Sorrow

In The Chill in the Bones, Wani Nazir turns the Kashmir chronicle into an unforgettable verse, threading melancholy and memory into a lyrical elegy.

Rafiya Sayeed

In The Chill in the Bones, Wani Nazir gathers the dust of his homeland and turns it into poetry that aches.

This haunting collection is part lament, part tribute, part reckoning. It holds the emotional temperature of Kashmir, a place that in the poet's words is "an Eden whose Adam / has been long exiled to / uncertainty."

Reading this book feels like stepping into a graveyard of dreams, where every poem is a headstone, but also a flower.

Nazir doesn't write about Kashmir from a distance. He is inside it, within the silence that follows rhythm, within the pages of newspapers that no longer shock, within the skin of a people still trying to remember how to feel.

The poems are not journalistic. They are not political in a conventional sense. Yet, every line is a statement. Every metaphor is a memory.

In poems like My Poetry, Weaving a Poem, and Writing a Poem, Nazir addresses the why and how of his own writing. They're not only about the process but about the burden of speaking.

The poet doesn't "strip off the subject," as he puts it. Instead, he embraces it, with the quiet devotion of someone tending to the bones of the past. The result is a voice that feels both intimate and unshakable.

The metaphors in the collection are striking, but they don't draw attention to themselves. They flow, often quietly, through poems that feel as natural as breath. Water, snow, ash, memory, trees—these return again and again, creating a kind of ecology of pain.

Nazir threads "beads of syllables and words" into a "garland" that floats on what he calls "a shrieking river of metaphors."

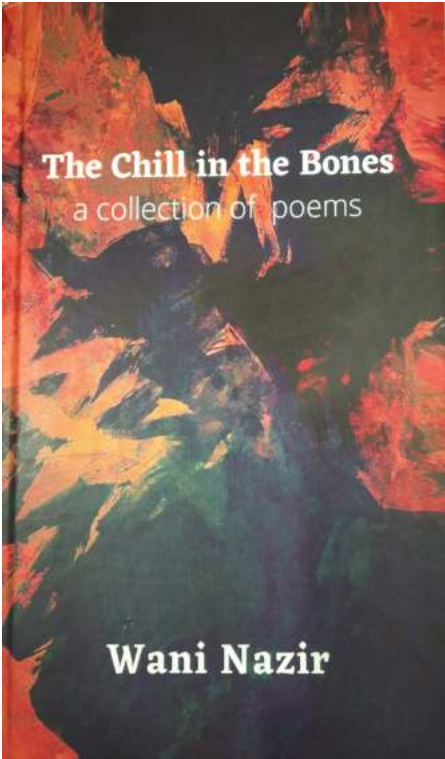
That garland is light, bright even, but it carries the scent of grief. Grief, in these poems, is not a performance. It is something older, like weather or stone.

There is a strong undercurrent of lyrical mastery throughout the book. The rhythm of the poems holds the weight of their content. The imagery sometimes startles, but more often, it stays with you slowly, like a bruise that deepens over time.

Nazir writes with restraint, and that restraint gives the poems power. You won't find rage on the surface. But beneath the calm surface of his verse, the tremors of loss and longing never stop.

The nine ghazals in the book are a special highlight. They carry the musical melancholy one associates with Agha Shahid Ali, and yet Nazir's voice is his own.

The longing, the unresolved search, the aching desire for belonging—these are carried beautifully in the classical structure of the



The poet doesn't "strip off the subject," as he puts it. Instead, he embraces it, with the quiet devotion of someone tending to the bones of the past. The result is a voice that feels both intimate and unshakable.

ghazal. The best of them, like the poems Tears and Memory, seem to rise above the page and speak directly to the reader's chest.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this collection is how accessible it is. You don't need to be a scholar of poetry or politics to be moved.

Nazir's language is simple, but never simplistic. His metaphors do not obscure meaning, they reveal it.

Kudos to the poet sounds like a cliché until you finish this book. Then you understand why it must be said.

Wani Nazir has written something that doesn't just deserve to be read. It deserves to be remembered.

Rafiya Sayeed is an educator, poet essayist, and a reviewer.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

India, Pakistan Pull

confirmed that air force stations in Udhampur, Pathankot, Adampur, and Bhuj were targeted but sustained no damage. Police in Jammu reported five civilian deaths during the exchange and that included ADC Rajouri Raj Kumar Thapa.

With tensions at boiling point, international actors including Saudi Arabia, China, Iran, Qatar, and the G7 nations urged restraint and offered to mediate. But it was the United States that emerged as the key player.

