

May Heat Intensifies In J&K

Srinagar Hits Season's Hottest Day At 31.5°C

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is experiencing a relentless heatwave as May temperatures soar, with Srinagar, the summer capital, recording the season's highest temperature on Saturday.

Srinagar hit 31.5 degrees Celsius, marking the hottest day of the season so far. Jammu and Qazigund also recorded peak temperatures of 41.0 degrees Celsius and 32.0 degrees Celsius respectively.

Other areas felt the heat as well, with Kokernag in south Kashmir recording 30.0 degrees Celsius, and the popular tourist destination Pahalgam reaching 29.0 degrees Celsius. In north Kashmir's Kupwara district, the mercury climbed to 30.0 degrees Celsius, while Gulmarg, known for its ski slopes, remained cooler at 22.2 degrees Celsius.

The Jammu division experienced heatwave conditions in Banihal, Batote, Bhaderwah, and Katra, with temperatures crossing the 30-degree mark.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, Director of the Meteorological Department, said that the heatwave would continue through Sunday. However, he said relief was expected as light rain and



Srinagar 31.5°C
SEASON'S HOTTEST
Jammu 41.0°C
SEASON'S HOTTEST
Qazigund 32.0°C
SEASON'S HOTTEST
Kokernag 30.0°C
Pahalgam 29.0°C
Kupwara 30.0°C
Gulmarg 22.2°C

thundershower activity is forecast to begin from the evening of May 18 and continue till May 20, likely bringing temperatures down.

"Thunder showers with gusty winds are expected till May 20," he added. "However, another short spell of heatwave is likely from May 21 to May 24, followed by chances of light rain and thundershowers from May 25."

Dr. Ahmad advised residents, particularly in the Jammu division, to take necessary precautions amid the rising temperatures. He urged vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, children, and the elderly to stay hydrated and avoid excessive exposure to heat.

Most parts of India are likely to witness a hotter-than-usual month of May, with the number of heatwave days doubling to nearly seven, as opposed to the usual three, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) warned earlier this month.

As the region braces for fluctuating weather, residents are advised to stay alert and take care during this unseasonal heatwave.

LIGHT RAIN AND THUNDERSHOWER ACTIVITY IS FORECAST to begin from the evening of May 18 and continue till May 20."

'Maximise Water Use After Indus Treaty Suspension'

Centre Plans Extension Of Ranbir Canal On Chenab

Agencies

New Delhi: The government is considering plans to increase the length of the Ranbir canal on the Chenab river as part of its efforts to maximise the use of water that India will get after putting the Indus Water Treaty in abeyance following the Pahalgam attack, officials said.

Till now, India has been using limited water from Chenab, mostly for irrigation, but by putting the treaty in abeyance now there is scope of expanding its use, especially in the power generation sector to meet the energy demands, a

senior official said. Another official said that India is planning to enhance its current hydropower capacity of around 3000 megawatts on the rivers that were earlier being used by Pakistan and a feasibility study in this regard is planned, the official said.

"One of the major plans are enhancing the length of the Ranbir canal to 120 km," the official said, adding that as building of the infrastructure requires time, "all stakeholders have been urged to expedite the process".

Moreover, the process of desilting has | [More on P6](#)

LG Hikes Ex-Gratia Relief For Terror Victims



Announces Up To 500% Increase

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant move aimed at supporting victims of violence and their families, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has announced a substantial hike in ex-gratia relief under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme in Jammu and Kashmir. The revision includes up to a fivefold increase in compensation for civilians, government employees, ex-servicemen, magistrates, and Village Defence

Guards (VDGs) affected by violence or civil unrest.

The enhanced relief is in addition to the Central Government's existing scheme that provides ₹5 lakh for death or permanent disability caused by terrorist violence.

As per the revised SRE guidelines:

Civilians: Ex-gratia for death has been raised from ₹1 lakh to ₹2.5 lakh, while for permanent disability, it has doubled from ₹75,000 to ₹1.5 lakh.

Ex-servicemen (Police): Death compensation has been increased from ₹2 lakh to ₹4 lakh, and for permanent disability, from ₹75,000 to ₹1.5 lakh.

Magistrates on Duty: Ex-gratia in case of death has been raised from

Vows Rehab Plan For Shelling Victims

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said a comprehensive plan would be prepared to seek assistance from the Centre for the rehabilitation of residents affected by shelling.

"Many houses and commercial properties here have been damaged due to the shelling from

the adversary. Today, I visited those places with senior administrative officers, saw the situation with my own eyes, and interacted with the people to understand their problems," Sinha told reporters in the Tangdhar area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district. He said the administration has done an assessment | [More on P6](#)

the adversary. Today, I visited those places with senior administrative officers, saw the situation with my own eyes, and interacted with the people to understand their problems," Sinha told reporters in the Tangdhar area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district. He said the administration has done an assessment | [More on P6](#)

'No Forgiveness, No Forgetting' Went 100 Km Deep In Pak To Avenge Pahalgam Attack: Shah

Observer News Service

Gujarat: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday declared that India has avenged the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam — which left 26 civilians, mostly tourists, dead — by carrying out a massive retaliatory strike deep inside Pakistan, demolishing nine terror camps including the headquarters of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT).

Speaking at a public gathering, Shah said the strikes were conducted under the "decisive leadership" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Operation Sindoor quelled the JeM and LeT headquarters to rubble," he said, calling it the strongest-ever message sent to terror elements and their backers across the border.



According to Shah, the Indian armed forces penetrated up to 100 kilometers inside Pakistani territory to carry out the precision strikes. "Our army gave a clear message — if anyone raises an evil eye towards Indian citizens, they will not be spared. They heard India's message through the sound of our bombs," he asserted.

The Home Minister revealed that terror facilities in Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Bahawalpur, Muridke, Sialkot and other areas were targeted and destroyed. "These camps were stockpiling weapons and training terrorists to attack India. The message was loud and clear — any attack on Indian civilians will be met with double the force," Shah said.

Recalling the era before 2014, he said terror attacks were often met with silence or restraint. "Back then, Pakistani terrorists would cross over, kill our people, and return untouched. But since PM Modi took charge, every act of terror has received a firm, strategic response."

Shah cited previous operations including the 2016 Uri surgical strikes, 2019 Balakot airstrikes after | [More on P6](#)

Tourism Hit Badly, Focused Now On Amarnath Yatra: CM



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Asserting that tourism has been hit quite badly, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday said the government is now focused on Amarnath Yatra and wants to ensure the annual pilgrimage passes off peacefully.

Talking to reporters, Omar said that tourism has been hit quite badly and there are hardly any tourists coming here in this summer season.

"We are now focused on Amarnath Yatra and want to ensure that every pilgrim leaves from here safe and sound," he said. "We want the incident-free annual pilgrimage and later on we will start looking at what we can do to promote tourism."

The Chief Minister further said the ceasefire is intact and there were no reports of any violations from LoC and border. "At present, the damage assessment | [More on P6](#)

Confront Pak, Adopt Kashmiris: Owaisi To Govt

Press Trust Of India

Hyderabad: AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi on Saturday cited the spontaneous and organic protests in Kashmir after the Pahalgam attack to say that it showed there was no support for Pakistan left in the region.

"In fact, it is a historic opportunity for the government, for Prime Minister Modi, for Home Minister Amit Shah. They should use this opportunity properly. You should definitely confront Pakistan but you should also adopt Kashmiris," the fifth-term Hyderabad MP said.

Owaisi said that after the April 22 terror attack, "there was maatam (mourning) in every Kashmiri household".

Asked to elaborate on what he means by adopting



Kashmiris, he said the government should ensure that there are no human rights abuses there, "they should get their rights, Kashmiri students shouldn't be attacked in other parts of the country".

"All this should be done. We shouldn't lose this opportunity.

Don't leave the Kashmiris to their fate. Adopt them," Owaisi said.

He said it is the unwritten ideology of Pakistan to foment instability and communal divide in India and to thwart its economic growth. And it has been doing so since it sent tribal invaders into Jammu and Kashmir after India's independence.

"You can never trust Pakistan as long as the Pakistani deep state, Pakistani ISI, Pakistani military's objective is to destabilise Bharat," the AIMIM leader said.

On April 22, Pakistan-linked terrorists gunned down 26 people, mostly tourists, in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam. Political parties, religious leaders and social organisations condemned the horrific attack and held protests in many parts of J&K following the terror strike. | [More on P6](#)

Indian YouTuber Held On Charge Of Spying For Pak

Press Trust Of India

Chandigarh: A Haryana-based YouTuber has been arrested on the charge of passing on sensitive information to Pakistani intelligence operatives, police said on Saturday.

Jyoti Malhotra, who runs a YouTube channel, Travel with JO, and hails from Hisar in Haryana, was arrested from New Aggarsain Extension, they said.

She has been booked under the relevant sections of the Official Secrets Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, said police.

She was sent to a five-day police remand after being produced before the court. Jyoti, whose YouTube channel and Instagram account have 3.77 lakh subscribers and 1.33 lakh followers respectively, allegedly was in contact with a Pakistani staffer working at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi. On May 13, India had expelled that Pakistani official for allegedly indulging in espionage.

Her YouTube channel account shows some videos regarding her visit to Pakistan — 'Indian Girl in Pakistan', 'Indian Girl Exploring Lahore', 'Indian Girl at Katas Raj Temple' and 'Indian Girl Rides Luxury Bus in Pakistan'.

She has made a total of 487 videos so far.

She has described herself as a 'Nomadic Leo Girl', 'Wanderer Haryana + Punjabi' and 'purane khayalon ki modern ladki' on her YouTube channel.

In 2023, Jyoti came in contact with Ehsan-ur-Rahim alias Danish at the Pakistan High Commission where she went to seek a visa to visit the neighbouring nation, according to an FIR lodged at Civil Lines Police Station on May 16.

Jyoti, who visited Pakistan twice, had met Danish's acquaintance Ali Ahwan who arranged her stay there, the FIR read.

Ahwan arranged Jyoti's meeting with Pakistani Security and Intelligence officials and | [More on P6](#)

2 Drug Peddlers Get 5 Yr Jail, Rs 50K Fine

M Ahmad

Srinagar: A court here on Saturday sentenced two drug peddlers to five years rigorous imprisonment and imposed Rs 50,000 as fine on each of them.

