

‘I Lost Everything’: How Online Gaming Is Breaking Lives in Kashmir

Fiza Masoodi

Srinagar: Noor Mohammad was once a man people admired in his Bandipora hometown. He had a steady electronics shop, a comfortable home, and two cars parked outside. His children were growing up under a stable roof, and life felt secure.



FROM COLLEGE STUDENTS TO SHOPKEEPERS, an entire generation of Kashmiris is now hooked on a game that promises instant wealth, but delivers only loss, addiction, and a slow unraveling of lives.

But today, Noor is homeless, buried under debt, and wandering the streets of Srinagar.

His voice is trembling in a viral video appeal that has gripped Kashmir.

“I had everything,” he says, eyes red and voice cracking. “But after my son’s illness, I lost control. Someone told me about a game... Aviator. It destroyed me. I lost everything.” Noor says he lost 1.5 crore, including all his savings, borrowed money, and even the money from selling his house, to a betting game that’s taken

over Kashmir.

His story, emotional and raw, has triggered a wave of unease in the valley, where an online gambling crisis is escalating far from the public eye.

Noor’s downward spiral began last year when his sick son’s medical bills began mounting. In his search for fast money, Noor | [More on P6](#)

Rain, Risk, & Relief

J&K Records Sharp Dip In Temp, Alerts Issued

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Intermittent rainfall across Jammu and Kashmir has brought much-needed respite from the recent heat-wave, pushing temperatures well below seasonal averages while normalizing the region’s rainfall deficit for the current monsoon period.

Jammu division, too, the mercury remained subdued. Jammu city recorded 30.6°C, which is 3.4°C below normal, while places like Banihal, Batote, and Katra all hovered between 22°C and 26°C—up to 5°C below the usual.

More Rains Ahead



Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, Director of the MeT Department, forecast more rain over the coming week. “From July 18 to 20, scattered to fairly widespread light to moderate rain is expected. From July 21 to 23, we expect generally cloudy skies with intermittent rain and possible heavy to very heavy spells at isolated locations,” he said.

The MeT has issued a yellow alert for Kashmir till July 22 and | [More on P6](#)

Jhelum Sees 'Marginal Rise'

Despite moderate rainfall across the region, the water level in river Jhelum and its tributaries saw only a marginal increase on Wednesday, with authorities ruling out any immediate ‘flood threat’. As per the latest figures from the Irrigation and Flood Control Department Kashmir, the Jhelum at Sangam was flowing at 3.85 feet, significantly below | [More on P6](#)

NC, PDP Back Congress Demand on J&K Statehood

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Political parties on Wednesday welcomed the Congress initiative, asking the prime minister to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, as Chief minister Omar Abdullah said “we are not demanding something that was not promised to us”.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function at Jammu, Abdullah said the Supreme Court’s directive to the Centre to restore Jammu and Kashmir’s statehood “as soon as possible” came long ago.

The chief minister was reacting to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi jointly writing a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging the

BJP-led Centre to bring a legislation in the upcoming Monsoon session of Parliament to grant full statehood to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

“This is a very good thing. We were waiting for this day when the opposition would raise our voice in Parliament and Delhi. I am thankful to Kharge and Rahul that they have raised the statehood issue with the Centre,” Abdullah said, when asked about the Congress leaders’ letter to Modi.

“We are not demanding something which was not promised to us. We were repeatedly promised within and outside Parliament, in the Supreme Court and at public functions that statehood will be restored to Jammu and Kashmir at an appropriate time.

Indian State Authority Fully Established: LG Reflects On 5 Yrs In J&K

'From 100 Terror Recruits A Year To Just One, Naya Kashmir Is Peaceful'

My Ties With CM Are Cordial, I Work Within Constitutional Limits: LG

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that the authority of the Indian state has been firmly established in Jammu and Kashmir during his five-year tenure, and described the “new J&K” as peaceful, vibrant, and brimming with economic and social opportunity.

In a detailed interview to news portal of the weekly The Week, LG Sinha reflected on the region’s transformation since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, and reiterated the Centre’s commitment to restoring statehood—at an “appropriate time.”

“Delimitation is done, elections were peacefully conducted with record turnout, and now an elected government is in place. The final step—statehood—will happen, but the country must wait for the right time,” Sinha said, referring to

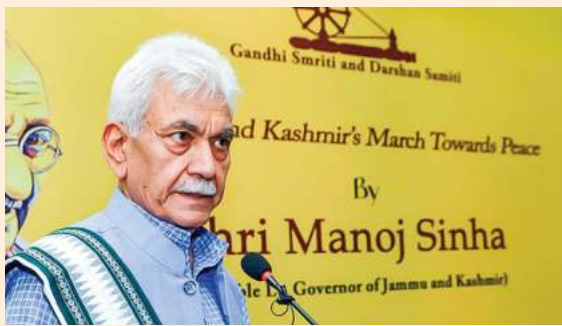
the Centre’s three-step road-map outlined by the Union Home Minister.

“Local Recruitment in Terror Outfits at All-Time Low”

Underscoring the shift in the security landscape, the LG said that the biggest success of the past few years has been the drastic fall in local militant recruitment.

“Earlier, 100 to 150 local youth would join terror outfits annually. Last year, that number dropped to just six or seven. And this year, only one local youth has joined so far,” Sinha said, crediting increased public trust in the administration and better coordination among security forces.

He further noted that Jammu and Kashmir has seen a complete halt in hartals, lockdowns, and stone-pelting incidents. “The people of Jammu and Kashmir have rejected violence and embraced | [More on P6](#)



‘Won’t Spare Those Speaking Terror’s Language’

LG Manoj Sinha Wednesday reiterated the administration’s firm resolve to eradicate terrorism and its support structures from the Union Territory, asserting that “strict action will be taken against anyone who speaks the language of terror outfits.” Speaking at a seminar titled “J&K’s March Towards Peace”, organised by Gandhi Smriti in New Delhi, the Lieutenant Governor said that the | [More on P6](#)

DELIMITATION IS DONE, ELECTIONS WERE PEACEFULLY conducted with record turnout, and now an elected government is in place. The final step—statehood—will happen, but the country must wait for the right time

J&K’s Road Fatalities Double National Average: Study Sounds Alarm

Over 4,800 Deaths in 5 Years, July Emerges as Deadliest Month

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: A recent set of comprehensive studies has painted a grim picture of road safety in Jammu and Kashmir, revealing that the Union Territory records nearly twice the national average in road accident fatalities. With over 22.66 lakh registered vehicles and thousands of kilometers of challenging terrain, the region is grappling with a mounting toll of deaths and injuries caused by traffic accidents.

According to official figures, 4,899 people lost their lives and 40,065 were injured in road accidents between 2019 and October 2024 in J&K. The year 2023 alone witnessed 6,298 accidents and 893 fatalities, reflecting a steady and disturbing rise in the number of casualties.

The study cites



over-speeding, reckless driving, poor enforcement of traffic rules, and deteriorating road infrastructure as the chief contributors to the crisis. July has emerged as the deadliest month, with the monsoon, melting snow, and landslides contributing to road erosion and loss of vehicle control—especially in hilly districts.

Another worrying aspect

is the rural-urban split: rural areas account for 69% of all accidents, compared to 31% in urban centers. Commercial vehicles, particularly heavy trucks, are frequently involved in fatal crashes. Hit-and-run cases make up 15% of the accidents, with overturning and head-on collisions accounting for 8% and 4%, respectively.

Infrastructure | [More on P6](#)

NT Language Row

Appointing Revenue Officers Without Urdu Useless: CM

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said that appointing officers in the Revenue Department without knowledge of Urdu would be ineffective. He said it is important for officers to have basic Urdu language skills to effectively handle revenue records, which are historically maintained in Urdu.

“Ours is not an attempt to exclude anyone from the department. Revenue records in Jammu and Kashmir have been in Urdu since before Independence. If we appoint officers who cannot even read these records, what will they do?” Omar said during a media interaction regarding the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) stay on the enforcement of a key provision in the Jammu & Kashmir



Revenue (Subordinate) Service Recruitment Rules. The rule mandated candidates possess a graduation degree with Urdu language knowledge as an exclusive qualification for the post of Naib Tehsildar.

Omar said that officers from JKAS and IAS who lack Urdu knowledge are being given time to learn the language. “Appointing Revenue officers without Urdu knowledge is futile. It’s better | [More on P6](#)

AMARNATH YATRA

Woman Pilgrim Killed, 3 Injured In Landslide

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: A woman pilgrim died while three others sustained injuries on Wednesday in a landslide incident along the Baltal route of the Amarnath Yatra in Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

Four pilgrims were washed downhill by a landslide at Railpathri along the Baltal axis to the holy cave on Wednesday evening, the officials said.

The injured were rushed to the Baltal base camp hospital where one woman | [More on P6](#)

‘8th Pass’ Clause

HC Closes PIL On SMAS After Government Vows Review

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has closed a Public Interest Litigation, seeking its directions to do away with pre-condition of 8th pass for poor girls to avail the benefits under State Marriage Assistance Scheme (SMAS).

While the petitioner—Abdul Hamid Rather, a law student, contended that the stipulation was unfair to poor and underprivileged girls, senior additional Advocate General



on behalf of the government assured the court that the matter shall be examined in the “right earnest” and appropriate orders in this regard shall be passed within a period of two months. | [More on P6](#)

PIL On DV Act Implementation Closed

M Ahmad

The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has disposed of a Public Interest Litigation, seeking its directions for effective implementation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act including | [More on P6](#)

MHA Approves 20 New CRPF Battalions For J&K: Report

Agencies

Srinagar: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has given in-principle approval to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to raise 20 new battalions, adding over 20,000 personnel, for deployment in Jammu and Kashmir, reports said.

Initially, the CRPF had sought approval for 35 battalions, but the Ministry has sanctioned 20 as an immediate measure, following the April 22 Pahalgam militant attack and subsequent ‘Operation Sindoor’. The Finance Ministry has already

cleared the proposal, and Union Cabinet approval is expected soon.

Reports indicated the new battalions will be equipped with enhanced operational capabilities, tailored to J&K’s terrain and security needs. With a shift in focus from Naxal-affected areas to counter-militancy efforts in Jammu and Kashmir, the move is seen as part of a broader strategic recalibration.

Additional CRPF companies are expected to be deployed across the Union Territory shortly, with senior officials forecasting | [More on P6](#)

J&K FAKE GUN LICENCE CASE

HC Extends SIT Probe Into 2 More FIRs

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: The High Court here has dismissed pleas seeking quashing of additional FIRs in connection with an investigation into the fake gun licence case and ordered a probe by a special investigation team (SIT) into two cases registered in the Rajouri district over a decade ago.

It, however, said the order shall not preclude the government from transferring the investigation into all FIRs to any specialised probe | [More on P6](#)



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Are Sunscreen Chemicals Safe To Use Daily Amid New Safety Review

The Conversation

Last week, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) released its safety review of seven active ingredients commonly used in sunscreens. It found five were low-risk and appropriate for use in sunscreens at their current concentrations. However, the TGA recommended tighter restrictions on two ingredients – homosalate and oxybenzone – to reduce how much can be used in a product. This is based on uncertainty about their potential effects on the endocrine system, which creates and releases hormones.

This news, together with recent reports that some products may have inflated their claims of SPF coverage, might make Australians worried about whether their sunscreen products are working and safe.

But it's not time to abandon sunscreens. In Australia, all sunscreens must pass a strict approval process before going on the market. The TGA tests the safety and efficacy of all ingredients, and this recent review is part of the TGA's continuing commitment to safety.

The greatest threat sunscreen poses to Australians' health is not using it. Australia has the highest incidence of melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer worldwide, and approximately 95 per cent of melanoma cases in Australia are linked to ultraviolet (UV) exposure.

Still, it's understandable that people want to know what's in their products and any changes that might affect them. So let's take a closer look at the safety review and what it found. What are the active ingredients in sunscreen?

There are two main types of sunscreen: physical and chemical. This is based on the different active ingredients they use. An active ingredient is a chemical component in a product that has an effect on the body – basically, what makes the product "work".

In sunscreens, this is the compound that absorbs UV rays from the Sun. The other ingredients – for example, those that give the sunscreen its smell or help the skin absorb it – are "inactive". Physical sunscreens typically use min-



erals, such as titanium dioxide and zinc oxide, that can absorb the Sun's rays but also reflect some of them. Chemical sunscreens use a variety of chemical ingredients to absorb or scatter UV light, both long-wave (UVA) and short-wave (UVB).

The seven active ingredients in this review are in chemical sunscreens.

Why did the TGA do the review?

Our current limits for the concentrations of these chemicals in sunscreen are generally consistent with other regulatory agencies, such as the European Union and the US Food and Drug Administration.

However, safety is an evolving subject. The TGA periodically reexamines the safety of all therapeutic goods.

Last year, the TGA revised its method of estimating sunscreen exposure to more closely model how skin is exposed to sunscreens over time.

This model considers how much sunscreen someone typically applies, how much skin they cover (whole body versus face and hands, or just face) and how it's absorbed through the skin.