President Donald Trump, returning to the global spotlight, announced on social media: "After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE. Congratulations to both countries on using Common Sense and Great Intelligence."

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio elaborated on the diplomatic effort behind the breakthrough:

"Over the past 48 hours, Vice President Vance and I have engaged with senior Indian and Pakistani officials, including Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Shehbaz Sharif, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir, and National Security Advisors Ajit Doval and Asim Malik. I am pleased to announce the Governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site.

We commend Prime Ministers Modi and Sharif on their wisdom, prudence, and statesmanship in choosing the path of peace." However, in a development that underscores the fragile nature of the peace, India swiftly denied any agreement on talks. In a brief statement issued late Saturday night, the Ministry of External Affairs clarified:

"While India has agreed to a ceasefire in the interest of regional stability and civilian safety, there has been no commitment or agreement to enter into broader talks with Pakistan at this stage. Any such discussions must be preceded by concrete action against cross-border terrorism."

At 4:30 PM IST, the ceasefire was formalized as Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) called his Indian counterpart. Both sides agreed to halt all hostilities — land, air, and sea — starting 5:00 PM IST. The DGMOs are scheduled to speak again on May 12 at 12:00 PM to review compliance.

Confirming the ceasefire, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar wrote on X (formerly Twitter):

"Pakistan and India have agreed to a ceasefire with immediate effect. Pakistan has always strived for peace and security in the region, without compromising on its sovereignty and territorial integrity!"

In New Delhi, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri confirmed the ceasefire at a press briefing, stating that clear instructions had been issued across military commands to halt operations immediately. "The decision reflects a mutual understanding that dialogue must replace destruction," Misri said, though he declined to comment on any future diplomatic engagements.

Despite the ceasefire, the situation remains tense and fragile. Deep-rooted mistrust and public pressure in both nations pose ongoing risks to peace. The world watches closely as India and Pakistan navigate the uncertain road ahead — one that could either lead to lasting peace or renewed conflict.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since their independence in 1947, two of them over Kashmir. Both nations became nuclear powers in 1998, making any military confrontation a global concern. The latest escalation marks one of the gravest crises in their post-nuclear era.

Whether this ceasefire holds — or crumbles under pressure — will depend on political will, diplomatic clarity, and the ability to address deep-rooted issues beyond the battlefield.

PM Chairs High-level

shortly after US President Donald Trump said India and Pakistan have agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after talks mediated by the US.

The DGMO of Pakistan called the DGMO of India at 3:35 pm earlier this afternoon, Misri said.

Every Escalation

would get a befitting response. Addressing a special tri-services press conference here, Commodore Raghu R Nair, along with Col Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh said, "While we adhere to the understanding, the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy remain fully prepared and ever vigilant and committed to defend the sovereignty and integrity of our motherland."

"Every misadventure by Pakistan has been met with strength and every future escalation will invite a decisive and befitting response," he added.

Col Sofiya Qureshi rejected "Pakistan's false propaganda" that Indian armed forces have targeted mosques. "India is a secular nation and the Indian armed forces are a reflection of our constitutional values. We hold every places of worship of all faiths in the highest regard."

"The Indian operation was aimed at terrorist camps and facilities used for anti-India activities," she added.

Wing Commander Vyomika Singh said that Pakistan has suffered significant and unsustainable losses in recent days, following its unprovoked attack on Indian installations. She added that the damage affected Pakistan's capabilities both in land and air.

"Pakistan has suffered very heavy and unsustainable losses after it has given us an unprovoked attack on our installations. It has suffered losses both in land and air."

The IAF officer said that several crucial Pakistan air bases have suffered extensive

damage including Sargodha and Jacobabad.

"Across the LoC, extensive and precise damage to military infrastructure and command control centres and logistic installations have led to breakdown of the Pakistani morale," she said.

Earlier Colonel Qureshi and Wing Commander Singh while addressing the media had rejected Pakistan's claims that it had destroyed the Sirsa and Suratgarh airbases and neutralized India's S-400 air defence system at Adampur.

They described the claims of Pakistan as baseless and part of a misinformation campaign aimed at misleading the global community.

The officers played the live videos of the Sirsa, Suratgarh airbases during the press conference where normal activities were going on.

"Pakistan has launched multiple long-range weapon attacks, including high-speed missile strikes on airbases in Punjab, and carried out air intrusions and heavy calibre firing along the Line of Control," they said. "However, the Indian armed forces successfully neutralized these threats with precision and professionalism."