Special Judge (NDPS cases) Srinagar Vinod Kumar also ordered that in case the duo—Rafiq Ahmad Putoo of Saida Kadal Srinagar and Aqib Manzoor Bakhroo of Rainawari, failed to pay the fine amount, they shall undergo six months further simple imprisonment.

"The period of detention already undergone by the accused shall be set off against the sentence imposed, as per Section 428 of the Cr.PC," the court said.

According to prosecution, on 16 October 2020, a police party apprehended the duo at Khonakhan Dalgate when they tried to flee after seeing the policemen. Thereafter they were searched. Two packets of charas-like substance

was recovered from one of them while 13 sticks wrapped with corn husk having charas-like substance were found in possession of the second accused. Investigation revealed that they were going to sell the charas-like substance to the youth at high rates, the prosecution said. The recovered material was sent to FSL and tests confirmed same to be charas, the prosecution said. After completing the investigation, the police filed chargesheet | [More on P6](#)

NC, PDP Endorse Owaisi's Remarks

The National Conference and the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) on Saturday endorsed AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi's statement suggesting that the Centre should engage constructively with the people of Kashmir and "not leave them to their

fate". NC state spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said it was a good opportunity to reduce the trust deficit, after Owaisi urged the Centre to "adopt" the people of Kashmir while confronting Pakistan on terrorism. However, the ruling party in Jammu | [More on P6](#)



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Celiac disease: PGIMER reinforces commitment to early diagnosis, family-centric care

Press Trust Of India

The PGIMER commemorated the Celiac Disease Day here with a dedicated awareness and education programme, aimed at highlighting the significance of early diagnosis, strict dietary management, and comprehensive psycho-social support for children affected by the ailment.

The Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) here, through its division of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Hepatology, commemorated the day on Friday, a statement said.

Addressing a gathering, professor Sadhna Lal, head of the division of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Hepatology, underscored PGIMER's pioneering efforts in managing the disease.

"The PGIMER has been at the forefront of diagnosing and managing celiac disease in India since the 1980s. Our dedicated clinic has treated nearly 18,000 patients to date, making it one of the largest such centres in the world," she said. She emphasised that celiac disease is significantly more prevalent in north-western Indian states such as Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan, owing to a genetic predisposition and a diet predominantly based on wheat.

She cautioned that many cases remain undiagnosed due to the subtle or non-specific presentation of symptoms. "The disease is often likened to an iceberg, where visible symptoms are just a fraction of the underlying burden," she remarked.

Lal said that while in the past cases primarily presented with growth failure, the current

clinical profile has evolved. "Nearly 50 per cent of children now show normal growth parameters, which makes diagnosis more challenging and necessitates increased clinical suspicion, however, iron deficiency, anaemia still remain the most common feature," she said.

Highlighting the long-term consequences of untreated disease, Lal warned, "Continued intake of gluten acts like a slow poison, causing progressive and silent damage to internal organs. Complete avoidance of gluten is essential to prevent complications."

Tracing the historical evolution of understanding celiac disease, she highlighted that although the condition has existed for over two millennia, its medical relevance gained prominence only in the last century. She stressed the importance of early diagnosis

in paediatric settings, explaining that childhood remains the optimal window for effective treatment. "Unfortunately, diagnosis becomes more complex in adulthood, and many individuals remain undetected," Lal added.

Lal shared the case of a young patient, who went into liver failure due to non-compliance with diet primarily because of ignorance of the family. She had been diagnosed at PGIMER eight years ago with celiac disease. Now she was advised a liver transplantation. Fortunately, she is on her road to recovery with medication being given now, she said.

Lal further highlighted the importance of family involvement in management, stating, "Strict dietary compliance requires the cooperation of the entire family. Parental understanding and commitment are crucial for sustained treatment adherence."

Reiterating PGIMER's commitment, Lal said, "We continue to work towards enhancing awareness, promoting early detection, and providing research-backed care and education to improve outcomes for children living with celiac disease."

Offering practical tips on celiac disease management, Lal emphasised the importance of a home-based gluten-free diet, disciplined eating habits, and maintaining regular meal times. She advised parents never to send children to school without a proper breakfast and to actively involve the child in managing their condition.

The programme also included interactive dietary counselling, gluten-free recipe demonstrations, and a question and answer forum with experts. Participants received guidance on safe food practices, and emotional support strategies essential for managing celiac disease in day-to-day life.

Scholarships This Week

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

Scholarship Name 1 IET India Scholarship Award 2025

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

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

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

Scholarship Name 2 Ahimsa Fellowship 2025

Description: The Ahimsa Fellowship 2025 is an 8-month full-time opportunity for graduates designed to create a network of effective animal protection leaders. This program trains fellows to collaborate with government bodies in India to enforce animal protection laws, supporting



efforts through agencies like Animal Welfare Boards and monitoring committees.

Eligibility: The application is open to Indian citizens between 21 and 39 years as of 31 December 2025. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in any discipline and possess good communication skills in English and regional languages. They must be available to attend the 8-month duration of the fellowship programme.

- Prizes & Rewards: A monthly stipend of up to 20,000 and other benefits.
- Last Date to Apply: 29-06-2025
- Application mode: Online Applications Only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/AAFM1
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/ahimsa-fellowship-20241747038312.png>

Scholarship Name 3 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow India 2025

Description: Samsung Solve for Tomorrow India 2025 is offered by the strategic partnership among Samsung India, the United Nations in India, IIT Delhi, the Foundation for Innovation & Technology Transfer (FITT), and the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.

Eligibility: Open for Indian nationals between the ages of 14 and 22 as of 30 May 2025.

- Prizes & Rewards: Grants up to 25,00,000 and other benefits.
- Last Date to Apply: 30-06-2025
- Application mode: Online Applications Only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SST3
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/samsung-solve-for-tomorrow-india-20251747050827.png>

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR PATTAN

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

Public Notice..

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Ashia Ishfaq D/o Ishfaq Ahmad Ganie R/o Natnusa Handwara kupwara with verified date of birth 25/05/2022 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR PATTAN

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

Public Notice

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Haya Hameed D/o Abdul Hameed Sheikh R/o Nehalpora Tehsil Pattan with verified date of birth 05/02/2018 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

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 Al Umar Shafi s/o Mohammad shafi war R/o Darveshbagh Nehalpora Tehsil Pattan with verified date of birth 10/04/2010 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 Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

The name of my daughter has been wrongly written in her DOB certificate issued by MC Pattan vide Registration Number: B202501900480000286 dated 11-04-2025, as Aneesa while her correct name is Aneesa Riyaz which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the above mentioned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

RIYAZ AHMAD DAR F/O ANEESA RIYAZ (DOB : 31-08-2020) PALPORA, Tehsil PATTAN, District BARAMULLA FKO

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR PATTAN

Sub.. Application of Rubena Begum w/o Bilal Ahmad Nazroo R/o Aram Mohalla Pattan for issuance of dependent certificate..

Public Notice..

IT is inform to general public that applicants husband dependent certificate is under process in this office in this matter report was sought from Patwari concerned which reveals that applicants husband namely Bilal Ahmad Nazroo s/o Mohd Sulthan Nazroo R/o Aram Mohalla Pattan died on 14/09/2024 and dependents of deceased are as under...

SD Naib Tehsildar Pattan fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been incorrectly recorded as Mufasil Ul Haq and incorrect date of birth 18-04-2006 in the Aadhaar Card bearing the Aadhaar Number 9482 8231 1116.

While my correct name is Mufasil Ahmad Kumar and date of birth is 01-03-2007 as recorded in the Birth Certificate issued by the Jammu & Kashmir board of School Education bearing Registration Number 203600000840016 dated 20-Oct-2022. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concern aadhar centre Jammu Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mufasil Ahmad Kumar son of Abdul Aziz Kumar R/o Nowgam tehsil and district Shopian fko

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FKO

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No.JK-0420100011389 issued in favour of FIRDOOS AHMAD SOFI Parentage FAROOQ AHMAD SOFI Whereas an application has been received by one FIRDOOS AHMAD SOFI Parentage FAROOQ AHMAD SOFI wherein he claimed that the Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as FIRDOUS AHMAD SOFI Which needs to be changed as FIRDOOS AHMAD SOFI. Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.

Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir mccb

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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No.JK-0120050002910 issued in favour of MO-HAMMAD ASSIF Parentage SHEIKH ABDUL RASHID

Whereas an application has been received by one MOHAMMAD ASSIF Parentage SHEIKH ABDUL RASHID wherein he claimed that the Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as MOHAMMAD ASIF Which needs to be changed as MOHAMMAD ASSIF and New address is SYED ABAD near FC1 godown Ompora Budgam.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.

Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir mcb

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CM Omar Reiterates Commitment To Resolving Public Grievances

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reaffirmed his government's unwavering commitment to addressing the genuine concerns of the people, stating that public service is not merely an administrative responsibility, but a solemn duty.

Chief Minister met several public delegations and individuals who flagged a range of issues and demands for resolution. The inhabitants of Government Housing Colony, Ompora, Budgam apprised the Chief Minister of various civic issues under the jurisdiction of the Housing Board.



"We are duty-bound to resolve all genuine issues of our citizens with empathy and urgency," the Chief Minister said during a day-long public outreach programme held for the second straight day at the Raabita Office in Srinagar.

He emphasized that the true essence of governance lies in active listening, meaningful engagement and timely redressal of grievances. "Voices from every corner of Jammu and Kashmir will be heard, respected and acted upon with sincerity and resolve," he asserted. Throughout the day, the

Delegations representing both factions of the Kashmir Traders & Manufacturers Federation discussed the persistent challenges faced by the traders community across the Valley.

J&K Private Empanelled Hospitals & Dialysis Centers Association highlighted critical concerns regarding private sector healthcare infrastructure and policy support.

A deputation from the All India Fair Price Shop Dealers Federation raised several long-standing demands of fair price shop owners, urging timely intervention.

Book Launch Marks The Literary Debut Of A Young Spiritual Voice

In her first published work, Zuha Ashai turns emotional loss into a quiet meditation on God and love.

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: A young Kashmiri girl stepped into the literary spotlight on Friday with the launch of her debut book, Through You to Him, a poetic meditation on love, loss and the divine. The event,

Part poetry, part spiritual memoir, the book is a short, introspective collection that reflects on grief and longing as paths to the divine. In one passage, she writes: "You weren't wrong to love them. You just didn't know He was the one behind it all."



held at the Iqbal Institute of Culture and Philosophy, University of Kashmir, drew a quiet but thoughtful gathering of scholars, students and writers.