Given this new model, along with changes in the EU and US approaches to sunscreen regulation, the TGA selected seven common sunscreen ingredients to investigate in depth. Determining what's safe

When evaluating whether chemicals are safe for human use, testing will often consider studies in animals, especially when there is no or limited data on humans. These animal tests are done

by the manufacturers, not the TGA.

To take into account any unforeseen sensitivity humans may have to these chemicals, a "margin of safety" is built in. This is typically a concentration 50–100 times lower than the dose at which no negative effect was seen in animals.

The sunscreen review used a margin of safety 100 times lower than this dose as the safety threshold.

For most of the seven investigated sunscreen chemicals, the TGA found the margin of safety was above 100.

This means they're considered safe and low-risk for long-term use.

However, two ingredients, homosalate and oxybenzone, were found to be below 100. This was based on the highest estimated sunscreen exposure, applied to the body at the maximum permitted concentration: 15per cent for homosalate, 10 per cent for oxybenzone. At lower concentrations, other uses, such as just the hands and face, could be considered low-risk for both ingredients.

What are the health concerns?

Homosalate and oxybenzone have low acute oral toxicity – meaning you would need to swallow a lot of it to experience toxic effects, nearly half a kilogramme of these chemicals – and don't cause irritation to eyes or skin. There is inconclusive evidence that oxybenzone potentially causes cancer in rats and mice, but only at concentrations to which humans will never be exposed via sunscreens.

'One In Five Women In WHO Southeast Asia Region Covered Under Health Insurance'

Press Trust Of India

About one in every five women in the WHO Southeast Asia Region, including India, are covered under a health insurance, a study published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia has estimated.

One in eight women in the region – defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) – were enrolled in social security schemes. At the same time, only one in thirteen had privately purchased or commercial insurance, the analysis reveals.

The 'WHO Southeast Asia Region' includes India, among other countries such as Bangladesh, Myanmar and Indonesia.

Researchers from Health Systems Transformation Platform and Population Council Consulting Private Limited, New Delhi, also found that one in four men in the region had health insurance coverage, with the highest prevalence seen in Indonesia at over 56 per cent and lowest in Myanmar at about 1.5 per cent. In India, the prevalence of health insurance uptake was 53 per cent among women and 56 per cent among men, the team found.

The highest levels of health insurance coverage for women and men in the region were found in Indonesia, while the lowest levels were reported in Bangladesh and Myanmar, respectively.

Equity in accessing quality healthcare without experiencing financial hardship is key to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) – one of the core aims of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals – especially in low- and middle-income countries in the WHO Southeast Asia Region, the authors of the study said.

They added that healthcare demands and costs are expected to rise in the region as populations age. However, high out-of-pocket expenditures remain a barrier despite health insurance programmes in the region, they said.

The study analysed socioeconomic and demographic factors to estimate coverage under any health insurance, using data from Demographic and Health Surveys (2015-2022) conducted in the WHO Southeast Asia Region every five years. "Approximately one in five women in the region were covered by any form of health insurance," the authors wrote.

"In contrast, one in four men in the region had any health insurance coverage, with the highest prevalence observed in Indonesia (56.6 per cent) and the lowest in Myanmar (1.4 per cent)," they wrote. Older age, higher education levels, and higher exposure to media were found to positively influence insurance coverage for both men and women in India, Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Further, beyond individual factors, contextual ones such as government commitment, design and implementation of insurance schemes and economic conditions are crucial in determining health insurance coverage, the authors said. Traditional beliefs and a lack of trust in formal financial systems can hinder insurance adoption among South Asian



communities, they added.

Evidence suggests that in rural areas of India, Nepal and Bangladesh, people relied on community-based informal support systems over formal insurance, reflecting cultural preferences that affect enrolment rates, the team said.

The study's findings, therefore, highlight that country-specific contexts need to be addressed to effectively expand health insurance coverage, the authors said.

They suggested policies should prioritise building sustainable health financing systems, making healthcare infrastructures more resilient, and fostering widespread awareness in the community about the benefits of health insurance.

Further, strategies aimed at resolving socioeconomic disparities and for the underinsured populations are vital in advancing equitable health insurance access and accelerating progress towards UHC, the team said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change my name in my Aadhar card bearing no 9234 7707 0650 from Mohammad Ashur Dar (old name) to Mohammad Ashur Hanji (new name) .If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohammad Ashur Hanji
S/o :- Abdul Rahim Dar
R/o:- Bajibagh Samboora,
Pampore


jvd

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 Zahid Bashir Marazi s/o Bashir Ahmad Marazi R/o Hartrath with verified date of birth 16/12/2022 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



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For any query email: jkadmission2025@aicte-india.org

Warning: Students already enrolled in any other scholarship scheme on board with NSP or enrolling while being a beneficiary of SSSJ&K and Ladakh are not eligible for scholarship as per the guidelines of the Scheme.

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cbc 21300/12/ 0007/2526

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mohd Shafi Baba, S/o Mohd Yaseen Baba, resident of Awura , Trehgam, Kupwara, do hereby inform that my name and my father's name are recorded as Mohammad Shafi Baba, S/o Mohammad Yaseen Baba in the Registration Certificate (RC) of my vehicle (Alto Car, Reg. No. JK01Q 2300). However, as per my Aadhaar Card, my name and father's name are correctly spelled as Mohd Shafi Baba, S/o Mohd Yaseen Baba.

I hereby declare that the names Mohammad Shafi Baba, S/o Mohammad Yaseen Baba and Mohd Shafi Baba, S/o Mohd Yaseen Baba refer to the same person (myself). I intend to get the spelling corrected in the vehicle RC as per my Aadhaar Card. Objections, if any, may be communicated to the office of RTO sringar within 7 days of publication of this notice.

Mohd Shafi Baba
S/o. Mohd Yaseen Baba
R/o. Awura, Trehgam, Kupwara.
Mob: 7760810146

ako

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 Mohammad Usman Ganai s/o Ghulam Nabi Ganai R/o chanderhama with verified date of birth 07/07/2024 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

NOTICE

I, Abdul Majid Mirza, S/o Mirza Mohammad Hassan, R/o Munawarabad, Srinagar, would like to bring to public attention that my name has been incorrectly recorded as Abdul Majid in the records of J&K Bank. I am hereby applying for correction of my name to Abdul Majid Mirza in the said records.

If anyone has any objection to this correction, they may contact the concerned authorities within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After this period, no objections will be entertained.

ABDUL MAJID MIRZA
S/O Mirza Mohammad Hassan
R/o Munawarabad, Srinagar
Contact: - 9419009995, 7889888623

inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been inadvertently recorded as Syeeda Begum in the Aadhaar card bearing number 2031-5840-5873, which is incorrect. The correct and actual name is Saida Bano.

I have now applied for the correction of the same. If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may file it with the concerned office within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Saida Bano
W/o Mohd Maqbool Mir
R/o Chukar, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Have changed my Name from (Old Name) Saniya Zahra to (New Name) Saniya Zehra.

In future I will be known as (New Name) Saniya Zehra. If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact the Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 Days no objection will be accepted.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card as Rabishta while my correct name as per Domocile Certificate is Rumishta Farooq D/o Farooq Ahamd Bhat . 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 concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Rumishta Farooq
D/o Farooq Ahamd Bhat
R/o Chairhara Tehsil Magam

bmg

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my 8th standard certificate issued by Govt Higher Secondary School, Zadibal, Srinagar bearing Admission No 6161, Session 1995. I have now applied for a duplicate of it. Any one having objection, if any, shall apply within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohd Jabar Mir
S/O Gh Mohd Mir
R/O Chatergul, Anantnag

ss

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

No: 227/B&D/TZ/2025 Date: 16/07/25

Subject: Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Birth & Death
Public Notice

This office has received a written application from Amaan Ashiq S/o Ashiq Hussain Hajam R/O Seloo , Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of self Born on 04/03/2011 and as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days. After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Naib Tehsildar
Executive Magistrate
Bomai

fko

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

No: 228/B&D/TZ/2025 Date: 16/07/25

Subject: Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Birth & Death
Public Notice

This office has received a written application from Sagia Jan D/O Nazir Ahmad Lone R/o Zaloora , Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of self Born on 01/03/1998 and as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days. After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Naib Tehsildar
Executive Magistrate
Bomai

fko

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI

Sub: Application of Syed Mohd Shafi Bukhari, S/o, Late Syed Ameer-ud-din Bukhari, R/o Kreeri, for the issuance of Legal Heir certificate.

NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above, in this context, a detailed report was sought from the patwari halqa concerned which reveals that Syed Ameer-ud-din Bukhari, S/o Syed Shams-ud-din Bukhari, passed away on 20-6-25. Moreover, the Death Certificate issued by the Competent Authority also depicts the same. Furthermore, the report of Patwari Concerned points out that the deceased has left behind the following Legal Heirs, tabulated as below:

S. No	Name of Legal Heir	Relation with Deceased	Age	Occupation	Marital Status
1	Syed Mohd Shafi	S/o	62	Retired Govt. employee	Married
2	Syed Altaf Hus-sain	Son	52	Govt. employee	-do-
3	Shameema Akhter	Daughter	65	Govt. employee	-do-
4	Mumtaza Akhter	Daughter	60	Housewife (H.W.)	-do-
5	Jabeena Akhter	Daughter	58	Govt. employee	Divorced

The applicant has applied for the issuance of a Legal Heir certificate. As such the instant matter is published through the newspaper. If anyone has any kind of objection, he/she may approach this office within 7 days of the publication of this notice. After passing of stipulated time of 7 days, no objections will be entertained.

Naib Tehsildar
Kreeri

fko



JKSA Rallies Behind Imran Ansari Amid Controversy

Observer News Service

Srinagar- A meeting of clerics and Zakireen associated with the Jammu and Kashmir Shia Association was held on Wednesday to express support for party chief Molvi Imran Reza Ansari, who is facing public backlash over recent controversial remarks about prominent Sunni figures.

The meeting was convened a day after the Mut-tahida Majlis-e-Ulema—the leading religious body in the Kashmir region—censured Molvi Imran and summoned him, along with others who responded to his remarks with public outbursts perceived by the Shia community as disrespectful. Presided over by the JKSA President, the meet-

ing took place at Darul Jawad, Qamarwari, Srinagar, according to the party statement.

“The participants unanimously expressed their unconditional support for Molvi Imran Ansari’s leadership, calling it a continuation of the Association’s historic legacy of service, faith, and social responsibility,” the statement read.

The gathering also highlighted the collective commitment of Kashmir’s Shia clergy to uphold the values of unity, truth, and the enduring message of Ahlul Bayt (AS), it added.

“This meeting was not just a routine congregation, but a reaffirmation of our unity and mission,” the statement quoted one of the Zakireen as saying.

Commissioner SMC Reviews Progress Of National Clean Air Program (NCAP)

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a continued push towards improving urban air quality Faz Lul Haseeb (IAS), Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess progress under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). The meeting, held at SMC headquarters, Karan Nagar and was attended by key line officers from various departments.

The session involved a detailed evaluation of the initiatives undertaken during 2025-26 to mitigate air pollution in the city. Commissioner acknowledged the progress made so far, applauding the departments for their efforts, while also drawing attention to areas that demand focused and accelerated action.

“Clean air is not just an environmental imperative—it’s a fundamental public health priority,” the Commissioner emphasized. “It is our collective

duty to implement these initiatives with efficiency and purpose, so that the people of Srinagar can breathe cleaner, healthier air. This calls for innovation, commitment, and strong inter-departmental coordination.”

Commissioner, urged all concerned departments, including the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department, to fast-track pending projects, improve coordination mechanisms, and streamline administrative procedures to facilitate timely execution. Stressing transparency and accountability, the Commissioner directed officials to maintain a collaborative and result-oriented approach in achieving NCAP goals.

In his closing remarks, the Commissioner reaffirmed that air quality improvement remains a top priority for SMC. He pledged continuous monitoring of project implementation and emphasized the shared responsibility of all stakeholders in creating a sustainable and livable city.

SKIMS Performs First STA-MCA Bypass For Moya-Moya Disease

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Department of Neurosurgery at SKIMS, Soura, has successfully performed the first direct vascular bypass surgery (STA-MCA) in Jammu and Kashmir for a patient suffering from Moya-Moya disease — a rare and progressive brain condition.

The complex six-hour procedure involved connecting a healthy blood vessel from outside the brain (superficial temporal artery) directly to a diseased vessel inside the brain (middle cerebral artery), allowing for immediate improvement in brain blood flow. The patient, an adult who had suffered multiple strokes due to the condition, was discharged

in stable condition after a successful surgery with no complications.

Moya-Moya disease, mostly reported in East Asian countries like Japan, narrows brain arteries and leads to the formation of fragile vessels that resemble a “puff of smoke” on scans. It can cause strokes and seizures, particularly in children. Treatment often requires surgical intervention to restore proper blood circulation.