They confirmed that India faced missile attacks on several airbases in Punjab and reported damage to civil infrastructure, including medical care centres and schools in Srinagar, Udhampur, and Awantipora airbases. "Despite these provocations, Indian forces launched calibrated counter-attacks targeting Pakistani military installations, including the Sialkot Aviation Base," they added.

"Pakistan made at least 26 infiltration attempts through Indian airspace, using both military aircraft and, alarmingly, civilian airlines for strategic operations," they said.

Colonel Qureshi and Wing Commander Singh condemned Pakistan's use of social media to spread false narratives. "Pakistan is indulging in a deliberate disinformation campaign. Their claims about inflicting damage on key Indian assets are nothing but lies," added the officials.

Artillery shelling by Pakistan has been reported in border regions including Kupwara, Baramulla, and Rajouri, prompting strong and proportionate responses from the Indian Army. (KNO)

UN Sec Gen

Secretary-General said.

The US-brokered ceasefire came hours after India and Pakistan attacked each other's military facilities, dangerously escalating the ongoing conflict.

Earlier, US President Donald Trump said India and Pakistan have agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after a "long night" of talks mediated by Washington.

"After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE. Congratulations to both Countries on using Common Sense and Great Intelligence. Thank you for your attention to this matter," Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that over the past 48 hours, Vice President J D Vance and he engaged with senior Indian and Pakistani officials, "including Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Shehbaz Sharif, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir, and National Security Advisors Ajit Doval and Asim Malik."

"I am pleased to announce the Governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site," he said.

"We commend Prime Ministers Modi and Sharif on their wisdom, prudence, and statesmanship in choosing the path of peace," Rubio said.

"India and Pakistan have today worked out an understanding on stoppage of firing and military action," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in a social media post.

The announcement came days after India carried out Operation Sindoor striking nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir to avenge the Pahalgam attack. Since the operation, Pakistan targeted various Indian military installations without success.

Better Late Than

all firings and military action on land, air and sea with effect from 5 pm on Saturday. The brief announcement by the foreign secretary came shortly after US President Donald Trump said India and Pakistan have agreed to a "full and immediate ceasefire" after talks mediated by the US.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah welcomed the ceasefire, saying it was better late than never.

"I welcome from the depths of my heart the announcement made by the Government of India spokesperson about the restoration of ceasefire between India and Pakistan," Abdullah told reporters at his residence.

"Better late than never but had this ceasefire come two or three days earlier, perhaps the bloodshed we saw and the precious lives we lost, would have been safe," he added.

Abdullah said it is now the duty of the J-K government to provide relief and compensation to those who have suffered during this period.

"We have announced compensation for the loss of precious lives. Now we will have to compensate those who have been injured as well," he said.

The chief minister said there has been a lot of devastation caused by cross-border shelling and attacks in Jammu, Poonch, Rajouri, Tangdhar and other border areas.

"Now we also hope that we can resume the Haj flights as we were not able to send the pilgrims to Haj due to the closure of the airport," he said.

Ruling National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah also welcomed the ceasefire, emphasising the urgent need to end hostilities.

In a statement released from the party

headquarters Nawa-e-Subha, the NC president expressed his support for the ceasefire, acknowledging the significant impact the ongoing situation has had on the people and their property in the region.

"Our people along the LoC (Line of Control) and IB (International Border) have borne the brunt of the deteriorating situation between the two neighbouring countries. This measure will greatly alleviate the suffering of our people who have been caught in the crossfire," he said.

Abdullah emphasised that his party has always advocated for lasting friendship between India and Pakistan.

However, he stressed, that the primary responsibility to bridge the trust deficit lies with Pakistan, which must address India's genuine concerns regarding cross-border terrorism.

Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti welcomed the ceasefire and said both countries should resolve their issues and find ways to establish permanent peace.

"This is good news for the people of J-K who have been suffering because of the cross-border shelling for the last few days. I am sure the news has brought a sigh of relief across the border," Mufti said in a video released by her party.

She said while terrorism is not acceptable to anyone and would not be tolerated, "terrorists should not determine when there should be war or peace between India and Pakistan".

"Military solution is no solution. Ultimately, there should be a political intervention," she said.

Mufti said India should play the role of big brother in the region.

"Our country is huge, it should play the role of a big brother not just with Pakistan but also with the whole region so that there is permanent peace and people prosper," she added.