The author, Zuha Ashai, read from her book in a soft, deliberate voice, offering glimpses into a personal journey that moves from human attachment toward spiritual awakening. "This is not ink on paper," she told the audience. "It is the quiet echo of a girl who once mistook the shadow of love for the sun itself."

Hosted by Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Ganai, coordinator of the Iqbal Institute, the event was attended by educationist G. N. Var and former J&K Bank PRO Farooq A. Ashai, along with students and faculty members. While the gathering also featured the release of three scholarly titles on Iqbal and Sufism, it was Zuha Ashai's slender volume that caught the room's attention.

"This book holds a stillness," Dr. Ganai said. "It's not just a literary piece, but a spiritual document."

DEMISE

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the demise of

**Zawar Ghulam
Mohammad Zaildar**



S/o Ghulam Haider Zaildar R/o Zaildar Mohalla, Saida Kadal Srinagar, passed away on 16th May 2025.(Friday).May Almighty Allah grant Jannat-ul-Firdous to the departed soul (Aameen). Congregation Fateh Khawani will be observed on 19th May Monday 2025 at 6:00 am at graveyard Hassanabad, after Taziyat mjlis will be observed at his residence at Zaildar Mohalla Saidakadal Srinagar.

Bereaved /Family

8825054707, 7006084833, 9796111211



Firefighters douse the flames of a house that caught fire in Lal Bazar, Srinagar, on Saturday. (KO Photo)

23 Terror Aides, Miscreants Booked Under PSA In City

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a decisive action against subversive and criminal elements inimical to the security and public order of the Nation, Srinagar Police on Saturday said to have booked 23 terror associates of proscribed terror outfits involved in subversive activities and miscreants involved in public disturbance under the Public Safety Act (PSA).

These individuals have been identified as Saqib Shafi Wani S/o Mohammad Shafi Wani R/o Baghi Sunder Bala Chattabal, Srinagar, Waleed Aijaz Sheikh S/o Aijaz Ahmad Sheikh R/o New Colony, Batmaloo, Hashim Farooq Mir S/o Farooq Ahmad Mir R/o Ikhrajpora Rajbagh, Srinagar, Sayar Ahmad Sheikh S/o Bilal Ahmad Sheikh R/o New Colony Batmaloo, Tawseef Ahmad Khan S/o Showkat Ahmad Khan R/o Firdous Abad Batmaloo - Lane No. 15, Showkat Ahmad Dar S/o Ghulam Mohammad Dar R/o Dooha Mohalla Nishat Srinagar, Ali Mohammad Rather S/o Ghulam Rasool Rather R/o Malfuk Hazratbal Srinagar, Owais Farooq Lone S/o Farooq Ahmad Lone R/o Bata-gund Tral A/P Maisuma Srinagar, Musaib Ahmad Khan S/o Ghulam Nabi Khan R/o Sector 07-Hamdaniala Colony Bemina, Feroz Ahmad Najar S/o Ali Mohammad Najar R/o Chandipora Harwan Srinagar, Shabir Ahmad Ghulam S/o Mohammad Sadiq Ghulam R/o Bagiyas Srinagar, Sa-

jid Shahnawaz Mir S/o Shahnawaz Ahmad Mir R/o Firdous Abad Batmaloo, Numan Qayoom Ganie S/o Abdul Qayoom Ganie R/o Methan Chanpora, Srinagar, Owais Altaf Bhat S/o Mohammad Altaf Bhat R/o Padshahibagh Srinagar, Junaid Zahoor Bangroo S/o Zahoor Ah. Bangroo R/o Malik Angan Fatehkadal Srinagar, Muzaffar Farooq Mir S/o Farooq Ah. Mir R/o Dangerpora, Shahzadpora Kanpora, Budgam, Unee Naseer Mir S/o Naseer Mir R/o Dangerpora Shahzadpora Kanpora, Budgam, Irfan Ahmad Seeru S/o Late Mohammad Shaban Seeru R/o Khankhal Sokhta Nawakadal Srinagar, Fahad Bashir Sidique S/o Bashir Ahmad Sidqui R/o Akilmir Khanyar Srinagar, Zubair Ahmad Lone S/o Manzoor Ahmad Lone R/o Saidapora Eidgah Srinagar, Faizan Yaseen Sheikh S/o Mohammad

“These accused persons have been booked after obtaining formal detention orders from the office of DM Srinagar based on dossiers prepared against them by Srinagar Police,”

Yaseen Sheikh R/o Kaka Sahab Jamalatta, Ibrahim Rashid Ganie S/o Abdul Rashid Ganie R/o Moomina Abad Lane 05 Batmaloo Srinagar and Abdul Hamid Ganie S/o Ghulam Qadir Ganie R/o New Theed Harwan, Srinagar, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to Kashmir Observer.

"These accused persons have been booked after obtaining formal detention orders from the office of DM Srinagar based on dossiers prepared against them by Srinagar Police," the statement reads.

"Consequently, they have been detained and subsequently lodged in District Jails of Poonch, Udhampur and Kot Bhalwal Jammu. Pertinent to mention here that many criminal cases have been registered against these individuals. Despite this, they did not mend their ways after getting bailed out from courts, they were brazenly involved in the disturbance of public order, criminal and subversive activities against the Nation," police said.

Pertinently, J&K Police has been systematically targeting and dismantling such anti-national and anti-social infrastructure in Srinagar city through its relentless crackdown on such elements, police said.

J&K Police affirms its steadfast commitment in eliminating criminal activities prejudicial to the security and public order in this region with the full might of law, the statement added.

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR	PRAYERS
20 Zil-Qadah 1446	FAJR 3: 50
	ZUHR 12:27
	ASR 5: 22
	Magrib 7:30
	ISHA 9: 05

This Day In History

- 1846- US troops attack Rio Grande occupying Matamoros
- 1860- Republican Party nominates Abraham Lincoln for president
- 1869- Surrender and dissolution of the Ezo Republic to Japan.
- 1896-US Supreme court affirms legitimacy of racial separation (Plessy v Ferguson)
- 1896- Khodynka Tragedy: A mass panic on Khodynka Field, Moscow, during the festivities of the coronation of Russian Tsar Nicholas II, results in the deaths of 1,389 people
- 1899-World Goodwill Day-26 nations meet in 1st Hague Peace Conference
- 1917- US Congress passes Selective Service Act, authorizing the federal government to raise a national army for the American entry into World War I through compulsory enlistment
- 1940- German troops conquer Brussels
- 1941- Italian army in Ethiopia under general Aosta surrenders to Britain
- 1943- Allied bombers attack Pantelleria, an Italian island 100 km southwest of Sicily
- 1944- Expulsion of more than 200,000 Tartars from Crimea by Soviet Union begins, they are accused of collaborating with the Germans
- 1948- Arab Legion captures fort on Mt Scopus during Arab-Israeli war.
- 1948-Saudi Arabia joins invasion of Israel
- 1951- UN moves HQ to NYC
- 1951- US General Collins predicts use of atom bomb in Korea

From KO Archives

Bomai Village Rejoices as Pandits Return

Observer News Service

S RINAGAR- The process of homecoming for the Pandits who left the valley over 17 years ago has begun; ripple of joy went through Bomai area of Sopore when 25 Pandit families who had fled in the early nineties, returned to their native village.

Their Muslim neighbours gave them a rapturous welcome, with the local MLA Abdul Rasheed Dar, closely involved with the celebrations.

Chuni Lal who spent the past 17 years living the life of a refugee in Jammu, said that he had thought the day would never come.

"I am looking forward to resuming my life in my native village," he said.

"By the grace of God, hearts pained for years will find solace now with the return of peace in the valley," Lal said.

Another migrant, Maharaj Krishen, said that he has been in the village for the past ten days, and it appeared as if everything had taken on a festive air. He was full of gratitude for his Muslim neighbours who, he said, displayed the same love they more than seventeen years ago.

Bhushan Lal said that when he arrived in his native Bomai, the people there greeted him with garlands.

The returning Pandits thanked MLA Abdul Rasheed and the sub-district magistrate for making it possible for them to meet their long-separated friends. "We feel as if new life is coursing through our veins," they said.

The MLA announced to release Rs 2 lakh from his constituency development fund for the repair of the local temple.

Reports say that a festive air prevails in Bomai for the past four days, and the Muslim community is overjoyed at the return of their Pandit brethren.

The process of the migrants' return to Bomai is on for the past four days, and the families that have come back are being housed in the local Dak Bungalow for the time being.

(Kashmir Observer, 18 May, 2007)

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

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

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

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

If you or some one you know is experiencing symptoms of OCD, seeking professional help is crucial.

You do not have to fight your battles alone.

There is no need for referral, simply call us for registration.

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

9070806160

Lost in 7.1 Million Voices

The Kashmiri language is fading from daily life as young people turn to English, Urdu, and Hindi. Can a mother tongue survive if its children stop speaking it?

Nawaz Manzoor

I grew up hearing Kashmiri at home. My grandparents spoke it with ease, their conversations laced with humour, old proverbs, and the kind of warmth that only a mother tongue can carry. But outside those walls, something was shifting.

At school, we were encouraged to speak English. On TV, Urdu dominated the screen. Slowly, I noticed how Kashmiri, once our everyday language, was retreating into corners of memory.

Today, fewer young people speak fluent Kashmiri. Many don't speak it at all.

According to the 2011 Census, over 7.1 million people speak Kashmiri, mostly in the Valley. That might sound like a lot. But numbers don't tell the full story.

Among younger generations, especially in cities, the language is slipping away. Children now greet each other with "Hi" instead of "Salaam," talk about their "school projects" rather than their "taalim," and often feel more at home in English or Urdu.

In everyday life, Kashmiri is being replaced.

There are many reasons for this. English is the language of opportunity. It's the medium of instruction in most schools, the ticket to good jobs, and the passport to global conversations.

Parents, understandably, want their children to succeed. They see English not just as a skill, but as a necessity. Urdu and Hindi, thanks to Bollywood and official communication, also exert their own influence.

As a result, Kashmiri is mostly confined to casual conversations, if it's spoken at all. Even then, the words are often sprinkled with English. This kind of "code-switching", mixing two or more languages in a single sentence, is now common.

While it helps communication, it also erodes vocabulary. The beauty of Kashmiri idioms and expressions is slowly being lost.