While SKIMS had previously managed such cases using indirect techniques like Encephalo-Dura-Myo-Arterio-Synangiosis (EDMAS), this was the institute’s first direct bypass surgery, marking a major leap in neurovascular care within the region.



PIB Organizes “Varta” To Strengthen Dialogue Between Media & Government

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Press Information Bureau (PIB), Government of India, Srinagar, organized a media workshop titled “Varta”, aimed at fostering constructive engagement between the media and government institutions. The event brought together senior journalists and media professionals from print, electronic, and digital platforms for an open discussion on the evolving media landscape, responsible journalism, and communication of public welfare schemes.

The workshop was inaugurated by Nitish Rajora, Director, Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), J&K, who attended the event as Chief Guest. Also present was Qazi Salman, Director, PIB Srinagar. The welcome address was delivered by Sunil Koul, Assistant Director, PIB Srinagar.

Speaking on the occasion, Nitish Rajora underscored the media’s crucial role as the fourth pillar of democracy, especially in regions like Jammu & Kashmir where public discourse and access to information are vital for democratic functioning. He said, “Media has a defining role to play in ensuring transparency and public trust. In an age where misinformation spreads faster than facts, the responsibility on journalists is greater than ever.”

He stressed the need for coordination between media and government bodies and remarked, “Journalists must function as informed intermediaries between institutions and the public. Only through constructive engagement can we ensure that accurate and reliable information reaches people.”

Qazi Salman, Director, Press Information Bureau, underlined the transformation witnessed by the country across key sectors and said, Over the past decade, India has undergone a remarkable journey of inclusive growth, doubling its GDP, expanding critical healthcare access to over 50 crore citizens, and ensuring that the hands that feed the nation are empowered with modern tools, income security, and market access. These are not isolated achievements but a collective movement towards dignity, resilience, and national self-reliance.

This progress reflects not just economic strength, but the spirit of a billion citizens striving together—where technology, transparency, and targeted policies have bridged gaps and unlocked opportunities across every section of society, he added.

As part of the workshop, presentations were made on major government initiatives in the health and agriculture sectors.

Dr. Waseem Akram, Operations Manager, State Health

Agency, J&K, presented details of Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY and PMJAY Sehat schemes in the UT. Since its launch in December 2018, the scheme has issued Golden Cards to 95% of families in J&K, resulting in over 17 lakh treatments worth 3120 crore. Over 13,000 cases worth 124 crore have been treated outside J&K. More than 130 private hospitals are empanelled. Monitoring, rating, and grievance redressal systems are in place, with UT-level portability and transparency ensured under Trust-mode operations.

Dr. Amal Saxena and Dr. Liyaqat Ali Chowdhury, both from SKUAST-Kashmir, presented the progress of the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyaan, an agriculture-focused outreach campaign. The campaign aims to take information on government schemes directly to farmers and promote modern practices like drone-based farming, climate-resilient techniques, protected cultivation, high-density orchards, and real-time agro-advisory systems.

Each expert session was followed by an interactive feedback session, allowing media persons to engage directly with the speakers.

The workshop concluded with a vote of thanks, reaffirming PIB’s commitment to enabling informed discourse and building stronger ties with the media community in the region.

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HIGHWAY STATUS

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



PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 50
ZUHR	12:37
ASR	5: 35
Magrib	7:45
ISHA	9: 23

This Day In History

- 1936 - Spanish generals Francisco Franco and Emilio Mola lead a right-wing uprising, starting the Spanish Civil War
- 1944 - 2 ammunition ships explode at Port Chicago, California, killing 322
- 1948 - Israeli army captures Nazareth
- 1948 - Proclamation of constitution of Republic of (South) Korea
- 1952 - Shah of Persia Mohammed Reza Pahlavi names Ghavam Sultaneh premier
- 1958 - King Hussein declares himself head of Jordan/Iraqi federation
- 1959 - Paleanthropologist Mary Leakey discovers partial skull of a new species of early human ancestor, Zinjanthropus boisei or 'Zinj' (now called Paranthropus boisei) lived in Africa almost 2 million years ago
- 1964 - Great Britain performs nuclear Test at Nevada Test Site
- 1973 - Military coup in Afghanistan; King Mohammad Zahir Shah flees
- 1975 - Apollo 18 and Soyuz 19 make 1st US/USSR linkup in space
- 1976 - Indonesian president Suharto annexes East Timor
- 1980 -- Bolivian military coup; General Garcia Meza becomes president
- 1980 - Ronald Reagan formally accepts Republican nomination for US president
- 1981 -- Israeli bombers destroy PLO/al-Fatah headquarters in Beirut
- 1981 - USSR performs nuclear Test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalitinsk USSR

From KO Archives

Baramulla Boat Tragedy

Minister Greeted With Stones In Village

Observer News Service

Srinagar- Local MLA and minister for tourism, Muhammad Dilawar Mir, was attacked with stones when he arrived in Ladura, Baramulla, on Friday to visit the families of Wednesday’s boat tragedy victims.

After taking a recess in a supporter’s house, the minister finally managed to reach the victim’s home, offer fateha and pay condolence to the bereaved family.

Mir, who represents the Rafiabad assembly segment, was visiting the area to pay condolence to the families who had lost their loved ones on Thursday, when locals retrieved the body of another victim, Firdous Ahmad Dar, from the Jhelum. Dar was one of the six people killed when a boat capsized in the river on Wednesday.

Reports said that the minister reached Ladura chowk just as a large number of people were in the streets after taking Dar’s body to his family.

The already emotionally-charged crowd raised slogans against Mir and the government, and a group of youth attacked the minister’s car with stones. Unable to come out his vehicle, Mir took a U-turn and made for the home of a supporter.

The minister and his entourage escaped unhurt in the attack. The locals said that the army and the police, assisted by residents, had resumed the search for missing victims on Friday morning, but gave up only after two hours, leaving the difficult task to villagers.

They alleged that the administration was using dilatory tactics in recovering bodies from the Jhelum, which had added to the anguish of the victims’ families. The locals contested reports that the police or the army had recovered three bodies yesterday, saying that the victims were found solely due to the tireless efforts of the local villagers.

(Kashmir Observer, 17 July, 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
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 (1st Floor), Daresh Kadal
Chowk, Srinagar

9070806160

ان زینایت بڈگام با جلاس یا سرشیر کو صاحب نائب تحصیلدار بڈگام

مفتوں۔ درخواست الزانجائیں غلام حسین ڈار اولیٰ محمد آسان کن یویدہ تحصیل بڈگام
برادر ابراہیم گمڈ پنڈی سرینکیت نغرض حصول Girl Marriage Assistance Scheme

اشہار برادر آگاہی برغاص عام

معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں مایان نے ایک درخواست نسبت الزانی گمڈ پنڈی سرینکیت نغرض خضر خاں میں پیش کی ہے جس کے
نسبت ہوا کی طاقت سے، بہت طلب کی ہے جس کے مطابق مائل غلام حسین ڈار اولیٰ محمد آسان کن یویدہ تحصیل بڈگام ہے۔
نمبر شمار نام افراد کی تعداد ریشہ ہمسایاں عمر پیشہ گھر کیلکام یویدہ سکونت

1۔ جیلہ بانو زوجہ سائل 54 سال گھر کیلکام یویدہ
2۔ عرفانہ حسین دختر سائل 30 سال گھر کیلکام یویدہ

اسکے علاوہ او کوئی بھی افراد خاندان تحصیل نہیں کیا گیا۔ اس بارے میں ذریعہ اشہار ہمارے غاص و عام کو
مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی شخص کو سرینکیت الزان کے میں کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک خطفے کے اندر اندر دفتر بذاتیں پیش
کریں بعد کرتے معیا کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہ ہوگا۔

تحریر الصدور
نائب تحصیلدار بڈگام

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KO VIEW

Dredge Before Deluge

It is deeply troubling that, despite the scars of the 2014 floods and numerous close calls since, the government has not undertaken any dredging of the Jhelum or its flood spill channels in the past five years. A recent RTI reply by the Irrigation and Flood Control Department has laid bare what many in Kashmir feared: critical flood mitigation efforts have stalled, and official lethargy continues to put millions of lives and livelihoods at risk.

The Comprehensive Flood Management Plan (CFMP), launched in 2015 under the Prime Minister's Development Package, was meant to be the Valley's shield against future disasters. But a decade later, little has changed. Only 80 percent of Phase-1 has been completed, and since then not a single new dredging contract has been floated. This is not just bureaucratic inertia but also the institutional negligence. More so, considering how prone Srinagar and the other parts of Kashmir Valley are to floods.

Dredging can hardly be delayed. It is vital intervention to ensure that the three days of incessant rain doesn't lead to flooding yet again. Jhelum dredging is critical. It is important to intermittently remove silt and debris from the riverbed to enhance its capacity to carry excess water during heavy rainfall.

Although the RTI reply reveals that the department has desilted over 670 kilometre of irrigation canals in 2023-24, that is no substitute for dredging of the river. It requires deep excavation of the waterbody to restore its depth and flow. On the contrary, desilting is a routine maintenance activity, which does little to avert floods.

At the same time, while dredging is being delayed, riverbanks are facing alarming scale of encroachments. The RTI reply has revealed 1.884 illegal structures including semi-permanent buildings, walls, and even trees planted on embankments. Yet, only a fraction of these have been removed. This weak enforcement not only chokes the natural watercourse but undermines public confidence in the government's commitment to disaster prevention.

True, there is a new DPR reportedly being prepared, and a fresh flood study has been conducted under the Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project. But there is no clear timeline for the execution of works for the Phase 2. That too, despite warnings from the Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS), which recommended urgent action as far back as 2018.

Kashmir can't afford another flood of the scale of 2014 before the government wakes up. The time to dredge the Jhelum and deepen its water-carrying capacity is now.

FINANCIAL FIX

The Premium Illusion

Misunderstood advice and commission-driven selling are leading Kashmiris into financial dead ends.

Irshad Mushtaq

Walk into any bank branch in Kashmir, and chances are you'll hear someone asking about a policy. Most don't know if it's insurance or investment. They're told to pay for ten years, stay locked in, and expect a return. Many never ask why.

The idea that money should grow, no matter where it's parked, has taken hold, and it's leading people down the wrong road.

Insurance was never meant to be an investment, especially term plans. These are about protection, not profit. If something happens, your family gets a payout. If nothing happens, there's no return, and that's the point. It's risk cover.

Yet in Kashmir, thousands treat these plans like fixed deposits or savings schemes. That confusion, often pushed by commission-hungry sellers, costs more than money. It delays real growth.

Investments are a different game. They demand time, patience, and a little courage. They move with the market. They reward those who start early. If your money sits inside a policy that promises safety but delivers little growth, you're falling behind without even knowing it.

Many in the valley now admit they were misled, or misunderstood. That's not failure. It's a wake-up call. Revisit your choices. If it doesn't serve your goals, move on. The earlier you correct course, the better your future looks.

Kashmir's financial maturity depends on clarity. Know the difference between safety and growth, between insurance and investment, and between what protects your family and what builds their future. Your money deserves better. So do you.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

Kashmir's New Drug?

What starts as a thrill on a screen is ending in shattered families and lifelong debt across the valley.

Malik Yaseen

“The social consequences are unfolding every day in homes across the valley. Parents pawn jewellery to cover debts their sons cannot explain. Marriages break under the weight of financial secrecy. School fees go unpaid. Community members whisper about those who have “lost everything.”

A man from our community recently lost 1.5 crore to an online betting game. That number may sound unreal, exaggerated even. But it isn't.

What began for him as a harmless flutter, a few hundred rupees on a mobile app, slowly turned into a spiral of obsession, debt, and irreversible loss.

In the end, his savings vanished, his home was sold, and his family was left struggling to make sense of a life that had, quite suddenly, fallen apart.

He isn't alone. And that is what makes this story so frightening.

Across Kashmir, a growing number of young people are being pulled into the high-speed world of online betting through games like Aviator, fantasy leagues, poker clones, and countless copycat apps.

They are sold the dream of easy money, promised that with the right move, the right bet, they too can change their lives overnight.

What they're not told is how often these games are rigged, how quickly they turn into addiction, and how many lives are silently collapsing behind closed doors.

The spread has been swift, and alarmingly deep.

Walk into any town square in Kashmir and you will find young men tapping furiously on their phones. What looks like a game is, more often than not, a digital trap.

The first wins come easily. The app lets you feel in control. It gives just enough reward to keep hope alive. Then the losses start.

A hundred becomes a thousand. A thousand becomes a loan. Days blur. Night arrives unnoticed. And the line between real and virtual money disappears altogether.

In a region where joblessness is high and options are scarce, the temptation is hard to resist.

According to official estimates, youth unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir is well above the national average. Many educated young peo-

ple spend years waiting for a government job that never materializes.

For them, these apps offer a quick fix, a shortcut to the financial stability that feels increasingly out of reach. It is easy to understand the appeal. But it is just as easy to miss the cost, until it is too late.