The former chief minister of the erstwhile state of J-K expressed hope that the two countries will seek to resolve their difference to establish permanent peace.

"I hope both the countries will sit together and resolve their issues and find a way to establish lasting peace in the coming times -- the peace which is permanent and not affected by an incident.

"I am very happy with the news given by Trump. It has brought a message of peace not just for J-K but also the whole region," she said.

Senior CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami also welcomed the ceasefire, saying it has brought a big relief to people on both sides.

Peoples' Conference chief Sajad Lone said the announcement of the ceasefire is a welcome step and there is a sense of relief everywhere.

"The inhabitants of the border areas in J and K have had a harrowing time. Hope they are able to resume their lives and hope we as a society come to their aid and help them rebuild their homes," Lone added.

All Parties Sikh Coordination Committee (APSCC) chairman Jagmohan Singh Raina termed the ceasefire as a significant development and said the decision would not only help establish peace along the borders but also pave the way for restoring trust between the people of both nations.

Raina appealed to the leadership of both countries to resolve all outstanding issues through dialogue.

Rs 10 Lakh Relief

Minister said in a statement shared on X.

CM Visits Family

acknowledging the officer's outstanding dedication and supreme sacrifice. "His service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. The Government stands firmly with his family in this hour of grief," CM Omar Abdullah said during the visit.

Dr. Thapa was stationed in Rajouri town when he was fatally struck by Pakistani shelling. His untimely demise has sent shockwaves through the administrative and civil community, marking a sad and solemn moment for the entire Jammu and Kashmir.

"We have lost a dedicated officer of the J&K Administrative Services. Just yesterday, he was accompanying the Deputy Chief Minister around the district and attended the online meeting I chaired," the Chief Minister said. "I've no words to express my shock and sadness at this terrible loss of life. May his soul rest in peace."

Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister also visited the affected areas of Rehari and Roopnagar in Jammu to assess the damage caused by the cross-border shelling, which continued for the second night in a row. "The pain and disruption faced by residents is deeply concerning. We stand with every affected family and will ensure all necessary support is provided without delay," he stated.

The Chief Minister reiterated his government's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the lives and well-being of its citizens amidst ongoing hostilities.

Brick by Brick

a skeleton of blackened walls and scorched fields.

In Bandi Market, Uri's commercial hub, the damage is complete. Several shops are reduced to warped shutters. A cow wandered through the ruins, unfazed. There was no one to shoo it away.

"It reminded us of 1948," said Hakim ud din Choudhary, 85, walking the cracked streets of Gingal.

"Back then, the mountains had echoed with intense fire. It's happening again. Seventy-five years, and no bunkers, no safety. Just silence and smoke."

The shelling followed India's launch of Operation Sindoor, a military response to a terror attack in Pahalgam that left 26 people dead. Uri subsequently was caught in the middle. The townspeople say they heard no warning. Only explosions.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha arrived in Uri on a rain-soaked Friday, flanked by a battery of bureaucrats. He walked past the charred

remains of homes in Gingal and Lagama, promising immediate relief and long-term reconstruction.

"The nation stands with you," he told a small gathering of residents. Ministers Sakina Ittoo and Javed Dar also arrived and offered words of consolation and comfort.

Before these high-profile visitors, civil defense teams and local police were working around the clock, evacuating hundreds and delivering food and medical kits to scattered survivors.

But the psychological toll is harder to tend to.

Thirteen-year-old Bisma flinches upon hearing a loud sound. Her brother Ayan, 8, hasn't eaten properly in three days. The kids saw a shrapnel shattering their Salamabad home, before running for their lives.

"I covered the children with my body," said their father, Abid Sheikh, a sanitation worker. "I thought it was the end."

The night the bombs fell, Nargis Begum tried to flee with her family in their SUV. A shell ripped through the vehicle near Razarwani, killing her instantly. Her daughter's screams echoed through the region long after the shelling stopped. Now, neighbours pass their house without looking up.

Uri's pulse has purportedly paused. Most of the workforce has left. Markets are flattened. Schools are closed. Those who stayed behind move carefully, watching the sky, ears tuned for distant rumble.

Some families, like Molvi Zubair's, returned briefly to collect the elderly before vanishing again into safer districts.

"Our village is hollow now," Zubair said. "The animals are alone. The courtyards are deserted. And we still don't know if we're safe."

In Kamal Kote, locals are stockpiling ration bags and charging phones. "We're not sleeping," said a mother as her daughter clung to her shawl. "Only waiting."