In formal settings, the situation is worse. Kashmiri is rarely used in government offices, courts, or academic institutions. Even though it holds the status of an official language in Jammu and Kashmir, it's often absent from public signage and documentation.

This invisibility reinforces the



idea that the language doesn't matter.

This wasn't always the case. Kashmiri, also called Koshur, has deep literary roots. Its poetry, influenced by mystics like Lal Ded and Habba Khatoon, carries centuries of wisdom. The language itself is unique, belonging to the Dardic branch of the Indo-Aryan family, with a structure and vocabulary unlike any of its neighbours.

It uses different scripts too. The Perso-Arabic script is the official one, but some Kashmiri Pandits use Devanagari. Sharada, an ancient script, still appears in religious texts. These layers of history add to its richness. But history alone cannot keep a language alive.

Languages survive when they are spoken. And spoken often.

Urbanization has also played a role. As people move to cities, they adopt languages that offer convenience or status. In Srinagar, it's not unusual to hear young professionals speak only in English or Urdu.

Some feel embarrassed to speak Kashmiri, fearing it makes them sound "rural" or "uneducated." This shame, however subtle, is dangerous. It weakens the emotional bond between people and their language.

But there is still hope.

Some schools have started offering Kashmiri as an optional subject. Cultural groups are organizing storytelling sessions, poetry readings, and folk festivals. Apps and online dictionaries are being created to make the language more accessible. Social media pages are posting daily Kashmiri words and phrases. These are small steps, but they matter.

We also need Kashmiri in films, music, and digital spaces where young people spend their time. We need to hear it in public service announcements, see it in advertisements, and read it in children's books. Language survives not just in heritage but in habit.

Preserving Kashmiri is not just about saving a language. It's about keeping alive a way of seeing the world. It's about the songs our mothers sang to us, the jokes our fathers told, and the wisdom our elders passed down. It's about belonging.

I still remember my grandfather's voice when he told stories in Kashmiri. The words had a rhythm that no other language could match. They felt like home.

Let's not lose that.

The writer is a student of Political Science at Aligarh Muslim University and can be reached at nawazmanzoor71@gmail.com.

“Parents, understandably, want their children to succeed. They see English not just as a skill, but as a necessity. Urdu and Hindi, thanks to Bollywood and official communication, also exert their own influence.”

Sameer doesn't like to talk about pain. He wears it like old wool: heavy, familiar, too close to be shed in public.

The way he walks, head down but sure-footed, tells you he's someone who's used to bearing weight. He works in a government department, keeps a low profile, doesn't talk much at work.

But if you follow him home, or rather to the room he rents now, you might find pages: tucked in drawers, behind the door, scribbled late into the night.

That's where the story lives. The one he kept hidden behind a closed door for years.

Sameer thought he had done everything right. He married Mehnaz because she seemed warm, intelligent, graceful.

In the early days, their life felt like the one he had always imagined: children, a home, calm mornings. But slowly, that dream began to crack. And no one saw it coming. "She had this way," he says quietly, "of making you feel wrong even when you were just being kind."

At first, it was just small things. Snide comments that stung, disapproval in the way she looked at him, subtle undermining in front of the children.

Then it became more pointed: cold silences, money demands, late-night accusations. Sameer found himself walking carefully, avoiding confrontation, offering more than he could afford—financially and emotionally.

He had taken a loan to renovate his ancestral home, a modest house filled with memories of his parents, where he wanted his children to grow up. That home became another battleground.

"She had other plans," he says, pausing. "I didn't know I was the only one trying to build a future."

Mehnaz began recording him, collecting his contacts, monitoring

Gaslit and Ghosted

Trapped in a toxic marriage, a Kashmiri man stayed silent for years until the lies, manipulation, and betrayal forced him to choose himself.

Syed Majid Gilani



his phone. She twisted his conversations into weapons. Over the years, she slowly turned their children against him. The calls stopped. The greetings faded. His son blocked him. His daughter's voice grew curt.

Sameer still remembers the day he called and no one picked up. "It felt like dying slowly," he says. "Like you're watching yourself disappear from people you love the most."

The strategy was clear in hindsight. Mehnaz never asked for a divorce. She wanted him to file it, to look like the guilty one. If he resisted, she could play the victim: accuse him, isolate him, and still ask for alimony.

Sameer never hit her. Never raised his voice. He cried, though. A lot. At night, in that silent room. Sometimes, he pressed his ear to the wall as if the house itself would tell

him what to do.

"She wanted me to snap," he says. "She wanted evidence."

He didn't give it to her. Instead, he began writing. At first, it was just notes. Then short reflections. Soon, paragraphs. It gave him something to hold onto when everything else had slipped away.

"I was not made for war," he says. "But I survived one."

Mehnaz, not satisfied, filed complaints with the police, painted him as abusive, told neighbours he was mentally unstable. She even approached his colleagues, hoping to provoke a reaction. Sameer, still unwilling to retaliate, bore it all with silence. The kind that makes people uncomfortable.

When I ask why he didn't leave earlier, he looks away. "I thought I was chosen to carry this. Maybe God gave me strength because no

one else could have handled it."

It's hard not to think about all that time he spent alone in that room. How many tears went into that pillow, how many prayers were whispered into the ceiling. He says he prayed for patience more than justice.

But something shifted when he began writing. He reconnected with old friends. He revisited his parents' grave. He walked through the streets of his childhood neighborhood, letting the cold air of dawn fill his lungs.

"It reminded me of who I was before her," he says. "Before the gaslighting, the fear, the second-guessing."

Mehnaz didn't take well to his awakening. She doubled down on new accusations, new forums. But this time, Sameer didn't crumble. He didn't fight either. He simply stepped away. He set boundaries. He stopped explaining himself. And in doing so, he found clarity.

Now, when he looks back, he doesn't do it with bitterness. There's pain, yes. Tremendous pain. But there's also dignity.

"You learn that love is not enough," he says, "especially if it's not returned."

Sameer still misses his children. There are nights when he dreams of them running through the hallway of their old home. But he also knows that truth has its own rhythm. "One day," he says, "they'll see what really happened."

Sameer's story isn't rare. But his silence was. In a world that often tells men to toughen up, he broke by bending. He didn't become cruel. He didn't retaliate. He didn't surrender to vengeance. He simply endured. And then, he healed.

Syed Majid Gilani is a government officer and writer who reflects on human emotions, family bonds, and the quiet resilience of everyday lives. Reach him at syedmajid6676@gmail.com.

From Paper to Pixel

A low-cost digital experiment is helping rural Kashmir trace land ownership with surprising clarity.

Mohammad Amin Mir

In Chanderhama, a sleepy village in Baramulla district, a group of farmers huddled under a walnut tree while a patwari stood before them with a smartphone. He zoomed in on a plot of land using Google Maps and asked an elderly man, "Is this yours?"

The man nodded and pointed toward a line of trees. "My father planted those in the seventies," he said.

The patwari clicked a photo, scanned an old deed using Google Lens, and marked the spot with GPS.

It was a simple exchange, yet one that marked a significant change in how Kashmiri villages are beginning to define ownership, possession, and memory—digitally.

For generations, land in rural Kashmir has lived in fragile forms: paper records, oral agreements, and government maps drawn decades ago.

The system, rooted in obsolete frameworks, often left villagers confused and courts overwhelmed.

With records like jamabandis barely updated and many partitions or family transfers undocumented, even the sim-

plest land transaction could turn into a long-drawn conflict.

Some disputes are resolved on the spot. Others are flagged for later scrutiny. Once this stage is done, the data is consolidated into a draft digital record, which is shared for another round of feedback. Nothing is final until all voices are heard.

Legal safeguards are also being built into the process. These digital records are proposed to be treated as provisional—valid for up to five years and open to correction.

If a claim is disputed or incomplete, it's marked accordingly. This makes the system both flexible and fair. It also prevents hasty conclusions that could later be challenged in court.

Across the border, other countries have tried similar models. Rwanda digitized over ten million land parcels using public meetings and handheld GPS. In Bangladesh, Android apps helped cut land disputes significantly in rural areas.

The key to their success, and perhaps to the Valley's, was community involvement. In Kashmir's case, the strength of the village panchayat and the



“For generations, land in rural Kashmir has lived in fragile forms: paper records, oral agreements, and government maps drawn decades ago.”

tech awareness among rural youth may be the biggest assets.

Of course, the model isn't without challenges. In some places, local elites have resisted, worried that digital records might expose encroachments. Others worry about digital literacy. Not every farmer can read a satellite map.

To bridge this, printouts of updated maps are pinned to walls in panchayat offices, making the information accessible to all.

Legal resistance is another hurdle. Courts may question the standing of these records unless they are clearly labeled as interim and participatory.

Still, in village after village, the early signs are promising. In Hariparigam, a retired army man smiled as his land was recorded digitally. "Now my son won't have to fight in court after I'm gone," he said. His neighbor added, "It's not about technology. It's about trust."

This shift is slow, field by field, name by name. But it holds the potential to change how land is seen, owned, and passed on in rural Kashmir.

What once lived in dusty files or in the words of village elders is now being transferred to phones and cloud servers. More importantly, it is being done with the villagers, not for them or against them.

The hope is that this trial can become a template. That Kashmir, often associated with frozen disputes, can lead the way in resolving them.

And that the work of mapping, marking, and settling land can begin in a mustard field with a patwari, a phone, and an old farmer who remembers where his father once built a fence.

The author is a legal analyst and columnist writing on land reform, revenue law, and rural governance. He can be reached at miramin354@gmail.com.

Travel Trauma

A Malaysian tourist recounts his journey through Kashmir's famed landscapes, and what he saw behind the postcard views.



Amargit Singh

I had always imagined Kashmir to be heaven on earth. I'd seen the pictures: lush green meadows, snow-draped mountains, rivers that ran clear and cold.

So when I finally got the chance to visit this April, I was excited in a way I hadn't been in years. I travelled from Malaysia with a sense of wonder, ready to experience the famous beauty of Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Sonamarg.

In many ways, the place lived up to its promise. The air was crisp, the views majestic. I remember sitting quietly in the early mornings, watching the light shift over the mountains and feeling incredibly grateful. But alongside all this beauty, something else began to catch my eye. And soon, I couldn't unsee it.

Everywhere I went, there was trash.

Plastic bottles and food wrappers lay scattered on the roadsides, under trees, beside streams.