The social consequences are unfolding every day in homes across the valley. Parents pawn jewellery to cover debts their sons cannot explain. Marriages break under the weight of financial secrecy. School fees go unpaid. Community members whisper about those who have “lost everything.”

There is a heavy silence around gambling losses. People are ashamed to admit what happened. Many suffer in isolation. The damage festers.

And while the damage is visible, the response has been anything but urgent. These apps continue to operate freely. They change names, migrate to new servers, reappear with updated logos. There is no clear regulation banning them, no strong enforcement to hold promoters accountable.

In some Indian states, action has been taken. In Kashmir, we seem to be watching it unfold in slow motion, hoping perhaps it will go away on its own.

But it won't. The tech behind these platforms is built to manipulate. Behavioral psychologists work with developers to design reward systems that mimic the highs of substance addiction.

The more you lose, the more desperate you are to win. The more desperate you are, the more vulnerable you become.

And in that desperation, young people begin to believe that one big win will fix it all.

That belief, so deeply human, so tragically flawed, is what these companies bank on.

It's not just the absence of regulation that's troubling. It's the absence of awareness.

Game Over

A new wave of online games is devouring time, money, and dreams across Kashmir. What looks like entertainment is actually a trap, and no one's sounding the alarm.

Irshad Mushtaq

Then come the small payments: 500 for a quick boost, 2,000 for another chance, a little more for a token or upgrade.

The money slips away, the days start to blur, and what felt like harmless fun slowly takes over.

Family savings disappear, study plans fall apart, and mental health begins to break down.

There is no oversight. Most of these apps operate in legal grey zones or from jurisdictions with zero accountability. Players who lose money have nowhere to turn.

What's worse, these platforms often encourage users to recruit others. It's not just personal harm anymore. It spreads across peer groups, colleges, neighbourhoods.

The consequences are showing. Students are dropping out. Young men

are withdrawing socially. Families are reporting sudden financial distress.

Kashmir, once known for its poetic resilience and creative brilliance, is now watching the digital decay, a slow fade into screen-lit paralysis.

This is more than a private issue. It's a public crisis in the making.

A generation already burdened by political uncertainty and limited opportunity is being nudged into digital distraction, while the world moves forward.

The opportunity cost is enormous. These are years when skills could be learned, businesses started, crafts mastered, or communities rebuilt.

What's missing is intervention.

There're no serious digital awareness campaigns, no public discussions on gaming addiction and no regulatory guardrails.

Most schools and colleges still

treat gaming as a joke or worse, as a phase. Parents are left guessing, educators feel helpless, and the state remains silent.

What Kashmir needs is not moral panic, but immediate, strategic response.

Start with real, ground-level conversations in schools, colleges, homes. Build helplines, counselors, digital detox programs.

Clamp down on gambling masquerading as games, demand transparency from app platforms, and block the worst offenders.

And above all, invest in alternatives: job pathways, creative hubs, outdoor spaces, sports, art, and purpose-driven education.

Young people in Kashmir don't lack talent or ambition. What they lack is access to opportunity, structure, and guidance.

In that vacuum, the game wins. And they lose.

The phone isn't the enemy. The unchecked app economy is.

Without action, the cost will not be measured in money alone. It will be seen in wasted potential, broken trust, and a future scrolling endlessly into nothing.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

Letter to Editor

The Misuse of Social Platforms: A Call for Unity and Wisdom

In the digital age, where platforms like Facebook were meant to connect minds and hearts across distances, it is deeply distressing and profoundly disappointing to witness how they are increasingly being used to sow division among sects, particularly within the Muslim Ummah.

A sacred space meant for community building and enlightenment is now tainted with toxic, baseless, and often incendiary rhetoric. Every day, we come across self-proclaimed preachers, keyboard warriors, and so-called scholars, who without any sound knowledge or spiritual depth, indulge in spewing venomous lectures and divisive content but there are always exceptions,

all do not fall in the same boat, many are wise and know how to propagate unity and love.

These unfiltered outbursts, often wrapped in religious language, are not only misleading but emotionally damaging. They hurt sentiments, destroy the fabric of mutual respect, and pull the Ummah further apart.

This casual abuse of free speech under the guise of religious freedom is neither scholarly nor ethical.

What is more worrying is the silence, or worse, the passive participation of many educated individuals and genuine scholars who should be the torchbearers of wisdom, tolerance, and brotherhood.

The pulpit, the podium, and now the screen must never be used to

mock, degrade, or misrepresent any sect or belief system. The real scholars and intellectuals are those who mend hearts, not break them. They inspire souls, not inflame egos.

At this juncture in history, when the world is already gripped by injustice, oppression, and moral decay, we can no longer afford to tear each other down. The true enemy is not within our sects, but in our collective ignorance and ego.

What we require, and what we desperately need, is a renewed call for Shia-Sunni unity. Not a unity based on similarity, but one based on respect, compassion, and the shared love of Allah, His Messenger, and the Ahlulbayt (a.s.).

Let us remember: Islam is a reli-

gion of mercy, not malice. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent as Rahmatul-lil-Alameen, a mercy to all the worlds. His teachings, and those of his purified progeny, promote dialogue, not division; love, not loathing.

It is time to detoxify our online presence. Let our Facebook posts, tweets, and YouTube speeches be fountains of peace, not flames of hatred.

Speak with knowledge, listen with humility, and act with sincerity.

Let's spread love, not hate, because love unites, and hatred only destroys.

Sincerely,
Sibt Muhammad Hassan
Press Enclave, Srinagar

Are K-Startups Built to Last?

From apple-tracking apps to tech cafés, Kashmir’s young businesses are growing fast, but many are ignoring a basic rule that could break them: compliance.

Syed Arsalan Abid

Across Kashmir, a startup wave is gaining ground. In Srinagar, a young founder is helping saffron farmers reach markets across India. In Shopian, two brothers are building a tech tool to trace every apple’s journey. In Baramulla, a café has turned into a buzzing hub for freelancers and founders.

These are exciting times. Local ventures, once rare, are now springing up in towns and villages. Young people are now moving beyond government jobs and trying to build something of their own.

But in this rush to create, one important thing is being ignored: the rules that make a business strong from the inside.

It’s called compliance, a word that might sound boring, but it can decide whether a business survives or shuts down.

When you start a company, you don’t just build a product or service. You also create a legal identity. And that identity comes with responsibilities: paying taxes, filing paperwork, renewing licenses, protecting customer data, and keeping proper records of your finances and team.

Skipping these steps may not hurt right away. But when the problems come, they come hard.

Take a case I recently worked on: a tech startup based in Kashmir had raised a small investment from a Delhi-based angel investor. On paper, the idea looked good. But when the

investor’s legal team started checking documents, they found problems.

The company hadn’t updated its registered office, it had missed important filings, and it had no financial records for two years.

The deal fell through. The investor pulled out. The founder was heartbroken.

And this is not rare.

I’ve seen startups get fined for not paying TDS on time. Others failed to claim government benefits because they didn’t register under the right scheme. Some hired people without contracts, only to land in legal trouble later.

These are simple mistakes. But they can end a startup before it even begins to grow.

What many young founders don’t realize is that compliance is not a hurdle. It’s a support system.

When you follow the rules from the beginning, you’re able to raise funds more easily, join government programs, win tenders, and expand into new markets with confidence.

With new laws like the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, there’s even more reason to pay attention.

If your app collects personal data, like phone numbers, health info, or payment details, you need to protect it. Failing to do that can lead to huge penalties.

So, how can Kashmir’s startups stay compliant without getting overwhelmed?

Start right. Choose the right busi-

ness structure, like a private limited company or LLP. Register with the right authorities. Set up proper contracts with co-founders, employees, and vendors.

Make a calendar. List all your deadlines: GST filings, board meetings, tax payments, license renewals. Don’t leave them for the last minute.

Use tech tools. There are apps and platforms that help you stay on top of compliance – filing returns, tracking documents, managing payroll, and sending alerts when something is due.

Get advice. If you can’t afford a full-time legal officer, consult one at least once a quarter. A simple audit can catch issues early and save you trouble later.

The truth is, many founders treat compliance as an afterthought, something to “fix later.” But by then, the damage is often done.

Startups don’t just fail because of poor ideas. They also fail because of poor planning.

And in Kashmir, where each new venture brings hope, jobs, and pride to a community, every failure is a missed opportunity.

We need these startups to last for years. That can only happen if they’re built on strong, legal foundations.

So as you build your dream company, don’t forget to build it right.

The author is an advocate, solicitor, and advisor who helps startups across Kashmir and India set up legally sound businesses.

The Missing Forum

Kashmir’s classrooms have talent and awareness. What they lack is a formal platform for student voice.

Madhat Bin Hashmat

In India’s leading universities, student politics is a rehearsal for real democracy. It’s where future ministers learn how to debate, where civil servants learn to listen, and where journalists sharpen their questions. It’s where representation begins.

But in Kashmir, those training grounds remain empty.

Student unions in the region’s colleges and universities are either dormant or banned. Elections don’t happen. Manifestos aren’t written. There are no campus debates about fees, fellowships, or academic reform.

A student in Srinagar or Pulwama can’t stand for union president due to paucity of the structure.

This silence isn’t harmless. It’s a vacuum. And it’s costing Kashmir its next generation of democratic leaders.

Kashmiri students are among the brightest in the country. They top national exams, win scholarships, and enter elite institutions across India.

They are socially aware, politically conscious, and eager to shape their world. But without student politics, that awareness is kept in the shadows.

Compare this to campus-

es in Delhi, Hyderabad, or Kolkata.

There, students write manifestos, contest elections, argue policy, and learn how to lead. It’s no accident that leaders like Arun Jaitley, Kanhaiya Kumar, and Indira Gandhi began in student unions.

Globally, too, Barack Obama and Nelson Mandela shaped their political instincts in classrooms and campus meetings.

But sadly, Kashmiri students are being denied that journey.

The reasons usually cited are security concerns or fears of unrest. But a functioning student union doesn’t breed chaos. It gives students a platform to negotiate peacefully, represent responsibly, and raise concerns within a system, not outside it.

Without such forums, students are left to navigate power structures alone, their voices lost in red tape and indifference.

Worse, their political energy risks being either suppressed or misdirected.

Student politics is not perfect. It comes with dissent and disruption, just like democracy itself. But it also builds skills: how to organize, listen, and lose with grace.

These are tools for leadership, not weapons of protest.

And denying them weakens our institutions, not strengthens them.

Kashmir varsities need student forums as a democratic necessity. Campus elections must return, backed by clear rules, institutional support, and leadership training.

Civil society, educators, and policymakers must come together to make this possible. That includes codes of conduct, conflict-resolution mechanisms, and mentorship programs.

Kashmiri youth don’t need to be “kept out” of politics. They need to be invited in, responsibly. They deserve to run for office, draft resolutions, and represent their peers. They deserve to speak, and to be heard.

Democracy doesn’t begin with voting at 18. It begins much earlier, in classrooms, debates, and campus corridors.

That’s where ideas are shaped, voices are tested, and the habit of participation takes root.

In Kashmir, that beginning is missing. It’s time we bring it back.

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The Road That Never Was

Despite public demand, the Kapran–Desa route remains absent from national highway plans and government priorities.

Peerzada Mohsin Shafi

Kapran is a remote area located about 18 kilometers from the historic Mughal Garden of Verinag in South Kashmir. Blessed with breathtaking natural beauty, the region boasts a striking and expansive landscape shaped by nature.

Between Verinag and Kapran lie several villages, each rich in history and culture. The road connecting them is fully macadamized, beginning at the District Headquarters in Anantnag and continuing through Verinag all the way to Kapran and beyond. Along the way, it passes through prominent villages such as Kokagund and Nowgam.

At Chowgund, the road splits into two branches, one leading to villages like Rain, Koot, Heward, and Dudhwagan, and the other connecting places like Qammar. These routes eventually merge again, forming a path that leads further to Reshipora, Kapran, Gawas, Chohhan, and Dedibal.

The road connectivity in this region is relatively good, offering promising opportunities for tourism and the development of renewable resources.

Sarbal Lake, nestled in the area, is a hidden gem for trekkers. Despite its potential, it remains off the mainstream tourism map. Dedibal, the last point accessible by motorable road, resembles the renowned tourist destination of Pahalgam, yet remains largely undiscovered. Surrounded by dense, green forests, it offers a serene and untouched paradise.

On the Doda side, reports indicate that the road extends only up to Manjani Desa, after which travelers must undertake a 35-kilometer trek on foot to reach the Chenab Valley.

Interestingly, if one opens a map application at Dedibal and searches for Doda, the distance appears to be just a 15-minute drive.

Local legend holds that this once served as the shortest route between Kashmir and Doda. However, the terrain is far from motorable. It’s a rugged mountain path that must be crossed on foot to reach the Desa area of Doda.

In the early 1900s, Jammu & Kashmir, as well as much of the rest of India, was underdeveloped, and people often relied on traditional footpaths used by nomads for travel and trade. Much like other mountainous regions, the people of Kashmir and the Chenab Valley used ancient routes to travel between Doda and the valley, and vice versa.