The residents of Uri say they've lived on the frontline long enough to know what life on the Zero Line really means.

"War is easy from a distance," said Saquib Bhatti, a college student who returned from Srinagar to help his neighbors evacuate. "The people here carry the cost. Every time."

Uri is a ghost town, its streets troubled and torn. Those who come back find no peace, just fear that bombs will fall again, wiping out what's left of home.

Tomorrow feels as broken as the walls around them.

Enemy Making

want War. But, we will not remain silent on the killings of our civilians. Our forces are giving a befitting reply to the enemy. Your unity and steadfast devotion towards the motherland will be their shield and strength and will boost their morale. Let us wholeheartedly salute our valiant soldiers who stand guard at our borders. Let our brave sons of Maa Bharti know that the entire nation stands strong with them," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also called upon the prominent citizens and civil society members to counter fake narrative and propaganda being created by the adversaries.

Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister, reaffirmed the commitment of the government to the safety of the people and protecting social harmony. We will not let the enemy divide us, he said.

While assuring seamless supply of essential

commodities, the Chief Minister also called upon the members of civil society and business community to report any instances of black-marketing.

Moulvi Riyaz ul Haq, Imaam o Khateeb, Asari Sharief Hazratbal, while speaking on the occasion, said, this challenging time underscores the vital message: unity, peace, and brotherhood. I pray for peace and prosperity of our nation and safety of its people, he said.

S. Paramjit Singh, President, Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Baramulla strongly condemned the unprovoked shelling by Pakistan on Gurudwara Sahib in Poonch. He appealed to the Government of India to take up this calculated and deliberate action by the neighbouring country to international forum and diplomatic level.

"This country is ours and we are of this country," affirmed by S. Gurmeet Singh Bali, Secretary, GPC Srinagar.

Javid Ahmed Tenga, President, KCCI and Shahid Kamili, President, FCIK extended support from business and trade community to the Jammu Kashmir administration.

Revd. Vino Koul, Associate Priest, All Saints Church, Srinagar; Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi representing all J&K Anjum Sharie Shian and Parshotam Lal, Shiv Shakti Sewa Dal also called upon the people to remain united.

The meeting paid homage and observed a two-minute silence in the memory of civilians killed in Pahalgam terrorist attack and those martyred due to unprovoked shelling by Pakistan.

Haj Flights Cancelled

western India from May 9 to 14, 2025. Pilgrims and their families have been urged to stay in touch with official communication platforms for timely updates regarding their travel. Earlier on Friday, Dr. Shujhat Ahmad Qureshi, Executive Officer of the J&K Haj Committee said, "We are in touch with all concerned agencies, but as of now, the situation remains unchanged and uncertain. Pilgrims and their families are requested to remain patient until we receive clearance for rescheduling."

Jamia Millia Reschedules

of Jammu and Kashmir being held on May 10-11, 2025.

Minister for Education J&K Government, Sakina Ittoo informed about the development through a tweet on social networking site "X", "Considering the ongoing situation Jamia Millia Islamia will reschedule the admission test for students from Jammu and Kashmir at the request of the J&K Government. I thank the university administration for understanding the current challenges faced by the students of J&K".

The admission tests of Jamia Millia Islamia for the session 2025-26 commenced on 26th April, 2025 and are scheduled to be completed by 31st May, 2025.

The admission tests of a few programs are scheduled on 10th and 11th May, 2025.

However, for the remaining students, the admission tests will be held on given dates and time (May 10-11, 2025).(KINS)

Avoid Air Raid

air raids sirens and civilians may have misunderstood it as routine matter, used by the media channels, during the actual air raids.

The advisory came amidst the heightened tension due to the ongoing India-Pakistan conflict.

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Admin Pays Heartfelt Tribute To Martyr ADDC Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa

Observer News Service

RAJOURI: The District Administration Rajouri paid a solemn and heartfelt tribute to Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa, Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Rajouri, who attained martyrdom during cross-border shelling, laying down his life in the line of duty while serving the nation with unwavering commitment.

In a poignant message, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, lauded the extraordinary dedication and bravery of Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa. "His supreme sacrifice during the tragic incident at Badhaal will be remembered forever. He was a beacon of courage and devotion, serving the people of Rajouri till his last breath," the DC remarked.

Dr. Thapa, a 2001 batch officer of the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS), was known for his integrity, humility, and deep sense of responsibility. His



passing is a tremendous loss to the administrative fraternity and the people of Rajouri.