In Pahalgam, even the riverbanks were not spared. In Sonamarg, it felt like the mead-

Kashmir's beauty deserves to be protected, and that can only happen if serious attention is given to how tourism is managed.

ows had been turned into an open dumping ground. The sight was heartbreaking.

Families picnicked next to piles of garbage as if it were completely normal. I saw visitors, both local and from other

Indian states, toss used water bottles and bags without a second thought.

It wasn't a rare act. It was happening all around me.

It became clear to me that this wasn't just a case of careless tourists. The problem seemed much deeper.

There was no visible waste management system in place. No bins, no one collecting litter, no signs reminding people to clean up after themselves. Even toll booths, like the ones at Aru Valley and Baisaran, were in a bad state. They were damaged, poorly maintained, and offering no real information or guidance.

I remember asking around for directions because the signage was either missing or too faded to read.

One thing I kept noticing was the absence of any officials from the tourism board. If they were present, I couldn't tell. There were no uniforms, no ID cards, no one monitoring the sites. It felt like the system had been left to run on its own, and it wasn't working.

Another concern that stood out during my visit was the way tourists were being

charged. Rates for basic services like pony rides and taxis seemed completely arbitrary.

In Sonamarg, I met a family who had paid over ₹3,000 for a short horse ride. There were no price charts, no receipts, and when they tried to question it, the operators became defensive. I heard this story more than once.

One moment that really stayed with me happened at the riverbank in Pahalgam.

I was walking with my camera, trying to capture the evening light when I saw a plastic bag drifting downstream. It was filled with what looked like leftover food and some empty bottles. As I followed the water's path, I realised that no one around me was reacting. People walked by, laughed, took selfies. No one seemed to care.

And in that moment, I felt an overwhelming sadness. Not just for the river, but for what we were doing to it without even realising.

It made me think of the Kartarpur Corridor, a place where I've seen strict rules in action. Plastic is banned there. Visitors follow eco-friendly norms, and the area remains clean because it is actively protected.

Kashmir could follow a similar approach. It needs structure, enforcement, and a cultural shift around how people treat the land.

None of this is meant as criticism for the sake of it. I write this as someone who truly fell in love with Kashmir. I want others to experience its wonder as I did, but without the disappointment that came with it.

Kashmir's beauty deserves to be protected, and that can only happen if serious attention is given to how tourism is managed.

A clean, well-managed Kashmir is not just possible, it is necessary. For its people, for its visitors, and for the generations who will come looking for the same magic I once did.

Valley's Whisper

After the Pahalgam attack, Kashmir's iconic destinations closed their doors. But it's time to reopen them, not just for tourism, but for healing, livelihood and life.



Dr. Rizwan Rumi

When you arrive in Kashmir, the first thing that strikes you isn't the snow-capped mountains or the scent of pine in the air. It's the silence.

Not the kind that unsettles, but the kind that calms, that holds a thousand stories within it.

But lately, that silence has changed. It's grown heavier, more uncertain.

The recent attack in Pahalgam shook the valley. Lives were lost, fear returned, and as a result, the government closed down some of the most loved tourist spots across the region.

The decision was meant to protect people. But it also froze something vital.

Because Kashmir isn't just a place people visit. For thousands, it's where they find meaning, work, memory, peace.

And when its gardens go quiet, its lakes go still, and its trails close down, it doesn't just hurt business. It wounds the soul of the valley.

Over the years, Kashmir has lived through unrest, floods, curfews and long winters. And yet, somehow, it always comes back.

The people find a way. The mountains remain. The chinar leaves still fall in autumn.

There's a kind of quiet endurance here that doesn't make the news but deserves to.

Now, as the dust begins to settle and security is being rethought and reinforced, we must ask: what next?

The answer, many believe, lies in reopening. Not in a rush, but with care. Not just for tourists from outside, but for Kashmiris themselves.

Because these places—Sonamarg, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Yusmarg—are not just stops on an itinerary. They are part of who Kashmir is.

Tourism here isn't a side story. It's the story. It's the houseboat owner on Dal Lake who hasn't had guests in weeks.

It's the pony-wallah in Sonamarg whose earnings stopped overnight.

It's the papier-mâché artisan in Srinagar whose delicate designs wait for buyers who may never come.

Data from the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department tells us about a record number. Hotels were booked out. Shikaras were busy again. That wave brought hope. And then, in one moment, it paused.

Every week of closure now means real losses. Not just financially, but emotionally.

For the family-run guesthouses, the small tea stalls near trekking routes, the guides, the

cab drivers, the weavers—all of whom depend on the movement of people to survive.

When tourists stop coming, it's not just a drop in bookings. It's school fees unpaid, winter supplies on hold, dreams deferred.

Reopening the valley's destinations needs more than just an official order. It needs trust. It needs coordination between government bodies, local stakeholders and the tourism industry. It needs reassurance, visibility, and perhaps most of all, empathy.

Because locals, too, deserve to feel like they belong to the beauty around them.

Security, of course, matters. No one is calling for reckless abandon. But balance matters too.

The valley cannot afford to become a museum of memories. It must live, breathe, change and welcome again.

The promise of responsible tourism—where visitors respect the culture, treat the environment gently, and contribute to local lives—is one that Kashmir can lead in. It has the landscape. It has the hospitality. It has the history. All it needs is space to grow again.

The author is a Srinagar-based academic and commentator on culture, tourism and public policy.

Whispers at the Shrine

In a city sanctum, a young girl shares how her parents' love story turned into a lifelong sentence for her.

Fiza Masoodi

It was just after noon when I stepped into the shrine. The scent of rosewater and the faint rustle of prayer threads filled the air. People came and went with folded hands and hurried footsteps. She was sitting by the carved window, her dupatta slipping, eyes closed, lips moving soundlessly.

At first, I thought she was praying. But then I noticed: she was whispering, as if speaking to someone just out of sight.

That's how I met Naina.

We didn't speak right away. I sat near her and waited. A minute passed. Then another. She opened her eyes and glanced sideways.

"Do you believe in saints?" she asked.

I said, sometimes.

She gave a dry laugh. "I come here to complain. Not to worship."

And slowly, like someone turning the pages of a half-burned diary, she began to tell me her story.

What are you complaining about?

"My parents," she said, without blinking. "I come here and I tell the saint everything. How they hurt me. How they failed me. How they made me a prisoner in my own home."

She paused, tugged at the corner of her sleeve.

"I was born out of love. Can you believe that?" she asked. "They fought for each other. Broke ties. Ran away. Everyone said it was the greatest love story. And then I arrived. The story ended."

What changed?

"They changed," she said quietly. "After I was born, it was like I was a reminder of something they regret-



ted. My mother was always angry. She took it out on me. Her voice, her hands, her silence—it was all punishment. My father... he just stopped looking at me. I was in the way. An interruption."

She blinked slowly, like each memory required effort.

"Every morning began with a fight. Not with me, but around me. Plates would break. Doors would slam. I'd hide under the table or

pretend to be asleep. But I heard everything. Children always do."

Did you try to talk to them about it?

"Once, I was maybe eight. I asked my mother why she shouts so much. She said it's because I don't behave. I stopped asking after that."

She shifted her weight and looked out the window for a long moment.

What was your childhood like?

"I missed most of it. I couldn't go to school regularly. My mother would stop me if there had been a fight the night before. She'd say I don't deserve to go out. Or she'd lock me in. I didn't have friends. There was no birthday, no Eid, nothing. I remember watching other kids from the window. I thought maybe if I prayed harder, I'd become someone else."

Did things ever improve?

She shook her head. "They only got worse. When I turned fifteen, they started controlling everything I did. My clothes. My phone. My tone of voice. I was either too loud or too quiet. Too shy or too rude. They wrote rules every day and I broke them by existing."

Her voice didn't shake. It was flat. Practiced.

"I started cutting class. Not to hang out, but just to breathe. To sit

near the river or under a tree. To remind myself I'm still a person."

And now?

"Now I'm twenty-three. My youth is gone. My studies are scattered. I never learned how to live in the world. But somehow, they think I owe them everything. My father took a loan last year and my mother says it's my duty to 'help the family.' They see me as a way to earn money now. They want me to take a call-center job, send them the salary. If I say no, they say I'm ungrateful."

She looked at her palms.

"They don't ask if I'm okay. They don't even see me. Just my income."

What do you want from life, Naina?

"I want peace. Not the kind you find after a storm. The kind where nothing needs fixing. I want to learn again. Maybe finish studies. Or write something. I think about writing a lot."

She turned to me then, eyes softer.

"Mostly, I just want to feel like I was meant to be born. That I wasn't some mistake they made out of passion and paid for with anger."

We sat in silence again. The wind outside rustled the trees. A thread of prayer fluttered on the saint's tomb.

What do you whisper to the saint?

She smiled faintly. "I tell him I'm trying. I tell him I want to forgive them, but I don't know how. I tell him I'm tired. And I ask him, if there's still time left, can he help me find a life that feels like mine."

The author is a Srinagar-based scribe. She's making her literary debut this summer.

CBSE Asks Schools To Set Up 'Sugar Boards' To Monitor Students' Sugar Intake

New Delhi, May 17: The CBSE has directed affiliated schools to establish "sugar boards" to monitor and reduce sugar intake of children, according to officials.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has noted that there has been a significant increase in Type 2

diabetes among children, a condition once primarily seen in adults, over the past decade.

"This alarming trend is largely attributed to high sugar intake, often due to the easy availability of sugary snacks, beverages and processed foods within school environments. The excessive

consumption of sugar not only increases the risk of diabetes but also contributes to obesity, dental problems and other metabolic disorders, ultimately impacting children's long-term health and academic performance," the CBSE said in a letter to school principals. Studies indicate that sugar

constitutes 13 per cent of daily calorie intake for children aged four to 10 years, and 15 per cent for those aged 11 to 18 years, substantially exceeding the recommended limit of 5 per cent.

"The proliferation of sugary snacks, beverages, and processed foods, often readily available in

school environments, contributes significantly to this excessive intake," it said. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is a statutory body formed under Section (3) of the Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005 (No 4 of 2006), to ensure that

rights of the children are protected especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalised.