Before the construction of roads and the Jawahar Tunnel, travelers had no option but to cross the treacherous Banihal Pass on foot to reach Jammu from Kashmir. In the Ramban region, residents of Gool used to navigate difficult mountain passes like Daggan



Top, Darsaa Gali, and Mouni Top to reach the Reasi district. Such examples of traditional foot routes can be found throughout Jammu and Kashmir.

In this context, there is nothing particularly unique about the Kapran–Desa route, though some locals have romanticized it as a dream project. Across India, there are hundreds of similar paths where locals have long proposed road construction, but many remain unapproved by the government.

In Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand, for instance, the people of Gangotri Valley used a traditional footpath for years to travel between Mukhba, the winter residence of the Gangotri temple priests, and Jangla. In the 2000s, a proposal to build a motorable road on this route was submitted by local authorities to promote tourism and pilgrimage. However, it was rejected due to environmental concerns and the ecological sensitivity of the area. To this day, the route remains inaccessible to vehicles.

Another example is the Nimmu–Padum–Darcha road in Ladakh.

For generations, residents of Zaskar traveled by foot or horseback along this route to reach Leh or Manali. In the late 1970s, local Buddhist communities and Ladakhi residents pushed for a road to connect Zaskar with Himachal Pradesh via this corridor.

Despite decades of demand, construction faced long delays. Eventually, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) began work on the route, but by then, alternatives like the Manali–Leh Highway had taken priority. As a result, the Nimmu–Padum–Darcha road still requires sections to be traveled on foot.

Similarly, the Stilwell Road, also known as the Ledo Road, in Arunachal Pradesh was once a critical military supply route during World War II, connecting India to China through Myanmar. Despite its historic importance, it too has seen minimal development since then.

After India gained independence, local communities in Arunachal Pradesh urged the government to upgrade the Stilwell Road into a fully motorable route. They argued that the road could boost connectivity with Myanmar and unlock new economic opportunities for the region.

However, the Indian government declined the proposals, citing sensitive border issues and the high cost of maintaining a road through such rugged and seasonally challenging terrain. Instead, the government focused on developing alternative road networks, such as the Itanagar–Tezpur route, while strategically prioritizing regions like Tawang.

A similar story unfolded in Himachal Pradesh with the Koti–Bastara road.

This ancient trade path, which links Kullu to Chamba, had been used for generations. Due to the high-altitude terrain, building a road was nearly impossible for much of history, so people relied on footpaths to transport goods and move between the valleys.

In the early 1990s, local villagers and district officials proposed constructing a proper road to support the region’s growing population and improve accessibility. But the plan encountered serious roadblocks, including environmental concerns and high construction costs.

Ultimately, the government opted for a new alignment via Balu, leaving the traditional Koti–Bastara route as a

walking trail still used by locals.

Another example is the old Kullu–Manali foot trail.

Before the Manali–Leh Highway was built, this route crossing the Rohtang Pass was widely used for trade and travel. In the 1980s, residents appealed to the government to convert the footpath into a motorable road to support tourism and commerce.

But the proposal was sidelined due to the high altitude and harsh weather conditions at Rohtang. Instead, the government chose to construct a more viable road farther south. The new Manali–Leh Highway bypassed the old trail entirely, offering a safer and more sustainable option for vehicular traffic.

In the 1980s, residents of Spiti Valley and surrounding areas proposed building a road to connect Kaza with Manali. The existing footpath was insufficient for transporting goods and people, especially during the harsh winter months. However, the proposal faced long delays due to budget constraints. Eventually, the government built a road via a different alignment, through Rohtang Pass and Kunzum Pass.

These are just a few examples, but a broader pattern emerges.

The much-discussed Kapran–Desa route, often referred to as a “dream project” and portrayed as a long-pending proposal, appears to be more symbolic than practical. As seen in earlier cases, the government has often opted for alternate routes instead of following the alignments proposed by locals.

The same holds true for the Kapran–Desa corridor, which some view as a potential link between the Kashmir Valley and the Chenab Valley.

Instead of pursuing this route, the government has chosen to develop the National Highway-244 (NH-244), which connects Anantnag to Chenani via Kokernag, Vailoo, Chatroo, Kishtwar, and Doda.

Currently, the government is investing approximately ₹10,375 crore in this highway project to improve connectivity between the Kashmir and Chenab valleys. Given the scale of this investment, it seems unlikely that a parallel project such as the Kapran–Desa route would receive funding.

Furthermore, NH-244 is expected to significantly shorten travel time between Doda and Kishtwar, reducing the current distance of 59 km to just 30 km upon completion of key components like the Khelani Tunnel.

Land acquisition is another major factor.

The terrain along the Kapran–Desa route involves extensive land from both the Anantnag and Doda sides, which makes acquisition both complicated and expensive.

When the government is already spending billions on NH-244 to serve the same purpose, allocating additional funds for Kapran–Desa becomes economically unviable.

According to the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), land acquisition costs in such terrain average around ₹3.6 crore per hectare. For the Kapran–Desa route, at least ₹650 crore would be required for land acquisition alone, before even accounting for construction and environmental challenges.

Despite all evidence to the contrary, many people continue to hold on to the illusion that the Kapran–Desa road is a viable and imminent project.

During my research on the matter, I obtained a copy of Unstarred Question No. 4164, posed by former MPs Hasnain Masoodi and Jugal Kishore to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), which was answered on July 18, 2019.

Among several questions, the MPs had asked for the current status of various infrastructure projects in Jammu & Kashmir, including the Kapran–Desa–Doda Tunnel, Mughal Road Tunnel, Qazigund–Banihal Tunnel, Pahalgam–Panikhar Road, Kulgam–Gulabgarh Road, Tral–Pahalgam Road, and Shar-i-Shali–Tral Road.

The Ministry’s response was unequivocal: “Kapran–Desa–Doda Tunnel, Pahalgam–Panikhar Road, Kulgam–Gulabgarh Road, Tral–Pahalgam Road, and Shar-i-Shali–Tral Road are neither part of notified National Highways nor ‘In-principle’ National Highways, and hence fall outside the mandate of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.”

In simple terms, the Kapran–Desa route is not a National Highway, nor is it under active consideration to be

come one.

More than six years have passed since that statement, and I have filed multiple RTI applications to verify whether the status has changed.

Interestingly, both the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) responded with nearly identical one-line replies: the road does not fall under their jurisdiction, and no proposal has been submitted for its construction.

Further, the Central Public Information Officer of MoRTH confirmed that there is currently no proposal to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for this road.

Perhaps the most talked-about moment in recent years came when the Public Works Department (PWD) Minister announced during a session of the Union Territory Assembly that a proposal for the Kapran–Desa road had been submitted.

The statement quickly went viral. However, no official record has ever surfaced detailing when or where such a proposal was submitted. Similar claims had gone viral in 2016 and on earlier occasions, yet no tangible progress has ever followed.

During the PDP–BJP coalition government, the then PWD Minister had also acknowledged that Kapran–Desa and other similar projects were still awaiting approval. Even today, the current PWD Minister has clarified that there is no proposal to upgrade the Anantnag–Doru–Verinag approach road either.

In conclusion, while the idea of the Kapran–Desa road is deeply rooted in local aspirations and historical memory, it remains far from becoming a reality.

With no official proposal, DPR, and status under national highway development plans, the project continues to exist more in the public imagination than in any policy framework.

Considering the massive ₹10,375 crore investment already underway on NH-244 to connect the Kashmir and Chenab valleys, it is highly unlikely the government will divert funds to a parallel route with high land acquisition costs and limited feasibility.

Unless there is a major political shift or extraordinary policy change, the chances of the Kapran–Desa road being constructed remain extremely slim.

As of now, there is neither the political will nor any official indication that the project is on the government’s radar.

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Aadhaar OTP Verification Now Mandatory For Online Tatkal Booking: Railways

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Railway authorities have officially mandated Aadhaar verification through OTP for online ticket bookings under the Tatkal system across the country, a senior railway official said on Wednesday. Senior Divisional Commercial

Manager, Jammu Division, Northern Railway, Uchit Singhal announced that from July 15 onwards, Aadhaar OTP verification became mandatory for online Tatkal booking. Singhal emphasised that these amendments were made to ensure fair and transparent access to Tatkal tickets for passengers,

protecting their interests and ensuring that genuine users benefit from the system. "Passengers will not be able to get Tatkal tickets without verification through mobile OTP. Under the new system, Tatkal tickets will be available for booking through the IRCTC's official website, mobile app, or the

Indian Railways' PRS counters," he said. Tickets will be made available for booking through authorised agents only after authentication of the OTP generated by the Railway Reservation System, which will be sent to the mobile number provided by the user at the

time of booking, he added. "Those taking Tatkal reservation tickets will now have to carry a mobile with a SIM card linked to their Aadhaar number while booking the ticket," he informed. The railways also maintained that bulk booking will not be allowed during the first

30 minutes of the booking window. "To prevent bulk booking during the initial period of rail reservation, authorised ticketing agents of Indian Railways will not be allowed to book Tatkal tickets during the first 30 minutes of the booking window," Singhal said.

This restriction will apply from 10 am to 10.30 am for AC classes and from 11 am to 11.30 am for non-AC classes. The railway administration has requested passengers to take note of these changes and ensure that their profiles are linked with their Aadhaar number to avoid inconvenience.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

'I Lost Everything'

was introduced to Aviator, an online betting game with cartoonish graphics and lethal consequences.

The game is simple: a red plane lifts off, a multiplier ticks upward, and the players must cash out before the plane disappears. If they don't, they lose their bet.

"The first time I won, I thought God was helping me," Noor says. Encouraged, he bet more.

He sold his car, worth 8 lakh, for half its price to invest more. Then he took out loans, one after another. The debt piled up.

Finally, in a desperate move, Noor sold his house, his last asset. He gambled again, and lost again.

Now he sleeps wherever he can find shelter. His family of six has scattered. His phone pings daily with repayment alerts from banks and digital lenders. His face has become a warning on WhatsApp groups and community forums.

Noor is not alone. In Srinagar's old city, a 23-year-old man pawned his laptop and mother's gold bangles after losing 4.5 lakh to the same game.

In other stories, a Kashmiri teacher used a colleague's identity to take out a 3 lakh loan, while a college student stopped attending classes after losing 70,000 borrowed from his classmates.

Each story echoes the same pattern: small wins at first, then larger bets, followed by total collapse.

According to cyber-monitoring sources in Srinagar, thousands of unique IP addresses in Jammu and Kashmir have accessed Aviator-like betting platforms over the past year.

Most users are young men, between 17 and 35, they say, many using VPNs to bypass restrictions.

Many techies term these platforms offshore, run through Telegram channels, shady websites, or even "gaming" apps advertised by YouTubers and influencers.

Once hooked, players often shift between multiple apps, using fake IDs, third-party wallets, and digital loans to keep playing.

Dr. Ishrat Jan, a Srinagar-based psychologist, says online games like Aviator exploit a gambler's worst weakness: the illusion of control.

"It doesn't feel like gambling in a den," she explains. "It's just a phone screen. You feel alone, but in control. That's the lie."

In her clinic, she now sees a new profile of addicts: tech-savvy, educated, financially anxious, and deeply ashamed.

One 19-year-old patient confessed to spending 11 hours a day playing Aviator. Another admitted using his sister's wedding savings to chase losses.

Many don't speak to their families. Some drop out of college. Others vanish into cities, trying to escape mounting debt.

Online gambling is banned under the Public Gambling Act, 1977, but digital games like Aviator operate in a grey zone. The minute one is banned, another takes its place.

Law enforcement is overwhelmed.

"We shut down ten platforms, and twenty appear overnight," a cyber cop says. "And the victims don't report. They're too embarrassed."

Earlier this year, the J&K Cyber Police issued an advisory calling Aviator and its clones "digital betting traps." But with no central regulation and limited tech capacity, enforcement remains reactive at best.

Some local clerics have begun warning congregations during Friday sermons. Schools are discreetly reporting rising cases of online gaming among teenagers. Families have started blocking access to UPI apps and disabling wallets on their children's phones.

Yet awareness lags behind damage. In working-class neighbourhoods, Aviator is pitched as a "side hustle." In upscale homes, it's a late-night thrill.

"In Kashmir, jobs are scarce, anxieties are high, and technology is cheap," says sociologist Nayeema Rasheed. "Games like this offer the illusion of hope to those who feel they have no control over their lives."

In the last part of his viral video, Noor speaks directly to the youth: "At first, it looks like a blessing. A chance to fix everything. But it will take everything from you. Don't do what I did."

His video has prompted some sympathy, some ridicule, and hundreds of forwarded warnings.

A few well-wishers have begun raising money to help him repay what they can. Most others are asking how many more Noors are out there – silent, ashamed, and still betting.

J&K Records

an orange alert for Jammu division till July 19, warning of flash floods, landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones, particularly in hilly and vulnerable areas.