"He was not just an able administrator, but a true hero in service—a symbol of sincerity and dedication," DC Abhishek Sharma added while extending condolences to the bereaved family.

The District Administration, along with officials from various departments, observed a moment of silence and resolved to carry forward the legacy of selfless service exemplified by the late officer.

His memory will continue to inspire generations of civil servants to uphold the highest values of duty, service, and sacrifice.

JKAS Members Express Grief

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Members of Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) on Saturday expressed grief and sorrow over the tragic death of Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Rajouri, Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa.

In a statement, the member of JKAS said, "It is with profound grief and a heavy heart that we express our deepest condolences on the tragic passing of Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa, a distinguished senior officer of the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service and Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) of Rajouri. Dr. Thapa lost his life in the line of duty."

"Dr. Thapa was a beacon of dedication, professionalism, and compassion. Known for his people-friendly approach, he played a pivotal role in addressing critical issues, leaving an indelible mark on the communities he served. His

career, spanning over two decades, was a testament to his integrity, resilience, and selfless devotion to public service," the statement reads.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of a mentor, a colleague, and an inspiring figure whose contributions to the administrative service and the welfare of the people will never be forgotten. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to Dr. Thapa's family during this time of immense sorrow. We stand in solidarity with them, offering our unwavering support and prayers for strength to bear this irreparable loss," the statement added.

"We honor Dr. Thapa's legacy and pledge to carry forward his vision of service, dedication, and compassion. His sacrifice will remain etched in our hearts, inspiring us to serve with greater resolve and commitment. May his soul rest in eternal peace," it added.

Sakeena Itoo Offers Condolences

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo has consoled the sad demise of Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Rajouri, Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa, who was tragically killed today morning by cross border shelling.

Remembering the late officer's unwavering dedication to public service, Sakeena Itoo recalled his exceptional efforts during the Budhal tragedy, highlighting that his swift and compassionate response brought solace to many affected families. The Minister said that Late Dr. Thapa used to update about the situation even during the

night hours and was active on the ground for the relief of common masses. "He was a symbol of sincerity and responsibility, particularly during times of crisis. His humane approach during the Budhal tragedy left an indelible mark on the hearts of the people", Sakeena said.

Describing the late ADDC as a committed and upright officer, Sakeena said that the loss is not only a blow to the administration but also to the countless lives he touched through his selfless service.

Sakeena Itoo also extended her heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the family in this hour of grief.

DC Reasi Holds Consultative Meeting With Prominent Citizens

Observer News Service

REASI: Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Nidhi Malik chaired a consultative meeting with prominent citizens of the district to review public concerns and enhance community coordination in disaster response and preparedness.

During the meeting, participants raised various issues, including instances of non-compliance by certain shopkeepers during a recent power blackout. In response, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the critical importance of adhering to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) during emergencies to ensure public safety and efficient disaster management.

Highlighting the crucial role of community participation, DC Nidhi Malik encouraged citizens to volunteer for emergency services. The initiative received an enthusiastic response, with several individuals coming forward to assist in blood donation drives and other

essential voluntary services.

She urged residents to prioritize personal safety during blackouts or shelling by remaining indoors and avoiding unnecessary movement. Citizens were also cautioned to steer clear of any suspicious or unfamiliar objects and to immediately alert security personnel if such items are found.

The Deputy Commissioner directed concerned departments to intensify awareness campaigns about emergency protocols and the importance of public cooperation in maintaining safety and order.

Assuring the public of the administration's preparedness, Ms. Malik confirmed that adequate food supplies and essential services will be maintained throughout any emergency situation. She also appealed to the public to remain vigilant and to promptly report any suspicious activity or unidentified individuals to the authorities to help preserve communal harmony.

Pakistan Will Always Face Defeat By Fighting India: Dy CM

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary on Saturday said Pakistan will always face defeat by fighting India, asserting that the sacrifices rendered by the people can never be forgotten.

Talking to reporters here, Choudhary said the family of Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Rajouri are in grief, but are proud of the sacrifice rendered by their be-



loved for the nation.

"Whenever the nation is in need, the people have always stood firm and sacrificed their lives for the nation," he said.

WHENEVER THE NATION IS IN NEED, the people have always stood firm and sacrificed their lives for the nation,"

Kashmir Fruit Growers Union Urges Dealers To Keep Prices Affordable

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers Cum Dealers Union has called upon all wholesale and retail fruit and vegetable dealers across the region to ensure essential food items remain accessible and affordable for the public.

The union, which represents the collective interests of all fruit and vegetable growers' associations in Kashmir, said it is the collective responsibility to address the current hardships faced by residents amid ongoing tensions.