The schools have been asked to establish "sugar boards" where information is displayed to educate students about the risks of excessive sugar intake. "These boards should provide

essential information, including the recommended daily sugar intake, the sugar content in commonly consumed foods (unhealthy meals such as junk food, cold drinks, etc.), health risks associated with high sugar consumption, and healthier dietary alternatives.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

LG Hikes Ex-Gratia

₹2 lakh to ₹5 lakh. For permanent disability, the amount is now ₹1.5 lakh. Village Defence Guards (VDGs): Compensation for death has jumped from ₹1 lakh to ₹2.5 lakh, while permanent disability compensation has been set at 1.5 lakh.

Government Employees on Duty: The most dramatic hike comes here, with death compensation increasing by 500%, from 1 lakh to 5 lakh. For permanent disability, relief has been raised from ₹75,000 to ₹1.5 lakh.

Paying tribute to those who have laid down their lives in the service of the nation, LG Sinha said, "India has been subjected to cross-border terrorism for decades, but Operation Sindoor has drawn a new red line—shifting from deterrence to direct action."

He warned that Pakistan would face "a very heavy price" for any future misadventures, while reaffirming the administration's commitment to ensuring a life of dignity for the next of kin of martyred civilians and personnel.

"Our focus remains firm on both internal security and the well-being of those defending it," he added.

India Brought

counter any misadventure effectively.

Vows Rehab Plan

of the losses and immediate assistance has been provided to the people. "Those who have not got assistance till now, will be provided today," he added.

However, the LG said the assistance provided to the people was not sufficient and the UT government would seek more assistance from the Centre.

"Divisional Commissioner Kashmir and senior officers will prepare a comprehensive plan for the damage and based on that, we will request the Central government, and rehabilitate the affected people," he said.

SIA Raids Multiple

group of 18 to 22 years," the official said.

In this context, the role of teachers, parents, and peers becomes crucial.

While constant monitoring may not always be possible, they should remain alert to the online activities of young individuals and offer timely guidance if any concerning behaviour is noticed, the officials said.

Tourism Hit Badly

is being done. Once we get the report, the compensation will be provided to the affected people," he said.

Wherever needed, we will get centre's assistance, Omar added.

Moreover, the Chief Minister while reacting to the all-party delegation visiting different countries, said, "During the tenure of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji, a similar kind of delegation was deputed to multiple countries post Parliament attack. It is once again a good opportunity to put forth India's voice."

Went 100 Km Deep

the Pulwama attack, and now "Operation Sindoor" as examples of India's new doctrine of "proactive defense."

He added that following India's strikes, Pakistan retaliated with drone and missile attacks from Kutch to Jammu and Kashmir. However, India's upgraded air defense systems, bolstered under the current government, intercepted and neutralized all threats, ensuring no civilian casualties.

In response, Shah said, the Indian Air Force launched precision strikes on 15 Pakistani airbases. "For the first time since 1947, Indian forces went so deep inside and dismantled Pakistan's terror infrastructure. Their air power stands shattered."

"Pakistan used to threaten us with atom bombs. Today, they are afraid. India has demonstrated strength, clarity, and will," he added.

Showering praise on Prime Minister Modi, Shah said, "The son of Gujarat is also the son of Bharat. Under his leadership, India is not just growing economically but is also feared by its enemies. This is New India — it doesn't forget, and it doesn't forgive."

Shah also commended the Indian armed forces for their bravery and reaffirmed the government's commitment to national security. "Every Indian can sleep in peace knowing our forces stand ready and resolute," he said.

Centre Plans

also started on Kathua, Ravi and Paragwal canals, the official said. Brokered by the World Bank in 1960, the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) governed the distribution and use of the Indus river and its tributaries between India and Pakistan.

But India decided to suspend the treaty after the Pahalgam attack and has since then maintained that the treaty will remain suspended "until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism".

The river system comprises the Indus -- the main river -- and its tributaries. The Ravi, Beas and Sutlej are collectively referred to as the eastern rivers while the Indus, Jhelum and the Chenab are known as the western rivers.

2 Drug Peddlers

and after trial, the court convicted the duo.

"The prosecution has discharged its burden of proving the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt for offenses under Sections 8 and 20(b) (ii)(C) of the NDPS Act," the court said while convicting the duo on March 30. "The charge under Section 29 is not substantiated due to lack of evidence." On Saturday the court announced the quantum of punishment, awarding five years jail term and Rs 50000 as fine on each of them.

Indian YouTuber

met Shakir and Rana Shahbaz. She saved Shahbaz's mobile number as 'Jatt Randhawa' to avoid any suspicion.

She was in contact with these persons through WhatsApp, Telegram and Snapchat, and passed on sensitive information to them, according to the FIR, which was registered on the complaint of sub-inspector Bijender Singh.

She met Danish several times at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi and was found to be in touch with Pakistani Intelligence Operatives, it said.

Jyoti's arrest came days after Punjab Police arrested two persons, including a woman, from Malerkotla district for their alleged involvement in espionage activities linked to the Pakistani official posted at the High Commission.

The accused Guzala and Yameen Mohamad, both residents of Malerkotla had been receiving payments through online transactions in exchange of classified information.

On May 11, Punjab police said that Guzala had been arrested for leaking sensitive information regarding the Indian Army movements to a Pakistan-based handler.

Guzala revealed that she was doing it in lieu of money and the accused Pakistani official sent her Rs 30,000 in two transactions -- Rs 10,000 and Rs 20,000 -- through UPI (unified payment interface).

On Friday, the Haryana police arrested a 25-year-old post-graduate student from Kaithal for allegedly having links with Pakistani intelligence operatives.

The accused, Devender Singh, from Kaithal district's Guhla area, was arrested after an FIR was registered against him on Sunday for uploading photos on social media with weapons, police said.

During the investigation, it was learnt that Singh, who had been pursuing a Master's degree in political science from a college in Punjab, had gone to Pakistan on pilgrimage in November last year.

During the visit, he allegedly came in contact with Pakistani intelligence operatives and remained in touch with them even after his return, police said.

A few days ago, a 24-year-old youth, Nauman Ilahi, was arrested in the Panipat district for allegedly supplying sensitive information to some individuals in Pakistan.

These arrests come amid tension between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives.

NC, PDP Endorse

and Kashmir claimed the support shown by Kashmiris post the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack was "not reciprocated" and that Kashmiris living in other parts of the country were harassed.

"After the attack, people genuinely supported the Government of India on any step it took to avenge the killings. Our chief minister Omar Abdullah, who represents the will of the people, is on record as having said this," NC state spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said.

In his remarks on Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, Owaisi on Saturday spoke about the spontaneous protests in Kashmir after the Pahalgam attack.

"In fact, it is a historic opportunity for the government, for Prime Minister Modi, for Home Minister Amit Shah. They should use this opportunity properly. You should definitely confront Pakistan but you should also adopt Kashmiris," the fifth-term Hyderabad MP said.

Asked to elaborate on what he means by adopting Kashmiris, Owaisi said the government should ensure that there are no human rights abuses there, "they should get their rights, Kashmiri students shouldn't be attacked in other parts of the country".

"All this should be done. Don't leave the Kashmiris to their fate. Adopt them," Owaisi said.

Reacting to the remarks, Dar said, "Yes, there is a need to adopt Kashmiris. This was the best time to reduce the trust deficit. It would have reduced a lot had they reciprocated, but they did not reciprocate in a good manner."

He said the protest against the Pahalgam attack by the people of Kashmir was a genuine outpouring of emotions.

"It was an organic protest. There was a time when the government tried to manage the protests, but it was the first time that there was a genuine outpouring of emotions. It was spontaneous, we as a party supported it, it was supported by religious and trade organisations as well," Dar said.

"But, it is unfortunate that the Government of India did not reciprocate it. We witnessed hate crimes against Kashmiris... after the Pahalgam attack, and there was silence from the Govt," he claimed.

He said the "most unfortunate" aspect is that no Union minister came to Kashmir to meet the shelling-affected people "which should have sent out a very good and positive message in the country towards Kashmiris".

PDP spokesperson Mohit Bhan said Owaisi has stated what his party has been advocating for long.

"The country, the central government, have to own the people of J&K. We have seen a decrease in tourist footfall. It has affected everybody from ponywallah to hotels to drivers, etc, as it is interconnected. To address that, the government has to step up," Bhan said.

Instead, "we have seen right-wing hate being spread and they are telling 'do not travel to Kashmir'. There has to be a counter campaign to it," Bhan said.

"This is the time to own the people of J&K. They should say these are tough times and we stand by the people of J&K. The people of J&K need some support, some hand holding," Bhan said.

The PDP spokesperson said the Centre also has to accept that there is a problem and stop saying every time that everything is fine.

"They should stop keeping themselves in that balloon. PDP has been repeatedly saying that the problem is still there and we are not addressing the disease, we may be treating its infection, but not the disease.

"Pahalgam attack also signified that there are still issues in J&K. It is a region where the intervention is from across the border and we see attacks like Pulwama and Pahalgam happening," he said.

"So, we have to accept that part while we have to continue promoting the businesses and every other aspect of Kashmir in good light. But at the same time, we have to consider that there is a problem, a disease which needs attention and that needs to be cured," the PDP leader said.

28th year OF PUBLICATION



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Anupam Mittal Bats For Revival Of Kashmir Tourism

Agencies

SRINAGAR: India's top-notch entrepreneur, Shaadi Dot Com founder and Shark Tank India judge, Anupam Mittal has booked his ticket to Kashmir and called on fellow Indians to support the region's tourism sector, saying, "If we travel, Kashmir & India win."

His statement comes at a sensitive time when the Valley is grappling with the aftermath of the recent terror attack on a tourist vehicle in Pahalgam, where 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Mittal, wrote: what Kashmir really needs is tourists to come back so I booked my ticket! If we vanish, they win. If we travel, Kashmir & India win.

He also used the hashtags #ChaloKashmir and #JaiHind. His post also triggered a flood of reactions online, with some users questioning the timing of

his travel given the prevailing security concerns.

Responding to a comment that called his move "not very smart," Mittal replied, "Safest place to be."

Another user asked why he shared only a one-way ticket. To this, Mittal responded light-heartedly, "Return hai yaar, sirf going ka post kiya." In another exchange, a user shared experiences of being asked in Kashmir if they had come from "Hindustan," suggesting an identity disconnect.

Mittal countered, "I think that has been changing since Article 370 and the tourism surge. Kashmiris consider themselves Indians more so than ever. If the economy comes back strong, the hearts will follow."