Rainfall Normalized
Data compiled by the MeT shows that J&K has so far received 157 mm of rainfall, nearly equal to the normal 159.4 mm for the June 1–July 16 period. Nine weather stations, including Srinagar, recorded normal precipitation. However, areas like Kishtwar and Shopian continued to face a severe shortfall with rainfall deficiency ranging from 60% to 99%.

On the flip side, Rajouri stood out as the only station to record large excess rainfall this season, while Udhampur, Reasi, and Samba also

recorded above-normal rains.

Advisory for Public and Authorities
People living in flood- and landslide-prone areas have been advised to remain cautious and avoid unnecessary travel, especially during intense spells. Authorities have been urged to remain on high alert and ensure preparedness to mitigate disruption and ensure public safety.

Jhelum Sees

the 21-foot flood mark. "In Munshi Bagh, it stood at 5.94 feet (flood mark: 18 feet) and at Asham, the level was 3.84 feet (flood mark: 14 feet)," the data says.

It adds, other readings include: Pampore: 0.05m, Wullar Lake: 1574.94m (against full level of 1578.00m), while the tributaries also remained well below danger levels as Vishow Nallah at Khudwani: 2.73m, Rambiyara Nallah at Wachi: 0.01m, Lidder Nallah at Batkoot: 0.79m, and the Sindh Nallah at Doderhama: 1.06m.

A senior I&FC Department official said there is no flood threat as of now. "Water levels are being regularly monitored, and the situation remains under control," he said.

Adding to the assessment, Faizan Arif Keng, an Independent Weather Forecaster from Kashmir Weather, said that most of the rainfall so far has occurred in central Kashmir.

"Rainfall in higher catchment areas is more crucial for a significant rise in river levels. The effect on Jhelum will likely reflect a day later or more, once the upper regions contribute to runoff," he told KNO.

Meanwhile, according to the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, multiple spells of rain are expected in the coming days, particularly from July 16–17 and again from July 21–23, with warnings for heavy to very heavy rain at isolated places.

The advisory issued by the MeT reads, "Risk of flash floods, landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones in vulnerable areas, while the public, especially those in hilly or flood-prone areas, are advised to remain alert and follow official updates.(KNO)

Indian State

peace. This is the 'Naya Kashmir' that reflects aspirations and ambition," he said.

Infrastructure, Investment, and Growth
Sinha also listed key development metrics from his tenure, highlighting major infrastructure and economic advances.

"Travel time from Jammu to Srinagar has been halved—from 9 hours to 4.5 hours—thanks to massive infrastructure work. Over 1.5 lakh crore has been invested in tunnels and highways alone," he said.

Private sector investment, he added, has risen from 1,400 crore to nearly 30,000 crore, while projects worth 10,000–12,000 crore are already operational. "Tourism has hit a record high with over 2.38 crore tourist arrivals last year. Our power generation capacity has also increased significantly," Sinha added.

Institutions like IIT, IIM, AIIMS, NIFT, and seven new medical colleges have also come up in recent years, he said, reflecting the government's focus on long-term capacity building.

'Every Terror Act Treated as War'
On the security front, Sinha reiterated that terrorism continues to be a part of Pakistan's state policy. "Our response has been clear and firm. Every act of terror is treated as an act of war. Operation Sindoor made that evident to the world," he said.

He added that infiltration attempts are being foiled regularly and that security forces remain on high alert across the region.

On Criticism, Governance, and Rebuilding Lives

Responding to former CM Mehbooba Mufti's criticism over alleged targeting of employees from a particular community, Sinha said action under Article 311 is only taken after credible investigation. "We are committed to protecting national security. No innocent will be harmed, but no threat will be tolerated," he said.

On power-sharing, he clarified that the J&K Reorganization Act clearly defines the roles of the LG and the elected government. "My relationship with the Chief Minister is cordial. I meet the CM regularly and work strictly within my constitutional limits," he said.

Sinha also spoke about recent initiatives for terror-affected families. "Just yesterday, 40 terror-affected individuals were given government jobs. We are actively processing financial aid, FIR registrations, and helping with livelihood support," he said.

'Winds of Change in Kashmir Are Real'
Highlighting the cultural revival in Kashmir, Sinha said the resumption of Muharram processions after 35 years, reopening of cinema halls, and renewed celebration of festivals across communities point to a changing social fabric.

"From fear to freedom, from despair to development—Kashmir is evolving. The Kashmir of today is peaceful, progressive, and ready for the future," the Lieutenant Governor concluded.

Won't Spare Those

Union Territory was steadily moving towards a future marked by peace, development and integration, despite repeated attempts by Pakistan to derail the process.

"This wind of change has rattled the terrorist nation Pakistan, and it constantly tries to hurt the soul of India and its cultural-spiritual

fabric," LG Sinha said. He described the recent Pahalgam terror attack as a "desperate attempt to stall the economic progress of Jammu and Kashmir," but asserted that such efforts will not succeed. "We are marching ahead with renewed strength," he added.

Emphasising the Union government's commitment to peace, Sinha said, "We are determined to completely wipe out terrorism and remnants of the terror ecosystem. We will not spare anyone who speaks the language of terror outfits. Strict action will be taken against such elements."

The Lieutenant Governor credited the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government for fulfilling Mahatma Gandhi's dream of a peaceful and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir. "Gandhiji saw a ray of hope in J&K. The Prime Minister is turning that hope into reality," he said.

He added that the abrogation of Article 370 marked a turning point for the region. "Indian State authority has been completely established in J&K. Youth have realised that their future lies with India, and local terrorist recruitment is at an all-time low," the LG stated.

He also highlighted various measures being taken to sensitise youth and dismantle radicalisation efforts, while pointing to development milestones, improved security, and increased civic participation as indicators of a transformative shift in the region.

The event also saw the inauguration of a newly developed Gandhi Smriti Art Gallery. The seminar was attended by several dignitaries, including former Union Minister and Vice-Chairman of Gandhi Smriti, Vijay Goel.

NC, PDP Back

"You might remember that when the Supreme Court passed its order (on Article 370 of the Constitution), it called for the restoration of statehood as soon as possible. We are saying that as soon as possible has gone long back and now, Jammu and Kashmir should get back statehood as early as possible," he added.

Asked about the reported plan of the Congress to gherao Parliament on the opening day of the Monsoon session, the National Conference (NC) leader said, "We have had no talks with them. We will talk to them and see what we have to do."

The ruling NC in Jammu and Kashmir expressed gratitude to the Congress leaders for taking the initiative.

"We welcome this and thank the Congress leadership for taking the initiative," NC's Jammu and Kashmir spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said in Srinagar.

He said there is no reason to delay the restoration of statehood to the Union Territory further.

"We are hopeful that the government will bring the bill (for the restoration of statehood) in the forthcoming Monsoon session," Dar said.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) spokesperson Mohit Bhan said statehood is the right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and there has already been a delay in restoring it.

"As far as statehood is concerned, that should be given to Jammu and Kashmir. The prime minister and the home minister have promised it and I think much time has already passed and Jammu and Kashmir should get its statehood back," he said.

Bhan, however, asserted that the "real fight" is for the restoration of Articles 370 and 35A, which were revoked by the Centre on August 5, 2019 and the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into Union territories.

"The real fight is the restoration of Articles 370 and 35A, for which it is really important to raise voice in Parliament and in all the institutions of the country," he said.

The PDP spokesperson pointed out that Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India under certain conditions, including Articles 370 and 35A, which were negotiated by the Congress, and added that the same party now hesitates to talk about those.

"What pains us is that the same Congress party's leader, Rahul Gandhi, hesitates to talk about Articles 370 and 35A. I think it is the role of the opposition and especially the Congress party to raise its voice over Articles 370 and 35A," he said.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Karra expressed gratitude to the party leadership for its letter to Modi.

"I express gratitude to Hon'ble LoP Shri @RahulGandhi ji and AICC President Shri @kharge ji for their letter to PM Shri Narendra Modi, urging the restoration of full statehood for J&K and inclusion of Ladakh under the 6th Schedule," Karra said in a post on X.

He said the party demands immediate action in the Monsoon session of Parliament to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

"@INCIndia stands firm for J&K's rights,"

Karra added.

J&K's Road

Gaps & High-Risk Zones
The studies point to significant gaps in road design and maintenance. Lack of lane markings, absence of pedestrian infrastructure, poor lighting, and missing safety medians have been flagged as major safety hazards. Accident-prone junctions—especially roundabouts and T-junctions—account for 42% of junction-related crashes.

The data also reveals that vehicles aged between 5 to 10 years are disproportionately involved in accidents, suggesting lapses in vehicle fitness and regulatory checks.

Black Spots & Highways
The Rajbagh area has been identified as a major accident blackspot, recording 75 crashes in the last five years. National highways remain the most dangerous routes, particularly those passing through Jammu, Udhampur, Samba, and Kathua—districts accounting for nearly 40% of total fatalities.

Urgent Recommendations
The reports recommend a multi-pronged strategy to curb the rising toll:

Routine road maintenance, especially in hilly, snow-bound, and landslide-prone areas

Improved road design, drainage, and signage

Stricter enforcement of traffic laws, including speed monitoring

Targeted awareness campaigns to promote safer driving behavior

Revival and expansion of public transport to reduce pressure on roads

Experts Warn of Crisis

"The infrastructure deficit and institutional neglect are costing lives and livelihoods," the report warns. "If timely interventions are not made, this could spiral into a full-blown public health and economic crisis."

With accident numbers rising and the roads getting busier each year, the studies underline the urgency of immediate reforms—both on policy and ground levels—to make transportation safer for everyone in the region. (inputs from KNO)

Appointing Revenue

to develop a policy allowing them some months or a year to acquire basic Urdu skills. If they don't have Urdu knowledge, they won't be able to read revenue records effectively," he explained.

In another development, CM welcomed the letter from Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging the restoration of statehood for Jammu and Kashmir. He expressed gratitude and said that he had long awaited such a move.

"I appreciate Kharge and Rahul for raising the issue of statehood restoration. We haven't asked for anything that hasn't been promised to us. Promises were made in Parliament, the Supreme Court, and public meetings that statehood would be restored at the earliest. I believe the time for delay has passed, and it should be restored now," he asserted.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister projected that the ongoing Amarnath Yatra will see over 3.5 lakh pilgrims this year. "Despite concerns that pilgrimages would decline after the Pahalgam attack, large numbers are visiting Kashmir, and the pilgrimage is proceeding smoothly. We expect the number to easily cross 3.5 lakh," he said. (KNO)

Woman Pilgrim

pilgrim was declared dead on arrival, they said, adding the deceased was identified as Sona Bai (55), a resident of Rajasthan.

With this, the death toll in this year's Amarnath Yatra has risen to 15.

HC Closes PIL

Subsequent to the submissions, a bench of Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh Oswal closed the PIL filed earlier this year, seeking court's direction to quash Clause 3(b) of Annexure 'A' to Government order No.49-JK(SVD) of 2022 dated March 22, 2022, issued by the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, as regards imposition of the eligibility requirement of passing at least 8th standard for poor girls to avail the benefit under SMAS.

As soon as the hearing in the PIL started, the petitioner submitted that prior to institution of this petition, he had submitted numerous representations to the authorities as regards his concerns and grievances but to no avail. Senior AAG A. R. Malik, on behalf of the authorities, submitted that the competent authority was already cognisant of the representation submitted by the petitioner. He submitted that it would be expedient if the PIL was disposed of at this stage to enable the authorities to examine and deal with the concerns and grievances of the petitioner and take necessary measures in accordance with law.

That being so, the petitioner submitted that the PIL be disposed of in terms of the statement made by the senior AAG. However, he urged that authorities be directed to take a decision in this regard within a specified time.

As to this, the senior AAG submitted that the matter shall be examined in the right earnest by the authorities and appropriate orders in this regard shall be passed within a period of two months.

"In the wake of the above, the writ petition (PIL) is disposed of in terms of the statements made by the learned counsel for the parties," the court said.

In April this year, the government increased the financial assistance under the scheme for the poor girls of marriageable age belonging to AAY ration card holder families from Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000.

For girls from families with Priority Household (PHH) ration cards, the financial assistance will remain at Rs 50,000.

Any girl of legally marriageable age from an AAY or PHH ration card-holding family will be

eligible for the one-time financial assistance.

PIL On DV Act

establishing of shelter homes for destitute women in Jammu and Kashmir as mandated under legislation.

A division bench of Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh Oswal closed the proceedings in the PIL after hearing submissions by senior AAG and counsel representing the petitioner organization—Mehram Women's Cell Kashmir.

Among others, the organisation in its plea filed in 2022 highlighted absence of shelter homes, ill-equipped shelter homes, lack of awareness to the provisions of the Act, insensitivity towards the domestic violence cases, unqualified Protection Officers as also no training programs being conducted by the authorities.

Senior AAG, Abdul Rashid Malik submitted that in Jammu and Kashmir, Child Development Protection Officers (CDPOs) have been designated as Protection Officers vide SRO 427 of 2015 to ensure district-level coverage. He said roles of CDPOs are well aligned with the objectives of the legislation since they coordinate services for vulnerable population including women facing domestic violence.