In its official statement, the union said, "The Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers Cum Dealers Union, Srinagar, which is an elected umbrella body representing all fruit and vegetable growers' associations of the valley, humbly requests all wholesale and retail dealers to make fruits and vegetables available to the general public at reasonable and affordable prices on humanitarian grounds, considering the current situation and our duties towards society."

The statement came in the wake of the rising tensions between India and Pakistan



over the last few days. However, both nations announced a ceasefire on Saturday late afternoon. The statement was issued before the ceasefire announcement.

The president of the union, Basheer Ahmad Basheer, said fruits and vegetables are daily essentials and must be made accessible to everyone. He urged dealers to moderate their prices and make efforts to sell these items at discounted rates, helping to stabilise supply and prevent hoarding or exploitation during this critical period.

"Let us come together as a community and fulfil our

duty," Basheer appealed. "Dealers involved in the sale of essential commodities should stand united, sell at reasonable prices, and ensure that the common people do not face shortages or inflated costs. This is a time to prioritise public welfare and prevent any undue advantage being taken of the current situation."

He further said that all traders dealing with essential items should cooperate and share the responsibility of providing affordable supplies to the public. "We must all do our part to ensure that no one is deprived of basic necessities during these difficult days," he added—(KNO)

Passengers Say Cab Drivers Hiked Prices Amid Border Tensions

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Passengers in Jammu and Kashmir faced difficulties in the last few days due to increased fare demands by some cab drivers, given the border tensions between India and Pakistan.

Many travellers said they were forced to pay higher charges on the national highway and other key routes, with no authorities stepping in to address the issue.

Passengers from various parts of the valley travelling between Jammu and Srinagar shared their concerns reveal-

ing that fares have more than doubled, and they feel helpless against the exploitation.

Mateen Wani, a passenger from Shopian, recounted that a Tavera driver from his area forced him and a few students to pay Rs 16,500 from Jammu to Srinagar on Friday. Similar reports have emerged from travellers heading to Rajouri, Kishtwar and other destinations, who said they are being subjected to the same inflated charges.

Gulzar Ahmad, another passenger, said, "While the border situation is tense, some drivers are taking undue advantage of it by charging extra for rides. The

fare from Jammu to Srinagar is now more than double the normal rate." He added that most passengers paid these inflated charges because many drivers were unwilling to visit Kashmir amid the current circumstances.

Passengers sought the government's intervention, saying no one should be allowed to exploit the situation and that strict action must be taken against those charging excess fares. They urged authorities to ensure that travellers can reach their destinations without facing additional financial burdens or harassment during such hard times—(KNO)

Babila Rakwal Reviews Civil Defence Preparedness

Observer News Service

REASI: Commissioner Secretary, Cooperative Department, Babila Rakwal, who has been designated as the mentor for Reasi district, chaired a high level meeting to review the district's civil defence preparedness.

Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Nidhi Malik, presented a comprehensive overview of the civil defence plan and ongoing measures to ensure public safety. She informed that a dedicated control room has been established to manage emergencies and provide assistance to the citizens.

The Commissioner Secretary conducted a detailed review of the preparedness of key departments. The Health Department shared its plan to ensure 24/7 ambulance services, adequate hospital bed capacity and uninterrupted functioning of health facilities during emergencies.

The Power Development Department (PDD) and Public Health Engineering (PHE)

Department assured that systems are in place to restore electricity and water supply promptly after blackouts. The PHE Department further confirmed arrangements for alternative water sources as a contingency.

The Public Works Department (PWD) reported that critical infrastructure has been identified and that swift response mechanisms including establishment of temporary structures such as bridges, are in place in case of any damage to roads or essential assets.

The Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department assured that adequate stocks of food grains and fuel are being maintained to meet potential emergency demands.

The Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) informed that sufficient vehicles and drivers have been designated to ensure safe and efficient evacuation or public transport if needed.

Deputy Commissioner Reasi also highlighted that all vi-

tal infrastructure has been mapped and secured and multiple safe houses have been identified across the district to shelter affected individuals during emergencies.

A detailed review of the district's security preparedness was conducted.

Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Nidhi Malik, along with SSP Reasi, Paramvir Singh, briefed Commissioner Secretary Rakwal on the current security scenario and the coordinated steps being taken to safeguard the public.

Reaffirming administration's commitment, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized that all departments are working in close coordination to ensure uninterrupted essential services and that a robust civil defence plan is firmly in place for the safety and welfare of residents.