Mittal's post has triggered debate online, coming just days after the attack in Pahalgam that left 26 tourists dead and several others injured—(KNO)



J&K Bank Commissions ATM At Sheikh-ul-Alam Hospital



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Reinforcing its commitment to provide convenient banking facilities to people, J&K Bank has commissioned an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) at Sheikh Ul Alam Hospital in Srinagar.

Vice Chairman (Srinagar Development Authority) M. Rafi inaugurated the ATM today in presence of the Bank's Zonal Head (Srinagar) Raja Zaffar, Cluster Heads (I & II), owners of the hospital, besides a large gathering of valuable customers and attendants present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chairman M. Rafi appreciated the Bank's efforts to bring banking touch points closer

to where they are needed the most. "The installation of this ATM is a welcome step and will go a long way in facilitating the financial needs of patients, attendants and staff at this busy healthcare facility," he said.

Zonal Head (Srinagar) also reiterated that the Bank was constantly striving to strengthen its delivery infrastructure to ensure ease and access for our customers. "We will continue to enhance our presence across vital public spaces to better serve the community," he said.

Notably, the ATM is expected to benefit patients, attendants, hospital staff, and the surrounding population by providing round-the-clock access to basic banking services like cash withdrawal and account information.

Jal Shakti Dept Clarifies On Safety Of Drinking Water

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In reference to the news item published in a local Urdu daily dated 15th May, 2025 regarding the safety of drinking water in Jammu & Kashmir, the Department of Jal Shakti, J&K, today clarified and reassured the general public and all stakeholders that the water supplied across the Union Territory is safe for consumption and is regularly monitored under a robust and transparent mechanism.

As per an official communiqué issued here, it has been given out that a comprehensive water quality monitoring and surveillance system has been established in J&K, comprising a network of 02 Union Territory-level and 20 District-level NABL-accredited labs besides 76 Sub-Divisional level testing facilities.

"During the financial year 2024-25, a total of 2.66 lakh water quality tests were conducted covering 6,122 villages in J&K. Out of these, only 78

samples- a mere 0.03% were found to be contaminated, primarily due to turbidity, which is a temporary and seasonal phenomenon usually occurring during heavy rains," read the statement.

The official communication further mentioned that immediate remedial measures were taken in 76 of these cases, resulting in a 98% rate of corrective action, which stands significantly higher than the national average of 62%. Moreover, the contamination rate of 0.03% in J&K is notably lower than the national contamination average of 4.1%, showcasing UT's better performance in ensuring water safety.

It is also pertinent to mention that during the ongoing financial year 2025-26, around 25,000 samples have already been tested so far and not a single case of contamination has been reported. These figures reflect the seriousness with which the Department treats water safety and the effectiveness of its monitoring and response systems.

AYUSH Shopian Conducts School Health Check-Ups

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a dedicated effort to promote preventive healthcare and holistic wellness, Ayush Department Shopian conducted two school health check-up camps and a special awareness program on the occasion of 'World Hypertension Day.'

These initiatives were held on the directions of the Director Ayush J&K, Dr. Nuzhat Bashir Shah.

The school health camps were successfully organized in the

district, one by AHWC Wachie, and the other jointly by AHWC Khurampora and AHWC Trenz.

During these camps, students underwent comprehensive health check-ups including general physical examinations, Hemoglobin testing, oral hygiene assessments, and nutritional evaluations.

In addition, interactive health education sessions were conducted to sensitize students about personal hygiene, balanced nutrition and the importance of preventive healthcare.

WORLD HYPERTENSION DAY

'Over Half Of UT's Population In Pre-Hypertensive Stage'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Hypertension is silently affecting Jammu and Kashmir, with recent data revealing that only 36 percent of women and 31 percent of men in the Union Territory have normal blood pressure levels.

They said a large portion of the population is already in the pre-hypertensive stage, which increases their risk of developing full-blown hypertension if preventive measures are not adopted.

According to information from the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), 11 percent of women and 10 percent of men aged 15-49 in J&K are living with hypertension. Alarmingly, 57 percent of the population falls into the pre-hypertensive category—a warning sign that calls for immediate attention.

The risk of high blood pressure escalates with age. Among youth aged 15-19, only 3 percent are hypertensive, but this figure rises steadily with age—4 percent in the 20-24 age group, 7 percent in 25-29, 8.5 percent in 30-34, 14 percent in 35-39, 20 percent in 40-45, and reaching 24 percent in the 45-49 age bracket, the data reveals.

Similarly, the proportion

of people with normal blood pressure declines from about 60 percent in the 15-19 age group to just 17 percent among those aged 45-49. Conversely, the percentage in the pre-hypertensive stage increases from 40 percent in the



“

A large portion of the population is already in the pre-hypertensive stage, which increases their risk of developing full-blown hypertension if preventive measures are not adopted.

youngest group to 62 percent in the oldest.

Urban areas report slightly higher hypertension rates. Approximately 10.3 percent

of women in urban J&K are hypertensive compared to 9.7 percent in rural areas. The pattern is similar among men.

Data also shows that 7 percent of women suffer from Stage 1 hypertension, 1 percent from Stage 2, and less than 1 percent from Stage 3. Additionally, a small percentage of women—around 0.3 percent—are on medication despite having normal blood pressure.

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, occurs when the force of blood against artery walls is consistently too high. It is a major risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, kidney problems and brain disorders, and is a leading cause of premature death worldwide.

Key risk factors include unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, alcohol and tobacco consumption, and being overweight or obese.

Health experts advise people to adopt healthier lifestyles, undergo regular blood pressure screenings and seek timely medical intervention to prevent serious complications—(KNO)

'Hypertension A Silent Killer'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Hypertension, commonly known as high blood pressure, has become an escalating public health concern, silently impacting one in four adults. Often termed the "silent killer," this condition frequently remains undiagnosed, yet its potential consequences can be severe, including heart attacks, strokes, and brain haemorrhages.

Despite its widespread prevalence, a large number of people with hypertension remain unaware of their condition. This lack of awareness hampers timely diagnosis and treatment, increasing the risk of serious complications.

Dr Mohammad Salim Khan, Head of the Department of Community Medicine at GMC Srinagar said, "Hypertension affects approximately one in four adults in our population. The majority of hypertensive patients are unaware of their condition, which can lead to cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and strokes. Among those diagnosed, many do not take their medications regularly."

He added, "Sedentary lifestyles, consumption of fast food high in salt, sugar, and oil, avoidance of physical activity, use of addictive substances like cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs and stress are major contributing factors to hypertension."

Dr Khan advised the public to adopt positive lifestyle changes, including avoiding junk food, reducing salt, sugar, and oil intake, managing weight, and increasing physical activity through walking, running, outdoor games, or swimming. He stressed the importance of stress management and resolving conflicts within families and workplaces.

Dr Salim recommended that people over 30 years old should have their blood pressure checked annually, even if they are asymptomatic. Recognising that hypertension and pre-hypertension are increasingly seen among children and adolescents, he suggested that school health programs should include annual blood pressure screenings.

Dr Murtaza from GMC Anantnag highlighted similar concerns, saying, "Every third or fourth adult in our area has hypertension, but almost half of them are unaware of their condition, as hypertension often shows no symptoms during its course, apart from vague complaints attributed to other illnesses."

He added, "Unfortunately, four out of five hypertensive patients do not keep their

blood pressure under control, which can lead to severe consequences like heart attacks, strokes, and kidney failure."

Dr Murtaza said that lifestyle and dietary habits have drastically changed, with increased sedentary behaviour, high intake of salt, sugar, and fats, smoking, and substance abuse contributing to rising hypertension rates, even among school-going children.

"While the recommended maximum salt intake is five grams per day, a Kashmiri typically consumes around 10-15 grams daily," he said. "Younger individuals, including children and adolescents, are increasingly affected, putting them at risk of early-onset diseases."

The doctor called for hypertension education programmes in schools, colleges and workplaces, focusing on behavioural and dietary modifications.

"Regular physical activity—such as daily walking—reducing salt, sugar, and fats, avoiding smoking, alcohol, and drugs, coupled with a healthy home and work environment, health counseling, routine blood pressure checkups, and strict adherence to medications, can significantly reduce the burden of hypertension and promote healthier living," Dr Murtaza added—(KNO)

SKIMS Medical College Observes World Hypertension Day

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Department of General Medicine, SKIMS Medical College, Bemina, observed World Hypertension Day with an impactful event held in the college auditorium, aimed at raising awareness about hypertension and promoting preventive healthcare.

The program commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Tariq Bhat, In-Charge Head of the Department, General Medicine, who emphasized the importance of timely diagnosis, adequate treatment, and consistent monitoring in managing hypertension effectively.

Prof. Dr. Fazal Q. Paray, Principal of the college, and Prof. Dr. Ajaz Rather, Registrar Academics, delivered keynote addresses highlighting the growing public health challenge posed by hypertension and the urgent need for greater awareness and lifestyle modification among the population.

A key feature of the event was an expert lecture by Dr. Muzafar Naik, who provided



an in-depth overview of Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM). He emphasized that SKIMS Medical College is the only institution in the region offering this advanced diagnostic service, underscoring the institution's commitment to technological advancement in patient care.

The event also featured a student symposium on hypertension, where medical students presented on various aspects of the condition. The symposium was adjudicated by a panel of faculty members including Dr. Muzafar Naik, Dr. Manzoor Ahmad, and Dr. Ahmad Wani. Prizes were awarded to the best presentations, encouraging academic engagement and peer learning.

The proceedings of the event were efficiently moderated and anchored by Dr. Rozia Bukhari, Senior Resident, Department of General Medicine.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Manzoor Ahmad extended a heartfelt vote of thanks to the organizing committee, faculty members, students, and staff for their contributions in making the program a success.

The event reflected the institute's continued efforts to lead public health initiatives and educate both the medical fraternity and the public on critical health issues such as hypertension.

Dedication, Sacrifice Of Soldiers Truly Inspiring: LoP Sharma

Observer News Service

WS Leader of Opposition and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Sunil Sharma on Saturday said that the bravery, dedication and sacrifice of our soldiers are truly inspiring.

The senior BJP leader visited the multiple areas along the Line of Control (LoC) to assess the damage in these shelling-affected areas. Sharma visited the shelling affected areas in Fatehpur Kotha village on R S Pura border where he assessed the damage in the village.

He also engaged with the locals to understand the challenges they faced due to shelling.