Further, he said, CDPOs are trained in social welfare schemes and have practical experience in handling cases relating to women and child protection. Similarly, he said, the Mission Director (Mission Shakti) in coordination with the District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs) have already initiated a training program for CDPOs to enhance their understanding of the Act. And they are duly sensitized to domestic violence issues, he said.

However, he said the workload as regards the CDPOs has indeed multiplied and that the same needs to be addressed at the earliest to ensure quality and expeditious service delivery. Similarly, he said, as regards shelter homes, service providers, counseling, welfare experts, medical facilities, awareness and publicity, "a substantial ground has been covered".

He said that the Jammu and Kashmir administration was committed to effective implementation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 as is made out from the operational framework of 20 OSCs, two Shakti Sadans, 11 Shakti Sadans and five Sakhi Niwas, ten Special Cells, Nari Adalats, and Women Helpline (181) under Mission Shakti.

Amicus Curiae in the PIL, Sharaf Wani, submitted that while the PIL has substantially served its purpose, "still it is a work-in-progress and lot needs to be done."

The amicus curiae further submitted that for present, the court may close the proceedings in the present PIL but she be granted liberty to approach the Court by a fresh petition in the event the schemes and several other initiatives that are alleged to have been initiated by the authorities do not make any tangible and substantial progress.

"In the wake of the above and the statement made by the learned counsel for the parties, the proceedings in the petition at hand are accordingly closed," the court said and disposed of the PIL.

MHA Approves

significant security restructuring to assist local police in law and order and anti-militancy operations. (KNT)

HC Extends

agency such as the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) or the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

An FIR was registered on February 7, 2011, at Janipur police station in Jammu after two persons carrying 12 bore guns were nabbed and their weapons licenses, issued by Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Mendhar (Poonch), were found to have addresses of Kupwara, Kathua and Budhal.

An SIT was constituted, and it found that some fake gun licenses were prepared in the office of the additional district magistrate, Rajouri, and the SDM of Mendhar.

Accordingly, one docket in respect of 216 gun licenses was sent to the Rajouri police station, and another for 179 gun licenses to the Mendhar police station, leading to the registration of separate FIRs in 2011. Two more FIRs were registered in Kandi and Thanamandi in Rajouri district in 2012 and 2015.

Various petitions have been filed by the accused, including some government officials, seeking quashing of the four FIRs, on the ground that an FIR has already been registered in respect of the same incident with the Janipur Police Station.

Disposing of the petitions seeking quashing of the additional FIRs, Justice Rajnesh Oswal on July 11 said there was no merit in the pleas, agreeing with the argument of the Senior Additional Advocate General Monika Kohli, who vehemently opposed the plea.

The judge also said the FIRs registered with Thanamandi and Kandi police stations are required to be investigated by the SIT already constituted by the government.

"Accordingly, Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, is directed to transfer the investigation in the two FIRs to the same SIT, constituted to investigate the earlier case registered at police station Janipur," the high court said.

It directed the Inspector General of Police to monitor the SIT probe and ensure that it is concluded as expeditiously as possible and the final report is filed before the competent court in accordance with law.



Uri-Baramulla Road Widening Turns Nightmare For Commuters

Idrees Bukhtiyar

SRINAGAR: The much-anticipated two-lane widening project of Uri-Baramulla road has turned into a daily ordeal for locals and commuters with various spots witnessing persistent traffic snarls, dust pollution, and growing environmental concerns for over a year.

Residents and daily travelers have expressed deep concern over what they describe as “poor planning and mismanagement” of the project. The road, which connects several key areas in north Kashmir, is currently under expansion, but the lack of proper workforce has resulted in daily inconvenience.

“Every day, we are stuck in traffic for hours. There’s no proper traffic regulation, and the work goes on haphazardly without anyone overseeing it,” said Shafiq Ahmad, a local of main town Uri.

“The unregulated work zones and absence of adequate personnel to clear and manage the sites have left vehicles crawling along the stretch, especially during peak hours,” he added.

Locals have also raised alarm over the rising dust levels due to continuous earthwork and no measures to suppress it.

“There is no water sprinkling at all. The dust has made it difficult for children and elderly to travel on the road,” said Bashir Bhat, a local of Garkote village.

“Many residents claim they have developed respiratory issues due to the thick layers of dust blanketing the road,” he said.

Adding to the growing woes is the alleged large-scale felling of trees, particularly near N S Bridge and Boniyar. Locals alleged this is causing repeated landslides whenever it rains. “They have cut down so many trees, but not a single sapling has been planted in return. The slope near the bridge becomes dangerous with even a light shower,” said Abrar Ahmad, a local social activist.

Residents have now urged the authorities to shift the majority of the construction activity to night hours in order to alleviate the traffic chaos during the day.

“Why can’t they do the heavy work at night when the road is less busy? That would be a major relief for everyone,” said a bus driver who plies on the Uri-Baramulla route daily.

An official from the Uri administration said that he will look into the matter.

Akbar Jaipuri Memorial Committee Condoles Shahid Budgami’s Demise

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Akbar Jaipuri Memorial Committee has expressed sorrow over the demise of Shahid Budgami, a renowned literary figure whose contributions left an indelible mark on Kashmiri and Urdu literature.

In a statement, the Committee described Budgami as a “towering literary and cultural figure of Kashmir” and a close associate of the legendary poet Syed Akbar Jaipuri. “Budgami Sahab was a celebrated poet, author, and lyricist whose work enriched Kashmiri and Urdu literature for decades,” the statement read.

Among his most notable contributions was Kashi Marsi Hund Tawareekh, a landmark work that traced the history of Marsiya poetry in Kashmir, preserving a spiritual and literary

tradition deeply rooted in the Valley’s cultural ethos.

Known for his literary discipline and unwavering faith, Shahid Budgami hosted and conducted Hussaini Mushairas at his residence, Hussain Manzil, creating a unique space that merged devotion and poetic expression.

Recalling the personal bond between Budgami and Akbar Jaipuri, the Committee noted, “The Jaipuri family remembers his warm calls on the landline to recite his poetry to Akbar Jaipuri Sahab—a bond marked by literary affection and shared spiritual vision.”

Describing him as a kind-hearted soul whose presence will be deeply missed, the statement concluded, “He loved Jaipuri Sahab, and we loved him. May his memory continue to inspire.”

21st Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting Held

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: The 21st Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Ganderbal convened with high enthusiasm and broad stakeholder participation.

The event was notably marked by the inauguration of a series of agricultural and allied infrastructure units by Prof. Dr. Nazir Ahmed Ganie, Vice Chancellor, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), Shalimar.

Delivering a keynote, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nazir Ahmed Ganie lauded the KVK Ganderbal team for their exemplary work, proudly declaring it the number one KVK in Kashmir Valley. He further emphasized its immense potential to ascend to the top position among all KVKs in India and highlighted the role of KVKs as dynamic institutions bridging the gap between scientific research and field application.

He also engaged with progressive farmers present at the event, soliciting their feedback to better tailor future interventions and emphasized the importance of educating our youth about agricultural innovation and the value addition of agricultural products by applying scientific methods.

He stressed the need to guide youth on how to adopt innovative agricultural practices and enhance the agricultural products through proper scientific

approaches.

Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Extension, SKUAST-K, addressed the gathering and emphasized the critical role of such platforms in promoting farmer awareness, skill development, and adaptive research. She reiterated the University’s commitment to uplift the farming community of Kashmir through sustainable, science-driven solutions.

Earlier, the programme began with a detailed overview by Dr. Suja Nabi Qurashi, Senior Scientist (Horticulture), outlining the day’s agenda and key developments at the Kendra.

Dr. Ajaz Ahmed Malik, Senior Scientist and Head, KVK Ganderbal, presented the Action Taken Report (ATR), Annual Progress Report (APR), and the Annual Action Plan for the forthcoming year.

In a significant milestone for the center, the Vice Chancellor inaugurated several newly established demonstration and research units at the KVK premises, including Entrance Signage, High-Density Cherry Block, First Harvest at Fish Unit, Rootstock Bank, Gul-e-Kashmir – A Bloom Lab, Vegetable Block, Goat Rearing Unit, Molecular Diagnostic Lab and Soil Testing Lab.

These units have been set up to strengthen the practical training ecosystem of KVK Ganderbal, offering region-specific innovations and technology demonstrations aimed at empowering local farmers and entrepreneurs.

Final Survey Approved For New Rail Line Between Jammu & Katra



Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: In a major infrastructure push aimed at enhancing pilgrimage connectivity and boosting regional development, the Ministry of Railways has sanctioned the Final Location Survey (FLS) for an additional rail line between Jammu and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra. The proposed line will span approximately 77.96 kilometres.

The survey, sanctioned at an estimated cost of ₹12.59 crore, will be executed by Northern Railway. It marks a crucial step

towards laying the groundwork for the eventual construction of the new railway corridor, which is expected to offer a more efficient and direct travel option for lakhs of devotees visiting the revered shrine annually.

Railway officials said the project aligns with the broader vision of Indian Railways to modernise infrastructure and improve accessibility to religious and strategic locations. Once operational, the new line is expected to significantly ease congestion on the existing route and bolster both

tourism and local economic activity.

“This initiative is a part of Indian Railways’ continued commitment to enhance connectivity in high-priority areas while supporting regional development,” a senior official said.

The new line is not only expected to streamline pilgrimage travel but also catalyse socio-economic growth across the Jammu region, contributing to improved logistics, increased employment, and better integration of remote areas into the national railway grid.

Continuous Skill Upgradation Key To Lifelong Success: CS

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A landmark two-day conference aimed at transforming the skilling ecosystem of Jammu & Kashmir commenced at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar.

The participants, among others, included representatives from the Union Ministry of Education, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE); NITI Aayog; GDI and senior Administrative Secretaries of the Government of J&K besides representatives from CII, NSDC, BISAG, SIDBI, NABARD, FICCI and industrial houses such as Maruti Suzuki Limited, TATA Strive and J&K Bank. The conference is also being attended by the Director IIT Jammu, Director IIM Jammu, Vice Chancellors of some prominent Universities along with representatives from Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK).

The conference seeks to foster a robust, demand-driven skilling framework by encouraging interactive sessions, consultations and collaborative discussions. Over the next two days, the participants will contribute valuable insights and policy suggestions to build a future-ready, inclusive and industry-aligned skill development roadmap for J&K.

Delivering the keynote address, the Chief Secretary underlined the significance of aligning the skill development ecosystem with the emerging



needs of the industry. While highlighting the priorities, he stressed on Industry-Academia collaboration. He recommended that industries must actively co-develop curricula with academia to ensure relevance and employability of the skilled manpower produced by the skilling institutions.

The other priority, Dulloo emphasized upon is early vocational exposure. He unequivocally maintained that vocational education should be integrated from the school and college levels to build foundational skills early. He remarked that such an educational framework would be a precursor towards creating the skilled workforce that is in sync with the latest market requirements, therefore highly employable anywhere in the country.

Moreover, the Chief Secretary impressed on the fact of nurturing entrepreneurial mindset among all the youngsters. He underscored that the youth should be nurtured not

merely as job seekers but as job creators, empowered to innovate and lead from the front.

Quoting futurist Alvin Toffler, he called for adopting at an earliest the adaptability and lifelong learning model in J&K. He mentioned the author saying that “The illiterate of the future will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.”

The Chief Secretary also stressed the role of convergence and coordination among various departments, institutions and private players to drive impactful and sustainable outcomes.

Pertinently, this workshop is being organised by the Labour & Employment Department and is envisioned not just as a forum to boost employment, but as a strategic effort to build an adaptable, inclusive and futuristic ecosystem. This will greatly help in equipping youth with the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving job market world over.

Lady Doctor Assaulted After Patient's Death At GMC Jammu

Observer News Service

JAMMU: In a deeply disturbing incident, a female doctor at Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu was physically assaulted by the attendants of a patient following his death in the hospital’s emergency ward.

The patient, identified as Rajinder Kumar, had been suffering from a massive brain haemorrhage and was referred to GMC Jammu from PGI with a poor prognosis.

An official of GMC Jammu told KNO that the patient was admitted to GMC Jammu five days ago, after being sent back from PGI with advice for basic medical and nursing care.

“Despite the patient’s terminal condition, doctors at GMC provided the best possible treatment. However, the pa-

tient succumbed to respiratory arrest on July 16,” he said.

In the aftermath of his death, the attendants turned violent, targeting the on-duty staff, including a lady doctor, who was kicked and beaten, the official said.

CCTV footage has captured the gruesome attack, clearly showing the physical assault.

The incident triggered outrage among the medical community. The GMC Jammu administration, faculty, and resident doctors have strongly condemned the violence.

The official said that an FIR has been lodged at the concerned police station against the persons involved.

“The repeated instances of violence against doctors are unacceptable. We stand in solidarity with our medical staff

and demand strict legal action against the culprits,” reads a statement from the GMC administration.

In response to the assault, junior doctors went on a strike, demanding safety and accountability.