The meeting was attended by SSP Reasi Paramvir Singh, ADDC Sukhdev Singh, ADC Rakesh Kumar, Chief Medical Officer, XEN PDD, XEN PHE, Assistant Director Food, Army officials, and other senior officers.

J&K Has Adequate Supply Of Essential Commodities: Satish Sharma

Observer News Service

JAMMU: In view of the prevailing situation, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs; Transport; Science and Technology; Information Technology; Youth Services; Sports and ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, has appealed to the public to remain calm and avoid panic.

He assured that there is no shortage of essential commodities, including food grains, petroleum products and LPG across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister informed that sufficient stocks are available at all distribution points and necessary arrangements are in place to maintain regular supplies. "There is absolutely no need to panic. We have adequate reserves, and my team of dedicated officers is constantly monitoring the situation and taking timely decisions to ensure uninterrupted supply," the Minister stated.

He also expressed gratitude to Trader Associations and Federations for their cooperation in ensuring that the supply chain remains unaffected. "Their support has been crucial in maintaining normalcy in availability of various commodities," he added.



On the transport front, the Minister informed that the Managing Director of RTC along with RTOs and ARTOs are working tirelessly to provide transportation to those who need to travel. He emphasized that fare regulations are being strictly enforced and action is being taken against operators found overcharging passengers.

Satish Sharma further urged the public to stay vigilant and not believe in rumors. "Vehicles are plying across the UT in accordance with advisories issued by the authorities. I request everyone to avoid panic besides urging the members of the business community not to indulge in hoarding or overpricing," asserted the Minister.

The Minister extended his best wishes for the safety and well-being of all citizens and reiterated the importance of adhering to official guidelines. "Let us stand together, remain calm and follow all advisories to ensure the safety and stability of our society," he appealed.

J&K SED Establishes Helpdesk For Students

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In view of the prevailing situation and for the benefit of the students, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, School Education Department (SED) Civil Secretariat Srinagar/ Jammu today issued an order for establishment of the helpdesk for students in Srinagar and Jammu divisions.

Minister of Education, Sakina Itoo in a tweet on 'X' informed of establishing dedicated helpline by the Govt of J&K to assist students.

"Students from J&K studying outside who need to return home are advised to contact officials from the School Education and Transport Departments of the Jammu Division. Similarly, students from outside the UT who are currently studying in J&K may get in touch with officials of SED and Transport Department of the Kashmir Division for help with transport, lodging, or any related assistance," she posted.

Further in her tweet, the Minister assured that the government is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all students.

The needy students can contact the helpdesk officers/ officials for any assistance including lodging and transport.

JKTPO Conducts RAMP Awareness Workshop

Observer News Service

PULWAMA: A district-level awareness workshop on the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) program was organized at the Town Hall, Pulwama.

The workshop was a collaborative effort of Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO), the State Programme Implementation Unit (SPIU) – Grant Thornton, and the District Industries Centre (DIC) Pulwama.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), artisans, and key stakeholders from the district.

JKTPO, under the supervision of the Department of Industries and Commerce, J&K, is conducting workshops to enhance the outreach and capacity-building of local MSMEs and entrepreneurs.

These workshops aim to raise awareness about the RAMP program, which supports MSMEs through market linkages, digital financing, skilling, cluster development, and business reforms. The SPIU team presented detailed implementation procedures and addressed queries to ensure effective execution of RAMP initiatives.

The session was presided over by Waseem Ahmad Malik, General Manager, DIC Pulwama, who emphasized the

importance of a collaborative approach for successful implementation of the RAMP scheme.

"It is imperative that all implementing agencies work in synergy with MSMEs to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Pulwama. We must extend consistent hand-holding to our entrepreneurs to ensure sustainable growth and self-reliance," he said.

The workshop featured participation from a diverse array of departments and institutions including the Assistant Commissioner Development, Pulwama, Dr. Peerzada Farhat, Manager SIDCO, DGM SICOP, Principal ITI Pulwama and representatives from JKEDI, ITI, Handloom and Handicrafts Department, Lead Bank, Horticulture and Agriculture Departments, and other district officials.

Various sessions were conducted to create awareness among MSMEs about the benefits, components, and application procedures under the RAMP program. These included discussions on capacity building, access to finance, consultancy support, and marketing assistance.

The workshop also provided a platform for direct interaction between entrepreneurs and government departments, enabling grievance redressal and identification of potential interventions.

UNRAVEL KASHMIR