According to a post on X, Sharma, informed to have visited the border area and assessed the damage caused by Pakistan's shelling in Saie village on the Suchetgarh border and engaged with the local residents to understand the challenges they face due to the shelling.

In another post, Sharma said that he is committed to work with the government to develop a concrete and sustainable solution that addresses these issues and prioritizes the safety and well-being of the people.

"Visited the border area of Village Grahna Zero line #Suchetgarh, and listened to the concerns of residents impacted by Pakistan's shelling. Committed to working with the government to develop a con-



crete and sustainable solution that addresses these issues and prioritizes the safety and well-being of the people," Sharma wrote on X.

"Visited the border area in Village Chandu Chak R.S. Pura, and heard the grievances of the residents affected by Pakistan's shelling. Committed to finding a concrete and sustainable solution in consultation with the government to address these issues and ensure the safety of the people," Sharma added.

Moreover, the Leader of Opposition has stated that the bravery, dedication and sacrifice of our soldiers are truly inspiring.

"Met the courageous soldiers at the Suchetgarh border, who selflessly guard our nation. Their bravery, dedication, and sacrifice are truly inspiring. We salute their unwavering commitment to our country's safety and security, and I'm honored to have interacted with these heroes of our nation," Sharma wrote.

Pertinently, several villages along the Line of Control faced huge damage due to shelling by Pakistan in which over a dozen people also lost their lives.

India's Response Through 'Op Sindoor' Was Decisive, Bold: Andrabi

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board, Dr. Darakhshan Andrabi, has termed Operation Sindoor as a "strategic and successful" response to enemy aggression, applauding the Indian armed forces and hailing the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

During her visit to the shelling-affected areas of Uri, Dr. Andrabi said the operation sent a clear message that India would not tolerate provocation. "Under the decisive leadership of Prime Minister Modi, our forces entered enemy territory and delivered a firm response. Operation Sindoor was not only successful militarily but also symbolic of India's resolve," she said.

Dr. Andrabi saluted the armed forces for their bravery and noted that the operation offered symbolic justice to the lives lost in the terrorist attack. "The souls of those who lost their lives must have found peace with this action," she re-

marked.

Turning attention to the damages caused by the recent shelling, she underscored the need for swift rehabilitation efforts. "This is not just the pain of one household—it's the grief of an entire community. The Waqf Board will coordinate with the Centre and the UT administration to ensure that all possible relief is provided to the victims," she said.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to peace, she added, "The Prime Minister has promised peace and prosperity for every citizen in Jammu and Kashmir. It is our collective duty to restore security and confidence so that displaced families feel safe to return and rebuild their lives."

Dr. Andrabi urged all stakeholders to come together to help restore a sense of normalcy in the region. "The minds and hearts of the people living along the border must be at peace. Only then can true rebuilding begin, now that peace has been restored," she concluded.

J&K Approves Deployment Of ESM For Protection Of Critical Infra

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a major step towards strengthening community-based security and harnessing the capabilities of former military personnel, the Sainik Welfare Board of Jammu & Kashmir had moved a proposal for mobilising Ex-Servicemen (ESM) to safeguard vital infrastructure across the Union Territory.

This proposal has now been formally approved by the J&K Government, setting the stage for a unique collaboration between veterans and civil authorities, reads a statement issued to Kashmir Observer.

As per the approved plan, 4,000 Ex-Servicemen volunteers have been identified for this initiative. Among them, 435 individuals possess licensed personal weapons, significantly enhancing the capacity to respond effectively to localised security situations. These ESM will be employed for the protection of critical infrastructure in all 20 districts of J&K, including power stations, bridges, government installations, and other vulnerable points.

The initiative builds upon the previous success during the Covid-19 pandemic, where 2,500 Ex-Servicemen volunteered to support the administration. The increase to 4,000 reflects both the growing spirit of service among veterans and the trust reposed in them by the government and local populace.

As outlined in the proposal: The ESM volunteers will serve



These ESM will be employed for the protection of critical infrastructure in all 20 districts of J&K, including power stations, bridges, government installations, and other vulnerable points.

under the overall coordination of the respective District Sainik Welfare Officers (DSWOs); they will function in close coordination with the district administration and local police; their role is non-combatant, focusing on static guard duties, presence-based deterrence, and local coordination; uniforms and basic equipment will be provided through the Sainik Welfare Board with administrative support from district authorities and training and orientation programmes are being planned to ensure standardised conduct and efficiency.

This initiative not only utilises the discipline, experience, and commitment of the ESM community but also represents a model of inclusive and participatory security. It further cements the Indian Army's legacy of service beyond the battlefield, contributing meaningfully to civil society and local governance structures in Jammu and Kashmir.

Struggling DC Take On Formidable GT In Reverse Leg IPL Game

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Shaken by the abrupt suspension of their previous match due to the India-Pakistan conflict, a struggling Delhi Capitals will look to regroup and address bowling concerns when they face table-toppers Gujarat Titans in a reverse-leg IPL clash here on Sunday to keep their playoff hopes alive.

If three defeats and a no-result due to rain in their last five games weren't enough, DC's previous fixture was called off midway following air raid alerts in neighbouring Jammu and Pathankot, prompting a week-long suspension of the league.

Although the tournament has resumed, several overseas play-



ers have not returned to complete their commitments, forcing franchises to make major adjustments to their squads.

DC, currently just outside the top four with 13 points from 11 matches, suffered a major set-

back with premier pacer Mitchell Starc deciding not to return for the remainder of the season. The Australian left-arter is the team's leading wicket-taker with 14 scalps, and his absence is a significant blow to DC's al-

ready slim playoff hopes.

In a bit of relief, the Capitals managed to secure the services of Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who obtained the 'No Objection Certificate' from his national board on Friday.

An experienced IPL campaigner with 38 wickets at an economy of 7.84 in as many matches, Mustafizur will be expected to spearhead a struggling pace attack against a batting-heavy GT line-up.

The Axar Patel-led side has endured a disappointing run at home, managing just one win — that too via a Super Over — at the Arun Jaitley Stadium this season.

When the two teams last met on April 19, DC were blown away by Jos Buttler's 97 off 54

balls as GT chased down a 200-plus total with ease to win by seven wickets.

DC's problems have only deepened in recent outings. Their top and middle-order crumbled against Sunrisers Hyderabad in a rain-hit match, while their bowlers were hammered by Punjab Kings, who raced to 122 for one in just 10.1 overs before the game in Dharamsala was abandoned.

KL Rahul, the team's leading run-scorer this season, will have a crucial role to play along with skipper Axar.

GT, comfortably perched at the top of the table with 16 points from 11 games, have been a well-oiled unit this season. Match starts at 7:30pm IST.

Short TAKES

Annual Training Camp For Kashmir Cadets Begins At NTA Nagrota

The Annual Training Camp 2025, organised at the National Training Academy Nagrota, commenced Saturday with spirited participation from NCC cadets mostly from Kashmir.

The 10-day camp, from 17 to 26 May, brings together cadets from Senior & Junior Divisions/Wings (SD and JD) for focused training.

Day One featured high-energy sapping Physical Training, drill training sessions followed by Live Firing Practice.

The day also marked Inter Company Cadet Sports competitions in Basketball, Volleyball and open Gym activities.

Punjab Eye Playoff Spot As RR Seek Pride In Final Home Game

Punjab Kings will look to renew their bid for a playoff berth with another commanding performance here on Sunday against Rajasthan Royals, who have failed to rise above mediocrity despite possessing the resources this season.

As action returns to the Sawai Mansingh stadium after a week-long enforced break, Shreyas Iyer's side will hope to move past the nightmare on May 8, when their match against Delhi Capitals in scenic Dharamsala had to be called off due to India-Pakistan border tensions, forcing the players to return to their dressing rooms in pitch darkness.

As PBKS take the field on Sunday, comfortably placed at third spot on the table with 15 points from 11 games, there would be some scepticism with regard to the changes in the lineup owing to the enforced break.

Match starts at 3:30 pm IST.

ZPEO Rainawari Inaugurates AAG Boys Football Tournament



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Zonal Physical Education Office Rainawari inaugurated the All Age Group Boys Football Tournament on Saturday at KNS Playfield in Radapora here. The opening ceremony was led by Muzamil Ahmad Dar, ZPEO Rainawari, accompanied by his dedicated field staff.

A total of 180 students under the age of Boys 14 years from government and private institutions participated on the first day of the tournament. Before the matches commenced, all participants took a pledge against drug abuse.

The top performers of the tournament will earn a chance to represent their zone in the upcoming Inter-Zone District Level Football Tournaments.

The tournament is being organised by ZPEO Rainawari under the aegis of the Department of Youth Services and Sports.

Aqua Kashmir Avengers Join Khyber Cement Kashmir Super League 2025

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Aqua Group has entered professional football with its franchise team, Aqua Kashmir Avengers, joining the Khyber Cement Kashmir Super League 2025, powered by Athwas Hyundai, as the league's third franchise.

The franchise is owned by Arshid Ahmad, a passionate advocate for sports and youth engagement. Aqua Group's foray into football underscores its commitment to fostering local talent and contributing to the growth of sports in J&K.

"We are thrilled to be a part of the Khyber Cement Kashmir Super League 2025," said Arshid. "Our vision is to build a competitive and spirited team that not only entertains but also inspires the youth of our region to pursue sports with passion and purpose."

The Aqua Kashmir Avengers will compete alongside some of the top teams in the region, promising fans a season full of thrilling action, competitive rivalries and exemplary sportsmanship.



Inter-School Zonal Competitions Energise Budgam District



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: Under the guidance of DYSSO Gh. Hassan Lone, the Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam continues its vibrant Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions across various zones.

Zone Beerwah: Kho-Kho & Kabaddi (Girls U/14 & U/17) at DIET Ground Beerwah with large student participation.

Zone B.K. Pora: Kabaddi (Girls AAG) at Jamai-ul-Uloom.

Zone Dreygam: Kabaddi (Boys U/14) held at B.Ed College Wager.

Zone Magam: Volleyball & Kabaddi (Girls U/17 & U/19) at PS Hazarpura with 212 students.

Zone Khansahib: Kho-Kho (Girls U/14 & U/17) launched at GDC Khansahib by Principal Dr. Nargis Bano.

Zone Budgam: Kho-Kho & Kabaddi at Syed Yahiya Ground, Ompora.

Zone Chadoora: Martial Arts trials (Girls AAG) at HSS Chadoora for upcoming district-level events.

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