To ensure uninterrupted patient care, Principal and Dean Dr. Ashutosh Gupta issued an order directing all clinical and paraclinical Heads of Departments to ensure the deployment of faculty members and consultants in the emergency ward until the junior doctors return to duty.

The medical fraternity across the region has also expressed serious concern over the increasing incidents of violence against healthcare workers and called for stronger security measures at hospitals.

Kashmiri Researcher’s Study Chosen For Global Anthropology Congress

Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: In a significant recognition of academic work rooted in Jammu and Kashmir’s traditional knowledge systems, a research paper by Kashmiri researcher Irfan Ali Banka has been officially accepted for presentation at the prestigious World Anthropological Union (WAU) Congress 2025.

Banka’s paper, titled “Sustainable Grazing and Marginal Environments: Climate Perspectives from Transhumant Pastoralism in Jammu and Kashmir,” will be featured at the global event scheduled to take place in Antigua, Guatemala, from November 3 to 8, 2025.

The congress, themed “Unearthing Humanity: Critical and Urgent Epistemic Redefinitions in World Anthropologies,” is a hybrid gathering of leading scholars, students, and practitioners engaging with pressing anthropological questions worldwide.

According to the official notification issued by the WAU Scientific Committee, Banka’s submission was selected through a rigorous peer-reviewed process based on its academic quality, thematic relevance, and contribution to the congress’s critical objectives.

Reacting to the development, Irfan Ali Banka said,

“I am proud that voices from



J&K’s pastoral landscapes will be part of a global conversation on sustainable futures. This journey is rooted in community knowledge, fieldwork, and the hope that policy will one day walk alongside practice.”

The paper focuses on the climate dimensions of transhumant pastoralism—an age-old migratory practice of livestock herding—and its relevance in marginal ecological zones such as those found in Jammu and Kashmir. Banka’s work underscores how indigenous grazing systems offer valuable insights into sustainability, adaptation, and resilience amid climate uncertainty.

The WAU 2025 Congress is expected to draw global participation, aiming to redefine critical epistemologies in anthropology and highlight underrepresented voices from diverse cultural and ecological landscapes.

People Demand Uniform Test Rates In Private Labs

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With rising concerns over erratic pricing and inconsistent diagnostic results, people across Jammu and Kashmir are demanding that the government implement a uniform rate list for tests conducted at private laboratories.

Speaking to KNO patients as well as attendants said they feel exploited by the current unregulated system, where prices for the same medical test can vary widely—even on the same day.

“Last week, I had to get a test done. One lab charged me Rs 700 while another quoted Rs 1200 for the same test,” said Zareefa Bano, a patient from Anantnag. “How is that fair? There’s no transparency, and it feels like we are being taken advantage of.”

Adding to the frustration, patients also flagged a growing distrust in diagnostic accuracy. “Two labs gave me completely different blood sugar readings on the same day. One said I was diabetic; the other said I was perfectly fine,” said Riyaz Ahmad, a resident of Baramulla. “Which one do I believe? These discrepancies can have serious consequences for our health.”

Patients also raised suspicions over doctors recommending specific labs. “When doctors insist on sending us to particular

private labs, we start to wonder if it’s really about our health or something else,” remarked Javid Lone from Srinagar.

Amid mounting public outrage, Rouf Rangraze, President of the Kashmir Private Diagnostic Centres Association (JKPAC), acknowledged the issue. “We have met Health Minister Sakina Itoo and other senior officials multiple times to demand a uniform rate list. Unfortunately, despite promises, there has been no concrete action yet,” he said.

Rangraze said that such a rate list is essential to bring accountability. “If there’s a government-notified rate structure, any lab that overcharges can be penalised. Without it, there is no legal framework to control pricing, and unethical practices continue unchecked,” he explained.

He added that although the government had announced intentions to issue standard test rates, the delay in implementation is causing further public distress. “The longer the government waits, the more the common people suffer,” Rangraze warned.

Patients and diagnostic centre representatives alike now await decisive action from the authorities. The demand is simple yet urgent: transparency, regulation, and fairness in medical testing services that directly impact lives.

Over 600 PHE Employees Transferred In Baramulla To Fix Water Woes

Agencies

BARAMULLA: Jal Shakti Division Baramulla on Wednesday realigned over 600 field employees across various subdivisions, calling it a long-overdue move, aimed at improving water supply services and addressing serious manpower imbalance in the region.

The top official cited multiple reasons behind the large-scale reshuffle of field staff, including persistent water supply issues, overstaying of employees in the same postings—some for over a decade and the need to rationalize manpower following the retirement of over 200 staff in recent years.

Division head says that the transfer is not only about addressing public complaints but also about rationalizing field strength after decades of static staffing patterns.

“More than 200 of our employees have retired over the past three years and over 100 are due for retirement soon. We had to act now to avoid a breakdown in operations,” the official added.

Officials in a transfer order further explained that, both

outgoing and incoming employees will be held jointly accountable during the transition of any water supply scheme. “If there’s any disruption, disciplinary action including suspension will follow.”

It also clarified that transferred employees are expected to join their new locations without delay. “Anyone not reporting to their assigned duty stations will lose House Rent Allowance benefits,” it reads.

The department has instructed Assistant Executive Engineers (AEs), Assistant Engineers (AEs) and Junior Engineers (JEs) to oversee implementation of the order and allocate responsibilities to newly posted staff within 24 hours. “They must also share contact details and assignment lists promptly so there’s no gap in service,” says division head.

The official also called for immediate reporting of any irregularities, saying the aim is clean, transparent and efficient service delivery.

The move, described as one of the most comprehensive internal reshuffles in recent years, is also linked to the expansion of infrastructure under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)—(KNO)

Root No. 1 In Test Rankings; Aussies Dominate Bowling Charts

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Star England batter Joe Root reclaimed the top position in the ICC men's Test rankings within a week of losing it while India's all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja climbed to the 34th spot in the latest list released here on Wednesday.

Root's scores of 104 and 40 in the third Test of the five-match series against India at Lord's that England won by 22 runs helped him start his eighth stint at the top.

At 34, he is the oldest No. 1 Test batter since Kumar Sangakkara in December 2014, when the Sri Lankan was 37. Root had lost his top spot to compatriot Harry Brook, who has slipped behind Kane Williamson to third position.



Among Indian batters, opener Yashasvi Jaiswal and vice-captain

Rishabh Pant have dropped down a rung each and are currently placed fifth and eighth respectively, while skipper Shubman Gill has also fallen three places to ninth.

However, Jadeja has risen five places to 34th after scores of 72 and a fighting 61 not out at Lord's. KL Rahul, who made 100 and 39 in the same match, has also climbed five places and now sits one spot behind Jadeja on 35th.

England captain Ben Stokes' player of the match effort of 77 runs and five wickets at the Lord's have lifted him two places to 42nd among batters and one spot to 45th among bowlers.

Bumrah Holds Firm At No 1

Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah continues to dominate the Test bowling rankings, retain-

ing the top spot with a commanding 50-point lead over South Africa's Kagiso Rabada.

Australian quick Scott Boland has made a significant jump, rising six spots to a career-best sixth place.

Bolland, whose 62 wickets in Test cricket have come at just 16.53 apiece with only ICC Hall of Famers George Lohmann and Sydney Barnes having taken wickets at a better average, joins his four compatriots already in the top 10 -- Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Nathan Lyon and Mitchell Starc.

This kind of domination has not been seen since England had six bowlers in the top 12 in 1958.

India all-rounder Washington Sundar has moved from 58th to 46th position.

KSL: Athwas India XI Beats ARCO United FC 4-1

Athwas India XI defeated ARCO United FC 4-1 in Kashmir Super League 2025 on Wednesday at TRC Ground, Srinagar. Ahteab Ahmad scored a hat trick for Athwas India as they dominated their opponents in both halves of the contest.

Ahteab opened the flood gates in 38th minute before Asif Ali made it 2-1 in the 41st, helping Athwas India enter the half time break 2-0 up.

The second half saw a spirited display from ARCO United, with Parveez Hussain pulling one goal back for his team in the 75th minute. However, Athwas India and Ahteab had different plans as the talented forward scored his second of the match in 80th minute before completing his hat trick in the 91st. The 4-1 win has lifted Athwas India XI up in the points table.

Ahteab Ahmad was awarded Player of the Match and the Golden Moment award. Amit Kumar of Athwas India won the Game Changer of the Match. (Observer News Service)

Provincial Girls' Baseball Tourney Begins in Ganderbal

The Department of Youth Services and Sports Ganderbal on Wednesday inaugurated the Inter District UT Level Baseball Tournament for Girls All Age Groups of Kashmir province at the Government College of Physical Education in Gadoora, Ganderbal.

The event was formally declared open by Sheikh Shafiq Iqbal, District Youth Services and Sports Officer Ganderbal, who presided over the inaugural ceremony. In his welcome address, DYSSO extended warm greetings to all the participating teams.

The tournament began with spirited performances from various district teams in the Girls U14 category. After a competitive display of skill and determination, District Ganderbal and District Pulwama emerged as finalists. The title clash between the two will be held today, Thursday. To ensure merit-based selections, expert selectors appointed by the department monitored performances throughout the matches. (Observer News Service)

District Budgam Soft Tennis Championship Concludes

The District Budgam Soft Tennis Championship 2025-2026 concluded on Wednesday at The Cardiff School, Charar-i-Sharief, Budgam. Organised by the District Budgam Soft Tennis Association and sponsored by J&K Sports Council, the two-day event brought together over 110 young players from across the district.

Jahan Aara (ZPEO, Charar-i-Sharief) was the Chief Guest and praised the organisers for promoting youth engagement through sports. Guests of Honour included Owais Mattoo (Director, Cardiff School), Nazir Ahmad Mir (Sports Observer, Budgam), Rayees Ahmad Wani (Sr. Vice President, J&K Amateur Soft Tennis Association) and Basit Nabi Wani (International Soft Tennis Umpire). (Observer News Service)

After Instant Stardom, Suryavanshi Gets Attention In England

Press Trust of India

BECKENHAM: With his gluttonous appetite for runs, wunderkind Vaibhav Suryavanshi is making his presence felt in England. He has been signing autographs, obliging requests for selfies, and even making fans drive long hours to get a glimpse of him.

Having become a household name in India following his record-breaking hundred in the IPL, the 14-year-old from Bihar is now attracting eyeballs on the U-19 tour of UK.

He has been consciously kept away from the media glare but his achievements on the field have not gone unnoticed in this part of the world.

Those who are part of a rather large Indian diaspora in the UK and the locals had their eyes trained on the left-hander during the first Youth Test in the sleepy town of Beckenham.



"He is my role model. I like his aggressive style of batting," said a local kid from Beckenham after getting an autograph from Suryavanshi at the Kent County Cricket Ground on the final day of the red-ball series opener.

Ten days ago, Suryavanshi had hammered a 78-ball 143 for India U-19 in a 50 over game against England U-19 in Worcester, extend-

ing his reputation as a clean hitter of the ball.

England U-19 left-arm spinner Ralphie Albert, who was part of the white-ball game in Worcester and also the Youth Test here, was surprised by the Indian's aggressive approach across formats.

"I bowled to him (Vaibhav Suryavanshi) throughout the ODI series. And then coming off the Test series, you'd think maybe he'd pull back a bit, but he's kept going. But yeah, he's a really good player," said Albert after day four.

Suryavanshi can do without the constant attention but one London-based couple of Indian origin travelled two hours from the British capital to see the flamboyant opener in flesh and blood.

"I came only for Suryavanshi. I hope I can get a picture with him," said Sanjeev, who has a government job in the UK.

India's Football Ecosystem Is Scared: Chhetri On ISL Pause

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Former captain and top striker Sunil Chhetri on Wednesday said the current state of "uncertainty" in Indian football is very concerning and the sport's ecosystem is "worried, hurt, and scared" by the top-tier ISL being put on hold indefinitely.

Chhetri, who turns up for Bengaluru FC in the league, said he has been inundated with phone calls and messages expressing apprehensions about the future of the sport in the country.

"It began with worrying about how I am on borrowed time with what I have left in the tank. But speaking with players from across clubs, I've realised that my selfish problem isn't as important," the 40-year-old Chhetri posted on X.

"The current situation that Indian football finds itself in, is very concern-



ing. I've received a flurry of texts from players, staff members, physios, masseurs - not just from my club, but from other clubs as well.

"Everybody in the Indian football ecosystem is worried, hurt, scared about the uncertainty we are faced with," he added.

The ISL (Indian Super League) put the 2025-26 season "on hold" due to uncertainty surrounding the renewal of Master Rights Agreement (MRA) between the event organisers and the All India Football Federation.

The league normally

runs from September to April, and the current MRA between Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL), which organises the event, and the AIFF is scheduled to expire on December 8, 2025, by which time the ISL would be into its third month.

This was after a Supreme Court directive to AIFF in which the body was asked not to negotiate new terms of the MRA with FSDL, the apex governing body's commercial partner running the ISL, until a final judgment is delivered in the AIFF draft constitution case.

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